

VEGETARIANISM/VEGANISM: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

A Thesis

by

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## ABSTRACT

The vegetarian/vegan movement, as all social movements, is impacted by systemic issues, here, the issues of race, class, and gender. This study begins with an analysis of the relationships between these systemic issues and vegetarianism/veganism, by means of an examination of twenty well-known vegetarians/vegans. The twenty were selected on the basis both of their importance to the movement, and on the amount of material written about them.

My findings are first, concerning race, that there was a greater number of non-Hispanic Whites than Blacks, Latinos/as, or Asians among the twenty vegetarians/vegans, a finding consistent with the literature on the subject. Secondly, in terms of social class, the selection of twenty vegetarians/vegans had more individuals from the upper-middle and lower-upper classes, than from the lower social classes. Finally, concerning gender, more men than women were included in the list of twenty. This latter finding is not consistent with the literature which indicates that more women than men are vegetarian/vegan, this is probably due to the fact that, generally speaking, women tend to be under-represented in the mass media.

The second part of this study is a micro-analysis of the discourse of five of the twenty vegetarians/vegans. Their motivations for becoming vegetarian/vegan are discussed, in particular their concern for animal welfare and human health. The analysis of the five also demonstrated that their paths to becoming vegetarian/vegan rarely were direct and that most experienced some back-and-forth movements in the process of their

conversions. Based on the accounts of the five, factors facilitating the conversion to vegetarianism/veganism included the importance of having a strong vegetarian/vegan social network, of having the support of close friends and family, and the important role that media plays in the diffusion of the movement. On the other hand, factors keeping people from becoming or from staying vegetarian/vegan are presented, such as negative stereotypes about veganism, as well as the absence of the link between meat about to be eaten and the fact that this meat once was a living animal.

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## INTRODUCTION

*We should always be clear that animal exploitation is wrong because it involves speciesism. And speciesism is wrong because, like racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, classism, and all other forms of human discrimination, speciesism involves violence inflicted on members of the moral community where that infliction of violence cannot be morally justified.* Gary L. Francione, animal rights advocate and Distinguished Professor of Law, Rutgers School of Law-Newark.

This research is a comprehensive sociological analysis of vegetarianism/veganism.

In-depth studies of this movement and the dimensions I examine have been non-existent.

Little is known about how and why individuals become vegetarian/vegan. My intent is to

go beyond the idea of vegetarianism/veganism as being only a diet consisting of not

eating and not wearing animal products. First, I will define and detail the history of the

vegetarian/vegan movement. I will demonstrate that vegetarianism/veganism is a social

movement embedded in a larger system that is sexist, racist, and classist. Social

movements are defined as “a form of political association between persons who have at

least a minimal sense of themselves as connected to others in common purpose and who

come together across an extended period of time to effect social change in the name of

that purpose” (James and van Seeters 2014). We will see that vegetarians/vegans,

because they share a common identity and because they organize in associations for the

purpose of changing mainstream views on vegetarianism/veganism, are engaged in a

social movement. We will see that the systemic issues of race, class, and gender are

interconnected, that they impact the vegetarian/vegan movement, and that they influence

those wanting to access a vegetarian/vegan diet. To do this, I will review the literature

linking race/class/ gender to vegetarianism/veganism.

Next, I will compare the biographies of twenty well-known vegetarians/vegans, analyzing them to see if they fit the literature on the connections between vegetarianism/veganism and race, class, and gender. Thus, I will not only look at systemic relationships, but I will look at relationships at the individual level as well. Further, I select five of the twenty accounts of vegetarians/vegans, and thoroughly analyze them to obtain even more information about their paths to vegetarianism/veganism and the back and forth movements they may have experienced in their conversions. Based on these five accounts, I explore the factors contributing to the diffusion of vegetarianism/veganism. Elements such as the importance of having a vegetarian/vegan social network, having the support of close friends and family, as well as the important role that media is playing in the diffusion of the movement will be discussed. On the other hand, factors keeping people from becoming or from staying vegetarian/vegan also will be examined. Negative stereotypes about veganism as well as the disconnection between pieces of meat and living animals will be revealed through the analyses of the five vegetarians'/vegans' accounts. Finally, I demonstrate again the importance of considering the vegetarian/vegan movement as more than only a diet through a presentation of accounts that tells us that vegetarianism/veganism often is like a spiritual awakening.



## DEFINITION OF VEGETARIANISM/VEGANISM

It is useful here to define what vegetarianism and what veganism mean. A vegetarian has been defined by the Vegetarian Society as “someone who lives on a diet of grains, pulses<sup>1</sup>, nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruits with, or without, the use of dairy products and eggs. A vegetarian does not eat any meat, poultry, game, fish, shellfish or by-products of slaughter.” (The Vegetarian Society of United Kingdom, retrieved on September 16, 2015). Thus the most common type of vegetarians--lacto-ovo vegetarians-- avoid eating any meat, while still indulging in eggs and dairy products.

There have been many definitions of veganism over time. An early definition is as follows: “Veganism is the practice of living on the products of the plant kingdom to the exclusion of flesh, fish, fowl, eggs, honey, animal milk and its derivatives, and encourages the use of alternatives for all commodities derived wholly or in part from animals” (1944 definition from The Vegan Society).

Although complete, this definition does not account for the numerous differences among vegans. Some vegans scrupulously respect the above definition and avoid eating or using any animal products. Other vegans are less strict both in their diet and in the products that they use. For example, some vegans include honey, an animal product, in their diet, and others wear wool, also an animal product, because sheep are not killed when wool is harvested. Cherry (2006) indeed found that half of all self-defined vegans that she interviewed did not adhere strictly to the vegan society definition of veganism.

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<sup>1</sup> pulses are grain legumes

Let us, then, examine the different forms of vegetarianism/veganism. As mentioned, strict vegans refuse to eat animal flesh and refuse to use any products derived from animals. Raw vegans avoid consuming either the flesh of animals or any food products of animal origin. Additionally, raw vegans only eat either uncooked food or food cooked at a low temperature so as to avoid the destruction of micronutrients and the production of harmful chemicals which may occur during cooking. Fruitarianism, juicearianism and sproutarianism are subcategories of raw veganism. Fruitarianism consists of a diet of at least 75% fruit. Juicearianism is a diet consisting mainly of drinking fruit and/or vegetable juice. Sproutarianism is a diet consisting predominantly of eating sprouts.

Continuing with our examination of the different forms of vegetarianism/veganism, lacto-ovo vegetarians avoid eating meat but do consume eggs and dairy products. Finally, pescetarians, while avoiding meat, do eat fish.

We can see from the above variation from the strict definition of veganism that the consumption of an “animal” depends on its definition. If it is considered as a “real” animal, that is, an animal capable of feeling, vegans will not consume it. For the purpose of this study, we will assume that vegans and vegetarians exclude the consumption of animals belonging to any of the following four categories: amphibians, birds, mammals, and reptiles.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF VEGETARIANISM/VEGANISM

It is difficult to trace the historical foundations of vegetarianism, since the concept that eating animals is wrong has existed in many cultures for many thousands of years.

As far back as the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC, Pythagoras was vegetarian and made vegetarianism mandatory for his disciples (Iacobbo & Iacobbo 2004). However, prior to the nineteenth century, most people were restricted to a local food diet. Only after the Industrial Revolution did middle-class individuals have a wider choice of dietary intake, as well as the income to purchase a wider variety of foods. (Leneman 1999:219-20).

