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Tensions and Pathways to Coalition Building Between Environmental Justice and Animal
Rights Groups in the US and the UK

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Masters of Arts
in Global Studies

by

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September 2024

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ABSTRACT

Tensions and Pathways to Coalition Building Between Environmental Justice and Animal Rights Groups in the US and the UK

by

Vidisha Rai

Animal agriculture, despite being a substantial contributor to climate change, is often neglected in discussions around solutions to climate change. Animal agriculture is a prominent contributor to global deforestation, air pollution, water pollution, biodiversity loss, degradation of arable land, public health threats, animal cruelty, worker exploitation, and ocean pollution. This thesis attempts to understand why more environmental, and in particular environmental justice organizations do not prioritize the issue of animal agriculture. Furthermore, this thesis attempts to understand the relationship between the environmental justice and animal rights movements in the US and the UK, what tensions have emerged historically and presently between these movements, how organizations and activists are attempting to overcome these tensions and to understand successful instances of collaboration between the two movements. Through my research findings, I declare that

despite decades of peer-reviewed research exposing that animal agriculture accounts for 10-17% of global GHGs, policymakers and advocates have neglected the issue at the global, national, and local levels. It is imperative to look at each level to illustrate how the attitudes and perceptions towards animal agriculture permeate national borders and space. I align with David Pellow and many other BIPOC leaders as a part of a normative stance, that the only way to tackle the climate crisis truly is to embrace a Total or Collective Liberation framework (used interchangeably) of justice to begin to heal tensions between AR and EJ movements. A crucial part of working towards an interspecies Total Liberation framework and overcoming these tensions, paradoxically, is to center human rights issues present in industrial animal agriculture and work to integrate food sovereignty principles in outreach efforts to bridge the gap. embrace reduceterianism, engage in intersectional advocacy, promote resource redistribution, and embrace the movement ecosystem.

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List of Abbreviations

ALF	Animal Liberation Front
AR	Animal Rights
ASPCA	American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
AVA	Animal and Vegan Advocacy
AWFW	A Well-Fed World
BIPOC	Black Indigenous People of Color
BVS	Black Veg Society
CJ	Climate Justice
COP	Conference of Parties
DEIJ	Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice
EB	Eating Better
EDF	Environmental Defense Fund
EJ	Environmental Justice
ELF	Earth Liberation Front
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEP	Food Empowerment Project
FFL	Fossil Free London
FOE	Friends of the Earth
FSI	Food Systems Innovation
GFI	Good Food Institute
GHG	Green-House Gas
IEN	Indigenous Environmental Network
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MFA	Mercy for Animals
NDC's	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
RJ	Racial Justice
RF	Reductarian Foundation
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
UN	United Nations
VAA	Vegan Activist Alliance
XR	Extinction Rebellion

I. Introduction

It was a beautiful, sunny, bright, clear blue skies California day, the kind that is popularized in collective consciousness through famous songs like “California Dreamin’” by the Mommas and Papas. My head was tilted back to welcome the sun’s warmth on my face, the endorphins of the sunlight spread through my body, and a broad smile formed across my face. My windows were down in my car, the wind whipping against my face, providing stimulation, energy, and vibrations ringing through my hair. I cruised in the car with my speaker’s bass turned up, doing small dance moves to my favorite tunes while enjoying the freedom to travel and adventure in my car solo. Suddenly, I was hit with the most disgusting bullshit; I quite literally mean the smell of thousands of cows in Harris Ranch factory farms pooping in a land radius of a few square miles. I immediately put my windows up, but it was too late. The smell had penetrated my nose, lodging itself deep into my nasal passages. I felt an overwhelming feeling of nausea and sickness, which disrupted my breathing, and I began coughing. My mood completely dropped the earlier natural high of a carefree drive long behind me; my face was now in a perpetual grimace, and my nose curled up in disgust at the pungent odor of waste.

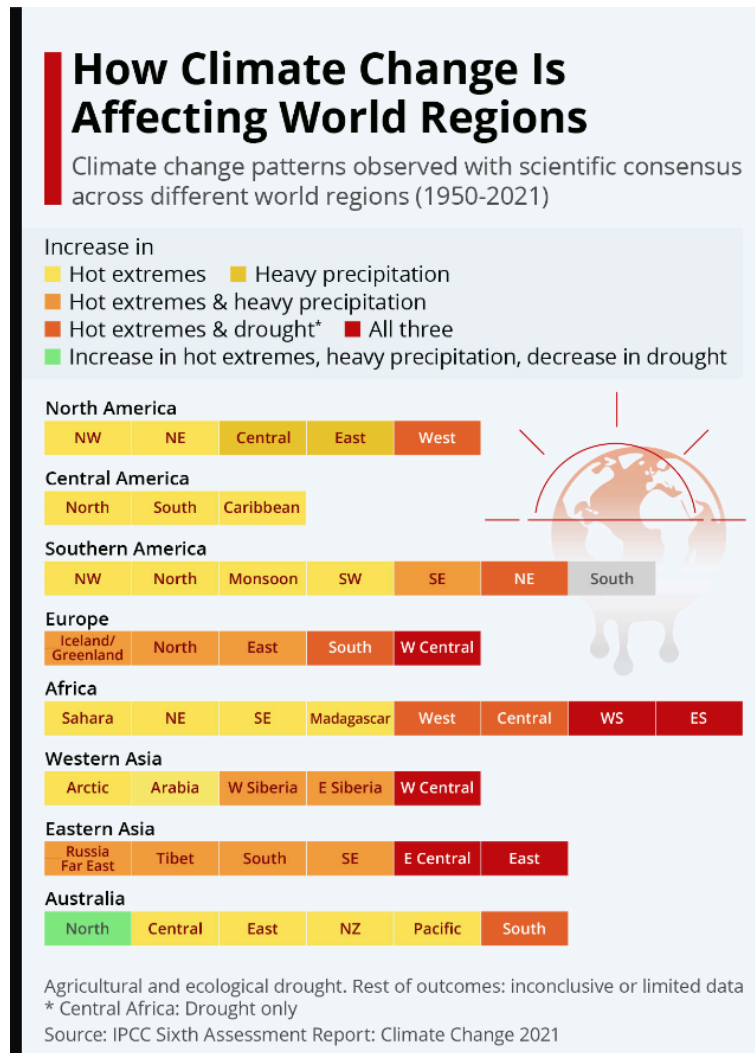
I quickly glanced at the thousands of black and white cows trapped in a permanent state of captivity, subjugation, and within piles of their feces and urine. Fences enclosed their world, where they were not free to wander or explore and remained in what many would describe as hell on Earth. I drove away as quickly as possible, slamming down on the gas and driving over the speed limit to put as much distance as possible between myself and the factory farm. However, it did not matter; the smell, the feeling of this poison, did not leave me for at least twenty minutes. It ruined my lovely drive, hurt my heart, gave me a pounding

headache, and left me angry. Driving through central California on my way to Los Angeles, I passed dozens of signs about how farmers are restricted from water access and how Gavin Newsom is the villain behind these suffocating water laws. The signs said, “Is growing food wasting water?” or “Vote for Newsom if you want most of our water dumped into the ocean,” or “Make California Great Again.” But why was any sign not asking, “Why do we waste so much water trying to feed thousands of cows in cruel conditions that pollute our soil, poison our communities, and emit powerful greenhouse gas emissions?” Why are so many environmental organizations, global institutions, national and local governments, and the media ignoring the bullshit? If it is so awful for me to experience this for a brief twenty minutes, what is it like for communities that live near these operations daily? Why are environmental justice organizations not addressing this issue in their campaigns? Why do only animal rights groups seem to take this issue seriously? The questions that arose through this experience helped form this thesis's foundation. The question that informs my research is: What is the relationship between environmental justice (EJ) and animal rights (AR) groups? What are the tensions between AR and EJ movements in the US and the UK? How are groups on the ground attempting to overcome these tensions and building collaborations? How do organizations approach long-term coalitions given histories of oppression, the diversity of experiences of each individual, systemic barriers, different theories of change, varying priorities, and divergent lifestyles? What are the benefits of movements coming together, historically and through research?

A. Animal Agriculture and the Climate Crisis

In December 2024, Southern California experienced an atmospheric river, where parts of the state got one year's worth of rain in one week ([Toohey & Fry, 2024](#)). As a result, immense flooding, road damage, and infrastructure damage occurred along with sewage pipes being overwhelmed with water, which dumped hazardous waste in parts of Long Beach and prompting hundreds of evacuations from people's homes ([Toohey & Fry, 2024](#)). What happened locally here in Southern California is a microcosm of global trends, with biblical-esque floods becoming more common annually worldwide. Mass flooding in Pakistan in 2022 led to 15,000 deaths and 8 million people being displaced, with 1/3 of the country flooded, crops destroyed, decades of work and livelihoods lost, and millions of people displaced without homes or resources ([Nabi, 2023](#)). In the same year, historic flooding occurred in Nigeria where the UN stated in its assessment of the disaster, "In 2022, Nigeria experienced the worst flooding in recent decades, with over 600 fatalities and 3.2 million people affected across 34 of the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory.¹ Hundreds of lives and livelihoods have been lost, 1.4 million people have been displaced, and over 569,000 hectares of farmland have been destroyed along with key infrastructure, negatively impinging on the cost of living across the country (Statistician General's statement, October 2021)" ([United Nations Development Programme, 2023](#), p. 8). Often, an apocalyptic picture of our world ending is painted when talking about the climate crisis; author Suvi Alt discusses how this is inspired by the Christian religion's view of the apocalypse, a single, great cataclysmic event with natural disasters like the great flood, wiping out humanity off of the Earth for good ([Alt, 2023](#)). Alt disagrees with this view; she

believes the apocalypse is already here, particularly for countries in the Global South, and the effects are not felt evenly across time and space.



(Source: [Buchholz, 2021](#))

Island nations like Barbados are experiencing consistent natural disasters, with limited infrastructure and funds to protect them. They have to spend billions repairing damage yearly, buffering a debt/collector relationship with the World Bank, but the natural disasters do not stop ([Lustgarten, 2024](#)).

Not only are we already experiencing the compounding of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions trapped in the atmosphere, but global climate negotiations have been co-opted and sabotaged by those profiting the most from the destruction of our planet and the suffering of millions of people. This year, greenwashing reached new levels at the United Nation (UN)'s Conference of Parties (COP), where Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber acted as the president and actively thwarted efforts for nations to commit to reducing their fossil fuel usage, hijacking meaningful conversations and commitments around severe carbon reduction under the guise of preserving Global South development. In reality, it is to protect his billion-dollar investments in infrastructure and to continue oil and gas extraction ([Carrington & Stockton, 2023](#)). A record number of fossil fuel lobbyists attended COP, with an analysis by Time magazine stating, "... the number of industry representatives pushing Big Oil's case at this year's U.N. Conference of the Parties (COP) has [nearly quintupled](#) in the past three years. In 2021, at the [COP26 gathering](#) in Glasgow, Scotland, there were 503 fossil fuel lobbyists present. That increased to 636 at [COP27](#) in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2022, before ballooning to a whopping 2,456 this year in Dubai " ([Kluger, 2023](#)).

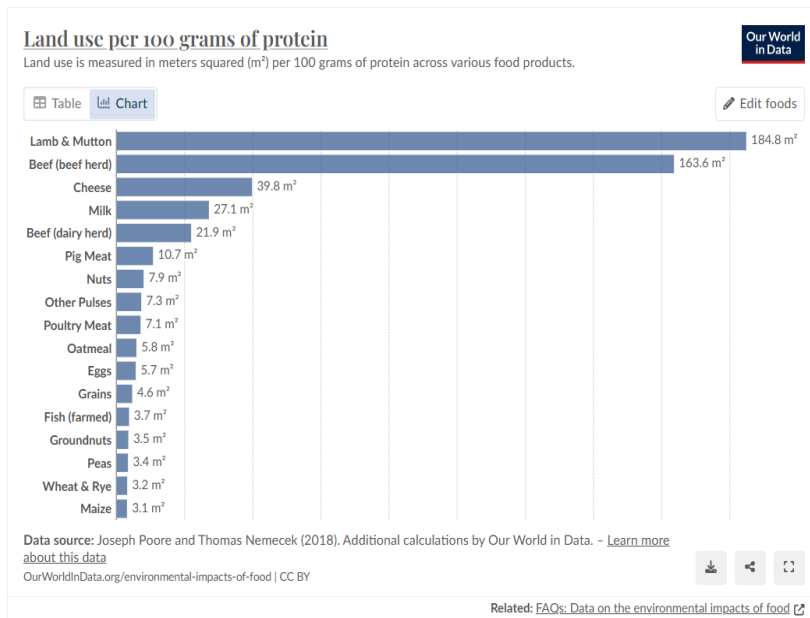
Furthermore, few are addressing the cow in the room, the massive need for a substantial reduction in animal agriculture and awareness of the multifaceted environmental impacts of the industry, as meat lobbyists tripled their presence at this year's COP compared to last year ([Sherrington et al., 2023](#)). Global GHG emissions from animal agriculture are estimated to be 10-18% of total emissions, averaged at 14.5%, and especially high in methane emissions. Methane is a GHG emitted by ruminants like cows and sheep, which is 25-60x more potent than CO₂ ([Lazarus et al., 2021](#)). While methane stays in the atmosphere for less

time, its potency makes it dangerous, but reducing these emissions may be an excellent opportunity to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change.

Some preliminary studies have suggested that drastically reducing our methane emissions is one of our best chances of quickly avoiding the most disastrous climate impacts ([Eisen & Brown, 2022](#)). The UN's IPCC committee that published "*Livestock's Long Shadow*" which exposed livestock's environmental footprint, was censored by people in the department and the industry's lobbyists to preserve the idyllic free-range farming image of sustainability ([Thomas, 2023](#)). Meat lobbyists showed up in great numbers to COP as well, so why is climate's ugly stepsister so well hidden compared to the more well-known oil and gas industry? While COP 28 featured a record menu of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the food being served as plant-based due to lower environmental footprints, serious conversations around food systems transitions have been stalled, overlooked, ignored, downplayed, and pushed to the sidelines ([Mauvais, 2023](#)). According to Oliver Lazarus, emissions from animal agriculture compare to those from all forms of global transportation combined, with current estimations not including the loss of carbon storage from deforestation, transportation of animal products, and nitrous oxide from animal waste ([2021](#)). The loss of carbon sinks, such as rainforests like the Amazon, creates a negative feedback loop that intensifies the climate crisis by creating less resilient and biodiverse ecosystems.

In Environmental Studies discourse, the buzzword decarbonization is often used to describe innovative solutions that pull carbon from the atmosphere and reduce industry emissions. The process of decarbonization is frequently seen as the critical solution to climate change. However, focusing on emissions alone neglects the larger picture, such as the case of animal agriculture. Companies like Tyson and environmental organizations such as

the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) are simplifying the issue of animal agriculture to methane alone and suggesting methane digesters and carbon capture technology as a fix, which does not address the inherent resource-intensive nature of industrial animal agriculture ([Bond, 2024](#)). Besides the substantial global emissions footprint of land animal agriculture, vast amounts of water, land, and energy are utilized to sustain the industry.



Source: ([Ritchie & Roser, 2024](#))

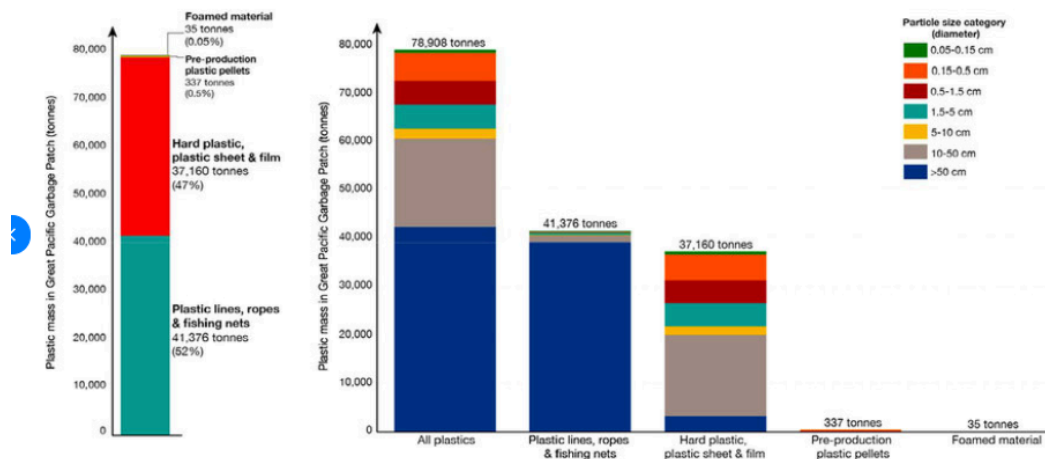
Producing one beef quarter pounder requires 660 gallons of water ([Hoekstra, 2012](#)). Animal agriculture requires enormous amounts of land; 83% of global farmland is used for raising animals, yet only yielding 19% of global calories ([Ritchie & Roser, 2024](#)). According to another analysis done by Our World in Data, “More than three-quarters (77%) of global soy is fed to livestock for meat and dairy production” ([Ritchie & Roser, 2024](#)). As we raise about 60 billion land animals annually, the amount of land, water, and food necessary to sustain these industries is enormous ([Orzechowski, 2024](#)). Over $\frac{2}{3}$ of corn and soy grown in

the United States is to feed farmed animals, which often uses pesticides to grow the plants as quickly as possible ([USDA, 2023](#)). To create space for animal agriculture, existing ecosystems need to be drastically altered, disrupted, and sometimes eradicated ([Minyasan, 2021](#)). According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), "Worldwide, more than half of forest loss is due to conversion of forest into cropland, whereas livestock grazing is responsible for almost 40 percent of forest loss, according to the new study" ([Minyasan, 2021](#)). Native animals and plants are killed when creating agricultural land; in Brazil, several species have become endangered or extinct ([Grantham, 2021](#)).

Here in California, Point Reyes National Seashore, a landmark of California beauty, has been taken over by free-range dairy farming. According to Lovell, the water in Point Reyes is unsafe for recreational activity due to waste pollution from cattle and has led to the displacement of the native Tule Elk ([2022](#)). Regarding world hunger, while meat and dairy have helped alleviate malnutrition in the 20th century by being dense calorie foods, the question remains: why can we feed 60 billion land animals but can not feed 8 billion people? Those in the animal agriculture industry state that factory farming can more easily feed people, and while it can alleviate malnutrition through highly available meat and dairy products, it comes at the externalized costs of billions of animals' lives, whole ecosystems, pollution of marginalized communities and personal and public health. In addition to this is the waste issue, as mentioned in my opening anecdote. The sheer amount of waste generated from factory farms and intensive animal agriculture is causing massive problems. In China, for example, Marx's concept of Metabolic Rift is demonstrated by author Mindi Schneider, whose work centers around understanding the Chinese pork industry ([2017](#)). Waste pollution from extensive factory farming, one of China's most prominent industries in the 21st century,

is causing water pollution for rural communities and creating eutrophication or algae blooms in the East China Sea. In the United States, specifically in California, high levels of nitrate and nitrite have seeped into the soil and risk damaging the future of food production, a significant source being animal waste utilized in fertilizers ([Kerlin, 2016](#)). Furthermore, these are just details about the land animal agriculture industry; we have not spoken about the aquatic animal agriculture industry, which wreaks havoc on our oceans.

Trillions of sea animals are killed each year to sustain the global seafood demand, with the United States alone consuming 46 billion sea animals annually ([Orzechowski, 2024](#)). Industrial fishing utilizes supertrawler nets that are miles long and aim to catch as many fish as possible, and as a result, the phenomenon of bycatch occurs. With bycatch, several other sea animals are unintentionally caught in the nets and often killed or severely injured, such as dolphins, whales, sharks, seabirds, and sea turtles ([Keledjian et al., 2014](#)). Due to unregulated international waters, illegal fishing operations continue to plunder the ocean, leaving a trail of nets behind them and contributing massively to plastic pollution. The great Pacific garbage patch, an island of trash in the middle of the Pacific Ocean the size of Texas, is estimated to comprise almost 50% of fishing materials ([Lebreton et al., 2022](#)). These materials are mainly created from materials in the petrochemical industry, and as a result, microplastic pollution becomes another ripple effect of the industrial fishing industry ([Lebreton et al., 2022](#)).



The 'Great Pacific Garbage Patch' (GPGP) plastic sources.

Source: ([Chaturvedi et al., 2020](#))

Furthermore, since industrial fishing vessels are catching fish in such high numbers, local fishermen off the coast of West Africa, for example, now have to go miles out into the ocean to catch fish, impacting their daily livelihood and limited opportunities to generate income ([Ighobor, 2017](#)). Significant portions of fish species have depleted due to overfishing, leading to intensive fish farming to sustain the high demand for fish like salmon and shrimp. To have fish farming or aquaculture, dedicated areas in the ocean raise these fish from egg to maturity before they are slaughtered. Since these fish are genetically modified, lack genetic diversity, and are in a tight-knit space, disease outbreaks are common, particularly sea lice, so antibiotics are used to solve the problem ([Zhang et al., 2023](#)). As diseases evolve, antibiotics wear down in their effectiveness, creating antibiotic-resistant bacteria that can spread to other sea creatures in the ocean. Regarding public health, factory farming presents an enormous issue like the one above. Similar to aquaculture, these animals lack genetic diversity, are covered in feces and urine, and are in close proximity to one another. Not only is this objectively cruel, but it has created a breeding ground for disease, with swine flu, bird flu,

and MRSA emerging from factory farms ([American Public Health Association, 2020](#)). These diseases put the broader public at risk, but more specifically, the heavily exploited labor force of the animal agriculture industry.

In terms of human rights issues, the global aquaculture industry is known for kidnapping poor members of East Asian communities, particularly in Thailand, and coercing them through the threat of violence to climb aboard fishing ships ([Environmental Justice Foundation](#)). Guns are often held to their head, and they can be chained to boats so they do not jump off and are forced to work without pay. In the global shrimp industry, we see massive amounts of child laborers who are forced to peel shrimp for hours without breaks or pay ([Environmental Justice Foundation](#)). In terms of land worker exploitation, in the United States, largely undocumented workers make up the labor force of factory farms (Imhoff, 2012). US meat producers often recruit people in Mexico to work for them under the guise of fair wages, healthcare, and a place to stay (Imhoff, 2012). Once they get there, they are trapped in poor salaries, do not have health insurance, cannot unionize, and are expected to work long hours (Imhoff, 2012). For example, workers in the poultry industry are expected to kill a dozen birds per minute. As a result they develop mobility issues, making it hard for them to do daily activities like cooking, cleaning, washing their clothes, and driving ([Bhushan, 2011](#)). Workers are exposed to blood, feces, urine, and diseases, as demonstrated by the number of meatpacking workers who contracted COVID-19 during the early days of the pandemic ([FOE, 2020](#)). Some workers can even lose an arm, thumb, or hand around the hazardous machinery ([Bhushan, 2011](#)). Furthermore, the physical dangers of working in meatpacking plants are equally as daunting as the mental health dangers.

In the communities around factory farms, workers had high levels of depression, inflicting domestic violence, suicide attempts, anxiety, drug abuse, and alcoholism ([Bhushan, 2011](#)). In addition to worker human rights violations, the communities around factory farms suffer immensely. A recent documentary called *The Smell of Money* features North Carolina residents who are predominantly black and live near hog factory farms in North Carolina, one of the biggest domestic producers of pork meat ([Simonpillai, 2023](#)). Communities around factory farms have to deal with the pungent smell of waste pools, which causes serious health issues. When cesspools of waste fill up in factory farms, to empty them, they are sprayed away from the operation through giant garden sprayer-like machinery, which makes it rain pig feces. Residents around these areas have the smell of pig waste overtaking their homes, giving them chronic headaches in the short-term and long-term issues such as respiratory infections and asthma, and can even penetrate their water supply ([Berger, 2022](#)). As their homes are sprayed with feces, their property values plummet, making it difficult for these folks to leave, and they are indefinitely trapped near the factory farm ([Berger, 2022](#)).

Globally, ten meat corporations run the global market: Cargill Inc., Conagra Brands, Inc., JBS SA, Tyson Foods, Inc., BRF SA (Sadia), WH Group Limited, Minerva Foods SA, Clemens Food Group, Hormel Foods Corporation, NH Foods Ltd., Sysco Corporation, and Vion N.V., are the major players with a majority being based in the United States ([Expert Market Research, 2024](#)). The vertical and horizontal integration of global supply chains has created ultra-powerful multinational conglomerates that control most of the food production in this world. Moreover, their lobbying power is immense, and governments reward and subsidize these extremely harmful industries. It should be noted that “Late last year, Madre Brava, an environmental research and advocacy group, commissioned a poll of 7,500

consumers across the US, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Brazil, asking which industries and environmental issues they thought were the biggest contributors to global warming. People generally ranked industrial meat production as one of the smallest contributors, even though it's one of the largest" ([Torrella, 2023](#)). Big Agriculture's misinformation campaign has been successful at quelling the masses into submission and distracting them from critical thinking by stuffing their stomachs with delicious animal products.

The majority of EJ organizations in the United States focus on the devastating impacts of big oil, pipelines built across Indigenous lands, and pollution from somewhere like Cancer Alley in Louisiana, where petrochemical plants poison local communities. All are devastating and important and must be addressed since the oil and gas industries contribute the most to the climate crisis, particularly carbon dioxide emissions. Nevertheless, few environmental organizations in the West, where animal product consumption is the greatest per capita, have consistent campaigns around the meat and dairy industries, their lobbying power, how we spend significant amounts of government resources subsidizing these industries, the devastating effects on ecosystems, massive worker exploitation, and the public health risks associated with them. Brian Kateman states, "In 2014, scientists from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health published a study of 34 environmental NGOs based in the U.S., Canada, and Sweden. The researchers conducted extensive interviews with staff members on the issue of meat consumption and climate change. They noted that the majority of the people they talked to did view high levels of meat consumption as problematic. Yet, most of the NGO staff admitted meat was *not* on their organization's agenda and certainly not a priority. With a few

notable exceptions, environmental NGOs, in particular, have encouraged only small changes to meat consumption and have only promoted those changes in minor ways rather than establishing dedicated campaigns on the issue,' wrote the study's authors" (2019). I conducted a content analysis of over twenty US-based EJ organizations, where I combed through their websites, campaigns, and social media posts to understand their priorities. I only found one organization that discussed the impact of animal agriculture, with no others having current campaigns that focused on it. Why are some of the most progressive activists, who connect all other oppressions, ignoring this massive social justice issue and its impact on the climate?

In the last couple of decades, in particular, with the help of social media and increased awareness of environmental injustice, there has been a renewal of critical interrogations around the historical and continued oppression of Indigenous communities in settler colonial countries. However, there seems to be limited discussion in EJ discourse on the role of cattle ranching as a settler colonial tool to accumulate land and wealth. There were several mechanisms used to dispossess Indigenous communities of their homelands, one of them being the expansion of cattle ranching. In the 1800s, to cut off Indigenous people of the plains tribes in North America from subsistence, there was a targeted campaign to kill off the bison, an essential part of the Indigenous plains people's way of life (Specht, 2019). They relied on hunting the bison for meat, bones for weapons and shelter, and furs for warmth while also being spiritually sacred to these tribes (Specht, 2019). The colonial forces carried out a targeted operation to kill the bison as a way to cut off Indigenous communities from self-sufficiency, but it goes further (Specht, 2019). They sought to replace the bison with cattle so they could render the colonial project complete (Specht, 2019). It coincides with the

expansion of frontier economies, manifest destiny, cowboy culture, and cattle ranching as the backbone of the American economy.

