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# Saving cetaceans: documentary films, animal activism and power

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## **Abstract**

In modern times, the world has experienced the rise of a range of different large, well-coordinated social movements with the goal to make the world a better place for oppressed societal groups. One of these movements is the animal activist movement, with the objective to change the societal norms regarding facilitating and exploiting cetaceans through captivity at zoos- and marine mammal parks etc. In order to receive an understanding of the animal activist movement and how they are operating to evoke civic engagement and passionate participation for their cause, this study draws on theories from three different academic fields; Critical animal studies, Civic engagement and Critical media studies, and Documentary studies. The design of this study is a qualitative case study with a starting point in social constructionism. The empirical materials have been collected through a multi method approach, combining qualitative semi structured interviews with two animal documentary filmmakers, genre analysis of animal documentary films with a focus on aesthetics, and internet studies containing website analysis. This thesis analyze the different messages communicated through the public sphere media by the zoo- and marine mammal park industry and the animal activist movement, the authorial role of animal documentary films as well as the concept of civic culture underpinning the animal activist movement. As a final remark, this thesis emphasizes the large range of different power structures operating within this case study.

**Keywords:** Animal activism; Cetaceans in captivity; Animal rights; Animal welfare; Civic culture; Civic engagement; Political participation; Documentary film; Internet; Moral emotions; Empathy

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## 1. Introduction

Never before, in the history of our world, have we seen more social and political voluntary organisations and networks, which distributes various campaigns and "try to change the world to make it better conform to their views on, for example, [...] animal well-being" (de Jong, Shaw & Stammers, 2005:x, & Jacobsson and Lindbom, 2013:56). This can be explained as a result of the technological development that rapidly has occurred and blurred the boundaries of time and space, and made it possible to communicate with anyone in the world that "possesses the proper technology, in a split of a second" (Ward in Olsson & Dahlgren 2010:37). This means that individuals all over the world have the opportunity to "pursue their personal interests and connect with a global group of like-minded people" in order to engage, build knowledge, take political actions and form citizenship. Possibly without even leaving the computer screen (ibid). One activist movement which has seen a major boost by the globalization and technology development is the animal activism movement. It is an old movement which has been working for better treatment of animals for many decades now, but during recent years, it has been playing an even larger and determining role than before in issues regarding wildlife conservation. In contemporary society, the modern humans sense of entitlement to see wild animals any time one wants, has created a culture which strongly oppress animals, and in particular the higher mammals such as cetaceans (Marino, Bradshaw & Malamud, 2009:27). This culture has strengthened the role of the corporations within this million dollar industry, such as zoos and marine mammal parks, which use and expose these animals in the name of education and conservation. Although, several writers within the field strongly questions this objective, that humans will learn anything about wildlife conservation by seeing a manipulated trained, former wild animal, many times ripped from its natural habitant and family at a young age, by performing circus tricks (International Tourism Services, 2008 in Molloy, 2011:70-71 & Marino, Bradshaw & Malamud, 2009:26). Instead, it is suggested that regardless of what these profitable corporations states, the most important rational is not education nor conservation, but exploitation, through which animals are "constructed as ridiculous or pathetic or as simple objects of entertainment" (Baker, 2001:174 in Molloy, 2011:2).

To better understand the phenomenon of zoos and marine mammal parks and the controversy between the industry and the animal activist movement regarding keeping cetaceans in captivity, a case study design will be used, consisting of four different animal activist documentary films and campaigns related to them. In order to examine this process and the activities involved, this thesis will overarch and cover the three different academic fields of Critical animal studies, Civic

engagement and Critical media studies, and Documentary studies. To incorporate and combine theories from all these academic fields is highly necessary in order to receive a fuller picture of the controversy between the zoo- and marine mammal park industry and the animal activist movement, as well as for the development of an understanding for the chosen case study.

### ***Aims and objectives***

The purpose of this study is to understand how the animal activist movement, working to implement the view that cetaceans does not belong in captivity, is operating within the public sphere media by providing components necessary for civic culture, civic engagement and passionate participation.

### ***Research questions***

This thesis has the objective to provide answers to these three main questions:

1. How do the animal activist movement make use of the public sphere media in order to encounter, challenge and change the norms regarding cetaceans in captivity? How are the zoo- and marine mammal park industry working to preserve the norms as they are today?
2. In what ways are the animal documentary films organizing their arguments and creating an evidential status in order to mobilize their audiences?
3. How can Dahlgren's (2009) model of Civic cultures be used in order to understand the animal activist movement, civic engagement, values and practices related to cetaceans in captivity?

## **2. Literature review**

In the following chapter, theories within the fields of Critical animal studies, Civic engagement and Critical media studies, and Documentary studies, will be presented, as well as previous research on the subject.

### **2.1. Critical animal studies**

This part will presents theories from the field Critical animal studies, which is a field that seeks to examine different systems of oppression and domination towards animals and other marginalized societal groups (ICAS, 2015). The theories presented in this section is needed in order to receive an understanding of the diverse views underpinning the animal activist movement and the zoo- and marine mammal park industry. This following part will address the animal activist movement, emotions of morality connected to animals, animal exploitation, as well as the industry's argument of education and conservation, and laws and regulations regarding keeping cetaceans in captivity.

#### **The animal activist movement**

During modern times, numerous social movements have been operating in order to make a difference in the lives of oppressed societal groups, such as women, people of colour and animals. The common denominator of all social movements is that the people involved are trying to change the world and to make it a better place conform to their own views on, for example the well-being of animals (Jacobsson & Lindbom, 2013:56). This is done through actions, and it is also through actions that social movements move (Munro, 2012:173). But according to Eyerman (2006:194) they can move in several ways, for example through "mobilizing and affecting opinions, engaging emotions, changing laws, preventing some actions while encouraging others". However, Regan (in Armstrong & Botzler 2008:615) argues that "the struggle for animal rights is different; it calls for a deeper, more fundamental change in the way we think about membership in the moral community". This since issues revolving around animal rights does not demand an expansion of the for-humans-only conception, but rather a dismantling of it, and it needs to be replaced by a new view which includes other non-human animals as well. The animal activist movement have risen in popularity during recent years and Munro (2012:166) explains this by arguing that the movement are "right in time" since, in the last couple of years, the environment has been an urgent political issue, together with the nature and how the society and humans overall are dependent on it. In order to target the work of the animal activist movement that is operating to change the fundamental view of keeping cetaceans in captivity, a framework can be used where Munro (2012:169) argue that social movements have "three core framing tasks, namely diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational

framing". The diagnostic frame of the animal movement is to target human abuse of animals as a social problem in the context in which it occurs, and as Munro (ibid) states, it "transforms ethics into social action". The prognostic frame of the movements is the practical work and the tactics which the movement employ in order to reach its goals. The movements motivational framing is how it mobilizes support, and it involves making strategic choices between for example direct or indirect action (Munro, 2012:169,174).

### **Online animal activist movements**

Online activism is a term that describes how citizens can use the digital tools which the internet provides in order to encourage political and/or social change (Amin, 2010:64). To define online activism, is just as difficult as defining traditional activism before the appearance of the internet. According to McCaughey and Ayers (2003:14) "activism takes many forms – including direct action, protests, efforts to change laws, educational groups, activist newspapers and so on". One commonly used definition of online activism is that it is a movement seeking political change that relies on the internet, either partly or fully, in order to reach its traditional goals. McCaughey and Ayers (2003:71,72) argues that an activist movement operating in online environments, either are internet enhanced or internet-based, meaning that, in the former case, "the internet is only used to enhance the traditional advocacy techniques" or in the latter "by coordinating action more efficiently". Over the last few years, the internet has become such an integrated part within the society, that the two no longer can be separated from one another. It is a normal feature of the everyday life, on almost every level of the society (Dahlgren, 2009:150,152). Due to this, the use of interactive online platforms by activist movements has increased in rapidly pace, and today activist movements, such as the animal activism movement, operate across several different platforms and make use of various digital tools to get their message across (Amin, 2010:64, 65). A large number of activist movements, including the animal activist movement, operates on platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, which provides the activists with a free and easily used platform for working with and distributing multimedia content, which is accessible to anyone who has internet connection (Amin, 2010:64, 65). Since social movements and activist groups works solely in transnational contexts, the internet has helped the development of this form of communication significantly (Dahlgren, 2009:39). This as the internet erases the boundaries of time and space and provides global reach and an opportunity to communicate, generate and distribute information both cheaply and effective, which is highly valuable features to social movements and activists, such as the animal activist movement (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003:129).



## **Emotions and animal activist movements**

In order to understand the underlying motivational force to why people chose to get involved in animal related issues one need to considered the emotional and affective drive of the cause, existing in the foundation of the activist movement. Overall, it is commonly acknowledge that emotions are a central part of being a human being and that they play a crucial role in how people act and approach the world. In order to study emotions, Ahmed (2004:1) presents a framework where she argues that when addressing emotions, one needs to survey the categories of individual and collective bodies (in relation to this thesis, a single or a collective of animal activists), objects (e.g. a marine mammal park) and others (e.g. the marine mammal), which are all interconnected. This since "emotions work to shape the 'surfaces' of individual and collective bodies" and due to the fact that "bodies take the shape of the very contact they have with objects and others" (ibid). A crucial question raised by Ahmed (2004) is "what do emotions do?" (Ahmed, 2004:4), which indicates that one potential view to take on emotions are the one of a process that builds upon interaction between bodies and objects, which impacts and orientate people into actions. This is also the fundamental view adopted throughout the reasoning in this thesis. Within this view, "emotions should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices" (Ahmed, 2004:9). To this thesis, this means that the emotions connected to the norms regarding animal treatment and whether or not to facilitate cetaceans in captivity, are fluid and changeable, as well as (re)constructed through interaction among individuals and institutions in a particular society.

This view on emotions as a social process involves contact between subjects and objects. Ahmed (2004:6) argues that "if emotions are shaped by contact with objects, rather than being caused by objects, then emotions are not simply 'in' the subject or the objects", instead "objects are often read as the cause of emotions in the very process of taking an orientation towards them". This implies that emotions have what Ahmed (2004:7) calls an "aboutness" thus indicates that "they involve a stance on the world, or a way of apprehending the world" (Ahmed, 2004:7). This stand indicates that emotions are relational in their (re)actions of "'towardness' or 'awayness' in relation to [...] objects" (Ahmed, 2004:8). But according to Ahmed (2004:11) emotions are also moving phenomena's, and even though they don't simply move around between bodies, movement here aims at attachments that occur through movements between bodies. Therefore, emotions are also about attachments which connect us to other bodies or objects. This relation between movement and attachment demonstrates a complexity in the nature of emotions, namely that "what moves us, [...] is also that which holds us in place" (ibid).

## **Morality - the foundation of animal activism movements**

Morality is a highly diversified concept which is central within the study of animal activism movements, within which, the importance of reason and emotions are often highlighted (Herzog & Golden, 2009:486). According to social intuitionists, moral decisions involve two distinct components. The first one is intuition, which is an unconscious, instantaneous and emotional process. This process is followed by the second component which is a logical factor of moral judgements which serves to provide justifications for the initial gut-level decision towards an action. Therefore, moral thinking usually consists more of rationalization than of reason (ibid). According to Herzog & Golden (2009:486) "judgments about the treatment of other species are affected by some of the same psychological factors that mediate ethical behaviours directed toward our fellow humans, including disassociation, similarity, and language", and furthermore, these dilemmas also reflect conflicts between intuition and reason. Most research on intuitive/affective components of attitudes directed towards animals have focused on the positive emotion of empathy (e.g., Hills, 1993; Signal & Taylor, 2007; in Herzog & Golden, 2009:487), which is learned through imagining "to stand in the other fellow's shoes and to see and feel the world from that perspective" (Fischer, 2010:285), and according to La Capra (2000:212) "empathy should be understood in terms of an affective relation, rapport, or bond with the other recognized as other". Whereas studies of intuitive/affective attitudes towards other people have focused on a negative emotion, disgust, which has a powerful influence on moral judgements (Herzog & Golden, 2009:487). By observing the sensibility of disgust on animal rights advocates, Herzog and Golden (2009:493) concludes that animal activists are a group that are sensitive to disgust and they argue that it is possible that disgust functions as a motivator for people to become involved in moral causes such as animal activism. For advocates of animal rights, disgust might facilitate psychological processes which results in the inclusion of non-human animals into the ethical system which historically have been restricted to the human species (Herzog & Golden, 2009:496).

## **Fundamental views on animal treatment - animal rights and animal welfare**

In contemporary society, humans often claim a morally superior position towards animals, which usually is based upon an identification of a morally important difference that is supposed to exist between humans and animals. According to Garner (2005:65), this position suggests that "humans have characteristics that enables them to be labeled as persons, whereas animals, despite having capabilities beyond the ability to experience pain and pleasure, are not full-persons". This since animals don't possess the same collection of mental characteristics as humans do, and it is these characteristics which constitutes the concept of person-hood that enables the categorization of

beings as persons (Garner, 2005:44). Garner (2005:45) argues that this position raises two interconnected moral dilemmas, "the first focuses on the claim that not all animals lack personhood, and the second on the implications of the act that not all humans are persons". This results in the moral dilemma of what kind of treatment beings are entitled to. Here, it is easy to generalize the larger masses, but on the one hand there are animals, such as cetaceans, with highly advanced mental capacities, and on the other hand, humans with low mental capacities such as children, old people or people with mental health problems or learning disabilities. How should we relate to these groups and how should we categorize them and their rights? (Regan in Armstrong & Botzler, 2008:23). This constant determination of categorizations between humans and animals does not only figure morally and ethically, but also legally. Today, there is also a legal wall dividing humans from animals, where humans have assigned themselves (among millions of animal species) the superior status of legal persons. A legal person is entitled to all the rights, privileges, powers and immunities, whereas every other animal are trapped on the other side of the legal wall and are assigned the status of legal things (Wise in Armstrong & Botzler 2008:589), meaning that legal persons are entitled to treat legal things in any way they wish. This is reflected in that the human species have assigned the group itself the right to keep animals as prisoners in zoos and marine mammal parks in order to expose them for the purpose of entertainment.

However, it is fairly acknowledge among individuals in the western societies that animals have some kinds of rights, but this stance means different things to different individuals in different societies (Lindburg in Armstrong & Botzler 2008:523). The general perception in the western world, however, is that animals have an interest in not suffering, which often is associated with ethical implications (Kaldewaij in Armstrong & Botzler 2008:59). Garner (2005:42) argues that:

" (...) the claims of those who persists in arguing that we owe no direct duties to animals are weak. While empirical evidence of animal sentience can never demonstrate conclusively that animals have moral standing, the evidence that they can suffer pain is strong grounds for suggesting that it ought to be taken into account in our moral deliberations. This position is strengthened by moral intuition, reflected in the law of all developed countries of the world, which suggests that the capacity to feel pain means that we owe moral duties to animals directly".

As stated in the quotation above provided by Garner (2005) humans (should) owe direct moral duties towards animals, which is an argument that also is reflected in Kaldewaij (2008) and Lindburg (2008) claims brought upon earlier, that people have assigned animals with some level of

rights. But at present times, there is a divide in the view of to what extent humans are allowed to exploit animals for their own interests; the divide between animal rights advocates and those of animal welfare. It is of high importance to this thesis to acknowledge this difference in viewpoint between these two groups, since it constitutes the core of the dilemma of how to treat animals. Animal rights can be interpreted as the fundamental belief that animals possess the same rights as humans, and therefore all use of animals for human purposes should be considered as wrong and unethical. The American Heritage Dictionary (2005) define animal rights as "the right to humane treatment claimed on behalf of animals, especially the right not to be exploited for human purposes" (Phillips et al, 2010:91). On the other hand, animal welfare is the belief that humans are entitled to use animals if it will be beneficial for humans. But the animals that becomes exploited for human purposes, should be treated in such ways that their natural mental and physical stage are taken well care of and are not compromised or manipulated. The individual animal should be protected from mental stress as well as from physical harm. This view states and indicates that humans are more important and valuable than animals and that humans therefore are ethically, morally and legally empowered to keep animals in captivity or even kill them if it will improve and add value to human lives (Phillips et al, 2010:1-2 & Shani & Pizam, 2008:680).