### **The History of Vegetarianism in Europe**

With this wider choice of food, considerations about proper nutrition became important at the end of the nineteenth century, and debates about eating meat became more common. The first vegetarian society, The Vegetarian Society located in Manchester, Great Britain, was founded in 1847 (Leneman 1999:219). At that time, a vegetarian diet was considered extreme by non-followers. This was true even though vegetarian restrictions concerned only the eating of meat, while the consumption of eggs and dairy products were not questioned. Nevertheless, once ethical reasons for not eating meat were raised, it became difficult not to extend ethical questions about the consumption of other sources of animal products, such as the consumption of eggs and dairy products. Indeed, as early as 1909, debates occurred within the vegetarian movement concerning eggs and dairy products. Debates arose rapidly about the abuse committed against animals when consuming these products. The exploitation of cows for

their milk and their being slaughtered when they no longer could produce milk, as well as the killing of many bull calves, were questioned in particular. One bull can inseminate multiple cows and also bulls do not produce milk. Additionally, some debates occurred about the healthfulness of dairy products, with some people arguing that diseases were transmitted from animals to humans through the consumption of milk (Leneman 1999:223-4). Realizing the sanitary risks as well as abuse perpetrated to animals while consuming eggs and dairy products, an increasing number of vegetarians were slowly moving towards a more vegan diet.

In 1910, Rupert H. Wheldon wrote what could be considered the first vegan cookbook (even though the term, “vegan,” had not yet been coined) entitled, *No Animal Food*. In 1934, the editors of the Vegetarian Society of Manchester’s monthly journal remarked that “the question as to whether dairy products should be used by vegetarians becomes more pressing year by year,” (from the Vegetarian Society of Manchester’s monthly journal, in Leneman 1999:221). Members of the Vegetarian Society requested that a section of the journal be dedicated to the controversy over the consumption of eggs and dairy products, but the request was denied. Consequently, Donald Watson, Secretary of the Leicester Vegetarian Society, began a newsletter in 1944 on the non-consumption of eggs and dairy products. Following the publication of this newsletter, Watson decided to break from the Leicester Vegetarian Society and to found a society that would be in accordance with the concept of neither eating eggs nor dairy products. He called the new association The Vegan Society, coining the word, “Vegan”, from the word VEGEtariAN (Leneman 1999).

## **The History of Vegetarianism in America**

The vegetarian movement in the United States was greatly amplified by the migration of members of the Bible-Christian Church from England to the United States in 1817 (Shprintzen 2013). To be a member of this church, founded in 1809, individuals had to refrain from drinking alcohol and had to adopt a vegetarian diet. According to Iacobbo & Iacobbo (2004), a particular verse in the Bible was responsible for the conversion to vegetarianism of this community, namely, Genesis 1:29-30, which states that humans should only consume plants and fruits.

*29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.*

*30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.*

Genesis 1:29-30 King James Version

When two clerics of the Bible-Christian Church, along with 40 members, escaped the persecution of the British and migrated to Philadelphia in 1817 to establish their church in the United States, they helped to promote their principle of non-meat eating in the United States, even though there were already small vegetarian communities existing in the US (Iacobbo & Iacobbo 2004).

Sylvester Graham (1794–1851) greatly contributed to the diffusion of vegetarianism in America. During the cholera epidemic of 1832, he had a dramatically opposite view on how to avoid contracting the disease than did most physicians of his time. While most doctors recommended the avoidance of fruits and vegetables as well as

encouraging the heavy consumption of meat, Graham advocated the consumption of whole grain bread instead of white bread, as well as the total avoidance of meat, alcohol, and tobacco (Iacobbo & Iacobbo 2004). Graham, like the members of the Bible-Christian Church, believed that the Bible was encouraging people to be vegetarian. He also strongly believed that meat-eating was responsible for alcohol consumption and that by stopping the consumption of meat, the craving for drinking alcohol would disappear. Since the term, vegetarian, was not widely used at the time, his movement was called Grahamism and his followers, the Grahamites.

William Alcott (1798-1859), although trained as a mainstream doctor, rather than as a doctor using alternative medicine, strongly believed that a vegetarian diet was the key to good health, rather than the use of medicines for this purpose. Alcott did not consume any meat, nor any dairy products, and therefore his food consumption, most likely, would approximate what today we would call veganism. He promoted the vegetarian diet by means of publishing books and magazines (Iacobbo & Iacobbo 2004). Both Alcott and Graham became the most influential leaders of the vegetarian movement in the United States at that time. Some Grahamites created organizations such as The American Physiological Society (APS), for which both Graham and Alcott lectured. Later on, some Grahamites detached themselves from the church and disconnected the concept of vegetarianism from the religion. The APS became focused on studying health and diet based on scientific facts rather than on religion and to promote the avoidance of meat based on medical science (Shprintzen 2013).

In 1850, only a few years after the British Vegetarian Society was created, the AVS, the American Vegetarian Society, was created with the aim of reuniting the different movements promoting a meatless diet (Shprintzen 2013). A year later, in 1851, the death of Sylvester Graham shook the vegetarian movement. Graham's feeble health, and subsequently his early death, made some individuals question the healthiness of the vegetarian diet (Iacobbo & Iacobbo 2014). The Vegetarian Movement continued to spread nonetheless after Graham's death, because numerous partisans, as did Graham and Alcott previously, advocated for the vegetarian cause.

Iacobbo and Iacobbo (2004:126) explained how innovations helped spread vegetarianism at the beginning of the twentieth century. The discovery of vitamins allowed nutritionists to see the benefits of a diet consisting of an abundance of fruits and vegetables. New studies about not needing as much protein as previously thought in a diet arose and contributed to opening individuals' minds about the danger of eating too much meat. Technical innovations, such as refrigerated trucks, also helped the transport of non-local fruits and vegetables. Both scientists and doctors began to search for other sources of protein than meat. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943) in particular, revolutionized the American breakfast with his ready-to-eat cereals, causing many to give up their traditional breakfast which included sausage.

Yet, the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl of the 1930s seriously impeded the growth of the Vegetarian Movement. Not only were people impoverished and willing to eat whatever they could afford, whether vegetable or meat, but also the meat industry began to massively advertise about the necessity of eating more meat (Iacobbo &

Iacobbo 2004). Following the Dust Bowl, State and Federal governments started to subsidize farmers to make meat affordable even to the poorest. The drop in the price of meat together with the convincing and powerful message from the Meat Industry, kept vegetarianism in America a dietary practice exercised by a minority even to this day. There has been, however, a resurgence in interest in the vegetarian movement during the 1960s-1970s with the countercultural movement. Numerous “hippies”, who envisioned a cruelty free world as well as a concern for the environment, became vegetarians. (Iacobbo & Iacobbo 2004). The book by Iacobbo & Iacobbo (2004) was heavily relied upon in this section because it was the first complete history of vegetarianism in the United States and because it is fairly recent.

### **Vegetarianism/Veganism Today**

Today, approximately five percent of the American population consider themselves as vegetarian (Gallup 2012), and two percent of Americans consider themselves as vegan. As stated before, vegetarians and vegans in the US still remain a minority and suffer from stereotyping. Nonetheless, few people in America do not know about vegetarianism today, and even veganism is slowly becoming more popular. We have seen through the history of the vegetarian/vegan movement that the social and political context of a given time influences the propagation or the limitation of a movement. Vegetarianism/veganism is part of a large and complex social system, and its diffusion or restriction not only depends on individual choice, but is greatly impacted by larger social forces. For example, state and federal governments, by subsidizing the meat and dairy industry, allow meat and dairy products to be more affordable than vegetarian



and vegan food, thus discouraging many people from even considering being vegetarian/vegan. This support from the government to the meat and dairy industry through the subsidization of their food products is a reciprocal process (Simon 2013). Indeed, in return, the meat and dairy industry, through the help of their lobbies, play an important role both in electing and re-electing members to government who advocate for their cause.

