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SOWING THE SEEDS OF ANIMAL RIGHTS IN THE VEGAN ADVOCACY FRAMES OF U.S. ANIMAL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

By Carrie Packwood Freeman, Phd

ABSTRACT: How much do animal rights activists talk about animal rights when they attempt to persuade America's meat-lovers to stop eating nonhuman-animals? This study serves as the basis for a unique evaluation and categorization of problems and solutions as framed by five major U.S. animal rights organizations in their vegan/food campaigns. Findings reveal organizations framed problems as: cruelty and suffering; commodification; harm to humans and the environment; and needless killing. To solve problems, largely blamed on factory farming, activists asked consumers to become "vegetarian" (meaning vegan) or reduce animal product consumption, some requesting "humane" reforms. While certain messages supported animal rights, promoting veganism and respect for animals' subject status, many frames used animal *welfare* ideology to achieve *rights* solutions, conservatively avoiding a direct challenge to the dominant human/animal dualism. In support of ideological authenticity, I recommend vegan campaigns emphasize justice, respect, life, freedom, environmental responsibility, and a shared animality.

Keywords: vegetarian, animal rights, framing, campaigns, farm animal, ideology

How much do or should animal rights activists talk about animal rights when they attempt to persuade America's meat-lovers to stop eating animals? As participants in a counter-hegemonic social movement, animal rights organizations (AROs) are faced with the discursive challenge of redefining accepted practices, such as farming and eating nonhuman-animals (NHAs), into socially unacceptable practices. In problematizing the status quo, activists must decide how to balance the risks and benefits involved with being either too oppositional or too moderate. For AROs, this involves deciding how much their messages should reflect a transformational animal rights perspective and non-speciesist values or more mainstream animal welfare values and human self-interest.

As an animal activist and communications scholar, I argue in favor of ideological authenticity, where communication strategy is grounded in its ethical philosophy to promote long-term worldview transformation. For animal rights, this would mean constructing vegan campaigns which not only convince people to avoid consuming any animal products but do so in ways that encourage people to respect other animals as fellow sentient beings with the right to live free of exploitation. In this study, I determine to what extent AROs currently reflect an animal rights perspective, and I make strategic recommendations for how they could. I do so through evaluating and categorizing how five major U.S. AROs frame problems and solutions in their vegan campaign materials.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing

Social movement organizations (SMOs) must mobilize resources, heed political opportunities, and publicly communicate their ideas through strategic packaging, or framing (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996). Communicators use framing to make ideas meaningful, organize experiences, and guide audience actions (Snow et al., 1986). SMOs engage in collective action framing, which involves three

core elements: diagnosis (defining problems and possibly attributing blame); prognosis (defining solutions); and motivation (appealing to shared values to encourage action) (Snow & Benford, 1988).

Frames can be conceived as reductionist presentation strategies that are informed by ideology, meaning a guiding belief system and normative worldview (Oliver & Johnston, 2005). Ideologies serve as both a constraint and a resource to the framing process, and the resulting frames help scholars empirically observe ideology at work (Snow & Benford, 2005). Achieving ideological transformation requires SMOs to follow a frame alignment process where they align their meanings and values with those of the public while creating new discourses (Snow et al., 1986).

Foucault (2000) suggested transformative discourse requires people to have "trouble thinking things the way they have been thought" (p. 457) and relies on a criticism of the status quo that is outside of the standard mode of thought, not one that is just "a certain way of better adjusting the same thought to the reality of things" (p. 457). Similarly, Lakoff (2004) posited change cannot occur without issues being strategically *re-framed*: "Re-framing is changing the way the public sees the world. It is changing what counts as common sense…Thinking differently requires speaking differently" (p. xv). Lakoff believed advocacy groups should "say what they idealistically believe" (p. 20), emphasizing their own worldview and presenting a clear set of simple *values* that accurately reflect their philosophy and "moral vision" (p. 74).