### **Exploiting animals through mediation**

The interest and ongoing attraction of animal based narratives can be found within all spectrums of the popular media, from pet programs to wildlife documentaries, and the underlying purpose of this is easily explained; animal stories are profitable (Molloy, 2011:1). From an industrial- economic perspective, the contemporary popular construction of animal images and narratives are a part of a wide set of processes through which animals are being transformed into commodities and where the norms of human-animal relations are established and further sustained (ibid). However, media audiences are often sceptical and cynical towards what they see, and they are not passive receivers of different media texts, but rather active consumers who negotiates meaning from images and texts presented to them (Molloy, 2011:8). Regardless of if the media imagery of texts that are consumed by the media audiences, representations of animals are never neutral. Molloy (2011:9) writes that:

”media representations do not reflect the reality of animal lives but reconstruct animals within a set of discursive boundaries that delimit what can be said, visually and aurally, about them. For this reason, media discourses can shape public understanding of animals in ways that appear to be natural and normal. Yet, inasmuch as animals are discursively constituted as ‘animal’ within systems of production and through webs of relations,

animals are embodied material beings with interests. What is at stake then is that there is a relationship between the discursive construction of animals and the material reality of animal's lives".

Due to this, these representations are discourses that govern what is thought about the animals, and in many cases, also the animals moral worth (ibid). The media representations of animals reproduce animals as objects based upon contemporary knowledge about that animal and its species, and in other words, media discourses are very important when it comes to sustaining the wide range of general constructions of animals and in the normalization process of particular relations and practices (Molloy, 2011:9,13). But when it comes to commodified animals, such as the cetaceans at different marine mammal parks, Molloy (2011:13) argues that the "imagery reflect the extent to which media representations operate within an economic framework". This since animals generates billions as stars etc. as they are portrayed in zoos and marine mammal parks (ibid). When it comes to the complexity of animals and humans economical interest in them, Molloy (ibid) argues that "in many cases, however, animals have an economic worth which takes precedence over their moral worth".

### **Exploiting animals through captivity**

Every year, millions of people visit zoos and marine mammal parks. All these places provide the visitor a place and an opportunity to view and perhaps interact with animals. Most people who visit zoos and marine mammal parks don't reflect upon what it actually means that the animals displayed have been removed from their natural environment. According to Garner (2005:65), a common mistake is that people tend to "underestimate the intellectual capacity of animals, and particularly the higher mammals" such as cetaceans. But when people do reflect upon what it means to keep these animals in captivity, they usually conclude that captivity in itself is an necessary evil, that zoos and marine mammal parks are required as it is presumed that people need to be able to look at wild animals in order to get an understanding of them and help them in the wild. By this reasoning, people justify the captivity and let the captive animals pay the price (Marino, Bradshaw & Malamud, 2009:25). According to Conway (in Norton, 1995:2) the zoo and marine mammal park industry is an example of an ethical paradox, whereas zoos and marine mammal parks "seek to inspire public interest in wild creatures and nature, to provide ecological education, and to help save wild species from extinction, but in doing so they confine wild animals away from nature and manage their lives". But by making this claim and by arguing that captivity is necessary in order to save wildlife, a controversial ethical assumption is made: the long-standing suffering of confined

animals balances out the effort to save other habitants of the same species in the wild (Marino, Bradshaw & Malamud, 2009:27). Marino, Bradshaw and Malamud (2009:27) argues that zoos and marine mammal parks "palliate people's anxieties about a disappearing natural world, instead of forcing us to confront the imminent dangers to animals". Therefore, a zoo or a marine mammal park, filled with empty cages and tanks, would be a far more realistic way to convey the impending loss of species and populations (ibid). With this ethical paradox follows that zoos and marine mammal parks need to create a reverence for wildlife including inspire the public to feel sympathy and empathy for both welfare of individual animals as well as for sustaining entire species (Conway, 1995, in Norton, 1995:6).

### **The marine mammal park industry's argument of education and conservation**

In today's modern times, the earlier support for the original colonial reasons for zoos and aquariums in western societies has left the way for more politically correct messages, and the catchwords of contemporary zoos and marine mammal parks are education and conservation (Marino, Bradshaw & Malamud, 2009:26). But in despite of this re-branding, there are no real, hard evidence of that these facilitates actually have had a positive impact in public education or wildlife conservation. But the education- and conservation arguments work well as marketing strategies in brochures and on websites (ibid). This could be identified as a strategic move named "Greenwashing", described by Stærk Ekstrand and Lilholt Nilsson (2011:167) as an activity where "more and more companies take an interest in communicating their environmental and ethical conduct in their marketing, especially companies utilizing many resources on keeping themselves as environmentally responsible as possible".

This claim and marketing strategy is something that concerns Marino, Bradshaw and Malamud (2009:27) and they stretches that "there is a very real danger to believing the message of zoos and aquariums", seeing that if we pretend that we can learn about animals only by watching them in compounds made of cement and steel, created by humans, we are indirectly arguing that the animals natural habitat are irrelevant. And if the animals natural habitants is implicitly put forward as unimportant, the zoos and marine mammal parks contradict the overall message which they claim to affirm (ibid). Further, the same contradictory controversy goes for the argument that captive animals functions as species ambassadors, in helping to raise public awareness and money to support education, conservation and research of its species (Hutchins, Smith & Allard in Armstrong & Botzler 2008:514). But in this respect, when it comes to the arguments of education and conservation, the question of individual ethics and morality creates a form of grey-zone, where

Garner (2005:139) argues that a line can be drawn between zoos without cetaceans and those containing cetaceans, marine mammal parks and aquariums. This since the main purpose of marine mammal parks, aquariums and zoos having cetaceans in captivity is for entertainment, and therefore, they are much more ethically problematic than zoos which have animals that don't have to perform and are forced to do shows (ibid). According to Garner (2005:139-140) "marine mammal display provide limited conservation and education function. Entertainment remains by far the most important rationale, and of course with entertainment comes money for the owners".

There are currently no laws that forbid keeping and displaying cetaceans such as orca whales and dolphins in captivity, but there are several laws regulating the capture of wild cetaceans for the purpose of scientific research and entertainment. Even though there are no laws that forbid the exploitation of marine mammals through captivity, there are laws and regulations which govern the facilities which holds these animals in captivity, regulating for example specifications of the facilities such as tank size, transportation of the animals and the care of them. These laws and regulations are very country specific, meaning that the placing of them is found on different levels within the legal part of the society (Animal legal and historical centre, 2014). Within the framework of this thesis, the laws and regulation won't be examined any deeper than this, due to the fact that they differs so significant between countries and states and it would claim too much space of this thesis. But it is still of importance for the interpretation of this thesis and the activists frustrations to acknowledge what the legal systems looks like.

## **2.2. Civic engagement and Critical media studies**

This part of the literature review presents theories from the academic field Civic engagement and Critical media studies that are needed in order to receive an understanding of the animal activist movement and how they operate within the public sphere media in order to facilitate engagement and participation. This following part will address the theory of the public sphere both online and in a more traditional notion, the importance of the media in a democratic society and the concepts of engagement and participation. Finally the Civic cultures framework, provided by Dahlgren (2009), will be introduced in brief, and later be elaborated upon in the analysis on this thesis.

### **The theory of the public sphere(s)**

The debate regarding the interconnected relationship between media and democracy are usually framed within Habermas theory of the public sphere. The public sphere is a metaphor for a space where information and ideas circulate in large societies and where citizens interact and

communicate about the content in the public sphere in order to form the rules of their society. The concept of the public sphere describes the flow of information that is generally made available to the public and how citizens, based upon this information, reaches a consensus about how to run their society (Gripsrud & Moe, 2010:9, & McKee, 2005:vii). But the concept of the public sphere is also helpful in how we, as argued by McKee (2005:6) can think about how a democratic culture should work. Habermas (1997:105), the founder of the theory, describes the public sphere as "a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed". In other words, the public sphere could be argued to be a space where individual people come together in order to exchange information, ideas and feelings important to them, so as to form a collective and a public (ibid). Therefore, the public sphere(s) is an significant cornerstone in a democratic society, which ensures that the citizens are free to contribute with opinions and ideas in order to form an general agreement with other citizens in a just way in order to form a public (McKee, 2005:16).

Today, the theory of the public sphere is somewhat ambiguous, since it does not only involve merely one sphere, but multiple spheres, connected to each other through net-like linkages. At the same time, public spheres are not static in their existence, new spheres arise and some old ones die out or are renegotiated. Public spheres exist in all sizes, from smaller niched spheres to large global public spheres, as well as from strong to weak public spheres. Everything revolves around how close the spheres are to one another and how they link to other spheres around the centre of the decision-making (McKee, 2005:214 & Dahlgren, 2009:158,165), and here Dahlgren (2009:165) argues that there is a distinction between "strong public spheres where decisions are taken and weak ones, which offer only the possibility of generating opinion or collective identity". As stated by Dahlgren (2009:69) in the previous quotation, collective civic identities are formed within the context of the public sphere, which is a development that has enabled the growth of social movements and new forms of political participation occurs every day within newly-emerging as well as old, more established public spheres. The media, both mass and alternative, works as building blocks and plays a crucial role within the theory of the public sphere. The mass media have always constituted the highly necessary infrastructure for the modern public sphere, since they always have distributed essential information, diverse forms of knowledge and argumentation's. Further, they've also ventilated problems and helped generate different solutions (Gripsrud & Moe, 2010:9). Trade (1969 in Splichal, 2010:24,25) argues that the public never could exist without the press since the press stimulates passion and awareness which leads to participation in a public domain. But he also stresses the importance of private conversations among people, where they can discuss and interpret news materials provided by the media.



### **Digital public spheres and activist influence**

Recently, the internet has been taking up an increasingly important position in the domains of political, economic and social life (Gripsrud & Moe, 2010:13). Dahlgren (2009:158,169,170) argues that the internet provides the public with an extension of the public sphere, which makes a positive difference in political involvement and therefore has a strong influence in political decision-making. Further, McCaughey and Ayers (2003:136) claims that if we regard the internet as an extension of the public sphere, we might come to regard it as a supporting function upon which public spheres can be built. It can be argued that the internet helps in order to increase cross-visibility of already-existing public spheres and in the emergence of new public spheres, both those that are smaller of grass-root character and those that are of a larger global scale (McKee, 2005:214).

As argued above, digital public spheres can take several different forms and be shaped by lots of diverse factors, since there is a considerable degree of fluidity online (Dahlgren, 2009:167). According to Poster (2001:129), the virtual reality tend to duplicate 'the real' and "they provide the participant with a second order reality in which to play with or participate upon the first order" meaning that what is discussed online, are based on and connected to the offline reality. Therefore, as stated by McCaughey and Ayers (2003:129) "the internet can be seen as a foundational medium for civic society and the informal public sphere". The global reach of the internet, and its ability to erase the boundaries set up by time and physical space, has helped in facilitating the growth of huge and well-coordinated digital networks of activists and social movements (McCaughy & Ayers 2003:129 & Dahlgren, 2009:167).

### **Impact, influence and importance of the media**

In today's globalized world, political issues are increasingly taking on a transnational character which results in that global media can have an impact on the political agenda of specific nation-states. This means that social movements, activist groups etc. have perfect conditions to operate in, and the development are increasing with the speed of the internet and merges with the notion of the public sphere (Dahlgren, 2009:38,39). When citizens gather in a public sphere in order to engage in an issue that is important to them, they will need to know what is going on, in order to be able to act upon it (Hill and Hughes, 1998:2). Today, as a result of the technology development, Dahlgren (2009:154) argues that "individuals are able to select from an enormous array of online output, customizing their own personal information packages". This was not possible just a few decades ago, indicating that cyberspace is changing the way we live and provides us with more effective tools for social agency (Dahlgren, 2009:149).

Even though the internet is making it easier for activist movements to get their message across, it is generally difficult for them to receive any publicity in the mass media. But they would be wrong to exclude and ignore them completely in their communication, but at the same time, they would be wrong to rely on them to a great extent (Lester and Hutchins, 2009:584). This is since most people, but not necessarily the activists themselves, receive their information about almost everything, from major worldwide events to small grassroots activist groups from the mainstream mass media (de Jong, Shaw & Stammers, 2005:5). The unique features of the media as a prerequisite for shaping the democratic society and affect potential participation in it, very much appeals to the activist groups. The media can be seen as the bearers of the political communication beyond the face-to-face setting in democracies where their role is to make politics and society visible to its citizens through providing information, forums for debates and establish a shared democratic culture (Dahlgren, 2009:2,3). The media also plays an important role in organizing the public's attention, and as argued by Coleman (2013:214), "by making certain experiences, feelings and relationships seem natural and significant, they configure political subjectivities around officially acclaimed moments and events". This indicates that the mass media follows its own logic, as do the social movements, which means that in order for a social movement and/or activist group to be successful, they need to maintain movement-controlled media as well (Lester & Hutchins, 2009:584).

### **Civic engagement and passionate participation**

The two terms engagement and participation are essential to any activist movement, and the animal movement is no exception to this. In short, Dahlgren (2009:81) argues that "engagement refers to subjective states, that is a mobilized, focused attention on some object. It is in a sense a prerequisite for participation". But in order for engagement to become embodied as participation and give rise to civic agency, some connection to do-able, practical activities where citizen empowerment can be fulfilled is needed (ibid). Civic agency is a process involving people stepping into the public sphere and through discussions together with other people make sense of media representations and from that, perhaps take on other actions (Dahlgren, 2009:76). Thus, civic agency involves, according to Dahlgren (2009:77) the process of "generating knowledge and opinion together". The concept of civic agency is closely connected to the civic society and a/the public. Gripsrud and Moe (2010:31) argues that when civic society or a component from civic society is connected to a public discourse that are taking place in the public sphere, it turns into 'the public' or 'a public'. Civic society cannot exist without the public, but in the public sphere, there are several other actors with significantly different interests than those of civic society of the public, meaning that there are other forms of power relations at play (ibid).

In order for civic agency to arise and bring upon a civic society, not only knowledge is required, but a high level of motivation as well, indicating that both engagement and further participation must have an emotional drive. As Dahlgren (2009:85) states, "passion is crucial for making political choices, creating political community, and motivating political action. No passion, no participation". Here, the media has an important function in contemporary democracy in supplying the public with emotions, which have become an incorporated part in communicating political and social knowledge (Fischer, 2009:274). Emotions and passion are basic fundamentals of the political process, meaning that people rarely engages themselves in politics without any form of emotional convictions (Fischer, 2009:272). The animal movement is a great example of a group which are constantly using emotive rhetoric and visual media in order to awaken moral sensibility, which hopefully, further on, will lead to engagement and participation for the activist networks causes (Jacobsson & Lindbom, 2013:58). But in order for the animal activist movement to evoke any form of engagement at all, in hope of recruiting participants and members, they need to create an image of themselves where they are being identified as followers of an admirable and noble cause, rather than a movement which violates existing norms. This means that the animal activist movements balance on a fine line between defending an ideal, but at the same time, the activist movement's needs to have respect for important social norms in order to be successful (ibid).