Cattle are not native to this land, and ranching has been used as a way to justify private property expansion and to alienate Indigenous communities from their traditional sustenance sources (Specht, 2019). In Joshua Specht's book *Red Meat Republic*, he states, "It is the story of the origin of what was then known as the "Cattle Kingdom," the destruction of the Plains bison herds, and the fracturing of the societies that lived off their hunt. Cattle ranchers and bison hunters, supported by the US military, fundamentally reshaped the Great Plains, expelling American Indians from western lands and appropriating that land for use by white settlers and ranchers.³ Without this process, beef's move to the center of the American diet might not have been possible" (2019, p. 21). Today, red meat and dairy are central parts of settler colonial diets. While there has been a reduction in beef consumption in the US, industries have continued to produce the same amount of meat and now export it to other countries through neoliberal policies. The globalization of animal product-heavy diets can be attributed to the most recent food regimes discussed by food systems analyst Philip McMichael.

B. History of Food Regimes

Philip McMichael gives an excellent historical and contemporary analysis of the political economy of the global food and agriculture industrial complex. He starts his article with a powerful introduction, where the Inter-Academy Partnership in 2018 reported on a "broken global food system." McMichael points out that the global food system is not broken

and works exactly as planned “...constantly concentrating wealth in a few, powerful monopolies while transferring all the social and environmental costs onto society” (2021, p. 2). He provides empirical evidence through historical chronology, recounting the political, economic, and ecological relationships that originated in the colonial capitalist production system. With the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples and peasants from their agroecological systems, colonial powers converted these lands into cash crops and commodity production. McMichael emphasizes, “This was a global process, whereby slaves, peasants, and laborers in colonies provisioned European industrial classes with cheap colonial products such as sugar, tea, tropical oils, and cotton for clothing. European development was realized through a racialized process of “underdevelopment” of colonial societies, reaching its height in the late 19th century age of empire ” (2021, p. 54). Philip McMichael moves into the more recent history of the industrial food complex by examining the political economy of the food regimes. The first food regime was the British Empire (the 1870s - 1930s), which globalized intensive crop rotations, pesticides, and offshored grain and meat production to colonies. Post WWII till the 1980s, the American food regime began with globalizing green revolution technologies like monocultures, high-yield seeds, and the displacement of small farming systems and farmers. The third food regime, the current one, is the corporate food regime, where transnational corporations have helped work to liberalize trade via the World Trade Organization to integrate national and local supply chains into their globalized food production. McMichael remarks, “ A conservative Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimate for 16 Southern countries claimed that between 20 and 30 million farmers exposed to agricultural trade liberalization lost their land in the half-decade following the establishment of the WTO in 1995 (Madeley, 2000, p. 75)” (2021, p. 57).

The US food regime globalized the meat complex; the US Marshall Plan introduced the American industrialized agriculture system to Europe, integrating the European and US agro-food sectors via industrial inputs and processing. McMichael comments, “A global meat complex formed in this context, as Third World countries developed livestock industries, supplied with specialized feed grains (corn and soy) from the First World and middle-income countries such as Brazil and Argentina. In the four decades following mid-century, global soybean production expanded sixfold, with corn production transformed into a specialized, capital-intensive agro-industry, overtaking the value of the world wheat trade by a factor of six (Friedmann, 1993). Animal protein consumption multiplied as governments and elites associated meat with a modern “nutrition transition” (from starch to grain to animal protein and fresh vegetables), which catered to affluent class diets” ([2021](#), p. 59). McMichael provides empirical data and evidence to demonstrate how the US and Europe completely changed the global food system to work in their favor, creating food dependency in Global South countries and liberalizing trade to flood markets with their products and maximize capital accumulation.

Due to the British and American food regimes, industrialized animal agriculture and its high inputs have become the global norm. McMichael discusses Japan and South Korean feed grain imports and Japanese investment in Thai aquaculture. McMichael highlights the astounding growth in the scale of this industry, with 6.1 billion chickens killed in 1961 to 61 billion killed in 2013. India, often known for their sacred relationship with cows, is the largest beef exporter while $\frac{1}{5}$ of its population is malnourished ([Landes et al., 2016](#)). McMichael highlights this industry's environmental consequences, including fossil fuel-based transport, fertilizer runoff for intensive grain production, and animal methane's

contribution to global GHG emissions. He says, “...it takes up to 16 times more farmland to sustain people on a diet of animal protein than on a diet of plant protein... The emerging meat-eaters of the emerging economies—especially China—are driving industrial agriculture into the tropical forests of South America, sending greenhouse gases skyward in a dangerous new linkage between the palate and the warming of the planet” (Nepstad, 2006, p. 1) ” (McMichael, [2021](#), p.61).

Global and transnational corporations' domination of domestic farm sectors has fundamentally altered socioecological relations and dynamics. However, a movement is fighting back against the corporate takeover of the global food system. McMichael ends on a hopeful note, citing activist movements and wins calling for a worldwide transition back to agroecological forms of food production. The “repeasantization” movement advocates restoring traditional farming knowledge, biodiversity, soil health, and resisting industrial agriculture acquisitions. He emphasizes that future solutions depend on agroecology principles, polycultures, organic fertilizers, integrated pest management, and energy conversion. He highlights multifunctionality, a concept that ancient people practiced and can now fill in the gaps caused by industrial agriculture’s extractive model. “Enshrined programmatically in the European CAP as “environmental governance,” multifunctionality via nonindustrial farming is understood and practiced as a restorative and regenerative principle, where agriculture is embedded in ecological cycles (cf. Hart, McMichael, Milder, & Scherr, 2016). Rather than designate separate spaces to conserve biodiversity and waste sinks, it integrates ecological repair and reproduction into the practice of farming itself (Perfecto, Vandermeer, & Wright, 2009). And its “labor-driven intensification emerges as a strategic...development trajectory” (van der Ploeg, 2009, p. 48). As the Coordination

Paysanne Européene noted: “maintaining the number of people working in agriculture is not a sign of economic ‘backwardness’ but an added value” (2003)” ([2021](#), p. 67). McMichael thoroughly analyzes the roots of our current food system but ends his book by highlighting contemporary movements' resistance to this process. He reminds us that labor organizing, grassroots movements, traditional knowledge, and worker unity are integral to reforming our food system.

C. Research Site Selection

McMichael’s work, in particular, aided in selecting my research sites in the US and the UK, as these are the two countries most responsible for advancing all forms of industrialization, leading to the climate crisis and globalizing intensive animal farming. Benjamin Selwyn and Charis Davis articulate the importance of focusing on richer countries and their movements: “We focus on transforming food systems in rich countries for three reasons. First, by virtue of their far greater consumption of meat-based protein alone, the consumption habits of these countries have a much greater impact on climate breakdown than those of poorer countries. Second, it is in these countries that interest in, and the beginnings of, a shift away from meat to plant-based consumption is happening most quickly. Third, many poorer countries have radically different agrarian systems compared to richer countries. For example, around 1.3 billion people (mostly in poorer countries) depend upon livestock for their livelihoods.¹⁰ In terms of transforming food systems in poorer countries, we advocate, at the very least, debt write-off and mass reparations from richer countries as partial recognition for the world-historic damage caused by colonialism and continued unequal and exploitative international relations¹¹” ([2024](#)).

Activist movements in these countries have a unique responsibility to fundamentally change the values of their societies due to their past and present responsibility in exacerbating the worst effects of climate change on the most vulnerable populations in the Global South. As someone born and raised in the United States, I felt I should focus on the change needed within Western countries in societies I am most familiar with rather than going to a country in the Global South with radically different food systems. Due to all this context, I am focused on analyzing the past and present tensions and collaborations between EJ and AR movements in the US and the UK. Both countries have seen strong EJ and AR activism; both movements offer radical visions for what the world can look like when we include social justice values in activism. However, there have been persistent historical and present tensions between the two movements that can get in the way of opportunities for collaboration.

D. History of Movements

As I refer to them, the AR and EJ movements have operated mainly in the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe in the last 80 years. The main goal of the AR movement is to advocate against the human-dominated systems of oppression that confine, torture, mutilate, kill, and exploit non-human animals for food, entertainment, beauty, medicine, and fashion. AR advocates seek to not only bring awareness to what is happening to non-human animals in human industries profiting from their exploitation but to eradicate these institutions to liberate them from the constraints of human utility. Since the 1970s, AR

movements have become increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of animal agriculture as a significant contributor to climate change and ecosystem degradation.

The EJ movement was formally created in the 1980s by black residents of North Carolina who were protesting hazardous waste being dumped into their communities. David Pellow states, “The environmental justice paradigm (EJP) directs its attention to the urgent conditions that people of color, Indigenous populations, women, immigrants, the working classes, and the poor confront in the form of degraded environmental conditions and threats to public health.” (2014, p. 17) EJ initially focused on localized environmental pollution, waste disposal, and public health threats from nearby industries. Climate justice (CJ) has emerged as an evolution and expansion of the EJP, referring to the disproportionate impact of extreme weather events and rising temperatures on black and Indigenous people of color (BIPOC) and poor people, as well as the lack of resources available for resiliency. There is a broader spatial scope, with Global North/South power dynamics and inequalities highlighted and critically assessed. There is an expanded temporal scope as well, with histories of European colonialism, extractive capitalism, white supremacy, neo-liberalization, and corporate control being fundamental to understanding the modern global climate crisis. The EJ/CJ frameworks reject the idea that climate change is simply a result of too much carbon and that decarbonization will result in the necessary changes to fix the climate catastrophe. These movements emphasize that to tackle environmental issues, particularly climate impacts, adequately, there has to be an acknowledgment and education of how systems of colonialism, capitalism, racism, sexism, and classism have contributed to these problems in the first place. They analyze how the worst effects of climate change affect certain groups more than others, often those who have contributed the least to environmental emissions and

destruction, and that comprehensive environmental and climate remedies must center these communities in their voices, lived experiences, and desired solutions. Too often, mainstream ecological movements in the US and UK have taken a conservation approach, which does not involve acknowledging or analyzing the systemic oppression of BIPOC and low-income people or examining histories of colonialism, and seeks to work within the capitalist framework.

The central issues, visions, and tensions in these movements are closely paralleled in the US and the UK, the two countries I will analyze in-depth and where I conducted my field research. The AR movement has been strong in the UK, with Donald Watson, a British man, coining the term vegan to mean “A lifestyle that seeks to, as much as practical and possible, eliminate participation in industries that commodify, exploit and kill non-human animals, including but not limited to food, beauty, entertainment, medicine, and fashion” ([The Vegan Society](#)). The Vegan Society began in the United Kingdom, profoundly influencing the Western world, but the terminology and ideals have spread to all corners of the globe. While the ideas of veganism have long been practiced by cultures around the world in India, Africa, and the Caribbean, the most recent iteration seeks to target the capitalist exploitation of animals in human-dominated industries at large and seeks to go beyond diet change. The UK founded the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), which is still the largest animal welfare group in the country; it influenced The American Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) in the US, which had a profound impact on bringing animal welfare issues to the forefront, even if only initially for companion animals such as cats and dogs. David Pellow’s landmark book *Total Liberation* is one of the leading resources on the history of the radical Earth and animal rights movements, their tensions, and

past collaborations. He begins his historical analysis by distinguishing between mainstream and radical movements. RSPCA and ASPCA, as well as the Humane Society of the United States, are considered mainstream movements because they do not seek to radically transform the capitalist system of exploitation of human beings, animals, and the Earth but seek to work within it.

In the 1960s and 70s, a time of countercultural revolution both in the US and the UK, some radical activists grew tired of the approach of mainstream environmental and animal protection movements. The Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and Animal Liberation Front (ALF) operated in both the US and the UK; officially founded in 1992 in Brighton, England, the group derived its name from the Environmental Life Force, founded in the 1970s in Santa Cruz, California. Already, we see the mirroring of radical Earth movements going back several decades ago between US and UK activists. Around this time, vegetarianism as a moral and philosophical force began to become more prominent in progressive activist spaces, and some members of the ELF felt the group was not tackling the issue of animal agriculture and animal rights. So, a chapter within ELF formed called the ALF, which staged animal rescues from fur farms, destroyed buildings that medically tested on animals, released animals from farms, and instigated a series of other radical actions. “The Animal Liberation Front was founded in 1976 by Ronnie Lee, a British animal welfare activist who was jailed for raiding the Oxford Laboratory Animal Colonies. The first American ALF chapter began in 1979. It came to prominence with a raid of an animal laboratory at New York University’s Medical Center ” ([Influence Watch](#)). Pellow differentiates these two movements from their predecessors by stating, “These groups represented a stark departure from animal welfarist policies in their willingness to use property destruction and illegal tactics to challenge animal

exploitation.” (2014, p. 4) The emergence of ELF and ALF changed environmental and animal rights discourse forever, with joint actions in the US and the UK in the '90s against big corporations and institutions sending governments into a frenzy, labeling them “eco-terrorists” and fueling the green scare of the 1990s and 2000’s, where the FBI launched a series of attacks on activists through intimidation, surveillance, and incarceration. This early example of collaboration between environmental and animal groups is revolutionary and helped actualize the tenets of the Total Liberation framework into activism tactics. According to Pellow,” The actions by British activists and their ELF supporters in the United States signaled the emergence of the Total Liberation framework, while the lawsuit McDonald’s brought against them became a model of corporate repression against social movements in the years to follow.” (2014, p.53) The pillars of the Total Liberation framework are the ethic of justice and anti-oppression, which includes humans, non-human animals, and ecosystems, as well as anarchism and anti-capitalism. (Pellow, 2014, p.6)

While the collaboration between ELF and ALF was unprecedented and demonstrated an early form of cooperation between the movements and Total Liberation activism, there remained several points of contention, mirroring contentions in EJ and AR groups at large. The central point of tension was the philosophy of veganism; EJ groups at large did not consider animal oppression to be on equal footing as human oppression, not believing that animal farming itself is inherently wrong but rather that the factory farming system specifically is. While activists from ELF joined ALF protests, they were not necessarily cutting meat from their diet, and at large, EJ organizations would continue to serve meat at events, which angered AR groups. In the 1970s and 80s, the central AR organization leading significant actions was People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), which focused

on shocking actions to draw attention to AR issues. In Pellow's book *Total Liberation*, he recounts "...a recent PETA action outside the Westminster Kennel Club convention that involved AR activists wearing Ku Klux Klan robes, handing out flyers protesting what they described as the dog breeders' efforts to create a "master race" of canines. PETA also produced an infamous exhibit that drew parallels between slavery and the lynching of African Americans and the treatment and exploitation of nonhumans, alongside its "Holocaust on a Plate" campaign, which claimed parallels between nonhuman exploitation and the Nazi Holocaust" (2014, p. 90)

A critique from EJ and other racial justice (RJ) movements about the AR movement is that AR activists are predominantly white and uninformed about the history of animalization of people of color, and comparing suffering can invalidate the unique experience of oppressed people. Since people of color have struggled and continue to struggle with living in a world where they have equal rights with their white counterparts, many EJ activists see the AR movement as a single-issue advocacy movement that believes universal human rights are enjoyed by all groups, neglecting to see the present issues of RJ and acknowledge the ongoing struggle of people of color. Furthermore, EJ organizations and other social justice groups feel AR groups narrowly focus on helping non-human animals while not caring about human rights issues. Suppose AR groups do mention human rights issues. In that case, many EJ or other social justice groups can feel it is not from a genuine place of building solidarity and integrating collective social justice values but to only further issues affecting animals. Furthermore, EJ and other social justice groups can feel frustrated when the predominantly white AR movement fights for the oppression of animals but does not have the same concern, dedication, or vigor when it comes to fighting for their fellow

humans. These tensions have remained persistent till today but have been exacerbated in some cases due to growing concerns about the climate crisis and what needs to be done to solve it.

E. My Argument

Research from Oxford University details in depth how movements with similar values and goals cannot cross the “threshold” of change needed to mobilize the masses while operating independently from one another. Beckstead states, “Today’s social issues require immediate action with verifiable progress. Only systemic change can achieve long-term social progress. Focusing our energies via collaboration is critical to system-level change. As cause advocates, we serve change over any single organization’s needs. Resources are precious, and we respect the time, work, ideas, and assets of others as vital to creating the greatest possible solutions and efficiencies. Movements must transparently and publicly show how stakeholders, leaders, partners, and resources are used ethically toward achieving change. We value bundles, or groupings, of movements. We believe movement leaders will benefit from identifying partnership opportunities and potential collaborations with nearby movements” ([2012, p. 167](#)). To cross the threshold of solving the climate crisis, both movements will need to move past tensions and start to resolve them through transparency, accountability, education, communication, collaboration, and mutual aid. My research seeks to contribute to the existing body of literature around Total Liberation and provide on-the-ground empirical data from the US and the UK to illustrate these dynamics in the contemporary movement sphere. I hope that AR and EJ leaders can use my research to

inform their campaigns and strategies, have a reference for work already being done by primarily women and BIPOC leaders, and create greater efficiency when approaching collaborations.

The AR and EJ/CJ movements center their narratives on justice, but what differs is who this justice is for. Both groups are incredibly concerned about global climate change, declining ecosystems, the effects of increasingly extreme weather, resource depletion, and the future of life on our planet. At first glance, these movements appear to be natural allies, with an aligned emphasis on justice and environmental degradation, but several tensions have persisted throughout the last four decades. According to my research, the four central tensions between the AR and EJ movements are the divergent framing of the climate crisis, differing attitudes towards non-human animals, vegan techno-capitalism vs. food sovereignty principles, and the othering of non-vegans and perpetuation of human injustice by AR organizations. As a part of my argument, I declare that despite decades of peer-reviewed research exposing that animal agriculture accounts for 10-17% of global GHGs, policymakers and advocates have neglected the issue at the global, national, and local levels. It is imperative to look at each level to illustrate how the attitudes and perceptions towards animal agriculture permeate national borders and space. The anthropocentric and speciesist oppressive lens manifests in a systemic nature. I investigate different levels to prove that the neglect of animal agriculture is not simply an isolated instance or a regional issue but manifests worldwide. Another crucial component of looking at the global, national, and local levels is that knowledge production from organizations, such as the UN, directly informs countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), global non-governmental organizations (NGO) goals, campaigns, and strategies, and national NGOs, which can

therefore significantly influence local grassroots organizations. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports are regularly cited by environmental and EJ organizations, which can influence policy, such as the case with the Sunrise Movement and the Biden administration in 2021 ([Krieg, 2021](#)). Each of these levels are connected and when a significant issue such as animal agriculture is left out of the conversation, it provides an incomplete picture of how to solve the climate crisis.

I align with David Pellow, Christopher Eubanks, Aph and Syl Ko, Angela Davis, and many other BIPOC leaders as a part of a normative stance, that the only way to tackle the climate crisis truly is to embrace a Total or Collective Liberation framework (used interchangeably) of justice to begin to heal tensions between AR and EJ movements. A crucial part of working towards an interspecies Total Liberation framework and overcoming these tensions, paradoxically, is to center human rights issues present in industrial animal agriculture and work to integrate food sovereignty principles in outreach efforts to bridge the gap. Furthermore, food sovereignty principles are critical to working towards Collective Liberation. To avoid tokenization or transactional relationships, the AR movement must cultivate genuine reciprocity with the EJ movement, rooted in seeing animal and human liberation as equally important. My eight suggestions based on the data I collected, to help build bridges between the movements and achieve both of their goals are to target big ag corporations in campaigns, distribute community aid, change choice architecture, embrace reduceterianism, engage in intersectional advocacy, promote resource redistribution, and embrace the movement ecosystem. My frame of analysis will be looking at organizations' or specific campaigns' mission, vision, and values and comparing their proximity to the Total

Liberation framework from a normative standpoint, which evaluates the outcomes of EJ and AR actions against desired goals.

F. Methodology

My methodology includes conducting a literature review, specifically within the relevant fields of critical animal studies, environmental sociology, global studies, ecofeminism, critical race studies, deep ecology, socioecological inequality, and post-colonial studies, which has profoundly influenced my work. My other methods include semi-structured in-depth interviewing of leaders in various AR and EJ organizations in the US and the UK, discourse and content analysis through looking at websites, promotional materials, campaigns, social media, and speeches, participant observation through immersing myself in activist meetings, events, and actions and a comparative analysis to the tenets of the Total Liberation framework.

G. Empirical Chapters

My first empirical chapter will discuss the tensions between the AR and EJ movements based on my interviews, the materials I analyzed, and other scholarly sources. In my second empirical chapter, I will illustrate instances of collaboration between AR and EJ movements using interviews, campaigns, and data I gathered at events during my fieldwork.

II. Chapter 1 Case Study: Analyzing Tensions Between the Environmental Justice and Animal Rights Movements in the US and UK

This chapter delves into the first part of my research question: What are the tensions between AR and EJ movements in the US and the UK? Moreover, I will underscore the urgency of the first part of my argument, demonstrating that policymakers and advocates have long neglected the critical issue of animal agriculture at the global, national, and local levels. For AR and EJ groups to collaborate effectively, it is imperative to understand the tensions between the two groups and conduct a systemic analysis of their missions, visions, and values. I will be layering my analysis by exploring how each of these groups' missions, visions, and values compare with a normative stance of the Total Liberation framework, using it as the guiding force for comparison in the first three tensions. The last tension explores instances of racism and sexism in the AR movement. It does not look at any specific organization's mission, vision, or values but will be compared to a normative approach in the Total Liberation framework.

The politics of anthropocentrism and single-issue vegan advocacy both lack the tenets of the Total Liberation framework and act as foils of one another; through using this framework, I will illuminate the current shortcomings of both movements. The tensions are created through divergent perspectives, experiences, priorities, education, missions, visions, values, theories of change, and strategies. They exist overwhelmingly because of Anthropocentrism, Speciesism, and a lack of an interspecies Total Liberation framework as the guiding principle. *Speciesism* is defined as believing certain species' lives matter more than others, for example, dogs rather than cows or humans over non-human animals ([Sanders](#),

[2023](#)). However, a lack of effective communication, interaction, and significant coalition-building efforts has left these tensions unresolved and neglected. This highlights the urgent need for unity and collaboration, as it is only through collective action that we can overcome the climate crisis.

Furthermore, these tensions are amplified by the lack of collective visioning, the homogenous leadership and neglect of human social justice issues in the AR community, and operating within different movement spheres, further perpetuating division, separation, and disconnection. This thesis argues that to address this essentially unyielding anthropocentrism, advocates for AR and reducing animal agriculture must navigate four central tensions. The four tensions between EJ and AR groups are the divergent framing of the climate crisis, differing perceptions and conceptions on non-human animals, vegan techno-capitalism vs. food sovereignty principles, and the AR movement's othering of non-vegans and perpetuating human injustice. Regarding framing the climate crisis, EJ and AR groups often focus on different international actors, corporations, solutions, and visions for the future. Regarding the perception of non-human animals, EJ groups view farmed animals' bodies and secretions as necessary for human well-being and nutrition but have concerns about wild animals and biodiversity. In contrast, AR groups seek animal liberation and recognize the autonomy of each being. Vegan techno-capitalism refers to the use of technology and capitalism to promote veganism, often through the production and marketing of plant-based products or cultivated meat. Food sovereignty moves away from technology-centered solutions to small-scale, local, and nature-based solutions rooted in agroecology principles. Lastly, I explore how the AR movement creates division amongst those inside and outside

the movement, has failed to confront its sexism and racism, and hinders its potential to create positive change for non-human animals.

I have two main categories for organizing my study groups: environmental justice (EJ) groups and animal rights (AR) organizations. I am determining if groups are AR, if they specifically emphasize farmed animal protection if they focus on animals in the food system, and if they promote a plant-based food system and/or protein alternatives. This differs from organizations like World Wildlife Protection and World Animal Protection, which overwhelmingly focus on wild animals. Within AR movements, some folks more exclusively concentrate on animals, and others incorporate a closer integration of Total Liberation philosophy, which I have added to the table. I am determining if organizations are EJ, whether they have a focus not just on solving climate change but on tackling the systemic injustice of poor/BIPOC folks, a focus on a just transition, and a confrontation and dismantling of systemic oppression as a critical cause of climate change rather than just an issue of too many emissions. I understand this is imperfect and reductive, so to further stratify and specify the organizations I am discussing, here is a table where EJ and AR groups are broken down into radical, mixed advocacy, and incremental approaches to activism. According to scholar David Pellow, I categorize each organization based on whether their missions and visions include a total overhaul of our current system and a focus on direct action, which leans towards a radical classification. On the other hand, incremental groups seek to advocate for change through the current system, such as politics, lobbying, technology, and seek improvement but do not advocate for overhauling the system. Mixed groups combine both and do not concretely fit into any category neatly.

	Radical	Mixed Strategy	Incremental/Working Within the System
Environmental and Climate Justice	Fossil Free London (FFL) Kill the Bill Coalition	Extinction Rebellion (XR) Sunrise Movement Friends of the Earth US (FOE) Friends of the Earth England, Ireland and Wales (FOE) Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) Greenpeace UK	United Nations (UN) Eating Better (EB)
Farmed Animal Protection Groups	Animal Rising	Animal Outlook	ProVeg International and UK Animal and Vegan Advocacy Conferences (AVA) Good Food Institute (GFI)

			Reductarian Foundation (RF)
Interspecies Justice Groups	Apex Advocacy	A Well-Fed World (AWFW) Food Empowerment Project (FEP) Chili's on Wheels Vegans of LA Black Veg Society (BVS) 50by40 Mercy for Animals (MFA) Vegan Activist Alliance (VAA)	Hare Krishna

With AR organizations, I chose organizations based on my own experience working in the AR movement, my connections, and who was featured in AVA's sponsored goody bag. I wanted to choose global and national organizations with significant funding and a broad geographical scope because those organizations shape the discourse the most. However, I also include some grassroots organizations from the AR movement. With EJ organizations, one of the central organizations I looked at was the UN because of its global and national influence on solutions to climate change, knowledge creation on climate change and

solutions, the hosting of COP, and its unique international position. I also knew someone here, so it fit together well. While the UN may not be an EJ organization specifically, they do include it as a central aspect in their vision when discussing solutions to climate change, hence why I have categorized it as so. UK organizations, mentors, and activists I spoke to urged me towards including Extinction Rebellion (XR), and they also operate globally. I found Fossil Free London (FFL) at an XR event that I thought could serve well as a case study at the local level. With EJ organizations in the US, I looked at Sunrise Movement because I have organized with them before and have connections, and they have hundreds of local chapters across the country. I brought in the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) because of their coalition, which could bring diverse perspectives from various tribes and stakeholders.

The blinders of doing case studies mainly around US/UK groups are that these are two of the wealthiest and most developed countries in the world and that the activists here are working within the logics and systems of empire and may not serve as a viable foundation for replication for movements in the Global South. There is a lack of Global South perspectives in my essay; I do, however, interview many BIPOC people who live in the US and the UK. I explained how the US and the UK have transformed the global food system into what it is today, particularly with the introduction of intensive crop rotations and concentrated animal feeding operations, not to mention possessing enormous national carbon footprints. Movements and activists within those countries have a vital prerogative to take accountability and transform the imperial legacies of their respective nations by creating change. However, national activism will only go so far; there is a need for transnational and global solidarity. While my case studies attempt to make connections between these levels,

the lens needs to be expanded, and more perspectives on the most marginalized in the world and what they think about these movements/tensions need to be provided.

