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## **Applying Social Movement Theory to Nonhuman Rights Mobilization and the Importance of Faction Hierarchies**

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## **APPLYING SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY TO NONHUMAN RIGHTS MOBILIZATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FACTION HIERARCHIES**

### **Abstract**

This paper offers an exploratory analysis of social movement theory as it relates to the nonhuman animal rights movement. Individual participant motivations and experiences, movement resource mobilization, and movement relationships with the public, the political environment, historical context, countermovements, and the media are discussed. In particular, the hierarchical relationships between factions are highlighted as an important area for further research in regards to social movement success. Specifically, the role of counterframing in subduing radical mobilization and the potential aggravating factor of status contamination is explored.

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## Introduction and Definitions

This article aims to address major themes in social movement theory (SMT) in their applicability to the modern nonhuman animal rights movement with a special consideration of the relevance of hierarchical relationships among factions. A multitude of social movement definitions exist, but, for the purpose of this paper, a social movement will refer to conscious, sustained efforts to enact social change using extra-institutional means (Goodwin and Jasper, 2003). This definition is distinct from consensus movements that tend to be widely supported by the public and the state and are largely free from opposition (Schwartz and Shuva, 1992). This also distinguishes social movements from interest groups that also enact social change but rely heavily on legitimated channels for social change, namely through political lobbying (Clemens, 1997).

As such, the nonhuman animal rights movement, active since the mid-nineteenth century, can be considered a social movement as it has struggled to improve conditions for nonhumans despite considerable resistance using moral suasion, consumer boycott, protest, and other forms of direct action (Beers, 2006; Guither, 1998; Jasper, 1992). Furthermore, the nonhuman rights movement might be considered as part of a larger wave of “new” social movements characterized by a democratic structure, rejection of traditional means for social change, and claimsmaking focused on rights and quality of life (Dalton and Kuechler, 1990). Political power, no longer monopolized by the state, is increasingly wielded by organizations (Tilly, 1984). The abolitionist faction of nonhuman animal rights, in particular, highlights the need for democratic access to decision making. For instance, a prominent abolitionist theorist, Gary Francione, explicitly rejects the need for professionalization or leadership: “We do not need large organizations whose employees get fat salaries and subsidized travel. Every one of us can be a ‘leader.’ If we are to succeed, every one of us *must* be a leader, an important force for change. Every one of us has the ability to affect and influence the lives of others” (2007). Indeed, this tension between moderate and radical movement structure characterizes nonhuman liberation efforts. Francione’s comment critiques a modernized social movement that has largely professionalized and harkens to the power in grassroots mobilization and individual contribution traditionally associated with collective action on behalf of nonhumans.

Earnest mobilization for the protection of nonhumans began in Victorian Britain and America, where wealthy aristocrats, involved with other moral crusades and having the resources to spare, became concerned with the treatment of urban working horses and the particularly abhorrent methods used by cities to “dispose” of stray dogs.<sup>1</sup> Gradually, concern for nonhuman welfare extended to other species as well. Upton Sinclair’s novel, *The Jungle*, while intended to raise awareness to worker conditions (and while ultimately most effective in raising awareness about food safety), was successful in revealing to the public the previously shrouded reality of slaughterhouse operations. Writing a decade before him, in 1892, Henry Salt penned a treatise on rights for other animals, drawing on the human rights mobilizations of his time that recognized the personhood of those considered property. Many other human rights activists and reformers of the nineteenth century had seriously considered the treatment and use of other animals. The communal Alcott house of New England, *Fruitlands*, operated not only as a stop on the Underground Railroad, but required veganism of its residents (Francis, 2010). Not only were the flesh, eggs, and lactations of other animals eschewed, but even their labor and manure.

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<sup>1</sup> In New York City, for example, dogs were corralled into a large cage and drowned in the river (Beers, 2006).

Vegetarian and vegan experiments did abound during this era, sometimes following trends in romanticism or religious purity, but other times explicitly recognizing the correlations between the experiences of humans and other animals and the desire to extend moral consideration (Davis, 2010).

