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Strategies, Action Repertoires and DIY Activism in the Animal Rights Movement

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ABSTRACT *Following Tilly, this paper argues that a social movement is what it does as much as why it does it. This approach is particularly important in the case of the animal rights movement, which is often demonized as extremist and violent. Critics of the movement claim that animal activists use letter bombs, arson attacks and threats to intimidate those they see as animal abusers and that violent direct action of this kind is typical of the movement as a whole. The present paper argues that the mainstream animal movement – in the USA, the UK and Australia – is overwhelmingly non-violent and that its core strategies and tactics have two broad aims, namely to gain publicity for the movement and to challenge conventional thinking about how we treat non-human animals. This is achieved primarily by the deployment of the key tactical mechanisms of persuasion, protest, non-cooperation and intervention. These tactics may be deployed collectively or as DIY (Do-It-Yourself) activism which many grassroots animal activists – ‘caring sleuths’ to use Shapiro’s apt term – seem to prefer. The paper focuses on demonstrations and pamphleteering as examples of publicity strategies or liberal governance strategies as well as critical governance strategies or interference strategies such as the hunger strike, ethical vegetarianism and undercover surveillance.*

KEY WORDS: Action repertoires, new social movements, publicity and interference strategies, liberal and critical governance strategies, DIY activism, non-violence

On 6 May 2002, Pim Fortuyn, a right-wing Dutch politician, was assassinated in the Netherlands by Volkert van der Graaf, a thirty-four-year-old vegan animal rights extremist who apparently was angry with Fortuyn over his support of intensive farming and his promise to repeal a ban on fur farming. This was the first political assassination in the Netherlands for over 400 years and the first ever documented murder by an animal rights activist. Yet even before this incident, animal rights supporters had been denounced in the media as violent extremists, particularly in America, the UK and Australia where animal activism has been most prominent in the movement’s recent history. For example, Kew’s (1999) doctoral dissertation contains two long chapters on the role of the media in the UK during the live animal export campaign from 1994 to 1996 and concludes that the quality media were overwhelmingly hostile to the movement, portraying supporters as ‘misguided, dubious, irrational, heretical, sinister, dishonest, totalitarian, murderous and

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treacherous' (1999, pp. 261–262). If these labels are used in a country which pioneered animal protection, then they are most certainly more widespread in less animal-friendly countries. The purpose of the present paper is to show – in contrast to media images and public perception – how the animal movement is overwhelmingly non-violent and that its strategies and tactical repertoires are in the main the conventional, legal tactics used by non-violent movements.

In line with Tilly (1985), the paper takes the view that a social movement is what it does, as much as why it does it. Thus while the focus will be on the movement's strategies and tactics which have been developed during the long history of animal protection from the RSPCA to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), it is important to include the motives of the activists behind the various campaigns since it is people who have objectives, rather than organizations per se. I argue that the animal movement is dedicated to non-violent direct action which incorporates the two broad strategies of gaining publicity for the movement and disturbing the status quo in the way we treat other animals. These approaches correspond to what Newell (2000) calls liberal governance strategies and critical governance strategies; the former refers to strategies which seek reforms within the system while the latter 'tend not to compromise . . .' (Newell, 2000, p. 127). The paper also explains why movement insiders reject violence in campaigning for the ethical treatment of animals; instead, activists draw on a variety of non-violent tactics borrowed from the repertoire of the nineteenth-century humane movement as well as from more recent social movements.

During the late 1990s I observed animal activists in Australia, the UK and the USA as they prosecuted their campaigns collectively and as individuals in what can be described as DIY activism. DIY activism included many different tactical repertoires which were familiar and available to activists, as well as ones which were designed to gain a response from the targets. According to Harding (1998, p. 80), DIY came out of the Direct Action movement of the 1990s and follows in the tradition of non-violent direct action espoused by the radical environmentalist group Earth First! (EF!). One of the slogans of EF! activists is 'DIY! – if not you, who?' (McKay, 1998, p. 3) describes a broader social formation he labels DIY culture, which includes a form of activism characterized by immediacy, spontaneity and direct action. This 'definition' is in line with Shapiro's (1994, p. 148) description of animal rights activists as 'caring sleuths' whose DIY activism is characterized by an aggressive, investigative style of direct action that is enacted as soon as animal suffering is encountered.

According to Doherty (2000, p. 62), tactical repertoires as learned and shared understandings of how to protest are shaped by the values of the movement. The power in movement (Tarrow, 1994, 1998) for animal protectors is the capacity to combine various forms of collective action from direct mail to direct action. Tactics highlighted in the paper are pamphleteering and demonstrations (publicity strategies), and hunger strikes, ethical vegetarianism and undercover surveillance (interference strategies). Clearly, there is some overlap in the objectives of publicizing an issue and how it might subvert the status quo; a hunger strike, for example, is at first glance a classic illustration of a publicity stunt yet it is highly subversive in intent. Similarly, a demonstration, depending on its size, is used by activists to publicize an issue as well as to disrupt life in its immediate vicinity. These particular tactics will be highlighted in this paper because they were popular among the activists and because, as I suggest below, they are representative of the tactical repertoires I observed in various movement campaigns.

