



Do Animal Welfare Laws Reduce Animal Product Consumption?

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Do Animal Welfare Laws Reduce Animal Product Consumption?

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A Thesis in the Field of Government
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

The topic of tactics raises a point of contention among animal rights proponents. Those who support animal welfare laws and regulations tend to claim that such measures are necessary to move society closer to abolishing animal use altogether. Those who do not support such measures claim that animal welfare does not equate to animal rights and should not be supported by animal rights advocates.

Findings from this research are revealed through a cross-examination of ten years of consumer expenditure data drawn from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics and state-level animal law rankings in the U.S. provided by the Animal Legal Defense Fund. An analysis of variance determined that the relationship between animal welfare laws and consumer expenditure on animal-based products is statistically insignificant and therefore negligible. However, the most prestigious corporate animal rights charities in the U.S. continue to make animal welfare reforms their primary focus when it comes to direct action and as a means to solicit donations from the public.

Dedication

For all nonhuman animals.

Acknowledgments

I want to express my utmost gratitude to several professors at the University of Massachusetts Boston whose efforts were particularly helpful to me throughout my undergraduate journey: Glenn Jacobs, Melanie Joy, Bianca Bersani, Cinzia Solari, Jackie Lageson, and Reef Younggreen..

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Glossary of Acronyms

| | |
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| AAVS | American Anti-Vivisection Society |
| AHA | American Humane Association |
| ALDF | Animal Legal Defense Fund |
| ASPCA | American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals |
| CAAN | Carnism Awareness and Action Network |
| HFA | Humane Farming Association |
| HSUS | Humane Society of the United States |
| NAA | National Alliance for Animals |
| NIH | National Institutes of Health |
| PETA | People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals |

Chapter I

Introduction

The topic of this thesis is the animal rights movement in the United States. The concept of animal rights must be understood as the belief that the use of animals for food, clothing, entertainment, etc., causes unnecessary harm to animals. The animal rights position holds that animal use itself is morally indefensible and should therefore be abolished. While many animal rights advocates have a shared goal of ending animal exploitation, there is significant disagreement when it comes to how to achieve such an end.

There are two primary schools of thought among animal rights proponents. The first and most prevalent is that animal welfare laws and regulations ought to be endorsed by rights proponents because it is assumed they will eventually lead to abolition. The other view is that rights proponents should not support animal welfare because these regulations assume the acceptability of animal use itself and do not push society closer to abolishing it.

This thesis seeks to answer the following question: Do areas in which strong animal welfare laws are in force have lower animal product consumption rates compared to areas that have weaker animal welfare laws? Additional questions that this study seeks to answer are: Do animal welfare laws decrease demand for animal products? If there is a relationship, what might account for this? If there is no relationship, then what accounts for such a focus on animal welfare among animal rights advocates? If the relationship is

statistically significant, then what does this imply for animal rights advocates who explicitly reject supporting animal welfare regulations?

The hypothesis to be tested is that the relationship between animal welfare laws and animal product consumption is negligible. The primary warrant for this hypothesis is that since the advent of automation and factory-farm procedures, the production of animal products seems to have increased over time in the aggregate, at least in the United States. The number of animal welfare laws has also increased over time. Hence, there does not appear to be a clear indication that regulating the ways in which farm animals are bred and produced holds any significant bearing on the consumption of such products among the general populace. While the number of self-reported vegetarians and vegans has increased, this does not necessarily mean that animal product consumption has simultaneously decreased.

To determine whether welfare laws have a significant impact on animal product consumption, per capita rates of expenditures on animal products in the United States are examined. Sources such as monographs and academic journal articles detailing the limits of animal welfare laws among other subtopics within animal rights advocacy—including the debate surrounding whether or not animal rights activists ought to be engaging and/or advocating for regulation of animal use—serve as both theoretical and historical background to the empirical research of this study.

This thesis investigates a prevalent assumption within the modern-day animal advocacy movement in the United States: that regulating animal use is an effective way to reduce animal product consumption. As an empirical matter, this point of contention amongst animal rights activists (i.e., those who are against all animal use on moral grounds) has been publicly debated for at least three decades to date. Yet, actual

empirical analyses of the claims made by those who advocate on behalf of regulation are relatively sparse and generally unsubstantiated. Numerous corporate animal advocacy charities, such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and Mercy for Animals—while claiming to be against all animal use—continue to devote both time and money to support their efforts toward increasing animal welfare regulations. The claims by rights advocates who are against such forms of activism contend that so long as non-human animals are property and lack the status of legal personhood, animal welfare laws will primarily benefit the interests of animal-product producers over the interests of the animals themselves. This study takes an empirical approach to evaluating these conflicting claims. More broadly, this research may reveal the potential advantages and/or drawbacks to social movements when engaging in a top-down approach to changing people's behavior through governmental action.

Chapter II

Background of the Problem

A debate persists among animal ethics scholars and animal rights advocates alike over the efficacy of pursuing welfare reforms and single-issue campaigns as viable tactics toward abolition. Both sides offer numerous claims regarding the validity of these practices.¹ Such claims have coincided with the advent of ethical philosophies that have transpired since the 1970s, espoused by figures like Peter Singer, and professionalized rights groups such as PETA, in the 1980s to the present.

Gary L. Francione, professor of law, scholar, and abolitionist advocate, views the property status of animals as the single most significant barrier to animal liberation. He contends that the abolition of animal use cannot be meaningfully attained if animals continue to be classified as human property.² He rejects the supposed effectiveness of regulating animal use as a logical tactic to this end. Regarding the distinction between those who advocate for animal welfare alone and abolitionists who promote animal welfare, Francione refers to the latter as “new welfarists,” namely, rights advocates who consider welfare reforms to be a means toward abolition. Take PETA, for example, as opposed to a more conservative or traditional animal welfare organization such as the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), which “explicitly denies that it wants to

¹ Gary L. Francione, and Robert Garner, *The Animal Rights Debate: Abolition or Regulation?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

² Francione and Garner, *Animal Rights Debate*, 1.

eliminate animal use.”³ Francione argues against the new welfarist position by drawing from the historical efforts of animal welfare reforms:

There is absolutely *no* evidence to support it. We have had animal welfare, both as a prevailing moral theory and as part of the law, for more than 200 years now, and we are using more nonhuman animals in more horrific ways than at any time in human history. Animal welfare reform has not led to the abolition of any institutionalized uses of animals. . . . In any event, there is absolutely no evidence to support the position that welfare reform sensitizes people in a way that makes society move closer in an incremental way to abolition.⁴

Historian Diane L. Beers also attests to part of this claim regarding institutionalized animal use: “The animal advocacy movement, from its inception to the present day, has secured some important victories but no comprehensive social or legal recognition of all animals’ rights.”⁵

However, others disagree with parts of Francione’s claim when it comes to the idea of animal welfare laws sensitizing people in a way that brings society closer to abolition. Robert Garner, professor of politics, scholar, and proponent of welfare reforms, criticizes Francione’s abolitionist-based argument and belief system based on what he sees as an “unwillingness to compromise those beliefs in order to achieve incremental short-term goals that fall short of the ideal end point.”⁶ Garner questions the credibility of Francione’s sentiment by highlighting the limited successes that welfare reforms have had in only marginally improving the treatment of animals. Garner cites a concern among abolitionists derived from “anecdotal evidence that some people have been persuaded that the conditions of animals have been improved to the point that these people are no

³ Francione and Garner, *Animal Rights Debate*, 48.

⁴ Francione and Garner, *Animal Rights Debate*, 49.

⁵ Diane L. Beers, *For The Prevention of Cruelty: The History and Legacy of Animal Rights Activism in the United States* (Athens, OH: Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 2006), 29.

⁶ Francione and Garner, *Animal Rights Debate*, 103.

longer worried about the treatment of animals” and that more empirical research is needed in relation to this claim.⁷ However, Garner asserts that it is just as likely that publicity of farmed animal conditions as a result of animal welfare could just as easily be claimed to foster more concern for animal treatment.⁸

For Garner, the abolitionist implication that more vegans would exist if all activists’ resources were geared exclusively toward vegan education is speculative at best.⁹ He further claims that the rise in abolitionist vegan activism is at least somewhat attributable to welfarism:

It is instructive here to take a historical view of how the animal issue has developed. Fifty years ago, vegetarianism was an alien concept for most. Now it is commonplace. This transformation, one can strongly speculate, has been at least partly the product of animal-welfare based campaigns, highlighting, for example, the evils of factory farming and the need to reform it. The only reason promoting veganism now is a more credible goal is exactly because of the work put in by the whole animal protection movement in the past, including those who have adopted an animal welfarist strategy.¹⁰

Factions within the animal advocacy movement are not new, nor is the movement itself. Beers has documented a history of animal advocacy in the United States since its early beginnings, marked by the official formation of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) by Henry Bergh in 1866.¹¹ Over the course of the following decades into the twentieth century, landmark developments in the movement resulted in factionalism between both moderate and more radical groups, with

⁷ Francione and Garner, *Animal Rights Debate*, 122.

⁸ Francione and Garner, *Animal Rights Debate*, 122-123.

⁹ Francione and Garner, *Animal Rights Debate*, 122.

¹⁰ Francione and Garner, *Animal Rights Debate*, 123.

¹¹ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 3.

differing views on what kinds of treatment are acceptable for animals. The key difference was that radicals pushed for stricter measures to be taken on any given issue.¹²

An early twentieth-century example of factionalism within the movement depicts a point of contention that still lingers today. As arguments for the humane treatment of animals became more prevalent in U.S. culture, organizations that did not want to “alienate their swelling constituency . . . increasingly pursued modest or even conservative reforms that prompted cooperation rather than confrontation with the perpetrators of animal abuse and exploitation.”¹³ This description is applied specifically to moderate groups such as the American Humane Association (AHA), which dropped “more aggressive strategies” and “instead proffered subdued humane education programs and bestowed honorary awards on former enemies that promised self-regulation and voluntary reforms.”¹⁴ The purpose was to foster changes incrementally over time under the assumption that it would result in greater benefits in the long term for animals and the movement in general.¹⁵ This did not go without response from more radical groups at the time, such as the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS), which considered this approach as conflicting with the integrity of the movement and a betrayal to animals’ interests. More moderate groups accused radical groups like AAVS of being unrealistic and claimed that their demands were a threat to “the very existence and future of the cause.”¹⁶

¹² Larkin Ormes, “The Primacy of Welfarism in the Animal Rights Movement.” Unpublished essay (Harvard University, 2019), 5.