### **Civic cultures: an analytical framework**

In order for citizens to be able to participate and engage themselves in the political domain, they need some basic skills to make sense of discussions in the public sphere to fully be able to participate. The analytical framework for Civic cultures is provided by Dahlgren (2009:103) who argues that the model aims at studying the conditions which are necessary for civic engagement. The model consists of six different, but intertwined, dimensions which all have mutual impact on each other, but in different ways (Dahlgren, 2009:108). These are knowledge, values, trust, spaces, practices and identities. This is a normative model in that it suggests that all the six dimensions needs to be presented and viable in order for participation to emerge, and somewhat indirect, for democracy to function (Dahlgren, 2009:9). The civic cultures framework is useful in order to study the factors that can form and shape civic agency and due to this have an important impact on both the citizen's engagement as well as participation in democracy and democratic life (Dahlgren, 2009:192). Miegel and Olsson (2013:16,17) argues that within this framework, Dahlgren, stresses the importance of the media as "an opportunity structure for learning citizenship", through the "pedagogical role played by both traditional mass media and new, social and interactive media". This framework of civic cultures work offline, as well as online, since even online, there are clear

implications of the civic cultures dimensions and plenty of easily accessible spaces in the form of platforms for communication, that can facilitate political participation (Dahlgren, 2009:197,198).

### **2.3 Documentary studies and power**

Documentary films have during recent years been discussed in relation to their possibility to convey messages, and they are of significant importance especially for the animal activist movements in rising awareness in regards to the issues. This section of the literature review will bring upon problematic dilemmas related to the documentary genre in large and the potential impact they might have in political questions. It is of importance to address these dilemmas before moving into the analysis in order to get a fuller understanding of the documentary films authorial role. These dilemmas presented in this section will be developed further in the analysis part of this thesis in relation to the empirical materials.

#### **The documentary genre - power, truths and the balance between fact and fiction**

In the field of documentary studies, the notion of the genre plays a powerful and highly important part in how documentary films are structured, produced, interpreted etc. (Cottle, Hansen, Negrine & Newbold, 1998:163). The term documentary is a label which is often loosely used, but according to Corner (1996:2) all productions within the documentary genre possess the common denominator in that they "reflect and report on 'the real' through the use of the recorded images and sounds of actuality". The pretense of reflecting on 'the real' is what constitutes the documentary genres and the documentary's forms fundamental claim of the truth which is a highly problematic claim. This since documentary films relies on an unavoidable involvement with the living scene, but at the same time, also at an visual and aural presentation of it, and it is in that manner, documentary work always, to at least some degree, are associated with the quandary's of fact and fiction (Corner, 1996:4). This stems from the notion that "documentaries address *the* world in which we live rather than *a* world imagined by the filmmaker" (Nichols, 2001:xi). Although all documentary's make claims of 'the truth', Corner (1996:15) argues that "documentaries vary radically in the way in which they organize their truth claims as well as in the strength and nature of these claims" (Corner, 1996:3), but the claims of 'the truth' are there, since documentaries social purpose are not only journalistic nor propagandistic.

#### **One documentary, different stories**

Within the field of documentary studies, it is commonly argued that a documentary, due to its mashed up form containing elements of both fact and fiction, and with the complexity that it brings

to the table, always contains several different stories. Nichols (2001:61) states that "For every documentary there are at least three stories that intertwine: the filmmaker's, the film's, and the audience's", meaning that each one of these stories, in different ways and to different extents, are a part of our overall view of a documentary. Documentary films are authorial, since they are, as Corner (1996:14) states, "creativity and transformation based on vision". This due to the fact that the raw-materials presented in documentaries are collected from 'the real world' but are processed and presented with a certain agenda in mind (ibid). Nichols (2001:xiii) demonstrates this powerful impression of authenticity in documentaries by arguing that "when we believe that what we see bears witness to the way the world is, it can form the basis for our orientation to or action within the world". The standard features of documentary films do exactly that, they alludes on "our belief in a bond between what we see and the way the world is, or how we might act within it" (Nichols, 2001:xiv), and by doing that, documentaries "set out to persuade us to adopt a given perspective or point of view about the world" (ibid), which brings upon the main complexity in that "we take not only pleasure from documentary but direction as well" (Nichols, 2001:2).

Although, to most people, both still and moving images that are recorded or taken under certain conditions, acts as evidence that a phenomenon or situation looked or occurred in the way presented (Plantinga in Winston, 2013:40). This brings trust in images upon a two-pronged dilemma; on the one side, people have a native trust to the camera since the photographer cannot do anything else than to portrait what already exists in the world, but on the other hand, the audience are becoming slightly more critical towards technologically produced images as a construction and towards the medium itself. This since they are made by a filmmaker with a culture, an ideology and a concise point of view, which is highly subjective. Taken together, these factors cause images to convey into a certain kind of knowledge and in a documentary they are presented in a way to support that knowledge in a particular way (Rosenthal & Corner, 2005:210 & Hill in Winston, 2013:83). But on the other hand, an image can be objective in the sense that it can "escape the subjectivity of the photographer", in despite of all the "subjective and creative deceptions that go into taking the photograph, or getting the shot" (Plantinga in Winston, 2013:42). So in the end, as argued by Hill (in Winston, 2013:83) "documentary's truth claim rests not on the image alone but also on its reception".

### **Documentary films as mobilizers of impact and engagement**

"Documentaries are no longer conventionally perceived as a passive experience intended solely for informal learning or entertainment. Instead, with ever increasing frequency,

these films are considered part of a larger effort to spark debate, mold public opinion, shape policy, and build activist networks” (Nisbet & Aufderheide, 2009:450).

As outlined in this above standing quotation provided by Nisbet and Aufderheide (2009), as well as in this documentary part of this literature review in large, documentary films potential impact, both social and political, are central topics for discussion within the field (Whiteman, 2004:52). This is due to the fact that the goal of documentary films in general is to impact the audience to act in accordance with the message of the documentary. Documentary films are usually designed around an argument and seeks to inform and/or perhaps provoke publics to a problem, ”potentially by reframing a problem so that it connects to a wider set of values or so that it can be addressed differently” (Nisbet & Aufderheide, 2009:454). According to Nisbet and Aufderheide a central dimension to this is that of ”documentary’s interference with civil society and democracy questions” (ibid), and they continues this reasoning by stating that:

”These films are often deliberately designed to speak across existing lines of political difference and to go ‘beyond the choir’. They are open-ended in their expectations while still vested in shaping public conversation and action. They provide tools that make it easier for people to become active citizens, to engage with people who may not already agree with them, and to define with others what collective actions they want to take”.

Although documentary films are designed to shape public conversation and spark actions, a documentary film is not very effective in engage citizens in political questions on its own, however, a common view at the moment is that by linking documentaries to larger campaigns, they can, very well, be a part of changing the world (Fraser in Winston, 2013:xiv). Here, Fraser (ibid) expresses a modest hope in relation to the view that documentaries could have that highly optimistic ’changing the world’ -effect, and states that on its own, documentary films are not ”specially good at social mobilization”, but as a part in a larger puzzle it fills an important function. Here, Whiteman (2004:53) stretches the highly operative role of the media coverage in engaging publics with documentaries and argues that the total impact of a documentary is a combination of media attention and direct viewership. Lenart and McGraw (1989:710) argue that “group discussion about a media presentation is a theoretically meaningful independent determinant of political attitude change”.

In order to receive an understanding for activist documentary impact, it is important to place them within the context of contemporary activist- and social movements. Here, according to Whiteman

(2004:67), activist groups plays two important roles, "initially as participants in the production process and then more importantly as catalysts in the distribution process, when documentary films become tools available to activist groups as they seek political impact". For activist groups and activist documentaries, it is therefore of high importance to direct and assess impact on policy outcome, in order to receive societal change (Whiteman, 2004:57). But in order to achieve policy changes, activist groups and their documentaries needs to achieve political impact. Whiteman (2004:66) suggest three different sets of factors which "affect a documentary's level of political impact", where the first has to do with the documentary producer and the production organization, the second has to do with the activist that present a documentary and once the documentary is produced, how "activist groups and individuals can use a documentary to create a public space within which citizens and decision makers can encounter, discuss, and decide to act on the issues raised" (ibid), and the third set of factors are to do with distribution strategies, where "the context provided for the presentation and the extent to which the audience is presented with options for action" are of importance (ibid).

### **Looking closer at documentary films - the category of aesthetics**

As discussed above, documentary films are authorial in their way of presenting arguments to its audiences, both through the spoken word but also, and perhaps even more importantly, through their aesthetic composition. Therefore, it is significant to consider a documentary's aesthetic features when looking at their overall political impact. Due to this, Corner (2003) have developed a framework for studying the aesthetics of a documentary film, which within this thesis will be used in studying the animal activist movement and their use of documentary films, as a way for them to convey their message to the public.

The category of aesthetics is a central feature to documentary films, which in short aims at the organization of the creative work (made by the filmmaker), the experiences that they produce in collaboration with the audience, and the different ways through which the aesthetics can be used in investigation (Corner, 2003:92). It is commonly argued that when it comes to the very idea of the aesthetics of a documentary, there exists a gap between the producers and the audience. Corner argues that the producers often emphasize "framing concern for artifactual qualities - for how imaginative, well-crafted or 'beautiful' the documentary work itself is", whereas the audiences "are likely to find these concerns a secondary matter at best, possibly ones of which they are only conscious when something is going wrong" (Corner, 2003:93,94). This highlights the question of documentary values, which most commonly are argued to derive from the knowledge produced by

the documentary, regardless of its truth claim, and in despite of its mode. So in order for a documentary to acquire value with at least some independence from its content is through aesthetic features and as Corner (2003:95) argues, "by marking its own aesthetic status and preferably by doing this in a way that is registered in routine viewing". As examined earlier on in this literature review, subjectivity is a highly important component in the study of documentary films, and the category of the aesthetic work is no exception. Therefore, Corner (in Rosenthal & Corner, 2005:52) suggests a typology - a framework - where the aesthetics of documentary work can be regarded under three headlines; pictorial, aural and narratological.

### **The notion of power**

Power is a central concept to this thesis, and in examining power, this thesis will draw from a framework provided by Corner (2011), called 'The notion of power'. Within this thesis, Corner's (2011) framework will provide an underlying, but overall conceptual theory in binding together the three different fields of Critical animal studies, Civic engagement and Critical media studies, and documentary studies used in this thesis. Even though this framework mainly is developed in relation to the media, it can be used to examine other societal power structures as well, for example power of documentary films.

Corner (2011:1-2) argues that in order to examine the power of the media, one needs to considered the concepts of power, form and subjectivity, where all three categories are interconnected and might to some degree overlap in a framing of both theoretical and analytical concerns. Form is a category which questions the communicative organization of media artifacts and performances (Corner, 2011:2). Subjectivity is a term which presents the importance and complexity of individual identities and the self in attempts to engage with how the media operates in the contemporary society (ibid). Matters of power are essentially turning on issues of both form and subjectivity; exploring form intimately coheres with subjectivity and power; and subjectivity connects with formal factors and power relations (Corner, 2011:3). Applied to this thesis, this means that the concept of power will be considered in relations to animal activism and the documentary films. The concept of form will underpin the study of the documentary films, either provided or used by activist networks, as well as the power of documentary films in public knowledge projection, activism and democracy. The concept of subjectivity will be used in order to trace and understand emotions involved in animal activism and the documentary films.



### **3. Methodology**

This chapter presents the research process of this study, including reflections on qualitative research. Here, I will outline my reasoning around the choices made for the conduct of this interdisciplinary study. This chapter will contain a discussion on social constructionism as an ontological perspective, the case study of animal activism, the multi methodological approach containing semi-structured interviews, genre studies of documentary films and internet studies used in order to collect the empirical materials, as well as the processing of the materials for the analysis and a discussion on strengths and weaknesses in qualitative research.

#### **3.1 Qualitative methodology and philosophy of science**

As the purpose of this thesis aims at studying the process of how animal activists, communicate and make use of different communication medias, such as the internet and documentary films, in order to stimulate and evoke civic engagement and passionate participation among the general public, a qualitative methodology is suitable. This since a qualitative methodology has the tendency to think of social life in terms of processes (Bryman, 2008:365). Therefore, I will adopt a fairly common ontological perspective within the qualitative tradition, the social constructionist approach with a base in symbolic interactionism. This since it allows me to view the social reality as a construct, where social phenomena such as activist movements, truths, civic engagement, citizen participation etc as context bounded social constructs, that constantly are negotiated and re-negotiated on an every-day basis through interactions among people (Bryman, 2008:34,341 and Silverman, 2013:107). The epistemological assumption made within this study is interpretive, which allows me to endeavor an understanding of the social reality on the basis of how the participants within the specific context of the animal movement, interpreted the reality (Bryman, 2008:341). Further, this study has been conducted in an inductive manner, meaning that I started out with collecting the empirical materials for the study and thereafter searched for different theories in order to explain the empirical materials obtained, which according to Bryman (2008:28 & 2012:19) is a common way of doing qualitative research where "theory is an outcome of research".

#### **3.2 The case study**

This study is build upon a case study design, meaning that it revolves around a detailed examination of one single case (Bryman, 2008:73) and "the goal is to understand the selected case or cases in depth" (Bryman, 2012:12). The case chosen for this study can on a broad level be described as the animal activist movements that works on changing the public outlook on the captivity industry and the media campaigns, including documentary films and internet communication on websites and social forums, that revolves around it. According to Flyvbjerg (2006:390 in Seale et al.), a case

study can be defined as a "detailed examination of one single case", and due to this, it is commonly argued that the information derived from it cannot be generalized on a broader scale, but Flyvbjerg argues that this is a myth and that a case study can "provide reliable information about the broader class" (ibid). This since case study research is about specific data and information, but that the theories derived from it can be generalizable to other cases as well (Silverman, 2013:145). Within this study, I adopted an information-oriented sampling approach, since my aim is to maximizing the usefulness of a smaller, clearly defined single case, that I selected on the premises of the richness of information it contained (Flyvbjerg in Seale et al, 2006:396). I chose to work with a case that is a particular part of a society, the animal activist movement, and the case I'm working with can be categorized as an "exemplary case", using Bryman's (2008:73) terminology, meaning that I aim at both capturing and describing how people operate in accordance with conditions in a everyday situation (Yin, 2003 referenced in Bryman, 2008:77). For example how the activists operate in accordance with existing societal norms in regard to keeping cetaceans in captivity and further operating with the objective to change those norms.

### **Sample and demarcations of the empirical materials**

For my selected case study, I wanted to study animal activist documentary films and campaigns connected to these documentary films with the overall message that cetaceans do not belong in captivity. I already had some insight and knowledge about what existed on the topic due to an extensive personal interest in these issues. Therefore, I started my sampling with choosing about seven documentaries of different production scales and impact to get a proper picture of the field of animal documentaries, from small grass-root productions to multimillion dollar productions. Since I was interested in conducting interviews with some filmmakers behind the documentaries, I begun by sending emails introducing myself and my research, and I got two positive responses, one from a filmmaker named Tim Gorski who produced the documentary *Lolita: slave to entertainment* (2003), and another response from Mikael Lemon who produced the documentary *The Great loss* (2013). They were both interested in participating in my research so their documentaries became a part of the selection. *Lolita: slave to entertainment* (2003) is a medium size production about an orca named Lolita who lives in captivity at the Miami Seaquarium and her life story. *The Great loss* (2013) is a small production which seeks to examine what's happening to the dolphins in the wild, but at the same time it looks into dolphin-entertainment at a Swedish zoo. After scheduling interviews with Gorski and Lemon, I unfortunately did not get any more responses from the other filmmakers I contacted, so I decided that in addition to these two documentaries, I wanted to look at two more which have had a significant impact on the animal activist movement trying to free

cetaceans from captivity and change the norms connected to it. These are *The Cove* (2009) which exposes the annual slaughter of dolphins in the Japanese town Taiji and the captivity dimension relation to this slaughter, and the documentary *Blackfish* (2013) which is about an orca named Tilikum who lives in captivity as a performance animal, who, due to a potential psychos as a product of the stress that this costs him, is responsible for the deaths of three of his trainers.