According to Rucht, the difference between strategy and tactics is stressed more in Europe than in the USA. Rucht notes that tactics may change from one situation to another and are not necessarily part of a general strategic concept (1990, p. 174). It is perhaps useful to think of strategy as the 'broad organizing plans' for acquiring and using resources to achieve the movement's goals (Turner and Killian, 1987, p. 286), while tactics refer to the specific techniques for implementing the strategy. Tactics are sometimes referred to as 'forms of action' (Rucht, 1990), 'action technologies' (Oliver and Marwell, 1992), 'claim-making repertoires' (Tilly, 1993/94), 'action repertoires', 'repertoires of contention' or as a 'tactical repertoire' (Tarrow, 1994). Rucht defines the action repertoire as 'the range of specific kinds of action carried out by a given collective actor in a cycle of conflict, usually lasting from some years to some decades' (1990, p. 164) while Tilly sees social movements as 'a cluster of performances' (1993/94, p. 3) which include the kinds of action repertoires listed in Table 1.

Animal Protection Praxis: Strategies and Tactics

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. (Attributed to Margaret Mead)

It's challenging. I like the strategy. I absolutely love the strategy of figuring out how to do something. . . . I guess I like the politics of it. (Adele Douglass, American Humane Association)

Turner and Killian (1987) have identified four tactical mechanisms – persuasion, facilitation, bargaining, and coercion – which have been used at one time or another by activists and advocates in their campaigns on behalf of animals. These tactical mechanisms can best be thought of as a continuum, with persuasion as the most moderate tactic at one end and the more direct confrontational tactic of coercion at the other end. I have selected a representative sample of these tactics as space does not permit an account of more than a few iconic tactics from the animal movement's DIY toolkit. Persuasion (e.g. pamphleteering, demonstrations) and facilitation (e.g. ethical vegetarianism) tend to be the preferred tactics of organizational advocates in the suites while bargaining (e.g. hunger strikes) and coercive tactics (e.g. undercover surveillance) are usually more commonly observed in grassroots activist campaigns. The tactics shown in parentheses above have been selected from Table 1 as representative of Turner and Killian's tactical continuum.

Persuasion, involving the use of strictly symbolic manipulation and the raising of issue consciousness, is one of the most important ways in which ideology is produced and continuously modified (Turner and Killian, 1987, pp. 297–298). Although consciousness raising has been derided as 'social change through banner hanging' (Wapner, 1995), it is nonetheless an important tactic in the animal movement for changing the way people think about animals. Close relatives of persuasion – facilitation and bargaining – had been famously used by the late animal activist Henry Spira, although not without criticism from more radical elements in the animal movement (Munro, 2002). Nonetheless, persuasion, facilitation and bargaining remain the staple approaches of the mainstream movement.

There are also many instances in which coercive tactics of various kinds have been deployed, particularly by grassroots activists to achieve improvements in animal welfare.

Table 1. Strategies and tactics of non-violent action by animal protectors

Publicity strategies		Interference strategies	
Persuasion strategy	Protest strategy	Non-cooperation strategy	Intervention strategy
Petitions (Celebrity) speeches Direct mail Publicizing surveys, opinion polls	Demonstrations <i>Picketing</i> <i>Vigils</i> <i>Parades, marches and rallies</i>	<i>Civil disobedience</i> Boycotts <i>Legal obstructions</i> <i>Occupations</i> *Ethical vegetarianism	<i>Animal rescue</i> <i>Sit-ins</i> <i>Blockades</i> *Undercover surveillance
Information stands Displaying symbols and caricatures Posters and banner hanging *Pamphleteering *Writing books, articles, poems *Art exhibitions, media presentations *Submissions and reports to inquiries * Writing letters *Bearing witness	Mock awards Street theatre etc. Mock funerals Burning effigies *Renouncing honours	Animal sanctuaries *Seeking imprisonment *Hunger strikes	<i>Non-violent sabotage</i> Exposure of animal abuser's identity Litigation Lobbying *Ethical investments

The asterisks denote actions mainly by individuals, and words in *italics* represent direct action activities. Tactics in **bold** are described in detail in the text.
Source: Adapted from Ackerman and Krueger (1994, p. 6, as cited in Lofland, 1996, p. 271, figure 9.2).

These range from the use of 'nuisance' tactics to more disruptive tactics including the violent actions of radical animal rights activists. Coercion, then, can be thought of as a continuum ranging from the mild forms of coercion used by activists like Spira to the threats and acts of violence made by extremist groups such as the Animal Liberation Front, the Animal Rights Militia and the Band of Mercy (see Tester & Walls, 1996). Violence is eschewed by the mainstream movement, and very few of the fifty activists I interviewed favoured extreme or violent action under any circumstances. This was even more evident in the results of a larger sample of animal rights supporters who overwhelmingly favoured legal, moderate protest actions over illegal, violent ones (Richards, 1990; Munro, 1995).

Non-violent movement strategies are represented in the four strategies – protest, persuasion, non-cooperation and intervention – and related forms of action in Table 1. The publicity strategies are the legal, mostly non-violent institutionalized strategies which Newell (2000) calls 'liberal governance' strategies and Tarrow (1994) labels as 'conventional' social movement action repertoires. I qualify the tactics as 'mostly non-violent' as demonstrations, for example, can often turn violent. Interference strategies correspond to Newell's concept of 'critical governance' and what Tarrow refers to as 'disruption'; these are non-institutionalized, unconventional tactics which are again mostly non-violent forms of direct action. All of these action repertoires and the related strategies – protest, persuasion, non-cooperation and intervention – have been deployed in recent animal rights campaigns that I observed in three different continents during the 1990s.