¹³ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 3.

¹⁴ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 3.

¹⁵ This tactic is similarly espoused by today’s rightist or radical faction of the animal advocacy movement.

¹⁶ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 13; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 6.

A more specific example of factionalism is illustrated by mid-twentieth century campaigns for federal reforms regarding “the most egregious practices in both meat production and laboratory research.”¹⁷ Radical groups had expressed interest in these campaigns, but they disagreed over the content and language of reform bills. It was eventually the more conservative branch of activists that fostered the necessary actions to get the Humane Slaughter Act (1958) and Laboratory Animal Welfare Act (1966, 1970) passed by Congress. Radicals viewed these reforms and the more conservative group of activists as ‘sellouts’ who betrayed animals by perpetuating cruelty. The radical faction of the animal advocacy movement remained relatively dormant compared to more mainstream conservative activism in the wake of these federal acts which merely modified the ways animals were used and did not prohibit any specific uses.

The radical factions did not re-emerge strongly until 1975, the year Peter Singer’s book: *Animal Liberation* was published.¹⁸ The beginning of the modern animal rights movement is at least partly attributed to the publication of this philosophical work, which defines the ideology of speciesism.¹⁹ According to Beers, Singer’s publication provided “ideological structure” and “opened a new door for animal advocacy.”²⁰

Singer formulated his approach with the familiar language and moral philosophical underpinnings similar to those used among human rights activists. This entailed conceptualizing and articulating an ethical framework by which humans could determine whether or not an animal’s interests are worthy of moral consideration. Using

¹⁷ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 13.

¹⁸ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 14.

¹⁹ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism.” 6.

²⁰ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 198–199.

the term *speciesism*, Singer asserted that humans' treatment of non-human animals is based on a prejudice that acts in fundamentally the same way as racism or sexism. In other words, racism and sexism reveal a bias in favor of one's own race or sex against the interests of others within these categories. When the interests of animals are concerned, most humans tend to be biased in favor of their own species. Beers quotes Singer himself: "Most human beings are speciesist in their readiness to cause pain to animals when they would not cause similar pain to humans for the same reason."²¹ She notes Singer's assertion: "A capacity for suffering and enjoyment meant a creature had legitimate interests that had to be ethically considered."²² Paradoxically, Singer "did not specifically advocate a doctrine of animal rights. In fact, he denies that animals have rights." Instead, his writings contributed to the movement by providing radical activists with a theoretical basis for their own "declarations on behalf of nonhumans."²³

Singer subscribes to a utilitarian philosophical framework which, in the case of animals, means that he does not reject the use of animals per se as morally indefensible.²⁴ Rather, he argues that some ways humans use animals may cause more suffering than other ways, and the suffering imposed by human beings through these uses must be taken into account and weighed against the benefits to humans. He promotes vegetarianism as a means to reduce suffering and as a way to be selective when choosing to consume certain animal products depending upon the degree of suffering inflicted as a result of how they

²¹ Singer, quoted in Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 198.

²² Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 198.

²³ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 199; Ormes, "Primacy of Welfarism," 7.

²⁴ Peter Singer, "Utilitarianism and Vegetarianism," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 9, no. 4 (Summer 1980).

were produced.²⁵ As Beers states: “Although Singer’s *Animal Liberation* empowered the radical faction, internal divisions still prevent a more cohesive and powerful movement.”²⁶ The adoption of Singer’s framework regarding speciesism by the radical faction of animal advocates still dominates today. The framework is also advocated by the PETA, the largest animal rights organization, formed in 1980, not long after his book’s publication.²⁷

Francione’s involvement with PETA occurred soon after.²⁸ A video interview in 2009 shows Francione claiming that he decided to become vegetarian in 1978 after visiting a slaughterhouse. In 1982, he became acquainted with Ingrid Newkirk, one of the co-founders of PETA. Newkirk argued to Francione that since he was vegetarian for moral reasons, if he took his moral inclinations seriously then he had to consider becoming vegan, that is, abstaining from eating, wearing, or otherwise using *all* animal products. After reading literature that explained the inextricable relationship between the production of animal co-products such as meat, and animal by-products such as dairy, Francione immediately decided to become vegan, claiming: “It became clear to me that veganism had to be the moral baseline of anything that was gonna call itself an animal rights movement.”²⁹

²⁵ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (NY: HarperCollins, 2002 [1975]), 170–171.

²⁶ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 201.

²⁷ PETA, “PETA’s Milestones for Animals. <https://www.peta.org/about-peta/milestones/>. Accessed January 11, 2022; PETA, *Animal Liberation* book, <https://shop.peta.org/animal-liberation-book.html>. Accessed January 11, 2022.

²⁸ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 8.

²⁹ Gary Francione, “I’m Vegan: Gary Francione”, YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5pDU1yMWMw>. Accessed April 24, 2019; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 9.

Francione, born in 1954, became an assistant professor at University of Pennsylvania Law School (Penn State) in 1984 following his clerkship with Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.³⁰ Animal experimentation labs at Penn State were under scrutiny at this time for abuses that violated animal welfare laws in the process of conducting head trauma experiments on baboons. Animal Liberation Front, a radical animal rights group, broke into the labs that year and stole videotapes depicting the abuses, subsequently giving them to PETA.³¹ Francione had met the founders of PETA, Ingrid Newkirk and Alex Pacheco, the previous year and was serving as a legal advisor to them on a *pro bono* basis.

In the wake of the break-in, Francione decided to organize a rally in the Spring of 1985 to protest the experiments at Penn State. He contacted Tom Regan, professor of philosophy and known animal rights advocate. Francione had read Regan's 1983 book *The Case for Animal Rights* the previous summer and decided to invite him to speak at the rally.³² Regan's work stems from a deontological position concerning what he claims to be the inherent rights of animals—a different approach than Singer's utilitarian framework. Unlike Singer, Regan argues that a view in which the interests of animals is based on appeals to utility results in arbitrarily favoring the status of human beings as moral agents and is itself speciesist. He claims—from the perspective of a moral principle based on treating similar cases similarly—that moral agents and patients alike have equal

³⁰ Gary L. Francione, "Have You Met Rutgers-Newark? Protecting the Civil Rights of All Creatures." <https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/about-us/have-you-met-rutgers-newark/gary-l-francione>. Accessed April 19, 2019.

³¹ Gary L. Francione, "Reflections on Tom Regan and the Animal Rights Movement: What Once Was," *Between the Species* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 3. See also, "Heckler Ends U.S. Funding of Research that Inflicted Head Injuries on Baboons," *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 1985, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-07-18-mn-7139-story.html>.

³² Ormes, "Primacy of Welfarism," 9.

inherent value, therefore, as a matter of “strict justice,” individuals, whether human or nonhuman, have a basic moral right to respectful treatment, which precludes them from being harmed or killed for reasons of unnecessary utility.³³ As Francione states:

Tom was a *rights* theorist; Singer was a utilitarian who rejected moral rights. Singer’s position reflected the thinking of nineteenth-century philosopher and lawyer, Jeremy Bentham, who was a chief architect of the animal *welfare* position. But Singer was celebrated as the “father of the animal rights movement.” . . . Tom wanted to establish that the difference in philosophical approaches was not just an abstract and largely meaningless academic issue; he wanted to make clear that it had relevance to the strategy that the movement adopted [emphasis added].³⁴

In other words, Singer’s position does not reject the commodity status of nonhuman animals and is more in line with the welfare position which holds that animal use can be acceptable as long as treatment is humane. Regan, on the other hand, explicitly propounded the view that animals were entitled to the right to be free from human exploitation regardless of treatment.

It was Singer’s work that garnered more praise and attention from radical advocates. Francione highlights that animal rights groups at the time, like PETA, did not sell Regan’s book but did sell Singer’s and called it “a book about animal rights.”³⁵ This is still the case with PETA today. On their website, the provided description of Singer’s book reads:

Referred to as the “animal rights bible,” this book includes in-depth examinations of the use of animals for food and experiments and puts forward a revolutionary animal rights philosophy. If you read only one animal rights book, it has to be this one.³⁶

³³ Tom Regan, *The Case For Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 279-280, 327-329.

³⁴ Francione, “Reflections on Tom Regan,” 9; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 10.

³⁵ Francione, “Reflections on Tom Regan,” 9.

³⁶ “Animal Liberation Book,” PETA, <https://shop.peta.org/animal-liberation-book.html>, Accessed April 24, 2019; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 11.

Regan accepted Francione's invitation to speak at the Penn State rally, which took place in April 1985 and enjoyed a much higher turnout than expected. The momentum generated among various activists involved in this case eventually led to protest in the form of a sit-in later that year on July 15 to demand that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, withhold funding for experiments until further investigation had been done.

Francione represented the protestors as a lawyer and negotiator on behalf of their demands. Regan was one such protestor, and the event itself was organized by Alex Pacheco of PETA.³⁷ This resulted in the Secretary of Health and Human Services at the time ordering a halt to further funding of head-trauma experiments on baboons until investigations had occurred.³⁸ While in this instance demands were met, Francione and Regan recognized that it fell short of achieving what they considered meaningful protection for animals used in experiments.³⁹

Francione's and Regan's work together fostered a partnership seeking to reorient the movement away from merely targeting animal abuses and law violations and aimed more toward rhetoric supporting the abolition of institutionalized animal use within all public actions pursued by animal rights activists. Even radical groups such as PETA, when confronting the treatment of animals used for experimentation at Penn State, did not explicitly promote the abolition of experimentation itself: "At the time, activists were very careful in public statements to make clear that they were not looking to go beyond

³⁷ Francione, "Reflections on Tom Regan," 2-3; Mark Katches and Eve Zibart, "90 Animal Rights Activists Stage Sit-In at NIH to Protest Experiments," *The Washington Post*, July 16, 1985, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1985/07/16/90-animal-rights-activists-stage-sit-in-at-nih-to-protest-experiments/001ca918-7f07-4a82-b85f-2e91f425ba38/?utm_term=.f81f9100897a

³⁸ "Heckler Ends U.S. Funding of Research," 1985 .