So, my sample for this case study fell onto the documentaries *Lolita: slave to entertainment* (2003), *The Great loss* (2013), *The Cove* (2009) and *Blackfish* (2013), where each one of these documentaries can be regarded as an animal activist campaign in itself, but I chose to also include some external campaigns and activism related to these productions as well. The reason that I chose to make this demarcation was since I wanted to get diversity within the sample of the documentary films, but at the same time, I wanted access to interview materials with some of the filmmakers behind them. The reason that I choose to delimit the sample to the activism revolving around cetaceans in captivity, was that I wanted the empirical materials to be very specific for the context of the case study selected. In other words, my sample in large was based on accessibility to the case, but to some extent, it was also goal orientated since I delimited the sample by the aims and objectives of this study, so that the chosen sample provide me with enough information for answering my research questions (Bryman, 2008:351).

### **3.3 Collecting the empirical materials**

Due to the interdisciplinary design of this study, I chose to work with a multi-method approach, which is a research design where two or more research methods are used rigorously in one study (Esteves & Pastor, 2004:70). This approach enables me to combine different methods to examine the diverse academic fields within this study. Adopting a multi-method design will help improve the research process and the findings significant, than if I just worked with a single method approach (Esteves & Pastor, 2004:69). Morse (2003:196 cited in Esteves & Pastor, 2004:69) argues that “multiple methods are used in a research program when a series of projects are interrelated within a broad topic and designed to solve an overall research problem”. This study is based upon different ”projects”, using Morse’s (2003) own terminology; the activist documentaries and the internet based campaigns in favour for the captive cetaceans, which are interconnected in the broader topic of how the activists are working in order to achieve citizen engagement and participation in the political manner. The methods used within this study are qualitative semi-structured interviews, documentary genre analysis with a focus on aesthetics and website analysis and internet analysis.

### **3.3.1 Qualitative interviews**

The interview method I adopted in this study was qualitative, and according to Bryman (2008:413), in a qualitative interview, the interest is focused on the positions and views of the interviewee and the researcher seeks detailed and extensive answers. The form of the qualitative interview approach I adopted was a semi-structured interview, which is a helpful approach when the researcher aims at "understanding events, patterns and forms of behaviour" (Bryman, 2012:471). I chose to structure the interviews around the themes animal activism, documentary films, media, and then include one or two questions within each topic just to have some 'conversation starters'. This since my goal was to keep the interviews as open as possible because I wanted the interviewee to be able to talk about what was important to them and not delimit the conversation to "already" prepared questions. The semi-structured interview approach is highly flexible and follows the direction that the interviewee wants to take, and it enables the researcher to ask follow-up questions, which were appealing features to me and my purpose of the research (ibid). My goal with the interviews was to induce the perception of my interviewees, although there is a general methodological issue here whether interviewees "are to be treated as giving direct access to experiences or as actively constructed 'narratives' involving activities which themselves demand analysis" (Silverman, 2013:47). The position I adopt in relation to this issue within this study is that the responses from the interviewees, although I see them as constructions tied to the local interaction, does not need further analysis in itself in order to fulfil its purpose within this study (Rapley, in Seale, 2006:16).

#### **Conducting interviews via Skype**

I knew that due to the geographical distance between myself and my interviewees (one located in Taipei, Taiwan and one in another part of Sweden), that a traditional face-to-face interview would not be a realistic option for these interviews. Therefore, both interviewees were offered to choose between a phone- or Skype interview, as well as asked if they had any other suggestion and both preferred Skype interviews. Skype is a free download software which is internationally recognized, that provides a variety of options in communicating, from audio and video calling both online and through mobile phone or written messaging (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014:606).

When interviewing, I stated by repeating the aim of my study, the purpose of the particular interview and the framework of the interview and asked if that sounded good to the interviewee so that we both had an agreement. Further, I choose to only use the function of audio in order to improve the quality of the interviews, since experience in using Skype tells me that the pictorial function sometimes can be poor, and I did not want that to disturb the conversation (Hanna,

2012:241 & Deakin & Wakefield, 2014:611). Therefore, the interviews conducted were basically online phone interviews. Holt (2010, referenced in Hanna, 2012:240) argues that even though a phone interview easily can lose some shades provided by face-to-face interaction, it enables the researcher to "stay at the level of text" and not read in any imposing contextual information onto the collected data. In using Skype, it was very easy for me to get high quality recordings of the interviews that were easy to transcribe, just by downloading a free open source audio editing program with a recording function (Hanna, 2012:241). Following the interviews, I transcribed the audial recordings and sent them to the interviewees so they got the opportunity (if they wanted to) to look through the transcribed interviews and add to it, make corrections etc so they would feel more secure in the context of being interviewed. Silverman (2013:208) argues that this process is very significant when conducting ethical interviews. In the emails I also asked if it was okay that I mentioned them by name or if they would prefer to be anonymous, which according to Silverman (2013:161) is of great importance when conducting ethical research.

### **3.3.2 Studying the documentary genre - a focus on aesthetics**

Within this case study used in this thesis, documentary films are significant components, and an important feature to the methodological assumptions connected to documentary studies is the notion of genre. Genre is, according to Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold (1998:163) "a powerful concept in moving image production" since it "determines how media organizations are constructed" and due to the fact that "it organizes and marshals audience expectation". Mittell (2004:1) states that "genres are cultural products, constituted by media practices and subject to ongoing change and redefinition", indicating that the term genre closely connects to the context in which it occurred and poses a degree of fluidity in its practices. Mittell (2004:96) continues this reasoning by stating that "for genre analysis, the power of context is crucial, as genre categories work to link assumptions which viewers undoubtedly bring to bear in their interpretive practices". The genre in this study is the one of the animal documentary films, which organizes their truth claims in a specific way. The purpose of studying genre in this thesis is to both extract and understand meaning and ideology which is inherent in the moving image content (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold, 1998:187). Studying genre can be done in several different ways, but in this thesis, I will adopt an aesthetic approach, meaning that the researcher is looking at features "to understand their internal operations and the 'proper' taxonomy of a genre" (Mittell, 2004:3). Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold (1998:164) argues that "genre studies has developed over the last thirty years as a central tool of moving image analysis", and the aesthetic approach in the notion

of genre, should include paying attention to the look or style of a genre, including the creativity and artistic values that is inherent in them (ibid,167). In this study, I have examined the authorial role of the documentary films chosen and how they organize their truth claims within their aesthetic features. This, in order to further relate this to the purpose of this study in how the activists, including the filmmakers, operate in order to evoke civic engagement.

In order to analyze the aesthetics of the documentaries within the case study, I will use a framework provided by Corner (2003:92), which aims at categorizing a documentary film's creative work, to organize the experience they produce, or in other words, the experience "that audiences derive from them". Even if most documentary filmmakers, due to the assumptions and expectations of truthfulness and 'objectivity' within the genre, probably would not acknowledge their documentaries aesthetic experiences, it is still important to address the role of the creative work, since "audiences seem completely unaware of" it (Corner, 2003:93). Within non-fiction genres, such as the genre of documentary films, the strength of the content and the onscreen activity is seen "to be enough", but "programmes can be judged to have aesthetic organization and aesthetic effects without their producers acknowledging this" (ibid). The aesthetic features of a documentary film should advantageously, according to Corner (2003:92), be analysed under the broad categories of pictorial-, aural- and narrative aesthetics. In conducting the documentary analysis, I looked through the documentary films several times and took notes, all from quotes to what the picture in a specific scene looked like. Afterwards, I began by categorizing my findings due to the three categories within the framework and I started noticing patterns between the documentary films and their organisation of their aesthetics. This became my strategy in narrowing down the empirical data and these findings were what I built the analysis around.

### **3.3.3 Studying the internet**

The internet has become a significant component in contemporary society, and it plays a large role in how we live our everyday lives and how we perceive everyday experiences (Hine, 2013:1). Due to this, Hine (2013:3,14) argues that researchers can carry out meaningful and mainstream qualitative research on the internet and expose aspects of social life that before the Internet, was nearly impossible to access. But as a researcher, one can view the internet in several diverse ways and qualitative internet research does not have to be about the internet in itself (Hine, 2013:22). For example, the internet can be considered as a tool for exchanging information and connecting with others, as a medium or as a technology. Within this study, I will treat the internet as containing of several social spaces which are constituted through what Markham (in Seale, 2006:328,330) calls

”computer-mediated interactions”. This means that I will consider the Internet as a tool, where the internet enables information to flow from one space to another (Markham, 2006 in Seale, 2006:330,331). For this case study that means to consider the internet as a space in which information can be distributed, protests, both online and offline, can be organized and where people can develop their civic identities. In other words, I aim at studying social interactions afforded by the internet as a tool that is no different from any other physical space where people interact with each other (Hine, 2013:11 and Markham, 2006 in Seal, 2006:331,333). For this study, I will incorporate information from the home pages of three different marine mammal parks; SeaWorld, Miami Seaquarium and Kolmården zoo. This sample is assumed from the documentary films, where these particular organisations are targets for critique. I want to underline that these organizations are not chosen for the analysis since they are ’particular bad’ corporations or such, but more for practical reasons. The online campaigns which I’m looking at figures on different websites as well as on pages on social networking sites such as Facebook, where most of the online information on the interactions will be retrieved.

According to Bryman (2012:679), ”conducting research by using the internet as a method of data collection raises specific ethical issues”, especially regarded to privacy. Bryman (ibid) argues that ”the more the venue is acknowledged to be public, the less obligation there is on the researcher to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of individuals using the venue, or to seek their informed consent”. Even though the sampled websites for this thesis are public and people are well aware of this, I’ve chosen to only name the organizations and networks behind the websites and pages on social network sites, and not name or mention individuals. This means, that when I use information from interactions that individuals have posted on these pages, I make sure that the individuals are kept anonymous, since mention names would not fill any function to my study.

### **3.4 Processing of empirical materials and analysis**

When I had all of the empirical materials from the interviews, the documentary films and the internet websites, I started to read through it in order to structure it by looking for common denominators, which became animal activism, documentary films and media. Thereafter, I structured all empirical materials underneath these broad categories and based on these, the research questions were finally formulated. Overall, this is a process that according to Seale (2006:26) is very commonly used when a researcher starts working on an analysis in qualitative studies. Seale (ibid) argues that working with an analysis is not strictly limited to the time the researcher actually

works on the analysis, but rather, it is an angling process, that routinely starts when the researcher conducts the first interview etc. This was something that I experienced during this process, so whenever I came across something significant, I wrote it down. In that way, deciding on the structure and themes of the analysis became somewhat easier and it kept me up to date with the empirical materials during the writing process. In the process of analyzing, especially within the category/research question about animal activism and the industry, I used some comparative elements to detect the complex relationship between the different sets of norms and perceptions that exists between the industry, the larger public and the animal activist movement, which according to Seale (2006) is a fruitful feature in an analysis (ibid). When writing up the analysis I chose to present the empirical materials, both from the interviews, the documentaries and the websites, as summaries and in the formation of quotes, which I sometimes cut in, in order to shorten them to get the point across in a faster way and other times to give them a better written flow.

### **3.5 Opportunities and limitations in qualitative research**

Conducting qualitative research brings upon opportunities and limitations on the research process. The main strengths in conducting qualitative research is its flexibility and emphasis on processes, which enables the researcher to "inject a sense of process into our understanding of social life" (Bryman, 2012:402). Qualitative research also enables the researcher to view the world through the eyes of the people studied, which indicates that they have their own reflections on the world, as well as on an emphasis to the context in which the people studied acts (Bryman, 2012:399-403). According to Bryman (2012:405,406), the most common critiques directed towards qualitative research is that it cannot fully be separated from subjectivity, that it is difficult to replicate as well as generalize a qualitative study, and that it might lack transparency. Bryman (ibid) argues that it is "almost impossible to conduct a true replication" of a qualitative study since the interpretation of qualitative data "will be profoundly influenced by the subjective leanings of a researcher" and it is very difficult establish "what the researcher actually did and how he or she arrived at the study's conclusions". In the same way, a common misunderstanding of qualitative research is that it cannot be generalized since it never can be representational for entire populations, but "instead, the findings of qualitative research are to generalize to theory rather than to populations" (ibid). In order to minimize the impacts of these dilemmas, I have, throughout this chapter, presented the research process in a constitutive way, as well as motivated the choices made, which will give the study a higher degree of transparency and make it easier to replicate (Bryman, 2012:405,406).



## **4. Analysis**

In this following chapter, the empirical materials consisting of findings from the website- and internet analysis, the documentary analysis and the interviews, will be analyzed with support from the theories and prior research from the Literature review. This chapter will be divided into three different parts, where each will cover one of the research questions.

### **4.1 Part 1: Reaching out through the public sphere media**

#### **Section overview**

This part of the analysis will look closer into the role played by the public sphere media in conveying messages and shaping the public view of the cetaceans moral standing in the western society, as well as the view on the zoo and marine mammal park industry. To understand the conflict behind the controversy of animal captivity and the media representations, this section will commence with an examination of the different animal views that are expressed in the messages of the public sphere media and conveyed to the public. The following part thereafter, will analyze the messages mediated through the websites of three actors within the marine mammal park industry; Miami Seaquarium, Kolmården zoo and SeaWorld. This will then interweave with the counter message from the animal activist movement and then the movement's usage of the public sphere media and animal mediations will be examined and exemplified through a selection of campaigns.

#### **The difference in fundamental beliefs behind the dispute**

Ever since ancient times, the general view and norm in western societies in regard to human-animal relations and animal treatment tends towards a focus on animal welfare, a view that to a large extent can be recognized in the contemporary message of the marine mammal park industry. Phillips et al. (2010:1-2) and Shani and Pizam (2008:680) argues that animal welfare is the belief that humans are superior to animals and therefore entitled to use them in any way desired, if it will be beneficial for the humans. This means that keeping cetaceans in captivity at zoos and marine mammal parks, and exploiting them for entertainment, is acceptable, as long as the animals are well taken care of, both mentally and physically, which all marine mammal parks states that their animals are (ibid). This in itself poses a dilemma, due to the lack of conventional international laws and independent external institutions which investigates that standards are followed so that cetaceans in captivity are well taken care of, both physical and psychological. This depends on the self regulatory character of the industry in general with regulatory organisations consisting of representatives that for one reason or another are loyal to the parks and the messages they convey about keeping cetaceans in captivity (Animal legal and historical center, 2014). Due to this, the intentions and justifications

underpinning the message of education and conservation that the marine mammal park industry communicates through the public sphere media, are highly questionable, according to the animal activist movement. This since these organisations are profiting from exposing animals through captivity, which is one of the most usual spins against the industry that the animal activist movement adopt in their communication directed towards the public.

Unlike the industry, the animal activists movement, which operates in order to end the exploitation of animals, in this case cetaceans, in captivity, draws from the concept of animals rights, which according to The American Heritage Dictionary (2005 in Phillips et al, 2010:91) is "the right to humane treatment claimed on behalf of animals, especially the right not to be exploited for human purposes". This indicates that the animal activist movement draws from the belief that all use of animals for human purpose should be considered as morally wrong and unethical. But here, it is significant to acknowledge that the animal rights perspective consists of different layers in regard to the issue of exploiting animals since the movement is highly diversified. One can, for example adopt an animal rights perspective and operate against the utilization of animals in the entertainment industry, but at the same time adopt an animal welfare view in other issues, for example the pharmaceutical industry. Overall, this implies that the animal activist movement studied in this thesis are advocates of an alternative animal view, that according to Regan (in Armstrong & Botzler 2008:615) "calls for a deeper, more fundamental change in the way we think about membership in the moral community", meaning that the animal activist movement wants to change the societal norms regarding animal treatment and the human outlook on it. Which Regan (ibid) argues should be done by an inclusion of animals into our moral and legal community.

### **Expressing messages through the public sphere media**

In order to spread their respective views on whether facilitating cetaceans in captivity is a good idea or not, both parties makes strong use of different public sphere medias to convey their messages to the public, to evoke engagement and participation through the debate. The message that has been most visible in the mass media up until a few years ago, in regard to keeping cetaceans in captivity have been largely dominated by the marine mammal park industry. Mainly with their commercials, but also to a great extent their presence in different news medias with articles and press releases based on storylines of how they have saved injured wild animals and rehabilitated them back to the wild or about cute new animal babies that has been borne in the parks (see for example Havlerstadt, 2014 and SeaWorld Parks and Entertainments, media room, n.d.). This is a part of the issue to why the view on the animals looks the way it do today and that this view has become the norm.

