



# Animal welfare during transport

## 'A communication approach'

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Animal welfare during transport

Transport of animals is a daily business. The Netherlands is Europe's largest exporter of livestock with an export of hundreds of thousands of cows, sheep, goats and horses, more than seven million pigs and hundreds of millions of chickens and turkeys a year ([www.stichtingdierenrecht.nl](http://www.stichtingdierenrecht.nl), March 2010). Not only transporters are involved with animal transportation, but also other stakeholders such as farmers, traders, assembly centers and slaughterhouses (Council regulation (EC) No 1/2005, 2004). This means that the welfare of animals during transport is dependent on a lot of different group interests. Not only the Dutch General Inspection Service (AID), Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (VWA), the Dutch union of traders, the union of transporters and farmers are involved in this process; consumers are also participants in discussions about welfare of animals.

The last years, the media reported more and more about the welfare of animals. Therefore it can be assumed that the consumer is more aware of the animal welfare story behind their bought product. The EU Transport Regulation is designed for transporters, keepers and assembly centers to avoid animal suffering during transport. This report includes guidelines about transport documentation and registration, training of staff and equipment of the competent, inspections, animal fitness for transport, transport practices about handling during loading and unloading, preventing of injury or suffering, kind of ventilation and floor bedding, supplying of feed and water, loading density and more (Council regulation (EC) No 1/2005, 2004). This increased regulation is meant to lead to an agreement about how we have to handle animals during transport. The regulation is composed with the potential to improve the welfare and health of animals in transportation (Hartung, 2006). Despite of this regulation, there is still a lot of discussion about the welfare of animals in transportation. In these discussions the business industry, like farmers, transporters, traders and slaughterhouses are involved. Also animal welfare organizations, who fight for animal rights, participate in discussions about animal welfare during transport. According publications of different animal welfare organizations, animals still suffer during transportation (e.g. Dierenbescherming, 2002; Eyes on Animals and WSPA, 2011). On the other hand, links in the chain of business industry, like transportation unions, has to deal with the EU Transport Regulation. So, all these parties have their own opinions and interests during discussions about animal welfare during transport: e.g. animal welfare organizations have animal welfare interests and the business industry has also to deal with economic interests. All parties want to take their own interest into account during discussions.

During these discussions, a group has to listen and respect the interests of other groups. It is difficult to get an agreement about animal welfare during transport, because of the different interests.

It seems that no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare, but what is the cause of this? Besides the fact that it seems that different stakeholders have their own opinions and interests, communication between these stakeholders may play also a role in this process. The role of the interests and the communication process between different stakeholders will be investigated in this paper. This will be done by using the communication theories groupthink, interpretation, fantasy, framing and trust. These communication theories will be described in section 1.3.

## **1.2 Aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to investigate, by using different communication theories, why no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare. With this information, the cause that no agreement can be reached will may be visible. This may give tools to make positive steps for more agreement concerning animal welfare, between the different stakeholders. To perform the aim of this study, three research questions have to be answered:

- 'What are the perceptions of animal welfare of the different stakeholders participating in the discussion about animal welfare during transport?'
- 'How do these perceptions influence the welfare of animals during transport?'
- 'How do stakeholders perceive other stakeholder perceptions?'

## **1.3 Theoretical background**

To understand the role of communication in the process that possibly no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare, a couple of theories will be described. These theories describe different ways of how discussions about animal welfare during transport can be influenced. First of all the definition of animal welfare will be described. Then the communication theories groupthink, interpretation, fantasy, framing and trust will be discussed.

### *Animal welfare*

First of all it is important to establish the definition of animal welfare. According to Broom (1986) the welfare is the state of an individual as regards its attempts to cope with its environment. This

includes both the failure to cope and the success to cope with the environment (Broom, 1988). How much has to be done to cope with the environment is also important. Succeeding to cope with the environment means that the animal adapts itself to the environment. Failure in such coping results in a reduced welfare, reduced fitness or even death (Broom, 1988). Poor animal welfare can be visible through a lot of indicators like decreased life expectancy, decreased growth, decreased reproduction, diseases, suppression of the immune system, adrenal activity, body damage, behaviour anomalies and self-narcotization (when an animal cannot develop normal behaviour because of sensory deprivation, it copes with this condition by producing endogenous opioids) (Broom, 1991). Behaviour also provides information about the welfare of the animal (Wiepkema, 1987). If an animal shows different behaviour than that is the norm for the whole population, it may indicate that the welfare of the animal is poor. Behaviours like self-mutilation and stereotype behaviour such as air sucking, bar biting and tongue rolling seems to be a sign of poor welfare. With these kinds of behaviours, the animal tries cope in its environment. According to Trunkfield (1990) a poor welfare of transported calves is evidenced by the high mortality rate, heart rate, adrenal activity and enzyme activity. Also the immunological effects, behavioral effects and a decrease of carcass quality show poor welfare of these calves.

Another approach of animal welfare, possibly better to implement in practice, are the five freedoms. Both the physical fitness and mental suffering is included in these five freedoms and are the basis of the Farm Animal Welfare Council in the UK (Farm Animal Welfare Council, 1993). Because of the practical approach these freedoms are a workable checklist to check the livestock system. The freedoms do not have the starting point to prevent that animals experience stress but the base of the freedoms is that animals do not suffer (unnecessary) (Webster, 2001). The five freedoms are:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst (access to fresh water and a diet to maintain health);
2. Freedom from discomfort (the animal needs a comfortable environment with a shelter and a resting place);
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease (prevention of diseases and treatment of illness is needed);
4. Freedom to express normal behavior (enough space and proper facilities and company of animals of the same species is needed);
5. Freedom from fear and tension (create conditions which prevent mental suffering of the animal) (Farm Animal Welfare Council, 1993).

The welfare of animals may be decreased when one of the freedoms is absent. A lot of situations which decrease animal welfare may happen during transportation. For example, for some transportations, unfamiliar animals will be mixed. This way mental suffering of the animals is not prevented. Also according to Knowles et al. (1999) grouping unfamiliar animals causes poor welfare and poor meat quality. This is the result of the stress and agonistic behaviour shown in new formed groups. During transportation some animals are unfamiliar with handling and yards. Animals which are not familiar with the yards and handling procedures may have more stress (because of the mental suffering) during these processes than animals which are familiar with these situations (Blackshaw, 2003). According to Trunkfield (1990) especially the loading and unloading seems to be the most stressful parts of the transport. Also a metabolic upset caused by lack of food and water may result in a situation in which the animal cannot adapt in its environment (Blackshaw, 2003).

In the following section several social scientific theories, that may explain why stakeholders cannot reach consensus on animal welfare, will be discussed.

