

Resolution affirming the personhood of nonhuman animals

Authors: Eucy, Madison S-B, Marcus P, Brandan W, Barbara B

Introduction: Historically, definitions and perceptions of personhood have varied geographically and from culture to culture. Though personhood is generally an abstract concept, it has a material effect on the way we perceive and treat one another, as well as socio-political implications under our current imperial capitalist government of the United States. Initially beginning with a highly restrictive definition of personhood informed by western philosophy, the USA first granted personhood through citizenship to white men, then later to black Americans and women. Other, non-western societies have developed perceptions, social systems and philosophies around personhood or analogous concepts such as animism or spirituality.

Definition: For the sake of this resolution the definition of a person will be “a being or entity worthy of moral consideration and deserving of their own life, free from harm or exploitation”. A ‘real person’ would be a “singular individual being or entity”, where the distinction is necessary.

Rationale: Our bylaws state that:

DSA envisions a humane social order based on popular control of resources and production, economic planning, equitable distribution, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships.

If Seattle DSA is to be an organization opposed to oppression, then we should strive for it's elimination in all forms, in all of our relationships. We have inherited from the systems we seek to change many things both good and bad, and must recognize that. Despite being opposed to oppression, we are capable of it's reproduction.

The overwhelming body of empirical evidence shows that nonhuman animals are in fact sentient. The [Cambridge Declaration of Nonhuman Consciousness](#) acts as an excellent primer, please refer to it if you are unfamiliar with the issue. In short, the experiences of nonhuman animals, insomuch as we can scientifically tell, are either identical or highly analogous to our own.

This resolution is philosophical in nature and nonbinding, hopefully serving to educate the general membership about the oppressed status of nonhuman animals. We are not asking you to drop what you're doing to help them, or go out of your way, or even to stop harming them. The first step is simply to recognize that harm is being done and acknowledge that it is a problem.

Therefore, be it resolved that Seattle DSA affirms the personhood of nonhuman animals. Animals are worthy of moral consideration and deserving of their own life, free from harm or exploitation.aaaaa