³⁹ Ormes, "Primacy of Welfarism," 11.

what we were seeking in the particular campaign.”⁴⁰ In an interview by a British television station about the issue at Penn State, when asked whether or not they were advocating an end to all vivisection, Francione recalls: “I responded that . . . the PETA campaign against Penn was focused only on the violation of laws and regulations, and bad science. . . . I remember how uncomfortable I felt when I made that statement.”⁴¹

Concerned about whether they were actually working toward abolishing animal exploitation by conducting and participating in campaigns that Francione felt “did nothing more than regulate animal exploitation,” both Francione and Regan decided that they needed to formulate a specific strategy to contextualize animal rights advocacy through an abolitionist framework.⁴² Their efforts helped to formulate the foundation of the modern-day abolitionist animal rights movement, which asserts that rights activists ought to pursue particular campaigns with a clear message that communicates the hope of eventually abolishing institutionalized animal use itself as the underlying goal. As Francione explains:

The difference between a campaign to end the consumption of veal and an abolitionist campaign to end the consumption of veal was that the former implicitly encouraged people to eat animal foods other than veal because it targeted veal in an isolated manner and made it seem that veal was morally worse than steak or eggs or milk; the latter made it clear that *all* animal consumption was morally unjustified and we were targeting veal as part of a continuing campaign that would seek incrementally to end *all* use of animals for food.⁴³

Five years later, in 1990, the animal rights march on Washington D.C. was the largest animal rights demonstration up to that date and had mainly promoted an

⁴⁰ “Heckler Ends U.S. Funding of Research,” 1985.

⁴¹ Francione, “Reflections on Tom Regan,” 8; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 12.

⁴² Francione, “Reflections on Tom Regan,” 8.

⁴³ Francione, “Reflections on Tom Regan,” 11. Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 12.

abolitionist message. Both Francione and Regan were key organizers for the march and spoke at the event, asserting that the abolitionist framework was necessary when engaging in animal rights activism and should not merely serve as empty rhetoric.⁴⁴ Some demands were articulated, including a stop to “all hunting and trapping on federal wildlife refuges,” and requiring “makers of products such as cosmetics and pesticides to seek ways of testing the toxicity of their products other than by injecting them into animals.”⁴⁵ Despite the prevalence of abolitionist rhetoric at the march, Francione’s and Regan’s views eventually met considerable backlash.⁴⁶

In 1992, Francione and Regan published an essay in *The Animal’s Agenda* magazine detailing the case for their position on animal rights activism and as “part of a debate with Ingrid Newkirk of PETA, who defended welfare reform campaigns and [characterized their] position as ‘purist.’”⁴⁷ Additionally, Regan and Francione saw efforts of rights activists to amend laws on treatment as counterproductive to achieving abolition. A salient example is amendments to the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) in 1985 which “prohibits ‘unnecessary’ animal suffering, but leaves to the exclusive discretion of vivisectors the determination of what constitutes ‘necessity.’”⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Francione, “Reflections on Tom Regan,” 14.

⁴⁵ David G. Savage, “Thousands Join D.C. Animal Rights Rally: Activism: Americans are urged to ‘eat beans, not beings.’ Organizers of the event claim that their movement now reflects the opinion of the majority,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 11, 1990. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1990-06-11-mn-134-story.html>.

⁴⁶ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 13.

⁴⁷ Francione, “Reflections on Tom Regan,” 15; Ingrid Newkirk, “Counterpoint: Total Victory, Like Checkmate, Cannot Be Achieved in One Move,” *The Animal’s Agenda* (January/February 1992): 44. https://arzonetranscripts.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/point_counterpoint-regan_francione_newkirk.pdf.

⁴⁸ Gary Francione and Tom Regan, “Point: A Movement’s Means Create Its Ends,” *The Animal’s Agenda*, January/February 1992, 40-41. https://arzonetranscripts.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/point_counterpoint-regan_francione_newkirk.pdf; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 14.

Newkirk, on the other hand, described what she deemed to be certain rights advocates refusing to help alleviate the suffering of farmed animals. After attempting to get a particular group of rights advocates to sign a petition that would legally require cows to be given water during their transportation to slaughter (a measure that cattle producers fought due to the extra expense), she received a message in return stating that because they were “opposed to the slaughter of animals for food” those advocates could not get involved. Newkirk stated: “Sometimes philosophy can get in the way of helping animals suffer less during the many years before they achieve the rights we wish for them.”⁴⁹

Francione responded directly to Newkirk’s assertion in a 1996 article that emphasized the futility of attempting to regulate animal use so long as animals are considered chattel property. He stated that Newkirk’s position represented the confusion between micro- and macro-level issues regarding animal use. What he considered the defect of Newkirk’s view was that it approached the macro issue of eradicating the institutional subjugation of animals through micro-level means such as “trying to obtain laws that will ‘reduce’ the suffering of animals who are regarded as property.”⁵⁰ He further stated that animal suffering stems from an institution that is unjust in itself and that the “obligation on the macro level is to eliminate that institution, not merely reduce the pain and suffering that are *inherently and inevitably* produced and ‘justified’ *whenever* the institution identifies that pain and suffering with human ‘benefit.’”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Newkirk, “Counterpoint,” 44; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 14.

⁵⁰ Gary L. Francione, *Rain Without Thunder: The Ideology of the Animal Rights Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 144.

⁵¹ Francione, *Rain Without Thunder*, 146.

At this point, Francione and Regan had mainly focused their efforts on compelling other rights activists to adopt an abolitionist approach to their activism. However, the backlash in response to their work resulted in them becoming slowly ostracized by those involved within the mainstream corporate animal advocacy charities.⁵² This point was discussed in the magazine *Vegetarian Times*, which stated its fears that those outside the movement would be dissuaded from adopting vegetarianism or veganism after they saw the lack of cohesiveness due to in-fighting.⁵³

The National Alliance for Animals (NAA) planned a march for June 1996 which, unlike the previous march on Washington D.C. in 1990, included sponsorships by “a number of organizations that have explicitly rejected the rights approach” including the HSUS, among several others.⁵⁴ PETA was also a “principal sponsor” of the march.⁵⁵ Regan took it upon himself to make it publicly known that he would be boycotting the march which he, like Francione, believed would only serve to obfuscate the rights/welfare distinction.

However, shortly after Regan’s return from a sabbatical, he changed his mind about participating and decided to attend. Francione recounted this turn of events with Regan in the post-script to his 1996 monograph: “Regan concluded that although the march was a welfarist event, welfarist organizations ‘do some good,’ and he announced

⁵² Francione, “Reflections on Tom Regan,” 22.

⁵³ Toni Apgar, “Another Threat From Within,” *Vegetarian Times* (February 1995): 62. https://books.google.com/books?id=iggAAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA6&lpg=PA6&dq=Mark+Harris,+%E2%80%9CThe+Threat+from+Within,%E2%80%9D+Vegetarian+Times,+February+1995,+62&source=bl&ots=H2qTU1TSnh&sig=ACfU3U1IeqHW_J4o9d4Y1KHeLwCOnrOpmg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj71or t7evhAhUIVd8KHSvUCrkQ6AEwAXoECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=Mark%20Harris%2C%20%E2%80%9CThe%20Threat%20from%20Within%2C%20%E2%80%9D%20Vegetarian%20Times%2C%20February%201995%2C%2062&f=false. See also: Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 16.

⁵⁴ Francione, *Rain Without Thunder*, 226.

⁵⁵ Francione, *Rain Without Thunder*, 227.

his intention to participate in the march.”⁵⁶ This event marked the end of Francione and Regan’s partnership. Why Regan decided to abandon the position he had defended with Francione up to that point was never discussed between the two. Francione speculated that Regan perhaps wanted to avoid being excluded from the movement altogether.

Francione recalls:

I certainly was excluded from the ‘movement’ after 1996. . . . But the internet came along and, thankfully, made it possible to communicate with large numbers of others and rendered the large corporate charities irrelevant in terms of their control of access to channels of communication.⁵⁷

The source of factionalism amongst animal rights proponents continues to be over whether or not promoting welfare reforms and regulations is a viable tactic for achieving abolition. The fact that the animal rights movement has not had a uniform approach to promoting and educating people on the rights ethic leaves claims on both sides of the debate open for further empirical study and interpretation, particularly the notion that welfare laws and more strict regulations have a significant relationship with rates of animal product consumption. This claim is the primary defense of welfare laws by rights advocates (new welfarists) and deserves continued empirical evaluation. The issue of empiricism has been publicly discussed.

On July 29, 2013, Francione participated in a live debate at the Animal Rights National Conference, with Bruce Friedrich, co-Founder and Executive Director of the Good Food Institute.⁵⁸ The debate centered on whether or not animal rights advocates ought to support welfare reforms. Both were allowed opening statements followed by a

⁵⁶ Francione, *Rain Without Thunder*, 229.

⁵⁷ Francione, “Reflections on Tom Regan,” 36; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 17.

⁵⁸ “Our Team,” The Good Food Institute, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://www.gfi.org/our-team>

question-and-answer session, and ended with closing statements. Francione argued in his opening statement that the predominant focus on welfare reforms in the modern animal rights movement has resulted in a counter-productive regression:

A reformist or regulationist [sic] agenda requires that we accept as a general matter that the primary focus . . . is reducing suffering and we're gonna put the killing issue off. So, we're gonna focus on regulating use . . . to reduce suffering . . . but we're going to continue to allow use and indeed, in certain ways, to *promote* use" [emphasis added].⁵⁹

His concern today, as it was then, when it comes to rights advocates initiating and supporting welfare reforms, is the propensity to inadvertently encourage animal use by making it more humane.⁶⁰ To support his argument that the movement has continued this trend, Francione cited a letter written by Peter Singer on behalf of Animal Rights International to John Mackey, CEO of Whole Foods, praising his efforts to sell animal products following supposedly higher welfare standards. Singer's letter also included endorsements of 17 animal advocacy organizations, and states:

The undersigned animal welfare, animal protection, and animal rights organizations would like to express their appreciation and support for the pioneering initiative being taken by Whole Foods Market in setting Farm Animal Compassion Standards. We hope and expect these standards will improve the lives of millions of animals.⁶¹

Francione found it particularly egregious that the letter included endorsements by several animal rights organizations, including PETA:

You cannot tell me that when PETA and Mercy for Animals and HSUS and Vegan Outreach and Compassion Over Killing and all these organizations sign a letter expressing appreciation and support to John

⁵⁹ Gary Francione, and Bruce Friedrich, Debate: Vegan vs. Vegan (Gary Francione vs. Bruce Friedrich), YouTube, July 29, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJ1qFdR1cHA>. Accessed April 9, 2019.