### *Groupthink*

One of the possible causes which contribute to the fact that no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare is the communication theory 'groupthink'. Janis (1982, p32 in Haslam, 2001 ) defined groupthink as follows: "Members of any small cohesive group tend to maintain esprit de corps by unconsciously developing a number of shared illusions and related norms that interfere with critical thinking and reality testing." According to Janis, the cause of groupthink is the pressure for mutual support amongst members of groups. According to the groupthink model the different groups can be affected with the groupthink syndrome. Janis (1971: in Haslam, 2001) described this as a number of key symptoms, a range of decision-making characteristics and a set of antecedent conditions. In Janis's model of groupthink, three categories of symptoms are described. First of all, the over-estimation of groups. Because of the fact that in-groups motivate each other in their opinions, they get the illusion that there are invulnerable. If you are one of a group, you feel stronger. You think you are invulnerable, because nobody is responsible for the decisions that the whole group makes and the responsibility may be diffused. You can hide yourself behind the face of the group. The believing of the morality of the in-group is very important in this case. Close-mindedness is a second symptom of group think. In the group there is a collective rationalization and a stereotypic view of other groups can be created. No contradictory opinions may be given in the group. The third symptom of group thinking is the pressure towards uniformity. There is only self-censorship which create a stronger opinion because nobody tells these groups that there are also

other options. Individuals do not make decisions considerate of options, plans and goals. The individuals in the group adopt the general opinion of the group without thinking of own norms and values. Because of this also an illusion of unanimity can be created and there may be a pressure placed on people who have a deviant meaning. This also results in mind-guarding: People in these groups do not give their own vision on subjects anymore, because of the pressure of the whole group and general meaning. So, when nobody dares to give their individual opinion anymore, it seems that there is unanimity in the group, which results again in the fact that people think they are the only one who has another opinion than the opinion of the group. As an individual member, you do not want to be a person who betrays the group through expressing a different opinion. The pressure that you need to think in one direction, results in more rationalization.

Haslam (2001) writes about the social identity approach and the analysis of features of group decision making that are apparent in groupthink. One of this is polarization. Through exchange opinions within your own group and no discussions with other groups, you can strengthen your own opinion as a group by supporting each other. The opinion about things can be more and more stronger. This polarization results in the fact that the groups, which should together create a compromise, growth further away from each other. Their opinion is so strong that this is difficult to change. The less both groups communicate with each other, the more both groups have their own strong opinion and will believe their own strong opinion. Rationalization and limited consideration of opinions are the result of this.

Back to the case about animal transport, it is likely that groupthink is one of the causes which influence the agreement between different stakeholders concerning the acceptable level of welfare. There are different stakeholders involved in the discussion about animal welfare during transportation. These stakeholders have their own opinions, goals, interests and visions about transportation of animals inside their own groups. General meanings may be adopted without thinking of own norms and values. This way, these stakeholders can get stuck in their own vision, because there is never a conversation or discussion about someone's deviant opinion. A magnified and overdone example of both parties will be given: Within transport organizations, a pressure will be placed on someone who should say that people have to look more at animal welfare and not to the costs of the transportation. This way, it looks like that the whole transportation group decide unanimous that animal welfare is not important. But the reality is that there are a lot transport companies which think that animal welfare is very important. On the other hand, animal welfare organizations fight for animal rights and a pressure will be placed on someone who should say that people also have to look at the consumption industry and the feasibility of plans about welfare rules

during transport. This way, it looks like that the whole animal welfare group forgets the whole aspect of transportation. In reality, this group knows that a lot of transportation is needed to fulfill the wishes of the consumption industry. This example show that people have to defend the opinion of the group and an individual person does not 'betray' his own group through saying that the general opinion is to radical.

The different groups, involved in the case about animal welfare during transport, have their own clear opinions and targets. These opinions may be exchanged within own groups, which results in a stronger group opinion. Little communication with other groups causes a strengthening of a group opinion. Because of the absence of discussion between groups, no group can tell others that some ideas and opinions are unrealistic. This can result in a stronger opinion about animal welfare by animal welfare organizations and a stronger opinion about economic interests for transport companies, farmers and slaughter houses. This way, polarization of the different stakeholders may be possible. The less both groups communicate with each other, the more both groups have their own strong opinion and may believe their own strong opinion.

#### *Interpretation or fantasy*

Another possible cause which contributes to the fact that possibly no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare may be 'interpretation or fantasy'. People interpret facts according to their own knowledge, culture and values. Ford (1999) described this phenomenon as a second order reality. These realities are interpretations of people, including their opinions, judgments, assessments, evaluations and accounts. This represented realities, created whenever we attribute, attach, give meaning, significance, or value to a first order reality. First order realities are composed by uninterpreted facts. These facts are accessible, measurable, and empirically verifiable. Pearce and Littlejohn (1997) wrote that any fact can be understood from the perspective of a nearly infinite number of stories. Stories, told for many years in groups, have created the truth of animals and their rights. Pearce and Littlejohn told in their book that these kinds of stories taught us how to see the other. This results in how we treat people around us. Pepper (1995) wrote about group fantasy. In this context, fantasy is not like a fairytale or like daydreaming. He described fantasy like a construction of reality through the accomplishment of shared meanings among group members. Because of trying to understand a member, an own group reality can be shaped.



Creating a second order reality may also be possible in the case of animal welfare and transport. Through different interpretations about animal welfare, different truths may be created. If people have different truths, it is difficult to discuss with each other and understand each other.

One of the complexities of the animal transport problem may be the interpretation of research and rules. For example in the case of animal transportation there are different definitions about animal welfare. For this example the animal welfare is based on the 5 'freedoms' of the Farm Animal Welfare Council: 1. freedom from hunger and thirst, 2. freedom from discomfort, 3. freedom from pain, injury and disease, 4. freedom to express normal behavior, 5. freedom from fear and tension (Farm Animal Welfare Council, 1993). A lot of organizations are known with these five freedoms and use them, but there are also organizations which think that these freedoms are useless. For example, the relation between human and animal is not the same in different religions and countries. The animal transport is not within the Dutch country borders, so that means that you have to deal with different definitions and thoughts about animal welfare. Likely people from for instance Balkan countries have different views on animals and animal welfare than countries like the Netherlands. This makes it difficult to make common rules about animal transport and animal welfare. These different views on animals have a long history and are become a kind of tradition, a part of the culture. It is impossible to change this culture in a couple of years. For these people their meaning about animal welfare is their facts, their truth.

Stories about animals and animal welfare told in a specific country may result in how people of that country treat the animals around them. It may be possible that people of for instance Balkan countries have learned that animals have no rights and that you can treat them like things without rights. In our perceptions and our culture, this way of animal treating is wrong. There is a difference between different countries about the interpretation of animal welfare. It is complicated to change the attitude of both countries and get an agreement about animal welfare. The attitudes of both countries are based on stories and truths of decennia old. The attitude is strong integrated in the culture and a couple of conversations about this case may not change the attitude completely.

Not only different cultures are the problem in this case, also the different interest groups in the Netherlands make this problem more complex. Because of polarization and group thinking it is possible for a group to create an own fantasy; a truth that is valid within that specific group. In the case of animal welfare this is possible because of different cultures and interpretation as described above, but also with different interest groups. For the animal welfare organizations, animal welfare is really important. They can create their own definition of animal welfare. For example, the group can

persist the definition of animal welfare as the five freedoms like described above. But also this definition may be interpreted differently. Free of fear and tension is one of these points. Which things cause fear in an animal? You can base the answer on this question on scientific evidence, but also this evidence is partly based on which points people did research and how they interpret their findings. It is logic to assume that animals are afraid for their natural predator, but questions about emotions and empathy of animals are more difficult to answer. Emotions and empathy are difficult to measure in animals and there is a lot of discussion about these points, but it is very important for the interpretation of the five freedoms. If animals have empathy for their cage mate, and it knows that its friend is killed by a human in a slaughterhouse, you can imagine that this gives a lot more stress and fear than just an overloaded truck. So back to the theory of fantasy, animal welfare organizations can take empathy of animals in their argumentation for changing welfare of animal transport. In contrast of the animal welfare organizations, transport companies just want to do their job, possibly take animal welfare into account and probably do not think much about empathy of animals.