Thus, the human social reforms over the past two centuries were hugely influential in early mobilization efforts for other animals. As the nonhuman animal rights movement has struggled for legitimacy, it perhaps quite intentionally draws on human rights discourse to garner claimsmaking strength. Connection to human rights has indeed been successful for other disadvantaged movements in bolstering their legitimacy (Brysk, 1994). While many applied abolitionist anti-slavery rhetoric to nonhumans (Beers, 2006) and suffragettes eagerly adopted vegetarianism as congruent with their challenge to patriarchal oppression (Leneman, 1997), it was not until the mid twentieth century that nonhuman liberation gained a significant political presence (Guither, 1998). As activists of the Civil Rights movement began to challenge the exclusion of women, homosexuals, and African Americans from the rights discourse, so too did nonhuman advocates who pushed the boundaries of moral consideration to include other species as well. Women's rights advocates, for example, call for the accommodation of gender nuances and specifically female interests (rape, domestic violence, sex education) in human rights claimsmaking (Stephen, 1997). Similarly, then, advocates of other animals insist on the accommodation of species.

Just as the inclusion of these new human demographics required a reconstructing of eligibility requirement, protest strategies, and goal demands to reflect new demographics, the extension of rights to other species necessitated new considerations as well. Importantly, for any oppressed group, but particularly for nonhuman animals, just who is being represented and who can be counted as a representative has required definition and is still without consensus. Animal advocates of yesteryear focused largely on highly visible, urban nonhumans who were not used for food. But, a century later, with the rise of factory farming systems and the subsequent release of Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* in the early 1970s, nonhuman advocates began to widen their circle of concern to include nonhumans raised for food as well. Indeed, the very notion of a human/nonhuman (and human privileging) divide in the hierarchically constructed realm of moral consideration is being challenged (Adams and Donovan, 1995; Wolfe, 2003).

While the scope of nonhuman animal representation varies by individual and organization, most liberationist advocates and groups today focus on any number of species impacted by human activities. While human interference tends to be a prerequisite for representation, however, groups may also discriminate based on a litany of qualities when determining how far to cast their net of representation. For example, according to Francione, "animals" are differentiated from non-animals in their capacity for sentience or self-awareness. Francione's definition of sentience also requires an ability to feel pleasure and pain and to hold interests and preferences. Any animal that is sentient would be eligible for representation. This is coupled with Regan's notion of a "subject of life" whereby, to be included under rights mobilization efforts, a nonhuman animal would need the ability to "perceive and remember," "act intentionally in pursuit of their desires or goals," and possess "beliefs, desires, and preferences," a "sense of their own future," and a "psychophysical identity over time" (Regan, 2004, p. 264). However, Regan's notion of animality tends to be overly particular and necessarily excludes many sentient

beings about whose subjective experiences we have little understanding. Moreover, as Francione argues, many of these characteristics exclude sentient beings (including many humans) who might still benefit from protected rights regardless of their capacity for complex cognitive functions listed in Regan's definition. Therefore, it is perhaps wiser to adhere to Francione's more inclusive definition which relies on sentience alone in affording rights. And, for those nonhuman animals for whom we are uncertain in regards to their sentience, Francione suggests we err on the side of caution and include them as well. This definition is important because once an animal is regarded as non-sentient or not a subject of life, it follows that other rights holders might justifiably use them as resources.

As illustrated in the debate over moral inclusion, what is "animal" is socially constructed. Consequently, the nonhuman movement varies on its representation of animals. Some attempt to represent all sentient animals, including humans and insects. Others focus only on nonhuman animals and exclude nonhumans of lower complexity. Still others focus primarily on popular species such as monkeys and apes, cats and dogs, or whales and dolphins. But generally, nonhuman animal rights advocates seek to extend those rights traditionally granted to humans—the *consideration of interests*—to incorporate other sentient beings who share a capacity to suffer and thus possess interests to speak of. Like other oppressed groups who have struggled for inclusion in rights discourse, newcomer claimsmaking will reflect that demographic's unique interests and identity. So, while women might struggle for the consideration of sexual violence in the rights discourse, nonhuman animals, alternatively, might have a vested interest in not being used exploited as food, labor, test subjects, or entertainment.

The types of interests that should be considered—and, likewise, who is considered an appropriate proxy in representing nonhumans—are additional points of contention. The hugely diverse nonhuman animal rights movement sees advocates taking a variety of stances with regards to human-nonhuman relationships. To be considered an advocate, it is not enough that one simply represent the interests of nonhuman animals. Such a definition would suggest that vivisectors and farmers that practice good "husbandry" might be considered advocates. Similarly, "conservationist" sportsmen that mobilize to protect hunting habitats might also be included. Therefore, for the purposes of this article, nonhuman animal rights activists will be defined as those who seek to relieve nonhumans from their oppressive conditions with a focus on *individual* rights for nonhumans that are unrelated to whatever function they might serve humans or the ecosystem. Such a definition would exclude any who do not seek to liberate nonhumans, who treat nonhumans as objects and resources, or who view nonhumans holistically as part of a larger ecosystem with no claims to rights as individuals. Thus, many nonhuman and environmental "protection" groups (the Humane Society of the United States and the Sierra Club, for example) would be excluded.