⁶⁰ Ormes, "Primacy of Welfarism," 23.

⁶¹ Peter Singer, President of Animal Rights International, letter to John Mackey, January 24, 2005. Available from: <https://www.abolitionistapproach.com/an-open-request-to-peta-farm-sanctuary-hsus-viva-and-others/>. Accessed May 8, 2019.

Mackey for his happy exploitation program at Whole Foods, . . . when PETA . . . or all of these organizations say something good about Whole Foods, . . . you cannot tell me that is not encouraging people. . . .⁶²

He viewed the endorsement of individuals and corporations who capitalize on animal exploitation as obscuring the meaning of animal rights in itself and rendering the distinction between rights and welfare insignificant by perpetuating the notion that any effort toward alleviating animal suffering, even while continuing to exploit animals, is compatible with animal rights. This was also observed and articulated in his assessment of this trend 17 years before, in 1996.⁶³

Bruce Friedrich, on the other hand, argues in favor of welfare reforms:

Those of us who support welfare reforms, most of us are also doing mostly vegan abolitionist advocacy, we just . . . also think that the welfare reforms are worth supporting . . . both because they're good for animals and if these were human beings in these sorts of situations we would not be opposing welfare reforms for them, and also because we think that it changes the playing field. It moves us from a society in which animals . . . don't have interests that matter to a society in which animals do have interests that matter and that leads us toward a more compassionate society for all animals and also more vegans . . .⁶⁴

There are two assumptions in Friedrich's argument. First, the assumption that welfare reforms produce the long-term effect of making people more aware and sensitive to the suffering of animals over time and therefore results in greater potential for people to be open to adopting veganism. The second assumption is that there is a causal relationship between welfare reforms and lower levels of animal product consumption.⁶⁵

During the debate video, and in support of the latter assumption, Friedrich presents a line graph with a header that reads "Reduction in Egg Consumption After

⁶² Francione and Friedrich, Debate, 2013; Ormes, "Primacy of Welfarism," 24.

⁶³ Francione, *Rain Without Thunder*, 79.

⁶⁴ Francione and Friedrich, Debate, 2013.

⁶⁵ Ormes, "Primacy of Welfarism," 25.

Passage of Battery Cage Bans.” The graph compares the European Union’s average egg consumption and the supposedly decreasing average egg consumption over time within countries that “independently banned battery cages relative to EU average.”⁶⁶

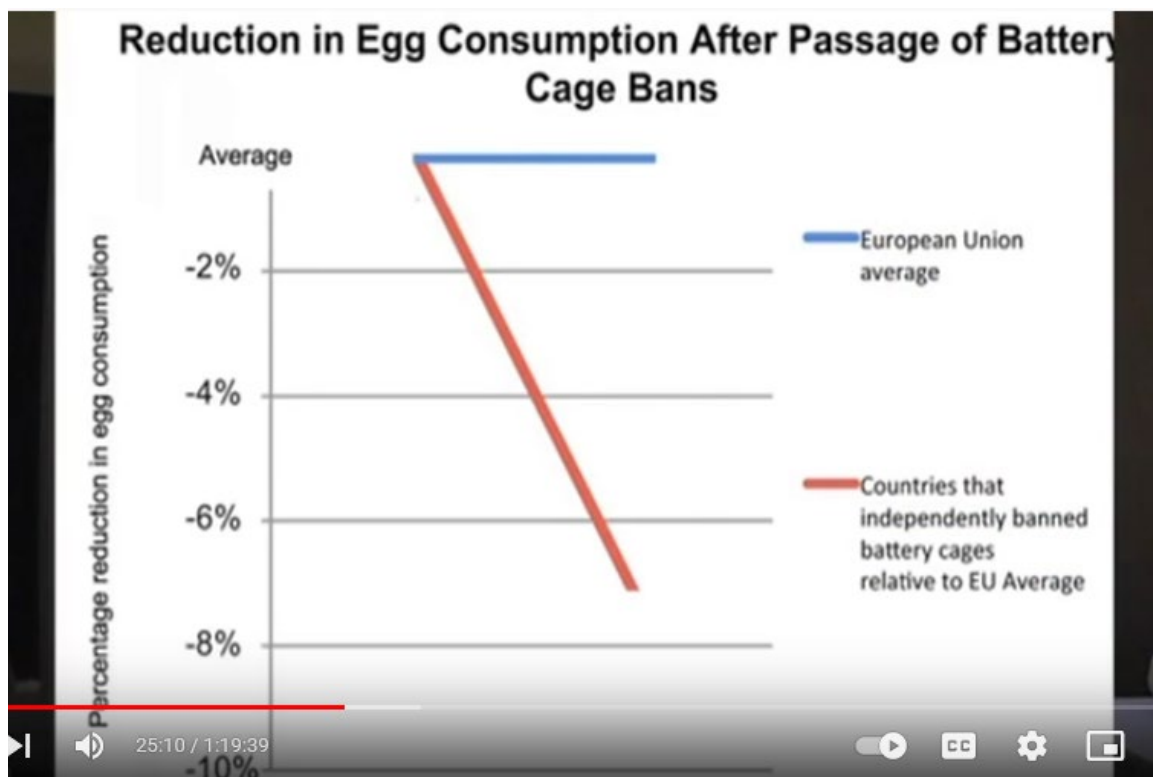


Figure 1. Screenshot of graph, taken from debate video.

Source: Francione and Friedrich, Debate, 2013.

While this might visually support Friedrich’s case, the data and comparison drawn are dubious. The graph shows two lines: one represents the total EU average egg consumption at the top and moves horizontally from left to right and the other shows a sharp downward trajectory representing the average consumption of the countries that have banned battery cages which starts at the overall EU average before descending from

⁶⁶ Francione and Friedrich, Debate, 2013.

left to right. The x-axis seems to represent time but there is no indication of what length of time it represents. The y-axis shows descending numbers from top to bottom starting at where the horizontal line is drawn, representing the overall EU average, and descending downward in increments of two percentage points starting with “-2%” and ending where it cuts off completely at “-10%.” There is no indication of how much egg consumption these numbers represent. Assuming the correlation is accurate, however, this would not definitively prove a causal relationship between welfare reforms and rates of consumption.

Following presentation of this graph, Friedrich goes on to claim:

The countries and cultures that have no animal welfare regulations have no vegans and no animal rights activists. The countries and cultures that have the most animal welfare regulations have the most vegans and animal welfare activists.⁶⁷

Once again, even if this broad claim is empirically accurate, it is still an assumption that welfare regulations are the reason why people become vegan and/or animal rights activists or why they are necessary in order to push people towards veganism.⁶⁸

Later in the debate, Francione explains how welfare reforms are usually implemented only if they are profitable in some way to the businesses involved, as he discussed in his previous work.⁶⁹ In response to a question by an audience member regarding how rights activists are “supposed to leave corporations alone and expect them to do the right thing,” Francione stated: “The idea that you’re ever going to make corporations behave morally, the answer is they’ll only do that if it maximizes the value

⁶⁷ Francione and Friedrich, Debate, 2013.

⁶⁸ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 26.

⁶⁹ Francione, *Rain Without Thunder*, 87–102.

for their shareholders.”⁷⁰ Francione further explained that most welfare reforms pursued by rights advocates happen eventually anyway because they are adopted primarily due to the economic benefit to producers. He provided an example relating to PETA’s effort to get chicken farmers to adopt controlled atmospheric killing:

If you . . . start a chicken slaughtering plant tomorrow, you would be out of your mind to use electrical stunning because controlled atmospheric killing is much more cost-effective, so what’s gonna happen is controlled atmospheric killing. It’s already becoming very, very popular in industry because as equipment gets older and gets expensed out for tax purposes, when it gets replaced, it’s getting replaced with controlled atmospheric killing. Same thing with the gestation crate, same thing with . . . the veal crate.⁷¹

Granted, Francione’s assertion is still an assumption that these changes would happen without efforts on behalf of animal advocates putting direct pressure on these industries and lawmakers. However, it would be fair to say that these changes would likely occur without *rights* advocates pursuing them because most animal advocacy organizations are groups that focus solely on welfare reforms that do not challenge the conventional wisdom regarding animal use. In closing, he stated:

If we . . . objected to animal use and didn’t participate in any of this happy exploitation, and we had a movement that was built around veganism, you think industry is just going to sit there and say “We’re not going to do anything, we’re gonna let them continue to suffer”? No. What they’re going to do is engage in the cost-effective reforms that they’re engaging in now because it’s economically good for them to do. . . . My view is that if you believe in animal rights, you never, ever, ever send out the message that animal exploitation can ever be morally acceptable.⁷²

In his view (as it was before parting ways with Regan), when rights advocates support welfare reforms, they inadvertently promote the acceptability of animal use,

⁷⁰ Francione and Friedrich, Debate, 2013.

⁷¹ Francione and Friedrich, Debate, 2013; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 27.

⁷² Francione and Friedrich, Debate, 2013; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 28.

which he claims can only further reinforce the root cause of institutional animal exploitation: their legal status as property.⁷³

In support of Francione's view, other scholars have cited previous social movements centered around human rights to analogize with the current challenge of the animal rights movement. Corey Lee Wrenn, professor of sociology, scholar, and abolitionist proponent, draws a parallel between the antislavery movement in nineteenth century United States, and abolitionism within the modern-day animal rights movement, emphasizing the similarities between the two.⁷⁴ Specifically, Wrenn cites the efforts of both groups in dismantling oppressive ideologies:

Just as human rights activists draw on the shared humanness of slaves and oppressed humans to argue for their inclusion in the larger human rights arena, nonhuman animal rights activists draw on the shared sentience of enslaved and oppressed nonhuman animals.⁷⁵

Of course, given the clear differences between these two movements, Wrenn highlights the more ubiquitous ideology that the animal rights movement seeks to dissolve, i.e., speciesism. Wrenn contends that unless speciesist ideology is dismantled, "no amount of bans and reforms are likely to seriously challenge the oppression that other animals face."⁷⁶ She calls attention to the primary focus on treatment and pain and suffering amongst proponents of welfare reforms as a hindrance to the goal of dismantling speciesism: "An emphasis on suffering would be unproductive if it does not

⁷³ Ormes, "Primacy of Welfarism," 28.