The possibility that the U.S. government can create an unequal access to certain food can be explained by the fact that the government, as a social and political institution, is itself embedded in a racist, sexist, and classist system. This system ensures that the vast majority of Congress members are elite white men whose interests are not primarily directed toward the betterment of the poor. What started as governmental help programs to farmers to reduce the severe consequences of the Dust Bowl for American agriculture during the 1930s, today almost exclusively benefit the big factory farms, and not small farmers. These factory farms are problematic for several reasons. First, their extensive size requires the use of heavy fertilizers and pesticides for the production of crops, as well as the confinement of animals in small spaces, which sometimes requires the mutilation of some animal parts, such as the cutting off the beaks of chickens and turkeys as well as the cutting of the cows' and pigs' tails. Because of their confinement, animals are injected with antibiotics to prevent illnesses. They are also provided with hormones to grow more quickly. The excessive amount of waste produced by the numerous confined animals is also a source of air and water pollution. As we can see, the development of large factory farms has severe consequences for the treatment of

animals, for the health both of animals and humans, as well as for the environment. Even though vegetarianism and veganism have always existed, the recent spike of interest for these diets can be explained at least partially, as a reaction to the environmental, health, and animal right issues that the creation of factory farms has demanded.

## METHODS

For this research, I analyze the literature concerning vegetarianism/veganism in terms of the important demographic factors of race, class, and gender. Little research has been done about the movement and in particular about how and why people are converted to vegetarianism/veganism. The literature collected on the subject is then compared with accounts by twenty well-known vegetarians/vegans selected better to understand the vegetarian/vegan movement. Finally, I select five of the twenty vegetarians/vegans who have provided longer biographies, to obtain even more detailed information about their conversion to vegetarianism/veganism, as well as the various factors that either facilitated or obstructed their conversions.

Below is a table of twenty contemporary well-known vegetarians/vegans selected for this study. The table provides the name, the profession, the race, the social class and the gender of the vegetarians/vegans studied.

**Table 1.** Twenty Contemporary Well-Known Vegetarians/Vegans

<b>Name</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Contemporary Social Class</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Paul McCartney	Musician, songwriter, singer	White	Lower upper class	Male
Linda McCartney	Musician, photographer, animal rights activist	White	Lower upper class	Female
Richard Melville Hall, better known as “Moby”	Singer, songwriter, and musician	White	Lower upper class	Male
Kristina Carrillo-Bucaram	Founder of the largest raw, organic produce co-operative in the US	Latino	Upper middle class	Female
Albert Arnold Gore, Jr. (Al Gore)	American politician, environmentalist	White	Lower upper class	Male
Ellen DeGeneres	Talk show host, comedian	White	Lower upper class	Female
Brigitte Bardot	Actress, singer, fashion model	White	Lower upper class	Female
Thierry Casasnovas	Founder of the association “Régénère”, speaker	White	Upper middle class	Male
Douglas Graham	Author of many books on health and raw food	White	Upper middle class	Male
T. Colin Campbell	Biochemist	White	Upper middle class	Male
Gary L. Francione	Distinguished Professor of Law, Animal rights advocate	White	Upper middle class	Male
Bill Clinton	American politician, President of the U.S.A. from 1993 to 2001	White	Lower upper class	Male
Thich Nhat Hanh	Buddhist teacher, author	Asian	N/A. Belongs to a religious community	Male
Ingrid Newkirk	President of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)	White	Upper middle class	Female
Pamela Anderson	Model, actress	White	Lower upper class	Female
Carl Lewis	Athlete	Black	Lower upper class	Male
Karyn Calabrese	Raw foodist restaurateur, holistic health teacher	Black	Upper middle class	Female

**Table 1.** Continued

<b>Name</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Contemporary Social Class</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Russell Simmons	Businessman, author	Black	Lower upper class	Male
Jared Leto	Actor	White	Lower upper class	Male
Russell Brand	Comedian	White	Lower upper class	Male

Among these well-known vegetarians/vegans, the accounts of five of them will be studied in more detail on selected topics about vegetarianism/veganism. These five individuals are:

1. Paul McCartney
2. Kristina Carrillo-Bucaram
3. Ellen DeGeneres
4. Thierry Casasnovas
5. Dr. T. Colin Campbell

## DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONVERSION TO VEGETARIANISM/VEGANISM

In the following sections, I identify patterns among vegetarians/vegans more generally, relative to their demographic characteristics. My intent is to show that the systemic forces of race, class, and gender impact the vegetarian/vegan movement. Other demographic factors such as age and marital status will also be discussed in regards to vegetarianism/veganism. First, I look at the literature on race, class, gender as well as on age and marital status as related to vegetarianism/veganism. Next, I compare this literature with the demographic profiles of the twenty contemporary vegetarians/vegans previously selected.

### **Gender Differences Among Vegetarians/Vegans**

Many studies have been done on the differences of consumption of meat by gender. The majority of these studies show a greater proportion of women being vegetarian/vegan than men (Vinnari et al. 2009). Phillips et al. (2011) in particular, demonstrate the differences by gender in the attitude and consumption of meat in eleven Eurasian countries. The authors noticed that women avoid eating meat more than men, and that there were three times as many female vegetarians as male vegetarians in their study. The Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has combined data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) and has reported the results of food consumption by several socio-demographic characteristics. According to their results, women overall eat less meat, poultry, and fish than men per year. In general, men consumed an average of 198 pounds

of meat, poultry, and fish during the 2007-2008 year, while women averaged 123 pounds of meat, poultry, and fish per year, a 47 percent difference.

While the difference in consumption of poultry (chicken and turkey) between men and women is not great, in general, men ate over 68 pounds of poultry per year while women consume over 52 pounds per year, which represents a little more than a 26 percent difference, the difference by gender in the consumption of meat (beef and pork) however is quite significant, with women consuming considerably less meat than men, 114 pounds per year for men versus 61 pounds per year for women, a 61 percent difference.

The reasons why women eat less meat than men, and therefore the reasons why women are more attracted to vegetarianism/veganism, are difficult to assess, but it is important to remember that vegetarianism/veganism is part of a larger societal framework, a framework of systemic sexism. Hence, we will see that refusing to consume meat is more than a personal preference, but can be, for some women, a reaction to the oppression that they are facing as women. The socialization of men as being more powerful than women, dominant over women (Benokraitis and Feagin 1986), and less emotional than women has greatly impacted the consumption of meat by men since meat is considered as one of the foods allowing them to be “manly” and build muscle effectively, and therefore allowing them to be very powerful physically. In other words, meat-eating is linked to the hegemonic framing of masculinity.

### *Thorstein Veblen's Explanation on the Link Between Veganism and Gender*

In this next section, I discuss the link between feminism and vegetarianism/veganism as depicted by an important American sociologist, Thorstein Veblen. His ideas fit well in this study because, in his writings, he directly commented on the connection between the domination over women and the domination over animals by men.

Veblen's early feminist views are particularly interesting in regards to the consumption of meat. Indeed, Veblen depicted women as the transmitters of "peaceable" culture. I use the word, "peaceable" because this is the term used by Veblen in this context. For him, women began civilization in a peaceable way and it is only later that modern civilization became dominated by patriarchy and "barbarism;" this second term is also used by Veblen. Veblen's central theory is that throughout history, there has been a tension between what Veblen called peaceable traits and barbarian traits. The two are always present, but the prevalence of one or the other is not preordained. In any given time, one predominates over the other.

#### *Women Are the Inventors of Civilized Life*

Veblen, in "*The Instinct of Workmanship and the State of the Industrial Arts*", stated:

It seems antecedently improbable that the domestication of the crop plants and animals could have been effected at all except among peoples leading a passably peaceable, and presently a sedentary life. And the length of time required for what was achieved in remote antiquity in this respect speaks for the prevalence of (passably) peaceable conditions over intervals of time and space that overpass all convenient bounds of chronology and localisation. Evidence of maternal descent, maternal religious practices and maternal discretion in the disposal of goods meet



the inquiry in ever increasing force as soon as it begins to penetrate back of the conventionally accepted dawn of history (Veblen 1918:101).

Women, at the beginning of civilization, were the ones who domesticated animals and cultivated crops. These activities took time, they required patience, and they required a lot of care. By doing these activities, women demonstrated what Veblen called their “parental instinct”. Therefore, according to Veblen, civilized life began with women and was dominated by their peaceable traits, such as parental instinct.

It is interesting to see that today, most of the matriarchal societies that still exist are usually peaceful, survive on agriculture, and have no concept of private property (Goettner-Abendroth 2009).

