



Quiet Activism:

Exploring the barriers and facilitators to animal activism

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the relationship between individuals and animal activism. Due to the scarcity of literature on the topic, indirect indicators were used to gain a preliminary understanding of the barriers and facilitators of animal activism, categorising barriers into internal and external barriers. Using this, a survey of 1,000 individuals living in the UK was carried out. It found that participation in animal activism is very low; however, most individuals were not wholly resistant to it. Rather, most participants either had not considered it before or would like to get involved. To this end, individuals were most willing to engage in ‘quiet’ forms of activism such as charity and social activism, whereas, frontline activism garnered less support. Overall, internal barriers, such as self-limiting beliefs, were more commonly experienced than external barriers. However, some external barriers like not having enough time were also commonly experienced. Accordingly, the most popular facilitators to animal activism engagement resolved these barriers, such as having more time or having activism work they are comfortable with. A focus group and an interview were subsequently carried out to deconstruct the reasons behind these findings. It was found that internal barriers often exacerbate external barriers. For example, not feeling confident enough may worsen social pressures. Participants found it easiest to engage with activism when it was using ‘quiet’ activism working towards a pre-established goal or project such as Veganuary or charity work.

Keywords and Topics: effective animal activism, plant-based diets, social psychology, dietary change, cognitive dissonance, self-limiting beliefs, external barriers, internal barriers, belief-action disparity, the meat paradox, social pressures

1. Introduction and Background

1.0 Background

1.0a Animal Activism

In terms of how many animals are impacted, being an activist is arguably more important than being a vegan. For example, suppose there's a flexitarian persuading several omnivorous peers to reduce their meat consumption. If successful, this may have more of an impact than the flexitarian further reducing their own meat consumption. It is estimated that switching from a typical diet to a vegetarian diet saves 30 land animals per year.¹ On the other hand, going flexitarian may save 20 animals per year if you reduce your meat intake by two thirds. Ergo, convincing three of your friends to reduce their meat consumption by 66% could save an additional 60 animals a year.

Additionally, it is arguably easier. Many individuals find cutting out meat and animal products altogether challenging. However, forms of “quiet activism” can be easy, as they require little time or effort. Despite this, animal activism is rarely participated in.

Both academic and grey literature about the challenges of animal activism are somewhat sparse. However, there are some important indirect indicators. These include movement-specific issues as well as general internal and external barriers faced by many social movements.

¹ Animal Charity Evaluators, 2018. [Accessed online August 2022] <https://animalcharityevaluators.org/research/methodology/our-use-of-cost-effectiveness-estimates/>

1.0b Types of animal activism

Defining animal activism can be difficult. Broadly, animal activists believe animals deserve to live happy, cruelty-free lives. However, what constitutes ‘activism’ can be more contentious. Dietary change in and of itself may be considered activism but others may only consider more direct forms of action like participating in animal rescues.² While all forms of animal activism are important, this paper will focus on activism that seeks to change others’ behaviours, especially through ‘quieter’ forms.

There are a number of ways that individuals can participate in animal activism of this type. They can roughly be divided into five categories: online, everyday, charity, social, and frontline.³

Frontline activism is the form most people think of when considering activism. It includes attending protests and demonstrations. There are also quieter forms of activism; **charity activism** includes working for or donating to animal organisations. **Online activism** includes sharing or creating pro-animal content, usually on social media platforms. **Social activism** can include talking to friends or family about animal welfare or dietary change. Finally, **everyday activism** can include wearing animal advocacy fashion.

² Braun, K. 2021. *Examining Animal Activism* [Accessed online August 2022]

<https://sheffieldanimals.group.shef.ac.uk/examining-animal-activism-by-katharina-braun/>

³ PETA, 2022. *Everyday Activism* [Accessed online August 2022] <https://www.peta.org/action/activism-guide/everyday-activism/>

1.0c External barriers

Despite the variety of methods of activism available, most people do not commonly engage in them. To understand the barriers that prevent people from doing so, it is important to first conceptualise them. Barriers can be broadly categorised into internal and external.

This is in line with other belief-action disparities regarding how humans interact with non-human animals. 94% of respondents to a European Commission survey stated that it was important to protect the welfare of farmed animals.⁴ However, when putting this belief into action only 35% of respondents were willing to spend up to 5% more for animal welfare-friendly products. 5% of respondents were willing to pay 11-20% more and just 3% were willing to pay over 20% more.

Therefore, there is clearly a disparity between the beliefs people have and the actions they will take to calibrate them. This is evident in the UK as well: a recent study by Bryant Research has found that individuals frequently disagree with common UK farming practices. For example, 96.2% said that keeping pigs in tight cages where they cannot turn around for weeks was unacceptable.⁵

Despite these views, only around 14% of the British population currently abstain from

eating meat.⁶ This has been coined the ‘meat paradox’ whereby individuals will say that they love animals and care for their welfare yet proceed to eat meat and other animal products that directly harm animals.⁷ This results in individuals being in a state of cognitive dissonance as their beliefs and actions do not align.⁸