With the definitions of nonhuman animals, nonhuman advocates, nonhuman rights, and the nonhuman movement attended to, we can begin to locate nonhuman advocacy within the sphere of social movement studies. Such an exploration might be organized in a number of ways (by following the historical progression of social movement studies, by discussing clusters of related theories, etc.), but this paper will deconstruct SMT as a micro-level/individual experience, a meso-level/group experience, and, finally, as a subject of larger, macro-level influences. While participation in a social movement is sometimes a personal decision and personal costs and

benefits will be experienced, the decision to participate is often mediated by social pulls (a critical mass, networks, a culture, etc.). The individual and group experience of collective action must always contend with larger social (or natural) influences such as political regimes, competition among social movements, environmental disasters, historical forces, etc. Thus, the nonhuman animal rights movement, typical of other movements, recognizes that the choice to mobilize for nonhumans is ultimately an individual choice (particularly for this group, as many are recruited with no preexisting networks) and that the individual will experience profound identity transformations (some of which may indeed be negative). This movement also recognizes the importance of strategy in professionalized organization and the nurturing of a movement culture to foster group cohesiveness, movement strength, and resourcefulness. But macro-scale realities also shape a movement, and nonhuman advocates must face prevailing ideologies of speciesism, countermovement from nonhuman exploitative industries, competing movements and factions, and a globalizing capitalist economy that entrenches animal use.

### **Individual Participation**

Ultimately, any social movement is comprised of individual participants. Some may be comprised of only a few committed and resourceful persons, while others might lay claim to hundreds of thousands of perhaps more loosely committed members. The experience and resources the participating individual has available to contribute (and could potentially gain) also varies, as do their motivations and expectations. In nonhuman animal mobilization, the personal motivations vary considerably. Because nonhumans lack the ability to mobilize on their own behalf, humans have intervened as proxies. This inherent disconnect between nonhumans and their representatives creates a potential disincentive to participation that is somewhat unique to the nonhuman movement. Yet, many oppressed groups, such as human slaves, children, and women, have been historically without voice or power and would be severely limited in their ability to mobilize as well. Fortunately, social movements (the nonhuman animal rights movement included) have been able to circumvent this disadvantage and create meaningful change for their constituency (Beers, 2006). Of course, this is not to say that human slaves, women, and other disadvantaged subjects of social change have not been able to act on their own behalf. Even nonhuman animals have been active participants in their emancipation as documented in countless instances of resistance (Hribal, 2010).

Regardless, even for those in more privileged or advantageous positions, social movement participation almost always entails a certain degree of cost and risk that must be overcome. Thus, the decision to participate is not simply a knee-jerk reaction to grievances, but is thought to require some degree of consideration. Given that significant disincentives would be expected to incapacitate social movement mobilization, social movement theorists have expended considerable attention to uncovering what motivates certain individuals to participate and others to free-ride (to abstain from participation but to nonetheless reap the benefits achieved by others who participate and incur those costs and risks). Some have applied a basic theory of rational choice which frames the decision to participate as one that is made by weighing potential costs against potential benefits. Potential costs for the nonhuman movement, for example, might include significant social stigmatization (Iacobbo and Iacobbo, 2006), legal persecution (Lovitz, 2010; Potter, 2011), and limited socioeconomic or geographic access to vegan alternatives (Harper, 2010). If the advocates do not stand to gain any direct benefits from liberating

nonhumans, these costs might be amplified. The collective good that advocates hope to achieve—equal consideration for all sentient beings—might not resonate with a deeply speciesist society. As such, many advocates also reiterate the interconnected nature of oppression for humans and nonhumans alike and also draw on the desire for environmental and human health benefits that would directly benefit the larger public.