Media coverage is essential in many animal rights campaigns for giving the movement legitimacy and publicity. As Glenys Oogjes of Animals Australia explained: 'I'd have to say that the most successful strategy, if you can call it that, was when we've had successful media coverage of an issue' (interview, 1997). Some of the tactics highlighted in this paper – demonstrations, hunger strikes, undercover surveillance – were chosen by activists for their headline potential while the remainder, ethical vegetarianism and pamphleteering were adopted with complete indifference to whether or not 'the whole world is watching' (Gitlin, 1980). DIY activism may not always be the best way to attract media attention in that the actions are typically enacted by small groups of individuals in isolation. Yet the media are always interested in dramatic news stories which many direct action campaigns provide. Rochon (1990) claims that the power of a movement resides in its militancy, size and novelty, while Koopmans (1993) suggests that it is violence which attracts the media's attention. It is for this reason that the media-movement relationship is accurately summed up by Van Zoonen's apt term 'a dance of death' (1996). On the one hand, animal rights activists need the media to promote their call for the compassionate treatment of animals; on the other, the media need dramatic footage and headlines which violence and threats of violence provide, albeit, as we will see below, at a moral cost to the movement.

Extremism and Violence in Animal Activism

Animal rights and anti-roads protesters, according to one writer cited by McKay (1998, p. 3), were the main dissenters in the UK during the 1990s. While many of these protests were militant rather than violent, the representation of the activism in the mass media was of violence and extremism (Kew, 1999). In the case of the animal rights protests against the live export of animals, a single incident involving a brick through a lorry window provoked a moral panic about 'the loopy and violent Animal Rights Militia' (*The Economist*, 1995), IRA-style urban terrorists and the like. Activists I interviewed often

used the language of war when describing their campaign strategies in Brightlingsea and Dover, but none supported the violence favoured by some extremist groups. Tilly (1978, p. 55) has provided some insights into why activists in new social movements eschew violence. There are essentially three factors which activists and bystanders consider, namely success, repression and facilitation. In the case of the success factor, many people now believe violence is counterproductive and indeed will invite repression from the authorities. As John Bryant claimed, 'the one thing the state can do better than anyone else is violence' (interview, 1996). Finally, social movement goals will be facilitated by elites in government and the media only if they are non-violent. For these reasons, then, social movement activists, including the majority of animal activists, favour non-violent means to achieve their goals. Kitschelt (1986, p. 61) also argues that movements need to appeal to widely held norms if they are to succeed and that the strategy of non-violence is crucial for the emergence of protest and the building of broad mobilizations in Western democracies.

Gurr (2000, p. 156) supports this view and notes how non-violent movements of the late twentieth century differed in at least three ways from previous movements. First, non-violent resistance gives protesters a moral advantage, a point frequently made by Peter Singer and other leaders of the mainstream animal movement. Second, because the tactics often proved to be creatively disruptive of public order and economic activity, authorities were compelled to respond in ways that put them at a moral and political disadvantage to the protesters. The large-scale protests in England in the mid-1990s against live animal exports are a good illustration of the effectiveness of non-violent civil disobedience. Third, recent non-violent protests have used the mass media to send their images and messages well beyond the immediate sites of conflict to 'a distant but potentially sympathetic public comprised of people who might be enlisted as allies and agents of reform' (Gurr, 2000, p. 156). Gurr argues that this outreach was not available to the nineteenth-century activists.

Given these arguments for non-violence and against violence, it is therefore not surprising that Rucht has identified a decline in violence in contemporary new social movements and a corresponding increase in civil disobedience (1990, p. 159). Doherty also claims that there has been an increase in non-violent direct action in the twentieth century (2002, p. 180). He identifies a number of factors which explain why violence is not popular in small environmental and animal rights groups: an expanded repertoire of non-violent tactics; much greater access to the mass media; and lack of public support for violence. In the case of animal rights, however, there is at least a perception in some sections of the media that violence has been increasing in the last decade or so. These media reports followed an admission from an animal rights extremist in 1994 that he had sent six letter bombs to companies involved in the live animal export trade in the UK (Jordan, 2002, p. 68).

Jordan distinguishes between activism! and activism, noting that the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) has become emblematic of the former. He points out that the ALF's 'terrorist' actions are a component of the mainstream animal liberation movement which uses primarily non-violent direct action in its campaigns (Jordan, 2002, pp. 67–68). Not surprisingly, then, in the public mind the animal rights movement is often associated with violence, especially in the UK where the ALF has been most active. Even in Australia, the birthplace of the leading advocate of non-violent animal liberation, Peter Singer, peaceful animal activists have been unfairly labelled 'terrorists' and 'extremists' and their campaigns linked to those of the ALF (Munro, 1999, pp. 43–44). That there are violent and extreme elements on the fringes of the mainstream movement cannot be denied; yet

they are a minority who evidently do not accept the non-violent stance of the mainstream movement.

Turner and Killian (1987, pp. 303–304) note how non-violence is often found alongside terrorism rather than in association with the more conventional persuasive and bargaining tactics, an idea which at first blush seems counterintuitive. However, as they explain it, terrorism requires only a small group of well-disciplined participants to prevail, while non-violence cannot be sustained without a mobilizable amount of sympathy for the cause and the presence in the constituency of an ethos that values both non-violence and self-sacrifice. In line with Merton's (1968, p. 140) famous typology, there is sometimes a tension between the compassionate goals of the animal movement and the means to achieve these goals which is resolved by deviant means. When peaceful animal rights protests fail, activists become frustrated and are tempted to turn to more aggressive tactics. Thus while the vast majority of respondents to ASIS (Munro, 1995) favour peaceful and legal means to achieve improvements in the treatment of animals, many activists become disgruntled when their conventional lobbying and years of campaigning fall on deaf ears. Violence and extremism are then rationalized by some perpetrators as necessary evils, with both positive and negative unintended consequences.