⁷⁴ Corey Lee Wrenn, "Abolition Then and Now: Tactical Comparisons Between the Human Rights Movement and the Modern Nonhuman Animal Rights Movement in the United States," *Journal of Agriculture and Environmental Ethics* 27, no. 2 (2014): 177-200. <https://doi-org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1007/s10806-013-9458-7>.

⁷⁵ Wrenn, "Abolition Then and Now," 181.

⁷⁶ Wrenn, "Abolition Then and Now," 196.

seriously challenge the political and ideological structures that maintain it.”⁷⁷ Wrenn further argues that welfarist tactics enacted by professionalized animal advocacy groups necessitate cooperation with institutional animal exploiters.⁷⁸ Regarding tactics such as single-issue campaigns, she and Johnson posit:

The utilization of issue-specific advocacy diverts attention from the root cause of injustice, thus compromising the integrity of the claims made. We also argue that this type of advocacy diminishes the importance of other injustices excluded from those issue-specific campaigns and may overload the potential constituency to the point of discouraging motivation.⁷⁹

Stated differently, issue-specific or single-issue campaigns single out specific instances of animal exploitation, thereby implying that certain forms of exploitation are more deserving of attention than others. This then inadvertently prevents the recipients of such messages from contemplating their own speciesist line of thinking.⁸⁰

Maxim Fetissenko, researcher and former professor of communication at Northeastern University, provides a scholarly critique of the abolitionist approach developed by Francione and supported by Wrenn. His critique is based on references to the historical efficacy of moral rhetoric within previous social movements and applying them to more current animal rights efforts.⁸¹ Fetissenko, like Wrenn, refers back to the antislavery movement in the United States. However, he uses the movement to exemplify the limits of moral suasion when attempting to enact social change, stating that the

⁷⁷ Wrenn, “Abolition Then and Now,” 180.

⁷⁸ Wrenn, “Abolition Then and Now,” 196.

⁷⁹ Corey Lee Wrenn and Rob Johnson, “A Critique of Single-issue Campaigning and the Importance of Comprehensive Abolitionist Vegan Advocacy,” *Food, Culture & Society* 16, no. 4 (December 2013): 652. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/175174413X13758634982092>.

⁸⁰ Wrenn and Johnson, “Critique of Single-issue Campaigning,” 652.

⁸¹ Maxim Fetissenko, “Beyond Morality: Developing a New Rhetorical Strategy for the Animal Rights Movement,” *Journal of Animal Ethics* 1, no. 2 (2011): 150-75. JSTOR doi:10.5406/janimaethics.1.2.0150.

“economic self-interest of Northern whites, not the moral arguments of abolitionists” is what proved to be paramount for abolishing human slavery.⁸² Fetissenko affirms certain claims made on both sides of the animal rights debate, as exemplified by Francione and Garner:

Francione is right to point out that there is no historical support for the expectation that a reformist approach will lead to the abolition of animal slavery. However, historical evidence supporting the thesis that ethics-based advocacy for more radical changes—the approach favored by Francione, Hall, and other critics of welfarism—is likely to be effective in achieving the abolitionist goal is equally scant.⁸³

Fetissenko asserts that “the impact of animal farming on the environment and the effects of animal food products on human health” could be used more pragmatically by rights proponents as a way to tap into people’s self-interests.⁸⁴ He further claims, based on historical animal rights successes and failures, that

persuading state governments or voters to support initiatives mandating that farmers abandon the industry’s most egregious practices is difficult enough; it is a challenge of a different order to persuade people to make profound changes in their own behaviors.⁸⁵

As Fetissenko makes clear, self-interest has shown historically to be a stronger determinant of action as opposed to altruism, an essential component of the animal rights ethic. However, some rights advocates like Francione claim that while welfare reforms may improve the quality of life for animals used as commodities (an empirical debate in itself), they also further entrench the notion that commodifying animals in the first place is not something that needs to be challenged. That is, rights proponents who advocate

⁸² Fetissenko, “Beyond Morality,” 160.

⁸³ Fetissenko, “Beyond Morality,” 162.

⁸⁴ Fetissenko, “Beyond Morality,” 163, 170.

⁸⁵ Fetissenko, “Beyond Morality,” 170.

welfare reforms are inadvertently promoting gentler forms of animal exploitation and reinforcing the acceptability of animal use itself. This promotion of welfare reforms is where abolitionist animal rights advocates claim ideological inconsistency within the movement and within corporate animal rights organizations in particular. Fetissenko does not refute this claim but rather the idea that a moral campaign alone is the most pragmatic approach.

Chapter III

Methods

The Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) produces an annual animal welfare law ranking of the 50 U.S. states as well as U.S. territories, which I used to act as the dependent variable for this analysis. States are ranked relative to each other based on the strengths and weaknesses of their animal welfare laws as well as enforcement.⁸⁶ The ALDF began ranking state animal protection laws in 2006. States are ranked from “worst” to “best” on a continuous scale and then grouped into three tiers: top, middle, and bottom. The top tier includes the states that earned the highest animal welfare law ranking within the given calendar year; the bottom includes states with the lowest rankings for that year. The middle tier includes states that fall somewhere in between the top and bottom tiers.⁸⁷ Rankings from 2009 to 2018 are included in this analysis. Because the ALDF did not rank states numerically prior to 2009, earlier years were omitted from this study for the sake of consistency.

Consumer expenditure data were retrieved from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and act as the independent variables for this study.⁸⁸ Geographical locations were categorized by their respective region within the U.S.: midwestern, northeastern, southern, and western. Data samples were collected from within several metropolitan (or

⁸⁶ Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF), “2020 U.S. State Animal Protection Laws Rankings.” <https://aldf.org/project/us-state-rankings/>. Accessed July 27, 2021.

⁸⁷ ALDF, “2020 Rankings.”

⁸⁸ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditure Surveys. <https://www.bls.gov/cex/csxmsa.htm>. Accessed August 2, 2021.

urban) areas within each region. Forty five different categories of expenditure data were collected including food, transportation, shelter, education, and healthcare to name a few.

Three to four cities were chosen from within the U.S. Labor Statistics data to be used as evidence representing their respective states in a given region. The specific cities were chosen based on availability of long-term data within the ALDF ranking reports. For the midwestern region, data collected in Chicago, Detroit, and Minneapolis-St. Paul were selected to represent Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota. For the northeastern region, New York City, Philadelphia, and Boston were selected to represent New York State, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. For the southern region, Baltimore, Atlanta, Miami, and Dallas-Fort Worth were selected to represent Maryland, Georgia, Florida, and Texas. Lastly, for the western region, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Phoenix were selected to represent California, Washington, and Arizona.

All regions were combined into a single dataset using the SPSS statistical software program. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) with a 95% confidence interval was performed in order to determine whether or not a statistically significant relationship exists between animal welfare and the rate of consumer expenditures on a given product, asset, or service category.

Chapter IV

Results

Most of the variables tested proved not to have a statistically significant relationship with animal welfare. The age of respondents themselves held a statistical significance, whereas the number of individuals in a household within the categories “Children under 18” and “Adults 65 and older” did not reveal a significant relationship with animal welfare.

Neither “Income before taxes” (total earnings during the twelve months prior to data collection) nor “Earners” (individuals in a household who have worked at least one week prior to the study), showed any significant relationship with animal welfare.

“Housing,” in general proved insignificant. This category included all forms of housing, from owned dwellings to rented dwellings and household expenses combined. Taken individually, none of the following held any significant relationship with animal welfare:

- “Rented dwellings” (including both rent paid and/or rent received)
- “Shelter”
- “Other lodging” (including vacation homes, college dorms, hotels, etc.)
- “Utilities, fuels, and public services” (including gas, electricity, etc.)
- “Household supplies” (including laundry and cleaning supplies, etc.)
- “Household furnishings and equipment” (including furniture, appliances, etc.).

“Transportation” as a whole, also proved insignificant. Taken individually, none of the following expenditures proved to hold a significant relationship with animal welfare:

- “Gasoline, other fuels, and motor oil”
- “Other vehicle expenses” (such as maintenance and repairs)
- “Public and other transportation.”

“Other expenditures” broadly includes:

- “Personal care products and services” (such as hair and oral hygiene products, cosmetics, etc.)
- “Reading” (including newspaper and magazine subscriptions and books)
- “Education” (such as tuition fees and textbooks)
- “Cash contributions” (including charity donations or care for students away from the home)
- “Tobacco products and smoking supplies”
- “Life, endowment, annuities, and other personal insurance”
- “Retirement, pensions, and Social Security.”

None of these showed a significant correlated with animal welfare.

The only variables that held a statistically significant relationship with the ALDF rankings were the following:

- Age: the age of respondent.
- Vehicles (this variable is seemingly interchangeable with “Vehicle purchases” and was therefore not included in the analysis of the results).
- Cereal and bakery products: ready-to-eat cereals, pastas, and other various grain-based food products.

- Fruits and vegetables: includes all fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Alcoholic beverages: beer, wine, whiskey, etc.
- Owned dwellings: mortgage principal repayments, interest, property taxes, etc.
- Vehicle purchases (net outlay): purchase price minus trade-in value on cars, trucks, motorcycles, etc.
- Entertainment: fees and admissions, TV and radio equipment, pets, hobbies, etc.
- Miscellaneous: checking account fees, legal fees, union dues, and other non-mortgage and non-vehicular expenses.

Annotations of these variables are based on the complete glossary with explanations provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.⁸⁹ Table 1 shows the statistical outcomes of the significant variables after processing the data using the ANOVA feature in SPSS. Note the last column, which reveals the significance using a 95% confidence interval. All variables present a figure less than 0.05.