Consequently, individuals feel a state of psychological unease and tension.⁹ This can heighten when someone challenges them on the issue that their action or belief pertains to. This is exemplified in people’s contradictory views of the virtue of veganism/vegetarianism and those who actually practise it. Ruby and Heine (2011) found in their study that omnivorous participants found a vegetarian diet more virtuous.¹⁰

However, this does not translate into how people perceive vegetarians and vegans themselves. Monin and Minson (2012)¹¹ found

⁶ Yougov, 2022. *Dietary choices of Brits*. [Accessed online August 2022] <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/lifestyle/trackers/dietary-choices-of-brits-eg-vegetarian-flexitarian-meat-eater-etc>

⁷ Loughnan, S. Bratanova, B. Puvia, E. 2012. *The Meat Paradox: How are we able to love animals and love eating animals* [Accessed online August 2022] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258332248_The_Meat_Paradox_How_are_we_able_to_love_animals_and_love_eating_animals

⁸ Cherry, K. 2022. *What is cognitive dissonance?* [Accessed online August 2022] <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-cognitive-dissonance-2795012>

⁹ McLeod, S. 2018. *What is cognitive dissonance? Definition and examples* [Accessed online August 2022] <https://www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive-dissonance.html>

¹⁰ Ruby, M, Heine, S. 2011. *Meat, morals, and masculinity*. [Accessed online August 2022] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0195666311000341>

¹¹ Minson, J. Monin, B. 2011. *Do-Goooder Derogation: Disparaging Morally Motivated Minorities to Defuse*

⁴ European Commission, 2016. *Attitudes of Europeans Towards Animal Welfare* [Accessed online July 2022] <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2096>

⁵ Bryant Research LTD, 2022. *Most Brits find common farming practices unacceptable* [Accessed online September 2022] <https://www.bryantresearch.co.uk/insights/acceptability-of-animal-farming-practices>

that within their study, 47% of participants associated at least one negative word with vegetarians. Many qualitative papers have reported that vegans and vegetarians experience social prejudice and strained relationships with friends or family.¹²

Consequently, some of the largest external barriers to animal activism are social. Pressure can come from friends, family, community or the wider culture in which an individual lives. Adolescent bystanders to animal abuse said the main reason they did not intervene was because they would have been labelled negatively and had no support in opposing it.¹³

Other external barriers are more simplistic in nature. They are often logistical, such as lack of time, resources and knowledge. Unsurprisingly, these barriers impinge most activist movements.

Individuals may not have enough time to engage in certain forms of animal activism and not know about the “quiet” forms of activism that require less time and effort. They may also simply not know how to get

involved in animal activism or what to do.

1.0d Internal Barriers

Internal barriers are the beliefs or attitudes that an individual may hold that stop them from getting involved in activism. These beliefs may be about themselves, the issue that the activism is about or the type of people that join the movement. These barriers can be found across activism movements with some variations.

Internal barriers may exacerbate an individual’s perception of external barriers, especially social ones. One of these is being stuck in self-limiting beliefs. These are beliefs that limit what an individual thinks about their own abilities, motivations or knowledge. For example, believing that they are not knowledgeable enough on the issue to get involved.

Another is avoiding unpleasant emotions. This can be social, having obvious overlaps with external barriers. However, how an individual feels about their friends, family and culture may play just as important a role. For example, an individual may simply find discussing dietary change or animal welfare with their friends strange or uncomfortable.

Avoiding unpleasant emotions can also include emotions about engaging with the movement itself. Animal activism can include discussing and sharing content online of harrowing animal abuse, especially in factory farms.¹⁴ This can be very saddening

Anticipated Reproach [Accessed online August 2022]
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1948550611415695>

¹² Potts, A. White, M. 2018. *New Zealand Vegetarians: At Odds with Their Nations* [Accessed online August 2022]
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/New-Zealand-Vegetarians%3A-At-Odds-with-Their-Nation-Potts-White/Oe5b54a68721aa55ced8b3f65ef6a966f5ba5528>

¹³ Arluke, A. 2012. *Bystander apathy in animal abuse cases: Exploring barriers to child and adolescent intervention.*[Accessed online July 2022]
<https://doi.org/10.2752/175303712X13240472427753>

¹⁴ CIWF, 2020. *Animal Cruelty.* [Accessed online August 2022]
<https://www.ciwf.org.uk/factory-farming/animal-cruelty/>

and some may simply want to avoid the emotions that engaging in this brings.

Individuals may also lack awareness of the issues, despite being on board with them. As discussed in 1.0c most people disagree with common UK farming practices. However, a YouGov tracker revealed that only 26% of people believed that agricultural companies were not acting very ethically or not ethically at all.¹⁵ Therefore, people may proclaim that factory farming is immoral whilst also thinking that it does not happen in the UK.

Another key internal barrier, which again has crossover with external barriers, is not feeling represented in the animal activism movement. If an individual feels like their gender, ethnicity or general type of person is not included, they may struggle to engage with the movement. While there is a lack of evidence on the demographic make-up of the animal activism movement, environmental movements have certainly been accused of not being representative of the UK population.¹⁶

Similarly, individuals who are not currently vegetarian or vegan may feel like they cannot or would feel uncomfortable engaging in animal activism. As stated at the outset of this paper however, those who still

eat a limited amount of meat can have a large impact through advocacy work, helping to facilitate broader societal changes that, in turn, make it easier for themselves and others to become vegan.