When activists engage in more extreme actions, their more moderate colleagues are sometimes accorded more respect by policy makers. In practice, this means that radical actions in the movement often have the effect of creating a niche for more moderate voices. This phenomenon was first identified by Haines (1984) as 'the radical flank effect' which is concerned with how radical groups affect the bargaining chances of moderates. According to Haines, this can either be negative or positive. When there is a negative radical flank effect, the moderates get tainted with the same brush as the radicals; this was the media's reaction to the peaceful protests associated with the live animal export trade in the UK in the mid-1990s. An example of a 'positive radical flank effect' has been noted in the US Congress where the radical and dramatic tactics of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) have made the moderates in the animal movement a more congenial group with which to bargain. This was the experience of at least one movement leader, Adele Douglass, of the American Humane Association:

I know for a fact that the 1985 amendments to the Animal Welfare Act would **never** have been passed without the PETA protests and all the stuff that they were doing. Because then – and it helps us I have to say from the perspective that we're at – when you have extremists and then we come in and where the extremists say 'we want research ended this afternoon,' and we say 'we want the animals treated humanely,' they pay attention to us because that's the other option. . . . I don't think the laws since at least the 1980s would ever have gotten this far without those organizations. (Interview, 1996)

A similar case was made by Haines, who argued that moderate civil rights groups in the USA in the 1960s were the beneficiaries of a positive radical flank effect when elite white groups were prepared to financially support moderates in order to neutralize the extremists. Haines's findings are supported by a number of contemporary movement watchers who have suggested that the extreme actions of radicals can have the effect of legitimating and strengthening the bargaining position of the moderates (McAdam, 1988, pp. 718–719; Scarce, 1990, pp. 6–7; Dalton, 1994, p. 211). On the other hand, at least one writer

(Godwin, 1988, p. 48) has argued that Greenpeace's dramatic actions mobilize financial and moral support from people who 'vicariously' participate in the actions by responding to Greenpeace's direct marketing campaigns. He also points out that threats on the lives of Christian Right leaders have also encouraged people to send money to the evangelicals in the hope of discrediting their extremist enemies. People therefore seem prepared to support dramatic, non-violent actions as in the case of Greenpeace and to register their disapproval of violence and threats of violence as in the case of the Christian Right.

Violent actions by animal rights extremists – such as damaging property, sabotage, sending letter and parcel bombs, planting car bombs, making violent threats and engaging in intimidation (see Tester and Walls, 1996) – make the actions listed in Table 1 seem moderate. For most of the informants in this study, then, violence is seen as counterproductive to the goals of the movement. For John Bryant and the League Against Cruel Sports (LACS), violence is a tactical disaster as well:

We're supposed to be a humanitarian cause and in a democracy we have a duty to use every militant but peaceful avenue up to the level of and including the level of civil disobedience – but any violence, intimidation, threats, abuse, particularly when it's targeted at individual researchers or individual huntsman and people like that, then if we go down that way there's no way back. (Interview, 1996)

Finally, according to Tarrow, violence can 'chill the blood of bystanders, give pause to prospective allies and cause (early enthusiasts) to defect' (1994, p. 112). Tarrow also makes the point that conventional forms of collective action are advantageous in that they are familiar, easy to employ and enjoy cultural resonance. Indeed, for some activists, the use of militant, confrontational tactics is unattractive. Patty Mark of Animal Liberation Victoria, for example, speaks for many activists when she describes the frustration of being forced into militant forms of direct action as a consequence of official indifference to their more moderate claims:

What do you do? . . . You've gone to the police, you've gone to the Minister, you've gone to the RSPCA, you've done everything legally viable, and nobody does anything. Then I think I have a moral responsibility to individually go in and help those animals. And, so I'll be straight, at the same time, I don't want to do that, I don't like to do that, it's nerve-racking! (Interview, 1994)

Thus, some prominent social movement analysts (Doherty, Gurr, Kitschelt, Tarrow and Tilly, among others), as well as leading activists like John Bryant in the UK and Patty Mark in Australia, see violence as counterproductive as a social movement strategy. This was the view of virtually all of the 53 advocates and activists interviewed for this paper; furthermore, it is the overwhelming belief of animal defenders surveyed in the USA and Australia that legal, non-violent protests are both more justified and effective than illegal, violent activities (see the Appendix, paragraph 1).

The Power in DIY Direct Action

Tarrow (1994) has identified three major types of publicly mounted collective action – violence, disruption caused by non-violent direct action and convention via primarily

organized public demonstrations. In Table 1, I have labelled the strategies of disruption and convention ‘interference’ and ‘publicity’, respectively, in the case of the animal movement’s strategic praxis. All three forms of collective action – publicity, interference and violence – have been enacted by the animal movement, although violence is a strategy only of groups outside the mainstream movement. For the supporters of Singer and Regan in the animal welfare and liberation/rights strands of the movement, the strategies of conventional lobbying and non-violent direct action are used in preference to violence (Garner, 1993). Tarrow points out that one of the major powers of the modern social movement is its capacity to combine various forms of collective action. Tilly supports the idea that action repertoires are enacted ‘cumulatively over many simultaneous and/or repeated meetings, demonstrations, marches, petitions, statements, and other interactions with objects of claims’ (1999, p. 262).