In the US, I collected my data through participant observation by attending the Animal and Vegan Advocacy (AVA) conference, attending Sunrise webinars, conducting semi-structured interviews, and visiting the websites and social media platforms of the organizations I was looking at. In the UK, I attended the Global March Against Fossil Fuels, where I met FFL, and I then attended the Oily Money Out Week hosted by FFL, which was a week of workshops, discussions, trainings, socials, and actions against the “Oscars of Oil” at the Intercontinental hotel in London. I also attended webinars by Friends of the Earth (FOE) England, Ireland, and Wales and conducted semi-structured interviews with someone who works there. I reference conceptual frameworks from David Pellow’s work *Total Liberation*, which is an inspiration for my work, and I research supplementary secondary data to corroborate my claims. I am organizing my data around the tensions, then dividing the organizations by global, national, and local in the first two tensions. I used semi-structured interviews with coalition builders in the US and the UK, as well as content analysis, discourse analysis, and comparative analysis.

A. Tension #1: Framing of the Climate Crisis

1. Global Perspective

a. EJ: Extinction Rebellion

Extinction Rebellion (XR) is a direct-action environmental group that began actions in 2018 and gained popularity in 2019 when they staged “the big one,” as many call it. They along with several other environmental groups successfully shut down central London,

causing a frenzy and gaining global attention. They demanded that the government tell the truth about the climate crisis and take radical action to address it. During my interview with former XR London member Bel Jacobs, she had this to say about what shook the English government as well as the world,

“Before XR, Greenpeace was the largest environmental organization operating in England. XR stood out because of the way they framed the climate crisis, emphasizing that it was an emergency, demanding the government declare it that way, and involving several other groups in an open call. Before this, Greenpeace had not involved the input of other groups; XR really changed the way we did activism with their collaborative, direct action tactics”(interview, 11/20/23).

XR's mission is to create "... a decentralized, international, and politically non-partisan movement using non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on the Climate and Ecological Emergency" ([Extinction Rebellion](#)). Their vision is "Creating a world that is fit for the next seven generations to live in. A healthy, beautiful world where individuality and creativity are supported and where people work together, solving problems and finding meaning, with courage, power, and love. This will be underpinned by cultures rooted in respect for nature, genuine freedoms, and justice" ([Extinction Rebellion](#)). Some of their values include a shared vision of change, a regenerative culture, challenging ourselves and the toxic system, reflecting and learning, diversity and inclusion, avoiding blaming individuals, non-violence, autonomy, and decentralization ([Extinction Rebellion](#)).

Today, XR is in 87 countries with 988 local chapters widely known worldwide, particularly in the West, for their activism ([Extinction Rebellion](#)). Due to this, XR was one of the first organizations I wanted to get involved with and observe during my time in the UK. On a hot, humid English day, I took the tube to central London to attend the Global March Against Fossil Fuels. When I got to central London, I was pleasantly surprised by the diversity in age; I saw kids with their parents, teenagers, young adults in their 20's, 30's, and several 50+ folks. It was a lively event, with banners and art galore, people painting signs, and a drum circle practicing for the march. About fifteen minutes later, XR leaders took to a bullhorn to talk to the crowd. Their message was clear and urgent, as they repeatedly discussed the British government's and global leaders' failure to tackle the climate crisis and halt drilling for new oil. Lauren MacDonald, an organizer with "Stop Rosebank," stated,

“We were warned by the UN last week that the world will fail to stop the climate crisis unless fossil fuels are rapidly phased out. The UK government has issued hundreds of new North Sea licenses and has voiced its support for Rosebank field off the Scottish coast” (field notes, 9/14/23).

Another leader had us practice a song, “Keep it in the ground! KEEP IT IN THE GROUND! Liar Liar the world’s on fire, whatcha gonna do when it all burns down?” (field notes, 9/14/23). After the crowd seemed to know the song well enough, we marched through downtown London, ending near Big Ben and the London Eye, a central tourist area with high foot traffic, to get our message across. Throughout the march, I saw impactful signs and

messages that said, “System Change, not Climate Change,” “We want to live, no new oil and gas,” and “cut ties to fossil fuels.”



I was getting tired and sweaty as we marched through the heat, chanting and holding our signs. But we persisted, with drummers and leaders imploring us to keep chanting until we reached Big Ben, where everybody gathered on the grass. As I sat down, resting, I met some other activists and started chatting with them. While most of the protestors were white, there was a presence of people of color. Other social justice organizations were present, from

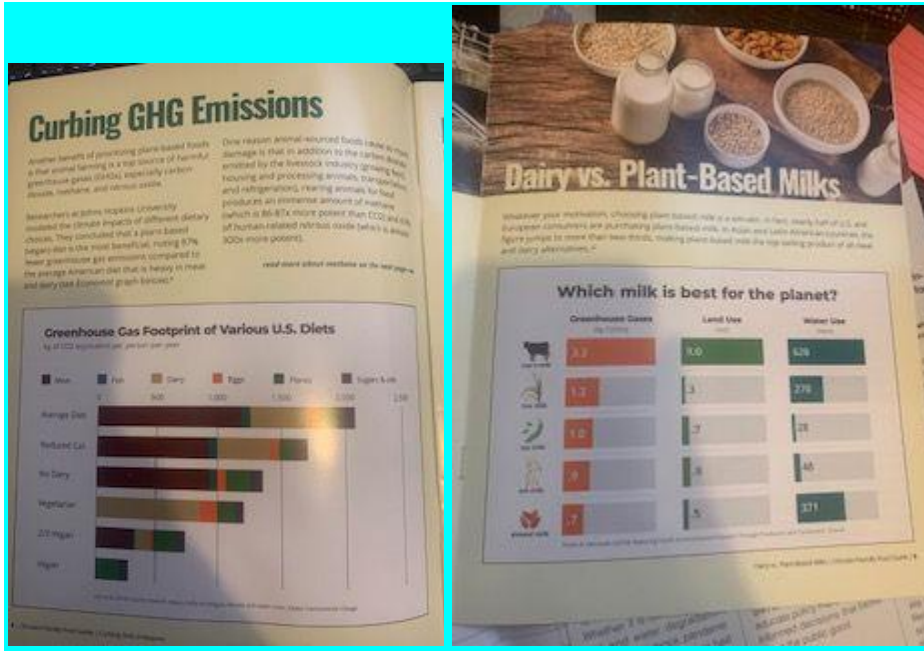
socialist and communist parties to other anti-fossil fuel and environmental justice groups.

Next, I will examine how a global farmed animal protection organization frames the climate crisis and then employ a comparative analysis.

b. AR: A Well-Fed World

From July 27 - 30, 2023, I attended the AVA Conference in Los Angeles, California. It was a four-day conference, it is one of the most considerable professional farmed animal protection and alternative protein conferences in the United States and the world. There were participants from 45 countries; however, most attendees were Western citizens and organizations. As an attendee, I was given a gift bag with leaflets, guidebooks, stickers, merchandise, and infographics from different sponsors and organizations at the conference. The organization I will highlight in this case study is A Well-Fed World (AWFW). AWFW is a New York based, globally informed, farmed animal protection organization whose mission is “...to strengthen plant-based feeding and farming solutions for impoverished populations and the world at large while championing a shift away from the consumption and production of animal-sourced foods as part of a viable strategy to improve global food security and mitigate the climate crisis” ([A Well-Fed World, 2024](#)). Their vision is, “A well-fed world is one in which all people have an abundance of nourishing, plant-based foods that maximize health for people, animals, and the planet. These nutrient-dense foods are to be produced and distributed in ways that prioritize public and planetary health for current and future generations” ([A Well-Fed World, 2024](#)). While not explicitly stated, some of their values include working with grassroots and local organizations, research, accessibility, human rights, animal rights, ecosystem preservation, hunger alleviation, collaboration, veganism,

and reducetarianism. In the conference goody bag, they gave out free copies of their “Climate Friendly Food Guide,” pictured below.



On the first page of the introduction, several statements frame the climate crisis right away. It reads,

“Many of the world’s most pressing problems can leave us feeling helpless—like there’s nothing we can do as individuals. The climate crisis, however, is an issue where personal change is overwhelmingly urged by experts around the globe. Among the actions that will have the biggest impact: our food choices! Leading environmental organizations and international institutions are urging a shift towards plant-based diets as one of the most important actions that the public can take to reduce climate destruction, deforestation, species extinction, and global hunger. In a special report by the IPCC, the UN recently declared that plant-based diets have the greatest and most immediate benefit to the climate.

Furthering the recommendation for climate-friendly food choices, 11,000 scientists signed a Climate Emergency Declaration imploring governments, policymakers, and consumers to take specific actions to reduce emissions” (A Well-Fed World, 2023).

Here, we see that AWWF is framing the climate issue specifically as a problem with global diets. The solution to this issue is to work towards transforming the food system to one that is primarily plant-based. Note that the UN’s IPCC report is mentioned for reference, further validating the influence of the UN’s climate research on NGO goals.

c. Analysis

Through these two fieldwork experiences with global organizations, it is clear that the climate crisis is being framed divergently amongst groups like XR and AWWF. XR and AWWF align in their mission and vision to address climate change, preserve the planet for future generations, and value human rights and involvement from local actors. XR focuses on the global climate crisis, big polluters, and direct action. In contrast, AWWF mainly focuses on alleviating hunger through plant-based foods, transforming the food system, depopularizing animal gifting in the Global South, creating grants for local organizations, and making plant-based food more accessible. Their focus on who is responsible and their strategies for achieving their vision differs.

XR goes beyond the individual, placing the blame and the responsibility to change on our government and institutional systems. AWWF, while acknowledging the systemic role in promoting animal products, places a higher responsibility on individual change and consumer choice architecture. Furthermore, when XR discusses the climate crisis, it centers blame on greedy corporations and reliance on fossil fuels as the leading causes of the climate crisis. There is good reason for this, as according to the UN, “Fossil fuels – coal, oil, and gas – are

by far the largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for over 75 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions” ([United Nations](#)). The oil and gas industries have deliberately misled the public, most notably with the case of ExxonMobil funding climate misinformation claims and denying that climate change exists despite their scientists concluding in the 1970s that it does. They lobbied government officials to spread these inaccuracies and then blamed everyday Americans when it was exposed that they had been deceiving the public. Supran said, “In 2015, investigative journalists discovered internal company memos indicating that Exxon oil company has known since the late 1970s that its fossil fuel products could lead to global warming with “dramatic environmental effects before the year 2050” ([2023](#)). They continue by pointing out that “It has been established that, for many years, Exxon’s public affairs strategy was—as a 1988 internal memo put it—to “emphasize the uncertainty in scientific conclusions regarding the potential enhanced greenhouse effect” (10, 44, 50)” ([Supran et al., 2023](#)).

On the other hand, AFWW takes the approach to the individual scale, with a guide that educates people on why there is a need to shift to a plant-based diet, a food guide on how to do so, and a nutrition guide to inform people on plant-based nutrition. In comparing these two case studies, it’s clear AFWW is more focused on education and targeting consumers in the Global North, while XR is focused on direct action and mobilizing the masses to rise against the system. Compared to the Total Liberation framework, XR meets this criterion without the message of animal liberation. They focus on human Total Liberation; they state their values of diversity, inclusion, and tackling various social justice issues, but animals are not mentioned in their mission or vision. AFWW on the other hand, while not using this

exact terminology, places the well-being of humans, animals, and the Earth on equal footing as a part of their vision statement. I would not consider AFWF a Collective Liberation organization since its main focus is plant-based food transition. Still, they consistently center on the human rights issue of hunger and employ a unique strategy to tackle human and animal oppression, which comes much closer to a vision of Total Liberation.

2. United Kingdom

a. EJ: Fossil Free London

While at the Global March against Fossil Fuels, I received a flyer from a group called Fossil Free London (FFL), pictured below. They were advertising their most significant event of the year, the “Oily Money Out Conference” in October 2023. At the “Oil and Money” conference, fossil fuel executives gathered in London’s Intercontinental Hotel to discuss continued extraction. FFL was advertising a week of workshops, education, skill-sharing, and community building to prepare to protest the “Oily Money Out” conference. Pictured below is the flyer they used to promote their conference.



To explain this event, they state,

“This October, the oil giants pushing us towards societal collapse while profiteering from our record high energy bills will be descending on London for their oil and money conference, nicknamed the “Oscars” of oil.” Towards the bottom, the flyer states. “This is a moment for the people, a time to say enough is enough. Join us to force oily money out of our city, out of our politics, and out of our society” (Fossil Free London, 2023).

FFL’s Mission is “to make our city inhospitable to the fossil fuel industry and the banks that fund it. We use direct action, creative stunts, disruption, and protest to tarnish the industry's image and attack its social license” ([Fossil Free London, 2024](#)). Their vision is “Eventually a world without fossil fuels privately, but ultimately about divestment from London’s institutions, particularly banks” ([Fossil Free London, 2024](#)). While not explicitly

stated on their website, some values include environmental justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, community, art and activism, and direct action. Like XR, FFL demands individuals to get involved, protest the mega-polluters and corporations, and not to focus on their carbon footprint.

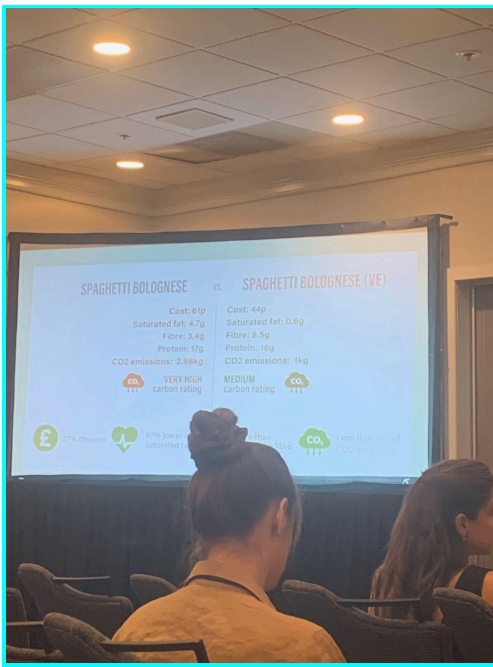
b. AR: ProVeg UK

At the AVA conference, I attended a workshop led by Colette King, the head of ProVeg UK's School Food Program and their Global Food School Coalition. ProVeg is an international organization that works in several countries around the world. Their overarching mission is "Replacing 50% of animal products globally with plant-based and cultivated foods by 2040" ([ProVeg UK, 2023](#)). Their vision is "A world where everyone chooses delicious and healthy food that is good for all humans, animals, and our planet" ([ProVeg UK, 2023](#)). On their website, there isn't a specific values section. Still, it goes over the five pro's which are pro-taste, pro-health, pro-animals, pro-justice, and pro-environment, while stating their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

ProVeg's School Food Program seeks to change demand in the food system by advocating for plant-based meals to be served in schools, as UK schools provide hundreds of thousands of meals a day. Each meal served has an environmental impact, a key factor ProVeg uses to convince school administration that serving plant-based food in schools will play a key role in combating the climate crisis. In one of her slides titled, "Why school food programs?" It states,

“We can influence children’s dietary habits for decades to come, children influence their parents and peers, it is high impact and low-cost, low-risk as healthy school food is universally appealing, and lastly that children care about climate change” (field notes, 7/28/23).

The following slides show the nutrition and carbon footprint breakdowns of a plant-based vs. animal-based meal, in this case, a Spaghetti Bolognese. Carbon emissions were listed for each meal, with a rating level at the bottom.



The spaghetti bolognese on the left, which is animal-based, has a carbon footprint labeled “very high,” while the plant-based version on the right has a “medium” rating. ProVeg’s school food campaign directly targets food procurement by educational institutions. It emphasizes placing the responsibility on them while hoping to have a trickle-down effect on the youngest, most influential members of society. In this particular campaign, ProVeg does not seek to advocate veganism; in fact, Colette specifically stated in her presentation,

“We do not use the vegan word for fear of alienation” (field notes, 7/28/23).

As seen in the slides, alongside the health benefits of plant-based foods, such as lower saturated fat and higher fiber content, the main selling point for changing school foods is emphasizing a lower carbon footprint and tackling the climate crisis.

c. Analysis

In framing both of these UK groups, their mission is focused on systemic change for the climate crisis, and both hope to shift the status quo's norms. Their visions differ and are quite specific: FFL is focused on fossil fuel divestment from London's institutions, and ProVeg is focused on shifting the global food system to one that is “good for all humans, people, and the planet” ([ProVeg UK, 2023](#)). Regarding values, FFL focuses on grassroots organizing, building community, disrupting business for oil executives in London, and driving London's citizens to turn against further fossil fuel extraction. Regarding values, ProVeg has five pros that focus on taste, justice, animals, environment, and health, which is much broader.

ProVeg UK's school food campaign is about changing choice architecture and placing the burden of providing healthier, climate-friendly food to millions of kids daily on education institutions and the food providers who supply them. However, like XR, FFL London does not emphasize personal choice regarding consumer choices; instead, the individual is asked to disrupt powerful corporations alongside the movement. ProVeg, while taking a systemic approach, has a vision that differs from AFWF, focusing specifically on exposing kids to plant-based food earlier in their lives. The hope is that the school food program will change

students' personal food choices outside of school, help make connections between food and the climate, and aid in influencing their parents, as stated in their presentation. Like XR, FFL values EJ principles and social justice, but it is not necessarily a part of their mission or vision. Compared to ProVeg, they lack tenets of Total Liberation and do not speak about animals. ProVeg values humans, animals, and the environment, which brings it closer to the Total Liberation framework. However, most of their campaigns promote plant-based food and do not center on human rights issues in industrial agriculture. This does not align with the Total Liberation framework, which prioritizes both equally.

3. United States

a. EJ: Sunrise Movement

Sunrise movement, a national environmental and CJ organization, made headlines in 2018 when they occupied Nancy Pelosi's office to demand robust climate policy and a Green New Deal ([Sunrise Movement, 2020](#)). These young people felt frustrated that the best the speaker of the house could do was to create a research committee to investigate the climate crisis rather than push for radical legislation to transform our system. Another reason Sunrise came to national recognition after this protest is that they were joined by fellow Congress member Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, who helped author the Green New Deal alongside Bernie Sanders as a tangible pathway out of the climate crisis ([Sunrise Movement, 2020](#)). Sunrise, a largely youth-led organization, has hundreds of chapters nationwide and has influenced recent CJ/EJ discourse, particularly around divesting from fossil fuels and reparations for marginalized communities. Their mission and vision is "Building a movement of young people to stop the climate crisis and win a new deal"([Sunrise Movement, 2024](#)). Their values

are community organizing, building people power, environmental justice, Indigenous sovereignty, diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, worker justice, systemic change, growth, joy, and celebration.

On Sunrise’s website, three campaigns are listed: The Climate Emergency, Green New Deal for Communities, and Electoral Campaigns ([Sunrise Movement, 2024](#)). Under The Climate Emergency, three main attributes are listed: creating green union jobs, ending the fossil fuel era, and preparing for climate disasters. Under the tab for the Green New Deal, it states,

“It’s a vision for the future that stops the climate crisis, creates millions of good, union jobs, and ensures a livable future for all people. It’s rooted in the truth that every person has a right to clean air and water, protection from disaster, access to healthy food, and the promise of a comfortable life, no matter the color of their skin or where they were born. We will do this by transforming every aspect of American society and our economy to meet 100% clean and renewable energy in the next 10 years. A world where communities don’t have to fend for themselves in times of crisis, but are instead provided resources and support to thrive. A world where our jobs don’t hold us hostage, solely for our survival but allow us to prosper and achieve meaning. A world where every worker not only has a voice through their union but earns their full worth. A world where healthcare isn’t the business of a few but a human right free and accessible to all. A world where we don’t continue legacies of injustice against others but redress and heal them. A world where young people aren’t trapped in fear and debt but are guaranteed education and the right to dream in safety. Together, we can win a world where work is fulfilling, our water and air are clean and crisp,

where the places we call home are here to stay, and the natural beauty of our earth is around for generations to come. The Green New Deal has four pillars that define it.

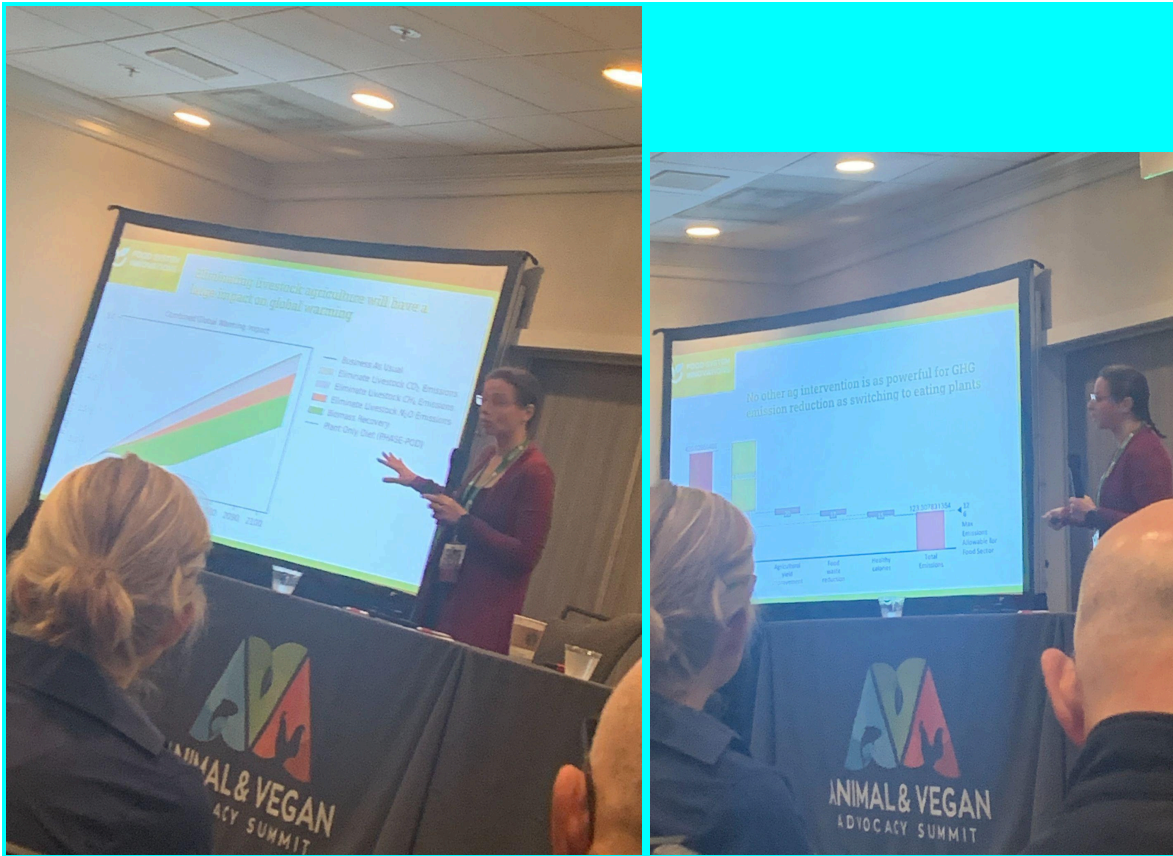
- 1. Stopping climate change (by moving our economy to run on 100% clean energy),*
- 2. Creating millions of good paying union jobs,*
- 3. Investing in racial and economic justice, and*
- 4. Reimagining our government to work for everyday people” ([Sunrise Movement, 2024](#)).*

What sets Sunrise apart from other environmental organizations is its focus on passing a Green New Deal, ensuring a just transition for workers in the fossil fuel industry, promoting multi-racial democratic socialism and targeting progressive politicians to endorse it. Compared to XR and FFL, while Sunrise wants to disrupt power and hold the government accountable, its campaigning involves trying to pass a specific piece of legislation that it believes will create a foundation for communities to be better adapted and resilient to the climate crisis.

b. AR: Food Systems Innovation Climate Workshop

While attending the AVA conference in Los Angeles, I had the opportunity to participate in a workshop titled “The Climate Opportunity to Reduce Animal Suffering.” In this workshop, a couple led the seminar and were the co-founders of a US-based organization called Food System Innovations (FSI). Many topics were covered in their workshop, but in this section, I will highlight their framing of the climate crisis. In one of the slides titled “Eliminating livestock agriculture will have a large impact on global warming,” they showed

a graph, pictured below, of the various actions that could be taken and their subsequent carbon emissions (field notes, 7/28/23).



Their next slide was titled “No other ag intervention is as powerful for GHG emission reduction as switching to eating plants” and had a bar graph showing emission savings from plant-based food systems. In addition to their presentation, a flyer highlighting their work was given in the AVA “goody” bag.



The flyer states that they “Help support cutting edge alternative protein scientific research around the world. Industrial animal agriculture is not sustainable-full stop. Whether it is climate change, soil and water degradation, antibiotic resistance, pandemic risk, or a myriad of other bad outcomes, the system must change now. The entire global population needs to modify what they demand and consume (a notoriously difficult thing for even the most motivated person to do), and so the perfect analogs to animal products available everywhere and at low prices are no longer “a nice to have” (Food Systems Innovation, 2023). Their mission is “.. to create, fund, or otherwise support projects and people that can have a substantial and, where possible, measurable impact on speeding the transition of the industrialized human food system to one that mitigates climate change and other risks by removing animals from the system” ([Food System Innovations](#)). Their vision is, “a world where animals are no longer central to the human industrial food system, so that the system serves to mitigate climate change rather than exacerbate it by efficiently and equitably providing sustainable, nutritious, and humanely produced food to meet planetary needs for

human nutrition”([Food System Innovations](#)). Their values include cutting-edge science, research, transformation, animal rights, ecosystem preservation, and collaboration.

c. Analysis

Sunrise and FSI are focused on progressing towards ending climate change, but similarly to our earlier examples, their vision and focus on how to get there diverges. Sunrise focuses on movement building, fossil fuel divestment, and passing a Green New Deal, while FSI focuses on technological innovation, research, and alternative protein accessibility. Sunrise movement presents a radical vision for the future rooted in values of community, equity, accessibility, social services, cooperation, healing, joy, and fulfillment. At the same time, FSI mainly focuses on a vision to liberate animals from the human food system, solve climate change, and create accessible alternatives to meet human nutrition goals. Sunrise’s vision is more radical leftist and includes people of all marginalized backgrounds, aligning it with the Total Liberation framework without including animals. FSI’s vision is a single issue focusing on animal liberation; while they want to provide adequate nutrition for human beings and tackle the climate crisis, they do not address human social justice issues or call for inclusion. I would not consider FSI in line with Total Liberation ideals.

While varying in their approaches, Sunrise aligns with XR and FFL in holding the government accountable for its failure to tackle the climate crisis. Still, as stated above, Sunrise differs from the others in its solution-based approach, passing the Green New Deal, making its strategy one that mixes direct action and working within the system. AWWF, ProVeg UK, and FSI are attempting to address systemic and individual change to promote a

plant-based food system. Here lies one of the most significant framing issues, and it's been highlighted in the Sunrise Movement founder's book, *Winning a Green New Deal*, by Varshini Prakash and Guido Girgenti. They state, "Earth Day listicles tell us how to lower our carbon footprints by having fewer children or eating less meat as oil executives board private planes to go stakeout newfound reserves" (Prakash & Guido, 2020, p. 5). This quote indicates a dismissal of reducing meat to curb the climate crisis, seeing it as a way corporations have continued to transfer the responsibility of the crisis to the general public. Animal agriculture or food systems change is not mentioned on their website or any of the organizations listed above. The need to divest from factory farms is mainly invisible and unacknowledged. While access to healthy food is mentioned under the Green New Deal, their website has no further elaboration. As a former organizer for Sunrise organizer myself, I never saw a campaign focused on divesting from factory farms or specifically about food systems transformation.