Communication within for example different groups of the animal welfare organizations can also create an own shared truth. Possibly a fantasy about the other group can be created. The transporters may think that the animal welfare organizations run on with their love for animals. On the other hand, animal welfare organizations may think about transport companies, farmers and slaughter houses that these people are animal haters, roughly with animals and just see animals only as a product and not as a living being. Even though these created fantasies are not true, these opinions are truths for the group which created it. This thinking about the other group can create an own fantasy, an own truth about the other group, even it is first based on dramatizing of the messages.

### *Framing*

Framing may also contribute to the fact that it seems that no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare. Framing has to do with making sense, interpreting or giving meaning to what is happening. Entman (1993) described framing like: "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described." This joints the theory of Gray (2003) who said that we create frames through sorting and categorizing our experience and weight new information against our previous interpretations. We select one or more points out of a message and use these points for

our own message. Through leaving contents out or enlarge facts of the message, you can push your opinion easy in one direction. Most of the time, this happens unconsciously. The way in which facts are framed influences our views of these facts. An example of framing can be the rendering about the weather news. The weather man on the news told that tomorrow the sun possibly shines and there may be a change to rain. You want to convince your friend to go out with you, picnicking in the park. You know that the weather has to be nice for these kinds of activities. You tell your friend that the news reported that the sun may shine tomorrow. You do not tell anything about the change to rain. In fact you enlarge the possibly sun shine and you leaving the content out about the rain. This way the change that your friend is going with you may be greater. You framed the weather news the way such suits you the best.

Aarts et al. (2010) wrote an article about a case-study that showed how people frame a conflict and how they legitimize the frames they deploy in interaction. The conflict was about a group of Moroccan youngsters who met at the square and the neighbors who lived at or near the square. According to the neighbors the youngsters caused nuisance and were aggressive against neighbors. According to the youngsters this was much exaggerated and like the neighbors they felt no accountability for the problem. One of the conclusions of this research was that both the neighbors and the youngsters deployed different frames concerning the conflict. Through talking in 'we' and 'they', both groups created more distance between each other. Both groups apart used several strategies to legitimize the frames they had deployed. Through presenting own experience, looking for support, stereotyping and the use of disclaimers, both groups grew further and further away from each other. Within their own 'we' group they all agreed with each other. This agreement resulted in a collective fantasy about the others. This is in agreement with the social identity theory, investigated by e.g. Billig and Tajfel (1973 in: Taylor, 1978). The results of these studies demonstrated that there was a favoritism to people of an own group, so for the in-group and that there was discrimination against people of another group, so the out-group. Taylor et al. (1978) found that the differences within a group were minimized and that the differences between people of another group were exaggerated. In the case of Aarts et al. (2010), both groups had to talk with each other and during this conversation they did not want to escalate the interactive situation. Also the combined group of youngsters and neighbors stereotyped the police. During the discussion with each other, the police became their common enemy. This experiment showed that it is very important that both groups talk with each other and create a common 'enemy'. Also according Wilder (1978b) members of in-groups may see out-group members as convenient targets, because they are more deindividuated than in-group members. Trough talking together the combined group presents also

own experience and also within these group people look for support and use disclaimers. The cause of the narrowing gap that was noticed between the youngsters and the neighbors was not clear.

The processes of framing may result in the fact that both groups grow further and further away from each other. An own created fantasy may be stronger and stronger which result in a second order reality of Ford (1999) described above in the Interpretation and fantasy part. A strong example of framing in the case of animal welfare and transport is the dramatizing of the treatment of animals through transporters, farmers and slaughters. The media show only the worst examples of animal cruelty in the media. The citizen sees only these worst examples and may think that every transport is a crime. Indeed there are cases in which animals are treated unfriendly. There are transports with animals without water or overloaded boxes, but not all transporters are responsible for this. There are also transporters who do their best to make the transport most as possible comfortable for the animal ([www.vleesmagazine.nl](http://www.vleesmagazine.nl), April 2010; <http://animals-in-the-news.blogspot.com>, April 2010). Through showing only animal cruelty, the image of transporters can be framed. They may be seen as murderers and animal haters. Through framing, a fantasy like described above, can be created. For example, one animal welfare organization presents an own experience like an overloaded transport with no water for the animals. Another welfare organization agrees and presents also a similar example. The rest of the group support them and also say that the transporters treat their animals bad. Together they stereotype the transporters as murderers and animal haters. They do not see any more that not all the transporters are neglectful. That transporters has to do just their job, because we all, including most animal activists, want to eat meat for the best price. So, cheap animal transport is still needed in this consumption industry.

### *Trust*

Trust may also contribute to the fact that possible no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare. Trust can be defined as confident positive expectations regarding another's conduct as such, it plays a critical role in social processes (Lewicki, 2006). If groups do not trust each other, it is difficult to get a resolution. When groups trust each other, they can work through conflict relative easily. Kramer and Tyler (1996) wrote about the dividing of trust into three types of trust: calculus-based trust, knowledge based trust and identification-based trust. The first form of trust is based on the fact that people do what they say because they are afraid of the consequences when they do not perform what they say. The consequences are clear and in this form of trust the promise or reward is likely less important than the threat of consequences. The trust based relation may be build up slowly. People let see that they trustworthy and gradually the trust

may increased and during this process also the trustworthiness of the other party may be tested. On the other hand, the created trust can be very fragile because a little mistake can take the trust based relationship a several steps back. This type of trust is most of the time the first type of trust when people develop a relationship. The second form of trust, knowledge based trust, is based more on knowledge and information than on deterrence. Because of the longer work relation, the relation is more based on the knowledge of how the other party should react. The other is predictable, which contributes to trust. Even if the actions of the other party are untrustworthy. The regular communications ensure that parties have constant contact with each other. Courtship ensures that parties can interview each other, watch each other and get the information about whether the parties can work together. The third type of trust is the identification-based trust, based on the fact that the parties can identify with the others interests and intentions. There is trust because the parties understand and appreciate the others wants. When there is a conflict, both parties tend to see the best in the other party. Both parties can be confident that their interests may be respected (Lewicki, 2006).

Next to trust based relations, we can also define distrust-based relations. A relation based on distrust is based on the negative expectations regarding another's conduct and implies fear of the other (Lewicki et al., 1998).