Women are the inventors of civilized life, but men created barbarism later on by becoming cattle breeder and by inventing the concept of private property. They took possession of cattle and by doing so dominated women, since as Veblen (1899:506) said “[...] *the non-fighters fall into a position of subservience to the fighter*. This link was made by Veblen between the domination over animals and the domination over women is similar to the link that many vegan feminists will describe later on.

#### *Meat Consumption: a Masculine Behavior*

The same link has been made by several modern authors about the attribution of masculinity to meat consumption. I will examine in detail the nature of this link and the role it plays in the attraction or in the rejection of individuals to vegetarianism/veganism. Nick Fiddes (1991), among others (Twigg 1983; Adams 1990), emphasized early on that meat consumption was symbolic of human control over nature. Consuming the flesh of

powerful, muscular, and evolved animals still is seen today as an act of power and dominance and hence as a masculine behavior.

Authors such as Twigg (1983) clearly saw food as being gendered, since Western society socializes men to identify the consumption of meat as masculine behavior. Women, on the other hand, are socialized to emphasize their femininity either by not eating meat, by eating less meat, or by eating non-red meat. Thus, Twigg presents vegetarianism/veganism as being in direct opposition to masculinity in the traditional masculine model. Following these considerations, some individuals, and, in particular many feminists, see in veganism a symbol of rejection of male domination, both over nature and over themselves, and thus they see vegetarianism/veganism as a mean of acquiring greater autonomy from men.

#### *Veganism as a Symbol for Rejection of Domination*

Phillips et al. (2011) found that women living in countries in which they are more empowered (such as in Sweden, Norway, and Great Britain) show more concern for animal welfare and animal rights than do men. Of the eleven countries studied by the authors, none of the countries shows men having a higher score than women on indices measuring concern for animals, such as indices on animal welfare, animal rights, unnatural animal practices, animals in experimentation, wildlife, animals as spiritual symbols and killing animals. Among these indices, the animal welfare, animal rights, and animal experimentation indices in particular show significant relationships with gender empowerment measures, such as political participation of women, senior workplace roles for women and economic participation of women. Such studies suggest

that generally speaking, women have more compassion towards animals, in particular in countries where women are less male dominated.

Vegan feminists have made a connection between domination over nature and domination over women. Vegan feminists, such as Adams (1990), saw the domination over nature and the domination over women by men as coming from the same source, namely, the oppression of a “species” that many men consider being inferior. Veganism is for these vegan feminists in direct opposition to male violence, and the vegan feminists demonstrated the interconnectedness of race, gender, and species. Both Adams (1991) and Kheel (2004) underlined the connection made by feminists as early as the 1970’s between the exploitation of women and the exploitation of animals; both are given a subordinate status.

In a more recent article, Adams (2010) proposes that animals are “absent referents” when individuals eat meat. People think of meat simply as food, and they do not think of the living animals from which the meat is derived. In particular in gourmet terminology, the sophisticated language used to describe the meat served at the meal contributes to a lack of consideration of the living animals. For example, the term, “filet mignon” is used instead of a cut of beef taken from a beef carcass. Thus living animals, for Adams, are the absent referent in the concept of meat. It is precisely this objectification that enables the oppression of animals. First, oppressors transform a living being into an inanimate object. Second, they fragment the inanimate objects into parts. The fragmentation into inanimate parts, in this case, is the process by which a living animal is transformed into pieces of meat. The process of fragmentation is usually

hidden. Consumption follows fragmentation. In this case, meat is consumed without any thought of the meat once being a part of a breathing, feeling animal. This process of objectification, fragmentation, and consumption is, for Adams, the same process that happens concerning sexual violence against women in Western cultures. Through cultural images of sexually objectified and dismembered women's bodies, women, like animals, become the absent referent. Whether in print ads, on television, or as dolls, the image of women as meat is often clearly depicted and in a patriarchal system, women are often animalized.

In conclusion, the symbolic nature of meat consumption as a powerful and masculine behavior, as well as the symbol of domination that the consumption of meat implies may explain why more women are attracted to vegetarianism/veganism than men.

#### *Gender Differences Among the Twenty Well-Known Vegetarians/Vegans*

In my selection of twenty well-known vegetarians/vegans, thirteen are male and only seven are female. This result does not match the literature on gender and vegetarianism/veganism which reports that more females than males are vegetarian/vegan. It is important, however, to remember the larger frame in which this study is done. The selection of twenty well-known vegetarians/vegans was done based on the amount of information available for each of them. In a society dominated by sexism and patriarchy, it is legitimate to question the imbalance in representation of females and males in mass media. Indeed, Collins (2011), among others, found that females are frequently under-represented, sexualized, and stereotyped in mainstream

media. This representation of women in media goes far to explain why more men than women are included in my list of twenty vegetarians/vegans.

### **Is Vegetarianism/Veganism Based On Social Class?**

Various studies have been done on whether vegetarians/vegans have a higher socioeconomic status than non-vegetarians/vegans. Some studies reveal a strong correlation between high income and the practice of vegetarianism/veganism (Hoek et al. 2004); others on the other hand, find no correlation (Beardsworth and Bryman 2004; Gale et al. 2007); and still others find that vegetarians/vegans have a lower socioeconomic status than the rest of the population (Vinnari 2010). Thus, it is hard to answer scientifically the question as to whether vegetarianism/veganism is linked to a definite socioeconomic status. It needs to be said that here we are analyzing the link between vegetarianism/veganism and socioeconomic status in Western societies, which is very important given that some non-Western countries, such as India, contain large population of vegetarians/vegans at every socioeconomic level.

While the direct link between vegetarianism/veganism and socioeconomic status is difficult to establish, it is plausible to believe that socioeconomic status might influence one's diet. Indeed, not all Westerners and especially not all Americans, possess the same level of household food security, which determines one's dietary choice. Food security was defined in 2001 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as "a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". We will see in this study that the three

pillars on which food security rests, namely, food availability, food access, and food use, are unequally distributed in the US population. This unequal distribution may affect the attraction for vegetarianism/veganism among certain groups.

#### *Food Availability*

The first component of food security consists of having a sufficient amount of food available on a daily basis. According to Andrews et al. (1999), 31 million Americans were food insecure in 1999, which represented more than 10% of the population. For people depending on food pantries, being vegetarian/vegan becomes more difficult. The poor do not have the luxury of selecting their food depending on their food ideology.

#### *Food Access*

The second pillar of food security, food access, concerns the affordability and procurement of food. In America, the subsidization of meat by the FDA directly benefits a small percentage of large factory farms, which makes the purchase of meat relatively inexpensive compared to unsubsidized food generally considered to be healthy, such as organic fruits and vegetables. Thus, the access of certain types of food is not equal to all populations. The unequal access of food is not only problematic concerning the food itself but also concerning the proximity of that food.

*The Location of Grocery Stores and of Their Products.* The presence of supermarkets with an abundance of healthy products nearby greatly enhances the possibility that people living in their proximity may change their diet towards a healthier way of eating. According to Moreland et al. (2002) supermarkets have been found to have the most

healthy food items at lower prices. The authors have shown that a great number of supermarkets are located in wealthy neighborhoods rather than in poorer neighborhoods.

The products available in supermarkets also differ greatly depending on the location of the supermarket. Indeed, organic and fresh products are found in many wealthy areas of cities, while they are either restricted or totally absent in poorer areas. In fact, Jetter and Cassady (2006) found that many food products containing less fat and sugar were absent from small grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods. Thus, the food environment is important in studying access to a vegetarian/vegan diet.