Akin to this is that certain personality types may make people more likely to engage in activism. Research indicates that individual qualities stemming from a bystander's demographic background, sense of efficacy, ability, and knowledge of what to do, social network or compassion can influence whether victims are helped.¹⁷

Certain demographic characteristics are also associated with likelihood of caring about the issues at the heart of animal activism. In one study, 169 students were given an ethics position questionnaire. Multiple regressions showed that female gender and left-leaning political identity were associated with more positive attitudes toward non-human animals and their treatment.¹⁸

1.1 Project Overview

The aim of this study is to understand why people (both vegans and non-vegans) do not engage more readily in animal activism. It will primarily investigate what the main barriers are to participating in animal activism, applying what has been found in the literature review. It will also investigate what facilitators may help people to overcome these barriers and increase their

¹⁵ YouGov, 2022. *To what extent are agriculture companies behaving in an ethical way?* [Accessed online accessed August 2022] <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/philosophy/trackers/to-what-extent-are-agriculture-companies-behaving-in-an-ethical-way>

¹⁶ Gayle, D. 2019. *Does Extinction Rebellion have a race problem?* [Accessed August 2022] <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/04/extinction-rebellion-race-climate-crisis-inequality>

¹⁷ (Amato 1990) (Dovidio 1984) (Banyard et al, 2007)

¹⁸ Galvin, S. Herzog Jr, H. 1992. *Ethical Ideology, Animal Rights Activism, and Attitudes Toward the Treatment of Animals* [Accessed August 2022] [10.1207/s15327019eb0203_1](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327019eb0203_1)

overall engagement in animal activism. In doing this, it will identify what types of activism individuals across a range of dietary habits can easily engage in as well as the nuances of what can increase collective engagement overall.

1.1a Relevance for the Field

This research is especially relevant to the animal advocacy field as it provides effective ways for people who do not readily engage in animal activism to participate in the movement. It may also aid those who face difficult external barriers (such as social pressures) to facilitate engagement in quiet activism, where they can have a large impact without having to face social ostracism.

As discussed, animal agriculture practices are widely deplored by the UK public, which should but currently does not translate into reception of activism for the cause. This report will attempt to bridge that gap, helping activists and animal advocacy organisations alike to identify types of advocacy to promote to the public – especially those that can be done irrespective of signing up to a major organisation and with little time and effort.

In doing this, It will also provide a practical guide for those facing barriers on what sorts of quiet activism can be done easily and with minimal effort. Furthermore, the findings will be important for those who are interested in other implications of consuming animal products, such as those who are flexitarian due to environmental concerns. It will illuminate what types of

activism they can do without needing to be vegetarian or vegan.

2. Methods

This research was conducted through the use of an online survey as well as a follow up focus group session and interview. Within each research method, participants were informed of the general nature of the study and were guaranteed anonymity. Procedures were put in place to ensure the study gathered a representative sample of the current UK population in the survey in terms of gender and age groups.¹⁹

2.1 UK Representative Survey

A representative survey of the UK adult population was conducted on Prolific in order to gather information on individuals' willingness to participate in different forms of activism, the internal and external barriers they face, as well as what may help them to get involved. Participants were also asked a series of demographic questions. We aimed for a total sample of n=1,000; to achieve this, we iteratively removed respondents who failed attention check questions or completed the survey too quickly (n=101), and recruited more to replace them. Participants were each paid £1 for their participation in the survey. An overview of the questions and answer options is available in the Appendix.

2.2 Focus Group Interviews

In addition to the survey data, some participants were invited to participate in a focus group or interview. There was one focus group

¹⁹ Demographic information on the survey sample can be found in the supplementary materials section of this report

session and one interview, which followed up and expanded on individuals based on their survey answers. The focus group had three participants and lasted one hour whereas the interview was with one participant and lasted thirty minutes.

2.2a. Participant Selection

Participants for the focus group and interview were selected based on how they answered whether they currently engaged in animal activism. Within the survey they were asked “do you take part in any form of animal activism?” Those that answered “no, but I would like to” were selected for follow up questioning.

Participants were selected upon this basis because they were the most likely to be receptive to animal activism but experience barriers to getting involved. Participants who still included meat in their diet were also selected, as one of the emphasises of this study was to identify activism that meat eaters and flexitarians would also feel comfortable with.

Beyond this, participants from a diverse range of demographics were selected so that a range of life experiences and factors could be represented.

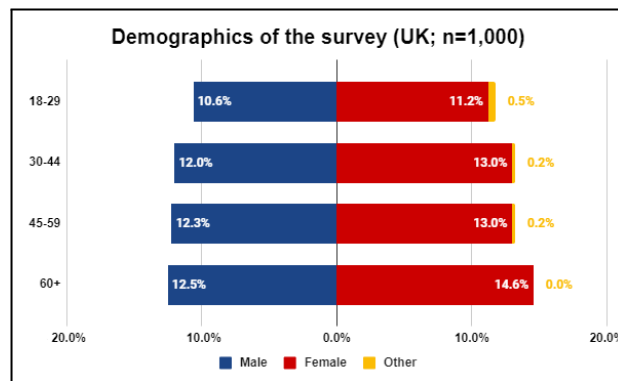
3. Results

Survey responses provided useful quantitative insights on people’s willingness to participate in different forms of activism as well as the barriers they face and what may aid them to get involved. This is especially interesting when viewing these results against a range of demographic data.