The most important rational communicated in the public sphere media by the marine mammal park and zoo industry's is by far the message of education and conservation. According to Jamieson (1985 referenced in Maple & Perdue, 2013:170), it is also only through the industry's potential or claimed contribution to public education that the institutions of both zoos and marine mammal parks can be justified. As a result of being exposed to these messages year after year, the larger public in western societies does not normally reflect upon, nor question, what it actually means to keep animals, such as cetaceans in captivity. But according to Marino, Bradshaw & Malamud, (2009:25), when people are faced with this dilemma, they usually conclude that captivity in itself is an necessary evil, that zoos and marine mammal parks are required as it is presumed that people need to be able to look at wild animals in order to get an understanding of them and help them in the wild. By this reasoning, people justify the captivity as well as reproduce the norms regarding assumed animal welfare, and let the captive animals pay the price (ibid). However, it is questionable that most people accept the rationale that humans would learn anything about marine mammals and wildlife conservation, by looking at animals that are taken out of their natural habitat and put into chlorinated tanks in these facilities. But among the animal activists, there is a lack of faith that there are any education in favor for animal welfare and conservation going on at these facilities due to the fact that the industry removes animals from the wild and places them in captivity to teach people to have respect for wildlife. This message is emphasized in the animal activist movements communication towards the public, both through mass- and alternative media. Both animal activist filmmakers Tim Gorski and Mikael Lemon has a hard time picturing this education for conservation claimed by the industry, whereas Lemon questions what should be learned and Gorski believes that instead of good education, these facilities conveys a large degree of bad education:

"I really think that captivity sends bad messages as far as education goes, especially in marine parks" (Gorski to author, 2014).

"I really do not know about their education, what it is that you should teach people with a dolphin in captivity as they make stupid" (Lemon to author, 2014).

### **Analysis of industry websites**

When looking closer at the industry corporations websites (Miami Seaquarium, 2015; Kolmården zoo, 2015 & SeaWorld, 2015), which in large functions as the industry's storefronts in their communication towards the public, they all share a few common features in how they organize their website experience, including what information that is put forward as most significant etc. All of

these websites are structured around the act of consumption and they all have a clear focus on promoting destinations for entertainment, selling 'fun' experiences and making money, rather than actually educating visitors about the animals that they have in their zoological collection. Perhaps the experience they are selling is educational and will bring the visitor new knowledge about wildlife conservation, but that is not what presumes as the main rationale of these websites. This educational argument also loses credibility when the visitor is exposed to several pictures of roller coasters, cetaceans performing shows etc on these sites. Instead of communicating the message of wildlife education and conservation as the most important rationales, these facilities appear to be pure amusement parks. Although, if the visitor looks closer into the net of pages on these sites, information about educational programs and wildlife conservation can be found in all cases, and it becomes clear that all of these corporations are doing good things for animals in the wild by caring for those that are ill, educating students at schools about marine life and so on. But this is not what presumes as these corporations main rational from the look at the websites.

Throughout these industry websites, there are in particular three different views that the industry corporations are communicating in regard to marine mammals; that marine mammal shows and 'swim with'-programs are educational and necessary for encouraging wildlife conservation; that there is an imagined difference in the view of treatment that beings are entitled to in regard to their species, such as between dolphins and tigers; and that the bad act of keeping animals in captivity always can be justified with the argument that it brings revenue that makes it possible to do good to other wild animals of that species. The last one is probably as indicated earlier the most problematic one, since the industry is masking and justifying the captivity part of their business by referring to all the good things they can do 'out there' as a result. All of these dilemmas will be regarded through following website analysis's.

### **The Miami Seaquarium's website**

At this website a large part of the message revolves around the interaction programs and the facility offers a few, but the one that is of more significance than the others for this thesis, is the dolphin interaction programs. On this webpage, a short film showing parts of this interaction program can be found, which poses several ethical issues. In this clip, a dolphin is filmed while swimming around in a small tank, surrounding of people standing in the water, waiting to pet it, hug it and kiss it. And when each participant have done all those things, the clip shows when the participants are riding with the dolphin to the other side of the tank, by climbing on to its dorsal fin, which according to the webpage will show the participant "the true power of these amazing creatures"

(Miami Seaquarium, Dolphin Odyssey, n.d.). The look of this activity is somewhat strange even from an animal welfare perspective since the animal is portrayed, not as an "amazing creature", but rather as a toy that all the participants are waiting to play with. Here all the participants are standing at one side of the tank, and one by one, they are being 'picked up' by the dolphin and 'driven' to the other side of the small tank. And after each 'transportation', the dolphin gets fed one fish and repeat the process (ibid). The human-animal relationship that is portrayed through this video is highly undynamic, and the dolphin is mediated as well as transformed into a commodity, and according to Molloy (2011:1), it is through this process that "the norms of human-animal relations established and sustained". By adding on the concept of education and conservation, which should be the main rationale of this facility, to this mediated image of the animal, it becomes difficult to find the educational aspect that will lead to an interest in wildlife conservation by kissing, riding with and just seeing a destroyed animal performing learned behaviors in "human-created compounds of cement" (Marino, Bradshaw and Malamud, 2009:27).

But then, the concept on education is debatable, which the visitor will see at certain points of this website. There is a paradox here in regard to how the industry treats their animals and what aspects they are choosing to educate the visitors about, both on the website and at the physical scene. On one page on this website dedicated to facts about orcas, for example, the Miami Seaquarium state that "both male and female killer whales will remain with their mother for the remainder of their lives" (Miami Seaquarium, Killer Whale, n.d). This is very paradoxical since the orca named Lolita that they have had in an illegally small tank in captivity for over forty years, were kidnapped from her mother and family in the wild. And even after decades of pressure from animal activist movements, the corporation won't even consider retire and rehabilitate her so she can go back home to her family. Gorski (2014), who made the documentary film about Lolita, argues that due to issues like this, the education of the Miami Seaquarium and the industry is highly questionable:

"I really dare you to find any real education there, they won't tell you how Lolita was captured, they don't tell you that she was taken away from her mother and that six other whales died in the process when she was captured. They don't tell you that she's been in that tank alone for close to forty years. So there is no real proper education within the park. They claim that they are educating people, but I want them to educate people from another perspective" (Gorski to author, 2014)

The difference in opinion here between the industry and Gorski as well as the animal activist movement, on what the industry should educate the visitors about is palpable and interesting.

Gorski and the animal activist movement in large argues that the education provided by these facilities today are miss-educating the visitors, which is a claim that is also found within the reasoning of Marino, Bradshaw and Malamud (2009:27), which states that when the industry are choosing to bring wild animals into captivity, they are indirectly arguing that the animals natural habitat is irrelevant. "And if the animals' natural context is implicitly presented as unimportant, then zoos are actually contradicting the message they claim to affirm, that environmental conservation is a pressing concern" (ibid).

### **The Kolmården zoo website**

What sets Kolmården zoo apart from most other parks within this industry, is that they have land living animals in their zoological collection, and not just cetaceans and other marine life, which creates the conditions for a very interesting discovery regarding the norms connected to different animal species. As argued by Garner (2005:139), a line can be drawn between the view of land living animals in zoos and cetaceans as well as other marine mammals, that can be found within the zoological collection of zoos and marine mammal parks. Facilities containing cetaceans are according to Garner (ibid) much more ethically problematic than those who don't, since cetaceans always are forced to perform and to do shows.

At the official website for the Kolmården zoo, it is very easy to find this rationale, that they seem to project a different view on their cetaceans than of their other animals. This can be illustrated by a comparison between two descriptions found on their website, illustrating two of their different animal shows. According to their website, during the Tiger Show, the visitor will "learn more about the world's largest feline! Here stories about the tigers on Kolmården are interwoven with useful information about the wild tigers vulnerability" (Kolmården, Tiger, n.d. own translation). The description of the Dolphin Show on the other hand, is of another character. Here, the description states that "the dolphins stands in the center when they and their trainers performs a new show of absolute world class. Expect laughter, shivering, emotionally charged atmosphere and fascinating experiences during the new dolphin show Life!" (Kolmården, Delfinshowen Life, n.d., Own translation). Although, they also states that the show portrays a story about the earth's environment, which is good in substance, it does not change the fact that the dolphins have to perform as circus clowns, whereas the tigers are treated with respect for the wonderful creatures that they are. According to Franklin (1999:59), "Animals have become a human moral responsibility", and it is therefore a human responsibility to not neglect and stop making fun of the cetaceans, and mediate them into props for human entertainment.

## **SeaWorld' webbsite**

Since SeaWorld is the corporation that is critiqued through the animal activist documentary Blackfish, which have received a great deal of media and public attention, SeaWorld appears to be very determined to, throughout their entire website, allude on a transparency of the organisation. They have also created an entire external website to this issue, where they are responding to the documentary Blackfish, and as they state: "Tell the truth about Blackfish" and "tell the truth" about their parks, animal care and how the Blackfish documentary is pure propaganda provided by extremists who's goals is to "deny us all the privilege of experiencing marine mammals up close, in ways that are educational, inspirational and that advance science" (SeaWorld, Join the SeaWorld truth team, n.d.). There are a few really interesting features of this 'Take action' website, and the most interesting feature here is a video clip, containing 23 different short interviews at approximately 30 seconds each, where employees from different parts of the corporation 'steps forward' and tells the truth. There are several clips within this series where the interviewee talks about how important it is to be able to see these "wild" creatures that they have in captivity, which becomes contradictory since the animals they have in their collection are not wild, they are trained. If one wishes to see wild animals, a visit to a human constructed facility with trained animals is not the right place. This video and the interviews within it shows of as well as reproduces the norms of what Marino, Bradshaw & Malamud (2009:27) argues to be the human "sense of entitlement to see any animal when, where and how we want" which "has created a culture of slavery and oppression for animals". One of the interviewees in the clip is Lindy Donahue, who works as a Killer whale and dolphin trainer at SeaWorld San Diego and states that:

"Every day, I get to make these one on one connections with dolphins and children and I have children myself, and to know what it means to this little bright eyed child to meet a dolphin and then say I'm going to go home and start recycling, you know, to watch the parents and watch how they just beaming with excitement that their child gets to have this experience. Have these one on one connections with individual people matters to the big picture of our world" (SeaWorld, Join the SeaWorld truth team, n.d.).

This quotation is highly illustrative for the information in general on this page, that one can justify a bad action, the animal captivity, with a good action, saving the planet. Taken together, this makes a descriptive case for greenwashing where SeaWorld is a corporation responsible for violating nature by capturing animals, justifies their actions by declaring that they are saving a lot of other animals out there (Stærk Ekstrand & Lilholt Nilsson, 2011:167). Animal activist and filmmaker Gorski

reasons around this common marketing strategy that SeaWorld as well as other corporations within the industry are adopting, and states that:

” I’m going to go out of the limb and say that they are probably doing stuff. Do they do as much as they say they are doing? Definitely not. They are going to make themselves look better than they are, always (...) it is a camouflage, it’s greenwash. It’s a ’look over here we are doing good stuff and we just hope that you guys won’t notice all the bad stuff that we are doing’. (...) So basically, what they are doing with their non-profit arm of SeaWorld is ’look at the good we are doing here, we’re putting money into this coral reef or something, don’t look at what we are doing back-stage to the animals at SeaWorld, don’t look at our captivity’. (...) SeaWorld probably puts some money into conservation but they are not really doing it themselves and the amount of conservation that they are doing is probably very small compared to the profit they make” (Gorski to author, 2014).

In this quotation, Gorski illustrates what is commonly argued and communicated by the animal activist movement, that the main rationale of the industry is to earn money and then to mask it behind a two-folded issue of justification.

### ***Looking closer at messages and the public sphere media: the animal activist movement***

In this part overall, the industry’s messages have been set out together with counter points and arguments from the messages of the animal activist movement. Although the view that has been most commonly communicated towards the public and the one originally receiving most attention in the public sphere media has been the industry’s, a distinct change has occurred in the mass media and news coverage regarding the issue of keeping marine mammals in captivity during recent years, and the industry is slowly put into a new light. The animal activist movement are inch by inch, taking over the mass media news agenda with their attempts to free cetaceans through producing a wide range of documentary films and campaigns related to these, aiming at informing people about the ’dark side’ to the captivity industry.

Environmental movements, including the animal activist movement, have during the last few decades, as argued by Cottle (2008: 853), developed ”strategies and tactics created for and communicated through the news media. Protest action is one such strategy that has become ’reflexively conditioned’ to an unprecedented level in its pursuit of media attention”. This meaning



that the movements keep on engaging themselves in activities that is news worthy, such as the act of demonstrations in the physical public streets. The concept of news worthiness and how the animal activist movement are structuring their activities around it, indicates that the mass media, as expressed by Rucht (2004:55) "follow their own logic", as do the social movements. This means that in order for activist movements to be successful, they also need to maintain movement-controlled media, to avoid the mediating effect of news journalists, to solely be responsible independent information distribution, and here, the internet plays an increasingly crucial role (ibid). Due to the appealing features of the internet, it has become the main platform for the animal activist movement to get their message across to the public and to facilitate support and recruit new members. The global reach of the internet could according to McCaughey & Ayers (2003:129) "be said to be of value to social movements and activist groups, to communicate, to generate information, and to distribute information cheaply and effectively, allowing response and feedback", that have helped in facilitating the growth of this well-coordinated digital network of animal activists, fighting to form opinions about captivity and how it is mistreatment of cetaceans.

The animal activist movement is connecting messages from the documentary films to other campaigns, which are flourishing on the internet. Through these campaigns, the animal activist movement are able to communicate an alternative view to the one provided by the industry of the cetaceans, and most of these campaigns mediate the cetaceans as pure, free creatures that are exposed to human tyranny, and it is, according to Molloy (2011:9) through this representation, that the cetaceans gets its high "moral worth". One representative example of such a mediation can be found at the animal activist campaign website 'Save Lolita', which have derived from the documentary film *Lolita: slave to entertainment* (Gorski, 2003, USA), and holds the objective to free Lolita. On this website, a clip illustrating Lolita's life story and mediating her through facts stated in words, can be found:

"she was brutally taken from her mother at four years old', 'she lives in deplorable conditions', 'she lives in isolation', 'she has committed no crime', 'to this day, her family still searches for her', 'and she still cries for them', 'don't let her die alone', 'her name is Lolita', 'please help set her free" (Save Lolita, Her story, n.d.).

It is not up until the last sentences, that the images showing in the background to these words, connects to her species, being an orca whale. This mediation alludes on an affective relation as well as people's ability to feel empathy towards the other, recognized as other, which means that we feel

bad for Lolita, and somewhat responsible (La Capra, 2000 in Probyn in Gregg & Seigworth 2010:86). The clip tells the narrative as if Lolita was a human, which pinpoints as well as mediate the argument that animals should be entitle to personhood, using Garners (2005:44) terminology, because the story is just as bad, regardless of spices origin.

## **4.2 Part 2: The truth claim within animal activist documentary films**

### **Section overview**

To examine the power of the selected documentary films and their ability to impact people and mobilize support for animal rights issues, it is important to analyze the truth claims made by documentary films, both those that are verbally stated, but most importantly how the documentary films makes these claims in a non-verbal way. The following section of text will be divided into two main parts, where the first part will be devoted to an aesthetic analysis of the chosen documentary films and the filmmaker's use of creative work in addressing the issues of captivity and the importance of animal activism. The second part will relate the key findings from the aesthetic analysis to the overall claim of truth made by documentary films in order to examine how these productions work in order to mobilizes people, and address the authorial role of documentary films.