The lack of trust may play a role in the continuous discussion about animal welfare during transportation. Transport organizations and animal welfare organizations may have different visions of animal welfare. Through creating a fantasy, second order reality or framing (all explained above), the reputation and expectations of the other group is not high. Both groups stereotype the other group, which in this case results in thinking bad about the other. They do not trust each other because they have too competitive interests and so, distrust about the other may be created. For example, according to animal welfare organizations and some participants of the transport business, some participants want to make money and do not look at welfare aspects of their animals anymore. The relation is likely based on the calculus-based distrust. For this means, animal welfare organizations and transport organizations fight for their own interest and do not listen anymore to the other party, because they do not understand what the vision of the other party is. The possible little trust relation between the parties may decrease or even vanished when a transport organization does not follow the legislation rules. The animal welfare organization may be stimulated in their shaped expectation on fore hand. When a small mistake will be made by the other party (in this case, one transport organization in contrast to a lot of other organizations) a distrust to transport organizations may be created again.

### *Integration of theories*

The above described theories may each contribute to the difficulties of finding an agreement concerning the acceptable level of welfare between the different stakeholders. It seems likely that they overlap and strengthen each other.

Within a group own experience may be told, individual people look for support and common disclaimers may be used. Because of group thinking, interpretation within the group and framing, a group may create an own fantasy; a truth that is valid within that specific group. This thinking about the other group can create an own new and more radical fantasy, which results in a more radical own truth about the other group, even it is first based on dramatizing of the messages. This process results in the fact that both groups grow further and further away from each other. The reputation and expectations of the other group can decrease. Both groups stereotype the other group more and more and they will think worse about the other. A stronger polarization may create, which results again in a stronger groupthink, lesser trust and a stronger fantasy or second order reality about the problem and the other group. Every party may be more and more scared of losing control of the situation and they want to hold on own known values. This results in the fact that no group wants to compromise in their interests, scared for losing control of the situation, because the trust in the other group is gone. Due to this, subsequently a stronger polarization may be created and everything else just by. A negative complex vicious circle has then been reached and the different processes have strengthened each other more and more.

In sum, it seems that groupthink is one of the causes which influence the agreement between different stakeholders concerning the acceptable level of welfare. This can result in a stronger opinion about animal welfare by animal welfare organizations and a stronger opinion about economic interests for transport companies, farmers and slaughter houses. This way, polarization of the different stakeholders may be possible. One of the complexities of the animal transport problem may be also the interpretation of research and rules. The attitudes against animal welfare of countries may also based on stories and truths of decennia old. Stories about animals and animal welfare told in a specific country may result in how people of that country treat their animals. Possibly also fantasy about the other group can created. Framing may also contribute to the fact that it seems that no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare. The processes of framing may result in the fact that both groups grow further and further away from each other. Trust may also contribute to the fact that possible no agreement can be reached

concerning the acceptable level of welfare. The relation between different stakeholders is likely based on the calculus-based distrust. Through creating a fantasy, second order reality or framing, the reputation and expectations of the other group is not high. Both groups stereotype the other group, which in this case results in thinking bad about the other.

By using the theoretical background, interview questions were formulated. Also the research questions were used as guidelines for the formulation of the questions. These interview questions will be presented in section 2.3. Also the used theory for formulation of a specific research will be shown. The theories and interviews were used by analyzing why no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare.

## 2. Method

### 1.1 Theoretical background

In this research, we looked mainly to processes between different groups. This influenced the selection of the theories. The theories groupthink, interpretation, fantasy, framing and trust were applicable on this kind of research design. The theories were applied between the visions of different stakeholders and so different out-groups. The theoretical information was found with search platform 'web of science'. Keywords used for this search were including 'social identity approach', 'groupthink', 'fantasy and/or interpretation', 'framing' and 'trust'.

### 2.2 Stakeholders

For this research interviews with different stakeholders, who play a role in discussions about animal welfare during transport, were done. A lot of different stakeholders participate in the chain of animal transportation. Figure 1 shows an overview of this chain. In total, 8 parties were visited and interviewed during three weeks in May 2011. The interviews were done with 3 animal welfare organizations, 1 former VWA inspector/ transport teacher, 1 builder of transport trucks, 1 trader, 1 scientist and 1 transporter.

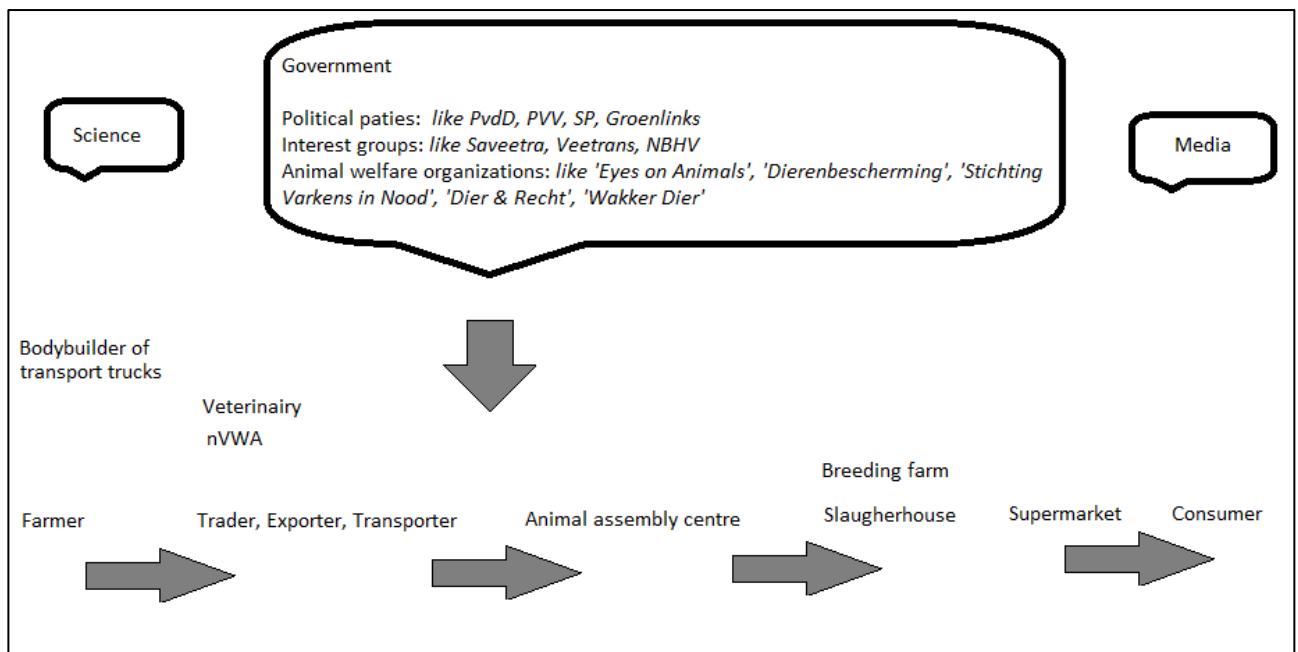


Figure 1. Different stakeholders, participating in the chain of animal transport. The chain starts with the farmer and ends with the consumer. All stakeholders influence the chain. The government, political parties, interest groups, animal welfare organizations, science and the media may influence this chain from outside.