I wanted to understand this problem more deeply, so I interviewed Aru Shiney-Ajay, a member of senior leadership in the Sunrise movement. She had one theory when I asked her about the lack of inclusion with the issues around animal agriculture on Sunrise's website. She responded by saying,

"I really don't think a lot of activists in Sunrise or the EJ movement know how much animal agriculture affects the environment in detail, there needs to be more education"

(interview, 5/1/23).

It may also be that grassroots EJ/CJ groups have limited capacity and funding, so more research needs to be done on why food systems change is not being prioritized and how to build up capacity activists at the global, national, and local levels. The education and movement around divesting from fossil fuels has been strong, and mass mobilization is occurring through the Global March Against Fossil Fuels event in the summer. The robustness of the anti-fossil fuel movement has grown, with Food and Water Watch remarking, “Organizers of the [March to End Fossil Fuels](#) today announced that 500 organizations have endorsed the upcoming mobilization on September 17 in New York City. Groups including the NAACP, Sierra Club, and Sunrise Movement have signed on to support the march and its demands for Pres. Biden to take bold action on fossil fuels in the wake of a deadly, record-breaking summer of extreme heat and climate disasters. In addition to the 500 groups supporting the march, nationally recognized leaders including Sen. Ed Markey, Reps. Rashida Tlaib and Jamaal Bowman, Tennessee State Rep. Justin Pearson, Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and President of Ireland Mary Robinson, Jane Fonda, Naomi Klein, Mark Ruffalo, and Bill McKibben are backing the march” ([Gladstone, 2023](#)). We see here that fossil fuel divestment campaigns have broad support across environmental groups, left-leaning politicians, national leaders, and celebrities.

As mentioned in my introduction, animal agriculture is a leading cause of climate change but does not have the same momentum as anti-fossil fuel campaigns. In a study conducted by Faunalytics, they found that “According to a recent consumer study conducted by Purdue researchers: “The belief that ‘eating less meat is better for the environment,’ which is strongly supported by many climate and environmental researchers, is at an all-time low” ([Lusk & Polzin, 2023](#)). The reason for this disconnect is multifaceted, but at least one

factor is the information the public receives regarding the connection between animal agriculture and climate change. In a study by Faunalytics, “Only 7% of climate articles mentioned animal agriculture, and they rarely discussed its impact on climate change. Most articles that mentioned animal agriculture failed to discuss the emissions and environmental degradation caused by the industry, let alone the importance of reducing meat consumption or switching to a plant-based diet to fight climate change. When diets were discussed, the effectiveness of plant-based diets was sometimes downplayed or, more often than not, presented almost as an afterthought rather than a legitimate strategy to mitigate climate change” ([Arevalo, 2024](#)). However, this is not simply an issue of the public lacking education and the media not covering the issues, but an extensive gap in environmental groups centering food systems change as a necessary part of combatting climate change.

These findings were corroborated through my interview with Alejandra from Food Empowerment Project (FEP), a California-based intersectional human and animal rights organization centering food justice, stated,

“EJ groups talk a lot about fossil fuel and not enough about food choices; it could confront a lot more to center both of these” (interview, 7/4/23).

I found this corroborated when I spoke with Chloe at Friends of the Earth (FOE) in the US. She mentioned,

“Few members of FOE work on meat reduction; it is harder to get EJ groups on board for animal ag issues because it affects a smaller group of people than fossil fuels” (interview, 8/15/23).

While Chloe did not specify why this is perceived to be the case, it could be that a smaller number of people live near factory farms as opposed to near oil pipelines, extraction sites, and refineries. Once again, more research needs to be done to solidify the exact reasons for this neglect. Fossil fuels can be seen as a more urgent, broader scale issue, and some fear alienating existing members by talking about meat/dairy issues. We see a parallel here between the US and the UK. I spoke with Bel Jacobs, a vegan and climate activist in the UK; she stated,

“There is still a hesitancy to talk too much about meat in environmental groups and the climate movement; anti-fossil fuel campaigns are seen as more palatable”(interview, 11/20/23).

Although she did not specify why, it could be that focusing on individual diets has a more minor impact rather than focusing on targeting large corporations. Like the US, EJ/CJ groups must prioritize animal agriculture issues more. EJ and AR groups have divergent priorities and strategic focuses on tackling the climate crisis, one that has deepened division and can stand in the way of coalition-building. While certainly a prominent contributing factor, it's important to note that the most significant tension lies with contrasting attitudes towards non-human animals, which I will tackle in my next section.

B. Tension #2: Contrasting Attitudes Towards Non-Human Animals

1. Global

a. EJ: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

The UN is seen as one of the most prominent leaders in the world, from development to international aid to research to sharing critical solutions to tackle climate change. In this case study, I will examine the language the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) utilizes when discussing animals and animal agriculture. The FAO's mission and vision is, "The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Our goal is to achieve food security for all and ensure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives" ([United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization](#)). While not explicitly stated on their website, the FAO values human rights, accessibility, sustainability, research, collaboration, change at all levels, inclusion, and transformation. In 2013, FAO released a report titled "*Tackling Climate Change through Livestock: A Global Assessment of Emissions and Mitigation Opportunities*." It is important to note that the UN acknowledges that animal agriculture has a severe climate and ecological footprint, with its landmark report *Livestock's Long Shadow* putting the issue on the global agenda. Throughout the report, mitigation measures are suggested, such as:

"While comparably high mitigation potentials were estimated for the ruminant and pig production systems in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, significant emission reductions

can also be attained in dairy systems with already high productivity levels, as demonstrated by the case study on OECD countries. Some of the illustrated mitigation interventions can concomitantly lead to reduced emission intensities and volumes and increased productivity and production. This is particularly the case with improved feeding practices, better health, and herd management practices”([Gerber et al., 2013, p. 81](#))

Here, the UN’s FAO takes an animal welfare approach, which supports the view that animals should be treated better but still be subjected to human-controlled industries, acknowledging that better health for the animals involved in these systems is vital to mitigation ([World Animal Protection, 2023](#)). While the UN has produced literature and knowledge on climate change mitigation, many from the food systems transformation movement believe the UN needs to prioritize the issue of animal agriculture more. I interviewed Lasse Bruun, who works at the UN Foundation, helping to put food systems change and transition on the agenda. Only last year, COP 27 had its first food systems summit, where they dedicated a whole section of the conference to discussing the massive problems in our globalized food production systems, as seen in ProVeg’s International 2022 report at AVA. This year at COP 28, for the first time, the conference will be serving $\frac{2}{3}$ plant-based foods, a big win for animal advocates ([ProVeg International, 2023](#)). Lasse comments, though, that

“Right now, food system change is still on the back burner; when I was working to raise awareness about these issues earlier in my career, I was completely dismissed and laughed at” (interview, 8/24/23).

A recent study shows that not only has food systems change been recently integrated into the agenda for the UN, but previous findings by UN scientists were sabotaged. In an expose by The Guardian,

“The allegations date back to the years after 2006, when some of the officials who spoke exclusively to the Guardian on condition of anonymity wrote Livestock’s Long Shadow (LLS), a landmark report that pushed farm emissions onto the climate agenda for the first time. LLS included the first tally of the meat and dairy sector’s ecological cost, attributing 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions to livestock, mostly cattle. “The lobbyists obviously managed to influence things,” one ex-official said. “They had a strong impact on the way things were done at the FAO and there was a lot of censorship. Serving and former FAO experts said that between 2006 and 2019, management made numerous attempts to suppress investigations into the cow/climate change connection. Top officials rewrote and diluted key passages in another report on the same topic, “buried” another paper critical of big agriculture, excluded critical officials from meetings and summits, and briefed against their work,” ([Neslen, 2023](#)).

Through a triangulation of content analysis, an interview with a leader at the UN, and supplementary secondary data, I conclude that while the UN has done a lot to put the issue of animal agriculture on the map, they ultimately take an approach that is at odds with protecting animal freedom and the right not to be exploited. As stated in the quote above, a large part of this is because of industry lobbying, which parallels the oil industry; journalists have repeatedly found censorship and willful lying by these massive industries.

b. AR: ProVeg International

At the AVA Conference, one group with a prominent presence is ProVeg. In this case study, I will examine ProVeg International's 2022 Annual Review content, which came in the AVA goody bag for attendees. On the second page of this booklet, titled "ProVeg at a Glance," it states:

"ProVeg International is a food awareness organization working to transform the global food system by replacing 50% of animal products globally with plant-based and cultivated foods by 2040. We engage with all relevant stakeholders to create a food system where everyone chooses delicious and healthy food that is good for all humans, animals, and our planet" (ProVeg, 2023).

Here, we see that ProVeg considers animals as stakeholders, differentiating itself from an animal welfare organization that does not mention animals as stakeholders. Throughout the booklet, the words "plant-based" are used on almost every page, varying from plant-based space to plant-based movement, plant-based meals, plant-based innovation, plant-based advocacy, plant-based non-profit space, and plant-based revolution. On page 12 of the booklet, in the bottom left corner, there is a picture of a mom and baby cow, where underneath it states, "Sign our petition for plant-milk inclusion: Start a school revolution."



On page 17 of the booklet, ProVeg discusses their “veggie challenge” to help people eat more plant-based products. They have graphics of the veggie challenge's impact, stating that “The Veggie challenge has spared an estimated 42,400 animals.” (ProVeg, 2023)



c. Analysis

The United Nations has a core focus on EJ on the global level, which is why I am choosing to use them as a case study for the attitudes EJ organizations may have towards

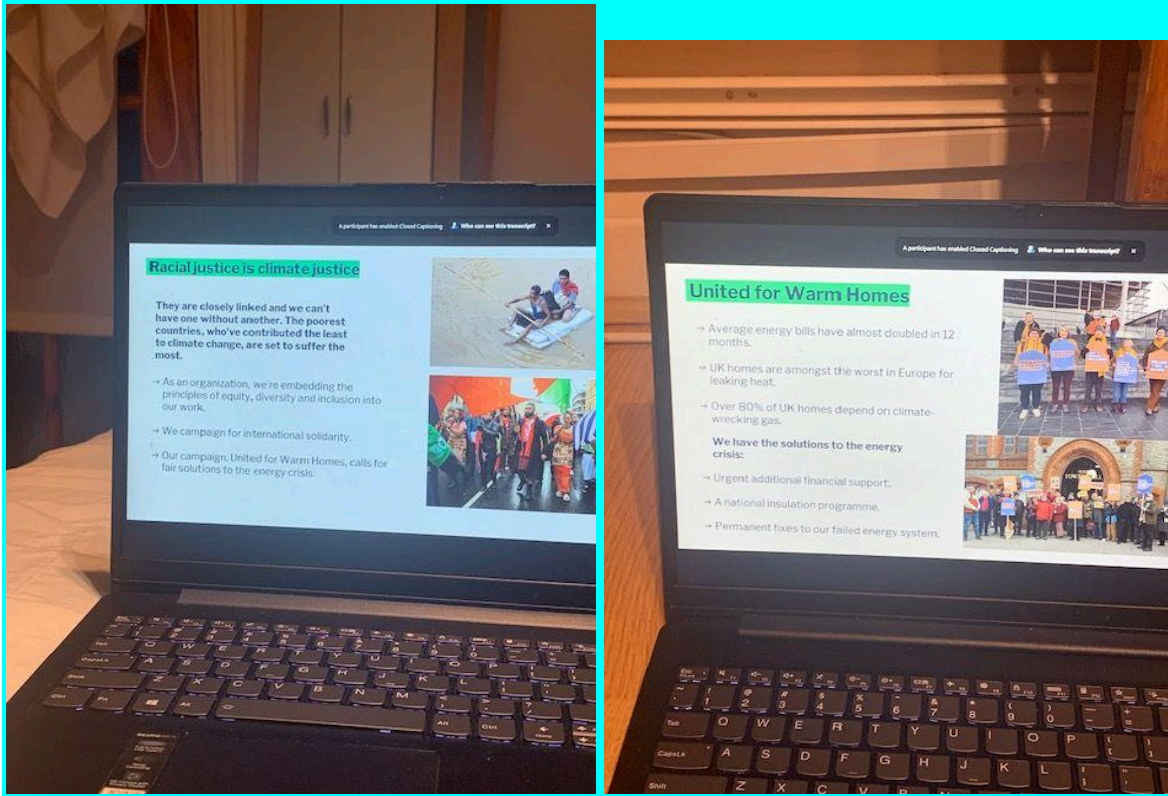
animals. The FAO focuses explicitly on alleviating hunger, improving food security, and improving human life through access to nutritious food. Like many EJ organizations mentioned above, the FAO includes all human beings in their mission but does not include animals removed from the food system as a part of their vision. Throughout the report by the FAO, while there is a call for a reduction in the number of animals farmed, many of the mitigation measures refer to feed efficiency, better land management practices, manure management, forage and digestibility, and breeding. There is little acknowledgment of animal suffering, animals as individuals, animals as commodities, or animals as autonomous beings. The FAO is focused on improving the animal agriculture system, while ProVeg seeks to transition to a 50% plant-based food system by 2040. ProVeg's mission and vision are about reducing animal products while highlighting human rights issues in the industry; but they do not seek to center human justice in their organization. The FAO and ProVeg lack the values in an interspecies Collective Liberation framework. The centering of animals as conscious, sentient beings throughout ProVeg is demonstrated through their illustrations of animals and their discussion of saving their lives. Saving animal lives is a crucial value for ProVeg, while for the FAO, it is merely a silver lining for transitioning to more sustainable food systems. By repeating the words "plant-based," we can see that ProVeg seeks to radically transform the nature of the global food system to one that moves away from animal farming. At the same time, the FAO mainly advocates for improving the current system but does not use the words "plant-based" in any of its mitigation recommendations.

2. United Kingdom

a. EJ: Friends of the Earth England, Ireland, and Wales

One of the most prominent national environmental organizations in the UK that center on climate justice as a part of their mission is FOE England, Ireland, and Wales. I had a chance to attend multiple online webinars from FOE England, Northern Ireland, and Wales. The webinar was led by three cis-gender white women from the UK, who created a welcoming environment by stating that this was a space open to people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities. Group agreements like respecting diversity, equity, and inclusion and creating a space free from discrimination were emphasized. They offered different ways to participate, such as participating in the chat or taking breaks when needed, contributing to fostering an inclusive environment for people of various abilities.

On their website, they do not have a typical mission and vision statements but highlight that they are “...a grassroots environmental campaigning community. From our campaigners and lawyers to local action groups and supporters across the country, we push for change for people and planet” ([Friends of the Earth England, Ireland, and Wales](#)). They have a focus on protecting wildlife and nature everywhere, envision a fossil-free future, and put the planet over profit. They also value diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) principles and discuss social and environmental justice as core values. There was a slide on climate justice in the webinar I attended, and it highlighted the Global North/South divide of climate impacts and racial injustice when it comes to energy accessibility in the UK.



They focused on four campaigns, United for Warm Homes, as there is an energy crisis in the UK, with many facing the “heat or eat” dilemma due to soaring energy costs in the UK and poor home insulation. The subsequent three highlighted campaigns included fossil-free planet, planet over profit, and international solidarity (field notes, 9/13/23). Animal agriculture was not mentioned in this webinar, so I wanted to talk to someone from FOE more in-depth about their view of it. Clare Oxborrow has worked as a campaigner for FOE for the past decade, and I was introduced to her through Lasse Bruun. She helped give me a detailed understanding of how they think of animal agriculture. Clare stated,

“Compared to ten years ago, in the UK environmental movement, there is more awareness of the harms of animal agriculture. We have done work in the past on industrial

farming; however, we do not have an explicit campaign focused on this right now. Under our planet over profit campaign, we tackle commodities like soy, palm oil, and timber. Of course, soy is related to feeding animal agriculture, so while indirect, it still tackles the issue somewhat” (interview, 9/28/23).

Clare has also worked to found Eating Better (EB), a UK coalition of environmental and animal protection organizations advocating for less and better meat. When I interviewed her and asked about this organization's impact, she commented,

“We support regenerative farming on a small scale, while animal advocates do not. There are ongoing tensions between animal protection organizations and regenerative agriculture groups. There is a prominent part of the environmental movement that fears telling people to cut out meat, so they don't upset the farmer organizations” (interview, 9/28/23).

We see these attitudes across the globe that non-human animals are not seen as an oppressed group, and meat reduction is only spoken about in terms of climate impacts. I concurred this perception with James Ozden, an AR activist and organizer who was a part of both XR and Animal Rebellion, now Animal Rising, in the UK. I asked James, “In your experience, how do the environmental organizations in the UK view the issue of animal agriculture in a climate context?”. He answered by stating that,

“Well, there are a lot of organizations that have the less and better meat framing/mentality. There is a broader acknowledgment now, as opposed to a few years ago, that large-scale animal farming is a massive climate issue, but most support animal agriculture on a smaller scale.”(interview, 9/26/23)

Next, let’s look at how the UK’s Animal Rising discusses the issue of animal agriculture and its attitudes towards non-human animals.

b. AR: Animal Rising

At the AVA Conference, many referred me to Animal Rising, initially a sector of XR focused on animal agriculture’s climate impacts. They now have independent funding and have formally separated from XR. I spoke to Dora Hargitai, a key leader in Animal Rising from its initial formation, to understand what happened between XR and Animal Rising. Dora was introduced to XR in 2019, where, as mentioned previously, they succeeded in shutting down central London. Dora remarked,

“It was my first time seeing large-scale disruption like that. We changed history overnight. I started to think, if we got one million veg eaters to come to XR events, we could have a vision for the future” (interview, 9/29/23).

At the time, Animal Rebellion chose not to focus on converting people to eat vegan but to raise awareness about system change. In 2021, they held protests at McDonald’s to attract people across coalitions, as McDonald’s was an easy target for radical activists to get behind regardless of their personal eating choices. XR people joined in mass numbers for this; however, Animal Rising now focuses more on animals as conscious, sentient beings

who deserve autonomy and freedom. Their mission is “to build a nonviolent, people-powered organization working towards a sustainable future where humanity shares a positive relationship with animals and nature” ([Animal Rising](#)). Their values are truth, love, courage, and faith ([Animal Rising](#)). Animal Rising highlights their theory of change,

“We have three streams of nonviolent protest actions which will continue throughout the summer. Open animal rescues and farm occupations. Spotlighting the stories of animals suffering through exploitation. Mass trespass onto animal racing events. As a nation of animal lovers it is about time we put these cruel, outdated practices under the spotlight and bring them to an end. There are more fun ways to spend a weekend than watching animals die, and as a society we will find ways to love animals without harming them. Public facing disruptions. This includes supermarket sit-ins, restaurant sit-ins, roadblocks, and more. All conducted peacefully and nonviolently” ([Animal Rising](#)).

Ultimately, while XR and AR started working together and were united on climate issues, their attitudes towards animals and goals towards animal liberation did not align, according to Dora.

c. Analysis

FOE’s mission is to create a grassroots community of activists to fight for change for the planet, while Animal Rising’s is specifically about changing human relationships with animals. While I am not sure what FOE’s exact mission is, I know they envision a world without climate change since they heavily focus on it in their campaigns. On the other hand, Animal Rising’s vision (while not explicitly stated on their website, but I confirmed with

Dora) is about fundamentally changing the way we view animals, not through a lens of utility but one of freedom and compassion. Both organizations value grassroots organizing and community building and are working towards change, but the people for whom this change is for differs. FOE is focused on human-centered issues, while Animal Rising is focused on animal exploitation.

For FOE, animal agriculture campaigns are not the center of their actions. When I spoke with Clare from FOE, she acknowledged the massive issues in animal agriculture. She was incredibly knowledgeable about the problems of not just cattle farming but chicken farming as well. She understood how unsustainable our current animal agriculture system is, how the waste from animal agriculture pollutes bodies of water across the UK, and that the animals are kept in cruel conditions. But fundamentally, FOE still supports animal subordination through regenerative agriculture and farmers profiting from the killing of animals, which is not in line with Collective Liberation principles. Animal Rising supports animal liberation, a shift towards a plant-based food system, and freeing animals from other exploitative industries. However, their work does not center on human rights issues. Animal Rising also would not align with Collective Liberation principles, as they do not place the liberation of humans and animals on equal footing. In my US examples, very similar dynamics and tensions of attitudes towards animals play out.

3. United States

a. EJ: Indigenous Environmental Network

One of the central tenets in the EJ framework is Indigenous Sovereignty and the right to a healthy environment often contaminated by extractive capitalist practices and Indigenous

lands acting as a rural sink. Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) was founded in 1990 after a meeting of 500 Indigenous leaders in North America; led by grassroots Indigenous leaders and youth, IEN became a national and global force in the fight for environmental justice and confronting the occupation by settler colonial forces. Their mission and vision is to

“Educate and empower Indigenous Peoples to address and develop strategies for protecting our environment, our health, and all life forms – the Circle of Life.

- 1. Re-affirm our traditional knowledge and respect of natural laws.*
- 2. Recognize, support, and promote environmentally sound lifestyles, economic livelihoods, and to build healthy sustaining Indigenous communities.*
- 3. Commitment to influence policies that affect Indigenous Peoples on a local, tribal, state, regional, national and international level.*
- 4. Include youth and elders in all levels of our work.*
- 5. Protect our human rights to practice our cultural and spiritual beliefs”*

[\(Indigenous Environmental Network, 2022\).](#)

On their website, it states their strategy for achieving this mission and vision is,

“...by maintaining an informational clearinghouse, organizing campaigns, direct actions and public awareness, building the capacity of community and tribes to address EJ issues, development of initiatives to impact policy, and building alliances among Indigenous

communities, tribes, inter-tribal and Indigenous organizations, people-of-color/ethnic organizations, faith-based and women groups, youth, labor, environmental organizations, and others” ([Indigenous Environmental Network, 2022](#)).

While their values are not explicitly stated in a separate section, a core value of theirs is collaboration across movements, particularly with ones led by BIPOC leaders. Further into the About page, we see IEN calling out the rampant dumping of waste on Indigenous lands, violation of treaties, and environmental mismanagement, to say the least. A few EJ issues they highlighted that stood out to me included,

*“SNAP-SHOT” of environmental and economic justice issues in Indigenous lands
(US-CANADA)*

- 1. Toxic contaminants, agricultural pesticides, and other industrial chemicals that disproportionately impact Indigenous peoples, especially subsistence and livestock cultures.” ([Indigenous Environmental Network, 2022](#))*

Here, we see a direct mention of livestock and the EJ consequences for Indigenous communities, which relates to other EJ issues they highlighted, including climate change and global warming, deforestation, water rights, privatization of water, and economic globalization, which stress Indigenous peoples and local ecosystems. There are many more, but these are the ones that stood out to me as relevant to this case study. I went to their food sovereignty demands and am choosing to highlight three of them as they involve a new vision of the future of food.

*“**Values Food Providers:** Food sovereignty values and supports the contributions, and respects the rights of women and men, peasants and small scale family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers, forest dwellers, Indigenous peoples and agricultural and fisheries workers, including migrants, who cultivate, grow, harvest, and process food; and rejects those policies, actions and programs that undervalue them, threaten their livelihoods and eliminate them” ([Indigenous Environmental Network, 2022](#)).*

*“**Makes Decisions Locally:** Food sovereignty seeks control over and access to territory, land, grazing, water, seeds, livestock, and fish populations for local food providers. These resources ought to be used and shared in socially and environmentally sustainable ways which conserve diversity” ([Indigenous Environmental Network, 2022](#)).*

We see through these principles that livestock and fish populations are seen as a necessity for communities to achieve food sovereignty; however, they do outright reject industrial agriculture in their last food sovereignty principle,

*“**Works with Nature:** Food sovereignty seeks to heal the planet so that the planet may heal us; and, rejects methods that harm beneficial ecosystem functions, that depend on energy-intensive monocultures and livestock factories, destructive fishing practices, and other industrialized production methods, which damage the environment and contribute to global warming” ([Indigenous Environmental Network, 2022](#)).*

Once again, we see that EJ movements have compassion for non-human animals and acknowledge the need to phase out intensive animal agriculture. Still, there is an emphasis on animal protein as a necessary component of nutrition, and the words “plant-based” are not used anywhere in the food sovereignty principles.

b. AR: Food Empowerment Project

The Food Empowerment Project (FEP) is an intersectional EJ, human rights, and AR organization based in the US. Their mission is to “Create a more just and sustainable world by recognizing the power of one’s food choices. We encourage healthy food choices that reflect a more compassionate society by spotlighting the abuse of animals on farms, the depletion of natural resources, unfair working conditions for produce workers, and the unavailability of healthy foods in low-income areas. We also work to discourage negligent corporations from pushing unhealthy foods into low-income areas and empower people to make healthier choices by growing their own fruits and vegetables. In all of our work, the Food Empowerment Project seeks specifically to empower those with the fewest resources” ([Food Empowerment Project, 2024](#)). Their vision is “A food system free from the exploitation of humans and the environment and with equitable access to healthy, sustaining food for all communities; where non-human animals are not seen as food but as individuals with lives, personalities, friendships, and family and are free from harm and exploitation; and where workers, communities, and the environment are always protected and treated with dignity, respect, and appreciation ” ([Food Empowerment Project, 2024](#)). Their values include “Stances against animal exploitation, worker exploitation, slavery, and food apartheid, Food Empowerment Project acknowledges that many other social injustices exist. Our values and ethics include a strong stance against ableism, ageism, antisemitism, body shaming, casteism,

classism, colonialism, homophobia, Islamophobia, racism, sexism, transphobia, and xenophobia. We also commit our solidarity to Indigenous peoples facing ongoing displacement and lend our voice to support long-overdue reparations for impacted tribal nations” ([Food Empowerment Project, 2024](#)).

Lauren Ornelas, the founder of FEP, is a Chicana vegan and human rights activist who paved the way for a unique course of action in the AR movement. I had a chance to interview Alejandra Tolley, FEP’s Communication Director, to understand the tensions with EJ organizations more. When I asked her about EJ organization’s thoughts on animal freedom, she stated,

“As almost everyone in this movement knows, EJ seems to be on board against factory farming and reducing consumption but rarely campaigns on this, believes sustainable meat consumption is the solution, and does not see animal justice/freedom as the issue but more the systems” (interview, 7/4/23).

As stated in their mission, FEP is a vegan organization and advocates for food sovereignty principles, but makes the distinction that animals are not commodities to be bought and sold and deserve the right to their own lives. FEP has vegan eating guides for different cultures on their website, including a Vegan Mexican Eating Guide, a Vegan Filipino Eating Guide, and a Vegan Chinese Eating Guide, to promote the inclusion of BIPOC people in diet change.

While not their explicit focus at all times, FEP does promote ethical veganism and wants to help people go vegan, even though the vegan word is largely taboo in EJ spaces.