*Fast Food Restaurants.* Fast food restaurants, such as McDonald's, Taco Bell, and Wendy's, benefit from a "factory farm" method of production which has the effect of greatly lowering the cost of meat. However, as we have previously seen, the factory farm method treats animals unethically and damages the quality of meat produced. Indeed, this intensive method of farming, by keeping a large number of livestock confined in small areas, does result in a lower cost of meat, milk, and eggs. Because the area needed to raise the livestock is reduced, so is the cost of raising the animals because modern machines are used to take care of large numbers of animals at the same time. When, in the addition, the largest factory farms are subsidized by the US Government, meat and dairy products from factory farms become available at very low prices. These inexpensive animal products then are used by fast food restaurants and become available also at low prices. Thus we see that, not only is this affordable fast food attractive to those of low income, but, as Block et al. (2004) noticed, more fast food restaurants are found per square mile in low-income than in middle and upper income areas.

Not only are fast food restaurants more numerous in low-income areas, but the selection of food also differs between low-income and high-income neighborhoods. Indeed, LaVonna et al. (2005) found that fast food restaurants located in poorer areas have fewer item options as well as fewer food preparation options (such as the option of having a baked potato rather than French fries) than fast food restaurants located in wealthier neighborhood. As we can see, the access of food in America is unequal, and largely depends on ones' wealth, neighborhood, and race.

### *Food Utilization*

Food utilization, the last pillar of food security, concerns the ability of the human metabolism to use the nutrients ingested. In the household, preparing, processing, and cooking food greatly impacts how the human organism will be able to use the nutrients in the food. Low socioeconomic households may lack the proper equipment, such as ample refrigerators and ovens, to stock and to process the food. As Barbara Ehrenreich states in her book, *Nickel and Dimed* (2001:21) "If you have only a room, with a hot plate at best, you can't save by cooking up huge lentil stews that can be frozen for the week ahead. You eat fast food or the hot dogs and Styrofoam cups of soup that can be microwaved in a convenience store." For the low socioeconomic population, not only do problems occur in accessing healthy food, but even if one did have access to vegetarian/vegan food, it also would be problematic to find a way to prepare this food properly.

To conclude, the availability, access and utilization of food is not equal among the different socioeconomic segments of the American population. These inequalities



impact the ability of many people to choose a diet consistent with their ethical convictions or with their idea of a healthy diet.

#### *Class Differences Among the Twenty Well-Known Vegetarians/Vegans*

The vast majority of the vegetarians/vegans selected are part of the upper-middle and lower-upper classes. However, it is interesting to note that these twenty came from different, often lower, class backgrounds before becoming established. It was only after having access to an upper social class status that they became vegetarian/vegan. For example, Paul McCartney's mother was a midwife and his father was a cotton salesman. It was only when McCartney became extremely successful with The Beatles and after meeting Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in India that he became a vegetarian.

#### **Racial Differences in Vegetarianism/Veganism**

It is important when studying meat consumption by race to note that while vegetarians/vegans are a minority in the United States, the predominant diet in many non-Western cultures is vegetarian/vegan, such as in the Chinese, East Indian, and African cultures.

Thus, I will focus my attention to the vegetarian/vegan community in Western societies and especially in the United States. First I will examine why vegetarianism/veganism generally is seen as a White movement in Western societies. Then, I will present data showing the consumption of meat by race.

#### *Vegetarianism/Veganism, a White Middle-Class Movement*

Vegetarianism/veganism commonly is referred to as a White, middle-class movement. The intersection of race (White) and class (middle-class) here is particularly

important, since it suggests that the consumption or non-consumption of meat not only is a matter of choice, but is also a matter of financial means.

Since the categories of race and class intersect, it is useful here to point out that people of different races do not have equal access to food in the United States. As mentioned, based on population density, Moreland et al. (2002) found that there are four times more supermarkets in White neighborhoods compared to the number in Black neighborhoods. This unequal access to healthy food affects minorities living in these poor neighborhoods. Moreover, Block et al. (2004) stated that Black neighborhoods tend to have more fast food restaurants than do White neighborhoods. The relative absence of supermarkets in Black neighborhoods as well as the presence of more fast food restaurants with fewer items, in part explains the fewer number of vegan minorities.

The contention has been made by Bailey (2007:46) that Black people were more attached to meat than White people since Black slaves had to eat the parts of meat that White masters did not want to consume and that the consumption of these parts of meat, once despised by Whites, was now an element of racial pride among the Black community. This contention does not receive total support however since African cultures have extensive numbers of green vegetables that were brought to the Western world, such as okra, black-eyed peas, and collard greens (Feagin 2015).

In conclusion, even though vegetarianism/veganism is a popular diet among numerous non-western countries, racial minorities in the United States have more difficulties than White people accessing a vegetarian/vegan diet.

*Racial Differences Among the Twenty Well-Known Vegetarians/Vegans*

In my selection of twenty vegetarians/vegans, fifteen were White, three were Black, one was Latina, and one was Asian. This selection of individuals, then, fits the literature which indicates an underrepresentation of people of color among vegetarians/vegans, although this under-representation is not great. The population of the United States is now about 31 percent people of color, while only 25 percent of my sample of vegetarians/vegans are of color. Here we see that social class is very important and overrides race so that none of the five individuals of color among the twenty were in the lower classes. For example, Kristina Carrillo Bucaram, a Latina, recently uploaded a video on her *YouTube* channel called “Raw Vegan on \$20 a day” (Fully Raw Kristina 2016) that attracted much negative commentary from her viewers. Her video intended to show how one could maintain a raw vegan diet on twenty dollars a day per person, a diet that she called “an affordable diet”. Many viewers with limited resources were adamant that they did not have enough money to spend twenty dollars a day for a diet.

## OTHER GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS CONCERNING VEGETARIANS/VEGANS

After studying the social demographic factors of race, class, and gender among vegetarians/vegans, the following section analyzes other demographic aspects, such as the age and the marital status of vegetarians/vegans.

### **Age**

In 2000, *Imaner Consultants*, a software development company based in the U.K., organized “The Vegan Research Panel,” consisting of 2,048 panel members. Eighty three percent of these members were vegan or considered themselves as “almost vegan”. The research revealed that 78% of them converted to veganism between the ages of 16 and 34. The average age of becoming vegan was 24.1 years of age. Based on this study, we can infer that individuals become vegan at a rather young age. Considering that becoming vegetarian/vegan is a major change in an individual’s life, it is not surprising to see that this change occurs when individuals are young. Younger individuals are often more likely to explore new way of conducting themselves than those who are older.<sup>2</sup>

### **Marital Status**

Unlike other demographic factors, the factor of marital status is not clear with reference to whether married people eat more meat than non-married people.

According to Vinnari et al. (2009), vegetarians/vegans more often tend not to be married. Indeed, the authors analyzed the prevalence and characteristics of vegetarians/vegans in three nationwide surveys in Finland and found significantly more

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<sup>2</sup> We must realize however that this information was not found in a peer-reviewed journal

single, co-habiting, divorced, and widowed individuals following a vegetarian diet than married people. Authors such as Rimal (2002) also found that married couples eat red meat more often than non-married couples.

However, Twigg (1983) noted that although masculine food choices are dominant in Western societies, heterosexual men who marry often need to negotiate food choices with their female partners, and their meals often combine vegan and non-vegan foods. Sobal (2005:146-147) also adds that multiple masculine models exist at this time, such as “strong men, healthy men, wealthy men, sensitive men”, and other conceptions of masculinities, and that the selection of masculine models by men influence food negotiations within the couple.

## FIVE ACCOUNTS OF WELL-KNOWN VEGETARIANS/VEGANS

As stated previously, since only five percent of Americans consider themselves to be vegetarian and only two percent of Americans consider themselves to be vegan, vegetarianism and veganism remain a minority movement. In addition, one has to remember that when individuals define themselves as vegetarians or vegans, their definitions might vary somewhat from the official, strict definition of what a vegetarian/vegan is. As a result, the actual percentages of vegetarians/vegans may even be smaller than the above percentages. For this reason, it is important to study how people consider the vegetarian/vegan movement, and to analyze the language that they employ when they talk about their movement. Because little is known about this aspect of the movement, we need to study in detail what it means to be vegetarian/vegan. Only by studying vegetarians/vegans in detail will we truly understand what the fundamental elements of this movement are. To do this, I have selected five individuals from the previous list of well-known vegetarians/vegans to be analyzed in detail. The selection of the five was based on the large amount of detail that the five themselves provided concerning their conversion to vegetarianism/veganism. In this way, we will better understand not only what we can discover in terms of a demographic overview but also what being vegetarian/vegan truly involves.