Retaining ideological integrity is also favored in lessons learned from 19th century human rights framing debates that recommend counter-hegemonic movements not shy away from demanding rights against discrimination yet remaining politically expedient by embodying culturally-resonant moral values situated in historically-familiar narratives/myths (Bormann, 1971; Campbell, 1989; Polletta, 2006). To increase frames' resonance, activists should: seek credibility using arguments that are authentic to their beliefs, truthful, and logically-consistent; and create salience by appealing to culturally-accepted values and connecting them to the audience's everyday life (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Animal Rights Ideology

The modern animal rights movement seeks a deconstruction of the human/animal dualism, transforming society to a non-speciesist worldview that conceives of other animals as inherently valuable beings with interests that deserve respect, similar to how humans claim to respect each other as subjects not objects (Francione, 1996; Regan, 2003; Singer, 1990). While animal rights incorporates concerns about animal welfare based on sentience, the two viewpoints contain important distinctions regarding how they view humans in relation to other animals. Animal *rights* can be defined as a deontological ethic that grants NHAs the right to privacy and freedom from human intrusion, seeking an end to the domestication, enslavement, exploitation, and property-status of NHAs (Francione, 1996; Hall, 2006a; Regan, 1983). Animal *welfare* can be defined as a mainstream western philosophy that regulates animal exploitation to reduce the suffering of NHAs under human control (Francione, 1996; Hall, 2006a). Francione (1996) stated that animal welfare: (a) recognizes animal sentience but believes NHAs are not as worthy of moral respect as are humans, (b) recognizes NHAs' property status while wanting to limit the rights of property owners, and (c) accepts trading away NHAs' interests in favor of human interests only if the latter are deemed significant and necessary. Welfare has been the more popular philosophy throughout history, likely because it does not threaten humanist claims to superiority and justifies "humane" use of other animals for profit or human gain (Linzey & Clarke, 2004).

Posthumanist scholars have recently challenged the rights-based approach to animal liberation based on its reliance upon expanding human rights principles that are inherently humanist and, therefore, ironically reinforce the human/animal dualism the movement seeks to dismantle (Calarco, 2008; Derrida, 2004; Wolfe, 2003). While these critiques have legitimacy, I advocate at this stage for a rights-based approach because it pragmatically resonates with Americans yet is less overtly humanist than a welfare-based approach. But to diminish the humanism inherent in the rights approach, I propose ARO rhetoric should increase human's connection with their own animality and nature by ensuring moral messages avoid humanist appeals to a purely "humane" or anthropocentric notion of civilization and ethics

(Freeman, 2010); I believe AROs must acknowledge that social NHA cultures have their own ethical systems (Bekoff & Pierce, 2009) often following nature's tendencies toward moderation and necessary harm and avoiding human tendencies toward excessive harm and consumption. But in promoting human-animal kinship and deconstruction of the human/animal dualism, AROs should also embrace *diversity* by appreciating species' variety and individuality to avoid a humanist insinuation that NHAs must resemble humans to deserve respect (Birke & Parisi, 1999; Freeman, 2010; Ingold, 1988; Wolfe, 2003).

Some animal rights scholars and activists argue that AROs should align ideology with strategy for increased authenticity and candor, retaining control of the discourse by defining the problem as exploitation and slavery not husbandry and cruelty (Dunayer, 2006; Francione, 1996; Hall, 2006a, 2006b; LaVeck, 2006a, 2006b). Yet Hall (2006a) noted that the majority of animal protection organizations, even radical direct action groups, promote welfare not rights by primarily focusing on captive animal suffering, when they should shift toward protecting the dignity and habitats of free NHAs. And to raise NHA status from property to persons, activist rhetoric must animate them (Black, 2003).

Framing Veganism

Regarding food issues, ARO debates center on promoting rights (veganism and farming abolition) versus welfare (meat reduction, "humane" products, and farming reform). The former deontological argument says improving an exploitative industry is disingenuous to an ideology that respects animals, which is also bolstered by the pragmatic argument that reforms undermine vegan objectives by assuaging consumer guilt and possibly increasing agribusiness profitability by appealing to increasingly conscientious consumers (Dunayer, 2006; Francione, 1996; Hall, 2006b; LaVeck, 2006a and 2006b; Lyman, 2006; Torres, 2006). LaVeck (2006b) claimed that through promoting farming reforms, activists are sending mixed messages, counter-productively radicalizing veganism, and introducing "moral ambiguity into situations where the boundaries between right and wrong must never be allowed to blur" (p. 23). Yet other activists and scholars disagree, citing utilitarian reasons for favoring farming

welfare reforms, saying it: raises greater public awareness, drives up meat prices, and incrementally leads to abolition (Park, 2006; Singer & Friedrich, 2006).

While less than four percent of Americans are vegetarian, abstaining from animal flesh (Maurer, 2002; Singer & Mason, 2006), a quarter of Americans say they are reducing meat consumption (HRC, 2007). Yet vegetarian advocates are challenged by survey findings revealing 80% of meat-eaters do not intend to ever fully go vegetarian, based on concerns vegetarianism may be unhealthy and because they like meat's taste (HRC, 2007). Therefore, researchers pragmatically suggested advocates promote meat *reduction* rather than veganism. Yet researchers also concluded that people are more motivated to *eliminate* meat based on an animal suffering/moral rationale, more so than a health or environmental rationale (HRC, 2007).