Some even associate veganism with colonialism, seeing the alternative meat and cultivated meat corporations endorsed by large organizations in the AR movement at odds with the principles of food sovereignty. Some in the EJ/CJ movement can accuse the vegan community of practicing colonialism when they ask folks to go plant-based. This is a multilayered and nuanced issue, as white vegan activists can be insensitive in how they approach asking people to go more plant-based. As discussed before, vegan activists can demand everyone go plant-based without thinking about cultural sensitivities, people's access to food, and finances. Alejandra does take issue with this as well, as FEP does not want to rely on corporations and cultivated meat to create a just food system,

“We see how corporations who make vegan products are not the end-all solution many vegan organizations want it to be, for example, a vegan Hershey bar doesn't take away the human rights abuses and plastic pollution Nestle engages in, which harms BIPOC people disproportionately” (interview, 7/4/23).

However, when it comes to the colonialism argument, Alejandra reiterates,

“People who say veganism is colonialism, is just not accurate. Indigenous foods like quinoa were considered inferior; colonizers brought cattle, pigs, and dairy to these lands and made them normal. One of our key campaigns is “Got Colonization,” which is a take on the “Got Milk” phenomenon of the past two decades, despite the fact most BIPOC people are lactose intolerant. The amount of land, water, and dispossession of Indigenous lands required to fuel the dairy industry is the reason we started Got Colonization.” (interview, 7/4/23)

FEP is a unique organization, with a decolonial emphasis on food systems transformation while simultaneously promoting animal liberation.

c. Analysis

Here lies the most significant tension: while EJ/CJ organizations advocate for the healing of the Earth, wild ecosystems, and human beings, their view of justice for farmed animals takes different forms. Organizations like IEN clearly state that they are against industrial animal farming and want to preserve ecosystems for wild animals. There is compassion and an acknowledgement that other beings are integral to healing the Earth, which differs from other EJ organizations mentioned who do not acknowledge this issue at all. However, they still believe ranching is justified and can be a part of their future vision for a transformed food system. When highlighting animal agriculture, it's from a sustainability and human justice point of view rather than acknowledging the severe suffering of animals. In comparison, FEP spotlights animal abuse, seeks to remove animals from the food system, promotes an interspecies vision of justice, and incorporates an anti-oppressive stance towards all social justice issues. FEP leaves nobody behind in its mission, vision, and values. FEP and IEN share several values, including Indigenous sovereignty, food sovereignty, anti-corporate controlled food, worker justice, food sovereignty, and empowerment through the community. IEN aligns with Collective Liberation in many ways, as exemplified by the below quote,

“Educate and empower Indigenous Peoples to address and develop strategies for the protection of our environment, our health, and all life forms – the Circle of Life” ([Indigenous Environmental Network, 2022](#)).

This statement in itself is in alignment with Ecocentric principles, which go beyond even the category of living beings to incorporate all parts of the Earth and ecosystems, the rivers, the trees, and fungi, shifting away from a hierarchical way of understanding the world to a truly collective way of understanding the world and approaching solutions. FEP focuses more on the food system than a complete transformation of the world as IEN does. It is important to note that Ecocentrism does not necessarily advocate for the complete elimination of animal products and animal farming; instead, it emphasizes that other species remain a central consideration. IEN then states in its goals,

“Recognize, support, and promote environmentally sound lifestyles, economic livelihoods, and build healthy sustaining Indigenous communities.” ([2022](#))

A part of this, as mentioned in their food sovereignty principles, maintains that animals on land and sea are to be utilized for economic livelihood and healthy communities, and it is a part of preserving self-sufficiency by not relying on corporate power. While IEN mentions non-human animals and the destructiveness of industrialized agriculture, there is still a tinge of Anthropocentrism in their language. Anthropocentrism is defined as “.. humans as separate from and superior to nature and holds that human life has intrinsic value while other entities (including animals, plants, mineral resources, and so on) are resources that may justifiably be exploited for the benefit of humankind ”(Pellow, 2014, pg. 8). Utilizing animals for economic stability and nutrition is acceptable for EJ communities, but AR activists tend to center animal suffering in their mission, education, and campaigns. I

believe IEN is very close to modeling and living Collective Liberation values and discusses animals much more than other EJ organizations, but they still lack an animal liberation perspective.

AR activists get frustrated that EJ/CJ activists fail to see farmed animals as conscious, sentient beings who are exploited by the same logic that lies at the foundations of all oppression, who are tortured and killed against their will, and who have their bodily autonomy stripped from them to make money or bring pleasure for human beings. I spoke with Eloisa Trinidad from Chili's on Wheels, an NYC food justice organization promoting a Total Liberation model; she states,

“When environmental justice groups talk about regenerative farming and small-scale farming as the solution to our food system issues, I remind them there is no right way to exploit other bodies” (interview, 8/16/23).

Animal rights activists are diverse; some acknowledge that those in food deserts and Indigenous people in rural communities have no choice but to eat animals, so they advocate for those who can choose to reduce animal products to do so. Other AR activists always believe eating animals is wrong; generally, AR activists are against the farming of animals in any form. EJ/CJ activists, on the other hand, often do not take a hard stance against animal farming and often promote regenerative agriculture. However, there is diversity amongst EJ/CJ activists as well and there are some who practice vegan values and believe in animal liberation. When I attended AVA, I attended a workshop titled “State of Social Justice in the Movement” led by Jasmine Levya. Jasmine Levya is a black female filmmaker who made a

film called *The Invisible Vegan* to raise awareness about how the industrial meat industry impacts black community health. She stated,

“Unfortunately, people in other social justice movements just don’t see animals as oppressed because they are experiencing so much oppression themselves” (field notes, 7/29/23).

Non-animal rights activists' circle of compassion is framed through a Speciesist lens, perpetuated by our larger culture's conditioning that humans matter more than every other species on Earth. Speciesism is a practical framework because it showcases the similarities and interdependence between oppression experienced by humans and non-humans. Secondly, Speciesism helps to demonstrate that animal cruelty is not the result of a few “bad eggs” in society but is institutionalized, legalized, and systemic.

Amy J Fitzgerald's and David Pellow's article “Ecological Defense for Animal Liberation: A Holistic Understanding of the World” discusses the implications of the culture/nature binary created through the heteropatriarchal colonial capitalist paradigm. The culture/nature binary relegates humans as the sole creators of culture, while non-human animals and ecosystems are placed into the nature side of the dichotomy. Pellow and Fitzgerald observe, “This dichotomy rationalizes and perpetuates the belief that humans are unique and vastly different than (and superior to) non-human animals...” (2014, p. 3). By differentiating ourselves from nature, we create an illusion of separation between ourselves and the surrounding ecosystem, leading to a more significant disconnection between actions and consequences. However, Fitzgerald and Pellow point out that the culture/nature

dichotomy has also perpetuated racism and sexism, with white cisgender heterosexual men being on the cultural side and women and people of color placed in the nature category.

There is a failure in the EJ/CJ movements to connect these binaries to the systemic oppression of non-human animals, in particular, farmed animals. However, AR organizations often lack a coherent vision of the future of our food system by not including food sovereignty principles and relying heavily on technological solutions, without interrogating the damaging role of corporations. In the next tension, I will dive further into a competition of visions for the future of our food system by analyzing vegan techno-capitalism in comparison to food sovereignty principles.

C. Tension #3: Vegan Techno-Capitalism vs. Food Sovereignty

In the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the options of alternative proteins available, two of the most prominent being Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods. These for-profit companies have made a substantial dent in the market, accumulating hundreds of millions of dollars in sales, normalizing and expanding plant-based meats globally, and satisfying many meat lovers with the taste of their products. Critics state that these alternative meat companies rely on monocropping pea and soy protein, which cements the unsustainable food production model that degrades arable land and is fossil fuel intensive due to fertilizers and deforestation. With the global reach of these companies, some have criticized them for basing their business model on the capitalist framework that doesn't seek to transform our food system radically. In the AR movement, alternative protein is one of the key ways many animal advocates see large-scale dietary change happening, whether through plant-based companies like Beyond Meat or cultivated meat, which seeks to culture cells in a lab to grow meat and not have to farm animals. As mentioned, this is at odds with EJ's food

sovereignty values which was discussed in the last tension. In my analysis, I will be describing the mission, vision, and values of large AR organizations who embrace the principles of vegan techno-capitalism and comparing them to principles in food sovereignty.

1. Good Food Institute vs. Food Sovereignty

At the AVA conference, I attended a panel titled “Alternative Protein and Inclusivity.” On the panel was Bruce Friedrich, the executive director of The Good Food Institute (GFI), whose mission is “Developing the roadmap for a sustainable, secure, and just protein supply. We identify the most effective solutions, mobilize resources and talent, and empower partners across the food system to make alternative proteins accessible, affordable, and delicious” ([Mount, 2024](#)). Their vision is “A world where alternative proteins are no longer alternative” ([Mount, 2024](#)). Their values are “Believe change is possible, Do the most good we can, Share knowledge freely, Act on evidence, and Invite everyone to the table” ([Mount, 2024](#)). They promote cultivated meat and plant-based meats, stressing the importance of the market, that most meat eaters won’t go from eating a beef burger to eating lentils, and that this is a necessary transition to a food system not dependent on animal exploitation. Bruce Friedrich responded, when asked about why this was an important avenue towards shifting the food system, he stated,

“Markets are just too powerful, and we need to contradict the system and change it. Meat consumption is expected to increase in the next several decades, and we need to look at

science-based solutions and work within the current capitalist framework” (field notes, 7/29/23).

The reliance on genetic engineering and technology goes against the principles of food sovereignty listed by IEN. One of their food sovereignty principles states,

*“**Localizes Food Systems:** Food sovereignty brings food providers and consumers in common cause; puts providers and consumers at the center of decision-making on food issues; protects food providers from the dumping of food and food aid in local markets; protects consumers from poor quality and unhealthy food, inappropriate food aid and food tainted with genetically modified organisms; and resists governance structures, agreements and practices that depend on and promote unsustainable and inequitable international trade and give power to remote and unaccountable corporations.” ([Indigenous Environmental Network, 2022](#)).*

Furthermore, IEN’s food sovereignty principles also state,

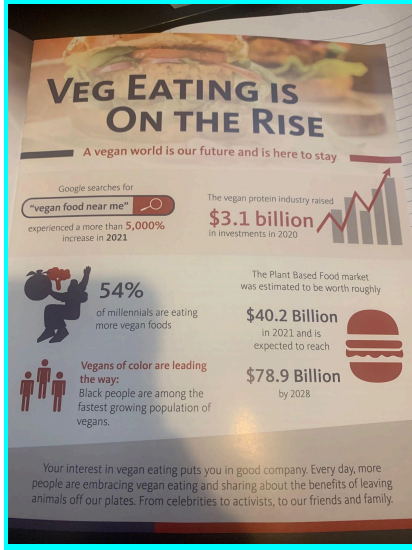
*“**Builds Knowledge and Skills:** Food sovereignty builds on the skills and local knowledge of food providers and their local organizations that conserve, develop, and manage localized food production and harvesting systems, developing appropriate research systems to support this and passing on this wisdom to future generations. Food sovereignty*

rejects technologies that undermine, threaten or contaminate these, e.g., genetic engineering.” ([Indigenous Environmental Network, 2022](#)).

GFI is an international organization with substantial operations in Europe and the United States. Its emphasis on the current political-economic framework and global presence is at odds with many EJ groups that promote local food production and transition away from the international corporate food regime. GFI's reliance on technology, innovation, and research differs significantly from the principles of decentralization, localized production, and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in food sovereignty.

2. Animal Outlook and ProVeg International vs Food Sovereignty

At AVA, I was given materials from Animal Outlook, a global AR organization based in the US. Their mission is, “We’re strategically challenging animal agribusiness through undercover investigations, legal advocacy, corporate and food system reform, and disseminating information about the many harms of animal agriculture, empowering everyone to choose vegan” ([Animal Outlook, 2024](#)). Their values are exposing truth, delivering justice, revolutionizing food systems, inspiring change, and farm transitions ([Animal Outlook, 2024](#)). I received a pamphlet from them in my AVA goody bag titled “The Hows and Whys of Vegan Eating.” Down below is the second page of the booklet.



They showed how the vegan protein industry raised 3.1 billion dollars in investments in 2020 while also saying that:

“The Plant-Based Food Market was estimated to be worth roughly \$40.2 billion in 2021 and is expected to reach 78.9 billion by 2028”(Animal Outlook, 2023).

FSI’s handout also emphasizes that one fundamental way to transform our food system is to

“Address knowledge gaps around the economics of the animal protein and plant-based alternative markets.” (Food Systems Innovations Flyer, 2023)

Many global and national animal rights organizations are committed to market-based solutions and the existing capital framework to achieve their goals. Several members of the vegan movement follow the principles of food sovereignty; Eloisa Trinidad from Chili’s on

Wheels is one of them. She sees the emphasis on the alternative protein industry as problematic. She states,

“The problem is, these big vegan organizations have rich donors they need to answer to, and when they enter into the for-profit space, they aren’t advocating for the changes that need to be made to transform our food system truly. Their imagination for the future ends with vegan capitalism as the answer to animal exploitation” (interview, 8/16/23).

Eloisa is an Afro-Indigenous woman who was raised with TEK from her Indigenous Peruvian roots, and she integrates a decolonial approach into her activism. She remarks,

“The plant-based food space often dismisses TEK and focuses on technology as the main solution to this multilayered crisis. Large vegan corporations can also undermine building solidarity through their goals; we see vegans aligned with someone like Bill Gates, which does not feel right to people in the EJ movement” (interview, 8/16/23).

As mentioned, I received booklets from different organizations throughout the AVA conference. ProVeg’s booklet highlighted their work with organizations like Tesco, Unilever, Alpro, and PepsiCo. One of their crucial impact areas is “Corporate and Institutional Engagement,” which is also the case for GFI. Many fear an overreliance on corporations to deliver a sustainable food system that ignores the ongoing dynamics of capital accumulation through horizontal and vertical integration. Not to mention that large corporations are primarily responsible for exacerbating the climate crisis.

In the article “The Case for Socialist Veganism,” authors Benjamin Selwyn and Charis Davis state, “The paradox is that many of the corporations expanding the plant-based food market have an enormous, immensely damaging environmental impact. Expansion into these markets does not portend a shift away from their environmentally damaging mass production of meat, dairy, and other environmentally ruinous activities. Rather, it represents a market expansion strategy combined with, and based upon, attempts at corporate brand greenwashing” (2024). GFI, Animal Outlook, FSI, and ProVeg international care about humans having adequate nutrition, addressing the climate crisis, seeking to be inclusive, and wanting to create systemic change rather than just individual change. However, I would not say they align with Collective Liberation principles overall. GFI does not discuss animal liberation as a part of their mission and vision. While they want to make alternative proteins accessible, they do not center human justice issues in their organization. Animal Outlook does seek animal liberation from the food system but does not mention the human rights issues within the system in their materials or create campaigns focused on that. Not only is this a contentious issue within the movement, but those in the EJ/CJ movement share similar critiques of vegan capitalism.

When some EJ activists see AR advocates promoting Beyond Meat as the solution to climate change, they can feel AR advocates are out of touch with the corporate and capitalist divestment that is necessary to ensure an ecological future. Speaking with Eloisa, it is clear there needs to be a focus in the AR community that simply switching to a vegan food system is not enough; we need human rights protections, a less globalized and corporate-controlled food system, agroecological principles, TEK, permaculture, and a shift towards ecocentric ways of living that takes into account the cyclical connection of all beings. The lack of

centering human voices in solutions to our food systems connects to the following tension I cover that exists between the AR and EJ movement, which is how AR movements have othered non-vegan activists and have failed to create a safe working environment for women and BIPOC people.

D. Tension #4: The Non-Vegan Other, Humans as Oppressors and Not Victims

The AR and EJ/CJ movements can be foils of one another regarding tensions. While AR activists are frustrated with EJ/CJ activists for not doing enough for farmed animals, EJ/CJ activists inside and outside the movement are frustrated with AR activists for not showing up for human social justice issues, perpetuating oppression within organizations, not having inclusive leadership, and having a single issue view of animal freedom. Sadly, their claims are not just abstract assumptions but have a stable footing in reality. There is a long history of racism, sexism, dominance of white-male leadership, a lack of inclusion, and a lack of accountability for these injustices in the Western AR movement.

1. Racism in the AR Movement

A former colleague and friend, Chloe Waterman, at FOE US, who works on food systems policy, stated,

“Animal and environmental movements have previously failed to include BIPGM people” (interview, 8/15/23).

Pellow confirms this in his book *Total Liberation*, detailing these movements,

“...animal rights movements have rightly been accused of prioritizing the protection of nonhuman animals and ecosystems over the needs of human beings, particularly communities of color, working-class populations, immigrants and Indigenous communities.”
(2014, p. 7)

Several intersectional AR activists, mainly BIPOC folks and many others, have noted for a few decades now that the movement holds itself back by failing to take a Total Liberation stance. The famous quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” is especially relevant. Nobody is free until everybody is free. Many AR activists can see those who consume animals as “the enemy” or “the other” and can become frustrated, disheartened, and resentful towards those who eat animals and participate in these systems of violence. They become discouraged when other activists demean them for being vegan, so as a defense mechanism, they focus solely on animal suffering, feeling human suffering already has too much attention. I spoke to Hunter Gwenna, the executive director of Vegans of LA, the only vegan food bank in Los Angeles. Gwenna is a black woman who has worked previously in the vegan movement and has years of experience in social justice and vegan activism. She feels strongly that:

“The vegan movement needs to stop seeing those who are not vegan as “the other” and extend compassion to those people, and meet them where they are at” (interview, 7/26/23).

Through Vegans of LA, Gwenna helps provide boxes of dried beans, vegan mock meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, and hygiene products to people in need in Los Angeles, combining her passions for human and animal rights. She wants to invite people to live a more plant-based lifestyle instead of alienating them through shame. Gwenna previously worked for a vegan organization but pivoted to her own project because she felt the mainstream movement lacked a vision of unity with human beings. There is significant evidence for this, with several studies being published about the systemic racism and sexism in the AR movement.

Encompass, an organization that has since disbanded its funding to smaller BIPOC-led animal protection organizations, conducted an in-depth study on oppression within the animal rights movements. The study led to several unsettling insights and confirmed that the animal protection movement needs a serious evaluation of how they handle issues like racism, sexism, DEIJ training, and how leaders in the animal protection space have not been inclusive of other social justice issues. In an Encompass report called “Voices of the Movement,” they found,

“Respondents also reported that organizations that acknowledge and address issues that affect both human and non-human animals are discounted by the movement’s more mainstream and well-funded groups and major donors. These respondents further noted that this attempted impartiality has inadvertently fostered an exclusive culture that does not fully consider the complexity of systems of oppression.”([Encompass, 2020, p. 11](#))

Here we see the inverse of what happens in EJ movements, AR activists put human rights on the backburner, feeling the issue of animal abuse is so overlooked and underfunded, and that human rights already have broader support and funding. Another finding in the report referenced one respondent who put it this way:

“I think historically the FAPM has been a single issue (animal rights) [movement] with a very poor ability to think multidimensionally and about power and privilege” ([Encompass, 2020, p. 12](#)).

Not only has there been hesitancy and ignorance among those in leadership to embrace taking a stance on social justice issues, but it has also been actively discouraged. Encompass also found,

“ Several of our respondents reported that organizations that put out statements in support of Black Lives Matter after the murder of George Floyd lost donors (often smaller donors, but the loss of large donors was reported, too). Further, our respondents reported receiving a torrent of racist social media messages and emails with threats to pull funding if their organizations ever took focus away from nonhuman animals again” ([Encompass, 2020, p. 13](#)).

Similar issues occur in the UK, where an intersectional approach to liberation is often not at the forefront of AR organization’s values. I spoke with Alex Considine, a member of XR, FFL, and involved with several grassroots organizing groups in London. She is a crucial

coalition builder for XR, joking that she is “the phonebook for all the grassroots environment groups” (interview, 11/16/23). She has been very active in the EJ and housing justice movement since COVID, and we chatted over coffee about her experience as a coalition builder. When asked about her experience with AR groups, Alex recounted,

“I was helping to rally XR groups for an Animal Rising event, they told us they were holding a march in August. It stalled, so I asked what was going on and I was told they didn’t want to dilute the movement with non-vegans. It creates a divide, at an environmental rally a woman asked me before I spoke if I was vegan, and I thought why does it matter so much?” (interview, 11/16/23)

Dora also confirmed this during her time with XR:

“Some hardcore vegans did not like that we were collaborating with XR, and we got backlash from them. There is a lot of infighting here in the UK. We didn’t want to become further divided with XR, so we prioritized working on that than winning over the small group of people that opposed us” (interview, 9/29/23).

It is clear from these experiences that AR activists often alienate people not in their movement because they do not subscribe to vegan ethics and values and do not put human or Total Liberation on equal footing with animal liberation. As seen in the quote above from Encompass, when groups posted in support of George Floyd, they had a slew of hate

messages and phone calls threatening to pull funding if animals were not front and center in their work.

Eloisa Trinidad expressed frustration on this topic.

"Some are against Collective Liberation because they believe it takes away from animal suffering. I founded the Vegan Activist Alliance because I saw a lot of racism, sexism, and ableism, and I was fed up that animal liberation was being fought from a single-issue lens. I wholeheartedly believe and advocate for total liberation. Growing up, I was taught that there was enough room for everybody, which inspires my activism" (interview, 8/16/23).

While it may seem counterintuitive, if AR activists want to save as many non-human animals as possible, there must be a greater effort to listen to BIPOC leaders in the space already doing the work of integrating and envisioning a world around collective liberation ideals, which has a profound impact on changing hearts and minds. The AR movement in the US has not prioritized or confronted racism within their organizations or lived up to the values they claim to hold, such as compassion, justice for all beings, and collaboration. Human beings are also animals; without human beings, progress cannot be made for non-human animals, and both issues can be addressed simultaneously without taking away from the other. In addition to racism in the movement there has also been systemic sexism, with the AR movement reckoning with its own #metoo.

2. Sexism in the AR Movement

To turn towards a critical gender analysis of the Western AR movement, while the majority of activists are mainly made up of women, white men have been the leaders of the

most prominent animal protection organizations and control most of the funding. The AR movement had its own #metoo movement when several executive directors of prominent animal protection organizations were exposed as sexual assaulters, abusers, and manipulators ([Humane Watch, 2019](#)). Humanewatch stated,

“It’s been a rough patch for animal activist groups during the #MeToo movement. The Humane Society of the United States saw two executives, CEO Wayne Pacelle, and vice president Paul Shapiro, resign after allegations of sexual impropriety emerged. Mercy for Animals head Nathan Runkle stepped down amid allegations against a senior leader, Nick Cooney. Farm Animal Rights Movement founder Alex Hershafft was also accused of treating women poorly.”([2019](#))

Lisa Kemmerer, a scholar-activist, has written extensively about sexism in the animal rights movement. She conducted a thorough study five years ago with qualitative and quantitative evidence. She concludes in her research,

“This data reveals the following: A circle of disproportionately powerful men control key organizations. These disproportionately powerful men work together to keep donations in their organizations. Males in leadership positions tend to hire males in other leadership positions (despite the fact that the AL/R movement is largely powered by women). Favored speaking times and days at the largest United States AL/R conference in 2017 (and 2012, and likely every year) were disproportionately assigned to men. Woman-run Gold Sponsor organizations at AR2017 were not granted the same privileges as the one male-run

Gold Sponsor organization—or necessarily even the same privileges as a Silver Sponsor male-run organization.” ([Kemmerer, 2018, pp. 280-281](#))

Once again, the AR movement does not exist in a vacuum where they are immune to the power dynamics of society, where white men play significant roles in decision-making across governments, corporations, and businesses. The single issue focus on animals hurts activists working inside and outside the movement, perpetuates oppression, which burns activists out, and is incredibly hypocritical in the values that these organizations claim to espouse.

Some positive changes have been made since this report was released five years ago. Many of these powerful, predatory men have been ousted from their positions and are no longer involved in the AR space. More women have been placed in high leadership positions, and more money has been funneled into BIPOC-led organizations through funds established explicitly for them by large AR organizations. At AVA, there were many more women speakers, BIPOC speakers, and several discussions about DEIJ work. There has been an improvement, but some BIPOC leaders worry that these issues can be tokenized on the surface and not truly addressed. Eloisa Trinidad states,

“While recently the animal rights movement is incorporating more dialogue about how humans are harmed in animal agriculture, many see it as performative” (interview, 8/16/23).

Alejandra from the FEP states,

“Some of animal protection organizations have started to talk about workers' rights, which is great, but how are we showing up for them?” (interview, 7/4/23)

Like the mainstream environmental movement, the AR movement has sometimes co-opted the language of DEI, anti-oppression, and inclusion statements but failed to integrate collective liberation principles into its missions, vision, campaigns, and strategies.

E. Conclusion

By describing the four tensions in detail with empirical data from various organizations, I hoped to shed light on the most persistent tensions between the EJ and AR movements. With the first tension, the framing of the climate crisis amongst many of the EJ organizations I selected tends to be fossil fuel focused, targets global corporations, centers on human injustice, and seeks to mobilize citizens to act through direct action except for the UN. On the other hand, AR organizations frame the climate crisis mainly through the issue of industrial animal agriculture, advocate for a transition to a plant-based food system, center animal oppression and sometimes human oppression, and seek to engage in system and individual change. Since the causes and solutions to climate change are framed so divergently across these movements, collaboration is challenging due to disagreement on who should be targeted in campaigns, what changes are necessary to achieve climate goals, and whom to center in these narratives. With the second tension, the EJ organizations I mentioned may acknowledge the issue with factory farming but accept the animal farming system as a necessary part of our world for human well-being. AR organizations view animals as conscious, sentient individuals and want to see them be liberated from human

industries, especially food. The varying attitudes towards animals makes collaboration incredibly challenging. AR organizations are unwilling to dilute their beliefs in animal liberation to accommodate EJ groups, and EJ groups grow frustrated that AR organizations are not doing their part to liberate human beings.

With the third tension, the logics of vegan techno-capitalism is often at odds with food sovereignty principles, making the potential for collaboration unlikely. One is more tunnel-visioned, focused on removing animals from the food system at any cost, and is ready to employ genetic engineering to bring that to fruition. Food sovereignty seeks to radically change our globalized food system, bringing food production to local communities, promoting the freedom to grow what they want, alleviating food insecurity, centering worker justice and marginalized communities' access to food, and promoting TEK. The final tension is the history of institutionalized racism and sexism in the Western AR space and a failure to integrate Collective Liberation principles. The AR movement has sabotaged the potential for collaboration by viewing humans as violent oppressors towards non-human animals and practices a scarcity mindset by believing that centering human justice takes away from animal injustice. I have analyzed each organization's proximity to Total Liberation ideals; while many employ aspects of intersectionality and anti-oppression values, only FEP embodies Collective Liberation in principle and action. The first step towards confronting these tensions is to learn about them and from those already engaged in coalition-building across these movements. In my next chapter, I will be demonstrating how these tensions are attempting to be managed by global, US, and UK organizations.

III. Chapter Two Case Study: How Tensions are Attempting to be Managed and Solved

In the first chapter, I explored the first part of my research question: What are the tensions between the EJ and AR movements in the US and the UK? The second part of the research question is, how are organizations and activists attempting to overcome these tensions and building collaborations? How do groups and activists approach long-term coalitions given histories of oppression, the diversity of experiences of each individual, systemic barriers, different theories of change, varying priorities, and divergent lifestyles? Through participant observation, semi-structured interviews from coalition builders, content analysis, and supplementary secondary data, I will outline various efforts from global, US, and UK national and local organizations. While there has been research done on tensions between these movements and the importance of collaboration between these movements, there is a need for more literature with empirical studies detailing campaigns and strategies groups active in recent years are utilizing to build cross-movement collaboration.