Virtually every informant interviewed for this paper acknowledged the importance of getting favourable publicity via the media for their different campaigns and many believed that the best way of attracting the media was by provocative, dramatic actions such as hunger strikes, animal rescue operations and other ‘interference’ tactics. Most of the tactics shown in Table 1 are usually deployed collectively although some like those denoted with an asterisk lend themselves more to individual or DIY actions. Tilly (1978) has pointed out that social movements use quite a small number of tactics considering the vast number that have been used throughout history. Thus, in a series of books on non-violent protest, Sharp (1973) describes approximately 200 such activities. How do activists choose from the available repertoire? Jasper (1997) suggests that activists exhibit ‘tactical tastes’, that is, they choose the tactics that match their habitus or disposition to act in a particular way. Thus trade unionists tend to go on strike, students ‘sit in’ and so on. Jasper also argues that tactics express protesters’ political identities and moral visions (1997, p. 237). To go on a hunger strike or to raid a battery farm says different things about personal identity. The identity of an animal activist might be as a radical vegan, an animal rescuer, a conservationist or as someone who goes on marches or writes letters to the editor. ‘A taste in tactics persists partly because it shapes one’s sense of self’ (1997, p. 246).

DIY Activism at the League Against Cruel Sports

DIY activism is in accord with Margaret Mead’s epigraph quoted above. Most of the tactics discussed in the remainder of the paper are examples of DIY activism which many animal activists favour. In the case of the League Against Cruel Sports (LACS), DIY activism is a philosophy which successfully combines the grassroots activities of activists equipped with cameras and the political skills of the organizational advocates who spend their time drafting animal welfare legislation. Thus, Mike Huskisson’s Animal Cruelty Investigation Group (ACIG) has formed an alliance with LACS so as to engage in lawful, covert operations designed to break the back of the hunting fraternity. Huskisson’s grassroots, anti-cruelty surveillance work with the League is a good example of effective advocacy/activist cooperation in animal protection. The ACIG was founded by Huskisson, a former hunt saboteur who now works alongside John Bryant to expose animal cruelty, lawfully and by non-violent means. The ACIG provides detailed tips to its 1,700 supporters throughout the country on DIY activism in which people are encouraged to video violations of the Animal Welfare Act and expose the cruelty of hunting.

Huskisson is a legend in the UK animal movement for his undercover work in the Feldberg case (McDonald, 1994). He maintains that video activism is more effective in reforming animal abusers than violent and illegal activities which, he says, ‘led to people like myself and others ending up in prison because there wasn’t any other outlet ...’ (interview, 1996). The DIY actions listed in Table 1 are preferred by ‘caring sleuths’ like Huskisson because they are legal, non-violent forms of direct action. Melucci defines direct action as

a form of resistance or collective intervention which possesses a minimum of organisation; which breaks the rules of the political game and/or the norms of the organisation without, however, undermining the foundations of the system of domination; which does not involve the deliberate use of violence; and which seeks to change the rules of the political game and/or to intervene in the political system. (1996, p. 378)

As space does not permit an analysis of each of the tactics listed in Table 1, I have selected a sample (shown in bold in the table) of the most commonly used and representative action repertoires – in the context of Turner and Killian’s (1987) typology – in the contemporary animal movement. The tactics of DIY direct action, the demonstration (publicity strategies) and the hunger strike, ethical vegetarianism and undercover surveillance (interference strategies) are described below.

Publicity Strategies in Animal Protection

I mean sitting chained up to a pig stall for seven hours is very tiring and there’s not a great deal of excitement in it. (Australian animal activist)

Demonstrations

The demonstration is the most widely used protest strategy in the social movement’s repertoire. Demonstrations have become institutionalized and constitute ‘the classical modular form of collective action’ (Tarrow, 1994, p. 107). While Melucci implies that demonstrations require a minimum of organization, organizers themselves claim otherwise (Mondros & Wilson, 1994, pp. 165–166).

Tarrow notes that demonstrations can be used to express the existence of a group or its solidarity with another group or to celebrate a victory or mourn the passage of a leader (1994, p. 100). Yet for many animal movement leaders, the demonstration is seen as a risky venture. For example, John Bryant, the co-chair of LACS, cautions against its use as it can prove to be counterproductive: ‘If the demonstration turns violent, and somebody puts a brick through a window, then it becomes a tactical disaster’ (interview, 1996). Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) experienced this when one of its peaceful demonstrations was hijacked by extremists who smashed the window of a lorry carrying live animals for overseas export. The media ignored the animal welfare issue behind the demonstration and focused on ‘the brick through a window’ story which featured pictures of men in balaclavas smashing the window of a lorry (Erlichman, 1995). Yet demonstrations remain the quintessential form of protest for social movement activists who as individuals or as members of collectivities can enact the several kinds of

demonstrations listed in Table 1 under protest strategies. These include a large number of options ranging from the collective actions of parades, marches, rallies, etc. to the DIY activism of renouncing honours.

Pamphleteering

And then somebody handed me a leaflet. (English animal activist)

John Bryant advocates social change via leafleting and notes in his *Fettered Kingdoms* (Bryant, 1982) that the great strength of the animal rights movement lies with the supporters who hand out leaflets every week: 'The leaflet is our media. In nearly twenty years in animal welfare and rights I have rarely found a campaigner who did not join the movement after being handed a leaflet – usually in the street' (Bryant, 1982, p. 88). Time and again in this study, when I asked what it was that got informants started in the movement, the response was that it came in the form of a leaflet, advertisement or in an arresting image. Tarrow claims that it was in the form of the pamphlet that the democratic implications of print first became known (1998, p. 45). The leaflet is therefore one of the oldest tactics in the social movement's repertoire. For many activists like John Bryant, it is *the* medium of the animal movement. The political potency of the leaflet can be gauged by its impact in the McLibel episode when vegetarian, animal rights activists distributed a short critique of McDonald's in the form of a leaflet which subsequently led to the widely publicized libel trial in London's High Court in 1996.