Maurer (2002) suggested that vegetarianism, as opposed to just meat reduction, will not start growing unless the movement proves that meat is either dangerous to one's health or immoral. Maurer concluded, "promoting concern for animals and the environment is essential to the advancement of the vegetarian movement" (p. 45) because health-motivated vegetarians may be tempted by the convenience of a meat-based diet and new lower-fat animal products. If vegetarianism becomes just another healthy lifestyle choice for consumers, it loses its ideological edge as a "public moral good" (p. 126).

METHOD

Structured by social movement framing theory and Snow & Benford's (1988) collective action framing components, this analysis defines how AROs frame problems and solutions in their food advocacy campaign materials. I examine this in context of the frames' alignment with animal rights ideology and American cultural values. I follow Stuart Hall's (1975, 1997) cultural studies method of textual analysis, examining words and images in context to uncover the themes and assumptions grounding the construction of ideas.

My text sample includes all food advocacy materials on vegetarianism/veganism and the human practice of farming and fishing, including hundreds of electronic and print materials used by AROs as of January 2008. Electronic materials include web pages and self-produced video footage and advertisements. Print materials include vegetarian starter guides, pamphlets, advertisements, and collateral pieces such as stickers, clothing, buttons, and posters.

To be comparable and relevant, AROs selected for this study had: a mission supporting animal rights and veganism in contrast to a more moderate welfare mission primarily promoting "humane" farming[1]; campaigns providing a variety of advocacy pieces aimed at the public; and a national U.S. presence. The following five organizations, listed from largest to smallest, most fully met criteria for inclusion: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), Farm Sanctuary (FS), Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM), Compassion Over Killing (COK), and Vegan Outreach (VO).

PETA was founded over 25 years ago in Washington, D.C. as a multi-issues group. Now headquartered in Norfolk, VA, PETA has expanded to become the largest animal rights group in the world, with more than 150 full-time paid staff, international offices, and more than 1.8 million members and supporters. FS was founded in 1986 and has grown into the largest farmed animal rescue and advocacy organization in the nation, operating sanctuaries in NY and CA, with more than 100,000 members and 75 paid staff. FARM, located in Bethesda, MD has seven paid staff and runs annual vegetarian campaigns and activist conferences; started in the 1970s, it is the oldest farmed animal rights group. The youngest vegan advocacy organization, COK, was founded in 1995 in a Washington, D.C. high school and now has six paid, full-time staff with an emphasis on truth in food marketing. VO is a highly-focused group started in 1993; it primarily operates from Tucson, AZ with just three paid staff

[1] This does not preclude the ARO from also supporting both reform and abolition of farming, but I deemed an organization such as the Humane Society of the U.S. as more welfare-oriented because they lean more toward humane reforms than vegan activism more so than People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals who openly claims to promote animal rights and veganism while also calling for humane farming reform.

members and a host of volunteers to fulfill its primary mission of handing out vegan pamphlets on college campuses.

FINDINGS

This section outlines the results of my textual analysis on the ARO collective action framing components of problems (including blame) and solutions.

Problem Frames

ARO advocacy utilized four "problem" frames which I discuss in order of frequency and prominence: (1) the suffering of animals due to cruelty, (2) the commodification of animals as objects, (3) the harmfulness of animal agribusiness and animal products to humans and the environment, and (4) the needless killing and death of animals for food.

Cruelty and Suffering

A FS leaflet says the number one reason to go vegetarian is because "'food animals' are not protected from inhumane treatment." This is representative of the most prominent problem frame – the cruelty and suffering of farmed animals. ARO texts are full of visual and verbal descriptions of land animals' extreme mental and physical suffering in confinement and the painful transport and slaughtering process (PETA was the only ARO who included fish suffering). AROs often use the words *cruelty* and *suffering*, such as on the covers of VO's two most popular booklets and in its web address opposecruelty.org. To ensure the public that farmed animals experience pain, AROs cite scientific evidence and frequently compare farmed animal feelings to those of cats, dogs, or other popular mammals, sometimes humans. Consider FARM's vegetarian postcard, which states, "Animals raised for food are just as intelligent, lovable, and sensitive as the animals we call *pets*."

