

Annex E — The Four Asymmetries in the Animal-Human-Industry Discourse

Methodological annex to the Source Critique Annex v0.1

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Preliminary note

Whoever evaluates sources in the animal-human-industry discourse examines not only methodology. They also examine who speaks how loudly — and how this loudness is distributed. The asymmetry lens drawn from the theory of nonviolent conflict (Mack 1968, Sharp 1973, Chenoweth 2011) decomposes this loudness distribution into four dimensions: resources, platform, skin-in-game, and reach.

This annex applies the lens to the present discourse. It is part of the source-critique apparatus. Its purpose is not to grant any position rightness, but to make visible the structural positions in which positions are formulated.

Methodological status — sub-annex, not standalone work

Under the refined Memory Rule 14 (companion-paper duty), *standalone works with their own theoretical contribution* must include their own mini-ETHOSLAB pre-examination and their own mini-MYZEL knot set. This annex is methodologically *not a standalone work*. It is part of the source-critique apparatus of the Master Paper, standing in the same relation as Annexes A through D — the asymmetry lens is applied here to the discourse, not advanced as its own theoretical position. The overall project's ETHOSLAB pre-examination (separate document in the bundle) methodologically covers this annex as a component of the source-critique apparatus.

Whoever wishes to develop the content of this annex into its own theoretical synthesis — for instance, to transfer the four-asymmetry lens as a methodology to other discourse fields — should establish for that purpose its own companion paper with its own mini-ETHOSLAB and its own mini-MYZEL. This annex is tool, not position.

1. Resource asymmetry

What is to be compared

Actor field	Annual budget (order of magnitude)	Source note
Global animal-production industry	~ 2.5 trillion USD turnover (FAO 2023)	FAO statistics global animal production
Industry PR and lobbying (estimated)	~ 5-10 billion USD annually	Industry-fringe estimates, no peer-reviewed consolidation

Actor field	Annual budget (order of magnitude)	Source note
Academic animal ethics worldwide	~ 50–100 million USD (institutional positions + research funds)	Estimate from university staffing statistics
Animal-rights NGOs worldwide	~ 0.5–1 billion USD donation volume	Annual NGO reports (HSUS, ASPCA, PETA, ProVeg, etc.)

Order-of-magnitude ratio: industry : academic animal ethics $\approx$ 50:1 to 200:1, depending on definition.

What this asymmetry produces

Industry-funded studies can be produced in greater numbers, with better-equipped methodology, more quickly. They have access to professional statisticians, physicians, communication experts — and they can *suppress negative results* (Sugar Research Foundation 1965, Kearns 2016). Critical academic voices must work with smaller sample sizes, fewer replications, and without a marketing apparatus.

The consequence is not that industry studies are automatically wrong — but that the distribution of studies is systematically biased in one direction. The fact that a particular hypothesis has “few studies against it” can also mean that less money was available for counter-studies, not that the hypothesis is strongly supported.

Examples from the corpus

- **PURE study:** Even if the study itself is methodologically seriously constructed, the advisory structure of the PURE consortium is partly entangled with the milk and meat industries (see Source Critique Annex B.1).
- **EAT-Lancet 2019:** Several authors have institutional connections to plant-food industry and foundations (Wellcome Trust, Knorr Foundation); these entanglements are to be stated without thereby invalidating the substance of the study.
- **Beef Checkoff:** Approximately 1 USD per sold U.S. animal flows into an industry-led “research and marketing fund” with annual volume over 80 million USD — a state-enforced compulsory levy as research financing.
- **CMA:** Comparable structure in Germany 1953–2009, stopped by the Federal Constitutional Court as constitutionally illegitimate.

2. Platform asymmetry

What is to be compared

Which voices reach the major discourse platforms? Mainstream media, large podcasts, academic conference keynotes, bestseller publishers, Wikipedia article construction.

Platform type	Structural distortion
Mainstream daily press	Predominantly supports the status quo of dietary habits; animal-ethics topics appear as “controversial,” “extreme,” “polarizing” — even when the content is empirically broadly supported

Platform type	Structural distortion
Popular podcasts (Joe Rogan, Lex Fridman, Andrew Huberman)	High visibility for carnivore-diet apologists, low for structurally critical voices; even where these podcasts are formally “neutral,” the guest selection is biased pro animal production
Bestseller publishers	“How Not to Die” (Greger), carnivore-diet books (Saladino, Baker) reach million-copy print runs; academically grounded animal-ethics books (Korsgaard, Wadiwel) typically under 5,000 copies
Wikipedia	Nutritional and animal-welfare articles are chronically contested; ProductWatch accounts document regular industry edits without disclosure
Social media	Algorithmic reward of emotional/confrontational content favors carnivore-identity memes over nuanced ethical argumentation

Example

Liver King had 1.7 million Instagram followers at the time of his steroid scandal; his subsequent book deal with Knopf was not withdrawn. A comparable platform for structurally critical animal-ethics positions does not exist.

3. Skin-in-Game asymmetry

What is to be compared

Who has personal, economic, identitarian investment in the respective position? Skin-in-game (Taleb) is the question of who earns money from a position, draws professional status, or defends their identity.