In the above section I have outlined two of the liberal governance strategies associated with getting publicity for the movement via persuasive communication; in the next section, the critical governance strategies of hunger strikes (bargaining strategy), ethical vegetarianism (facilitation strategy) and undercover surveillance (coercion strategy) will be discussed. Each of these repertoires are further examples of DIY activism which have the potential to subvert, if not disrupt, the status quo. According to Tarrow (1994, p. 108) in its contemporary form, disruptive tactics have three main purposes; first, disruption concretely expresses a movement's determination (e.g. sit-ins); second, it obstructs the routine activities of opponents, bystanders and authorities (e.g. blockades); and third, disruption broadens the field of conflict by posing a risk to law and order and drawing the state into the conflict (e.g. Brightlingsea Against Animal Exports (BALE's) street demonstrations discussed below). Yet despite frequent reference in the literature to direct action, the animal movement, like the environmental movement, tends to avoid direct action in the strong sense of forced entry, occupations and the like (Tilly, 1999, p. 267).

Interference Strategies in Animal Protection

The Save-Our-Sheep Hunger Strike

English ports used in the live export trade in the mid-1990s became the scene for some of the biggest demonstrations seen in the UK since the miners' strike a decade earlier. The new year in 1995 began with British newspapers trumpeting a moral panic with headlines about 'animal rights siege', 'single issue hooligans' and 'bunny-huggers do battle'. An editorial in *The Times*, headed 'Cuddly Terrorism', described the animal liberation

protesters as ‘on a par with the IRA’ (*The Times*, 8 February 1995), a claim that was often repeated in the media during the mass protests that year. To be sure, other themes also featured in the mainstream press although the law and order story was the predominant frame for most of the time. Under these conditions, the idea of a hunger strike was certain to invite further derision, or indifference, from a cynical mass media. However, one regional newspaper at least seemed to have a grudging respect for the willingness of the activists to bear witness. In the lead-up to the hunger strike in London, the *Cambridge Evening News* (22 July 1996) wrote:

The usual Cambridge cranks will be among the loonies in a hunger strike next week ... True, history will eventually recognise these cranks and loonies as heroes in the long struggle against cruelty to exported farm animals. History will see their dotty little gesture outside the Ministry of Agriculture as one of the few significant steps towards real civilisation in an otherwise benighted age.

Activists from Animal Rights Cambridge proudly displayed this clipping on their noticeboard at their regular meetings and at BALE’s post-mortem of the hunger strike I attended in the Brightlingsea community hall. With this ‘dotty little gesture’, the hunger strikers hoped to shame authorities into bargaining over, if not banning, the animal export trade.

The campaign against live exports in England was motivated primarily by anger over the cruelty involved in transporting animals long distances by road and sea. It was an animal welfare protest, not a strict animal rights campaign in which the rights of animals not to be slaughtered for food was prominent. While most of the leaders of the grassroots groups like BALE and the more structured advocacy organizations such as Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) were vegetarians or vegans, most of the rank-and-file protesters were not. Indeed, a large placard hanging from a Colchester pub explained: ‘You Don’t Have To Stop Eating Meat To Care – Ban Live Exports’. Even so, inside the animal movement, the distinction is made between those who eat meat and those who do not. While meat avoidance is not a high priority for just over half of the movement’s supporters in ASIS (Munro, 1995), it is seen by many inside the movement as the measure of one’s commitment to the cause of animals. Vegetarianism, as the quintessential form of DIY activism, is taken up in the next section.

Ethical Vegetarianism at FARM and MRAR

When we ask what drives the contemporary vegetarian movement, the only consistent reply is compassion for animal suffering. (Mary Douglas, 2000)

The Farm Animal Reform Movement (FARM) in the USA seeks to promote vegetarianism in a climate in which the American media have not been sympathetic to animal rights and anti-cruelty issues for most of the twentieth century (Jones, 1996). The activists at FARM have used innovative strategies and tactics to publicize a health education message that the US press finds difficult to ignore. When FARM began its animal advocacy in 1976 it was called the Vegetarian Information Service; five years later it focused more on cruelty issues associated with factory farming. FARM’s most prominent campaign, The Great American Meatout, tends to downplay the cruelty issues in preference to the positive

message of a vegetarian lifestyle. Jones (1996) believes that this, along with FARM's potential as an ally of environmental groups, explains its recent success in the media. For example, it has been very effective in the strategy of 'mobilizing information' (Lemert, 1984) whereby its issues and campaigns are advertised free of charge in the mass media.

Its campaigns give activists hands-on, practical ways to get FARM's message across. World Farm Animals' Day (WFAD) – on Gandhi's birthday, 2 October – is promoted as a non-violent educational event. In the WFAD campaign, bearing witness – by the observance of this tradition – appears to be more important than getting media attention, although a media kit is available to activists who want to issue press releases and the like.

Similarly, a kindred organization in Australia, Mountain Residents for Animal Rights (MRAR) has used unconventional, eccentric and exhibitionist tactics to attract the media's attention. Like FARM's success in the national media, MRAR has been successful in 'mobilizing information' in the local media. It has achieved this by dramatic, eco-friendly tactics and messages that appeal to the media as well as animal protectors, environmentalists and vegetarians. Unlike FARM's strident 'Meat or Murder' rhetoric, MRAR has adopted a 'Transforming McDonald's' campaign in which the fast food giant has been asked (unsuccessfully) to convert to a vegetarian diet. MRAR used street theatre and 'the world's biggest veggie burger' to promote its campaign to transform McDonald's; a 'non-sexist, eco-friendly clown' in the form of Regie McVeggie was created as an alternative to Ronald McDonald. While the campaign did not achieve the publicity of the McLibel trial in the UK, for a brief time it did put vegetarianism on the public agenda in the Sydney-Blue Mountains area.