We hope these findings can increase the amount of activism that occurs within the animal advocacy movement, especially

amongst those who are willing to participate but face barriers.

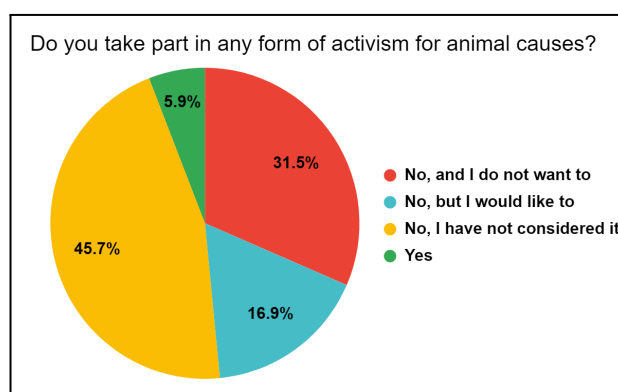
As shown, the survey responses reflected a representative UK sample in terms of age and gender groups.



3.1 Survey Results

3.1a Participation in animal activism

First, it was important to establish the engagement with and attitudes towards animal activism for everyday people. The above chart illustrates the extent to which people would be willing to engage in animal activism. This was in response to the question “Do you participate in any form of animal activism?” As illustrated, the vast majority of participants did not currently participate in animal activism at 94.1%.



However, their attitude towards it differed. 30.5% of participants said they did not and would not want to, and 44.2% said no they have not considered. However, 16.4% said they do not currently participate in activism but they would like to. Therefore, while there is little

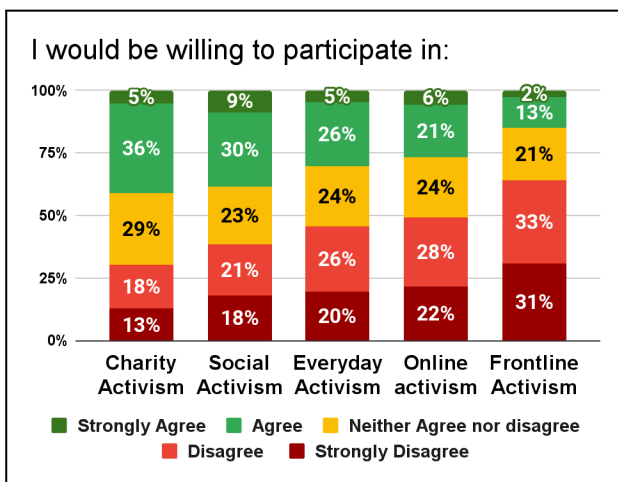
participation in animal activism currently, less than a third of respondents were completely resistant to the notion.

5.9% of people said they did participate in animal activism of some kind. However, this varied on frequency. 0.8% said they did on a daily basis, 0.4% said they did on a monthly basis 0.6% said they did on a weekly basis, 1% said they do every 2-3 months, 1.3% said they do every 3-6 months and 1.8% said they do every 6-12 months. Therefore, few people partake in animal activism and even fewer do so on a regular basis.

The other respondents said they did not know or preferred not to say.

3.1b Willingness to participate in different forms of activism

Participants were then asked whether they would be willing to participate in various forms of activism. They were asked this on a scale of: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree.



As shown in the chart above, certain forms of activism were more popular than others. Just under half of participants said they disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would be willing to engage with online activism, such as sharing videos or information on social media.

Just over a quarter of people either agreed or strongly agreed and just under a quarter remained neutral.

Participants were then asked whether they would be willing to engage in charity activism, such as raising money or volunteering for an animal charity. This proved to be the form of activism that people were most likely to participate in, as 41.1% agreed or strongly agreed they would be willing to engage in it. Consequently, less disagreed or strongly disagreed at 30.4% and 28.5% remained neutral.

Participants were least willing to get involved in frontline activism, such as attending a protest or demonstration. 63.2% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would participate in frontline activism. Just 14.9% agreed or strongly agreed and 21.2% remained neutral.

Participants were more receptive to engaging with social activism, such as talking to friends and family about animal rights or hosting a veggie/vegan dinner party. 38.7% either agreed or strongly agreed that they would engage in this form of activism. 22.7% remained neutral while 38.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Therefore, there was a fairly even split amongst participants towards this method of activism.

