

The Politics of Animal Rights Advocacy

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Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to make the case that the politics of animal rights advocacy rests with establishing the moral and legal status of animals as a public policy issue. Presently, animal rights is primarily framed as an optional lifestyle choice. It is not understood as a matter for mainstream politics, including public policy, the policies of political parties, regulations and legislation. Starting with Barbara Noske's concept of the animal industrial complex, I consider the present status of the many traditions, cultural norms, economic and other incentives which license our instrumental use animals for human gain. I propose a five-part evaluation process of social movements and use it to evaluate the modern animal rights movement. I critique its present strategy with its emphasis on personal lifestyle choice as inadequate in challenging the animal industrial complex. I conclude the modern animal rights movement must implement a long-term strategy which advances animal issues as public policy, which is in addition to its present strategy promoting optional vegan, crueltyfree lifestyle choice.

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Keywords

Advocacy; animal rights; industrial complex; lifestyle; moral crusade; otherness; policy; social movement; strategy; vegan

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