The Modern Totem: the Status of National Animals in Modern Nations

Rationale
This research presents an unprecedented analysis on the formation of national animals, exploring the discrepancy between its theoretical superiority and inadequate salience in reality. It aims to lay the foundation for further studies regarding the use of animal symbols in political science.

The Formed Symbol
Natural Animal
- Natural animals are constructed with human attributes based on their natural traits, human-animal interaction and human biases. E.g. lion is a large-sized carnivore and has few enemies. Hence, it is thought to be fierce, powerful, dominant. There can be negative impressions such as blood-lusting.

The Neglected Symbol
- National animal represents the state. The animal species can be selected based on pre-national history (Indian Tiger), or new creation (US Eagle). The human attributes are modified to create a positive image of the nation. For example, lions could never be “bullying” but “fight for justice” although both are ok for constructed animals.

The Superior Symbol
- Study of National animals is the beginning point for many other research areas

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