In their different ways, these animal SMOs have utilized various media to promote the cause of farm animals by using the positive message of a vegetarian lifestyle. For many animal activists, the ultimate boycott is to live a vegan or vegetarian lifestyle. In Singer's view, vegetarianism is a prerequisite to effective animal activism for 'the moral obligation to boycott the meat available in butchers' shops and supermarkets today is . . . inescapable' (Singer, 1992, p. 174). There is, however, much ambivalence in the animal movement associated with ethical vegetarianism as revealed in ASIS (Munro, 1995). Nonetheless, many people inside the movement would agree with Adams (1990) that meat eating is the most extensive and institutionalized form of violence against animals. FARM's Scott Williams, for example, points out that 'if you can eat them, what can't you justify?' (interview, 1996).

Joan Court from Animal Rights Cambridge explained what she believes is the trend in the UK:

People use the word 'obscene' all the time so it seems to be dreadful to eat animals . . . Everybody I know in the movement is vegetarian drifting towards veganism. The young people can't understand why everybody's not a vegan but we're now attracting a lot of older women and men who have had a lifetime of course of eating dairy products and it's more difficult [for them] . . . (Interview, 1996)

One of the factors identified in ASIS (Munro, 1995) which distinguished animal rights activists from advocates and supporters of animal welfare was the respondents' dietary habits. As expected, only a small percentage of activists were meat eaters. At the other dietary extreme, vegans were much more prolific among activists (32 per cent) than among either advocates (12 per cent) or supporters (3 per cent). Respondents with weaker

attachments to the animal movement were much more likely to eat meat; supporters were four times more likely than activists to be meat eaters while the percentage of meat-eating advocates was double the percentage for activists.

The conclusion we can draw from these data is that the more active members (according to their self-designation as activist, advocate or supporter) practise meat avoidance. Thus the habit of meat avoidance is for many animal protectionists the single most important thing an individual can do for animals. For many activists, animal rights and vegetarianism are different sides of the same coin. Committed animal rights activists believe that eating meat devalues the movement's philosophy that animals should be left alone. For them, the avoidance of meat is the most basic prerequisite to movement commitment and credibility even if this involves personal sacrifice.

Vegetarianism, whether motivated by gustatory, health, environmental or animal welfare concerns, is a profoundly radical tactic for a social movement to practise since it disrupts and challenges society's predominant construction of animals as meat to be eaten. It is also a tactic that individuals adopt to demonstrate their commitment to the animal rights cause, 'to attest personally to the sincerity of our concern for non-human animals' (Singer, 1975, p. 175). Seen in this way, it is the quintessential form of DIY activism.

Undercover Surveillance

While vegetarianism involves increasing numbers of people in what is a mild form of direct action in the private sphere, a more assertive form of DIY activism is undercover surveillance which is typically enacted by one or two committed individuals. Undercover surveillance is one of the oldest tactics in the animal movement's repertoire.

The most famous case of undercover surveillance in the animal movement's history was the exposé of animal experimenter Edward Taub by Alex Pacheco in Silver Spring in 1981. The police raid on the Institute of Behavioral Research was televised, thus giving maximum publicity to the animal movement. This episode – which involved exposing experiments on surgically crippled monkeys – is one of the most well documented in the movement's history (see Fraser, 1993; Orlans, 1993, pp. 176–179; Blum, 1994, chapter 5; Rudacille, 2001).

The English equivalent to the Silver Spring's episode was initiated by the ACIG undercover operation in 1990 when its founder Mike Huskisson and another animal rights activist, Melody McDonald, gained access to the laboratories of Professor Wilhelm Feldberg and for a period of five months videoed the 89-year-old researcher at work. The tapes, which ran to over 30 hours, revealed breaches of the 1986 Act concerning animal experimentation. A subsequent governmental inquiry confirmed that apart from failing to anaesthetize experimental animals properly, Feldberg had broken the law by continuing with experiments he had been told to terminate. Once the video-taped evidence was made public, Feldberg's experiments were ended within twenty-four hours by the Home Office.

From the perspective of vivisection, the exposé would no doubt be seen as a colossal deception since Huskisson and his accomplice had posed as researcher and biographer, respectively, thus duping Feldberg into believing they had no ulterior motives. Undercover surveillance raises some interesting ethical questions for a movement that promotes the ethical treatment of animals. Is it ethical to use deception to gain access to an organization for the purpose of exposing wrongdoing in that organization? Most animal activists believe that they are morally obliged to do whatever they can within the law to save animals' lives.

In the Feldberg case, activists would claim that the deception involved was justified given the apparent laxity of government controls over scientists like Feldberg. Deception was necessary if the activists were to expose what they saw as a greater evil – cruelty to animals perpetrated by scientists funded by taxpayers, most of whom would object to the research if they knew the facts. Huskisson claims the ACIG had the public's support for what they did and argues that undercover surveillance is lawful, justified and non-violent as opposed to more extreme forms of animal rights activism which he condemns:

We secured the film and within a day of showing it to the Home Office that experiment was ended. The man's licence to experiment was taken away; the Medical Research Council had an investigation and if he'd been a younger man he'd have been prosecuted. That ended that experiment dead. Now we did that and we had public support and there was anger directed against the laboratory. If someone had parked a vehicle outside and blown the place to smithereens it would have been the same result but the public would have said 'How could they do that? That's an outrage, there's that man doing his work, his lifetime work to end suffering to humans and these cowardly scum come out of the dark and they destroy a laboratory.' Same effect, but public anger would have been rightly directed against our side, so we have to use our brains to get in amongst the opponents and put an end to it lawfully. That's what we do. (Interview, 1996)