Fortunately, researchers have identified several other potential individual benefits from social movement participation that could compensate for these costs and risks and encourage collective behavior. First, the achievement of a critical mass is thought to encourage participation (Chong, 1992; Gerald and Oliver, 1993). When enough individuals are participating, risks and costs are distributed more widely and are significantly diminished for each person. Critical mass also creates a culture that normalizes that social movement behavior. Similarly, individuals are more likely to participate if they suspect success is likely and that their involvement will be influential (Finkel, Muller, and Opp, 1989). Second, individuals are thought to undergo some degree of political learning. That is, individuals will consider their past experiences with mobilization to determine the utility of future participation (Macy, 1990). Again, the perception that their involvement was influential is important. It has also been considered that extreme repression can sometimes overpower any individual hesitations related to risks and costs, encouraging mobilization despite the disincentives (Opp and Roehl, 1990). What's more, some individuals may participate to *intentionally* face the risks of participation. Some researchers have argued that the celebration of risk-taking and sacrifice for the greater good actually works as a status reward (Willer, 2009).

To be sure, the identity gained from participation can become a powerful incentive. Prestige and reputation gained from participating can override immediate self-interest (Muller and Opp, 1986). Likewise, as seen in lesbian and gay mobilization efforts, the community and sense of belonging that a movement can elicit becomes a potent motivator (Armstrong, 2002; Bernstein, 1997). Animal activists also report experiencing heightened self-confidence and enriched, more meaningful lives (Gaarder, 2008). It should be noted, however, that this acquired identity can also become a detriment. Many nonhuman activists, for instance, are labeled by the public, countermovements, and the state as irrational, terroristic, or overly emotional. Indeed, emotionality plays a controversial role in nonhuman advocacy. While emotion is hugely important in motivating participation for any social movement (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, 2001), it is particularly salient in nonhuman animal rights participation (DeCoux, 2009). But emotion can also work to delegitimize movement claims if participant identities are gendered and negatively perceived. This is a common occurrence in the largely female nonhuman animal liberation movement (Einwohner, 1999; Gaarder, 2011). So, while participation in nonhuman advocacy is largely motivated by an emotional response (Jasper and Poulsen, 1995), the negative stereotypes of irrationality attributed to female participants are notable risks to consider (Gaarder, 2008). For this reason, many advocates of nonhumans adhere to highly rational, reasoned arguments to counter the risk to identities (Groves, 2001). Furthermore, identity can also deter recruitment in creating an identity that is too exclusive. Creating a vegan or liberationist identity, for example, necessarily otherizes the larger, speciesist public who also act as the activists' recruitment pool (Maurer, 2002). This occurs *within* the movement as well. The abolitionist faction, for example, has been criticized for protecting exclusivity at the cost of alienating and repelling other nonhuman advocates (Yates, 2012). Radical factions that, by their

nature, criticize moderated movement activity and must protect and differentiate their position from that of the moderate group could be creating a negative and unwelcoming identity.

Given high opportunity costs and the potential for identity and emotion to become detrimental, group solidarity becomes critical in sustaining participation. Individuals must be bound together in some way to sustain and protect their involvement. Nonhuman advocacy, in particular, is heavily reliant on networks to recruit and maintain members (Cherry, 2006). Increasingly, transnational networking has become an important resource for nonhuman animal rights advocates, particularly for smaller, radical factions. Thus, advocates struggle to create an identity that is nurturing to participants, while, at the same time, not so exclusive that it discourages new participants from joining. As we have seen, advocates must also contend with outside counterclaims to their identity that can undermine the movement's authority. Strong, inclusive networks, then, carry much potential in reducing costs associated with participation and overcoming free-riding (Diani, 2004).

### **Social Movement Agency**

While individual decisions and contributions are important in understanding how movements coalesce and sustain, social movements are ultimately collective endeavors. Group processes vary significantly between social movements, and how a movement mobilizes available resources is linked to its ability to attain its goals (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Consequently, resource mobilization theory has dominated the social movement literature as a means of analyzing movement agency in determining outcome (Jenkins, 1983). Just as individuals are expected to participate given some degree of rational consideration, movements, too, are thought to behave more or less rationally when navigating their environments in pursuit of social change. Movements negotiate externally with the public, the state, other social movements, and countermovements. They also exhibit factionalism and tussle internally among themselves for the power to create meanings and to frame problems. Resource mobilization presumes that grievances are normal and therefore looks beyond individual incentives to participate, grappling instead with the difficult problem of how collective action manipulates resources to achieve goals (Foweraker, 1995).