For the second chapter, I will continue to utilize a critical analysis based on an organization's mission, vision, and values, if I have not previously defined them, or a particular campaign's mission, vision, and values, and compare them to the goals and ideals present as part of a normative stance of the Collective Liberation framework. Furthermore, I am demonstrating the second part of my argument in this chapter: that to work toward Collective Liberation, movements have to heal their relationships with one another. Therefore, AR organizations' coalition-building efforts must take a more Anthropocentric and human-centered approach when approaching these collaborations. Moreover, I am also arguing that working towards food sovereignty is essential to actualizing a Collective

Liberation vision. There cannot be a united effort towards Collective Liberation without tackling the foundational issues in our food system and ensuring everyone has access to nutritious, healthy food.

There are several strategies organizations and individuals are employing to work closer toward a vision of food sovereignty and an interspecies Collective Liberation paradigm. I have categorized the various case studies into eight main categories: corporate campaigns, community aid, changing choice architecture, reduceterian approach, intersectional advocacy, resource redistribution, and embracing the movement ecosystem. Not every example directly relates to the focus on AR/EJ communities, but most of these examples have an EJ and industrial animal agriculture lens. Some of these campaigns and initiatives build further into other social justice movements and can still provide helpful information on the broader nature of coalition building. To introduce each category type, I will go into further detail on how I categorized each case study and discuss how these coalition-building efforts attempt to resolve or work within the tensions mentioned in the previous chapter.

A. Corporate Campaigns

According to Oxford Academic, corporate campaigns are “... a framework that activist groups use to influence a company's business practices. Activists often use a combination of rewards and threats to achieve their goals, such as damaging a company's reputation or disrupting operations. Some examples of corporate campaigns include boycotts and divestment campaigns” ([Abito et al., 2019](#)). The overarching goals can vary from campaign to campaign, as listed above, it could be a call for a massive boycott to get a company to end investments in harmful industries, or it could pressure them into changing

their practices such as worker pay and protection, or to change an internal practice or regulation. The two case studies I will discuss target big agriculture or private industries, such as Tyson, JBS, or Barclay's, and expose their exploitative and harmful practices. Corporate campaigns can potentially resolve framing issues between EJ and AR movements because, in the examples I provided in Chapter 1, many EJ organizations target large corporations or companies rather than promote individual change, which these campaigns also attempt to do. While unable to sincerely resolve the tension between vegan techno-capitalism and food sovereignty, these campaigns align with some of the anti-corporate attitudes in food sovereignty. Finally, it can help resolve the issue of othering non-vegans since the framing shifts responsibility to the site of corporate power consolidation rather than address individual choices. The two examples I list advocate for primarily a human rights perspective, which is also more palatable to the masses.

1. “Bad Taste” Campaign by Greenpeace UK

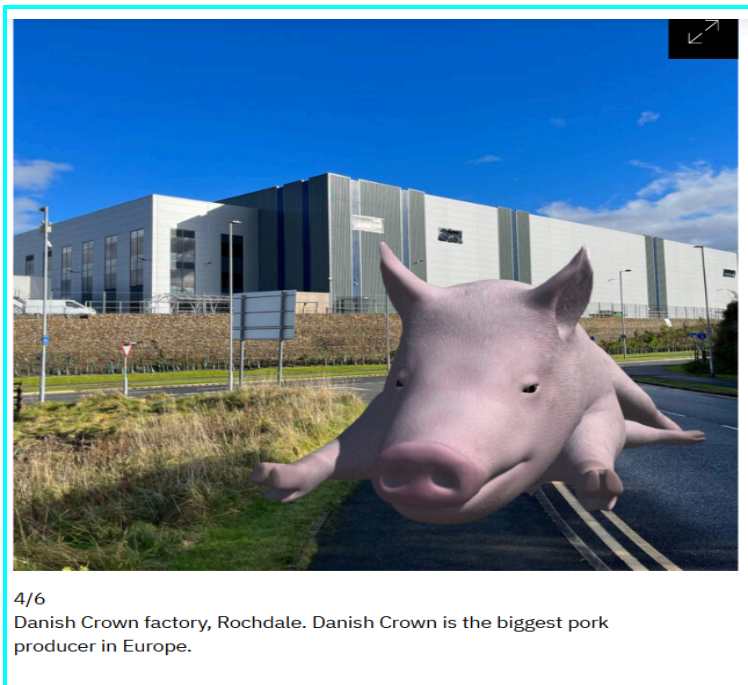
Since I had been told by many in the EJ movement in the UK that Greenpeace was one of the key leaders in the UK environmental stratosphere, I sought to interview someone who worked on coalition building there. After going to a free Palestine protest, I met someone there who introduced me to Sandra Ata, who holds the title of “Allyship Coordinator” from Greenpeace. Greenpeace’s mission is “To build a movement of people passionate about protecting the planet from destruction” ([Greenpeace UK, 2024](#)). Their vision is “a greener, healthier, more peaceful planet, one that can sustain generations to come” ([Greenpeace UK, 2024](#)). They do not explicitly state their values on their website, but by exploring their website, I can infer they value education, people power, environmental justice, equity, inclusion, and systemic change. They provide education on environmental and

EJ issues, promote community building, create systemic change campaigns, and highlight DEIJ principles. I asked Sandra about previous campaigns in the UK that Greenpeace had done regarding animal agriculture, and she highlighted the “Bad Taste” campaign.

The mission of this campaign was “A trio of artist-led interventions to confront our broken food system” ([Greenpeace UK, 2024](#)). In this campaign, Greenpeace exposed corporations like Tesco, the UK's biggest industrially produced meat and dairy seller. They highlighted Tesco’s complicity in buying industrial meat products and the UK government's refusal to ban these products, especially from places like Brazil, where deforestation of the Amazon has been a significant issue. Environmental activists, even some EJ/CJ activists, advocate for free-range beef to solve ecological problems in industrial agriculture. They perceive it as an animal welfare initiative, as good for our health, and a way for farmers to maintain their livelihood. In the Amazon, however, there has been massive deforestation, biodiversity, and land loss due to the raising of cattle, and growing mono-cropped soy to feed those cattle (free-range does not equate to grass-fed), which has displaced Indigenous communities off of their land ([Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#)).

The campaign also brought attention to the UK’s connection to the Danish Crown Factory, the biggest pork producer in Europe, and highlighted Barclay’s for its continual funding of JBS. The vision for this campaign was, “As ever, imaginative strategies are needed to create change. That is why the Bad Taste projects sit strategically at the intersection of art and activism and are taking place at sites of political and corporate structural power” ([Greenpeace UK, 2024](#)). The artists were overwhelmingly BIPOC, and since there was an open call for activist art across movements, coalitions were formed through creating art and intervention in public places, which gave grassroots activists the

creativity to frame this issue in a way that resonated with them, which aligns with Greenpeace’s overarching mission and vision. The combination of art and activism, centering on BIPOC artists and communities, and the discussion of industrial meat’s impact on the climate get closer to embodying many Collective Liberation values and food sovereignty principles. While not explicitly animal liberation focused, there was an art project called SOW, pictured below, that highlighted the treatment of pigs in factory farms, which brings animal treatment issues into the conversation without alienating people who consume pork.



Source: ([Greenpeace UK, 2024](#))

During our Zoom interview, I asked Sandra about the local EJ issues relating to animal agriculture. She stated,

“There is a bacon factory in Liverpool located near low-income communities of color that contributes to high levels of air pollution. Greenpeace takes the issue of industrial animal agriculture seriously and has campaigned for food systems transformation towards

plant-based foods and a call for meat reduction, especially amongst middle and upper-class Westerners” (interview, 11/25/23).

There was a project in “Bad Taste” that tackled this called Nourish and Flourish, which called for “...an open call for participants, twelve 16-25-year-olds signed up to take part in a series of four half-day workshops that included activities such as sustainable cooking, a visit to the Danish Crown factory, and a visit to the Liverpool-based factory of industrial animal feed supplier Cargill. They visited neighboring Crosby Beach – which overlooks Cargill’s operations and the gateway for deforestation entering the UK in the form of soya imports from South America, as well as a gateway for the historical international slave trade” ([Greenpeace UK, 2024](#)). Connecting previous forms of oppression from colonial powers to the present helps young people understand that industrial animal farming is rooted in similar values.

Utilizing the values of art and activism, corporate divestment, ecosystem preservation, education, global and local EJ, anti-imperialism, worker justice, land justice, animal welfare, and involving youth, much can be learned from the “Bad Taste” campaign as a closer embodiment of Collective Liberation ideals. While not explicitly animal liberationist, the SOW art project is a big step forward in creating visibility for the suffering of non-human animals in the food system. Sandra reiterated that the “Bad Taste” campaign combines several effective tactics that can help AR and EJ activists reconsider how to approach the issue of industrial animal agriculture and create coalitions. Dora Harigati and James Ozden confirmed this with XR and Animal Rising as well, saying that one of the largest turnouts they had for action against industrial animal agriculture was at a McDonald’s

protest. Large corporations that displace small farmers, control food production, rely on ecologically destructive crops, kill millions of animals every day, and exploit human beings, such as McDonald's or Tesco, can resonate with EJ activists who oppose corporate control, support food sovereignty principles and are concerned with environmental devastation. Furthermore, this campaign integrated the ecological injustice of industrial meat for lower-income BIPOC people living near factories and for the workers in these industries, which helped to frame the campaign in a way that was appealing to EJ activists. Next, I will analyze a corporate campaign example from FOE US.

2. Tyson Campaign by FOE US

I met Chloe Waterman when I worked for New Roots Institute. She led a coalition to pass legislation called The Healthy Future Students and Earth Act to get funding for schools to increase their plant-based options, and I reconnected with her at AVA. As the prominent leader at FOE US on food systems policy, Chloe has extensive knowledge and experience running campaigns for EJ groups about the impacts of industrial agriculture. During COVID, there were several unsettling reports on how meatpacking workers and other slaughterhouse workers were contracting high levels of COVID-19, could not work remotely, and were not given proper PPE ([Locke et al., 2023](#)). Chloe stated,

“We were able to get labor and EJ groups to work on a campaign centering worker justice and campaigning against Tyson’s treatment of workers” (interview, 8/15/23).

The coalition encompassed 122 workers’ rights, food justice, animal welfare, racial justice, farmer, health, consumer safety, and environmental protection organizations ([Friends](#)

[of the Earth US, 2020](#)). The coalition's mission was “to urge Tyson to take immediate additional action to protect the safety and wellbeing of its workers related to coronavirus exposure and address risks to business continuity, liability, and worker health and safety” ([Friends of the Earth US, 2020](#)). The coalition's vision was for Tyson to provide paid leave, PPE for all workers, physical distancing and slower line speeds, daily testing for COVID-19, halt lobbying to force faster lines, allow workers organize, protect workers from retaliation, and eliminate the point system. The values of this campaign centered on worker justice, community health, and collaboration. Once again, we see that it is easier to unite across movements, particularly with EJ groups, when large corporations are targeted, and in this case, for violating the fundamental human rights of their workers.

I would not consider this a Collective Liberation approach since the main emphasis is on worker justice. Still, it plays a vital role in promoting food sovereignty since worker justice is a part of those principles. Worker justice is a part of Collective Liberation since factory-farm workers are particularly vulnerable, marginalized, and made to feel invisible. There can't be a world based on Collective Liberation values without worker justice, so I believe this campaign was critical to address an overlooked human rights issue, raise awareness of corporate abuse, and create a cross-movement coalition.

However, Chloe added an essential detail about the coalition, one echoed by other BIPOC leaders I spoke with in their work.

“ Many animal groups were quick to jump on the bandwagon, which can endanger trust with EJ groups when animals aren't involved; EJ groups feel spread, used thin”
(interview, 8/15/23).

Some AR organizations can join campaigns that center on issues other than animal treatment and abuse to get closer to their goal of animal liberation, but this can be seen as opportunistic and not genuine, which does not align with Collective Liberation ideals.

Eloisa Trinidad confirms this by saying,

“We cannot approach organizations for coalitions for the wrong reasons, and we cannot be opportunistic. We must immerse ourselves more in SJ/EJ spaces and learn how to collaborate rather than impose our own goals” (interview, 8/15/23).

An important lesson learned from this campaign is that AR organizations need to spend more time and resources fostering a genuine commitment to worker justice issues and can't just show up when it benefits their agenda. Community aid is an example of a genuine effort to go beyond animal rights toward Collective Liberation and food sovereignty principles.

B. Community Aid

I define community aid in this context when organizations are working at the grassroots and local community levels to meet the community's needs, in this particular case, through food aid, community empowerment, and education. I am not using the term mutual aid, as that refers to help that is given outside NGOs, which would not apply here. The overarching goals of these community aid projects are to meet a need in the local community that is being neglected systemically, to improve community health through increasing access to healthy food, to host community gatherings, and to provide accessible education. When I

spoke with David Pellow, the author of *Total Liberation*, about how to coalition build between EJ and AR groups, one thing he suggested was,

“There is a great need for aid between EJ and animal protection organizations. Food distribution, targeting those in need, and helping to make plant-based food more accessible should be a greater focus” (interview, 11/19/23).

It could resolve the issues of vegan techno-capitalism vs. food sovereignty, as a critical tenet of food sovereignty is to help create access to healthy, fresh food for disadvantaged communities. The two examples I am using in my case studies do not promote vegan techno-capitalist solutions to the issues in our food system; however, this is only sometimes the case. It can also help the issue of alienating non-vegans, as it removes the barrier of extra labor required to learn and cook plant-based food on your own, something most people do not know how to do and may not be able to access.

1. Black Veg Society (US)

Black Veg Society (BVS) was founded by Naijha Brown, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at the AVA conference and had the opportunity to interview about her unique approach to AR activism through BVS. Naijha’s organization focuses on her Baltimore community and how to serve its specific needs best. The mission and vision of BVS is “to educate the public, particularly BIPOC communities, on the benefits of veganism and a plant-based diet while building a community centered around healthy, accessible, and sustainable food and a focus on lifestyle choices” ([Black Veg Society, 2022](#)). Their values are listed on their website as “Earth, Education, Enlightenment, Eating, Empowerment, Events”

([Black Veg Society, 2022](#)). In terms of their community aid services, they state, “We are a 24/7 online resource center with access to cooking demos, wellness classes, and referrals to certified health and wellness coaches. We engage, endorse, and establish partnerships in vegan and plant-based campaigns and coalitions. We host special events such as veg fests, vegan restaurant weeks, multi-city hybrids, and webinars” ([Black Veg Society, 2022](#)).

Naijha has partnered with businesses who have helped them fundraise, has partnered with schools to promote Meatless Mondays, and has an annual Soul Fest for the Baltimore community, which highlights black vegan chefs, how to eat plant-based, education on industrial agriculture, plant-based nutrition, cooking classes, and provides a space for the community to enjoy food together. When asked about what her crucial tactic is to promote plant-based eating, Naijha remarks,

“I have always been a natural collaborator and interested in meeting people where they are. Our goal is not to turn people vegan but to expose them to plant-based cooking tips and the benefits of eating plant-based food and be of service to the community. For us, since we are targeting black folks, we lean into the health benefits of a plant-based diet. The community does not like processed foods and suffers from higher rates of diabetes and heart disease; we frame it through how this can benefit their health; once they have a foot in the door, we go in with environmental education. In our experience, when we lead with animal rights, it can alienate people” (interview, 11/11/23).

BVS is not explicitly a Collective Liberation or food sovereignty organization but embodies many of these values and takes steps towards the vision created by those

movements. Collective Liberation seeks to connect human beings through community, protect the Earth, and address systemic injustices from oppressive systems, which BVS does. Regarding food sovereignty principles, moving away from processed foods, teaching marginalized communities how to grow food and eat healthy, removing barriers to nutritious food, and centering community perspectives are present in BVS. While not focused on animal liberation explicitly, it can create more education and demand for plant-based food, which can help remove non-human animals from the food system and work towards animal liberation.

While Naijha's work focuses more on the health, food, and community elements of plant-based eating, she frames it in a way that empowers the community, one that tackles unique issues facing the black community from a personal and public health perspective, and as a result, thousands of people are eating more environmentally friendly plant-based foods which helps the climate crisis. While these examples are not necessarily about framing between EJ/AR groups, they do reflect how playing around with framing an issue makes all the difference in how it is received. The focus is not to alienate people through shaming their choices but to bring them together through community, which can help with the issue of alienating non-vegans. Next, I will be discussing Hare Krishna's food distribution globally and in the UK.

2. FFL Food Distribution and Hare Krishna (UK and Global)

When I attended FFL's Oily Money Out protests, I was pleasantly surprised to see that the food provided was plant-based, and only plant-based milk was served for tea and coffee. There were giant coolers at each of FFL's events, filled to the brim with warm daal made from lentils and vegetables served with rice. The mission of FFL is to get oil and gas

money out of London's institutions. To do this, they have to build community power in London, so they hosted the a week of workshops, socials, training, and education before the Oily Money Out protests began. While FFL is not explicitly Collective Liberation organization, it does promote intersectional advocacy, which is the foundation upon which Collective Liberation can be brought to fruition. They discuss EJ and social justice issues and embrace anti-colonial and anti-imperialist values. Providing free food to their community also embodies central values in food sovereignty regarding access to healthy food and community nourishment. They lower the organization's environmental impact by procuring less resource-intensive foods. While not an AR organization, when I spoke with organizers about plant-based food, they acknowledged how harmful animal products are to the environment, so there is a baseline education, even if not from an animal liberation point of view. I asked one of the coordinators about the food being distributed, and they said it was provided by a Hindu plant-based food organization called Hare Krishna.

The mission and vision on the website are as follows: "Hare Krishna is the world's largest vegetarian food distribution program serving millions of meals daily, with projects in over 60 countries. With roots in the Vaishnava culture of charity and the distribution of pure food to all, the project is a modern-day revival of the ancient culture of hospitality and a belief in the equality of all beings" ([Hare Krishna Movement](#)). Hare Krishna is rooted in the practices of Hinduism, Hindu spiritual teachings, education about leading a spiritual life, the Hindu concept of Seva or service, community kinship and resilience, and the value of Ahimsa or non-violence. Once again, Hare Krishna does not explicitly identify as a Collective Liberation organization but does state in their mission and vision a belief in the equality of all beings. While Hare Krishna is a religious organization, they do not seek to

convert others as a condition for their free food, only to educate and spread the knowledge of Vedic teachings, particularly from lord Krishna. The values of service, access to healthy food for all, and not taking animal life to feed others embodies a mix of ideas from Collective Liberation and food sovereignty paradigms and can be used as inspiration for other organizations seeking to provide community aid. Next, we will move to changing choice architecture as a way to promote systemic change of our food system.

C. Changing Choice Architecture

I define changing choice architecture as targeting institutional food procurement to increase the options consumers and community members have at their places of work, schools, and community events. As I mentioned in my introduction, the US and the UK governments heavily subsidize the meat and dairy industries, giving them the advantage of access for most people. Dairy milk tends to be cheaper than non-dairy milk, and while dried pulses are more affordable than meat, some communities may lack access to grocery stores in the first place and may be forced to rely on fast food or convenience store items. Changing choice architecture typically focuses on public or private institutions, with the goal being to provide greater levels of access to plant-based options in these various institutions and move towards a plant-forward menu. Instead of asking individuals to eat more plant-based directly, changing choice architecture influences them through the institutions they are already a part of and exposes them to new dishes they may not usually encounter.

The framing issue can be addressed here since it puts the responsibility on institutions to provide healthy food and considers that there are barriers for the everyday person to change their diet and access nutritious food, which is more expensive in places like the US and the UK. From my experience, EJ activists often bring this critique up when AR

advocates discuss diet change so this approach can be less polarizing and address these concerns. Once again, this is not animal liberation focused but can help remove more animals from the food system and is an incremental approach. It helps with the othering of non-vegans because it gives them choices; in the example, I will highlight, they are not aiming to make school food fully vegan but have a sustained meat-free menu 2-3x a week. Students are told about the climate footprint savings and health benefits but are not introduced to it from an animal rights lens, which tends to be less alienating.

1. School Food Coalition-ProVeg International and UK

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I attended a workshop by ProVeg UK on school food campaigns, where I met Colette King. She leads ProVeg UK's Healthy School Food Campaign and runs their Global School Food Coalition. The coalition is a partnership of climate organizations, EJ organizations, and animal protection organizations across the globe working to get more plant-based options into schools. The mission and vision for both initiatives are as follows: "The School Plates program advocates for and assists schools in transitioning to more plant-rich school meals. They also recently launched a global school plates network to share best practices and foster peer-to-peer networking" ([ProVeg UK, 2023](#)). The strategy used in this program is, "The School Plates program offers a range of services, at no cost, to help schools transition to more plant-rich menus. They will review any school catering menu against evidence-based criteria based on nudge theory, and their awards scheme rewards schools for positive plant-based changes" ([ProVeg UK, 2023](#)). ProVeg UK's approach, as mentioned previously, goes beyond asking the individual to change their diet, instead focusing on changing existing institutions through a climate-centered approach. When I asked about what the most convincing argument was, Colette stated,

“Climate is definitely the most palatable angle here. Climate organizations can see that shifting to plant-based protein a few times a week in school has a serious impact on climate. Health is another angle; people want their kids to eat healthy and more fruits, veggies, and fiber. There is an inclusion aspect here as well, for example, Hindu, Jain or Buddhist kids who are vegetarian, BIPOC students who are lactose intolerant, and Jewish students who don’t eat dairy and meat together” (interview, 10/25/23).

Making plant-based foods more accessible is something BIPOC activists in the AR movement and EJ activists have been advocating for some time, as they highlight the inequity in access to healthy food. The systemic focus, as well as the emphasis on meat reduction, not elimination, has allowed the Global Food School Coalition to create partnerships with organizations outside of the AR movement across the Global North and South and work towards system change, which inherently makes people less defensive. With the focus on school food, this coalition has a clear target, which helps partners focus on the most critical angle to promote these changes. Colette emphasizes,

“We do not use the word vegan and want to reach outside the movement for coalitions, for fear of alienating potential allies. We do not push for 100% plant-based meals in school, instead working towards 30-50%” (interview, 10/25/23).

ProVeg is a vegan organization, but they understand the connotation and weight of that word, so they choose to avoid using it to be more inclusive and work across movements.

The school food approach does not embody Collective Liberation but does seek to be inclusive, make systemic changes, and promote community health, which are essential values in that framework. Although they help make food more accessible, which aligns with food sovereignty, I am not sure what the procurement criteria is for ProVeg. They have worked with big corporations to promote plant-based products, and this approach does not interrogate the underlying issues in the food system and with plant agriculture. More research must be done on procuring healthier, more sustainable, and delicious plant-based food that does not require corporate outreach. School food is an incremental approach, an important one with high potential for impact, and one that embraces reducetarianism rather than pure veganism. I will introduce the reduceterian approach in the following category, which strives to “meat” people halfway.

D. Reducetarian Approach

I define the reduceterian approach as organizations that seek to promote a sustained reduction in animal product consumption, usually centering on the climate benefits of this action, but do typically discuss issues with industrial animal agriculture in general. The goal is to appeal to those who will not go vegan or vegetarian but still invite them to participate with less polarizing messaging; they value progress over perfection and don't tend to center animal liberation. In activism, the wheel of alliance is a helpful conceptual framework that helps activists see who they seek to target. The wheel goes: active supporters (in this case, AR organizations and activists), passive supporters (people who care about AR issues but are not taking action), neutral supporters, passive opponents (meat eaters who don't like plant-based eating but aren't taking action to sabotage it) or active opponents (carnivore influencers and the meat industry). The reduceterian approach tries to target passive and

neutral supporters while maybe even appealing to passive opponents since veganism or a plant-based diet is not promoted.

This can help address the framing issue since it's not all or nothing, allowing people to reduce animal product consumption where they can. While not shifting attitudes towards animals from a liberation model, education on systemic animal cruelty and awareness is usually highlighted in reduceterian organizations, albeit not the central focal point. It can help with non-vegan othering, as it meets people where they are and gives them the choice to do what they want, understanding it takes time to change their habits and allowing for grace.

1. 50by40 Coalition (Global)

My friend and mentor Kimberly Carroll introduced me to Lasse Bruun, who created a cross-movement coalition between EJ, animal protection, and health organizations called 50by40. The mission and vision of the organization is “We are an international organization that breaks down barriers between stakeholders and supports agents of change under the theory of Collective Impact. This is where stakeholders from various backgrounds and sectors come together to solve a specific problem—such as improving the global food system. Through this, we aim to reduce the production and consumption of meat and other animal products by 50% by 2040 while ensuring that 100% of the remaining production is environmentally and socially sustainable” ([50 by 40, 2023](#)). As stated on their website, their values are global, collaborative, equitable, intersectional, innovative, transformative, and futuristic ([50 by 40, 2023](#)). Some of 50by40's partners includes the National Resources Defense Council, FOE US, Seeding Sovereignty (a grassroots and Indigenous woman-led organization), Alliance of Nurses for a Healthy Environment, Climate Save Movement, Center for Biological Diversity, Mercy for Animals (MFA), Rainforest Alliance, ProVeg

International, and The Redeceterian Foundation just to name a few. When I asked Lasse how he achieved such a landmark, cross-movement coalition with large environmental actors, he stated,

“Instead of focusing on differences, we wanted to focus on similarities and agreement on a few key factors: Less livestock intensification, agroecology, and organic farming practices, protecting human rights of workers and surrounding communities, the necessity for meat reduction, particularly in the Global North and a just livestock transition. This was really the key to helping unite people, and now it is happening at the global level at the UN, where I work now. By creating a just transition, we centered farmers/humans in the system, not seeing them as the enemy but turning adversaries into allies and not leaving them behind. It debunks that the movement does not care about animal farmers” (interview, 7/25/23).

50by40 integrated food sovereignty principles alongside a reducterian approach while considering historical, social, and structural injustices faced by BIPOC people, farmers, impoverished people, hungry people, and people in the Global South. While not explicit, 50by40 embodies many Collective Liberation principles by holding space and acknowledging various forms of oppression, addressing human justice issues as a necessary pathway to food system reform, inclusion of diverse leaders from across the globe and social justice spectrum, all while working towards a goal to reduce animal suffering. While not animal liberation focused, many elements of Collective Liberation values and critical justice initiatives exist. We see here that the reduction of 50% by 2040 gives a long-term timeline, and 50by40 emphasizes diet change in the Global North as most necessary and does not

prescribe all-or-nothing veganism. 50by40 is working towards common goals of food sovereignty principles like agroecology, organic farming, less livestock intensification, and a focus on worker's/human rights. By focusing on a just transition for livestock workers and farmers, 50by40 illustrates another tenant of Collective Liberation, including what other AR organizations consider to be adversaries.

Building coalitions, in general, is difficult, but for AR advocates, building coalitions with animal farmers would previously have been thought of as impossible. But now there are several organizations, including Miyoko's Creamery, the UN, and MFA, helping animal farmers transition to growing foods like mushrooms, hemp, oats, nuts, and plant-based proteins. Here lies what the industrial food system complex fears most: unity across labor and social justice movements working towards a common goal and not divided by hatred. Eating Better (EB) UK also seeks to create coalitions across movements and with farmers.