First, I will briefly introduce the five vegetarians/vegans selected before presenting their views on particular topics. For a more detailed biography of each, please see the Appendix A.

### **Paul McCartney**

Paul McCartney was born in Liverpool in 1942. From 1962 to 1970, Paul, together with John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr, formed the rock band “The Beatles”. The Beatles rapidly became one of the most popular rock bands in the world (Berry 2003).

### **Kristina Carrillo-Bucaram**

After being diagnosed with hyperglycemia when she was 18, Carrillo-Bucaram cured herself by adopting a low-fat raw vegan diet. Best known as “Fully Raw Kristina” on YouTube, Kristina at age 20, founded a non-profit organization called “Rawfully Organic”, in Houston, Texas. At this time, “Rawfully Organic” is the largest raw, organic produce co-operative in the US, supplementing over 800 families each week (Fully Raw 2016).

### **Ellen DeGeneres**

Ellen DeGeneres began her career as a comedian on “The Tonight Show”, and later starred as the main actress on her Shows “Ellen” and “The Ellen Show”. She now has her own talk show, “The Ellen DeGeneres Show,” since 2003 (Telepictures Productions Inc. In partnership with Warner Bros. Entertainment 2016).

### **Thierry Casasnovas**

Thierry Casasnovas was born in 1975 in the South of Perpignan, France, where he lives at present. After seriously damaging his body because of his long time addiction to drugs and alcohol, Casasnovas decided to cure himself by only eating raw, vegan food and with the assistance of alternative medicine. Currently, Casasnovas

informs thousands of people concerning the raw vegan diet through his association, “Régénère”, and organizes seminars and teaching programs in French-speaking countries (Casasnovas 2011; 2014).

### **T. Colin Campbell**

T. Colin Campbell is a biochemist: He obtained his PhD in Nutritional Science at Cornell University, in 1961. Dr. Campbell is known for his work on the role of nutrition in the development of cancer, and in particular for his research in *The China Study*, demonstrating that people who ate a diet consisting almost entirely of plant food tended to avoid cancer as well as chronic diseases more generally. Since then, Campbell has been a strong advocate of the vegetarian/vegan diet, and taught the first fully developed course on vegetarian nutrition in an American University, namely, Cornell University, in 2000 (Campbell 2006).



## DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE FIVE VEGETARIANS/VEGANS

Although each of the above individuals has had a different experience in becoming vegetarian/vegan, and although they are living the life of a vegetarian/vegan in different ways, similar themes can be found through an analysis of the vegetarians/vegans above.

### **The Path to Vegetarianism/Veganism**

The path to vegetarianism/veganism, for most, is not a simple, direct path. Concerning the vegetarians/vegans studied, most of them either experienced a back and forth movement between eating meat and not eating meat, or once they have decided not to eat meat, they have navigated between vegetarianism and veganism.

#### *A Back and Forth Movement*

From the above accounts, three detailed a wavering between not eating meat and consuming meat before fully committing to vegetarianism/veganism. Paul McCartney, for example, struggled to maintain a complete vegetarian diet at the beginning of his conversion to vegetarianism. Ellen DeGeneres also, after becoming vegetarian for eight months, resumed eating meat before turning vegan several months later. Kristina Carrillo-Bucaram, after becoming vegetarian, also went back to eating meat before going vegan. Subsequently we will later detail the factors that contributed to their decision to temporarily abandon the vegetarian/vegan diet, but we can conclude at this point that the path to vegetarianism/veganism is rarely a direct path.

### *From Vegetarianism to Veganism*

The path to becoming vegetarian/vegan of the above individuals is full of trial and error. Once they had become vegetarian /vegan, most of them still questioned their new diet and, while still refusing to eat meat, tried other types of vegetarianism/veganism to see what best suited their ideologies and their definitions of what it was to be physically healthy.

Thierry Casasnovas is the perfect example of an endless search towards the betterment of diet. Casasnovas first became vegetarian to help his body recover from his numerous excesses involving drugs, alcohol, and extreme sports. Because he remained very ill, Casasnovas turned from vegetarianism to veganism, and later on, to raw veganism. Ultimately, Casasnovas turned to “instincto nutrition”, which is a way to feed oneself only with natural products that have not been transformed in any way. This means that the food to be consumed is not processed, not cooked, and contains absolutely no additives. Additionally, instincto nutrition means that one can only eat the food that one’s natural instinct can trust, based on its smell, taste, and appearance. Instincto nutrition is slightly different than a raw vegan diet, because with the instincto nutrition diet, particular attention is given to the senses when eating, and because the food is not prepared in any way. In contrast, in raw veganism, while food is not cooked, it may be processed in different ways, such as placed in a blender. In instincto nutrition, any “recent” food in the history of nutrition is banned, such as food from plants and animals domesticated by early man. Even dairy products and any cooking methods are banned. The food needs to be eaten separately, mono-meals consisting of eating only one

type of fruit or plant, being optimal. Casanovas kept the principles of instinctive nutrition but banned any animal product and he slowly regained his health.

Vegetarianism/veganism, thus often is not the final step; we can see people adopting a vegetarian diet and then progressing towards a vegan diet and sometimes later adopting a different form of vegan diet.

*What Seem To Be Minor Differences in Diet Turn Out To Be Major Differences in the Vegetarian/Vegan Community*

Although not consuming meat is the common denominator both for vegetarians and vegans, there are subtle differences between the meatless diet of the two groups that are important for the vegetarian and vegan communities. T. Colin Campbell began his studies convinced that a diet rich in meat, milk, and eggs was a good and nutritious diet. When he and his colleagues discovered that casein, which makes up 87% of cow's milk protein, was consistently and strongly related to cancer, he changed his diet and stopped consuming animal products (Campbell 2006). Despite this, Campbell refuses to identify himself either as a vegetarian or a vegan. He recently stated that, although he appreciates the fact that both vegetarians and vegans strongly support his work, ninety percent of vegetarians still use dairy products, so that the nutrient composition of a vegetarian diet is not much different from the nutrient composition of a non-vegetarian diet.

According to Campbell, vegetarians are substituting dairy products for meat and eggs. Some vegans, although avoiding all animal food, still eat processed food that are vegan and therefore eat too much fat. For this reason, Campbell insists on calling his way of eating a "whole-food, plant-based diet," consisting of fruits, vegetables, grains,

legumes, and some nuts, all in a whole-food form, without being refined, but not necessarily raw. Thus, we see that what seem to be small differences in diet are, in fact, major within the vegetarian/vegan community (Satalia 2016).

### **Factors Contributing To the Diffusion or Retrenchment of Vegetarianism/Veganism**

Since the vegetarian/vegan path often is a result of trial and error, and because vegetarians/vegans occasionally move back and forth between eating meat and not consuming meat, it is interesting to see what the vegetarians/vegans in this study say about the factors, on the one hand, facilitating a meat-free diet, and, on the other, the factors contributing to individuals abandoning vegetarianism/veganism, even if temporarily. Although as stated before, socio-demographic factors of race, class, and gender influence individuals to become vegetarian/vegan, data collected from the five vegetarians/vegans in this study enable us to discover some interesting additional factors.

#### *Factors Contributing to the Diffusion of Vegetarianism/Veganism*

Because, as stated previously, vegetarianism/veganism is a social movement, the accounts that I have retrieved state the importance of becoming involved in a vegetarian/vegan social network as well as having a social support system in order to stay vegetarian/vegan. It must be stated that this social support system does not in itself have to consist of individuals who themselves are vegetarians/vegans. It must consist of people who care about and support the individuals who want to become vegetarian/vegan, even though the individuals in the support system themselves are not

convinced about the efficacy of this diet. In addition, media is an important source of influence as well as a way to collect information about a particular vegetarian/vegan diet for those who are interested and perhaps who convert to this form of eating.