As such, movements have some ability to manipulate societal culture and create supportive ideologies that legitimize their claimsmaking (Eckstein, 2001). Significantly, nonhuman animal rights mobilization, since the nineteenth century, has been successful in creating a culture that is much more sensitive to nonhuman animal interests (Beers, 2006; Ryder, 2000). Since the 1970s, the concept of nonhuman animal "rights" has become increasingly familiar with the general public. The mainstreaming and normalization of concern for nonhuman animals, intentionally produced by decades of mobilization efforts, has certainly created an environment much more conducive to future movement activities. However, over time, these movement activities also run the risk of falling into certain path dependencies whereby movements become locked into procedures and repertoires initiated many years prior. Deviation from these routines becomes increasingly difficult as time passes and movements become invested in particular behaviors. The cultures and ideologies they have fostered begin to cement. For example, a movement that has historically structured itself for the purpose of mobilizing financial donations will have difficulty adapting to mobilize grassroots activism (Oliver and Marwell, 1992). Piven and



Cloward (1977) are particularly critical of organization for these reasons. Organizations, they argue, are prone to internal oligarchy, external cooptation, moderated tactics and goals, and the unfortunate rejection of influential radical mobilization. Professionalization aggravates these tendencies as moderation is especially favored to maximize constituencies. A related effect of moderating is the diversion of significant percentages of acquired resources to self-maintenance (Edwards and Marullo, 1995). This is where Francione's criticisms of professionalized nonhuman animal rights organizations can be placed. Francione (1996) underscores moderated goals and tactics as a significant compromise to nonhuman animal rights. Out of regard for "purely pragmatic self interests," he argues, "[...] large, wealthy animal organizations [...] are more concerned with the size of their donor bases than with the moral message that they promote" (Francione and Garner, 2010, p. 74). Bearing out Piven and Cloward's concerns with organizations, abolitionism is blunted by hegemonic movement powers. So, both path dependency and active moderation could be at work in coalescing professionalized movement power to the point of self-imposed inflexibility. In such situations of stunted movement activity, however, those excluded radical factions are actually critical in refocusing movement goals and inspiring tactical innovations (Gerlach, 1999; Wrenn, 2011).

While radical factions play an important role in social movement health, they have not always been welcomed favorably. Factionalism tends to be underscored as a significant detriment to movement success, particularly in that it diverts crucial resources to infighting (Benford, 1993). As we have seen, the abolitionist animal rights faction has been criticized for its extreme exclusivity that may be severely limiting its ability to expand (Yates, 2012). Thus, to measure movement success (or lack thereof), it is certainly important to examine variations in resource mobilization between movements. But, also, the interactions among internal factions are a critical component as well. The nonhuman animal rights movement is not unlike many other social movements in its exhibition of many sharply divided factions (Zald and Ash, 1966). It is typical for movements to splinter and regroup in reaction to conflicts over perceived problems, accepted solutions and tactics, and methods in mobilization (Benford and Snow, 2000). So, for example, while advocates are united under the shared aim of nonhuman animal advocacy, they are sharply divided over the end goal of either liberation or reform and over the legitimacy of various tactics (direct action, violence, nonviolence, vegan outreach, etc.). Critical of the moderated tactics and goals of the professionalized nonhuman movement, Francione (1996) has outlined a radical, abolitionist approach that refocuses nonhuman advocacy on eliminating nonhuman animal use entirely with a particular emphasis on veganism as a moral requirement for achieving this end. In line with Piven and Cloward, Francione explicitly rejects the need for organizations, and, in fact, explicitly discourages their use altogether.

While agendas and claimsmaking certainly differ, how resources are mobilized by nonhuman animal rights factions varies considerably as well. As we have seen, the mainstream movement, having largely professionalized, tends to focus on the more dependable solicitation of financial donations and media representation. The direct action or "militant" faction, namely represented by the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and symbolized by iconographic ski-masked men dressed in black, often relies on property damage (Foreman and Haywood, 1993; Love and Obst, 1971), open releases (*An Animal Liberation Primer*, n.d.), intimidation ("haunting" and "harassment" as they call it) (Morgan, 1980), and even direct violence as amply illustrated in handbooks on munitions, bombs, and other weapons (*Improvised Munitions Handbook*, n.d.). Through

physical harm to other humans, destruction of property, and emotional terror, this faction hopes to create social change through force and fear. Such a tactical repertoire also tends to reject the utility of nonviolence. This is explained in one essay promoted on an online ALF library:

The ideology of nonviolence creates effects opposite to what it promises. As a result nonviolence ideologists cooperate in [...] continued repression of the powerless [...]. To minimize violence we must adopt a pragmatic, reality-based method of operation. (Meyers, 2000: 1).