Participants were less willing to engage with everyday activism, such as wearing animal advocacy fashion or putting up animal advocacy stickers. 30.2% agreed or strongly agreed that they would be willing to engage in this form of activism. 63.9% said they disagreed or strongly disagreed whilst 21.2% remained neutral

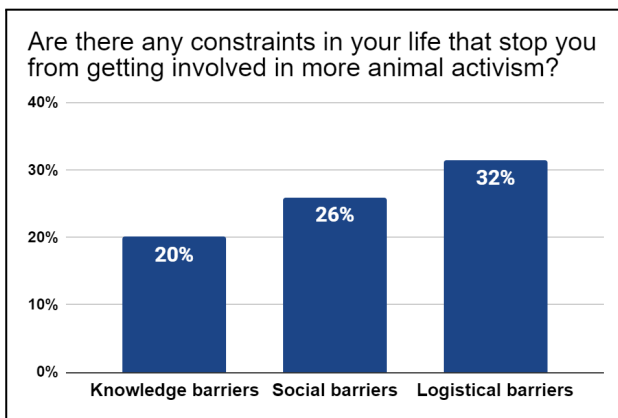
Therefore, whilst participants were unwilling to be involved in more direct forms of activism they were far more receptive to methods of quiet activism.

3.1c External barriers

Given this positive reception of most forms of activism, it is important to understand what barriers were preventing individuals from getting involved. First, they were asked if there were any constraints in their life that stopped them from getting involved with animal activism.

43.9% of people answered saying they did not have anything that constrained them from getting involved in animal activism. 10% said they either did not know or that they preferred not to say. Of those that did experience barriers, participants could select as many as they wanted.

The below chart shows responses from those who do experience external barriers, categorised by the barriers that they face. This categorical grouping of the barriers that people face, shows that the most prominent barrier by far is logistical in nature.



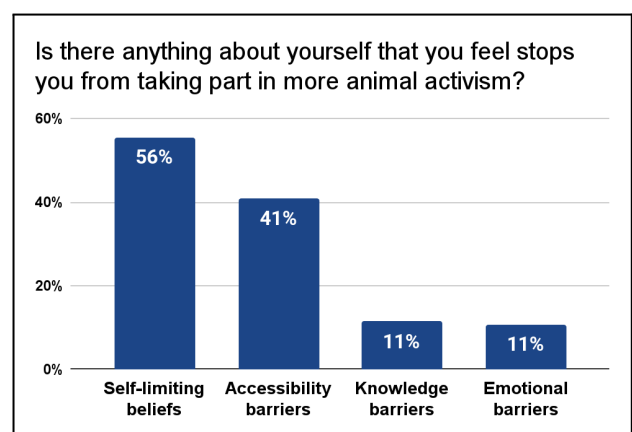
32% of respondents said they did not have enough time or resources to get involved. This is something the animal activist movement could feasibly remedy by promoting easier, more accessible, and lower-commitment forms of activism. It is worth noting that more effortful forms of activism are not necessarily more impactful - it could be the case that donating to charity, for example, is very low-cost and high-impact compared to attending animal vigils.

Next largest were social barriers, selected by 26% of respondents. 6.6% said they fear that friends and family will judge them and 4.5% said they fear that the community will judge them. Another 4.5% said they fear that people will judge them online. Similarly, 7.6% of people said they fear that people will judge them in public. 2.8% of individuals said they fear that it challenges their culture. Therefore, there is no single social pressure point that creates social barriers.

Finally, there were also knowledge barriers about how to get involved in activism. 11.7% of respondents said that they did not know how to get involved. In a similar vein, 8.4% of individuals said that they did not know what advocacy work can be done.

3.1d Internal barriers

Participants were then asked about internal barriers. They were asked "Is there anything about yourself that you feel stops you from taking part in more animal activism?" 60.1% said yes, while 30.2% said no. 5.9% said they don't know and 3.8% said they prefer not to say. Those that did experience internal barriers were allowed to select all that applied to them. The frequency of selection is shown below:



Evidently, the most prominent within this is self-limiting beliefs. 23% of participants said that they fear they do not know enough. 10.9% of individuals said they feared they would not be good at it and 21.6% said they would not be confident enough.

The next most commonly selected was accessibility barriers. This is largely due to the fact that 28.7% of respondents said they believe not being vegan or vegetarian stops them from taking part in more animal activism. Just 4.1% of participants said they feel unwelcome in the animal movement. Only 0.3 - 1.4% of all survey participants said that either their gender, age group or ethnicity were not represented. However, 5.2% of people did say they feel “people like me” are not involved in the animal movement.

Knowledge and emotional barriers were relatively less prominent. Firstly, there was a lack of knowledge about the issues of animal agriculture. 7.1% participants said that animals are not the priority and 4.3% said they feel animals are treated fairly in this country.

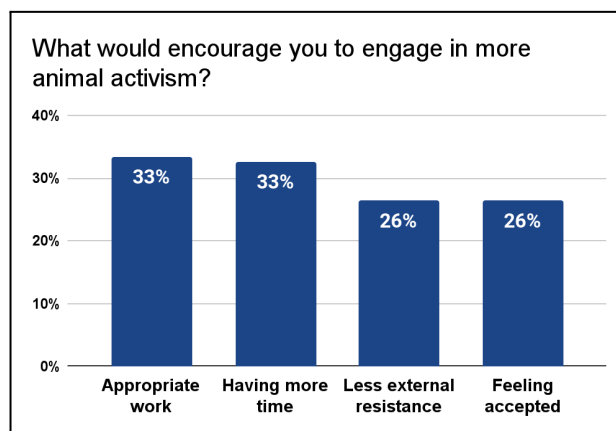
Finally, some participants expressed emotional barriers as 10.7% participants said that it would make them sad to engage with the topic.