⁸⁹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Consumer Expenditure Surveys," Glossary, <https://www.bls.gov/cex/csxgloss.htm#expn>. Accessed July 27, 2021.

Table 1: Significant Variables

| ANOVA | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Age of reference person | Between Groups | 66.068 | 2 | 33.034 | 7.571 | 0.001 |
| | Within Groups | 549.752 | 126 | 4.363 | | |
| | Total | 615.819 | 128 | | | |
| Vehicles | Between Groups | 0.641 | 2 | 0.321 | 3.754 | 0.026 |
| | Within Groups | 10.759 | 126 | 0.085 | | |
| | Total | 11.401 | 128 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|-----|------------|-------|-------|
| Cereal and bakery products proportions | Between Groups | 0.001 | 2 | 0.001 | 5.893 | 0.004 |
| | Within Groups | 0.012 | 126 | 0.000 | | |
| | Total | 0.014 | 128 | | | |
| Fruits and vegetables proportions | Between Groups | 0.001 | 2 | 0.001 | 3.099 | 0.049 |
| | Within Groups | 0.030 | 126 | 0.000 | | |
| | Total | 0.031 | 128 | | | |
| Alcoholic beverages | Between Groups | 245588.777 | 2 | 122794.389 | 4.916 | 0.009 |
| | Within Groups | 3122498.778 | 125 | 24979.990 | | |
| | Total | 3368087.555 | 127 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
| Owned dwellings | Between Groups | 12462168.209 | 2 | 6231084.104 | 3.423 | 0.036 |
| | Within Groups | 227574475.846 | 125 | 1820595.807 | | |
| | Total | 240036644.055 | 127 | | | |
| Vehicle purchases (net outlay) | Between Groups | 11987787.111 | 2 | 5993893.555 | 5.753 | 0.004 |
| | Within Groups | 122932953.501 | 118 | 1041804.691 | | |
| | Total | 134920740.612 | 120 | | | |
| Entertainment | Between Groups | 3567984.569 | 2 | 1783992.284 | 3.832 | 0.024 |
| | Within Groups | 58657672.470 | 126 | 465537.083 | | |
| | Total | 62225657.039 | 128 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|-----|------------|-------|-------|
| Miscellaneous | Between Groups | 1039383.058 | 2 | 519691.529 | 5.662 | 0.004 |
| | Within Groups | 11564961.934 | 126 | 91785.412 | | |
| | Total | 12604344.992 | 128 | | | |

Source: thesis author

If it is to be assumed that the strength of animal welfare laws has a detectable impact on the relative rate of animal product consumption, then two consumer expenditure variables would be expected to hold a statistically significant relationship with animal welfare. These two variables are (1) “Meat, poultry, fish, and eggs proportions” including beef, pork, processed meats, and fish and seafood, and (2) “Dairy products proportions” which includes eggs, milk, cream, and various processed dairy-based products.⁹⁰ Table 2 shows that the relationship between the strength of animal welfare laws and rates of animal product consumption are not statistically significant and therefore negligible. Note the last column revealing that both variables present an outcome that is greater than 0.05.

⁹⁰ Labor Statistics, “Glossary.” <https://www.bls.gov/cex/csxgloss.htm#expn>

Table 2: Insignificant Variables

| ANOVA | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Meat, poultry, fish, and eggs proportions | Between Groups | 0.002 | 2 | 0.001 | 2.449 | 0.090 |
| | Within Groups | 0.063 | 126 | 0.001 | | |
| | Total | 0.066 | 128 | | | |
| Dairy products proportions | Between Groups | 0.000 | 2 | 0.000 | 0.420 | 0.658 |
| | Within Groups | 0.007 | 126 | 0.000 | | |
| | Total | 0.007 | 128 | | | |

Chapter V

Discussion

This chapter presents an interpretation of the results regarding how the significantly associated variables may relate to one another. Then follows an overview of the current discourse surrounding debate on this matter. Finally, I offer some personal anecdotes to provide context to my interpretation. These anecdotes are drawn from my experience as a long-time employee within the retail grocery industry, as an activist on behalf of the abolitionist animal rights advocacy movement, and as a frequent recipient of solicitation by animal welfare organizations.

To begin, I acknowledge the influence of my personal position on this matter and the effect it can have on my judgment of the findings. I sought to determine primarily if the claim that I purport to be true within my interpersonal activism can be supported with empirical evidence, namely, that animal welfare laws do not result in less animal product consumption.

Part I: Associated Variables

Age is the most significant associative variable with animal welfare, with a statistical significance of 0.001. The average age of respondents in this cohort was roughly 50 years old with a minimum age of 45 and a maximum age of 54. According to the Pew Research Center, those born between 1946 and 1964 fall under the generational category of “Baby Boomer,” while those born between 1965 and 1980 are considered to

be “Generation X.”⁹¹ This means that based on the time of the ALDF publications used for this study (2009 through 2018), the vast majority of respondents fell within the birth year range of the Generation X category. It can be speculated that the statistically significant association between age and animal welfare in this study may be more of a product of generational qualities rather than age itself. The middle-age association, however, does imply that cumulative wealth and the experience that often comes with age may be contributing factors. However, the correlation is likely skewed since the age range of respondents is between 45 and 56 years. The inclusion of older and/or younger age brackets may change the significance of this correlation and would be worth examining in further research.

In my own experience as someone who falls within the age bracket considered to be the Millennial generation, I have found that vegetarianism and veganism are more prevalent among younger generations of people and less frequent among older generations. This observation has also been confirmed in both my experience as a clerk in a grocery retail setting and through conversational interactions while engaging in animal rights activism.

Vehicle ownership is also strongly associated with animal welfare, with a statistical significance of 0.004. Vehicle ownership as an asset reinforces the link between wealth and animal welfare. Respondents who own vehicles likely have the means to pay for and maintain their own transportation, which requires a minimum income level in relation to the cost of living within the given geographical location. Vehicle ownership also allows more options when it comes to acquiring goods and

⁹¹ Pew Research Center, “The Generations Defined.” https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/28/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers-as-americas-largest-generation/ft_20-04-27_generationsize_2/. Accessed September 6, 2021.

services without being limited to one's immediate geography—especially if the neighborhood in which one resides has limited outlets for retail food, a situation often referred to as a “food desert.”

I have never owned a vehicle. However, I have worked in the grocery retail industry for 16 years and have noticed that many, if not most, young adults also do not own their own vehicle. If vehicle ownership were more closely related to consumption habits than age, then I would expect to see a stronger correlation between vehicle ownership and plant-based diets, regardless of age. This shows, once again, why the correlational significance of age in this study is the most dubious among the significant variables. Access to resources regardless of vehicle ownership perhaps plays a larger role, which may explain the correlation between animal welfare and the next two variables.

Cereal and bakery products and *fruits and vegetables* are both significantly associated with animal welfare, with a statistical significance of 0.004 for cereal and bakery products and 0.038 for fruits and vegetables. I suggest that increased expenditures on these products instead of animal products is the reason. The level of wealth and income one would expect in conjunction with vehicle ownership perhaps implies more disposable income that can be spent on more expensive whole plant-based foods as opposed to processed foods from retailers with limited fresh-produce options.

Next is *alcoholic beverages*, with a statistical significance of 0.011. The association between purchases of alcoholic beverages and animal welfare is most perplexing. Further research could be done to determine whether the association is positive or negative, to better understand the specific reasons for this correlation.

Entertainment expenditures hold a statistical significance of 0.001. Many forms of public entertainment involve the use of animals such as zoos, circuses, aquariums,

rodeos, dog races, etc. It follows logically that choice of entertainment correlates with animal welfare because many states outright ban some of these forms of entertainment or at least regulate them, i.e., dog racing, rodeos, and circuses.

Lastly, the *Miscellaneous* category includes things like checking account fees, legal fees, union dues, and other non-mortgage and non-vehicular expenses, etc. It showed a statistical significance of 0.004. The variability of expenses within this category is worth examining to further determine how they relate to animal product consumption.

The over-arching theme among all the aforementioned variables appears to be level of wealth. The similarity between the significantly associated variables requires further research to determine the underlying causes for such associations. A qualitative approach may reveal such findings.

Part II: The Current Debate

Scholars and activists alike, including social psychologist Dr. Melanie Joy, consider the debate between animal rights advocates to be unproductive. Joy stated: “Virtually all that has been discussed in regard to the ‘debate’ is content-based, and one would be hard-pressed to find new content to add to a ‘debate’ that has been at a stalemate since its inception.”⁹²

Joy contends that the issue surrounding this debate is not so much about differences among rights advocates regarding the effectiveness of certain strategies. Rather, it is lack of ability to “discuss such differences openly,” further stating:

⁹² Melanie Joy, “Our Voices, Our Movement: How Vegans Can Move Beyond the Welfare-Abolition Debate.” *One Green Planet*, 2003. <https://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/our-voices-our-movement-how-vegans-can-move-beyond-the-welfare-abolition-debate/>. Accessed May 5, 2019.

We must approach our areas of difference in such a way that cultivates the kind of productive dialogue that enables us to fully explore the most expedient methods by which to stop the tide of horrific brutality toward nonhuman beings that does not pause while we argue with each other. . . . Both “sides” must work to defuse the Myth of the Great Debate.⁹³

Throughout her article, Joy posits that animal rights activists have more similarities than differences when it comes to the desired outcome of their efforts. On the other hand, her emphasis on similarities as justification for labeling this debate as a “myth” seems to dismiss its relevance. She appears to claim implicitly that questioning or challenging the compatibility of the accepted means of the mainstream movement with animal rights theory is unimportant or at least less important than promoting unity. Wrenn argues that Joy’s position stems from her proposed theory on the nature of animal consumption.⁹⁴

Joy’s contribution to animal ethics scholarship rests primarily on her development of the concept she refers to as “carnism”:

We eat animals without thinking about what we are doing and why because the belief system that underlies this behavior is invisible. This invisible belief system is what I call carnism. . . . Carnism is the belief system in which eating certain animals is considered ethical and appropriate.⁹⁵

She is also the Founder and President of Beyond Carnism (formerly Carnism Awareness and Action Network [CAAN]), a United States-based international corporate charity.⁹⁶

⁹³ Joy, “Our Voices, Our Movement.”