All AROs tend to focus on the *worst* cruelties in factory farming, specifically the extreme intensive confinement of battery cages (hens), gestation crates (pigs), and veal crates (calves), where the

animals can hardly move and the pictures are particularly pitiful, showing bars, excrement, chains, and inflamed raw skin. Immobility is frequently shown, not only animals confined in small cages, but hens painfully impaled by wire or stuck underneath battery cages, as well as "downed" cows and pigs languishing at stockyards or being dragged to slaughter. And almost every factory farming discussion describes the many standard procedures and manipulations performed without anesthesia, including: debeaking, branding, castration, dehorning, toe clipping, ear and tail docking, and teeth clipping. Videos allow viewers to hear the animals squealing or crying in pain.

As evidence of the poor living conditions and lack of individual medical care, AROs cite the high mortality rates on the farm or in transport, showing carcasses rotting among the living. Videos from FS and PETA reveal workers beating to death animals who are sick or "runts," particularly in the pork, foie gras, and turkey industries. Commercially-useless chicks in the egg and foie gras industries are shown slowly suffocating in trash bags inside dumpsters. And it is common for any section on slaughterhouses to assure viewers that many of the animals, particularly birds, are fully conscious when having their throats slit, sometimes experiencing scalding tanks and dismemberment; VO cites a slaughterhouse worker describing how cows often die "piece by piece."

Commodification of Animals into Economic Objects

Most AROs, particularly FS, critique how agriculture treats farmed animals like economic objects instead of sentient individual subjects. For example, FS's "Sentient Beings" campaign leaflet states "animals used for food in the United States are commonly treated like unfeeling 'tools of production,' rather than as living, feeling animals." FS's farmed animal treatment brochure explains that "when they are no longer profitable, they are literally thrown away" in wood chippers and garbage cans.

To emphasize the commodity status of farmed animals, FS's video on downed animals explains that calves may sell for "as little as one dollar but can be left to suffer for days" for that dollar. PETA's

Vegetarian Starter Kit tells the story of a downed cow left suffering all day at a stockyard because staff veterinarians would not euthanize her, lest they damage the "value of the meat;" she was eventually shot by a butcher and "her body was purchased for $307.50." FS and VO especially like to quote industry representatives who describe farm animals as profit-making "machines."

To visually express the impersonal business of mass-producing animals, AROs often show factory-farmed animals en masse, especially long shots of warehouses revealing a repetitious sea of similar-looking animals. Other times, closer shots reveal that each pig or calf has a *number* above his/her crate or a numbered tag on his/her back or ear indicating that he/she is nothing more than a replaceable unit. FS can juxtapose these industry images by showcasing *named* sanctuary residents like Phoebe or Truffles.

Harmfulness of Animal Products and Farming to People and Environment

Each ARO's vegetarian guides and web pages contain separate sections on health and environment. All AROs except VO prioritize human health as a major benefit of vegetarianism, second only to showing compassion for NHAs. Messages discuss how a plant-based diet is not only healthy but often healthier than a standard meat-based diet, especially in preventing obesity and major diseases, citing the American Dietetic Association. AROs often characterize animal-based diets as *un*healthy. For example, COK's and FS's veg guides say animal products are the "main source of saturated fat and the only source of cholesterol" for most Americans. FS's guide also debates the bone-building myth of dairy by saying "studies suggest a connection between osteoporosis and diets that are rich in animal protein," while COK emphasizes the unnaturalness of humans drinking another species' milk. Both guides also list the antibiotic-resistant bacteria strains that are found in animal products, and FS's brochures warn against "harmful pathogens like Salmonella and E. coli."

PETA is the only group emphasizing health messages regarding weight and sex appeal. PETA's veg guide page on weight loss features a doctor stating that "meat-eaters have three times the obesity rate of vegetarians and nine times the obesity rate of vegans." PETA creates a positive association between vegetarianism and sex through its annual "sexiest vegetarian" contests, while creating a negative association between meat, sluggishness, and impotence.

While personal health is prioritized, populist public health issues such as world hunger, farm-worker illness/injury, and rural pollution are sometimes mentioned by PETA, FS, and FARM. For example, FARM's "Well-Fed World" campaign seeks hunger policy reform, promoting "plant-based diets" as a key component to reversing starvation rates as worldwide consumption of unsustainable animal products and factory farming increases. And FS' "economy" web link describes how corporate agribusiness pollutes rural communities and fails to bring promised economic benefits.