Therefore, it is evident that internal barriers more commonly posed a constraint on people becoming involved compared to external barriers. This is because people frequently experienced self-limiting beliefs as well as feeling not being vegetarian or vegan meant they could not get involved in the movement.

3.1e Facilitators

Finally, participants were asked about what may work to help them overcome such

barriers. They were asked “What would encourage you to engage in more animal activism?” 29.8% of individuals said they did not know and 7.3% preferred not to say.



Most of the things that would facilitate more activism unsurprisingly solved the barriers that people had commonly experienced. Most commonly selected, by 32.6% of participants, was having more time.

Whilst people’s own time resources is a problem that the animal movement itself cannot remedy, it can work to promote the fact that many forms of activism (such as social) require minimal time and effort. This view is corroborated by the fact that 20.3% participants said that having advocacy work they are more comfortable with and 13.1% said having advocacy work which is more tailored to their skills would encourage them to engage in animal activism. These go a long way to solving both internal and external barriers; they help to stop self-limiting beliefs as well as letting people know how they can get involved in a way that suits their skillset.

There was some recognition of solving internal accessibility barriers. Most prominent was 15.5% of participants saying that they were more likely to be involved if they knew non-veggies/vegans could be involved in the animal movement. 10.9% of individuals also said

there being more people like them in the animal movement would increase their likelihood to get involved. This suggests that the animal movement needs to portray an image that it allows those who are in more complementation stages of dietary transition (such as flexitarian or meat reducer) to engage with the movement on an equal footing. Indeed, failing to do so limits the potential number of activists to the 3% of the population who are fully vegan.

There was also appreciation of solving external accessibility barriers as 6.3% of participants said if their friends and family were less resistant to it, 5.1% of individuals said if their culture was less resistant to it and 15% said if people in general were less resistant to it. Again, whilst this is something the animal movement itself may struggle to solve, promoting quiet forms of activism to those that may have social constraints, such as charity activism, may encourage more individuals to engage.

3.2 Focus Group & Interview Results

Conducting follow-up focus groups and interviews with survey participants allowed for a far more nuanced understanding of their prior experience and engagement with the animal activism movement. It was also an opportunity to develop a more detailed understanding of what people found difficult about engaging with the movement and how that could be overcome. All of the participants still ate meat but had in the past or were currently trying to reduce their meat consumption.

3.2a Experience and knowledge of animal activism

As an introductory question and to get a sense of the group's background experience, they

were broadly asked what they knew about animal activism and if they had any prior experience with it.

All participants agreed that the experience and knowledge they had of animal activism largely relied on the portrayals they had seen within the media. Invariably, this meant that they had seen much more "extreme" forms of activism, especially frontline activism.

However, participants did notice that they had on reflection engaged with forms of activism they may not have originally thought of as activism before doing the survey. This included things such as talking to friends about documentaries.

Almost instantly it was established that one of the key barriers to animal activism when they have seen it in the media or in real life is that it is targeting multiple different issues all at once. Whereas participants believed human rights has clearer objectives, they thought there is no clear statute that animal activists are trying to collaboratively build towards.

3.2b. Online Activism

Next, participants were asked about the various forms of activism, focusing on the 'quieter' forms of activism. All participants had seen online activism, such as people sharing videos or information, and believed them to be effective if people are willing to spend the time looking at them.

The willingness to engage in online activism seemed to very much depend on the interaction between both internal barriers and external barriers. This became evident when one participant stated they did not face external barriers and had like-minded people in her online

spaces, which enabled her to happily share information and videos about animal cruelty.

However, two of the participants did have friends, family or followers online that they felt may judge them for sharing such content. However, one of the participants who happily admitted he did not experience many self-limiting beliefs and was open to some negative backlash would happily share the content. Another participant was much more hesitant about the social pressures of posting animal advocacy content online. There were also other subsidiary considerations, such as, whether the online content has a genuine source and has been fact checked.

3.2c Frontline Activism

All of the participants expressed no inclination to be involved with frontline activism, nor could they see themselves becoming involved in it in the future. When pressed on why that may be, they said that it takes very particular personality types to get involved in demonstrations such as these. There was also hesitation expressed by two participants at the potential of getting criminal charges for attending such a demonstration.

There were mixed feelings towards those who do engage with frontline activism. On the one hand, there was a definite appreciation that a lot of important changes come via this more direct approach of action, especially, forms of undercover work that exposes animal cruelty. However, there was equally a sense that it gave a 'militant' image of the animal activism movement and may not be the most effective method to get the point across to the general public.

3.2d Social Activism

Participants found that they had all engaged in social activism in the past, whether that be knowingly or unknowingly. They said that it was certainly easier in the presence of at least one vegetarian or vegan. However, they did also state that as appreciation for vegetarianism and veganism has grown, so too has their ease with engaging in social activism. Equally, they find that there are now multiple ways to talk about animal related issues, including focusing on climate change, public health or animal welfare.

To help facilitate these sorts of conversations, participants found it especially useful if they had a project or information source that they could pin the conversation on. This belief was intensified for those who faced the internal barrier of self-limiting beliefs, especially about not being confident enough or knowing enough. Documentaries were a useful starting point as a way to initiate conversations about animal welfare and dietary change. Additionally, it was noted that national campaigns/projects such as Veganuary offer a fun way to engage in the topic of conversation which minimises the chance of confrontation.