### 2.3 Interview questions

Interview questions were based on the described theories of chapter 1: groupthink, interpretation, fantasy, framing and trust. Also a general part of questions were formulated to get general information about the situation and interviewed stakeholders. Every interviewed organization got the same 15 interview questions. Some questions were based on more than one theory. The different research questions were based on the theories as follows:

Interview questions based on the communication theory groupthink, which may contribute to the fact that no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare:

- What is animal welfare during transport for you and is it important for you?
- Do you think the different parties listen to each other? Do they want to understand each other or are there also parties which argue in an unfairly way?
- Does everybody in your organization think the same as you do?
- How do the other parties should see you or your organization?
- How do you see the other parties? Do you think that they would look different to the phenomenon of transportation?

Interview questions based on the communication theories interpretation and fantasy, which may contribute to the fact that no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare:

- What is animal welfare during transport for you and is it important for you?
- How do you see the other parties? Do you think that they would look different to the phenomenon of transportation?
- How do the other parties should see you or your organization?

Interview questions based on the communication theory framing, which may contribute to the fact that no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare:

- Is the negative publicity about the animal welfare during transport correct?
- What is the cause of the negativity publicity about animal welfare during transportation?
- How do the other parties should see you or your organization?
- How do you see the other parties? Do you think that they would look different to the phenomenon of transportation?

Interview questions based on the communication theory trust, which may contribute to the fact that no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare:

- Do the other stakeholders, participating in the animal transport, respect the transportation policy?
- Do you trust the other parties?
- How do the other parties should see you or your organization?
- Do you think the different parties listen to each other? Do they want to understand each other or are there also parties which argue in an unfairly way?
- How do you see the other parties? Do you think that they would look different to the phenomenon of transportation?

For a more general overview about the situation and the stakeholders, the following questions were formulated:

- In what areas should the animal welfare during transport be improved?
- What kind of steps should have taken to turn the negative image into a more positive one?
- Which other parties/ stakeholders are involved in the animal transport chain?
- How does the transportation policy will achieve and may you influence this process?
- Do the different parties communicate with each other? How does this communication take place and what is your opinion about this way of communication?
- On what way an agreement between different parties, involved during animal transportation, can be reached?

## **2.4 Implementation and application**

The answers of the different responders were placed next to each other and so patterns were visible. During the interviews, the conversations were written down on paper. Later on, the interviews were worked out. Interesting parts of the interviews were published and discussed in the paper. For privacy reasons, complete interviews were not presented in this paper. The different patterns, found by placing the interviews next to each other, were described again according the theoretical information about groupthink, interpretation, fantasy, framing and trust. Elements of the theories were be identified with and applied on the interview data. This way, the research question could be answered and a cause for the fact that possible no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare, may be found.

### 3. Results

Different stakeholders, who may play a role in discussions about animal welfare during transport, were interviewed. In total eight interviews were done with 3 animal welfare organizations, 1 former VWA inspector/ transport teacher, 1 builder of transport trucks, 1 trader, 1 scientist and 1 transporter. With the information obtained from the interviews, the different perceptions, interests, opinions, views and experiences of these groups will be discussed and applied on the communication theories groupthink, interpretation, fantasy, framing and trust.

#### *Groupthink*

According to the groupthink model the different groups can be affected with the groupthink syndrome. Because of the fact that in-groups motivate each other in their opinions, they get the illusion that there are invulnerable. Besides this, there is a collective rationalization in the group and a stereotypic view of other groups may be created. The individuals in the group adopt the general opinion of the group without thinking of own norms and values. In chapter 1 of this paper, it was discussed that it is likely that groupthink is one of the causes which influence the agreement between different stakeholders concerning the acceptable level of welfare. Using the information of the interviews, this will be verified.

During interviewing it was visible that there were stakeholders involved with different interests. According to an animal welfare group, animal transport is strictly business for transporters, traders and slaughterhouses. According to, for example, a trader the animal welfare groups do not have any economic interests. This may result in the fact that the starting point of the discussions is different for the different stakeholders. Also the interviewed scientist described this difference between stakeholders. According to the interviewed transporter, within the groups with economic interests there are also participants with different interest. This resulted in the fact that there are founded with different interests groups for transporters. 'Some groups prefer the money, others prefer animal welfare'. Because these interests collide with each other, new interest groups will be established.

One of the problems with a lot of interest groups is polarization. Because of the big difference between the interests of the different groups, the opinions of these groups grow stronger and stronger. According to the interviewed transporter, people with another opinion do not stay in their group and founded their own interest group. It seems that this way, people with different opinions

will not be in the same groups, causing the existing different opinions to shift away from each other. Their opinion is so strong that this is difficult to change.

Different interviewed parties told about the fact that there are a lot of discussions with other parties. Because of polarization, the interests of the groups are grown further and further away from each other. According to one of the interviewed animal welfare organizations, the interviewed trader and scientist, some parties do not want to see what the problem about animal welfare is. According to the two other welfare organizations and the builder of transport trucks, these parties do not deliberately have other opinions, but the interests are different from each other, so that no agreement can be reached. Sometimes, economic interests play a big role in the discussion and these economic problems cannot always be solved. Remarkable is that all parties said that, despite of the different interests: 'talking with each other is very important'. It seems that there is also a kind of limitation for extreme interests. The former VWA inspector and transport teacher said: 'When people or groups have too radical ideas, other groups do not take these groups serious anymore.' Also the transporter told that groups with too different interests have to compromise. People have to deal with these compromises. According to an animal welfare organization it is also important to have contacts with people from practice. This way, your own interests may be more realistic. The interviewed trader and transporter agreed with this.

An 'over-estimation' of groups, described in the groupthink model of Janis (1971: in Haslam, 2001), will be inhibited in the case of animal welfare during transport, through the fact that different stakeholders talk with each other and that there is contact with practice. All parties told that there are conversations with other stakeholders. According to the groupthink theory, groups would motivate other group members in their opinions so that they would get the illusion that there would be invulnerable, if there would be no conversations with other stakeholders. In the case of animal welfare during transport, too extreme ideas will not be taken serious anymore, so groups cannot feel invulnerable (according the builder of transport trucks and former VWA inspector and transport teacher). Close-mindedness and pressure towards uniformity are other symptoms of groupthink according the groupthink model of Janis (1971: in Haslam, 2001). Because of the contacts and discussions between the stakeholders of animal transportation, also these processes may be inhibited. Collective rationalization and a stereotypic view of other groups may be inhibited, because the groups have conversations with each other and hear also the arguments of the interests of the other groups. This may create more respect for the other group which tells that there are also other options. Despite there are conversations between the different stakeholders, these conversations

have to be improved. Too many people have too strong interests during the conversations (according to the scientist and transporter).

Because of the different interests, groups are diametrically opposed concerning the practicability of the legislation. According to the former VWA inspector/ transport teacher and the interviewed trader, the legislation is correct on this moment. According to the VWA inspector/ transport teacher, only the control of the legislation has to be improved. Besides, the trader told that only the welfare of the chauffeur has to be improved. Unlike these parties, the animal welfare organizations, builder of transport trucks, scientist and transporter sad that there is a lot to improve concerning animal welfare during transport.