Not surprisingly, such an approach requires that they operate in relative secrecy. Subsequently, this faction receives little, if any, public support from the professionalized and moderated mainstream organizations (Guither, 1998).

The abolitionist faction, alternatively, rejects both the moderate claimmaking of the mainstream movement and the violent tendencies of the direct action faction, relying instead on nonviolent vegan outreach and moral suasion (Francione and Garner, 2010). Both moderation and violence are thought to be counterproductive. The compromises of professionalized organizations are seen to undermine goals of nonhuman liberation in supporting exploitative industries and creating consumer complacency. Violent liberationist tactics, on the other hand, are thought to alienate the public, incite state repression, and run counterintuitive to values of peace, equality, and respect (Hall, 2006). Drawing on the abolitionist language of the anti-slavery movement that preceded it and recognizing the intersectional nature of oppressions for both humans and nonhumans alike, abolitionists call for a complete cessation of nonhuman animal use with a preference for education, outreach, and the adoption of veganism (Boyd, 1987).<sup>2</sup> In many ways, Francione's abolitionist approach does mirror the human abolitionists of the past, particularly in its reliance on moral suasion and nonviolent tactics. Yet, human abolitionists did sometimes utilize violence and were often involved in legal mobilization (Quarles, 1969). What's more, the work of human abolitionists is far from done (slavery in so many ways resurfaced in sharecropping and later in the discriminatory prison system). Advocacy today focuses on desegregation, combating racist ideology, improving educational opportunities, and securing other basic freedoms (Davis, 2006; Lewis, 1995). Nonhuman abolitionists, however, remain focused on attacking the property status of other animals. Though, like their human abolitionist counterparts, nonhuman abolitionists do emphasize the importance of attacking oppressive ideologies that support institutionalized enslavement and speciesism.

### **The Social Movement Environment**

Thus far we have seen the relatively rationalized behaviors of individuals, movements, and their factions in determining the formation and structure of collective action. But, clearly, the nonhuman animal rights movement, like any social movement, does not operate in a vacuum. Here, proponents of political opportunity structure challenge the shortcomings of resource mobilization in failing to account for macro-scale realities (Koopmans, 1999; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996). There will always be some degree of environmental influence that lies outside the control of the individual and the group that either provides or impedes opportunity. Furthermore, movement agency is highly influenced by that movement's history

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<sup>2</sup> The appropriation of human abolitionist language has garnered some degree of controversy in that Francione, who developed the terminology for nonhuman animal rights purposes, has largely failed to place the term historically or within the discourse of ongoing human abolitionist mobilization (The Vegan Police, 2011).

(Eckstein, 2001; Rubin, 2004) and its relationship to larger cultural forces and the social movement climate in general. The nonhuman movement, for instance, has a solid history of responding to highly visible cruelties suffered by urban species. This has certainly worked to maintain a movement that is largely concerned with reforming human-nonhuman relationships. Liberationist claimsmaking only surfaced in response to the energy and influence of the Civil Rights movement. Thus, the movement's history has created particular path dependencies in goals and tactics that continue to structure the movement's decision making today.

Political climate, too, will shape a movement's structure and trajectory. In the mid-nineteenth century, for example, the nonhuman movement gained legitimacy in drawing on the claimsmaking discourse of the relatively successful human abolitionist movement (Beers, 2006). The American Temperance movement, and subsequently, the Progressive movement, also created a political and cultural environment conducive to drawing attention to nonhuman animal issues. Later, riding the success of the Civil Rights and environmental movements of the 1960s, the nonhuman movement experienced a renaissance as the public was especially receptive to claims that extended concern to the nonhuman realm. Recently, however, the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> atmosphere has heightened state sensitivity to disruptive domestic activism. For instance, the 1992 Animal Enterprise Protection Act was amended in 2006 and renamed the Animal Enterprise *Terrorism* Act, effectively criminalizing any nonhuman activism that financially interferes with nonhuman industries (Lovitz, 2010). So, while activism on behalf of other animals carries on, participants and potential participants alike are keenly aware of the increased risks associated with their activism (Potter, 2011). This could be deterring and muting collective action to some extent (Lovitz, 2010). Certainly, then, political opportunities, or lack thereof, can influence a movement's ability to successfully mobilize. Other large social and environmental factors could also impact a movement's success. The Western health crisis associated with rich diets high in nonhuman animal products has introduced many to vegan and vegetarian diets (Marsh, Zeuschner, and Saunders, 2012). Likewise, the growing concern over climate change has increasingly come to include nonhuman animal agriculture as a primary culprit (Goodland and Anhang, 2009).