2. Eating Better UK

EB UK, co-founded by Clare from FOE England, Ireland, and Wales, is a coalition of animal and environmental groups advocating for less and better meat. Their mission is "To halve our meat and dairy consumption in the UK by the end of this crucial decade of action to reduce GHG emissions, protect nature and get us all eating better" ([Eating Better](#)). Their vision is, "From environmental and animal welfare charities to public health and social justice, we're working together to create a fair and sustainable food environment where everyone has access to healthy, affordable, and nutritious food. Our focus is 'less and better' meat and more plants, which is better for us, for nature, and for the planet" ([Eating Better](#)). While not explicitly stated on their website, their values include worker justice, government and institutional change, education, just transition, transparency, collaboration, and EJ. They

have resources on their website called “Anything is Pulseable” and “Season to Taste,” which highlight the environmental and health benefits of eating pulses, gives tips on how to cook them, and provides holiday and seasonal recipes and tutorials.

Eating Better highlights the environmental and public health issues in the animal agriculture industry and farmer exploitation. It helped other environmental organizations feel confident to publicly discuss the ecological impacts of the meat and dairy industry. It was one of the first coalitions of its kind in the UK. When I asked more about this, Clare stated,

“We realized livestock issues are about the environment and health. We wanted to team up with people across the spectrum to come to a middle ground and advocate for less and better meat. We held meetings to resolve tensions between groups, but we became united on the less and better front, even though The Veg Society, for example in their own mission, does not advocate for better meat. It has allowed organizations to come out and say that this is a problem, which AR advocates support. Things are easier in a coalition, it gives confidence to share something controversial when you have strength in numbers” (interview, 10/3/23).

While not animal liberation focused, EB UK seeks to bring values of Collective Liberation to fruition by working across the movement spectrum, considering all stakeholders in the food system, advocating against environmental injustice, and tackling the systemic issues of the food system. EB UK's approach also supports food sovereignty principles such as worker justice, ecosystem preservation, and a shift against corporate-controlled food. EB demonstrates that 100% ideological alignment is unnecessary

in a coalition; there can be an agreement to disagree on specific issues. However, this coalition focused on a common goal: more AR advocates are seeing that any step towards reducing animals in the food system, teaming up with environmental organizations, and working towards better conditions for animals is worth fighting for, even if they want complete animal freedom. EB can convince others in the EJ space that their cause is worthy without triggering defensiveness of whether eating animals is inherently wrong. Next, I highlight the work of the Reduceterian Foundation based in the US.

3. Reduceterian Foundation (US)

I had heard about the Reduceterian Foundation (RF) and saw their booth at AVA last year. I did not have a chance to stop by the booth as I rushed to another workshop, but I did check out their website to see how they frame their message. Their mission is “...to improve human health, protect the environment, and spare farm animals from cruelty by reducing societal consumption of animal products” ([Reduceterian Foundation](#)). Their vision is: “We envision a world in which societal consumption of red meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, and dairy is *significantly reduced*” ([Reduceterian Foundation](#)). They highlight their values of education, engagement, innovation, and research ([Reduceterian Foundation](#)). As I checked out the website further, there were ways to take action, including small steps like Meatless Mondays, Meat Mondays (where you only eat meat once a week), and vegan before 6. While the RF aims to improve environmental and public health and seeks to spare animals, I do not know if I would consider them a Collective Liberation or food sovereignty aligned organization. EJ and other social justice issues are not necessarily in their values or their focus; the focus seems to be on reducing animal product consumption. Still, they are trying to create less harm in the world, but liberation is not a word I would use to describe them.

Regarding food sovereignty, I did not see principles mentioned on their website. The question of which plant proteins to eat, the use of mono-cropped seed and soy oils, the question of plant-based meat alternatives, and what farming methods should be used remain more vague on the Reducetarian website. Next, we will look at organizations with a food sovereignty model of food production and living Collective Liberation principles.

E. Intersectional Advocacy

Intersectional advocacy is rooted in anti-oppression values; it highlights connections and overlaps between various forms of oppression and advocates from a viewpoint considering multiple social justice issues. In this context, I will discuss an intersectional approach to farmed animal protection and the industrial animal agriculture industry, which looks at the human rights, worker justice, ecological and public health implications of factory farming, and systemic animal cruelty. These organizations are vegan and embody vegan principles, and they do not believe in animal exploitation of any kind, which puts them into a unique category of their own.

The overarching goal for intersectional advocacy is to build collective power, understand how systems of oppression compound in our society and for the individual, and tackle the root of oppression by connecting all social justice issues with a common foundation of oppression while holding space for various viewpoints, experiences, and perspectives. Intersectional advocacy could help with the framing issue since it focuses on issues outside of AR, looks at the systemic problems that affect marginalized communities and the barriers to plant-based food accessibility, incorporates anti-colonial and imperialist views, and makes space for all kinds of oppression. Their message is inclusive and equally prioritizes human and animal rights. It has the potential to shift perspectives for animals

because it discusses the issue in a way that is less likely to alienate people, pointing to systemic issues many people understand already, like food apartheid, environmental injustice in communities of color, how animal exploitation is rooted in the human/animal binary, and how the use of the word animal has been used to oppress human beings. In my examples below, they do not embrace vegan techno-capitalism and advocate for food sovereignty principles; however, this may only sometimes be the case for intersectional advocates. It could help with not alienating non-vegans since there is inclusion for every kind of oppressed person, meeting people where they are and getting them to make changes based on what's accessible to them.

1. FEP: Worker School Supply Drive and Chocolate List (US)

As I mentioned in my first chapter, FEP is one of the first intersectional organizations in the AR/AP space to prioritize a Total Liberation approach. One project that FEP has that simultaneously advocated for animal and human justice is their chocolate list. They create a yearly list that highlights vegan and human exploitation-free chocolate brands, rigorously updating it. There has been a strong farmworker and community aid focus from the beginning for FEP. Alejandra states,

“All roads lead to farmworkers in California. FEP is also a member of the California Environmental Justice Coalition, where we work with them on a number of things. We recently spoke at an environmental protection agency webinar, where we talked about the human rights implications and environmental degradation associated with dairy farms and pig farms. We do a school supply drive every year for farmworkers' children so we can give mutual aid in a way that is not exclusively about animals” (interview, 6/24/23).

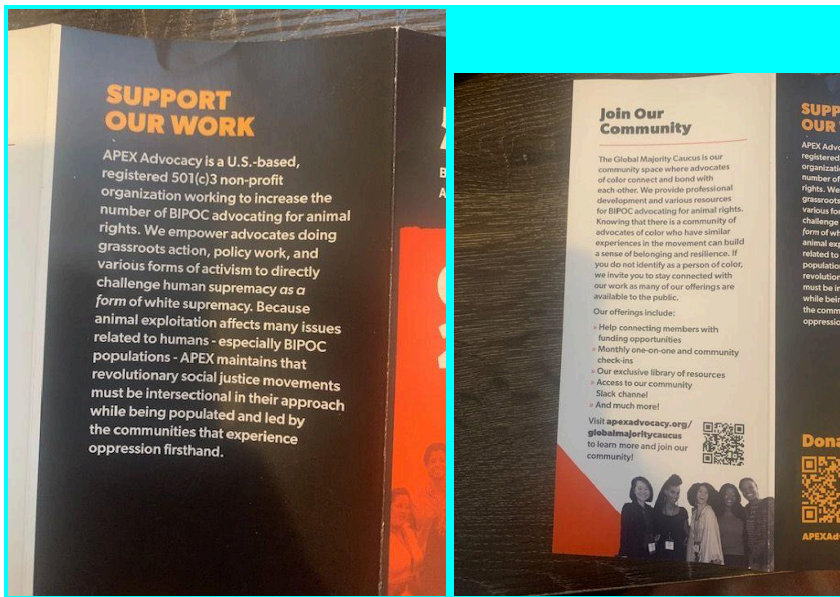
By providing aid that only benefits the human members of the industrial agriculture system and maintaining a rigorous human and animal rights-friendly chocolate list, FEP sets itself apart from other AR organizations, engaging in helping farmworker communities exploited in the food system. It shows that their efforts are genuine and do not just to promote the ideas of veganism. While this could also go under community aid, I chose to highlight the chocolate list as well, hence why it's under intersectional advocacy. They do not just talk about the intersectional issues in the animal agriculture industry but take specific actions to advocate for liberation in all its forms. On their website, they firmly maintain food sovereignty and food justice principles. In their "Healthy Access to Food Section" they state,

"As an organization dedicated to looking at food justice from a local and global perspective, we also consider the impact that racism has had on equal access to healthy foods in the US. Knowing the importance that fresh fruits and vegetables have on one's health and that Black and Brown communities and low-income communities lack access to them, we have added this to our work. We only go into communities when invited, and our work is to ensure the voices of the community are heard" ([Food Empowerment Project, 2024](#)).

They have also released a grow your own food guide, emphasize a shift away from corporate food, and recognize the ongoing land occupation in settler colonies worldwide, further demonstrating their Total Liberation and food sovereignty values in action. While not explicitly against meat substitutes like Impossible Foods, FEP helps resolve the tension

between Vegan techno-capitalism and food sovereignty by aligning with the latter's principles rather than the former. They do a great job of not othering those who are not vegan and having an anti-racist and anti-sexist approach to their values. They have built coalitions with labor movements and EJ movements and are not particularly present in AR spaces. They operate in their own sphere, utilizing a unique approach to industrial animal farming issues that leaves no one behind, which is also what APEX advocacy does.

2. APEX Advocacy (US)



At the AVA conference, APEX hosted a luncheon for BIPOC activists, and I decided to join them. Activists of all colors, socioeconomic backgrounds, and genders sat together, and the hotel set aside tables just for the Global Majority Caucus, as they called it. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, APEX Advocacy is a black-led and explicit Total Liberation organization that discusses all forms of oppression and does not shy away from the systemic abuses in the Western AR community.

The pamphlet I received in the AVA goody bag states that their mission and strategy is “... working to increase the number of BIPOC advocating for animal rights. We empower advocates doing grassroots action, policy work, and various forms of activism to challenge human supremacy as a form of white supremacy directly. Because animal exploitation affects many issues related to humans, especially BIPOC populations, APEX maintains that revolutionary social justice movements must be intersectional in their approach while being populated and led by the communities that experience oppression firsthand” ([APEX Advocacy](#)). Their vision is, “...in order to effectively eradicate animal industries, we maintain that the grassroots animal advocacy movement must actively welcome and amplify BIPOC voices, build bridges with other movements and communities, and recognize the interconnectedness between various systems of oppression ([APEX Advocacy](#)).

APEX makes the distinction that human supremacy is a form of white supremacy, which helped to push the culture/nature binary that Pellow and Fitzgerald discuss, as mentioned earlier. APEX also discusses EJ issues on their website, fully committed to resolving tensions caused by the AR movement and an intersectional view of justice for all beings. As stated in their materials and actions, APEX explicitly identifies as a Collective Liberation organization and promotes food sovereignty principles. They have campaigns such as addressing factory farming pollution in Georgia, an activist week where they host activists from other social justice organizations to help them learn about animal liberation, hosts film screenings to educate local BIPOC communities, rejects vegan techno-capitalism, and works towards food sovereignty principles. In my research, APEX is the only organization I have found with explicit Collective Liberation alongside food justice

principles. One way that APEX has been able to prosper, is through resource redistribution from larger organizations, which I explain in my next section.

F. Resource Redistribution

I define resource redistribution in this context as institutions or organizations dedicated to investing their resources into marginalized communities; typically, these are Global North organizations in my research. In the AR movement, there are a handful of large organizations who have the largest amount of donors and funding, while grassroots organizations struggle to maintain a steady donation flow. Recently, some of these large organizations have allocated more resources to help build capacity for smaller organizations. Resources can take the form of money, capacity-building, events, resources, and complimentary services and help. The main tension that resource redistribution could help with is the issues of sexism and racism in the movement. By giving more grants to BIPOC, women, LGBTQ led organizations and Global South activists/organizations the AR movement can begin to move away from their history of lacking DEIJ values and build a more inclusive, effective movement for animals, people and the planet.

1. Animal and Vegan Advocacy Summit (Global)

The AVA Summit I attended in Los Angeles is one of many global events. AVA's website states that its mission and vision are, “We are an international conference series for advocates focusing on systemic change and working on various strategies toward one shared vision: Removing animals from our food system and other human use” ([Animal and Vegan Advocacy Summit](#)). While not explicitly named, their values include creating accessible events, DEIJ, international cooperation, region-specific cooperation, building relationships,

effective communication, and transparency. I saw a card for “Asia Farm Animal Day” pictured below in the AVA goody bag, which took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2023.



When I looked at the event website, most of the speakers I saw were East and South Asian, representing the diversity of the Asian continent. In addition, AVA is holding a conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil, towards the end of 2024 and another in Asia in Hanoi, Vietnam, in October 2024. According to their website, before 2023, they had only had conferences in the United States. I spoke to Seb Alex, a prominent Lebanese Vegan Activist, who remarked during his speech at AVA that,

“Many Western funders and organizations are too focused on their region, and completely ignore the huge potential for veganism in Middle Eastern countries, where I have found success in distributing vegan food aid, getting religious Muslims involved in Meatless Mondays, and have helped encourage people to reduce their animal product consumption in hospitals. We opened a vegan support center in a Mosque; the AR movement needs to stop ignoring those not in the West” (field notes, 7/17/23).

While I have yet to learn about the specific workshops AVA has planned in these other countries, and it takes much more than a conference to overcome these tensions, prioritizing the Global South's voices, organizations, and leaders is a good start. While not explicitly aligned with Collective Liberation or food sovereignty, AVA prioritizes DEIJ values. It seeks to invest in other parts of the world that simply don't have the access to resources that Western countries do. For too long, the AR movement has been dominated by white male leaders, with movements in Asia and Latin America ignored by Western funders. AVA attempts to create more profound global unity, collaboration, and cooperation in different countries and redistribute resources via travel grants to Global South AR leaders. This is a crucial step to building a global movement for animal liberation and there is no shying away from discussing issues within the movement at these conferences. The number of women and BIPOC-led organizations increases yearly, and AVA seeks to include organizations from across the spectrum. By creating a space with these values, AVA allows for the discussion and platforming of Collective Liberation and food sovereignty, even if they do not explicitly promote it. Next, we will take a look at how MFA is seeking to redistribute resources to smaller AR organizations.

2. Mercy for Animals People's Fund (Global, UK and US)

MFA is a US-based, international organization that promotes animal welfare, plant-based diets, food systems transformation, helps animal agriculture farmers transition to farm plant agriculture, and creates campaigns that encourage a shift towards a food system not dependent on animals. Recently, to further their commitment to racial and social justice,

MFA has launched something called “The People’s Fund,” pictured below from the AVA goody bag.



The mission and vision are, “The People’s Fund is a grant program that aims to advance Mercy For Animals’ work to create a just and sustainable food system, build people power to accelerate change, and achieve racial equity in funding across our movement.” Their values include, “Trust, Equity, and Learning. We believe in a community-led, power-democratized, decision-transparent, and resource-collective grantmaking process” (Mercy for Animals, 2023).

The People’s Fund is a grant system that funds BIPOC and women-led organizations, hoping to give these organizations a stronger foundation, a more prominent presence in the movement, and highlight the work they are doing. The People’s Fund is a more recent grant system since 2021 and seeks to address the tensions of racism and sexism in the movement

through resource distribution and uplifting the work of marginalized activists. As stated on the card, “We envision a movement that is diverse, collaborative, and equitably resources” (Mercy for Animals, 2023). While not explicitly Collective Liberation focused, MFA People’s Fund moves toward some of those values by funding BIPOC-led initiatives, centering DEIJ practices, promoting animal liberation, and committing to invest their resources in grassroots organizations. They are a key funder of APEX advocacy, which, as previously mentioned, is a Total Liberation and food sovereignty-aligned organization, so while not directly advocating for it themselves, they are taking a step in the right direction that can still help those visions and values become realized. Initiatives such as this can begin to heal the systemic racism and sexism in the movement as well. Next, I will introduce my final category of the movement ecosystem.

G. Embracing the Movement Ecosystem

Movement ecology is “A successful freedom movement that requires many different individuals, groups, and organizations working in varied ways. As a forest flourishes best when there is a diverse ecosystem, a movement performs better when there is a wide range of strategies being pursued. Movements become more powerful when they can overcome differences and work together towards a shared vision” ([Animal Think Tank](#)). Its overall goal is to prevent infighting, promote collaboration and efficiency, save resources and time, and tackle systemic issues from different avenues, strategies, and campaigns while centered on a shared vision and aligned values. This approach could help address the framing issue because it allows for diversity in the movement; some groups can target the system, others can target the personal, and they are all important. Still, there needs to be communication and collaboration happening between these groups. It could help with the non-vegan other

because embracing a movement ecosystem could help radical organizations accept that organizations that work with non-vegans has a role to play.

1. Kill the Bill Movements of Movements Approach (UK)

At FFL's "Oily Money Out" week of socials, workshops, trainings, and actions, I attended a seminar titled "Unifying Across Movements: Lessons from Kill the Bill." Bhavini Patel, a long-time member of XR and FFL, led the workshop. She is an Indian woman in her 40s, experienced in activism, organizing, holding a leadership position, and building coalitions across class and race. When I got to the community center where this workshop was taking place, I noticed overwhelmingly white, younger people in attendance in their 20s and 30s. However, Bhavini and several other women of color led the workshop. In opening the seminar, Bhavini stated,

"Purity politics will kill us" (field notes, 10/15/23).

She continued discussing the importance of building coalitions across class, gender, race, and with people of other movements. She proceeded to examine her own experience with the "Kill the Bill" campaign, a response to the Public Order Act proposed to pass through parliament in England. Bhavini stated,

"This was a response to the big one in 2019 when XR shut down central London. They saw how powerful we were and wanted to suppress us" (field notes, 10/15/23).

Some of the measures included, according to Amnesty International, “Setting a very low threshold to define disruptive protesting, giving police significant new powers to prevent protests from occurring outside of major transport networks, oil and gas, and energy supplies, making “locking on” a new criminal offense, extending the use of stop and search powers – including suspicion-less stop and search – to protests and introducing of new protest banning orders that would prevent individuals from attending protests at all” ([Amnesty International, 2023](#)). The mission and vision of the organization was to prevent this bill from being passed, which was done through cross-movement collaboration, direct action, and organizing. Their values included the freedom to protest, collaboration, and a mix of centralized and decentralized decision-making. Bhavini discussed using a movement of movements approach, but I asked how this differs from traditional coalition building. She stated,

“Coalition building takes a long time, it is deep work and requires a level of agreement between groups/organizations. Significant amounts of discussion, time, and energy are needed for this. Coalitions can traumatize and trigger people, especially BIPOC and other oppressed groups, because they have to regurgitate their trauma, and people can project their trauma onto each other in these spaces. Disagreements can be triggering and cause people to shut down, and we can often spend more time talking than taking action. BIPOC feel tokenized, that white activists don’t understand the differing risks for arrest with us as opposed to them” (interview, 11/4/23).

I had the chance to interview Bhavini one-on-one after the workshop to understand the movement of movements approach better. She was adamant that this strategy was needed to advance resistance to the climate crisis and reduce tensions between different groups. She

also discussed how BIPOC people can get triggered when they feel they aren't being heard or seen by other organizations. She explains,

“The movement of movements approach can be less triggering. Why? It is about building power collectively on the streets and is action-oriented. Each movement/organization can have its own demands, its own messaging, and its own images. What is agreed upon is the ACTION, when it is taking place, where it is taking place, and what time. This is significantly more efficient than coalition building because there doesn't have to be a general consensus on messaging, demands, or graphics. There are no limits to what groups can demand, so we utilized this strategy for the Kill the Bill campaign. If you have one million people on the streets from different movements without clear leaders, it's much harder for the government/the media to villainize a specific group. It disrupts power rapidly. I want to be clear: I believe coalition building is incredibly important, but strategically and urgently, there needs to be a greater focus on action” (field notes, 11/4/23).

The movements of movements approach provides a strategic framework that can alleviate the tension of framing the climate crisis; all it requires is that groups show up to actions together to protest power. Kill the Bill's approach allowed each group in their coalition, from EJ to RJ to housing justice groups, to craft their own narratives and exercise freedom in their art, messaging, and communications. I would say indirectly that this includes some values of Collective Liberation because Kill the Bill sought to create cross-movement and cross-class solidarity and saw how a similar foe threatened everyone's freedom. Another aspect of Collective Liberation is democratic and decentralized decision-making, which is present in the autonomy integrated into the movements of movements' strategy. It created a non-hierarchical way of coalition building, where no one

organization controlled the framing of the issue or told others how to craft theirs. Holding space for each organization's differences but uniting against a common enemy embodies a movement ecosystem rooted in collective action and a clear vision. To dive deeper into the movement ecosystem, let's look at the AVA Summit's Abolition vs Welfare workshop.

2. AVA Summit Abolition vs. Welfare Workshop (US)

The first workshop I attended at AVA was titled "Abolition vs. Welfare," it was a conversation between radical and welfarist approaches. I was especially interested in this topic as this is an issue not only in the AR movement but all movements. The mission of this workshop was to educate and converse about infighting issues, and the vision was to promote a movement ecosystem. Some of the values present in this workshop were collaboration, open communication, diversity, healing, transparency, and honesty. The speakers were David Coman-Hidy, the former executive director of The Humane League, one of the world's most extensive animal welfare organizations, and Eva Hamer from US-based Pax Fauna, an AR research organization. Coman-Hidy was the welfare approach, and Hamer was the radical approach. As the workshop started, Coman-Hidy stated,

"Alright, guys, Eva and I are friends; you aren't going to see us hammer it out on stage. We are here to advocate that the movement needs both these approaches, and our focus is reducing infighting in the movement" (field notes, 7/16/23).

David went on to discuss the importance of welfare initiatives, such as banning cages for egg-laying hens, stunning fish instead of suffocating them, and initiatives such as landmark California Prop 12, which banned gestation crates for pigs, veal crates for calves

and requires animals to have enough space to move around ([The Humane Society of the United States, 2023](#)). In this approach, according to David,

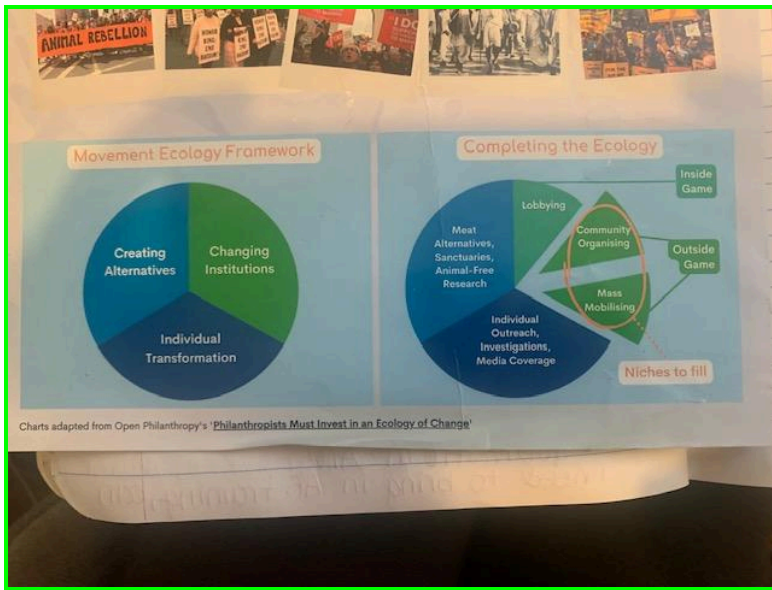
“We meet society where they are at, and it is easy to get people veg or not to support welfare initiatives. We create policy change, recruit people from all sides of the animal welfare spectrum, and help hold corporations accountable.” (field notes, 7/16/23)

He then gave Eva the microphone, who provided the perspective on the radical approach to AR,

“Welfarists often see radicals or abolitionists as unrealistic. In fact, the term welfarist was coined by radicals as a negative thing. They are frequently pitted against each other, the professionals vs the grassroots activists, but we are here to tell you this has been the wrong approach“ (field notes, 7/16/23).

David commented on how radicals feel that those focused on working within the system or incrementally are not doing enough, and those who do not identify as radicals believe that radical movements are too hasty and reckless in their actions. David responded,

“We waste time debating, and it is not productive for us. We literally lose millions of dollars a year infighting, and we narrow our strategic options. For monumental change to occur, we need to use EVERY strategy we have; each approach has its benefits, and we need to embrace a movement ecosystem.” (field notes, 7/16/23)



Source: (Animal Think Tank, 2023)

Although not directly related to Collective Liberation or food sovereignty, I wanted to include David and Eva’s workshop here as a framework to think about the issues of climate change, social justice, and animal liberation. No one strategy or approach will end oppressive systems, and just as I am presenting several different categories to work towards Collective Liberation and CJ, the AR and the EJ movements must embrace a movement ecosystem to challenge power at all levels. One example of embracing the movement ecosystem is managing the tension between food sovereignty and vegan techno-capitalism. I am not suggesting there should not be critiques for vegan techno-capitalism and interrogation of capitalist values and corporations, and the tensions should continue to be discussed. However, David and Eva suggest a path that wastes less time being divided, endlessly debating, wasting energy and resources.

While this may not directly relieve the tension between food sovereignty and vegan techno-capitalism, food aid is a tenant of food sovereignty, and so is accessibility to healthy food. Even while promoting vegan technology-centered solutions, adopting more food aid

initiatives could help bridge the gap between the EJ and AR movements. Food sovereignty advocates do not want technology-centered solutions, but is technology an all-or-nothing issue? Vegan techno-capitalism should not be the end-all-be-all. Still, it can provide a pathway to advance plant-based foods within the current capitalist system and target those who would otherwise not support food sovereignty principles. However, it cannot end there, as there is a need to shift away from capitalist production modes towards food sovereignty models. However, it can be an interim solution while production remains as it is.

H. Conclusion

In this second chapter, I attempted to implement a version of the movement ecosystem by illustrating a collaboration ecosystem. There is no single way to resolve the tensions between the AR and EJ movements, and it will take time, dedication, difficult conversations, and funding. Corporate campaigns can help recruit other movements to AR organizations' goals since large corporations universally oppress different groups. Community aid is a way for AR organizations not just to say they care about marginalized communities but to take action and bridge the gap genuinely. Changing choice architecture moves away from individual-focused initiatives and creates system change to make plant-based food more accessible. The reducetarian approach is one that I have utilized in my life with friends and family, and from personal experience, it triggers much less defensiveness from the average meat eater. Intersectional advocacy provides an essential pathway to an interspecies framework of Collective Liberation by equally centering human, animal, and ecosystem issues. Resource redistribution to BIPOC-led organizations is an excellent way for AR organizations to begin to heal past decades of white-dominant leadership. Finally, embracing the movement ecosystem shows us that to disrupt the system,

there must be a celebration of diversity amongst movements and a greater emphasis on collective unity.

IV. Conclusion

To effectively resolve the climate crisis, the root values of the heteropatriarchal colonial capitalist paradigm must be weeded out and replaced with the seeds of its antithesis, a world guided through the principles of Collective Liberation, tackling the foundation of all injustices while holding space for all their unique attributes, manifestations, and experiences. The scales must be rebalanced; BIPOC people must be centered in the fight for liberation because they are already leading the way, along with other marginalized groups, including but not limited to those in poverty, those in war zones, those on occupied land, folks with disabilities, women and gender non-conforming people, mainly from BIPOC backgrounds, and the LGBTQIA+ community. To solve the climate crisis, we need a movement ecosystem that cross-pollinates and blooms in alignment, rooted in solid values and a collectively envisioned way of redesigning the world.