Multiple participants had also encouraged their family to be involved in Veganuary, with varying degrees of success. Veganuary offered a useful avenue for the participants, as they were predominantly flexitarian, to say they are attempting a vegan or vegetarian challenge without facing pushback about why they were talking about animal welfare issues if they themselves had not entirely cut meat out of their diet.

3.2e Charity activism and everyday activism

Charity and everyday activism were talked about to a lesser extent. Only one participant had engaged in charity activism in the past. However, all participants believed that it was something easy to get involved in, although they did not know that a range of skills would be useful for this form of activism. For example, social media skills could maintain a local charity's social media channels.

Everyday activism, such as wearing animal advocacy fashion, was not seen as a popular option. This was largely because it put a lot of focus on them as an individual which heightened self-limiting beliefs and the social pressure that someone may engage with them confrontationally on the topic.

3.2f External barriers

Next, participants were asked about the external barriers that they may or may not have experienced. There was a recognition amongst participants that they had been engaging in 'quieter' forms of activism unknowingly. There was also an appreciation that they knew how to get involved in more direct forms of activism if they wanted to.

As per the survey, there was certainly an appreciation that external barriers were not as detrimental as internal barriers and the latter could often exacerbate the former. There was not much discussion about external barriers as both conversations quickly became dominated by discussion of internal barriers.

3.2g Internal barriers

Participants were then directly asked about internal barriers, especially whether not

being vegan or vegetarian posed a severe barrier to their engagement. One participant said that although they experience internal barriers such as self-limiting beliefs, when there are a lot of 'nudges' in the environment (such as online animal activist posts), it reminds her about the importance of the issue, temporarily reducing the power of self-limiting beliefs.

Additionally, this participant had previous experience of working for a wildlife charity where she did not feel judged about her meat consumption. She said that what really helped to mitigate internal barriers such as this was a shared aim and project. Namely, to help the animals that they were looking after.

However, there was recognition from other participants that this may not translate to other groups. Some participants certainly did feel that not being vegan or vegetarian was a barrier to getting more involved. These participants felt that they could not enter into activism or debates about the meat industry and consequently, wildlife preservation organisations were seen as a safer avenue of activism for them.

Participants suggested that the confidence levels to get involved with animal activism are counterbalanced by the risk levels. However, participants did suggest that if they knew what activism they could get involved in and what would happen if they did, they would feel more confident to get involved.

One participant stated that the high risk level of direct action is why many would not be willing to engage with frontline activism. However, interestingly, all participants noted that they felt like they were represented in the animal activism movement, just not amongst those that were doing frontline activism. One participant did

say that the mental health toll of continually seeing animal suffering was a large barrier to further engaging in online activism.

3.2f What could be done better by the animal activism movement

Finally, participants were asked what they think the animal movement could do to better involve people such as themselves. Most participants suggested that projects and information points that took the focus off them helped them to engage in different forms of activism, especially social and online. This was especially true of Veganuary as it offers a fun challenge to get discussions about animal welfare issues started.

Participants also stressed that information on objectives is very important. Having clearly defined mission goals and reasons for them would help their confidence when engaging with others on animal topics.

Finally, participants stressed the importance of information on how to get involved and what to do once you are involved.

4. Discussion

Both the survey and focus group provided rich insights into the barriers and facilitators of animal activism. It was clear from the survey that engagement in animal activism is currently very low amongst the general public. However, there was not an overwhelming amount of resistance to getting involved in it. There were plenty of people who stated they would like to get involved or had simply not ever considered getting involved. This indicates that there are potentially vast untapped human resources available to the animal movement.

The focus groups and interviews did highlight that a lot of people's preconceptions of animal activism can be built off media images of frontline forms of activism. These forms of activism proved to be the least popular in the survey. Most people preferred 'quieter' forms of animal activism. Additionally, the focus group revealed that many people may be engaging in these forms of activism unknowingly, especially when talking about something that does not directly relate to them, such as a documentary. This reveals a skewed perception of animal activism, and highlights the potential to bring more people into activism by promoting quiet forms of activism.

Internal barriers proved, on average, more constraining to people than external barriers. The focus group revealed that often internal barriers would exacerbate the severity of external barriers that an individual may experience. This rang true in the survey as self-limiting beliefs were found to be the most impactful internal barrier. It is easy to see how these could magnify external barriers such as social pressure. This highlights an opportunity for animal activists to create mechanisms for overcoming internal barriers such as activist training, guidance, and certifications.

Another key barrier highlighted was the fact that people believed not being a vegan or vegetarian would restrict them from engaging in animal activism. The focus group highlighted that this is less true for certain groups than others. For example, wildlife charities are quite easy to engage in irrespective of dietary habits whereas launching into debates about the meat industry would be hampered by dietary choice. This highlights the importance of catering some

activism opportunities to those who still eat meat - for example, promoting volunteering or donating to animal charities as more important than giving up meat oneself.

