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Big Animal Rights and the Nonprofit Revolution

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The Activist Imagination

- Sociology 101: Don’t miss the forest for the trees
- Tradition, authority, hegemony restrict
- Emotive, integrated, and stressful nature of activism invites individualizing
Social Movement Theory

Environment

Group

Individual
Environmental Influence of Neoliberalism

- West enters era of austerity in 80s-90s
- Nonprofits cheap solutions
  - And quell radical protest
- Nonprofits rational solutions
  - Offer stability, predictability, and efficiency
- Nonprofit industrial complex
Research Design

Qualitative Content Analysis

Archival data
- Nonprobability sampling
- Magazines and newsletters
- 1980 - Early 2000s

Digital data
- Random sample
- Blogs
- Professionalized groups and radical factions
- Mid 2000s - 2013
Trends in Animal Rights Nonprofitization

- Shift towards professionalization beginning in the mid 1980s
- Claimsmaking and tactics moderate
- Increased wealth
- Increased reliance on fundraising
- No defense given for these shifts; taken for granted as appropriate
Big Animal Rights

- Animal rights as a professionalized, hegemonic collective
- Weilds immense power over the social movement space
- Strongly shaped by financial interests
Making Big Animal Rights: Isomorphism

- Similar structures
- Teamwork
- Very rarely speak ill of one another
- One hegemonic voice
- Control over aspiring grassroots groups
  - Supplies
  - Street teams & leadership workshops
  - Grants
Making Big Animal Rights: Erasure

- Factionalism is **largely ignored** in professionalized claimsmaking

- In 1996 . . .
  - 2nd “March for Animals” in D.C.; only 3,000 attendees
  - *Rain without Thunder* published
  - Direct action faction routinely reporting disgruntlement
  - FARM reports that the movement: “[. . . ] enjoys uncommon ideological unanimity”
Making Big Animal Rights: Diminishment

❖ “Diversity” & need for “unity”
❖ “False dichotomy”
Making Big Animal Rights: Disparagement

- More rarely, dissent addressed as a problem
- Vegan Outreach capitalizes in order to appear “practical” & less threatening
- Also framed as wasteful & negative
Making Big Animal Rights: Symbol Mining

- Power of prof. orgs allows them to mine images, concepts, & ideas as they gain resonance
- Then manipulate them to protect hegemony
  - Identifying as “abolitionist” or “grassroots”
  - Using footage obtained by direct action
Making Big Animal Rights: **Exclusion**

- FARM hosts the annual Animal Rights Conference in the U.S.
- Radical factions barred
- Direct action advocates in the U.K. also reporting exclusion
- Radicals are silenced & cut off from resources
We select presenters and leaders for each component on the basis of their qualifications to handle the specific task (and availability). That judgment is grounded in our own sixteen years’ active participation in the movement, including arranging or presenting at 15 animal rights conferences, as well as consultation with our cosponsors and other people whose judgment we respect. We acknowledge a slight bias in favor of emerging leaders and an overwhelming bias against those who would use the convention as a forum to put down other movement activists or organizations.

We look forward to an informative, inspiring, and harmonious convention in June, and we hope to see you there.

- Alex Hershaft
Movement-wide events are spaces where **power is concentrated** . . .

And radical factions are **marginalized and disempowered**

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- Arrangement of a special lunch session organized by you
- One evening networking reception hosted by you
- Prominent link throughout the AR2015 website
- Listing in all printed AR2015 promotional materials
- Display of your logo during plenary sessions
- Promotion on FARM's social networking sites and newsletters:
  - Three customized images on AR2015 Facebook event page
  - Three customized images on FARM's Facebook fan page (200,000 followers)
  - Tag on FARM's Instagram & Twitter (35,000 followers)
  - Feature of two of your speakers in FARM's e-newsletter (25,000+ subscribers)
Importance of Factionalism

- Thought to impact success . . .

- **Negatively**
  - Drains energy & resources
  - Reduces resonance (Frey, Dietz & Kalof 1992)
  - Reduces credibility with public (Snow 1993)

- . . . And Positively
  - Maintains goal integrity
  - Tactical innovation
  - *Increases* resonance (Cress & Snow 2000)
  - Increases support for moderate groups (Haines 1984)
Conclusions

- Prof. orgs put economic & political capital towards the formation of symbolic capital
- Prof. orgs control the social movement field: the “common sense” of activism is created here
- This capital is wielded to maintain and increase power in the social change space
- Aggravates factionalism, but also neutralizes resonance of radicals
Conclusions

- Big Animal Rights correlated with greater **power** and **presence**
- But also **compromise** and **state collaboration**
- Hegemony of Big Animal Rights can be checked by **radicals**
- Factionalism as a healthy mechanism, rather than hindrance