*A Vegetarian/Vegan Social Network.* Before becoming vegetarian/vegan, individuals often are influenced by others who are already established as vegetarians/vegans. The established vegetarians/vegans become a source of inspiration for individuals desiring to adopt this diet and can play a major role in mentoring newly converted individuals. For example, Casasnovas, when desperately ill and searching for a cure through veganism, became fascinated with Brian Clement. Clement was the Director of the Hippocrates Health Institute in Florida, an institute offering classes in health and nutrition based on living food principles. Casasnovas participated in numerous seminars organized by Clement, he facilitated Clement's coming to France, and he followed the dietary principles that Clement espoused for a time. Although his health did not improve, Casasnovas remained convinced that Clement's principles were the solution to his health problems. During the winter of 2006, Casasnovas decided to go to Florida to enroll in a three-week intensive life transformation program at the Hippocrates Health Institute. He was hoping to recover his health during this stay but became quite critical toward the Hippocrates Institute. Indeed, he criticized the Institute's business-like atmosphere, he was very disappointed to only see Clement two or three times during his stay, and he had the feeling he was not learning very much. Although ultimately Casasnovas detached himself from Clement and his food principles, Clement did play an important role in Casasnovas' conversion to veganism (Casasnovas 2014).

Another example of the importance of social networking in becoming vegetarian/vegan is the example of Kristina Carrillo-Bucaram. Carrillo-Bucaram was heavily influenced by Douglas Graham, an important vegan, with whom she became an intern and worked with him for a time. Carrillo-Bucaram, once vegan, followed the diet created by Graham, namely the 80/10/10 diet, in which 80% of calories come from carbohydrates, 10% come from protein, and 10% come from fat (Fully Raw 2016).

Before becoming influential themselves, most of my well-known vegetarians/vegans first had to be influenced by other leaders in the movement and had to become involved in a network of other vegetarians/vegans. We see here again how vegetarianism/veganism can be considered a social movement since it gathers individuals who share a collective identity as vegetarians/vegans. The gathering of individuals is done through established vegetarians/vegans who teach not only the dietary principles of vegetarianism/veganism but also the philosophy of vegetarianism/veganism.

*Social Support.* Probably, the single most decisive factor in maintaining a vegetarian/vegan diet is the social support one can get from his/her family and immediate entourage. T. Colin Campbell referenced his wife, Karen, and strongly acknowledged her support for his work and confessed that without her support, he, himself, might have not become vegan (Vegetarians in Paradise 2007). Paul McCartney also acknowledged the role that his wife, Linda, played in enabling him to maintain his vegetarian diet. He stated that not only has she been supportive to him, but also that, over the years, she converted many people in their circle to vegetarianism. He stated that

she converted “our friends, people we worked with and even some of our roadies on tour. She had a non-aggressive forcefulness about her” (McCartney 2013).

We see then that being surrounded by people who either share the same views or accept one’s dietary choice is a fundamental factor to maintaining a vegetarian/vegan diet. When there is no social support, even if the person is convinced of the benefits of a vegetarian/vegan diet, it becomes more likely not to maintain a vegetarian/vegan diet. Kristina Carrillo-Bucaram, for instance, did not receive the social support she needed from her family and friends at the beginning of her conversion and reverted to eating meat because of social pressure. She stated:

Because I felt so much pressure from family and friends and people saying that I wasn’t getting enough protein, also because I was only 16-17 years old, I started eating meat again .... So I did go back to eating meat, but it had nothing to do with health and it had nothing to do with animals, it had more to do with societal pressure (Fully Raw Kristina 2014).

*Alternative Media.* The internet, and media more generally, also have been a great source of inspiration for the vegetarians/vegans in this study. Concerning the internet, Casanovas in particular has been active on forums concerning the vegan diet. DeGeneres, in interviews, has often mentioned that books and documentaries about factory farming heavily influenced her to become vegan. Additionally, many animal rights social researchers, such as David Nibert and John Sorenson, wrote strongly on the relationship between human oppression and the oppression of animals (Feagin et al. 2015). An increasing large community of vegetarians/vegans is present on the internet today, through forums, videos on *YouTube*, blogs, and so far, and offers a significant amount of support for those who have recently become vegetarian/vegan. Contemporary

leaders in the movement are now followed by thousands of individuals on the internet. Carrillo-Bucaram for example, now has over 727,600 subscribers on her *YouTube* channel, “Fully Raw Kristina”.

Establishing a vegetarian/vegan network of recognized vegetarian/vegan leaders, having a strong social support system in which family and friends along with other vegetarians/vegans, and collecting information about the particular diet on media are all important factors contributing to the development of vegetarianism/veganism.

#### *Factors Keeping People Either From Becoming or Staying Vegetarian/Vegan*

The accounts retrieved from my five vegetarians/vegans describe obstacles to their conversion to vegetarianism/veganism. The negative stereotypes attached to vegetarianism/veganism explain why so few individuals in the first place decide to become vegetarian/vegan. Additionally, the difficult access to certain vegetarian/vegan foods is mentioned as a factor keeping people from staying vegetarian/vegan.

*Changing Views About Vegetarianism; Negative Stereotypes About Veganism.* We have seen previously that Western masculinity has been associated with meat-eating and that meat-eating and masculinity have been associated with toughness, aggressiveness, and assertiveness. We do know however that vegetarianism is becoming more accepted in today’s society. A recent article called “Are vegans the same as vegetarians? The effect of diet on perceptions of masculinity” (Thomas 2016) not only looks at the perception of masculinity between meat-eaters and vegetarians, but includes a study of the perception of vegans as well. According to this article, vegetarianism may no longer be associated with decreased perceptions of masculinity, although individuals following a vegan diet



still are perceived as less masculine than meat-eaters, especially when being vegan is the result of personal choice rather than a dietary obligation. It is interesting to see that McCartney has a similar conclusion about the evolution of the perception of vegetarians today. He stated:

Growing up in Liverpool, I would have thought of a vegetarian as a wimp. We could be a prejudiced bunch at times but I'm not sure people would automatically think like that these days. I've been a vegetarian for a long time now and over the years I've seen how the attitudes have changed around the world, so I'm not surprised when I see new research that shows more and more people are increasingly adopting 'meat free eating'. Even 20 years ago, it could sometimes be difficult to find vegetarian options in good restaurants. Now it's great to see more and more choice with some brilliant creative dishes in restaurants, cafés and supermarkets. There is definitely now an overall greater acceptance of being vegetarian (McCartney 2013).

While it is true that it is quite easy to cook vegetarian/vegan meals at home as well as to find vegetarian/vegan foods in supermarkets, few restaurants have vegetarian/vegan options at this time. Asking to remove meat from a meal is possible in most cases, but today few restaurants design entire vegetarian/vegan menus.

Surely attitudes are slowly changing and a vegetarian diet may be more and more accepted. However, negative stereotypes concerning meat and what it means to be manly are still very present. A vegan diet in particular is still seen as wimpy, weak, and unappealing by most non-vegan individuals (Thomas 2016). Despite an abundance of very successful vegetarian/vegan professional athletes, a plant-based diet still is seen as nutritionally defective and as lacking protein by most non-vegans (McEvoy et al. 2012). McCartney stated, “My mum who’s a nurse would have thought that the only way to get protein was from animals, ‘cause that was the thinking back then” (People for the Ethical

Treatment of Animals 2009).