Of increasing popularity is an appeal to people's concerns for how our food choices affect the environment, especially when it threatens human well-being. PETA, FS, and FARM produce print and online pieces framing animal agribusiness as environmentally destructive, commonly featuring photos of factory farm pipes spewing manure into cesspools. FS's "Veg for Life" print pieces mention environmental degradation, using verbs such as *eroded, ruined, contaminated, compromised, mismanaged,* and *ransacked.* PETA's *Chop Chop* leaflet visually equates a pork *chop* to trees being *chopped*, providing details on meat's association with excessive resource use, global warming, pollution, and damage to oceanic life. FARM's "Bite Global Warming" campaign is built around a 2006 United Nations report listing animal agriculture as an even bigger "culprit" to greenhouse gas emissions than transportation, a fact increasingly cited by many other AROs as climate change becomes a critical issue.

The Killing and Taking of Life for Food

This right-to-life frame is frequently overshadowed by a more common emphasis on animal suffering, however, here are examples of when PETA, FARM & FS problematize death specifically. PETA's *Chew on This* DVD lists moral rationales for veganism, including: "because no living creature wants to see her family slaughtered," "because no animal deserves to die for your taste buds," "because they don't want to die," and "because commerce is no excuse for murder." PETA often states "vegetarians *save* more than 100 lives each year." PETA's teen booklet twice mentions that even free-range animals "all have their lives violently cut short." One page is titled "Bottom Line: Meat is Murder;" this retro slogan of the movement was rarely used by PETA and never used by other AROs.

FARM has a World Farm Animals Day campaign to "expose, mourn, and memorialize the innocent, feeling animals in factory farms and slaughterhouses." FARM's use of death toll statistics ensures that each life counts. The text describes the suffering and death as "pointless," emphasizing meat's needlessness, bolstered by the campaign's slogan "Saving billions – one bite at a time." Necessity was mentioned again in several of FARM's Meatout campaign postcards, saying that each vegetarian "saves up to 2,000 animals" from deaths that are "unnecessary."

Similarly, FS's FAQ section states people have the "choice" not to kill, as meat is not necessary for them like it is for some other animals. Its "Veg for Life" leaflet says "nearly 10 billion farm animals *needlessly* die every year." Life is emphasized in FS's campaign title "Veg for Life" and its new advertisement and t-shirt slogan "End the slaughter. There are lives on the line." Similar to FARM's idea of mourning the dead, FS's tribute section on the web memorializes deceased sanctuary residents with stories signifying that each individual's life mattered.

Blame Component: Agribusiness First, Consumers Second

In problem frames, AROs identify the most blatant culprit as "factory farms," claiming the "agri*business* industry" perpetuates and hides its cruelty, killing, pollution, and destruction. ARO

messages only sometimes blame "animal agri*culture*" or "free-range" farms; for example, collateral materials from FARM and FS specifically ask people to fight "*factory* farming," which is a distinctly different message than "end *animal* farming" would be. To a lesser extent, the government and legal system is mentioned for failing to protect farmed animals, but only a few of the AROs, particularly FS, propose legal solutions. Most calls-to-action ask consumers to boycott animal products, as this is considered more worthwhile than working with an untrustworthy industry and ineffectual government regulatory agencies on welfare reforms.

AROs do not usually blame meat-eaters directly and typically insinuate that consumers are caring people who are kept innocently ignorant of factory farm cruelty. Yet even the AROs' many positive messages about consumers' compassion suggest, by default, that newly educated consumers would now be guilty of supporting animal cruelty if they continue to buy animal products. However, a few messages more overtly accuse meat-eaters of being responsible parties in the problems of animal cruelty and environmental destruction. For example, A FARM poster shows a cow slaughter illustration and reads "It's a filthy business. They couldn't do it without you," and PETA's *Chew on This* DVD declares people should go vegetarian because: "it's violence you can stop," "no animal deserves to die for your taste buds," and "it takes a small person to beat a defenseless animal and an even smaller person to eat one."

While most ARO environmental appeals take a positive approach to asserting the "power" consumers have to save the earth, PETA sometimes uses a more accusatory tack. Its online environmental section claims "Meat-eaters are responsible for production of 100% of this waste. Go vegetarian and you'll be responsible for none of it." And PETA's *Chop Chop* leaflet boldly asserts "Think you can be a meat-eating environmentalist? Think again!" declaring "There's no excuse for eating meat."

Solution Frames

The most popular solution AROs propose is for consumers to eat fewer or no animal products, but FS also promotes humane farming reforms via government and PETA promotes some voluntary reforms by industry and retailers.