### **Documentary aesthetics**

The analysis of the documentary films aesthetics will follow the structure of a framework provided by Corner (2003:92), which emphasizes the categories of pictorial-, aural- and narrative aesthetics in order to categorize the organisation of documentary films creative work. These categories will be elaborated upon throughout the analysis of the selected documentary films. In large, it is of great importance to accentuate the creative work of documentary films to, as Corner (2003:92) states, understand the "experiences they produce (or to signal a key crux, that audiences derive from them)". This produced experience is closely connected to what Corner (2005 in Rosenthal & Corner, 2005:51) argues to be the core of the aesthetic experience in documentary films, "the interplay of artifactual design and subjectivity". Therefore, examining the aesthetics of these documentary films are of significance for this study since the creative elements, selected on a subjective basis by the filmmakers, are powerful gears in what worldview and directions the viewer, also with her own subjective point of view in mind, takes from the documentary film. The analysis will bring upon some examples of parts that are of significance for the understanding of their overall aesthetic features, meaning that the aesthetics will be generalized since there is no need, nor space, to cover the aesthetic representations of every scene in detail. There might be some minor overlaps since the three categories are interconnected, and therefore, cannot fully be separated.

### **Lolita: Slave to entertainment (2003)**

The aim of this documentary is to expose the moral dispute between the animal activists and the marine mammal park industry of keeping cetaceans in captivity and give the viewer the direction to boycott marine mammal parks by not buying a ticket. This is done at an overall level through the documentary's organization around the issue of lack of institutional responsibility within the marine mammal park industry, which poses a great deal of suffering for the cetaceans, both in the act of capture but also in housing them in captivity. The core of this documentary is to expose that the entire industry revolves around money and that the industry's view is that suffering of individual animals are of less importance than their own revenue (Lolita: slave to entertainment, 2003).

### ***Narration and sound***

The filmmaker addresses these moral issues between activists and the industry by telling the story of an orca named Lolita, and the documentary is dedicated to presenting her life story. In this documentary film, there is a female voice-over who tells the tale, and guides the viewer through it. This is done together with a very rich aural presentation with emotional and mood-setting environmental sounds which helps the narration forward in its presentation. The voice-over is what leads this story forward by verbally addressing issues and possible solutions, which according to Corner (in Rosenthal & Corner, 2005:55) is a common tool to use in order to develop narration within the documentary genre. The use of voice-overs in documentary films are a way through which the filmmaker is trying to impact the viewer and create emotions in relation to the images. In the first few sentences of the documentary, the voice-over sets the tone for the narrative by saying: "Borne free, nature has intended them to be free in exempt from domination, free for now. But are these gentle giants free from the hands of human tyranny?". These sentences set the tone for the narrative that follows, a story of good animals vs. evil, selfish humans operating in the marine mammal park industry. The voice-over's rhetorical tone varies to a large extent with the pictorial presentation. When the frame is filled with a 'happy' picture, in other words, wild orcas or people dedicated to rescue captive orcas, the tone of the voice-over is hopeful, and it talks a bit slower than if the picture is 'wrong' in its character. Then the tone of the voice-over becomes harder, heavier and expresses worry, and at the same time, the speed of the talk becomes faster and more dramatic.

In the same way as the voice-over shifts tone in relation to the image filling the frame, as do the music. According to Corner (in Rosenthal & Corner, 2005:245), music as an aural aesthetic in documentary films "greatly intensifies our engagement with the images" since it helps the viewer by providing resources for a disposition of watching which will allow the viewer to read and

respond to the meanings in the documentary film, both in detail through different scenes and in large and over scenes. This can be identified in the documentary when it, for example, presents an image of an orca in captivity, and the music playing is dull and leaves an emotion of sadness, but when the images is of a good character, the music is lighter and it gives the viewer a sense of hope.

### ***Interviews***

This documentary makes use of several interviews with people who in one way or another are connected to Lolita. All from 'large name' activists (such as Richard O'Barry) who's working to free her, and scientists arguing that she does not belong in captivity, to former animal trainers, eyewitnesses as well as with a man who helped capture her. Within this documentary, the interviews fills an important function, especially for the narrative since it provides the viewer to, what Corner (2003:97) calls "looking through" documentaries, meaning that the viewer sees the world through the eyes of the interviewees. Corner (ibid) argues that this form of viewing often projects a high degree of trust through "extensive sequences, projecting a relative transparency in the depiction (and bringing about what Luhmann would see as a kind of 'first-order observation')".

### ***Pictures and editing***

In large, this documentary consists of two different forms of pictures when showing of orcas, one with these creatures in the wild, where the lighting is bright and there is a lot of camera movement as it follows the travelling wild orcas, and on the other hand it contains one other set of images with Lolita in captivity, which tend to be a bit darker and not contain much camera movement to illustrate that she cannot move much in her tank. The documentary also makes use of a large amount of environmental images to position the story, which contains a lot of camera movement that tells the viewer where to look in the picture by adopting several zooms, both in and out from images, but also through movement such as glides and drifts over the filmed scene. Most of the images are filmed in closeup, showing of facial expressions and emotions and, the most common way to change images in this documentary is the fading image. The sequences in this documentary are not long, nor are they short, but it makes use of a lot of cutting, where interview images are mixed up with environmental images and images of orcas, giving a feeling of authenticity.

### ***Blackfish (2013)***

This documentary aims at showing the other side to the marine mammal park industry and what it really means to keep marine mammals such as orcas in captivity. The underlying purpose of this documentary is to communicate that it is morally wrong to keep such large and intelligent marine

mammals in captivity. This since there is no way that human build facilities can meet marine mammals physical and psychological needs, and that keeping orcas in captivity will have devastating consequences for both humans and the animals (Blackfish, 2013).

### *Narration and sound*

This moral dilemma is illustrated by showing the tragic story of an orca named Tilikum, who has been so traumatized by living in captivity that he is responsible for several deaths of marine mammal park trainers. The story of Tilikum is the main story of this documentary, but other "little stories", to use Corners (2003:99) terminology, also intervene, in order to contribute to the overall narrative by adding on story values, pleasures and contributing to the official argument of the documentary. Throughout the story, an understanding for Tilikum is developed and he is portrayed as something else than a scary "killer whale". It is the context and the human domination of him that is portrayed as the cause to his behaviour. All the blame is directed towards the industry.

The narrative in this documentary film is build like an emotional roller coaster, where the mode constantly alters between happiness, sadness, anger and to some extend even 'light horror'. The opening scene of the documentary, which is highly representative for the overall narrative, starts out as horrifying, when the viewer are exposed a black background with a white text, stating "February 4, 2010 SeaWorld Orlando" and a conversation between a SeaWorld employee at and the emergency service. It is these reporting rings to the police and the emergency services, the white texts against the black background, as well as the stories told by the interviewees who tells the tale and leads the narrative forward. In these phone calls, the SeaWorld employees always sounds shaken, and in this first scene the employee states that they have a trainer in the water with an orca where the trainer is not supposed to be. Here, calm music with an hint of a drum is playing, illustrating a heartbeat, while the picture is switched to an underwater image where the viewer sees an orca circling around a trainers legs. The orca starts to swim fast towards the trainer and in this contextual narrative build up, it looks like the orca is going to attack, but as soon as the orca reaches the trainer the picture is switched to an overwater image where the viewer is exposed to a marine mammal show with orcas at SeaWorld, where the orca and the trainer are doing tricks together as a part of a performance. Show-music is playing and applauds and cheering from the audience are heard. As a part of its narrative, this documentary contains a lot of mode-setting music, that indirect tells the viewer what to feel and when to feel it. The documentary makes use of a lot of context setting sounds, such as sounds from orcas and SeaWorld, and also contains several rhetorical quiet pauses where the viewer have a few seconds for moral reflection.

### ***Interviews***

This documentary contains several highly emotional interviews with among others, former trainers from SeaWorld where they speak about their experiences from working in the corporation and about the contact they had with the animals, mainly the orcas and Tilikum in particular. During the documentary, all former SeaWorld trainers interviewed testifies that they feel bad for Tilikum who still remains in an isolated tank at SeaWorld. Later on, one of them brings upon a moral dilemma by stating that "they are not your whales, they owe them", in the context that SeaWorld can do what they want with the whales, whatever brings the most revenue. It is these small comments in relation to emotional footage and cutting techniques that brings upon the documentary's rationale of good, pure animals vs evil marine mammal park industry including SeaWorld.

### ***Pictures and editing***

All images in this documentary are of high quality, even the scenes that are filmed with mobile phone cameras, which are assumed to come from audiences to different events, are in good quality. All images in this documentary are very well thought out in order to create and contribute to form the overall narrative, and no image in this documentary appears to be even slightly redundant. There are a lot of movement in these documentary images, and the camera always follows the object which the viewer should focus attention on, and as well as working with glides, there are a lot of zooms, both in and out. The overall fades within this documentary are fast but at the same time soft and the clips are not very long, which together with music with high bpm, creates the creative tension of tempo in the documentary. Further, this documentary makes use of a lot of close ups and extreme closeups, especially when the viewer is supposed to feel something. In an article responding to Corners (2003) framework, devoted to the the close-up image, Lury (2003:105) argues that "being 'close up' also suggests something about the way we think, feel and learn from the images we see". These framing techniques are, within this documentary, used both on the interviewees as well as at images of orcas, especially at Tilikum. These images are very emotional, and whenever it gets emotional, happy or sad, the camera always moves closer to the subject to really portray the feelings, which means that the viewer learns to associate certain images with certain emotions, an in this context, the emotion learned is that captivity is morally wrong.

### ***The Cove (2009)***

The Cove is a documentary film with the objective to expose the annual dolphin slaughter in Taiji, Japan, with the aim that everyone who sees the documentary will become engaged in animal activism and end the slaughter. The dolphin slaughter is not only problematic due to the killing of

hundreds of thousands of dolphins each year, or because the toxic (mercury) dolphin meat are sold and consumed by humans, but also because the 'perfect' dolphins are captured and sold to marine mammal parks around the world as performance animals. The documentary portrays that slaughter as the backside of the marine mammal park industry, since the slaughter would not take place if there was no demand for performance animals. The overall message of *The Cove* is not to buy a ticket to see a marine mammal show and the agenda is to shut down the industry (*The Cove*, 2009).

### *Narration and sound*

This attempt to expose the annual dolphin slaughter in Taiji is done by telling the story of how and why the director Louie Psihoyos made the documentary. The director tells the story together with the former dolphin trainer, turned hard core activist Richard O'Barry, and together they function as a voice-over. This documentary has a very full aural dimension with mode setting music, mostly of the sad and tragic kind, but also strong powerful music, as well as context sounds such as screaming dolphins, which is simply heartbreaking. The use of these aural aesthetics is, according to Corner (2003:99), a way for the filmmaker to "figure more fully in the consciousness of the viewer", since "the resonances of watching deepening with the direct infusion of feelings that music brings".

*The Cove* is a documentary with a lot of narrative parables to an action movie. The mission of the documentary is stated by O'Barry when he expresses the powerful words with a determined voice "We need to get in there and film exactly what happens. We need to tell the truth". Further on in the narrative, the action movie references becomes clearer when the director explains that to get these illegal footages for this film, he needed to create an "Ocean's Eleven-team" since the mission demanded a set of very specific skills. As any good action film narrative, the story of *The Cove* also portrays heroes and villains. The villains are played by the Japanese government, the marine mammal park industry and the corrupted organisation IWC (International Whaling Commission) with the purpose to protect cetaceans, but for reasons presented above, Japan is working to keep small whales such as dolphins from being protected by the commission. The heroes of this tale are the animal activists who are working to expose the slaughter and close down the marine mammal park industry and end the exploitation of marine mammals. In portraying this battle in a physical manner and to encourage further actions from the viewer, the final scene of *The Cove* portrays O'Barry as an 'activist in action', walking into an IWC:s meetings with a screen, showing of the horrible images from the dolphin slaughter in Taiji. Here, hopeful music is playing and after some time the frame turns black and a text appears: "The Taiji dolphin slaughter begins every September.

Unless we stop it. Unless you stop it” and then a webpage address is shown and happy music with the words ”I, I wish I could swim, like dolphins, like dolphins can swim” are heard.

### ***Interviews***

This documentary make use of several interviews with a lot of different organisations and individual people who in one way or another can be connected to the dolphin slaughter in Taiji. These interviews don’t play a determining role in the overall narrative, but they help by building on to the documentary’s overall message by adding on to the established conflict in the story.

### ***Pictures and editing***

This documentary is filmed in two distinct ways, which helps creates the narrative with parallels to the action film genre. The first way is through regular cameras which are used when preparing for filming the slaughter, and the second is through hidden cameras which are used in capturing the slaughter. Since the crew to some extent operates at night, they make use of night vision cameras, and in relation to that they are doing something illegal, they are running with these cameras so the image is shaky at times, which adds on to the ’Ocean’s Eleven’-feeling of the documentary. Regardless of what equipment was used in order to record the images, they are all of high quality and the sequences are long and overall edited together through hard fades. There are not a lot of camera movement in this documentary, since a lot of the scenes are interview closeups and filmed by hidden cameras. But there is a lot of movement within the images, for example dolphins fighting for their lives in the brutal slaughter. This is a highly emotional documentary, and each time when a dolphin is fighting for its life, the camera zooms in closer to the face in order to capture the panic. The images in *The Cove* are very strong, which, according to Corner (in Rosenthal & Corner, 2005:54) is an important feature of documentary films, since ”what we are offered visually must have sufficient resonance and depth to hold active attention without accompanying speech”. The images of the brutal dolphin slaughter are heartbreaking in themselves and no explanation is needed to understand the great amount of suffering that the dolphins experience when the fishermen are driving their iron rods into the dolphins while they are swimming in a huge bloodbath.

### **The Great loss (2013)**

The Great loss is a documentary film which focuses its attention on the issue of lack of institutional responsibility of dolphins, both in captivity and in the wild. The overall purpose of the documentary is to find out who’s responsible for the extinction of dolphins around the world. The Great loss seeks to change the view of people and make them more conscious as citizens, not only by



boycotting marine mammal parks, but also through inspiring to a more sustainable lifestyle, which in the longer run, will save dolphins in the wild (The Great loss, 2013).

### *Narration and sound*

This documentary follows the quest of the producer and director of the film, Mikael Lemon, when he discovers which economic forces that operates in order to prevent scientific discoveries around the dolphins intelligence. This story is mostly told by a female voice-over with a powerful voice, who verbally expresses a lot that the viewer is supposed to think and feel about the issue, through statements such as "Dolphins are captured and put into prisons called dolphinariums" and "Dolphinariums deceive people, by hiding the true nature of dolphins just to be able to earn money", instead of creating feelings trough images and the editorial process. This results in that the narrative don't always come together and that there are several forces of aesthetic's at work, which at times work very well together and sometimes operates to some extent in an ineffective way. An example of a situation when these opposing aesthetic forces work very well together in supporting the overall message of the documentary is when the marine mammal parks claim of education is ventilated. This occurs through a situation when the Kolmården zoos' zoologist describes that they as a zoo with marine mammals (dolphins), have an important mission in conveying a message to the public and not turn the animals into circus clowns. When this is heard, the viewer gets to see one of the Kolmården zoos' dolphin shows, where the dolphins are behaving just as clowns, throwing balls and doing circus trice while high disco music is playing and the dolphin trainers are dancing around in pirate-costumes.

This documentary is very provident when it comes to use of aural aesthetics. The only time music is used is when images are very beautiful, such as underwater images, or when the images are sad, such as when images from the dolphin slaughter in Taiji are used. The same composition goes for background/context images as well, but there is a lot of speech, filling the aural space. The speech is by fare the most significant aural aesthetics of this documentary, and Corner (in Rosenthal & Corner, 2005:54) argues that speech is a highly important feature i documentary films, and not only what is said, but rather "the satisfaction we obtain from listening to speech, including that of documentary subjects themselves, and questions of speaking style are raised to". In this documentary, the speech of the interviewees are not always very satisfactory since some of the interviewees speak swedish and some english, whereas some of the english speaking interviewees do not have the best pronunciation, so a lot of the viewers focus sticks on how the interviewees say things rather than what they say.