### *Interpretation or fantasy*

In sum, there seems to be some evidence for the occurrence of groupthink between different groups. Because of the big difference between the interests of the different groups, the opinions of these groups grow stronger and stronger. The starting point of the discussions is different for the different stakeholders. According to an animal welfare group, animal transport is strictly business for transporters, traders and slaughterhouses. According to, for example, a trader the animal welfare groups do not have any economic interests. So it seems that there is some evidence for the occurrence of groupthink, but because of the conversations, which already take place between the different stakeholders and gives the possibility to hear others arguments, it will be assumed that groupthink may be partly inhibited.

People interpret facts according to their own knowledge, culture and values. These new realities are interpretations of people, including their opinions, judgments, assessments, evaluations and accounts. In chapter 1 of this paper, it was discussed that it is likely that the interpretation and fantasies about definitions and other stakeholders, are causes which influence the agreement between different stakeholders concerning the acceptable level of welfare. Using the information of the interviews, this will be verified.

One of the struggle points of the animal transport problem may be the interpretation of the law. According to an animal welfare organization, the law tells that weak animals cannot be transported. A kind of state of fitness is needed for travel. But the question here is, when is an animal too weak for transport? How do you know when an animal is too weak? Some rules are clear, like animals with a prolapse, pregnant females for whom 90 % or more of the expected gestation period has already

passed will be not considered fit for transport. These examples are clear to see and often measurable. Other rules such as 'they are unable to move independently without pain' are more difficult to interpret. Sometimes it is hard to see when an animal has pain. According to the interviewed scientist it is hardly to investigate which specific parameters have to be used for the analyzing of the transportability of an animal and besides it is also difficult to translate this in a law.

There are a lot of situations in which the law, developed for the animal welfare, can harm the animals. The scientist gave an example about this: 'The law tells people not to transport animals when the temperature is not between 5 °C to 30 °C (with a +/- 5 °C tolerance). This law is used in the European Union (Council regulation (EC) No 1/2005, 2004). When a farmer housed his cows in Finland with temperatures around the -10 °C, the cows have to be transported around 5 °C because this is written in the council regulation. This results in the fact that these cows get a temperature shock of about 15 °C!' This example shows that what intended as an animal friendly regulation, may not always animal friendly in practice.

Also the definition of animal welfare can be interpreted differently. The interviewed trader said: 'Everyone wants animal welfare to be the most important aspect during transport, but to what extent? Where does animal welfare ends and where does the economic aspect begin?' Also the interviewed scientists said: 'Scientists discuss about what you can do with an animal and what are the limitations of what we can do with an animal? An animal cannot tell what it wants and what its limitations are. It is also difficult to measure this, and so it is hard to standardize this and translate this in law too.' This aspect results in discussion about animal welfare organizations and groups with a more economic aspect. One of the questions which arise in this case is: what may we aspect of an animal? The scientific definition, biological definition and public definition about animal welfare are not the same. The interviewed builder of transport trucks said: 'People in our culture do not like animals in a cage so they really do not like long transports for animals. On the other side, maybe with a more scientific view like cortisol measurements and heart rate measurements, the animals do not suffer so much like the public think.'

According to the builder of transport trucks, trader and scientist, our culture is sensitive for animal welfare. 'We see an animal as a human, but not as an animal anymore.' Because humans do not like these kinds of transports, the public think that animals will suffer during transport, just like a human should do. The interpretation of what does an animal like, is different between the different stakeholders and causes more and more discussions.

Because of the fact that a lot of things, which people have to deal with during animal transport, are not concretely formulated, it is possible for a group to create an own fantasy; a truth that is valid within that specific group. These truths are based on the different interests of the group, like animal welfare interests or economic interests. Because of groupthink and interpretation of things, also a fantasy about the other group can be created. The results of the interviews do not show specific fantasies about the other groups. For example someone of an animal welfare organization told: 'You should aspect that people who slaughter animals are lunatic, but when you take a look to a slaughterhouse, you see that these people are not lunatic at all'. The opinion or created fantasy of this animal welfare organization member, was changes after the visit in a slaughterhouse. This statement shows that when people visit other stakeholders, their possibly created fantasy about the other may be inhibited.

So, while we see that interpretations of animal welfare and related concepts may differ among the different groups, we don't see clear elements of fantasy about other groups. A lot of things, which people have to deal with during animal transport, are not concretely formulated. This way, groups will interpret the law and animal welfare by themselves, leaving room for personal interpretations.

### *Framing*

Framing has to do with making sense, interpreting or giving meaning to what is happening. We select one or more points out of a message and use these points for our own message. Through leaving contents out or enlarge facts of the message, you can push your opinion easy in one direction. The way in which facts are framed influences our views of these facts. In chapter 1 of this paper, it was discussed that it is likely that framing is one of the causes which influence the agreement between different stakeholders concerning the acceptable level of welfare. Using the information of the interviews, this will be verified.

All interviewed parties told: 'The bad guys will be presented in the media'. They all know that there are a lot of people who treat their animals well and look at the intrinsic value of the animal. Besides this, both an interviewed animal welfare organization and the interviewed trader told about the fact that the quality of the meat can be influenced by the quality of transport. Stress causes a decreased quality of meat. This means that it is also important for economic aspects, that an animal is treated well during transport and experience no stress. The media frames the image of the transport business. The media published the cases that break the law, but all the good people, who try to keep to the law, will not come on television or in the newspaper. These mistakes confirm the negative

image of animal transportation. Because of this way of framing, the public get only negative information about transport. Information about all the good cases will be left out. One of the possible main causes of this is, according to the interviewed trader, the fact that animal welfare organizations have the money to make promotion movies against animal transport. 'With these movies, they hope to get more members and financiers for their organization. The animal transport world does not have the money for kind of promotion movies. They need their money for new investments, ordered by new legislation. This way, the public sees only one side of the story. Actually the transport world needs also a promotion movie to inform the public about animal transport'.

A lot of emotions play a role too. People do not like animal transport and they do not want to see this. According to the builder of transport trucks, trader and scientist, our culture is sensitive for animal welfare. 'We see an animal as a human, but not as an animal anymore.' This may result in a more sensitivity for the negative framing by the media of animal transport. Negative images of suffering animals will confirm the negative emotions of the public. This way, animal transportation may be framed more and more in a negative direction.

Summarizing, we see that framing plays a big role in the development of a negative image about animal transportation. Especially the media and some animal welfare organizations publish the cases that break the law, but transporters who try to keep to the law, will not come on television or in the newspaper. Trough projecting on negative situations and let out the positive information, a negative image of animal transportation may be created. Because our culture is sensitive for animal welfare, it seems that we are more sensitive for this way of framing.

### *Trust*

Trust can be defined as confident positive expectations regarding another's conduct as such, plays a critical role in social processes (Lewicki, 2006). When groups trust each other, they can work through conflict relative easily. In chapter 1 of this paper, it was discussed that it is likely that distrust may one of the causes which influence the agreement between different stakeholders concerning the acceptable level of welfare. Using the information of the interviews, this will be verified.