Position	Skin-in-Game type
Carnivore influencers (Saladino, Baker, Liver King)	Direct income from supplements, apps, podcasts, book sales — they earn from the product itself
Mainstream nutritional scientists	Academic status, reputation protection; partly third-party-funding dependence on industry
Animal-ethics philosophers	Academic status; usually no direct industry entanglement; personal lifestyle investment (often vegan) yes
Farmers and small animal-keepers	Existential skin-in-game; cannot distance themselves from “their” product
Subsistence pastoralists	Livelihood skin-in-game in a completely different sense — not identity defense but material necessity
Industry managers	Direct economic investment; very strong skin-in-game against any reduction

What this asymmetry produces

When someone earns money directly from a position (carnivore apps, meat-subsidy lobbying), the probability that this person will revise their position is low — independent of the evidence base. Skin-in-game asymmetry acts not only on the arguments but on their *revisability*.

This applies in both directions. A vegan-living animal-ethicist *also* has skin-in-game — identity investment, personal lifestyle. But: she does not earn her livelihood directly from the contested product. A substantial skin-in-game asymmetry remains.

Reciprocity test

A useful methodological test (following reciprocity examinations from conflict theory): what evidence would move the respective voice toward position revision?

- For academic animal ethics: replicated LCA studies against plant production, new sentience findings, methodological-error exposure, etc.
- For carnivore influencers: no evidence publicly anticipated that would lead to position revision — the position is largely immunized against evidence.

This asymmetry is not trivial. It is a marker of which voices participate in the discourse in an epistemically fair sense, and which voices behave structurally as marketing apparatus.

4. Reach asymmetry

What is to be compared

Who is heard? In which language? In which institutional spaces?

A systematic visibility analysis of the animal-human-industry discourse does not, to the author's knowledge, exist; what follows are observed patterns:

Voice	Reach	Languages	Spaces
Global animal-production industry	Very high	40+	UN, FAO, WTO, EU commissions, national parliaments
Anglo-Saxon liberal-individualistic animal ethics	High in EN	Primarily EN	Universities, animal-welfare NGOs
Eco-marxist structural critique	Medium	EN, DE, ES, IT	Left-intellectual spaces, some university departments
Eco-feminist and indigenous plural positions	Low in Western media	Many local languages	Community spaces, indigenous councils, individual academic conferences
Subsistence pastoralists	Extremely low in Western discourses	Mongolian, Somali, Fula, etc.	Local — rarely translated into the Western mainstream discourse

Consequences for research

The demand in Western discourses predominantly present — “everyone should become vegan” — reflects not global realities and the voice distribution; it reflects the reach asymmetry. Whoever

wants to recommend that 600 million subsistence livestock-keepers transform their life-system, would have to at least *hear* these 600 million voices before formulating a recommendation. This does not happen in the majority of animal-ethics literature.

A serious transdisciplinary research must not have to “equalize” this reach asymmetry, but it must *declare* it. This annex does so.

5. Methodological consequences for the layer architecture

The four asymmetries operate on all fourteen layers of the architecture, with varying intensity:

Layer	Strongest asymmetry	Mitigation in the Master Paper
1–4 (Natural history / body)	Platform (carnivore influencers overrepresented)	Source Critique Annex A (Stone Ape, Aquatic Ape, Carnivore Diet)
5–6 (Nutrition / dairy)	Resources + Platform	Source Critique Annex B (PURE, EAT-Lancet, CMA, SRF)
7 (Pathogens)	Platform (pandemic policy)	Murray 2022, FAO, EFSA as main sources
8 (Industry)	Skin-in-Game + Resources	Source Critique Annex B + JBS/Batista corruption explicit
9–10 (Affect / taboo)	Reach	Pachirat, Adams, Aghori anthropology
11–12 (Ethics / Marx)	Platform (academic marginalization)	Singer, Regan, Foster, Wadiwel with full references
13 (Aquaculture)	Reach	Subsistence boundary in Layer 12.5b
14 (Alternatives)	Resources (industry defines pathways)	Cultivated meat presented honestly critically

6. What this annex achieves — and what it does not

Achieves:

- Making visible the structural position asymmetries in the discourse
- Methodological prescription for layer-based source critique
- Connection to well-established conflict-theoretical concepts
- Reciprocity test as operational tool

Does not achieve:

- Quantitative measurement — the numbers above are order-of-magnitude estimates, not peer-reviewed consolidation
- Resolution of the asymmetry — it can only be reduced through institutional and political work, not through methodology
- Tu-quoque inversion — the identification of industry entanglement *does not* automatically invalidate a study; it *requires additional examination*

7. Closing thesis

In the animal-human-industry discourse, a massive asymmetry prevails in favor of the industrial production structure. It is not a discourse effect but a material fact of economic power. A serious transdisciplinary engagement must explicitly declare this asymmetry, in every layer. Otherwise it unconsciously reproduces the asymmetry.

The present Annex E performs this declaration. It is not the final step of a discourse analysis but the first — a precondition without which any substantive engagement remains blind.

Footer

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