

# FACTORS SHAPING TEENAGERS AND YOUNG ADULTS' APPROACH TO HUNTING – A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

## ČIMBENICI KOJI OBLIKUJU PRISTUP LOVU KOD TINEJDŽERA I MLADIH

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### SUMMARY

Hunting is an important element in the protection of the natural environment and biodiversity. Demographic changes and people's distance from nature are causing society to polarize their perception of hunting. Some have "Bambi Syndrome" and others so-called "Nature Deficit disorder". Factors shaping attitude toward hunting are: sex, age and place of residence: girls and city based children are generally against hunting. Future of wildlife management models largely depends on the attitudes of people towards it in the coming decades. These attitudes are shaped by many different factors but it is lack of knowledge about it. For this purpose, the attitude of young people to hunting should be thoroughly and multidimensionally examined.

**KEY WORDS:** attitude toward hunting, young adults, teenagers

### INTRODUCTION

#### UVOD

The interest in hunting has been decreasing in many western countries (Brown et al., 2000; Enck et al. 2000; Andersen et al., 2010; Lindberg, 2010; Ryan and Shaw, 2011; Hansen et al., 2012; Andersen et al., 2014; Liordos, 2014; Eriksson et al., 2018; Hansson-Forman et al., 2020; ). This trend may have ecological, economical, and socio-cultural consequences (Larson et al., 2013). In developed countries where ecosystems are highly altered due to human activities such as agriculture, forestry, and urbanization, it is necessary to maintain a rational game management. Wildlife inhabiting such areas can cause problems such as disease transmission, reduction of biodiversity (Messmer, 2000), damage to crops and commercial forests. These problems can be reduced by implementing hunting (Messmer, 2000; Muth and Jamison, 2000; Zinn, 2003; Larson et al., 2013). Not only do the hunters improve the living conditions of

the game species (which increases the positive appeal of hunting) but also of the wildlife that is not hunted (Heberlein, 1987). The economic consequences of the decrease of the number of hunters are the income reduction of the companies in the hunting industry, which leads to reduction of both tax income and loss of workplaces (Arnett, 2015; Mensah and Elofsson, 2017). Socio-cultural benefits of hunting are providing game meat to the community (Ljung et al., 2015). The decrease in the number of hunters causes the dispersion of hunting culture (Ryan and Shaw, 2011; Price Tack et al., 2018). There are also consequences which affect hunters themselves. Their decreased number lowers public acceptance of hunting (Wierzbicka and Skorupski, 2017), and by that their role as a game management group may also diminish (Lindqvist et al., 2014).

When analyzing the above, it is important to ensure that the number of hunters in the society is at a sufficiently high level. Although some authors suggest recruiting hunters

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among the elderly, suggesting that it is more effective in recruiting new hunters than programs aimed at younger generations (Gude et al., 2012). Also most studies confirm the strong relationship between the time spent in nature during childhood and adolescence, with later interests in nature and the need for recreation based on enjoying nature (Gosling and Williams, 2010; Chwła and Derr, 2012; Braun and Dierkes, 2017; Rosa et al., 2018; Wilkins et al., 2019). The hunters are in general men brought up in the countryside, in families with history of hunting (Decker et al., 2001; Stedman and Heberlein, 2001; Heberlein et al., 2002). Most hunters started to hunt before the age of twenty (Duda et al., 1996; Decker et al., 2001; Stedman and Heberlein et al., 2001). Teenagers who participate in hunting with their parents, have a strong relationship with nature in their adult life (Lovelock et al., 2016). There is a greater interest in hunting among adolescents living in the countryside than among their urban peers (Stedman and Heberlein, 2001). The fact that there is a higher percentage of hunters in rural areas also helps to recruit new hunters among the inhabitants of the countryside (Heberlein and Ericsson, 2005). Therefore, possible programs aimed at increasing the number of hunters should be targeted mainly at teenagers and young adults living in cities (Wilkins et al., 2019). These programs must provide for reaching as many candidates for hunters as possible because it is simple dependence between number of hunters and social acceptance to hunting like USA and Sweden example shows (Byrd et al., 2017).