Consumers Going Vegan or Reducing Consumption of Animal Products

The most common solution by far proposed by all AROs is for consumers to stop supporting animal agribusiness and go vegan. While every ARO uses the term *vegetarian* more often than *vegan*, they imply veganism through all the dairy- and egg-free recipe and product suggestions. FS and FARM favor the term *plant-based* in environmental and scientific messages, presumably as it has less socio-political identity connotations. Most print materials make direct calls-to-action: "Choose veg foods" (COK), "Kick the meat habit," (FARM), and "Go vegetarian" (PETA & FS). And consider these vegetarian-promoting URLs: Meatout.org, Veganoutreach.org, Goveg.com, Vegforlife.org, Vegkit.org, and Tryveg.com.

Much of the time, AROs, especially COK and PETA, are consistent in their solution for consumers to eliminate animal products, but FS, VO, and sometimes FARM occasionally suggest less sweeping changes, asking that consumers simply reduce the amount of animal foods eaten. FARM's "Meatout Mondays" campaign, despite the title, still promotes veganism. Outside of FS's "Veg for Life" campaign materials, a vegetarian solution is not specified in some of its factory farming and stockyard cruelty messages; in some cases, FS requests only that consumers avoid certain *factory-farmed* products, such as: foie gras, veal, pork, and battery-caged eggs. FS's emphasis on promoting "compassionate" choices may leave the consumer with the open-ended option of determining which food items may qualify as compassionate.

VO's most popular booklet *Even If You Like Meat* suggests consumers *reduce* consumption of animal products, in particular "eggs and the meat of birds and pigs" as those animals suffer most. The

cover requests people "cut meat consumption in half," and inside it says "opposing factory farming isn't all or nothing" and consumers should "eat less meat to help prevent farm animal suffering." In this way, it avoids using the word *vegetarian*, suggesting individuals just "do what you can."

No ARO ever proposes that people switch to so-called "humane" animal products. All vegetarian starter guides and web sites have small sections dispelling the myth that "free-range" farming is truly free-range or cruelty-free, mentioning that these animals still experience painful mutilations and uncomfortable transport and slaughter.

Farmed Animal Welfare Reform

Some FS campaigns demand legal humane farming reform, making federal and state governments blameworthy for allowing cruelty. In FS's video *Life Behind Bars*, spokesperson Mary Tyler Moore proclaims that crates "should be banned in the U.S. as they are in other countries." FS's web page explains it works on state-wide referenda to institute crating bans as well as federal legislation to protect downed animals at slaughterhouses. Additionally, FS's "Sentient Beings" campaign seeks improved legal subject status for farmed animals, following Europe's lead. Rather than *government*-based legal reform, PETA tends to pressure *corporations* to voluntarily reform. PETA's campaigns request that the KFC fast-food chain and Safeway groceries mandate higher welfare standards from egg and meat suppliers and that Tyson Farms and kosher slaughterhouses use less painful killing methods.

DISCUSSION

In support of ideological authenticity, I advocate for some ARO collective action frames to fit a frame transformation alignment process (Snow et al. 1986), enacting Foucault's (2000) notion of critical transformation and Lakoff's (2004) idea of reframing. In this prescriptive section I analyze ARO frames for their alignment with animal right ideology and explain how, and to what extent, AROs did or could

construct transformative, non-speciesist frames that resonate on some level with a largely speciesist American public.

Evaluation of Problem and Solution Frames

Cruelty Problem Frame and Solutions of Veganism & Industry Reform

Welfare reform solutions, rather than veganism, make logical sense to mitigate the proposed problem of factory farm cruelty, but they fail to align with animal rights ideology, as reforms still allow industry to exploit NHAs for profit. The industry reform solution muddles and weakens the corresponding vegan solution by suggesting that industry can improve its animal use instead of insisting that animal use *is* the problem (LaVeck, 2006b). Additionally, the cruelty problem frame often highlighted the worst or most abusive aspects of factory farming. By doing so, it implicitly made less painful or mundane practices of farming animals, such as captivity and use, seem *less* problematic or even *un*problematic by comparison.

The logical solution to a problem frame of cruelty and commodification is for consumers to financially support *less inhumane animal farms*, but the most popular problem-solution relationship AROs constructed is for consumers to end cruelty by going *vegan*. However, AROs often tried to more logically align the problem of cruelty and commodification with a vegan solution by explaining that a greedy and uncaring industry *will not* stop cruel practices, and, additionally, it *cannot* stop because its profit motive dictates poor animal welfare to remain viable in a global market. When ARO messages included this economic argument against industry reform, then veganism rather than "humane" meat consumption became the more logical solution to cruelty.