Like the Silver Spring case, the Feldberg exposé has become one of the most celebrated in the movement. Huskisson uses it to promote the virtues of undercover surveillance. He advises young people attracted to animal protection to:

Get a video camera, get yourself a job in a research place, get yourself a job in a hunt kennels, go out there and get the film and you're not breaking the law, but you're breaking the back of the opponents. (Interview, 1996)

Conclusion

This paper has focused on how the animal rights movement strategizes its various campaigns. It does this via the non-violent DIY strategies of publicity and interference in campaigns to save animals' lives. Only a small number of publicity strategies (demonstrations and pamphleteering) and interference strategies (hunger strikes, ethical vegetarianism and undercover surveillance) have been described in this paper. They were chosen because they are among the most common in the animal movement; moreover, they are newsworthy (e.g. demonstrations) and appeal also to DIY activists ranging from the moderate (e.g. pamphleteering) to the more radical (e.g. ethical vegetarianism, hunger strikes and undercover surveillance). These tactics are also representative of Turner and Killian's (1987) typology of tactical mechanisms deployed by social movements: persuasion (pamphleteering, demonstrations), bargaining (hunger strikes), facilitation (ethical vegetarianism) and coercion (undercover surveillance). Furthermore, they are in accord with Turner and Killian's claim that social movement activists choose tactics that are familiar, available and likely to guarantee a (positive) response from their targets. Various theorists have argued that non-violence is the most effective mobilization strategy in Western democracies for social movements to adopt

(Doherty, Gurr, Kitschelt, Tarrow and Tilly). For mainstream animal activists, too, violence is seen as counterproductive to the movement's goal in promoting the compassionate treatment of non-human animals.

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Appendix

Survey respondents in both the USA and Australia agreed that all five legal efforts shown in Table A1 to improve the treatment of animals were virtually of equal importance and ‘always justified’. There was also agreement that liberating animals from labs and farms, although illegal, was more justified than causing damage to property where animals were badly treated. It seems that with illegal tactics, activists see animal rescue actions involving unauthorized entry as morally justified but this does not extend to actions which damage or destroy property, and by extension, to those which might harm humans.

The results in Table A2 summarize respondents’ views on the effectiveness of tactics designed to improve animal welfare. As shown in this table, both American and Australian

Table A1. Australian and American respondents' perceptions of the justification of certain measures to improve the treatment of animals

Justification of efforts	Australia ANZFAS (1995) (<i>n</i> = 437)		USA (Richards (1990) (<i>n</i> = 853)		
	Mean score		<i>t</i> -test at 95% CI		
	Transformed	^a	<i>t</i> value	Sig. (2-tailed) <i>p</i> < .05 ^b	Mean score
Justification of legal efforts					
Developing animal awareness education programmes	1.02	(6.97)	-1.531	0.126	1.05
Campaigning to change the law	1.04	(6.95)	-3.531	0.000	1.10
Peaceful demonstrations	1.08	(6.90)	-1.859	0.064	1.13
Media promotions such as television	1.09	(6.90)	-2.445	0.015	1.15
Boycotting businesses involved in cruelty/filing legal suits	1.09	(6.90)	-7.535	0.000	1.31
Justification of illegal efforts					
Taking or releasing animals from research laboratories	2.41	(5.54)	-0.058	0.954	2.41
Taking or releasing animals from farms	3.09	(4.80)	-1.206	0.228	3.21
Destruction or damage to research laboratories	4.13	(3.76)	1.793	0.074	3.93
Destruction or damage to farm property	4.62	(3.25)	-0.352	0.725	4.66

^a For the purposes of comparative analysis with the US study (Richards, 1990), Australia (1995) sample mean scores have been transformed. Original mean scores are shown in parentheses.

^b If the value of *p* < .05 then the difference between the means for the USA (Richards, 1990) and Australia (1995) is significant.

Table A2. Australian and American respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of certain measures to improve the treatment of animals

Effectiveness of efforts	Australia ANZFAS (1995) (<i>n</i> = 437)		USA (Richards (1990) (<i>n</i> = 853)	
	t-test at 95% CI			
	Mean score	<i>t</i> value ^a	Sig. (2-tailed)	<i>p</i> < .05 ^b
Effectiveness of legal efforts				
Developing animal awareness education programmes	1.72 (6.28)	1.955	0.051	1.62
Media promotions such as television	1.89 (6.11)	1.221	0.223	1.82
Campaigning to change the law	2.05 (5.95)	0.867	0.387	2.00
Boycotting businesses involved in cruelty/filing legal suits	1.99 (6.01)	- 5.826	0.000	2.32
Peaceful demonstrations	2.80 (5.20)	4.639	0.000	2.50
Effectiveness of illegal efforts				
Taking or releasing animals from research laboratories	3.79 (4.21)	5.781	0.000	3.27
Taking or releasing animals from farms	4.25 (3.75)	4.407	0.000	3.85
Destruction or damage to research laboratories	4.96 (3.04)	7.279	0.000	4.32
Destruction or damage to farm property	5.32 (2.68)	5.156	0.000	4.91

^a For the purposes of comparative analysis with the US study (Richards, 1990), Australia (1995) sample mean scores have been transformed. Original mean scores are shown in parentheses.

^b If the value of *p* < .05 then the difference between the means for the USA (Richards, 1990) and Australia (1995) is significant.

respondents agreed that liberating animals from labs and farms was more effective than damaging or destroying property where the animals were housed. As with attitudes towards the justification of illegal tactics, the results indicate that legal efforts are seen as more effective than illegal tactics in improving the treatment of animals in both countries. However, respondents in both countries agreed that peaceful demonstrations, while always justified, were usually ineffective in getting their animal welfare message across.

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