One of the animal welfare organizations said: 'The more you do wrong in relation to animal welfare, the more you do not like us. When you deliberately break the law, you do not like it when we take a look on your transport or publish information about you. In general, people who keep to the law, do not mind when they see us for an inspection.' It seems that, this way, a calculus based trust relation



can be created. People do what they say because they are afraid of the consequences when they do not perform what the welfare organization say. This created trust can be very fragile because a little mistake can take the trust based relationship a several steps back (Kramer and Tyler, 1996). Important in this case is that animal welfare organizations cannot require impossible and unrealistic changes of transport organizations. One of the answers of the former VWA inspector and transport teacher is in line with this. 'When people or groups have too radical ideas, other groups do not take these groups serious anymore.' For creating a trust based relation, sometimes compromises for all groups seems to be needed. The case of animal welfare during transport has to deal with at least two different interests: animal welfare and economic interests. The more a party strikes for its interests, the more these interests are unreachable for the other party. According to an interviewed animal welfare organization a lot of compromises will be made during discussions between different groups.

'When economic aspects play a role in a discussion, it is difficult to trust other parties. So most of the time is trust beautiful, but control of the situation is better' (according to the former VWA inspector/transport teacher and one of the welfare organizations). This is in line with the opinion of another animal welfare organization: 'The danger is that sometimes the financial interests are more important than the welfare of animals, so we do not trust groups with economic interest so much'. Trust plays also a role in control systems of the legislation. For example, according to the interviewed transporter, groups with economic interests had little trust in the government. It happens to often that the new, unrealistic laws were adopted. These groups had to pay all the new applications by themselves to meet the legislation. If this happened too often, the trust will disappear.

According to both the interviewed builder of transport trucks, transporter and one of the animal welfare organizations, it is hard to follow the legislation without offences. Some cases are difficult to describe in legislation. Besides this, according to the transporter, the rules do not agree with each other. For example, when you want to follow legislation article 1, it may possible that you have to offence legislation article 2 for following legislation article 1. This way, people will be forced to break the rules and will lose trust in the legislation and government which agreed with these rules.

Besides that rules not always agree with each other, problems will be solved by shifting the problem to another direction. According to the scientist and trader, the legislation about animal transportation causes new problems for other layers in the chain of animal consumption. For example, a cow with a broken leg cannot in transportation, which means that this cow has to been euthanized on the farm itself. This results in the fact that the farmer has to pay for destruction and this dead cow counts for the number of dead animals on his farm. This may have consequences for

the milk offending from the milk factory. The legislation contributes to the fact that the transportation problem is shifted to the farmer. This contributes to distrust in the government. It seems that on this moment a great part of the transport business group has negative expectations against the government and possibly implies fear of the government. Scared for more expensive and/ or contradicted rules. On one side, the government tries to make rules for lesser and animal friendly transport, but raises the costs for farmers. On the other side, the government causes also that a larger animal consumption market (like mega farms) is needed, because of these rules. This is needed so that farms can stay alive in this hard economy. This larger animal consumption results again in more animal transportations.

According to the interviewed scientist, the legislation is also not clear enough. 'The communication about on what perceptions rules will be based, has to be better. For example, the legislation tells that after a transportation of 8 hours, a rest period is needed. But on what facts is this rule based? Is it because of the driver, or is it because of the animals? No paper can be found about why animals need to rest precisely after 8 hours. The lack of concrete researches which should found some the rules in legislation may cause also distrust in the government. The communication has to be better.'

Not only the transport business may distrust the government, also the distrust in the transport business may grow. The media frames that the transport business is rude and irresponsible for the welfare of animals. When some of the transporters broke the law, the negative expectation against this group will be confirmed. According to animal welfare organizations, the transport business is not adhering to guidelines, developed by themselves. Transporters who offend the rules, have to be removed from the quality system, but this happened not often enough. This way, offences are maintained. An animal welfare organization told in the interview that every party in the chain of the consumption of animal transport has power over another party. 'There is a lot of cheating and at least in 5 segments of the chain, things can be wrong. The responsibility will be often passed on.' On the other side, people of the transport business told that people who offend the rules, will be put out of the market, because this unfair way of business will not be tolerated by the transport sector. According to the interviewed former VWA inspector/ transport teacher: 'People who do not want to participate with the quality system, should not be loading anymore'.

So, in the case of animal transport only few relations are based on calculus-based trust. Most of the interviewed parties, both animal welfare organizations and business organizations told that they trust some parties and distrust some other parties. A trust based relation may be created when parties do not have radical ideas. Also compromises for all groups seem to be needed. It seems that

some parties want to build a calculus-based trust relation, but because of mistakes most relations are based on distrust. The little calculus based trust between the parties may be decreased or even vanished when something negative will happen, for example a transport organization which does not follow the legislation rules. The public and possibly some welfare organizations will be stimulated in their shaped expectation on fore hand. When a small mistake will be made by the other party (in this case, one transport organization in contrast to a lot of other transport organizations) a distrust to transport organizations is created.

## **4. Discussion**

To understand the role of communication in the process that possibly no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare, a couple of theories were described. Based on these theories, interviews with different stakeholders were conducted.

### **4.1 Summary**

There seems to be some evidence for the occurrence of groupthink between different groups. The starting point of the discussions is different because of the different interests. Stakeholders polarize these interests. This polarization may be strengthened by the different interpretation of the law and animal welfare through different groups. There is no one concrete definition about animal welfare. A lot of things, which people have to deal with during animal transportation, are not formulated concretely by law. The scientific definition, biological definition and public definition about animal welfare are not the same, so the interpretation of what does an animal like, is different between the different stakeholders and causes more and more discussions. Also the media and some animal welfare organizations frame the image of the animal transport world. This way, negative expectations of groups against animal transport will be confirmed and so a trust based relation cannot be created in most cases. The negative framing of the image contributes to distrust in transport business. Only few relations are based on calculus-based trust, but these relations are weak because of all the framing, different interpretation of situations and the pressure of the own group. This results in the fact that most relations between stakeholders are based on distrust. Fantasies about other groups seem to be inhibited through the conversations with each other. Too extreme ideas will not be taken serious in discussions about animal welfare during transport, so it will be assumed that this groupthink may be partly inhibited.

### **4.2 Reflection**

To create better conditions for getting more agreement concerning animal welfare during transport, different stakeholders have to compose one group. When the stakeholders compose one new group, they see the other stakeholders not as rivals anymore, but as group members. According the social identity approach people discriminate people of other groups and create a favoritism to people of own groups (Billig and Tajfel, 1973 in: Taylor, 1978). If different stakeholders, participating in the case of animal welfare during transportation, discuss often together and accept each other, they can compose a kind of 'one big new group'. Too extreme interests will not accept in this situation, so people may weaken their opinions to prevent face losing. Also, when people dislike each other on

personal basis, they may like each other when this person is a group member. This is because of the virtue of the common membership (Dion, 1973 in: Ashforth and Mael, 1989). According Haslam (2001) groupthink is also psychologically efficient and creative, is grounded in group members' social reality and has the potential to be socially enriching. So maybe if different stakeholders and their knowledge bundle together, successful strategies can be created concerning animal transportation. Aarts et al. (2010) showed that when the out-groups will be combined, a new kind of in-group will be created. This way, the differences in this new group will be minimized, instead of when these groups form separate groups with exaggerate differences like Taylor described (1978). Though creating a new big 'in-group' trust can be integrated in the process again. People trust people of their own group more than people of other groups because they reduce the difference within a group (Aarts et al., 2010; Taylor et al., 1978). A common 'enemy' may be created because the new formed group of stakeholders feels itself strong. More deindividuated persons or groups, like for example the out-group government, may be seen as convenient target (Wilder, 1978b). The new in-group will focus less on the differences between themselves and will focus more on the differences between out-groups. The different interests of the stakeholders will join more with each other. Trough talking together the combined group presents also own experience and also within these group people may look for support and use disclaimers. This way, more agreement can be reached concerning animal welfare.