### ***Interviews***

The main function of the interviewees in this documentary is to create tension and debate on different levels within the narrative, both between interviewees, but also between interviewee and societal structures. The most obvious one is when some of the interviewees talks about the IWC (International Whaling Commission) and how it does not function properly since, as stated by an interviewee, "Unfortunately the convention is very old, and the rules and the laws of the convention are not very useful today" and another interviewee, who has been following the IWC for many years, states that "There is a clear change over time, that more and more political decisions are taken instead of scientifically", and that nowadays, "NGOs and media are closed off from the meetings". This creates a complicated relationship between the viewer and the IWC, since it is a large institution which apparently cannot be trusted with its mission.

### ***Pictures and editing***

The images in this documentary looks in large unedited and un-manipulated which creates an authentic feeling about the film. They are raw in their approach which adds a feeling of objectivity to the documentary. All lighting used appears to be natural, even that during the interviews. This documentary is characterized by long sequences that intersperse with both hard, soft and fading cuts. There are not very much camera movement in this documentary, but when camera movement is used, its mostly by zooming in and out on objects within the frame, in order to centre the viewers attention to objects within the frame. Overall, this documentary film is build upon close ups and environmental shots, which appears to be closely connected to the scene in which they occurred, giving a sense that they, to some extent, according to Corner (in Rosenthal & Corner, 2005:52) escaped "the creative tension between reference and artefact".

### ***Aesthetic findings***

From this aesthetic analysis conducted on these four documentary films one can concluded that they all differ from each other in their compositions and focus-points, but in the same time, they make use of some of the same aesthetic characters in order to construct a truth and convey a message. All of these documentary films are organized around the argument that captivity is bad for cetaceans since it destroys the character of the animals. Therefore, they are all aiming to address and change the existing western societal norms regarding human-animal relations where people today have assigned themselves a superior position to animals. In order to convey this message and affect the audience, these documentary films make use of highly emotional materials and creates an even more emotional narrative around it by pictorial and aural aesthetics. In addition to this, in order to

strengthen their argument that captivity is bad, they are constantly making comparisons through pictorial aesthetics between cetaceans that are free and that are captured.

### **Animal activist documentaries and their mobilizing role**

Even though all four of the documentary films analyzed in the previous section, differs to a great deal from one and other in aspects of how they are made and how the filmmakers builds the storyline by using aesthetic features, such as filming style, narrative construction etc, all these documentary films also makes use of a lot of the same strategies in order to organize their claims of the truth. These documentaries claim, both through verbally spoken words as well as through their aesthetics, that they report on the real world, through pictorial and aural recordings of it (Corner, 1996:2). In order to communicate their most significant truth claim, that captivity is bad and painful for cetaceans and that they therefore do not belong there, all the documentaries make use of an alternative reality, where they compare the narrative including images and sounds of freedom to the once of captivity. By doing this, the documentary filmmakers have reframed the issue of captivity so that it would fit within a wider set of values, that appeals to our western democratic norms of equality, freedom and justice, which strengthens the authorial position of the documentary films and their messages (Corner, 1996:14, Dahlgren 2009:110, Nisbet & Aufderheide, 2009:454).

Although this truth claim, that cetaceans do not belong in captivity, might in itself be both rational and morally legitimate, in itself does not change the fact that there is a complex power struggle taking place when regarding their evidential status as well as their impact. As argued by Nichols (2001:61), "For every documentary there are at least three stories that intertwine: the filmmaker's, the film's, and the audience's", meaning that each one of these stories, in different ways and to different extents, are a part of our overall view of a documentary. In this respect, it is very useful to apply the theoretical concepts of Corners (2011) framework of power, to address the power struggle going on between on the one side, the filmmaker and the documentary seen as the form, and on the other side, the audience seen as the category of subjectivity. In regard to these animal documentary films, it is important that the documentary film as the form, operates within the audiences net of subjectivity, since whatever claims of truth that a documentary film makes, if the audience does not believe that it bears any evidentially what so ever, they won't act in accordance with it. So if the filmmaker behind one of these animals documentary films, could extend its power and convince its audience that the mediated representation of the animal treatment occurring in the animal documentary film, bears what Nichols (2001:xiii-xiv) refers to as 'evidential status', it can have an impact on how the audience chose to orientate and act within the world, for example if the audience

chose become activist or not. In regard to the dilemma of evidence and viewer subjectivity, Gorski testify, that as a documentary filmmaker it's common to have once work critiqued by people who do not assign a particular documentary with any kind of truth or evidential status:

” I've gotten some hate emails of course, one of them was from a dolphin trainer who told me I was crazy. I've forgot what he accused me of, but basically he said that the whole movie (Lolita: slave to entertainment) was a complete lie. So I said 'which parts? Please explain to me which parts are lies because everything in that film is fact for an opinion'” (Gorski to author, 2014).

Receiving comments like this on ones work, only pinpoints that the documentary did not succeed in addressing this particular viewers subjective values, which illustrates that the documentary did not succeed in acting out its power over this individual's subjectivity. But just because a documentary film is designed to communicate an argument concerning an issue (Nisbet & Aufderheide, 2009:454), does it not mean that everyone in the audience, due to their personal subjectivities, will agree with it and become activists. But even if not everyone agrees with the message of the documentary film, it can still have a great degree of political impact, as in the case for some of the documentary films within this case study.

### **4.3 Part 3: The animal activist movement and civic culture**

#### **Section overview**

This part of the analysis will examine how the animal activist movement is operating in order to establish a civic culture within the movement itself, which will lead to civic engagement and passionate participation within the issue of liberating cetaceans from captivity. In order to do this, Dahlgren's (2009:103) analytical framework of Civic cultures will be used, for the conduct of the analysis. The objective of the framework is to identify ”cultural patterns in which identities of citizenship, and the foundations of civic agency, are embedded” and an important feature of this is within social interactions (ibid). Miegel and Olsson (2013:12) states that in the core of Dahlgren's theory, lies the question of ”how to increase and improve people's opportunities for involvement, engagement, influence and impact in the democratic processes”. This means the Civic cultures framework is useful in order to study the factors that can form and shape civic agency and due to this have an important impact on both the citizen's engagement as well as participation in democracy and democratic life. This framework emphasizes six dimensions, which are all interviewed and of equal importance for a civic culture to emerge, which is a necessary precondition for establishing a functioning democracy (Dahlgren, 2009:9,103,108,192). These six

dimensions that Dahlgren (2009:9) brings light upon within this normative model is knowledge, values, trust, spaces, practices and identities, which all will be elaborated further upon in this analysis. All of these dimensions represent conditions that are necessary for civic engagement to flourish (Dahlgren, 2009:103). Through critical readings of Dahlgren, Miegel and Olsson (2013:16) argues that within this framework for Civic cultures, all forms of media plays an important role as "an opportunity structure for learning citizenship". In this analysis, Dahlgren's (2009) model for Civic cultures will be used in order to study how the animal activist groups are operating in order to create the preconditions needed for citizen engagement and passionate participation. Due to the fact that all dimensions are interconnected, there might be some overlapping aspects in this analysis.

### **Knowledge: the most important rationale**

The first precondition needed in order for citizens to participate in politics, is knowledge, and if people are to be civically engaged, they need access to reliable reports, analyses and debates about current events and affairs (Dahlgren, 2009:108). The dimension of knowledge seems to be a highly valued part that is of significant importance throughout every single aspect of the animal activist movement. All of the documentary films, campaign websites and social network-pages have a large focus on knowledge distribution. Each one of the campaign websites contains a large amount of information of the subject, all from information on what the current situation for the cetaceans looks like, information about the activists work and information explaining why the animal activist movement do not think that cetaceans should be held in captivity, as well as how the movement is operating in order to change the norms regarding cetaceans and captivity. The information provided on the social network pages on Facebook are of the same character, although, there people are generating knowledge together by sharing their own information and discussing it with other activists within the movement (see bibliography for examples on websites). But as Dahlgren (2009:109) argues, in order to obtain knowledge, the information needs to be distributed somehow, and here, "the media plays a key role in regard to civic knowledge" due to their role as distributors. Even though the animal activist movements websites and social network pages are distributing knowledge, they can be somewhat tricky to find if one does not have the right knowledge about these issues or ever know that there exist a movement fighting societal norms regarding cetaceans in captivity. Therefore, the documentary films work as a great 'initial step' for distributing knowledge in recruiting more participants to this movement and knowledge about their cause. Mikael Lemon, the filmmaker behind the documentary *The Great loss* (2013), argues that spreading knowledge about the issue was the main reason to why he decided to make the documentary:

” I felt that I was sitting on a lot of knowledge that I wanted others to benefit from. So I wanted to convey the information that I was sitting on [...] and somehow, I also felt that it was my duty to speak up and sound the alarm” (Lemon to author, 2014).

Here, Lemon (2014) expresses a feeling of responsibility to react and spread the knowledge, which is a highly representative feature within the animal activist movement, both in online as well as in offline environments. The filmmaker behind the documentary *Lolita: slave to entertainment* (2003), Tim Gorski, also expresses this feeling of responsibility as well as a lack of information, as the main motivational reason to why he made his documentary:

” I felt like she (Lolita) was an important story that, first of all I knew nothing about, so I became passionate about learning about her story, and I thought that this was a story that people [...] was not getting good information on, myself included, and I wanted to get good information out there” (Gorski to author, 2014).

But another important part of this dimension is not just providing information and getting it across to the public, but it is also important that the public has the viable strategies needed for obtaining essential knowledge. Therefore, it is important that the citizens have at least some degree of literacy, since they must be able to make sense of that which figures in the public spheres and particularly the world they live in (Dahlgren, 2009:108,109). According to Dahlgren (2009:109) ”education, in its many forms, will thus always retain its relevance for democracy and citizenship, even if its contents and goals often need to be critically examined”. Due to this, the dimension of knowledge will always be closely linked to the dimension of practices and skills (ibid). Gorski also states that for him, education is an important rationale in creating awareness and knowledge:

” everything I do is usually, almost one hundred percent of the time, cantered around trying to make or trying to help people understand animal welfare and animal abuse and trying to get people to connect and to see things that they don’t necessarily normally see” (Gorski to author, 2014).

### **Values: morality and empathy**

Democratic values, such as tolerance and willingness, are important for the function of a democracy since it as a concept, would not function if democratic values, principles and procedures wouldn’t be deeply rooted in citizens every-day lives (Dahlgren, 2009:110). Dahlgren (ibid) argues that here, ”We can distinguish between substantive values such as equality, liberty, justice, solidarity and tolerance, and procedural ones like openness, reciprocity, discussion and responsibility/accountability”, and he continues this reasoning by stating that both these categories

should be universal, since there cannot be exemptions to these kinds of values in democratic societies. The values which are initiated as well as (re)produced within the animal activist movement are highly aligned with the substantive values of democracy, especially those of equality, justice, and liberty. The only difference that's distinguishing these values within the animal activist movements from the same values at a large societal democratic scale, is that the animal activist movement believe that these values should be expanded, in order to include animals into this worldview as well, instead of just ascribing these values to the human species (Regan in Armstrong & Botzler 2008:615). Due to this, it can also be argued that this type of animal activist movement is "right in time" since the environment, nature and animals have been urgent political issues during the last few years (Munro, 2012:166). The moral values within this political controversy are therefore already established within political agenda, meaning that a large part of the public already is familiar with them. Therefore, the values, foremost the moral values, embedded into the animal activist movement become easy for the public to assimilate.

Moral values, such as the substantive values of democracy, derives originally from moral emotions such as empathy. Morality is a highly diversified concept within which the importance of reason and emotions are often highlighted (Herzog & Golden, 2009:486). Moral decisions involves two distinct components; intuition, which is an unconscious, instantaneous and emotional process and a logical factor of moral judgements, which serves to provide justifications for the initial gut-level decision towards an action (ibid). These values derived from the moral emotions are found within the very core of the animal activist movement. Gorski expresses this emotional process becoming embedded into values when he first saw Lolita, the orca whale:

" I just did not feel right, you know when something in your gut don't feel right, like maybe when you see a dog that's chained to a wall in the cold out in the snow, or if you see somebody abusing an animal, or you might see a bird in a cage and it just upsets you to know that that bird was meant to fly and not to be in a cage. So, things like that bothers me a lot, so when I saw a giant orca whale in a tank that was barely big enough to fit her, I was, I was really disturbed. I was psychological and emotional disturbed. I was really upset" (Gorski to author, 2014).

The emotions and values expressed in this above standing quotation is highly representative for the values regarding animal treatment, underpinning the entire animal activist movement, including the campaign websites and social network pages (see the bibliography for a full outline). This movement is working hard to implement and communicate values that are affective and emotional

rooted, which according to Dahlgren (2009:85) is necessary for engaging people and motivate them to participation. These values therefore connects with the even more significant procedural values, which also are aligned with those of democratic society, such as responsibility and discussion, but also a strong sense of taking action, as can be seen as a result of the substantive values of this movement, to use Dahlgrens (2009) terminology. On The Cove's campaign website, one can see clear implications of these values, for example where they write:

” September 1st marks the start of yet another dolphin hunting season. Take action by signing the petition below, and if you've already signed it, share to help get the word out” (Take Part, n.d.).

These values also figures on the campaign website for the documentary Blackfish, where it is stated, simply but illustrative:

” So You've Seen Blackfish. Now what? For more info visit the website set up by some of the ex-trainers featured in the film for ideas on how you can take action” (Blackfish, n.d.).

These quotations provided within this section underpins as well as show of a genuine enthusiasm for democratic values, which according to Dahlgren (2009:111) can ”evoke response, stimulate engagement, and generate action”, and a passion for democratic values in a way, defines the ideal civic behaviour.

### **Trust: in each other and the in the cause**

Trust is a dimension that has been seen as an important part of democracy for a very long time. In general, trust has a good ring to it, and is often regarded as a naturally good thing, which means that any decline in trust is a signal of trouble. Overall, an equal sign is put between more trust and better democracy. The holders of the trust are usually seen as the citizens, whereas the objects of trust are for example institutions or government representatives (Dahlgren, 2009:111). Within the animal activist movement, trust can be found at various levels. Foremost, the activists have a strong trust to their cause, that they are working for and supporting a noble thing by, as what Jacobsson and Lindbom (2013:59) defines as ”both defend an ideal and respect important social norms”. This trust and the balancing between defending their ideal that they have trust in and respecting the prevailing social norms, is shown through everything that the animal activist movement do, for example communication on their campaign websites where just the two simple words of ”Take action” are the most effective in projecting their cause as noble (see for example Blackfish, n.d.).



In helping to facilitate this trust in the cause, it to some extent draws from the trust people have towards the individuals who are portrayed as the 'faces' of the movement, for example former dolphin trainer now activist, Ric O'Barry. Within the animal activist movement, O'Barry is portrayed as a very noble man, and the story of his background and how he became an activist is repeated as a mantra within the movement. This trust is strengthened further through the storyline of the good vs. the evil which is usually held forward. The evil one in this storyline is the industry since they are exploiting cetaceans and making money out of their suffering, which is a fundamental component that creates mis-trust (Dahlgren, 2009:113). When O'Barry is then put forward as an antithesis to this, and states that if he would have wanted to, he could have opened his own marine mammal park somewhere in the world and be making a lot of money as well, but he does not do that, simply because it's wrong. Instead, he is dedicating his life to tearing down this industry which he helped create through training the dolphins for the Flipper TV series in the 60s since he feels responsible (see for example *The Cove*, 2009).