A consumer-based vegan solution to cruelty does not make as much sense if AROs propose it along with an industry-based welfare solution. This combination of rights and welfare solutions might make more sense if AROs explained the two are *unrelated* by clarifying that veganism is the most ethical

consumer solution and welfare reforms are a *separate* solution aimed at industry mitigating the most egregiously cruel practices while society at large transitions from an animal-based to plant-based diet.

The commodification problem frame

The commodification problem frame could more logically fit a vegan solution and animal rights ideology as long as AROs emphasize how *all* farming is inherently *objectifying* more so than just emphasizing the suffering involved in industrialized mass production. However, in many cases, AROs referenced standard *factory farming* practices to indicate how the mass production of animals commodifies them and prioritizes profits, which implicitly excludes critiquing traditional forms of animal husbandry/fishing. I draw this conclusion because even when AROs argued against "free-range" farming, they often did so by claiming most of these farms were not *truly* free-range, which implies that *real* free-range farms would not be objectifying.

The killing problem frame

The lesser-used frame of "killing and taking of life for human food" is the problem frame that best aligns with animal rights ideology as well as a vegan solution, as it constructs farmed animals' *subject* status as being equal to dogs, cats, or even humans, all of whom are illegal to kill for food in the U.S.. Adding a *necessity* angle could bolster this frame, as it makes sense that if Americans do not *need* to eat animal products to survive, then they cannot morally justify the killing of fellow animal subjects. Some AROs occasionally mentioned meat's needlessness, or implied it by noting the healthfulness of veganism, but necessity and choice should be highlighted as central to determining when the idea of taking anyone's life becomes immoral and when meat does indeed become murder. This is supported by Hall's (2006a) contention that activists should not demonize predation overall, as carnivores have no *choice* but to be predators and humans may *need* to be omnivorous in extreme situations.

The problem frame of harm to humans and the environment

AROs linked meat and animal cruelty to other salient issues such a public health and environmentalism. While self-interested arguments about human health-risks are a legitimate concern, AROs should not make anthropocentric frames the *main* concern (and most AROs did not, except FARM), as it does not authentically reflect the AROs' primary motivation to protect NHAs. *Environmental* harm frames (when altruistic rather than anthropocentric) have a greater potential to fit animal rights ideology, especially by emphasizing protection of "wildlife" and their habitats (Hall, 2006a). All AROs expressed some concern for wildlife, especially oceanic life, in their environmental sections. However, I think AROs missed an opportunity to highlight the inherent value of NHAs and directly convey animal liberation goals of protecting free NHAs from human exploitation or unhealthy interference.

Additional Recommendations for Animal Rights-Informed Frames

In addition to emphasizing a problem frame of harm to nature and free NHAs, I recommend AROs frame food problems around injustice with a subcategory of cruelty/suffering. Then I suggest AROs engage audiences with the following individual and collective solutions: (1. Values-based) recognize the mutual subject status of *all* animals, including a compassion subcategory; (2. Consumer-based) eat a plant-based diet to avoid exploitation and unnecessary killing, including a health angle; and (3. Citizen-based) work collectively to solve food issues and replace the broader speciesist society with a just and sustainable one.

Recommended Problem Frames

Injustice: As the main problem frame, injustice would be transformational in nature, asking Americans to reconceptualize the accepted practices of animal agriculture, fishing, and meat-eating as unacceptable practices on the basis that they are, in most cases, unjust, exploitative, and unsustainable. This frame transformation alignment process could be complemented by promoting popular values of

respect for life, freedom, and the sentience of individual animal subjects. Justice, rights, and freedom resonate with American values of promoting life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Extending justice to NHAs requires appealing to moral consistency and compassion so people extend out their respect for the lives of sentient fellow subjects (humans and companion animals) to NHAs used for food.

The injustice frame should incorporate ethical aspects from both nature and culture by highlighting nature and society's mutual appreciation for freedom and some allowance for necessary violence. The injustice frame should state that animal agriculture is unfair and unnatural because it includes breeding fellow subjects in captivity, growing them to suit one's needs, and exploiting their body and offspring for one's own benefit. The exploited subject does not have the natural opportunity to leave the situation and survive on his/her own, nor the freedom to own his/her body and control what is done to it. Animal *agriculture* fits easier in an injustice frame, especially one that relies on naturalness and freedom, than does the practice of *hunting/fishing* animals for food. If animal products are required for human survival, as they may be in some regions, and always in the case of wild omnivorous and carnivorous NHAs, then hunting becomes more justified in nature's ethical system. Hunting/fishing does not involve the captivity and lifelong ownership that agriculture does, so it is not associated with exploitation and enslavement.