Another influential factor in the social movement environment, and largely outside the control of participants and groups, is the inevitable mobilization of countermovements. Often concerned with preserving the status quo, countermovements emerge to protect taken-for-granted social structures and ideologies (Jasper and Poulsen, 1993). Thus, social movements are often obligated to address the counter-claimsmaking and adjust their framing and repertoires accordingly. As Jasper and Poulsen (1993) uncovered when exploring nonhuman animal rights interactions with opposing mobilizations, countermovements can become a key variable in explaining movement successes or failures. So, the nonhuman rights movement must combat countermovement mobilization in addition to fighting for resources, recruitment, and social change. Exploitative industries work to actively defame nonhuman activists (Gorski, 2011), portraying them as detriments to human well-being, hindrances to scientific progress (Smith, 2010), or, as noted above, violent extremists. Much of this countermovement activity is conducted by highly organized and well-funded agribusiness, bio-medical industries, and recreational "sportsmen" (Sorenson, 2006) with powerful ties to the state (Lovitz, 2010).

Movements must also contend with public perceptions and media portrayals (Gamson, 2004). As discussed previously, countermovement and public misconceptions about a movement's identity can become problematic. However, the media's selection process can be particularly troublesome when deciding which movements and protests will be covered with a tendency to favor powerful interests and the status quo (Oliver and Myers, 1999). However, movements must utilize the media as it is an invaluable resource in diffusing claimsmaking and mobilizing participation. Moreover, independent media outlets offer venue and voice for otherwise marginalized groups (Ryan, 2005). The abolitionist faction, as we have seen, is largely excluded from the larger nonhuman movement's claimsmaking process, but, abolitionism is able to utilize affordable, free-access media resources like self-printed literature or the Internet to overcome internal movement barriers. The Internet, in particular, "[...] has lowered the opportunity costs of communication and has facilitated networking among similarly minded activists, who can bypass the large organizations and their efforts to control the discourse about issues" (Francione and Garner, 2010, p. 67). That said, the power regained from circumventing traditional channels and instead utilizing online forums might result in a situation of cyberbalkanization as increased control over claimsmaking can lead some groups to promote their agendas to the absolute exclusion of opposing approaches (Alstynne and Brynjolfsson, 2005). The abolitionist movement, in its problems with exclusivity, must certainly contend with this. However, the very nature of abolitionist nonhuman rights claimsmaking—that being the vested interest in monitoring professionalized and violent organizations and tactics—combats, to some extent, the potential for cyberbalkanization. Indeed, abolitionism is very often engaged in rigorous debate with other groups and individuals within the nonhuman animal rights arena (Francione and Garner, 2010).

Yet, despite the power in media representation, movements need to be wary of how media bias can misconstrue the movement to their detriment. While culture and ideology can be products of social movement mobilization, preexisting counter-ideologies and unreceptive cultures are a social reality that movements must address and attempt to resonate with. The nonhuman animal rights movement in particular enjoys extremely few positive media representations. In fact, many liberation or vegan claims are ignored entirely, or reframed in ways that support the interests of nonhuman exploitative industries (Blaxter, 2009; Cole and Morgan, 2011; Freeman, 2009; Freeman, Beckoff, and Bexell, 2011). However, media coverage continues to be a favored tactic in the nonhuman movement. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), for example, operates under the assumption that any coverage, even if negative, must be good for the movement in eliciting attention and perhaps provoking the audience to consider the issues (PETA, n.d.). Regardless, resonance with an indifferent or unfavorable public sphere is a leading challenge for nonhuman rights activists.

### **The Impact of Factionalism**

The nonhuman animal rights movement, then, is a collective group that must contend with a multitude of factors in its goal for achieving nonhuman liberation. Some of those factors are within its control, but many are not. Importantly, however, this movement also faces the additional challenge of inter-movement competition. While many social movements experience the problems associated with competing for limited attention and resources with similar organizations in their field (indeed, many organizations within a field will actually begin to homogenize as a successful strategy becomes standard) (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), the

nonhuman movement must contend with radical factions that are not only sharply critical of the moderated professionalized organizations, but are also competing for resources and claimsmaking space. To be clear, other movements have experienced this phenomenon, as radical mobilization is certainly not unique to the nonhuman animal rights movement. The women's movement, for example, enjoys a robust, moderate collectivity (generally associated with the most prominent group, the National Organization for Women), but contends with radical feminists who worry that the moderated movement has lost sight of important goals and ignores root causes of gender inequality. The women's movement, however, explicitly values difference, encourages all to participate, and gives weight to a variety of concerns (Lindsey, 2010). As a result, it has been suggested that the lack of unity and the leniency towards dissenting opinions have inhibited the success of the women's movement (Epstein, 2003).