In addition to these forms of trust, the members of the movement also have a large sense of trust among each other and towards the documentary filmmakers, which is shown by how they are communication with each other on these social network pages and how they are talking about the documentaries as they were pure and objective facts. This trust that the members have in each other is according to Dahlgren (2009:113,114) crucial in order for a social movement to function, otherwise, it would be impossible to perform any form of collective political actions. But as stressed by Miegel and Olsson (2013:13) through readings of Dahlgren (2009), the individuals within the movement must also have a degree of trust in politicians and officials and that they consider the citizens opinion in the political decision making. In other words, the movement needs to see results from their work, which the animal activist movement have. For example, the star of the movie 'Free Willy', an orca named Keiko, was recently retired and rehabilitated into the wild where he could live out the rest of his life, as a result of years of work by the animal activist movement. Unfortunately, he did not have many years left and he died just a few years later, but during that time, several corporations within the industry applied for permission to recapture him and place him in captivity again. These applications were declined by the politicians in charge due to enormous pressure from the animal activist movement (*The Keiko Project*, n.d.). The same form of retirement is now up for discussion for Lolita the orca whale, who's been at the Miami Seaquarium for over forty years, and at the moment, several state representatives within the United States are discussing the possibility to retire her, due to the activism, although the industry is not too happy about that (*Save Lolita*, n.d.).

### **Spaces: Online facilitates offline**

In order for democracy to occur, citizens must be able to communicate with each other, so they need access to one another in order to develop collective political efforts as well as contexts where they can act as a collective (Dahlgren, 2009:114). According to Dahlgren (2009:115) "the dimensions of communicative spaces can thus be seen as the accessibility of viable public spheres in the life-worlds of citizens", although, communicative spaces can be seen as accessible public spheres in the citizens life-worlds. But it is important that citizens feel like these spaces are accessible to them and that they can access them for civic use. Dahlgren (ibid) argues, that "With the media [...] the conditions for civic encounter expand, a potential civic communicative space multiply", and with this he means that the mass media are contributing to the reconfiguration of spaces that are both private and public. Another dimension here are played by the digital interactive media and the opportunity it provides by removing the physical, and providing an additional dimension of spaces where citizens get a sense of co-presence (ibid). The most tangible spaces within the animal activist movement is without doubt the documentary films and the Internet, with a range of different websites. Here, on several pages on social network sites, mainly Facebook, the citizens are finding information and discusses it through interacting with each other. On the topic of the Internet, Gorski talks about the significance of the internet in his work as an animal activist, and how he, through the internet as a space, have gotten both his message about cetaceans in captivity and documentary *Lolita: slave to entertainment* (2013), across to the public by uploading it to YouTube and Youku (the chinees version of YouTube). Gorski is a very strong supporter of the internet as a public space due to its feature of free access:

" it's really nice to have free access. It (*Lolita: slave to entertainment, 2003*) is one of those films that people do not necessarily go out and pay for but they might want the information, and like I said, we made it to help the animals and the only way we are going to help the animals is if people will see the film. And I truly believe that new media, you know, online, is the way that the current generation and the future generations are going to watch movies, so it just makes sense" (Gorski to author, 2014).

Within these new communicative spaces provided by the internet, civic cultures can evolve, and politics can be developed and pursued. But just because a civic culture might develop through digital spaces, it does not mean that it is tied to the online space nor that it have no substance in any other space (Dahlgren, 2009:115,116). This since, according to Poster (2001:129), the virtual reality tend to duplicate 'the real' and it "provide the participant with a second order reality in which to play with or participate upon the first order" meaning that what is discussed online, are based on

and connected to the offline reality. Therefore, as stated by Dahlgren (2009:116), online spaces often facilitates offline activities through online coordination of interventions in real-life spaces if they receive the status of taken-for-granted as cultures of networking in the every-day life. In the online spaces where the animal activist movement operates, the movement make use of the internet's communicative perks to make plans for, inform about and structure offline activities such as protests. There are several Facebook-events popping up every week about protests and events all over the world to support the releases of marine mammals in captivity, with several thousand 'attendances' (see for example London against the Dolphin Massacre - Taiji Japan, 2014). Therefore, as stated by McCaughey and Ayers (2003:129) "the internet can be seen as a foundational medium for civic society and the informal public sphere".

### **Practices: education and skills**

A well functioning and growing democracy needs to, according to Dahlgren (2009:116), "be embodied in concrete, recurring practices", of both individual and collective character, that are relevant for different situations. Practices which possesses these characteristics helps citizens to generate social meaning to the fundament of democracy, on a personal level. In order for these practices to fulfil its function, they need to have an element of routine, they need to be taken-for-granted in order to be a part of a civic culture (Dahlgren, 2009:116,117). The most common and important practices of the animal activist movement is education. The individual needs to gain specific skills and knowledge in order to operate within the frame of the movement (ibid). The knowledge and skills they need to gain is foremost the ethical view on animals as an oppressed societal group which should be incorporated as members of the moral community and they gain them from the online campaigns as well as from the documentary films (Regan in Armstrong & Botzler 2008:615).

The individuals also have to learn the practice of how to operate within the social form of the movement, which is characterized as non-hierarchical, decentralized in its constellation and with a fluid membership (Dahlgren, 2009:192). The interactions in the online spaces are very open and there is a discussion there, sometimes between people who are both a part of the movement and sometimes between people with different views regarding keeping cetaceans in captivity. Therefore the practice the citizens needs to learn in order to participate here through engaging themselves in the discussion, is that the tone and conversation varies a lot, but it is also, and most significantly always depended upon emotional motivation (Jacobsson & Lindbom, 2013:55, see for example conversation at Blackfish, 2014). This knowledge and special set of skills are further needed in

order for the participants to engage themselves in the liberating practices of signing online petitions, writing letters to authorities etc. in order to change laws regarding animal care to make it illegal to keep cetaceans in captivity. It is empowering practices like these that finally makes the animal activist movement 'move', to use Munro's (2012:173) terminology.

Munro's (2012:173) argument that it is through practices that the movement 'move' indicates that practices are not static phenomena's. Dahlgren (2009:118) argues, that over time, "practices becomes traditions, and experience becomes collective memory", which is important for the development of future practices and for the formation of civic identity. An example of a practice that now have become a tradition is the ban of capturing orcas from the United States in 1989. The reason that this law was introduced were because of the animal activist movement who demanded a stop to it, which means that the movement got actual proof that their activist practices paid off (Animal legal and historical centre, 2014). But a more recent event that is still taking place and progressively is placing itself into a tradition within the collective memory of the animal activist movement is the campaign BlackfishEffect or #BlackfishEffect, which has put the entire marine mammal park industry in flux. Through a constant flow of this hash tag on social media forums such as Facebook and Twitter, the users are mobilizing by spreading information about cetaceans in captivity and reaching out to, but mostly question, the corporations within the industry and organizations supporting them through for example sponsoring. By questioning both the industry corporations, but also their sponsors, the animal activist movement is making those involved in the industry look bad, a tactic which have proven to be very effective. The most recent result from this activity is that the American football team The Miami Dolphins ended their marketing contract with SeaWorld (Just, 2015). But an even more significant outcome of this campaign is that in December 2014, the CEO of SeaWorld resigned due to, what is assumed to be a result from the 'BlackfishEffect'-campaign (see for example Associated press and Szathmary, 2014).

### **Identities: caring and feeling empathy as well as responsibility**

Identities within the civic culture framework can be defined as peoples own subjective views of themselves as participants and members of a democracy. According to Dahlgren (2009), "as a foundation for agency, identities can be seen as the centrepiece of civic cultures, with the other five dimensions contributing, reciprocally, to shaping the conditions of its existence" (Dahlgren, 2009:118,119). It is of importance to underpin, that civic identities are not static, but develop constantly through experiences, which are emotionally based, pinpointing that civic cultures contains affective components (Dahlgren, 2009:119,124). What is characteristic about the animal

activist movement is according to Regan (in Armstrong & Botzler 2008:615), that "people who view themselves as advocates of animal rights also see themselves as a part of a social justice movement: the animal rights movement", meaning that advocates of animal rights believe that "common bonds unite them with those who have worked for justice in other quarters". This bond becomes an important part in the movements collective identity in positioning their actions into a larger context.

Within the animal activate movement, the documentary films play a crucial role in the process of forming civic identities, since they ask, both verbally and through its aesthetics, the audience to reflect upon their own subjective views on human-animal relations as well as on their self awareness about animal activism and gives directions to what to think and feel, as well as activities to engage in if one chose to embrace that identity. But in order to receive a civic identity, people also turns to the internet based activities provided by this movement. Here, the communication among individuals within the social network pages, show that the citizens who operates there take great pride in being a part of this movement and views that as an important part of their civic identity. This occurs partly from liking pages and sharing posts on Facebook, as well as making own posts and inviting other citizens to join their Facebook events. By actions like these, the citizens acknowledge themselves as a part of a community with other like minded individuals who is also well educated and aware about these issues. However, one can discuss how much action that is actually needed in order for a citizen to embrace the cause of a group or to actually be a part of a movement. With today's social media, is it enough to just click 'like' on a page and then, without any further actions, consider oneself as a part of that movement and as one have an activist identity? Probably not. The internet has facilitated new ways that practices can emerge, and it's becoming easier to enact citizenship and participatory processes, but a downside to this can be that the practice engaged in tends "toward feel good, "easy" activism" instead of having participants really engaging with the cause (Halupka, 2014:115,116). But even if one just engages in activities categorized as 'clicktivism' and don't embody the actions to the fullest, at least that activity can be seen as a prerequisite to forming a civic identity which might develop into a deeper engagement and participation in the further (ibid).

## **5. Conclusion and executive summary**

This thesis has aimed at an understanding of how the animal activist movement, dedicated to close down the marine mammal park industry by changing the public's view regarding animal treatment as well as human-animal relations, operates to facilitate public engagement and participation for their cause. This has been examined through a case study design, containing four different animal documentary films, connected campaigns, internet analysis of activist websites and websites from the industry, as well as qualitative semi-structured interviews with two animal documentary filmmakers. In order to study and understand this diversified case, this thesis have been drawing on concepts and theories from the three academic fields, Critical animal studies, Civic engagement and critical media studies, and Documentary studies. The research questions that have been guiding as well as analyzed in this thesis have been:

1. How do the animal activist movement make use of the public sphere media in order to encounter, challenge and change the norms regarding cetaceans in captivity? How are the zoo- and marine mammal park industry working to preserve the norms as they are today?
2. In what ways are the animal documentary films organizing their arguments and creating an evidential status in order to mobilize their audiences?
3. How can Dahlgren's (2009) model of Civic cultures be used in order to understand the animal activist movement, civic engagement, values and practices related to cetaceans in captivity?

### **Findings and concluding remarks**

Through the analysis, it can be concluded that the animal activist movement and the industry mediates a very diverse set of images through the media in regard to cetaceans and the treatment that they are entitled to. All of these mediated images are important for the public's view of cetaceans and to the formation of the norms regarding their treatment. The zoo- and marine mammal park industry is working on preserving the values that captivity is a necessary evil that can be justified through the view of animal welfare, a belief that poses an un-dynamic relation between humans and animals. At the moment, the industry is successfully spreading these values through their own websites, but also to some degree through public sphere media such as news papers. The animal activist movement on the other hand has during recent years developed several practices to receive the attention of the public sphere mass media, where they currently are getting more and more space for their animal rights message that exposing cetaceans through captivity for human entertainment is cruel. But the animal activist movement does not rely on the public sphere mass media in their communication, but rather facilitates a lot of the engagement and participation for

their cause through websites and social forums on the internet. Here, the movement has built a large well-coordinated network of activists that exercises their citizenship by engaging in online practices, but also in offline activities that's coordinated through initiatives taken and spread online.

One highly important feature of the animal activist movement and how they achieve attention and recruit support is through the animal documentary films. These are in themselves creating an evidential status by structuring their aesthetic features in such a way that their arguments are perceived as the only possible truth. This is done through well thought out compositions between pictorial, aural and narrative aesthetics which, both verbally and non-verbally, tells the viewer what to think and feel about the issues presented. This is overall done through mediating the moral emotion of empathy, that foremost connects to the cetaceans portrayed in the documentary films, but which further applies to all cetaceans exposed to human tyranny through captivity. These documentary films also provide the viewer, through their aesthetics, with doable empowering activities that the viewer can engage in, in order to change the world and make it into a better place.

Dahlgren's (2009) model of civic cultures can be used in order to obtain an understanding of the aspects necessary for civic engagement and passionate participation to occur within the animal activist movement, needed for changing the norms regarding cetaceans and captivity. The most important rational within this movement is sharing knowledge with each other and discussing it in order to develop collective opinions, as well as facilitate shared moral values of empathy and feeling responsibility and empowerment. By sharing the same set of values with other individuals causes trust among the individuals, as well as a strong trust in the movements cause. In order for the movement to organize themselves to compass these activities, they foremost operate in online spaces which further facilitates offline participation. The most significant practice of the movement is education, through which they will change the norms of exploiting cetaceans through captivity. By these activities, the participant develops an identity characterized by caring and feeling empathy for the cetaceans, which fits into the collective identity of the animal activist movement.

A recurring theme throughout this thesis, which can be found at all levels of the empirical case and in the academic literature, is the concept of power. To get a good overview of the different forms of power that are operating here, Corners (2011) framework 'The notion of power' is helpful and it emphasizes the concepts of power, form and subjectivity. Within this case study in large, money and financial resources can be seen as the main cause of the dilemma, posing a large degree of power onto the view of animal treatment. Here, the industry who wants to earn as much money as

possible on the animals, is exercising their power by communicating a justified message regarding animal captivity towards the public, trying to sustain the norms that they have constructed. And on the other side of this conflict is the animal activist movement, who's fighting the industry's message by exercising their power over the public by distributing authorial and emotional productions, such as the animal documentary films, as well as campaign sites. The animal activist movement is exercising their power through creating a civic culture in regard to mobilize the public for their cause. But here, there is an additional set of power operating, since the public does not just embrace the messages communicated to them offhand. Each individual citizen poses their own power through the concept of subjectivity, where their own perceptions, emotions, personal values etc. determines which side to emphasize with. Although, the public is effected by the different messages from this conflict, the final decision is theirs, and it is up to them to determine what messages to believe and regard as the 'truth'. Furthermore, this conflict between the zoo- and marine mammal park industry and the animal activist movement, as well as the different messages connected to it, has become highly mediated in itself, since the battle over the citizens 'vote' are fought out in the media. A result, there are several different power structures at stake here as well, as the public sphere media frames the discussion and exercises their power to create a mediation of this conflict that is beneficial in accordance to their own agenda. This indicates that it is not just the marine mammal park industry and the animal activist movement, which, through their own controlled media's, mediates the cetaceans and the emotions related to them. This is also done through the public sphere media. Here, the power that the media possess, can therefore, potentially be used for good, to spread and mediate the message of the animal activist movement in a favorably way, to distribute the values and practices connected to their civic culture and help change the norms.

### **Suggestions to further research**

As concluded in this above standing section, the concept of power permeates the case of animal treatment and the different views connected to it. For further research, it would be interesting to adopt another perspective to this same case study, and study the public and how they perceive and make sense of the mediated representations that occurs from the conflict between the marine mammal park industry and the animal activist movement. In other words, it would be interesting to emphasize the concept of subjectivity to a larger extent in regard to this case study, then has been done in this thesis. Here, the researcher could include aspects such as power related to consumption of different media forms as well as the power of the context through which the messages are consumed, for example if a public receives the message of an animal documentary film at a film festival together with other individuals or alone in front of the TV.



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## **Annexes**

### 1. Interview guide

#### **Introduction**

- Presentation of me and my research
- Outlines for the interview

#### **Animal activism**

- Would you describe yourself as an animal rights activist? Why/why not?
- What is your opinion on institutions like zoos and marine mammal parks?

#### **Documentary film**

- How come you wanted to make the documentary?
- Where did you find inspiration for the documentary?

#### **Media and Attention**

- What is your personal view on the internet as a distribution channel for getting your message across?