The injustice frame, as I am recommending it, is not specifically anti-corporate/industry as much as it is anti-exploitation, anti-enslavement, and anti-killing, whether the perpetrator is a corporation or a single person. And while AROs' anthropocentric, populist appeals to agribusiness's worker exploitation and rural pollution *are* a pro-justice frame promoting egalitarianism, their reliance on anti-corporate sentiment implies that "family" animal farms are justifiable because they benefit the middle-class farmer and treat human workers and other animals fairer.

Cruelty and suffering: The cruelty frame could be reconceptualized as a subcategory of injustice, widening the scope of cruelty to mean suffering not only *pain* but also suffering the injustice of being

enslaved and *used*. Similarly, AROs could place some blame on the meat-eating public, saying *they* are cruel to create a market demand for animal products knowing that it subjects fellow animals to unnecessary suffering and death. A suffering frame is best used to complement a solution that asks humans to see other animals as fellow subjects and to value their sentience, so it should emphasize *emotional/mental* pain not just bodily pain.

Rather than highlighting factory farm confinement, AROs should emphasize the suffering involved in *death* and in other basic agricultural or fishing practices standard (and often economically imperative) to *all* farms/fisheries, including smaller ones. But since anti-instrumentalism is hard to visually construct, the challenge becomes finding images that encapsulate suffering without the visual discourse being too reliant on anti-industrialism.

Recommended Solution Frames

Respecting the subject status of fellow sentient animals: AROs can continue to include their common analogies between farmed animals and other NHAs with subject status, such as dogs and cats. But to deconstruct the human/animal separation inherent to speciesism, AROs should follow PETA's lead and more frequently compare NHAs to the *human* animal (and vice versa). Additionally, AROs should openly acknowledge that humans are animals by saying "human animal" or "humans and other animals" (which no AROs did) and avoiding dualistic phrases like "people and animals," (which PETA and FS used a few times). Yet human-animal frames should blend ideas of kinship based on evolution and sentience with ideas of diversity to celebrate that all animals possess unique traits and need not resemble humans to deserve respect (Freeman, 2010). So instead of privileging fellow mammals, vegan advocacy should more frequently feature birds (as COK and VO did) and fish (as PETA did).

Eating a plant-based diet: Promoting an organic vegan diet is preferred to suggesting consumers just reduce animal product consumption, as veganism more closely aligns with the anti-instrumental

values of animal rights philosophy and the recommended frames of justice toward domesticated and wild animals. To aid persuasiveness and avoid harsh ultimatums, vegan advocacy could suggest a transition period, as many did, rather than succumbing to meat-reduction messages that imply it is okay to continue to support *some* NHA exploitation. Additionally, AROs should continue to appeal to human's self-interest in health (physical and mental), as it is essential to the argument that killing animals is unnecessary for human survival.

Working collectively to solve problems and change the system: AROs favored the individual market-based solution of changing one's consumption, but sometimes AROs more overtly engaged audiences as *citizens*, such as when FS suggested people demand legal reforms or when AROs asked the public to join in activism. Market-based consumer solutions should not be suggested in isolation of addressing broader *systemic* issues in American culture, politics, and economics that support legalized exploitation and an animal-based diet over a solely plant-based one. While not being too utopian, AROs should describe a moral *vision* (Lakoff, 2004) of the kind of non-speciesist, sustainable society that Americans can create together by respecting animal freedom.

In Conclusion

These AROs make a vital contribution to the movement by providing a variety of persuasive rationales that encourage NHA protection. But the discourse often leaned toward welfare/husbandry in its frequent critique of factory farm cruelty and occasional solutions of "humane" reform and meat-reduction. AROs most represented animal rights values when they promoted ethical veganism and respect for NHA sentience, condemning commodification and unnecessary killing. To increase ideological authenticity, I recommend AROs problematize the injustice and exploitation inherent to growing someone for food, complemented by promoting values of freedom, life, respect, compassion, health, and environmental responsibility. A posthumanist path to sowing the seeds of justice will rely on convincing humans not only to respect the sentience and individuality of other animals, in all their splendid diversity, but also to

respect the animality in themselves and envision a more cooperative place for the human animal in the natural world.

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