⁹⁴ Corey Lee Wrenn, “What’s Wrong with ‘Carnism’?” February 4, 2016. <http://www.coreyleewrenn.com/carnism/>. <http://www.coreyleewrenn.com/carnism/>; Gary L. Francione, “‘Carnism’? There is Nothing “Invisible” About the Ideology of Animal Exploitation,” *Abolitionist Approach*, October 2, 2012. <https://www.abolitionistapproach.com/carnism-there-is-nothing-invisible-about-the-ideology-of-animal-exploitation/>; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 29.

⁹⁵ Melanie Joy, *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows: An Introduction to Carnism* (San Francisco: Conari Press), 2010.

⁹⁶ Carnism.org website, “Who We Are,” <http://www.carnism.org/who-we-are>. Accessed May 9, 2019.

Her theory and claims regarding the abolition/welfare debate have been critiqued by abolitionist scholars, including Wrenn⁹⁷ and Francione,⁹⁸ both of whom interpret her theory as another form of rhetoric that further obscures the necessity of veganism within the animal rights movement while simultaneously perpetuating speciesist logic. For Wrenn, Joy's insistence on focusing primarily on the consumption of meat in her theory only hearkens back to the welfarist paradigm of drawing morally arbitrary distinctions between different types of animal exploitation:

To single out flesh as somehow more problematic is nonsensical. Instead, it becomes yet another campaign for reductionism/vegetarianism. Carnism obscures the importance of veganism and unnecessarily confuses anti-speciesist campaigning. . . . Dr. Joy insists that the term *carnism* actually entails all animal products. To the casual observer, however, this is not true. Having read her books, for that matter, I can attest that this hidden vegan meaning is never made clear.⁹⁹

In line with Wrenn's observations, the final chapter of Joy's monograph on carnism implicitly promotes the utilitarian notion that merely reducing animal product consumption is a morally good thing:

While eliminating your consumption of animal products is ideal, just reducing the amount of them in your diet can have a significant impact on the animals. . . . a person who eats meat once or twice a month consumes far fewer animals than someone who eats meat daily. Clearly, this helps the animals.¹⁰⁰

The last section of Wrenn's book provides a list of resources for "Transitioning to a Meat-Free Diet,"¹⁰¹ a list of "Organizations Promoting Vegetarianism and Farm-Animal

⁹⁷ Wrenn, "What's Wrong with 'Carnism'?"

⁹⁸ Francione, "Nothing 'Invisible'," <https://www.abolitionistapproach.com/carnism-there-is-nothing-invisible-about-the-ideology-of-animal-exploitation/>

⁹⁹ Wrenn. "What's Wrong with 'Carnism'?", <http://www.coreyleewrenn.com/carnism/>; Ormes, "Primacy of Welfarism," 30.

¹⁰⁰ Joy, *Why We Love Dogs*, 147.

¹⁰¹ Joy, *Why We Love Dogs*, 151.

Welfare”,¹⁰² and recommended reading on the topics of vegetarianism and animal welfare issues, including Peter Singer’s book *Animal Liberation* with a caption underneath that which reads: “A classic and staple for anyone interested in animal welfare.”¹⁰³

Furthermore, Wrenn explicitly endorses getting involved with such aforementioned organizations by donating money or helping with “advocacy efforts” as a means to “reduce animal suffering.”¹⁰⁴ There is no mention of animal rights theory or of veganism as a moral obligation within this work.

In direct response to Joy’s assertion that vegan activists must move beyond the abolition/welfare debate, Wrenn explains the relationship between Joy’s theory and her status as a leader of a non-profit animal advocacy charity:

Washing over factional divides in the movement is critical for non-profits, as acknowledging them would mean legitimizing pundit concerns about the non-profit structure itself. . . . Like many non-profit leaders, Dr. Joy ardently defends counterproductive and ultimately speciesist tactics of reform and vegan-bashing. Her suggestion of “moving beyond” the debate is simply that anti-reformist vegans cease their claimsmaking and join the status quo (“our voices, our movement”). Carnism works to invisibilize veganism as a rhetorical matter, but also as a political one.¹⁰⁵

To Wrenn, the Joy’s attempt to gloss over this issue is really a defense of the corporate non-profit animal advocacy institutions themselves. Abolitionists like Wrenn point out that the stakes involved with corporate animal charities stem from their reliance on a donor base that would unlikely be able to fulfill corporate financial needs regarding payroll, campaigning, marketing/advertising, etc., if comprised solely of vegan animal-rights advocates who were unwilling to participate in regulation and issue-specific

¹⁰² Joy, *Why We Love Dogs*, 155.

¹⁰³ Joy, *Why We Love Dogs*, 158.

¹⁰⁴ Joy, *Why We Love Dogs*, 147.

¹⁰⁵ Wrenn, “What’s Wrong with “Carnism”?”; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 31.

campaigns.¹⁰⁶ Recall the same dynamic observed by Beers occurred as far back as the early twentieth century regarding organizations not wanting to “alienate their swelling constituency” by pursuing “modest or even conservative reforms that prompted cooperation rather than confrontation with the perpetrators of animal abuse and exploitation.”¹⁰⁷

When it comes to Joy’s theory of carnism, Wrenn views this as merely putting “a new label on an old idea,” thereby deflecting any challenges to the latter. Francione would agree. In his assessment of carnism, he states:

The ideology that supports animal exploitation is the ideology of animal welfare. And this ideology is not invisible or hidden in any way: on the contrary, the animal welfare position is an explicit part of our culture to say that the animal welfare ideology is “invisible” is to encourage us to avoid a hard examination of animal welfare in favor of embracing some fantasy that we exploit animals as the result of some “invisible” conditioning. . . . As such, the “invisibility” position is itself nothing more than a version of welfarist ideology.¹⁰⁸

Part III: A Personal Anecdote

The following is an analysis of a present-day, issue-specific welfare campaign, followed by a cross-comparison of the mission statements of several animal welfare organizations compared to PETA’s mission statement. This offers an example of how rights organizations such as PETA are still as indistinguishable from conservative welfare

¹⁰⁶ Gary L. Francione, and Anna Charlton, *Advocate For Animals! An Abolitionist Vegan Handbook* (Logan, UT: Exempla Press, 2017), 125.

¹⁰⁷ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 3; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 32.

¹⁰⁸ Francione, “Carnism,”; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 32.

groups in their modes of advocacy as they were when Francione and Regan were actively working together to ameliorate this issue.¹⁰⁹

On April 16, 2019, I received a solicitation in the mail informing me about abuses taking place within the veal industry. Inside the envelope was a letter from Bradley Miller, the national director of the Humane Farming Association (HFA). The envelope had a “USA NONPROFIT ORG” stamp, which is typical of this type of charity as many (if not most) of these types of organizations are indeed nonprofit. The envelope had an image of a bovine calf with a chain around his neck, looking into the camera, with the rest of his body enclosed inside a wooden crate. The only text on the envelope read: “He Can’t Turn Around—We Can’t Turn Our Backs!” Above the small transparent window where my address showed, it read: “Inside: How you can stop farm animal abuse.” In what seemed to be an attempt to establish the credibility of the group’s effectiveness, the header at the top of the letter displayed a quote from the *New York Times* which read: “The most successful animal *rights* boycott in the United States” [emphasis added], with the HFA logo on the left. Underneath, it read: “Campaign Against Factory Farming.”¹¹⁰

It should be noted that HFA does not explicitly endorse an animal-rights position; the rhetorical use of the word “rights” among animal welfare proponents has largely obscured the definition of animal-rights theory, something Francione has been critical of in the past and remains so today.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 17.

¹¹⁰ Bradley Miller, Solicitation letter addressed to Larkin Ormes on behalf of the Humane Farming Association (HFA), April 16, 2019.

¹¹¹ Francione, *Rain Without Thunder*, 79, 229; Francione and Briedrich, “Debate”; Francione, “Reflections on Tom Regan.”

It is clear from the beginning of the letter that Miller was trying to persuade me to join the organization, although what this entailed was not yet stated. The letter described what many people would consider to be inhumane conditions evident in the depictions of what life is like for a calf during the production process in a veal factory:

The veal factories say that the baby calves they imprison are “happy” and as well cared for as your pet dog or cat. . . . To keep his meat the pale color promoted by the veal industry, he’s kept anemic on purpose. . . . The ramped rows of tiny crates may maximize profits for agribusiness, but they are a perfect breeding ground for disease. . . . If you or I abused a dog or cat like this, we could be jailed. . . . But agribusiness has lobbied so that farm animals are excluded from the Federal Animal Welfare Act.¹¹²

More human-centric effects were evident as a result of this alleged abuse was highlighted:

And what about the millions of Americans who unknowingly eat these sick animals? They are the victims of a dangerous and despicable consumer fraud. . . . The Humane Farming Association is a nonprofit organization of people like you who care deeply about the protection of farm animals — and the health of human beings.¹¹³

The language seems to imply that the issue is twofold: (1) the supposed abuse of a particular kind of farm animal bred for human consumption, and (2) fraudulent claims by the veal industry that apparently mislead consumers and pose a possible threat to their health. Miller portrayed a victim-and-victimizer dynamic where the victims are the calves themselves, and the producers as the victimizers, although the letter seems to focus more on the victimhood of the animals involved. The letter ends by telling me how I can “be part of the nation’s largest and most effective fighting force for animals” and that my

¹¹² Miller, solicitation letter, 2-3; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 18.

¹¹³ Miller, solicitation letter, 3-4.

“tax-deductible contribution . . . will be put to immediate use in [our] landmark campaigns to alleviate farm-animal suffering.”¹¹⁴

At this point, I am confused by this letter. Should I be boycotting all veal or just veal produced by certain manufacturers? How can I know? Is eating veal itself a problem or just how it is processed? Where is the line drawn between treatment that is cruel and treatment that is merely sufficient to produce veal? Should I just donate my money and not worry too much about it?¹¹⁵

There is a value system underpinning this letter as highlighted by the following excerpt: “Simply because a calf is destined to be slaughtered does not mean he should be forced to live in agony.”¹¹⁶ This quote reveals a value that is typical among most animal welfare organizations and the population at large, at least within the United States: the problem is not that animals are used, but rather *how* they are used. At no point in the letter did Miller say anything that refutes this assumption. This is a key difference from the abolitionist argument which also rejects the pursuit of these types of campaigns by rights groups such as PETA, whose mission statement and primary tactical foci are practically indistinguishable from HFA and other welfare groups.¹¹⁷

The HFA website reveals their primary intentions as an organization through their mission statement: “HFA’s goals are to protect farm animals from cruelty and abuse, to protect the public from the misuse of antibiotics, hormones, and other chemicals used on factory farms, and to protect the environment from the impacts of industrialized animal

¹¹⁴ Miller, solicitation letter, 4.