Despite its place in the wave of new social movements, the nonhuman animal rights movement has no such cultural appreciation for democratic leadership. It appears that, in accordance with Piven and Cloward's apprehensions, organizational oligarchy has manifested to the detriment of movement progress. Radical factions are largely excluded by hegemonic organizations like PETA, Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM), Farm Sanctuary, and Vegan Outreach. Indeed, these professionalized organizations are increasingly allocating resources to counter abolitionist claimsmaking and block their access to spheres of discourse. For instance, in the summer of 2012, dissatisfied with the moderated messages promulgated by the Animal Rights National Conference that is annually hosted by FARM to spotlight the agendas of professionalized organizations, a group of abolitionists attempted to hold their own smaller convention in the same venue at the same time as the larger conference. After initially accepting their reservation, the hotel later shut down the abolitionist event at the behest of the Animal Rights National Conference organizers (LaVeck and Stein, 2012). FARM later released a statement intended to "clear the air" and defame the offending radicals as "sideline pundits" (FARM, 2012).

Thus, inter-movement tensions are a particular problem for collective action on behalf of other animals. The radical abolitionists experience a significant amount of hegemonic exclusion and countermovement retaliation from the dominant animal groups despite their critical role in maintaining overall movement health. But, also, and perhaps not unrelated, abolitionists must contend with the phenomenon of status contamination. As larger organizations increasingly frame radical advocacy as deviant, unrealistic, and divisive, effectively demonizing radical tactics (Francione and Garner, 2010), one might expect that fewer advocates would be willing to identify with the abolitionist faction; the status of radical mobilization thus devalued and diminished, participants would presumably disassociate. Alternatively, as professionalized organizations also co-opt many of the important symbols and claims made popular by radical advocacy and mold them into something congruent with their favored moderate tactics, radical activists must also concern themselves with the potential for their status as radicals to be "contaminated" with moderate claimsmaking. In some ways, therefore, radical activists must engage in their own disassociation to protect their status, although, this might serve to aggravate the already disconcerting problem of hyper-exclusivity.

## Discussion

The individual decision to participate in collective action is, to some extent, a result of carefully weighed costs and benefits. Identity, emotion, and networks can influence these decisions and help counteract the potential to free-ride. At the collective level, movements can bring about change through strategized mobilization of available resources and the active creation of meaning, culture, and ideology. As resource mobilization theorists have emphasized, how a movement frames problems and solutions can impact a movement's identity and its ability to succeed. Yet, conflicts over framing often encourage factionalism. Factionalism can operate as a useful motivation for the movement, but it can also act as a major drain on resources. In the larger context of movement activity, movements operate in a fluctuating, reflexive relationship with their environment. They could be paralyzed or invigorated from particular political, economic, social, or ecological climates. Likewise, their actions and repertoires might be restricted by certain path dependencies that have crystallized over the course of the movement's history.

In regards to the nonhuman animal rights movement, it appears that factionalism, as a reflection of power hierarchies within the movement, could be the greatest impediment to goal attainment. Particularly, the active countermobilization on behalf of the professionalized organizations against abolitionism might prove a useful site for further exploration, as would the extreme exclusiveness perpetuated by the abolitionists themselves. Issues with status contamination might also be a latent effect of these inter-movement tensions that could be polarizing factions and hindering recruitment. Likewise, though not discussed in this paper, the possibility of concentrated power in the abolitionist faction (despite claims to reject professionalized organization and leadership in favor of democratic participation and grassroots mobilization), could help to explain limited movement success. On the other hand, the literature on path dependency might inform goal attainment. The professionalized nonhuman rights movement, for example, a product of approximately two hundred years of tradition, routine, and investment in reform, has had difficulty innovating tactics and claimsmaking. The abolitionist faction, in relying on nonviolent moral suasion and vegan outreach, provides a radical alternative to the moderated repertoires of the mainstream nonhuman animal rights movement. Radical factions might offer an important challenge to debilitating movement path dependencies. The opportunities for future research in factional influence, then, are numerous. A more thorough investigation into nonhuman animal mobilization could powerfully inform studies in social movement interactions and outcome.

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