Discussions between different stakeholders would be easier if the media would not frame the image of the transport business in the way they do now. The media published the cases that break the law, but all the good people, who try to keep to the law, will not come on television or in the newspaper. Because of this way of framing, only negative information about transport is visible, which caused distrust about animal transportation. Besides this, people in West Europe seem to be sensitive for animal welfare. This may result in a more sensitivity for the negative framing by the media of animal transportation too. On this moment, information about all the good cases will be left out in the media. This way, people who think negative about animal transportation will be confirmed in their negative attitude, which results in a strong opinion against animal transport during discussions. This contributes to the difficulties of finding an agreement concerning the acceptable level of welfare between the different stakeholders. The transport business has to show that most of the transporters think that animal welfare during transport is important and that there is a small group with 'bad guys' who break the law. It has to be clear for the outer world that the transport business has also a negative attitude to these 'bad guys'. This group of people contributes to an unfair market where transporters who try to keep the law lose a lot of profit. Because the public will be still skeptical about animal transport, the media has to stop with only negative framing. To motivate the

transporters who try to keep to the law, the media has to take a more neutral position in the case. They have to publish also animal friendly transport. This influences not only the negative expectations of the public against animal transportation, but also the negative expectations of other stakeholders participating in the discussion about animal transportation.

This research shows that communication is both the cause and the solution for the fact that no agreement between different stakeholders can be reached. On this moment there is not enough communication between the different stakeholders. This way groupthink, polarization, different interpretation, framing and distrust in each other may be created. If there are no conversations with other stakeholders, groups motivate other group members in their opinions, so that they get the illusion that they are invulnerable. Besides, group members can hide themselves behind the face of the group. Conversations between the different stakeholders contribute to the fact that more agreement may be reached. Discussions about the interests and goals are important. Also accomplishment of appointments, knowing that the other group has also good intentions, letting the other know that you stand open for alternatives and being sure that you interpret each other well, contributes to restore trust in each other. This can result in a decreasing of too competitive interests and can maybe create opportunities for an agreement about animal welfare during transport. Conversations can inhibit groupthink because too extreme ideas will not take serious by other groups. When a group will not be taken serious anymore, it seems that a group cannot feel themselves invulnerable anymore. The conversations with different stakeholders may result in more respect for the other group, because the other party gets the opportunity to tell the arguments of their opinion. This way, groups may understand each other better. Besides, if both groups sit together and they discuss with each other, it is more difficult to hide yourself behind the face of the group, because people can see who said that point. This can reduce polarization, because you analyze more about what you think and say. You are more responsible for what you say and you do not want to be the person who brings the group in a negative position with extreme remarks which are difficult to be argued. If you have no strong and realistic arguments for your opinions, other people do not take you serious anymore. Losing power of you and your group can be a result if people do not take you serious anymore. Losing power result in a stronger opposite group who gets the opportunity to take over the process and push it in their own direction. So extremism without arguments can have a big consequence. Conversation may also contribute to preventing of framing of other groups. Trough talking together both groups can discuss about their problem and explain their own interpretation. Their thoughts about the other groups can be reframed and own created fantasies can be more realistic again. Through talking with the other group, both groups tend to save face, applying different forms of face work. This creates more space to accept each other and may

create more opportunities, through bundling their strengths together and change the current image of animal transport.

#### **4.3 Implications for science**

The results of this paper show that communication theories like groupthink, interpretation, framing and trust are applicable to the case of animal welfare during transport. For this research just five theories were used for analyzing the causes which may influence the agreement between different stakeholders concerning an acceptable level of welfare. This research shows that these theories are integrated and influence other theories. It is possible that more communication theories have influenced this case. To understand the underlying processes why no agreement between different stakeholders can be reached, further research with more communication theories is necessary. This way, the problem can be solved from more directions, which gives a better view on what is going on in this case. Besides, possibly the case will be less complex, because more background information will be available through applying more theories. In this research, theories were applied between the visions of different stakeholders. For a more complete view it is also necessary to apply communication theories within groups of stakeholders.

#### **4.4 Implications for practice**

Besides the fact that more understanding about underlying processes is needed to get agreement between different stakeholders, it is also important to make the law and the definition of animal welfare more concrete. Without concrete lines, stakeholders will interpret some rules and the definition of animal welfare in their own way. People interpret facts according to their own knowledge and practice experience. When animal welfare is not concretely defined, it is easy to create a second order reality. Through different interpretations about animal welfare, different truths may be created. If people have different truths, it is difficult to discuss with each other and understand each other. It is hard to standardize what we can do with an animal, but it is necessary for starting discussions. When people have different starting points, it is difficult to make concrete appointments in a discussion. Through more investigation about animal welfare, people see the underlying evidence of a law which may result in more acceptance of the law.

Animal transportation is not only on national basis, so it is also important that international regulations have to agree with each other. On this moment this is not the case. For example, a Dutch transporter with an overloaded truck will get a fine of € 2.500 in the Netherlands. A foreign transporter cannot get this fine, because there is no possibility that he can be enforced to pay the

fine immediately (Eyes on Animals and WSPA, 2011). This results in an unfairly competition market and difficult discussions about animal welfare during transportation. Corresponding between international regulations contributes to better acceptance of the law. Also more trust in law can be created, because the unfair competition between national and international transporters may be excluded.

#### **4.5 shortcomings**

The results of this paper were based on different interviews. This may have the consequence that only the parties, who are aware of animal welfare during transport, see the importance of these kinds of researches. This way, it may be possible that only parties with an interest in animal welfare were interviewed and a more unilateral image is created.

For this research, 8 different persons where interviewed. Each person represented a whole group of stakeholders. For a more detailed overview of the opinion of a group, more people of one specific group should be interviewed. This way, the opinion of a stakeholder will not based on the opinion of one single person. Also an overview of the opinions and processes within a group will be more visible.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

So, the role of communication in the process that possibly no agreement can be reached concerning the acceptable level of welfare, is very complex. This research shows that communication is both the cause and the solution for the fact that no agreement between different stakeholders can be reached. It looks like that most of the participants in the discussion of animal welfare during transport, want animal welfare during transport. The main point of this discussion is the balance between welfare aspects and economic aspects. Not all points are clear to describe in a legislation, which causes more discussions. Also the interpretation of animal welfare is different between stakeholders. This way, the starting point of discussions is different between stakeholders. This makes compromises sometimes difficult. This problem is complex. There are not just good stakeholders and bad stakeholders. All elements are integrated and with changing one element the whole problem is not be solved. It is important that the different groups continue communicating with each other. This way, extreme groupthink, polarization of interests, negative framing and distrust may be prevented and animal welfare during transport remains an important issue in the transport world.



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