### **The adolescents' and young adults' perception of hunting and factors shaping it – *Percepcija lova kod adolescenata i mladih i čimbenici koji ga oblikuju***

The attitude of adolescents and young adults towards animals, animal welfare and their utilisation by humans depend on many factors. These may include gender, age, nationality/ethnicity, place of residence, activities and hobbies connection to animals, eating habits, culture, religion, education, and pet ownership (Kellert, 1985; Skogen, 2001; Martens et al., 2019). Kellert (1985), based on research on the attitude of children and adolescents in the USA carried out in four age groups – in the second, fifth, eighth and eleventh grade (from 9 to 16 years of age), discovered that younger children have lower acceptance for hunting and that it can only be accepted when done for food and not for trophies. Similar results were obtained by Pagani et al. (2007) in research conducted among children and adolescents in Italy in four age groups, i.e. 9-10 years old, 11-12 years old, 13-14 years old and 15-16 years old. Whereas research by Martens et al. (2019) in a group of 358 students in the Netherlands and Belgium, divided into age groups of 12-15 and 16-21, did not show differences in attitudes towards animals in terms of age, but confirmed the lack of

acceptance for hunting as a sport. Lack of acceptance for hunting as a sport and for trophies is a very general observation that requires further study. For example, the meat of the game animals hunted for the trophy is not thrown away, but is eaten (Daszkiewicz et al., 2013). Additionally, in case of some predators such as foxes and racoon dogs, hunting brings not only a trophy but also measurable control of their impact on environment (Schaefer, 2019).

Other factor shaping attitudes toward hunting is gender. 94% of girls and 71% of boys were against hunting (Kellert, 1985; Pagani et al. 2007). The same pattern one can observe for adult people (Wierzbicka and Skorupski, 2017).

Research in various parts of the world shows that children, teenagers, and young adults living in the countryside show greater acceptance for hunting (Kellert, 1985; Skogen, 2001; Pagani et al. 2007). It was also discovered that the dividing line between village and city is not clear-cut, and that social background is equally important (Hauser, 1962; Skogen, 2001). Hauser (1962) states that city dwellers, who come from the countryside, should be more favourable to hunting than those from families who have lived in cities for many generations. The results of Skogen's (2001) research indicate that among adolescents living in the countryside, majority of those who accept hunting belong to the farming and working-class families. Their peers from families that the author calls the middle class, giving examples of people who work in the city and live in the countryside, are as negative about hunting as teenagers living in cities. Although the conclusions of the research by Skogen (2001) shed new light on the traditional dividing line between city and village, and mean that despite the high acceptance of hunting in rural environments (Bialik, 2015; Sobalak et al., 2017; Wierzbicka and Skorupski, 2017; Skubis and Skubis, 2018; Kowalczyk et al., 2020; Matulewska and Gwiazdowicz, 2020; ), the acceptance of hunting in various social groups living in villages should be looked at more carefully and this issue requires a more detailed study. There is a great likelihood that the acceptance of hunting is the same as the acceptance of agriculture and forestry in these environments. And it is lower among people who moved from cities to countryside (Woods, 2003; Małek, 2011; Gołos, 2013; Markuszewska and Delebis, 2016).

The connection of children and adolescents with nature is a key element of their attitude to problems related to the protection of the ecosystems and nature conservation. Children and adolescents who have constant contact with nature and a strong, emotional connection with it, show greater sensitivity to the problems of nature and environmental protection. They have a greater need to protect the natural environment than their peers, whose spend little time in nature (Kals et al., 1999; Gosling and Williams, 2010; Chwła and Derr, 2012; Braun and Dierkes, 2017; Rosa et al., 2018; Martens et al., 2019).

Because it is little information about children and teenagers attitudes toward game management, the other way to finding factors shaping it can be closer look to attitudes toward animal in general and utilisation (mostly eating) of them. From that kind of analysis factors worth of closer research can be determined.

### **Attitude of adolescents to the utilization of animals – *Stav adolescenata prema praktičnoj uporabi životinja***

Since the beginning of time, humans have utilized animals for food and parts of their bodies as clothing. The development of civilization has extended the utilization of animals to help with work, e.g. horses, dogs, research, entertainment and companion animals. As in the case of hunting, most opposed to the use of animals are younger children, teenagers and young female adults, who do not eat meat and also have a pet (Pagani et al., 2007; Martens et al., 2019; McGuire et al., 2022). Additionally, according to Kellert (1985), younger adolescents, aged 10 to 13, were characterized by a significant increase in cognitive understanding and older adolescents, aged 13 to 16, were characterized by an increase in ethical concern and the need to protect animals and the natural environment. McGuire et al. (2022) based on the study of the group of children and young adults in Great Britain, found that children aged 9-11 years are characterized by lower speciesism than young adults aged 18-21 years. Children were more sensitive to the treatment of pigs than young adults, however this difference was not in the treatment of dogs, as both groups were equally highly sensitive to treatment of dogs. Young adults were more likely to believe it was alright to eat animals, but both groups highly accepted eating animal products.