The survey showed that there was a lack of knowledge about how much time and effort some forms of activism can take. As well as, the range of skills and advocacy work that can be done. This also rang true in the focus groups which stressed the power of having external projects to tie conversations to when carrying out either social or online activism. This highlights the importance of promoting low-effort forms of activism, and the importance of social events which prompt reflection.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, this study provided valuable insight into the rates of animal activism participated in by the general population, the different forms of activism that are available and people's willingness to participate in them, the barriers that people face whether they be internal belief-systems or external logistical constraints, as well as ways to facilitate solutions to those barriers. This information can prove invaluable to animal activists and organisations who are hoping to widen their scope in terms of increasing activism and encouraging those who would not normally partake in it to do so. As such, this report recommends highlights that:

- 1. People often associate animal activism with frontline activism, but are generally far more receptive to engaging in forms of 'quieter' activism that more aptly meet their skillset. Stressing the importance of these quiet forms of activism could greatly increase participation rates.**
- 2. This could be effectively done with national campaigns. Individuals stressed the ease of using a campaign such as Veganuary to engage others about the topic in a more casual manner. These campaigns could promote trying to get friends and families to sign up together.**
- 3. The same is true of charity activism; individuals find it easier to engage in activism when it is with the backing of a locally or nationally recognised charity.**
- 4. The most prevalent barriers to activism are internal barriers, such as perceived lack of knowledge or confidence. Providing structured training and certification could provide a tangible way to overcome these internal barriers.**
- 5. Those that eat meat feel like it is a barrier to getting involved in the animal advocacy movement, even if they are in the process of reducing their meat consumption. The animal activism movement should try to present an image that is welcoming to these individuals, and promote forms of activism which are accessible to them, such as charity volunteering and donations.**
- 6. The animal activism movement may benefit, and gain more activists, if it has very clearly defined goals and reasons for them, as well as tangible smaller objectives. This will help people to have a clear direction and confidence when participating in animal activism.**

Appendix - Survey Questions

These survey questions were included in a longer survey instrument, which also included questions for other studies and additional demographic questions.

1. Do you take part in any form of activism for animal causes?
 - a. No and I do not want to
 - b. No, I have not considered it
 - c. No, but I would like to
 - d. Yes, on a daily basis
 - e. Yes, on a weekly basis
 - f. Yes, on a monthly basis
 - g. Yes, every 2-3 months
 - h. Yes, every 3-6 months
 - i. Yes, every 6-12 months
 - j. Don't know
 - k. Prefer not to say
2. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.
(Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree)
 - a. I would be willing to engage with online activism, such as sharing videos or information on social media
 - b. I would be willing to engage with charity activism, such as raising money or volunteering for an animal charity
 - c. I would be willing to engage with frontline activism, such as attending a protest or demonstration
 - d. I would be willing to engage with social activism, such as talking to my friends and family about animal rights or hosting a veggie/vegan dinner party
3. Are there any constraints in your life that stop you from getting involved in more animal activism? Tick all that apply.
 - a. No
 - b. Yes, I do not know how to get involved
 - c. Yes, I do not have enough time or resources to get involved
 - d. Yes, I do not know what advocacy work can be done
 - e. Yes, I fear my friends and family will judge me
 - f. Yes, I fear my community will judge me
 - g. Yes, I fear it challenges my culture
 - h. Yes, I fear people will judge me in public
 - i. Yes, I fear people will judge me online
 - j. Don't know
 - k. Prefer not to say
4. Is there anything about yourself that you feel stops you from taking part in more animal activism? Tick all that apply.
 - a. No
 - b. Yes, I fear I do not know enough
 - c. Yes, I fear I would not be good at it
 - d. Yes, I am not confident enough
 - e. Yes, I am not a vegan or vegetarian
 - f. Yes, I feel unwelcome in the animal movement
 - g. Yes, I feel like my gender is not represented in the animal movement

- h. Yes, I feel like my age group is not represented in the animal movement
- i. Yes, I feel like my ethnicity is not represented in the animal movement
- j. Yes, I feel people like me are not in the animal movement
- k. Yes, I feel like animals are not the priority
- l. Yes, I feel like animals are treated fairly in my country
- m. Yes, I feel like it would make me sad to engage with the topic
- n. Don't know
- o. Prefer not to say

5. What would encourage you to engage in more animal activism? Tick all that apply.

- a. Having advocacy work which is more tailored to my skills
- b. Having advocacy work I am more comfortable with
- c. There being more people like me in the animal movement
- d. If my friends and family were less resistant to it
- e. If my culture was less resistant to it
- f. If people in general were less resistant to it
- g. If I had more time
- h. If I knew non-vegans/veggies could be involved in the animal movement
- i. Don't know
- j. Prefer not to say

6. Please indicate your gender:

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Other

7. What is your age? Please enter your age in years (whole numbers only). _____

8. Which of the following best describes your diet?

- a. Meat eater (No restrictions on eating animal products)
- b. Flexitarian (Reducing meat consumption or only eating it occasionally)
- c. Pescetarian (Does not eat meat, but eats fish, dairy, eggs, and plant foods)
- d. Vegetarian (Does not eat meat or fish, but eats dairy, eggs, and plant foods)
- e. Vegan (Eats only plant foods, does not eat meat, fish, dairy, or eggs)