Collective visioning is no simple task; it requires honest self-reflection, acknowledgment of our complicity in oppression, healing our bodies, a commitment to understanding and listening to one another, and connecting through community, art, music, and self-expression while leaving space for diversity. If movements are grounded in the radical love and inclusivity embodied in Collective Liberation, there is a chance to save ourselves from what seems like inevitable extinction. To take inspiration from the natural world, the greater the biodiversity in our ecosystems, the better off every being is on this

planet. Flora, fauna, funghi, and the elements all work together, contributing uniquely and embracing each other's differences while being rooted in the collective ecosystem and working toward a larger goal. My research attempts to contribute one miniature piece by highlighting the work already being done by leaders in the AR and EJ spaces, who are mainly women and BIPOC people and work towards Collective Liberation. I sought to investigate the tensions between movements, provide nuanced analysis, and compile a resource that fills an existing gap in research literature today, built through talking to community leaders directly and supporting my findings through secondary peer-reviewed research.

Right now, many people are frozen from fear of the overwhelming nature of the climate crisis, and many are losing hope that it can ever be resolved. The negative aspects and effects of the climate crisis are much more visible than those fighting against it, and there are millions of activists around the globe, in every country, dedicating all they can to preserving this planet for our and the next generation's future. We have the solutions and know what needs to be done, but it is about getting a consensus on shared values and visions while embracing various approaches to change. My work attempts to shed some light, and dare I say hope, on the leaders who are needed most in the task of dismantling systems of oppression, the ones who face the consequences disproportionately, particularly Indigenous peoples, and their voices must be amplified after hundreds of years of suppression. Many state that the best way to make change is to get involved in your local community or bring it to the communities you are already a part of. As part of the farmed animal protection movement, I write my suggestions mainly towards AR organizations seeking to collaborate with EJ organizations and to provide inspiration to stay engaged in the vision of a world built

on Collective Liberation values. I gathered some takeaways from the leaders I spoke to and compiled a non-comprehensive list of a few suggestions when working to develop cross-movement solidarity/coalitions. It starts with work to do before approaching organizations to collaborate, highlights examples of successful alliances, and provides ideas for future research to continue planting the seeds of Collective Liberation into the movement ecosystem.

A. Before Approaching Other Organizations to Collaborate

Radical Self-Reflection and Honesty: There has to be a resounding acknowledgment that the AR movement in the West has been predominantly white male-led, white-dominated, has harmed BIPOC communities, has been single-issue, and has lacked DEIJ initiatives. It is then, and only then, that any successful partnerships can happen. If we are on the defensive, unaware or uneducated about our shortcomings, then there is no point in approaching other organizations. There are several scholars and authors who have already done this work, including the previously mentioned Encompass Report and the report on sexism in the movement by Lisa Kemmerer. Be crucially honest about your past campaigns and actions. Has there been problematic messaging in the past? Has there been loud support for corporations that include vegan products without critiquing their human rights violations? Critical internal reflection and analysis of past partners/campaigns/communications will be crucial before coalition building. Furthermore, this will better prepare any organization confronted with questions or critiques about its past. Acknowledging past grievances, issues,

and problems is necessary to build trust with organizations skeptical of partnerships/coalitions with AR/AP organizations.

Total Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice: Before these organizations approach EJ or CJ organizations, they must develop a robust DEIJ internal assessment and report. Who is in leadership? What are the demographics of their team? How are they committing to increasing DEIJ on their staff? How are they making sure they are an equitable employer? How are they educating their staff on DEIJ issues and practices? Has your ideal of justice expanded beyond non-human animals? There must be prioritization of EJ/CJ issues, not just when it involves non-human animals or strategic opportunities, but a genuine commitment to anti-oppression ideals, policies, and practices. There is discussion around tokenization, that many non-profits put people of color on their boards, in their ads, but when it comes to leadership and structural changes, there is still a massive gap in BIPOC leadership in the AR movement. Moving beyond superficial tokenism into systemic and leadership changes will be a crucial step to building long-term coalitions with other organizations outside the movement and will be an essential part of growing the movement to include people of all backgrounds.

Research and Familiarity with EJ/CJ Issues, History, and Organizations: While education is a critical part of most non-profit organizations' strategy to raise awareness about an issue, in particular, the AR/AP movements know the value of education to a unique degree. Is there embedded learning about other social justice issues in your organization? How can there be more integration of cultural competency within organizations? I invite AR/AP organizations

to invest in the value of education and channel it into action by designating staff members to learn about the history, values, and practices of the EJ/CJ movement or any other movement they want to reach out to. Once this is done, there must be educational training for other staff members before any outreach. The next step should be obvious, but research must be done before any organization you seek to work with before approaching them. Reading in-depth and gaining familiarity with an organization's mission, vision, values, existing partnerships, communication style, and campaigns is crucial in forming any successful relationship.

Learn from BIPOC Leaders Already Engaged in this Work: Many of the leaders I spoke to in both the US and UK for alliance building are BIPOC and/or women. Several people have already been doing this work in the AR/AP space, such as Christopher Eubanks, Yvette Baker, Lauren Ornelas, Alejandra Tolley, Eloisa Trinidad, Hunter Gwenna, and Jasmine Levy, to name just a few, but there are many more. I cannot stress this enough for organizations that want to reach across the aisle: listen to the people already doing this work and learn from them. Another crucial element is to pay them for their time because activists are already stretched thin. Expecting free labor from BIPOC activists is another symptom of a toxic non-profit industrial complex system, which does not adequately compensate people for their time and energy. As an organization, you can save time and resources by not reinventing the wheel and using the resources and rich experience of those who have already engaged in this work for years.

Developing Inclusive Communication Strategy: Something reiterated to me several times, particularly from the coalition builders I spoke to in the AR movement, was that the

movement has alienated people immediately due to their polarizing communication. Dr. Melanie Joy, a vegan activist and psychologist, has done several webinars and talks about how when shame is used to convey information, people on the other side of that exchange can immediately shut down and get defensive ([Joy, 2023](#)). Several organizations, including the one I used to work for, New Roots Institute, have started to pivot their approach to one where you meet people where they are. You do not assume other people have the knowledge you do; you commit to asking questions and being curious about their values and expertise, educate them through the Socratic method, which allows them to come to their own conclusions, and invite them to join your movement. According to Alejandra from FEP, she states,

“We need to stop using divisive rhetoric; for example, I have seen so many vegan activists say the phrase you cannot be a real environmentalist if you eat meat” (interview, 7/4/23).

As Melanie Joy says, these statements automatically put others on the defensive and make them feel othered ([Joy, 2023](#)). Since most people in the world consume meat, these kinds of black-and-white statements hurt the movement by lacking compassion for most of the population. Since the mass mobilization of human beings is needed to achieve the goals of the AR movement, Eloisa Trinidad from Chili’s on Wheels and Vegan Activist Alliance (VAA) states,

“We cannot treat people like they are our enemy or make them wrong; we need to expose the system and how they have been conditioned to be a part of it” (interview, 8/16/23).

The conditioning to eat animals is deep in our culture. From ubiquitous “happy animal” advertising to medical institutions telling us we need animal products to live a healthy life to our friends and family making cultural dishes with animal products, along with the lack of education around the issues in the animal agriculture industry, there are many barriers to people making the changes necessary to protect our future. AR activists must expand their compassion and meet people where they are so they feel invited to participate instead of being attacked.

Not Seeing Vegan Capitalism as the End Goal: If organizations want to build coalitions with marginalized groups and people, then there has to be an honest and nuanced critique of how the AR movement sees vegan capitalism (at times) as the end all be all. There must be a deeper interrogation of the food system, its colonial and capitalist histories, and the labor and environmental injustice in the plant agriculture system. Furthermore, there needs to be a reevaluation of celebrating corporations just for having vegan products and seeing it as a total victory for the movement. For example, Alejandra from FEP states,

“We need to critique corporations honestly. Last year, Nestle released a vegan Hershey’s bar, and McDonald’s released their McPlant burger. So many vegan organizations celebrated this, without mentioning that these organizations have egregious human rights

violations, are destroying our planet, and are overwhelmingly profit-motivated” (interview, 7/4/23).

Many Collective Liberation activists insist that the system that caused the climate crisis will not be the system that saves us. Eloisa Trinidad states,

“We cannot see capitalism as the solution for ending animal, human, or environmental exploitation” (interview, 8/16/23).

I am not suggesting that activists should not highlight progress but invite nuance into the discussion before celebrating large corporations without critique. I invite organizations to go beyond technical fixes like cultivated meat and alternative proteins and work towards agroecology practices, localizing food systems, and TEK into their solutions for a more just, compassionate, and sustainable food system. EJ/CJ organizations hold these values overwhelmingly; of course, they should not just be adopted to be strategic but genuine. We live in a capitalist society; alternative proteins and cultivated meat have a role to play since we do not live in an ideal society. However, suppose our vision for a better food system ends there. In that case, we still accept an incredibly exploitative system that will not help us achieve justice for animals, people, and the planet.

Manage your Expectations: Many AR organizations desire to see veganism take root in other social justice organizations. While understandable, AR organizations cannot approach another organization with the intention of turning them vegan, and there has to be acceptance

and awareness that coalitions and cooperation do not mean 100% ideological alignment. Before asking for any behavior change, establish a solid foundation and understand that people are imperfect. The reality is that there are organizations that will turn you down when you reach out. Many organizations may wait to change their food habits, but building a coalition against industrial animal agriculture is an excellent place to build common ground and pave the way for a plant-forward food system.

Prepare for Backlash: In the AR world, significant infighting exists in the US and the UK. It was so much so that my mentor and good friend Kimberly Carroll, founder of Animal Justice Academy in Canada, hosted a webinar on their YouTube channel with Melanie Joy on ending infighting in the movement. Infighting is “Attacking the tactics used by other organizations in the same movement” (Joy, 2023). Millions of dollars are estimated to be wasted due to infighting in the movement (Joy, 2023). I want to bring it back to the idea of movement ecology, which I heard about when I went to the AVA Conference from David Coman Hidy, former executive director of The Humane League, was that

“We all do not need to agree on a single strategy; it is counterproductive and wastes time. The meat industry wants us to fight amongst ourselves and waste time and energy. We need every approach, from the radical to the moderate, to the welfarist.” (field notes, 7/16/23)

Of course, infighting is more than just an issue in the AR movement; it is also present in other social justice movements. In my introduction, I detail the split between the

mainstream Western environmentalist movement and the EJ/CJ movement, which is the more radical arm of the environmental movement. The reality is that reaching out to EJ/CJ organizations and other socially just organizations will cause other AR radicals to criticize you. Radical AR organizations tend to criticize organizations in the movement for working with movements that continue to exploit and eat animals, seeing them as a hindrance to the vision of animal liberation. These activists point out the hypocrisy of justice-centered organizations that continue to exploit animals in what they believe the “correct” way is, and this is a valid feeling of frustration and disappointment. But Dora from Animal Rising has valuable insight to offer here,

“The reality is, our movement has had limited growth because we do not invite people in that don’t 100% align with us. Gaining momentum and increasing our impact and reach is crucial right now; we need to recruit broader audiences beyond the vegan movement, which is still a fringe movement. On the wheel of alliance, there are so many people who are passive supporters, passive opponents, and active opponents, and we have an opportunity to increase allyship” (interview, 9/29/23).

It seems more AR organizations are beginning to come to the same conclusion, with Colette King, who works for ProVeg UK, echoing a similar sentiment,

“We are focused right now on appealing to the masses. We do not want to alienate people with AR jargon and terminology” (interview, 10/25/23).

It will be challenging to get backlash and criticism from other people in the movement, and it is essential not to alienate them as well. However, an inclusive approach to meeting people where they are works better than the rigid perfectionism that the AR movement has often employed with limited success.

B. When Approaching Other Organizations to Collaborate

Once you have prepared to reach out to other movements across the aisle and done the work to educate yourselves, implement structural changes, and mentally prepare for the realities of this work, there needs to be tailored approaches for each organization you reach out to. Below is a non-comprehensive list of a few suggestions from some of the changemakers I interviewed that could be helpful to organizations preparing to coalition build.

Listen First, then Speak: Listening is a skill; with coalition building, few skills are more important to cultivate than active listening and not interrupting others. Co-construct the agenda when contacting an organization to collaborate and schedule a time to speak with them. It will be all the more promising for the organizations you seek to collaborate with if you offer for them to take the lead first and share their concerns, questions, and goals for your meeting. Sandra Ata from Greenpeace UK, who is their primary coalition builder, states,

“You have to listen to frontline communities, and this is a lifelong process. Movement building does not happen overnight. You cannot get tired of listening.” (Interview, 11/25/23)

Positionality needs to be considered as well. If you are reaching out to working-class BIPOC groups and your organization does not reflect those demographics, it is all the more important to listen to those communities since their voices have been suppressed for so long. Learning to listen to understand rather than just respond and assert your position is difficult, but it can make all the difference in building relationships.

Demonstrating Value for Other Organizations: Lasse Bruun, who led the 50by40 coalition, has valuable knowledge to share in his experience leading this organization. In the AR movement, 50by40 is considered one of the largest global organizations that has built coalitions with other movements. Some of the organizations in their network that are not AR organizations include Act Asia, Alliance of Nurded for Health Environments, Seeding Sovereignty, Climate Save Movement, Climatetracker.org, Global Forest Coalition, the National Resources Defense Council, and the Rainforest Alliance, just to name a few. These range from climate groups to nutrition groups to wildlife conservation groups. When I asked how they succeeded in bringing these organizations together for 50by40, Lasse stressed that before approaching organizations,

“It is important that organizations you reach out to see the benefit for them. Why are they important to your mission, vision, and values? How can you demonstrate value for

them? It is important to tailor outreach to every organization and not have a one-size-fits-all approach” (interview, 7/25/23).

Another example of coalition building where they demonstrated value for other organizations is BVS’s partnerships with local organizations in Baltimore, Maryland. Naijha Wright Brown, director of BVS, stated in particular,

“Leading with animal rights can alienate people, especially black folks and people of color. In my experience, health is the most effective argument for predominantly black communities.” (interview, 11/11/23)

Being from the community, Naijha knows how people think and react to issues around animal agriculture. By providing a community event with healthy food, education, community leaders, and a lower climate footprint, Naijha demonstrated to other organizations the value of funding or participating in their annual Soul Fest.

Offer Support, Particularly Through Community Aid: Dora Harigati, who helped lead the collaboration between XR and Animal Rising, stated,

“When approaching them, we were prepared to give more than receive in the beginning, to show our genuine commitment.” (interview, 9/29/23)

AR organizations are already stretched for resources, so depending on your organization's size, your funding, and how much time you can allocate to coalition-building

support approaches will look different. However, I heard repeatedly from David Pellow, Hunter Gwenna, and Lasse Bruun that food distribution is a great way to build collaboration. As mentioned previously, a common critique of the AR movement is that there is a hyper-focus on going vegan. However, more effort is needed to increase access to plant-based foods systematically. While many more organizations focus on changing choice architecture to ensure consumers have the options in the first place, there still needs to be more access to healthy plant-based food for many communities worldwide. Offering to support organizations, whether monetarily or through time, to connect them to climate-friendly food distribution for their events can be a great place to start.

Another option is to fund pilot programs by BIPOC people in the movement, giving them the autonomy and creativity to help bring plant-based food to communities, such as Hunter Gwenna's vegan food bank in LA. Funding pilot programs and creating space for BIPOC leaders are other ways to promote DEIJ initiatives and let those who know these communities best lead and be financially supported. Professional development skillshares, campaign tactics, contacts in various communities, and offering to attend each other's events are also great ways to build relationships.

Co-Construct a Vision of Collaboration Together: When talking to other organizations, emphasize that you understand there will not be 100% ideological alignment, but figure out where your values, mission, and vision are shared. Some questions to ask when discussing potential pathways to collaboration are: What do both organizations want from this collaboration? How can it be achieved? Are there particular campaigns that can be highlighted to support? How can there be aid between the organizations? Can there be a

social event between organizations so that employees or volunteers can meet one another? When I worked with the Sunrise movement as a volunteer, Sunrise held “visioning” socials where members of Sunrise would come together and envision the world they wanted to see beyond capitalism and climate change. Holding these visioning sessions with organizations you seek to collaborate with can give both of you an idea of whether there is compatibility to work together long-term.

C. Examples of Successful Coalitions

In this section, I will highlight successful coalitions, some extending beyond the limited scope of AR/AP and EJ/CJ collaborations. What defines a successful collaboration is subjective, multi-faceted, and complex. I describe it imperfectly as a coalition that lasted for several weeks/months/years, worked together on a shared goal, and created some kind of change. Some of these coalitions no longer exist, and new tensions have emerged; here, I focus on what factors led to collaboration around specific campaigns or goals. I will incorporate global, US and UK national, and local coalitions to give a dynamic view of how coalitions can be built.

UN Declaration on Food Systems Cop 28 (ProVeg International)

Last year, at COP 28, a historic Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action was signed by 134 countries, mandating that Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) must include agriculture as a critical facet of their plan to tackle climate change. A coalition of organizations, including ProVeg International, YOUNGO, Youth and Children of UNFCCC, and the Food at COP campaign by YOUNGO

and ProVeg, worked together to make this possible ([ProVeg International, 2024](#)). While I do not know how these coalitions were built, an article on ProVeg International's website discussed how this was achieved. They lobbied for this declaration by leaning on information about agriculture's climate footprint, that hundreds of millions of people depend on agriculture economically and for nutrition, and a key finding that including agriculture in NDCs aligns with sustainable development goals mandated by the UN that state, "Every person has the right to adequate food and nutrition" ([ProVeg International, 2024](#)).

The mission of this coalition was to get a declaration to include agriculture in NDCs, and the strategy was to use education, coalition building, lobbying, and mobilizing advocates from all over the globe. While not explicitly focused on Collective Liberation, this declaration is an essential step in the right direction and has built a coalition that includes youth worldwide. The issues of food access, food production, worker's rights, and lowering carbon footprints are attempting to be addressed through this declaration. When I looked into the declarations more closely, there was no mention of animal liberation or liberation from a corporate food system. However, many changes are listed to preserve resources and jobs, increase food security workers' rights, stabilize food production, and ensure climate resilience, making this a successful coalition promoting systemic change in our food system ([COP 28](#)).

Bel Jacobs Community Action Events: Bel Jacobs, an animal and climate activist, has been immersed in the UK AR and EJ movements for some time now. Bel now runs a climate center, hosting events for the Islington community in London to tackle climate change. For example, the weekend I met her, she had just returned from a tree planting event where she

said she felt rejuvenated and refreshed. Another event Bel has hosted is calling for the community to build flood protection infrastructure, a way for people to channel their anxiety into action. While Bel’s center is not necessarily coalition-building formally with organizations towards a specific outcome, she is mobilizing local activists in her community who are involved in the AR, EJ, RJ, and affordable housing movements. I felt it was important to add her experience because she said something that resonated with me,

“People need practical responses to climate change; it has been too theoretical. We need preparation for extreme weather events instead of just living in fear. Governments and corporations are too slow and will not respond in time; we need to reach the community directly” (interview, 11/20/23).

Having events where AR and CJ/EJ organizations hold spaces for community building through climate resiliency projects could be a fantastic way to collaborate, bond, and build trust.

Greenpeace open workshops: Sandra Ata from Greenpeace UK helped create a workshop space offering after-hours access to various London social and EJ community groups. It started in 2020, and now, 15-65 groups use the space from across the social justice spectrum. Sandra stated,

“Different social justice groups show up for CJ, and even if they do not explicitly focus on that, it has helped build coalitions for Greenpeace and the larger community.”

She emphasizes, *“The community space is not marketed to donors. We did not want to give the impression to groups that this was a tactic to get more funding; I believe this is how we keep the space and intention genuine. Groups do not have to be ideologically aligned with Greenpeace to participate”* (interview, 11/25/23).

In Greenpeace's case, this is an excellent example of not tokenizing EJ/CJ groups and not using it for personal gain. Funding is a consistent issue for AR organizations, but it is best to avoid getting donors involved in the initial stages of coalition building. I highly suggest this for larger AR organizations, particularly those with the resources to do this, such as The Humane Society of the United States, MFA, The Humane League, or GFI. Smaller or medium organizations may be unable to do something like this. Larger organizations could also give money to BIPOC-led organizations to hold these open workshops.

Festival of Resistance (FFL): During the Oily Money Out week of events held by FFL, when we were protesting the last day in front of the Intercontinental Hotel, they held a “Festival of Resistance.” Their mission is to get oil money out of London’s institutions, divest from fossil fuels, and prevent new fossil fuel projects from emerging. With the festival of resistance, the vision for this event was to couple direct action with joy, integrate art and activism, build community empowerment, and embody a form of Collective Liberation.

The festival was about freeing activists through live music, group singing, dancing, celebration, and radical speaking of truth to power. There were folks from XR and folks with vegan t-shirts on; a Palestinian poet was speaking and calling for solidarity with Gaza, performances were done by drag queens, families attended with their children, and a band led

us through song and dance. What made this event successful was hosting a week of workshops, socials, skill sharing, previous coalition building, speakers from various movements, art from diverse stakeholders, Hare Krishna food aid, and outreach to labor groups who also came to speak at the festival. While not mentioning animal agriculture or farmed animals directly, there were blunt conversations around colonialism, the Global North/South divide, capitalism, patriarchy, and Indigenous sovereignty. Hence, it embodied Collective Liberation but without animal liberation and non-human animals. However, seeing vegans there, along with vegan food being served, gets this festival much closer to those ideals, and having these kinds of actions can help sustain movements and provide resources to prevent burnout (field notes, 10/20/23). It is essential to focus on progress, not perfection, and the festival of resistance represents serious progress toward integrating EJ and AR values.

Vegan Activist Alliance: Started by Eloida Trinidad, she utilizes her Afro-Indigenous roots to create a community-driven, Collective Liberation-focused coalition that seeks to bring together issues of human rights, animal rights, and environmental protection. The organization's mission is to “achieve systemic and individual change of industries exploiting animals” ([Vegan Activist Alliance](#)). The vision is to “Build a more inclusive and cohesive movement for liberation. One that is an abolitionist, radically inclusive, anti-speciest, anti-racist, anti-colonial, anti-imperialist approach to liberation work” ([Vegan Activist Alliance](#)). Their strategy includes coalition building, policy work, education, art, and community engagement. The partners are large organizations like MFA and The Humane League, as well as medium to small organizations like Chili’s on Wheels, The Agriculture

Fairness Alliance, Be Well with Brialle, Animal Activism Mentorship, The Vegan Museum, Animal Rebellion NYC, and Black VegFest. VAA totally and completely embodies Collective Liberation to the fullest, including animal and human liberation, as well as anti-colonial and imperial values. VAA has also been vocal on their social media about the genocide in Palestine and calling for their network to show solidarity. VAA is living the values so desperately needed across movements, and its vision is radical enough to challenge the foundational issues of the climate crisis head-on.

[APEX Advocacy Pro Palestine Solidarity and Activism Starter Guide](#): APEX advocacy stands out in the AR space, as they lead with Collective Liberation principles, are led by BIPOC, and their mission is to increase the number of BIPOC to advocate for animal rights. Their vision is to eradicate industries that exploit non-human animals with grassroots advocacy, amplify BIPOC voices, build bridges with other movements and communities, and recognize the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression ([APEX Advocacy](#)). Their strategy combines education, advocacy, grassroots outreach, intersectional advocacy, cross-movement building, and speaking truth to power. They created an “Activism Starter Guide,” an incredibly comprehensive guide in its education and messaging that tells the truth about the dynamics in the AR movement.

The activism started guide is unapologetically vegan but discusses the issues of white veganism and single-issue advocacy. They give an overview of the intersectional issues within the industrial animal farming industry, how it affects BIPOC people, center anti-imperial and anti-colonial values, EJ values, highlight different forms of activism, have tips to help people eat more plant-based, and more ([APEX Advocacy](#)). Several AR

organizations fund APEX Advocacy, but one funder that stands out is Lush cosmetics. While not exclusively an animal rights organization, they have vegan and cruelty-free bath and body products and help provide APEX with the funding they need to continue working. APEX has also been unwavering in their support for Palestine and the genocide in Gaza; at this year's AVA conference, they held a meet-up for animal activists to discuss what is happening, vocally called out Zionism in the vegan movement during their speaking workshop (which they were expecting to have people walk out, instead they got a standing ovation), and have held trainings on how to get involved with actions for Gaza (field notes, 5/15/ 24). APEX Advocacy is an organization that needs to be respected, from which other AR organizations should learn. It leads a collective liberation approach to animal advocacy that leaves no one behind.

D. Ideas for Further Research

I have several ideas for further research; of course, I would like to see more research on coalition building across movements, and a new study published by Faunalytics by Coni Arevalo has a similar focus to mine ([2024](#)). She spoke to several environmental organizations about whether they would be interested in working with AR organizations and under what conditions they would collaborate. More research on the effectiveness of BIPOC organizations is crucial to moving away from single-issue white veganism. It can help educate the movement on why there needs to be different strategies and leadership than what has been done in the last few decades.

Further research on intersectional strategy, specifically for AR, EJ, and climate movements, is needed to understand how effective these strategies can be. Research on collective visioning across movements would be fascinating; sometimes, we focus so much on the problems of climate change that we need to remember the future we want to have and how to bring it to fruition. There has been a greater focus on this in environmental studies research, but more profound research on Indigenous land management techniques needs to be prioritized. More research on environmental organizations' neglect or corruption is necessary to confront specific organizations' greenwashing and complicity. I spoke with a writer at Vox, whom I shall not name, on an expose they are writing about World Wildlife Fund to be published in July on how they take money from the meat industry, preserve land just to hunt animals, and have wilfully neglected water pollution issues from factory farming (field notes, 5/16/24). Finally, to follow the lead of all the research done on the oil and gas lobby's influence on politics, policy, and the public's perception, there needs to be more research on the meat lobby's influence over global, national, and local government, how they affect policy and how they have managed to fly under the radar.

E. Concluding Thoughts

The only way out of the climate crisis is to face what led us here in the first place: a colonial capitalist system that thrives on the racialized other, extraction, division, separation from the natural world, and the pursuit of voracious greed that destroys the conditions necessary for its survival. The remedy is to reconnect by finding our shared humanity, valuing other beings' freedom, and seeing them as relatives like Indigenous communities do

while integrating activism and joy. I am deeply indebted and grateful to the activists I interviewed who inspire me often, for all the organizations I highlighted and their dedication to making the world a better place, to the UCSB Global Studies department for giving me this opportunity, to the Orfalea Center for providing funding, and to my committee and professors for guiding me through this project.

I hope to create a small ripple that leads to more significant change within the AR movement and provide a helpful compilation of case studies, data, comparative analysis, Collective Liberation embodiment, and ideas for future research. We can create a more just, compassionate, and connected world and ensure our future by listening to each other, believing in each other, and working together to make the world we know we can have. Hence, I wanted to focus on understanding the tensions between AR and EJ movements, how tensions are attempting to be resolved, and how to tangibly come together to fight against humankind's most significant problem ever. We are one part of the whole; ending human superiority, moving away from binaries such as animal/human, black/white, and nature/humans, and seeing ourselves as one part of the ecosystem is the only way to solve climate change. To end with a quote from an Indigenous elder, Chief Seattle,

“The earth does not belong to man. Man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.”

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