Martens et al (2019) found several strong correlations in attitudes towards animals among young adults. Young women showed greater concern for animals, especially in categories where the animal's welfare and life were at risk (e.g., "killing animals", "experimenting on animals", "harming animals for the benefit of the environment"). There was no difference between the genders, in activities that included treating animals to improve their appearance or productivity ("changes in animal genotypes" and "destruction of animal integrity"). The results of Martens et al. (2019) confirm the conclusions of previous studies on gender differences. At the same time, studies by Pagani et al. (2007) found that 11% of the teenagers surveyed had committed animal abuse. The most common target of bullying was the cat, followed by the dog. When broken down by gender, 27% of boys and 9% of girls have abused animals. However, when broken down by age group, 28% of students aged 13-14, 20% aged 15-18, 16% aged 11-12 and 9% aged 9-10, committed abuse. The most common response to the question of why they were bullying was "for fun."

People raised by single parents and visited zoos, also showed greater care for animals (Martens et al., 2019). Interestingly, 64% of girls and 50% of boys were against zoos (Pagani et al., 2007). These studies also show, that 93% of girls and 88% of boys are against the utilization of animals for fur, and 82% of girls and 71% of boys are against the use of animals in circuses. No differences were found in the care for animal welfare in adolescents living in cities and villages, which confirms the results of previous research conducted by Su and Martens (2017) on a group of Asian students. However, Asian students showed less concern for animal welfare than students from Belgium and the Netherlands. Researchers led by Martens (2019) also found that having a pet as a predictor of greater empathy for animals is ambiguous. Contrary to previous studies which showed that adolescents and young adults with pets, showed greater empathy and sensitivity to the welfare of other animals (Paul and Serpell, 1993; Prokop and Tunnicliffe, 2010). The group that stands out for its empathy towards animals are people who do not eat meat. This is the consistent conclusion of many authors studying the relationship between humans and animals (Pagani et al., 2007; Martens et al., 2019).

### **Bambi syndrome – *Bambijev sindrom***

The term "Bambi Syndrome" began to appear in the 1970s, although it began to be researched twenty years later (Lutts, 1992; Bramer, 1998). Bambi syndrome is simplified or naive ("through the eyes of children") approach to nature and an opposition to killing animals that are perceived as cute or adorable, such as deer. At the same time, a person affected by this syndrome may have no objection to the suffering of animals that are perceived as uglier, e.g. pigs, spiders (Hastings, 1996; Nash, 2006). For 3/4 of teenagers, in Bramer (1998) study, man is the enemy of nature, and in the case of high school students, this view is shared by as many as 90%. This feelings are in opposition to XIXth century views, when people seen nature as threat to human. Researchers connect this change with many factors but living in cities far from natural environment and gaining knowledge about nature from television and the Internet seems to be the most important (Bramer, 1998; Kollender and Zabel, 2014). The literature researching Bambi Syndrome is very scarce, this problem requires more careful examination.

## **SUMMARY ZAKLJUČAK**

Game management is an important element in the protection of the natural ecosystem. When its goes to children and young people they attitude toward is generally negative. Age, sex and place of residents have impact on this attitudes. Younger children, girls and children living in cities have

more negative view of hunting and game management. Demographic changes and people's distance from nature are causing society to polarize their perception of hunting. Its future depends on the attitudes of people towards it in the coming decades. For this purpose, the attitude of young people to hunting should be thoroughly and multidimensionally examined. The literature available so far provides very little information in this field, hence the need for directional research focusing only on the attitudes of adolescents and young adults to hunting.

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## SAŽETAK

Lov je važan dio zaštite okoliša i bioraznolikosti. Demografske promjene te udaljenije ljudi od prirode, uzroci su polarizacije percepcije lovstva u društvu. Neki imaju Bambijev sindrom, drugi poremećaj nedostatka prirode. Mlade žene i gradska djeca općenito su protiv lova, a znanost trpi nedostatak analiza čimbenika koji su odgovorni za oblikovanje stavova. Budućnost modela upravljanja divljim životinjama ovisi o stavovima ljudi u nadolazećim desetljećima. Za ovu svrhu potrebno je temeljno i višedimenzionalno ispitati stav mladih ljudi prema lovu.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:** stav prema lovu, mladi, tinejdžeri