¹¹⁵ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 19.

¹¹⁶ Miller, solicitation letter, 3.

¹¹⁷ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 20.

factories.”¹¹⁸ Another similar and perhaps more well-known group from which I have received repeated solicitations is the HSUS, whose mission statement reads:

We fight the big fights to end suffering for all animals. Together with millions of supporters, we take on puppy mills, factory farms, trophy hunts, animal testing and other cruel industries. . . . We fight all forms of animal cruelty to achieve the vision behind our name: A humane society. And we can’t do it without you. . . . We take a mainstream approach and combat the most severe forms of cruelty and abuse.¹¹⁹

Another is the ASPCA, whose mission statement reads:

The ASPCA’s mission, as stated by founder Henry Bergh in 1866, is “to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States.” . . . Helping vulnerable animals and keeping pets in safe and loving homes requires a commitment from all of us. . . . When we work together under a common cause, we’re both saving lives and elevating our society and its laws to ensure cruelty victims and other at-risk animals receive the protection and care they deserve.¹²⁰

The similarities in focus and goals are apparent in these organizations. Their primary focus is to reduce the suffering of animals, particularly those being used for various human purposes such as food, testing products to be used for human consumption, treatment of companion animals, etc. The issue is consistently framed in a way that portrays the organization as combating certain industries that are abusing the animals they use and produce.

Most (or at least the three described thus far) solicit donations from the public. Clicking on the link entitled “How You Can Help” on either the ASPCA or HSUS websites, one finds things like: “Whether by volunteering your time, money, car or even

¹¹⁸ Humane Farming Association (HFA), “About HFA.” <https://www.hfa.org/index.html>. Accessed April 17, 2019.

¹¹⁹ Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), “Our Mission.” <https://www.humanesociety.org/our-mission>. Accessed April 17, 2019.

¹²⁰ American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), “About Us,” and “We Are Their Voice.” <https://www.aspc.org/about-us>. Accessed April 17, 2019; Omres, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 20.

your birthday, there are so many ways to help”¹²¹ or, in the case of the ASPCA: “As a non-profit organization, the ASPCA depends entirely on donations from kindhearted people like you.”¹²² All of the organizations described rely on charitable donations to sustain operations, and in some way or another all are perceived as defining historically and today what constitutes the mainstream animal advocacy movement.¹²³

None of the organizations described seek to challenge the conventional ideology at present. It is implicitly accepted as such. There is no significant evidence in their solicitations or online media that shows otherwise. These organizations, as well as the conventional attitude toward the treatment and use of animals as an issue worth addressing, make up the portion of the modern-day animal rights movement that focuses exclusively on welfarism. However, visiting the PETA website and reading the organization’s mission statement, it is difficult to discern how their mission differs from groups that focus strictly on animal welfare:

PETA focuses its attention on the four areas in which the largest numbers of animals suffer the most intensely for the longest periods of time: in laboratories, in the food industry, in the clothing trade, and in the entertainment industry. We also work on a variety of other issues, including the cruel killing of rodents, birds, and other animals who are often considered “pests” as well as cruelty to domesticated animals. PETA works through public education, cruelty investigations, research, animal rescue, legislation, special events, celebrity involvement, and protest campaigns.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Humane Society of the United States, “How You Can Help.” <https://www.humanesociety.org/how-you-can-help>. Accessed on April 17, 2019,

¹²² American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Ways to Give. <https://www.aspc.org/ways-to-give>. Accessed April 17, 2019.

¹²³ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 21.

¹²⁴ PETA, “Our Mission Statement.” <https://www.peta.org/about-peta/>. Accessed April 24, 2019.

Like the animal welfare organizations HFA, HSUS, and ASPCA, and as observed by Francione in 1996, “PETA’s mission statement contains no mention of animal rights.”¹²⁵

Several weeks after I received the solicitation letter from HFA, I received another solicitation letter in the mail, this time from Ingrid Newkirk of PETA. In a similar vein, Newkirk’s letter began with a statement evoking critical urgency: “Don’t wait any longer to help stop animals from being shocked, burned, mutilated, and dissected in laboratories.”¹²⁶ The letter ended by saying:

It’s outrageous that living, feeling beings are treated like laboratory equipment. Don’t wait any longer to sign your petition to NIH demanding that it stop supporting experiments on animals—and please enclose a generous contribution to help PETA stop the abuse and killing of animals in laboratories.¹²⁷

This letter, like HFA’s, did not explicitly endorse an animal rights position that all animal use is morally indefensible. Rather, it merely targeted the supply side of a particular form of use and in no way challenged the prevailing societal view that animals are resources and that our moral obligation to them is to reduce their suffering while we use them as we see fit. Therein lies the trend that is just as prevalent today as it was when Francione and Regan sought to ameliorate it prior to their parting of ways. Animal-rights proponents are still defending welfare reforms and issue-specific campaigns as a means toward abolition.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Francione, *Rain Without Thunder*, 33; Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 22.

¹²⁶ Ingrid Newkirk, President of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, Solicitation letter addressed to Larkin Ormes, April 29, 2019, 1.

¹²⁷ Newkirk, solicitation letter, 2.

¹²⁸ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 23.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

The recent discourse amongst scholars of animal ethics and activists within this debate reveals somewhat of an evolution in nomenclature as well as more emphasis on empiricism, albeit conjectural. However, the fundamental disagreement over what animal rights theory requires is still the same as it was when Francione and Regan first began their dissent from mainstream animal advocacy. This is evident in the fact that this debate has continued for over three decades now. To this day, animal rights organizations like PETA continue to promote the same types of welfare reforms and issue-specific campaigns that they did prior to the formation of grass-roots abolitionism. It is difficult, if not impossible, to definitively assess the efficacy of these efforts.

However, if there is any indication of what has not changed, it is the fact that “the animal advocacy movement, from its inception to the present day, has secured some important victories but no comprehensive social or legal recognition of all animals’ rights.”¹²⁹ This is precisely what fuels abolitionist animal rights advocates who assert that if animal exploitation is ever abolished, it will not and cannot be through engaging in activities that contradict animal rights theory.¹³⁰

However, even those like Maxim Fetissenko, who subscribes to the rights ethic and acknowledges the issue with rights activists promoting conventional welfarism, have expressed skepticism toward the efficacy of moral suasion: “Whatever the causes of this

¹²⁹ Beers, *Prevention of Cruelty*, 29.

¹³⁰ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 33.

overreliance on moral arguments may be, the approach is fundamentally flawed because it is built on overly optimistic assumptions about the relationship between moral principles and human behavior.”¹³¹ To support his case, Fetissenko refers to the abolition of human slavery in the United States to show that it took much more than moral arguments alone (namely, a war) to produce this outcome. Moreover, he asserts that animal rights advocates would have greater success in their efforts by additionally tapping into people’s self-interests through articulating the net-positive effects of a vegan diet on human health and the environment. This stems from the assumption that the animal rights movement has relied too much on moral arguments in the past—to which political scholar Per-Anders Svärd responds:

If we take a self-critical look at what we as individuals and our large organizations have been doing over the last 30 years or so, I think we will find that only a small fraction of our time and our resources has been put into the promotion of animal rights–informed veganism. If anything, we have been reluctant to explain what we really believe and why.¹³²

Herein lies what has remained virtually unchanged since the rise of radical activism after 1975.¹³³

The current mainstream organizational model of animal rights activism functions essentially like a business. While the largest and most prevalent rights organizations, such as PETA, claim that they wish to abolish animal use altogether, they continue to engage in promoting welfarism over challenging speciesist ideology. Abolitionists like Francione and Wrenn continue to express staunch criticisms of these tactics within the movement as serving mainly to garner donations by appealing to a broad donor base. This includes

¹³¹ Fetissenko, “Beyond Morality,” 159.

¹³² Per-Anders Svärd, “Beyond Welfarist Morality: An Abolitionist Reply to Fetissenko,” *Journal of Animal Ethics* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 179. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/janimaethics.1.2.0176>

¹³³ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism” 34.

both individuals who willfully use animal products and businesses that capitalize on animal exploitation.

The abolitionist animal rights movement did not break into the mainstream when it was first forming, and it certainly has not today. But perhaps that is the point of its existence in the first place. The abolitionist animal rights movement is a grassroots movement that formed in response to those like Ingrid Newkirk, Bruce Friedrich, and Melanie Joy, who all hold financial stakes in the perpetuation of the status quo that has been and still is the corporatization of animal rights advocacy. As far as whether or not the mainstream movement will ever seriously consider the arguments of abolitionists, only time will tell.¹³⁴

This study has revealed that the empirical claim made by certain animal rights advocates—that animal welfare is an effective means for reducing the demand for animal products—is unfounded. Moreover, the data have shown that general wealth, especially the possession of assets, holds a stronger association with animal welfare than do the rates of consumer expenditures on animal-based food products. States in which animal welfare laws are more plentiful and strictly enforced have not presented significantly different rates of animal product consumption than have states with less animal welfare laws and enforcement.

¹³⁴ Ormes, “Primacy of Welfarism,” 34.

Research Limitations

Several limitations should be taken into consideration:

- The timeline of data for this study represents only a specific ten-year period due to the limitation of state rankings reports provided by the Animal Legal Defense Fund.
- Respondents were comprised of a narrow age range; a more diverse age cohort could reveal a difference in data outcomes.
- The sampled geographic regions were primarily densely populated cities within their respective states. Therefore, the data is skewed in favor of those in urban settings as opposed to state populations as a whole.
- The analysis of variance revealed only the statistical significance when it comes to the relationship between animal welfare and various types of consumer expenditures. Obtaining more specific details regarding positive versus negative relationships and other statistical metrics would require further analytical procedures. As such, it could be the basis for future research.

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