*The Disconnection Between the Piece of Meat and the Living Animal*. It is interesting to see that the above vegetarians/vegans who evoked temporarily returning to eating meat, provided the same reason for going back to eating meat, namely the disconnection, in Western culture, between the living animal and the piece of meat bought at the supermarket. Carrillo-Bucaram, concerning American supermarkets, said:

After this entire experience had passed, after I had gone back to the United States, I remember it being a year, a year and a half after that, and I remember being in a grocery store and I remember thinking: wow they make everything look so harmless!" You know the chicken is packaged so nicely, wrapped in a plastic, there is no blood on it, and they make it look like happy grass fed animal "protein". And it looks so easy, all you have to do is take it home, unwrap it, put it on the stove. You never got to meet the animal, you never had to kill it, you never got to see the slaughtering, you never got to see the blood, all of that was taken away from you, all for the easy convenience of you having it in a package and be able to consume it and get exactly what you need from it. (Fully Raw Kristina 2014)

Our modern grocery stores, by nicely wrapping animal pieces in bloodless, attractive packages, encourage people not to make the link between the living animal, the way it was slaughtered and the piece of meat bought at the supermarket. Carrillo-Bucaram continued by stating that if everybody would have to kill to eat their own food, far more people would be vegetarian or vegan. One of the reasons that facilitated these already vegetarian/vegan individuals to go back eating meat was the ease with which we can ignore the fact that the bloodless meat sold at the supermarket was once a living animal. DeGeneres stated concerning the period when, after adopting a vegetarian diet, she resumed eating meat:

I used to love, you know cheeseburgers and steaks and you know, I just did what most people do, I just had to disconnect. I just decided, it is more important for me to taste the cheeseburger and have a steak or have a turkey sandwich, and it's easier and I just put it out of my mind (CBS News 2010).

Thus, we see, from negative stereotypes against vegetarianism/veganism, the ease with which we are able to disconnect from what is really on our plate, that the obstacles to becoming vegetarian/vegan are numerous and this may explain for the most part why so few individuals become long-term vegetarian/vegan.

### **Reasons for Becoming Vegetarian/Vegan, Based On Five Detailed Accounts**

Although there are many reasons for individuals to adopt a vegetarian/vegan diet, generally speaking there are four basic reasons to adopt such a diet. First, *the ethical argument* believes that the exploitation of animals by humans is morally wrong. Second, *the health argument* states that the consumption of meat and dairy products by humans is not optimal for good health. Third, targeting the livestock industry in particular, *the environmental argument* sees this industry as largely responsible for ozone layer reduction which damages the planet and, in addition, creates a large carbon footprint. Finally, some individuals, such as spiritual leaders, invoke *a religious or spiritual reason* such as the fact that certain foods in some religions are considered impure. Among the four major reasons, the two that are evoked most frequently for becoming vegetarian/vegan are the ethical reason and the health-related reason. Because of this, we will look more closely at these two arguments.

### *The Ethical Argument*

Among those who adhere to the ethical argument, not only is killing animals to consume them considered wrong, but any form of animal exploitation for human benefit is viewed as immoral. Thus, even to shear sheep to take their wool, even though it does not physically hurt the animals, is considered a form of animal exploitation. Animals, who are often called non-human animals by animal rights activists, are species that activists consider to be equally important as the human species, and they should not to be considered in any way inferior. In the testimonies gathered from famous vegetarians/vegans, several have mentioned their concern for the welfare of animals. The violent and premature death of some animals long before their natural death would have occurred is particularly shocking for these activists. For example, as mentioned before, bulls, although born as frequently as cows, are not useful in the production of milk to the same extent as cows, and therefore, many are butchered. Cows do not have a better fate, since they are over-inseminated to constantly produce milk and are separated from their calves soon after their calves' birth. Once too old or not producing milk anymore, cows are simply butchered, long before their natural death would have occurred. Concerning chickens, male birds, not useful in the production of eggs, are killed as soon as they are born. For some vegans, television documentaries showing footage of extreme brutality perpetrated against animals in factory farms such as in the documentary *Earthlings* (Monson 2005), contributed to their awakening of animal abuse and generated their conversion to vegetarianism/veganism. Ellen DeGeneres, for example, described well her awakening to animal suffering after seeing *Earthlings* (2005):

You just see that and...you go: I can't participate to that. I can't be a part of something that is suffering and it's 50 billion animals a year that are killed. And I think we all fool ourselves if we think that they are some kinds of happy cows, and that is a quick death and that they just hit them in the head and they are out and they go through the whole...and it's a very disturbing reality. And it happens every minute of the day and every commercial on the air has some kind of food product in it, every mini-mall, every store, every...and you think about the consumption and how fast they have to mass produce, and you can't possibly put together in your head one healthy happy animal. They are all in pain, they are all treated badly, they are all diseased, and they are all pumped with antibiotics. And they are just so many (CBS News 2010).

Other vegetarians/vegans attribute their awakening to the problem of animal suffering to the realization of the link between eating meat and contributing to animal abuse. Kristina Carrillo-Bucaram, for example, described her experience when she had to kill chickens to feed a community in the Dominican Republic. Her experience contradicted the normal absence of the link between the food that we eat and the animals that have to be killed to feed us:

And I remember when I first got there, I actually found this cute set of little chicks, that I took two. I remember I played with them all the time and I raised them and you don't really ever think about eating an animal as you are having fun raising it because you learn to love the animal, just like loving a dog or a cat, you learn to love it as you raise it. As months have gone by I remember these chickens had grown very big, and I loved them. So when you are young, and you have been exposed to many types of products at grocery stores, everything comes in a package. So my first time living in this type of community, I didn't really understand that if you would were going to eat meat, you had to kill them yourself if you wanted to consume them. I have never been in charge of that before [...] the day came around that it was time for me to learn how to kill my own food to eat it and it was for the group, it was for the family. I will never forget this experience because when it came my turn to make dinner for everyone or to make the meal for everyone, I was completely shocked when they told me that I had to kill the chickens to be able to prepare them with the beans and the rice and the tomato sauce. I will never forget this moment in my life because I cried hysterically for about an hour when they told me that I had to kill my chickens, and I didn't want to do this. I couldn't get

myself to do it and I remember staying around that day as literally some of my friends sliced the throats of some of these chickens. They plucked their feathers, they skinned them, they took out their guts, they separated the chickens' parts and they cooked them in a pot, in a bowl on top of the fire, in the middle of this village. I remember feeling so traumatized by this event, that I could no longer look at any of the chickens for a very long time. I didn't eat chicken or any type of meat after that for at least a year [...] For the next year, I didn't consume any animal products and my consciousness from just not eating animals grew, making animals as our friends and not our food and being very conscious of what I was eating. I was young at the time. I was 15, I was 16, I wasn't really concerned about health. So for me it was more about the gruesome experience of killing animals that affected me (Fully Raw Kristina 2014)

Carrillo-Bucaram first became a vegetarian because of this traumatizing experience of having to kill the chicken herself to feed the community, and later became vegan for health related reasons.

### *The Health Argument*

The consumption of meat and dairy products often is avoided by many vegetarians/vegans for its perceived harmful effects on their health. This was perhaps the most important reason most people changed their diets in the great expansion of interest in vegetarianism coming out of the 1960s anti-establishment movements. A recent study done by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the cancer agency of the World Health Organization, classified the consumption of red meat as “probably carcinogenic to humans”. They also classified the consumption of processed meat as “carcinogenic to humans”, meaning that the consumption of processed meat actually causes colorectal cancer (Bouvard et al. 2015). Among the many risks evoked by vegetarians/vegans, the practice of intensive animal farming, or as it is commonly called, “factory farming”, which, as we have seen previously, consists of keeping large numbers

of livestock in small, confined areas, seems particularly problematic in terms of health. Indeed, the crowding of animals into small spaces often requires the use of antibiotics and other unnatural chemicals to prevent the animals from catching spreadable diseases. Humans, by consuming meat and dairy products, also consume any antibiotics present in the animals. They thereby become immune to the antibiotics although they may need to use them in combatting their own illnesses. Factory farming also makes extensive use of pesticides and hormones that are known to be harmful to humans.

Many vegans also denounce the absurdity of drinking milk from other species, humans being the only species on earth to do so. The amount of protein contained in cows' milk is designed to grow cows and bulls and it is in too large a quantity for the human body to digest properly; it is, therefore, not designed for the human body. In addition, meat and dairy products are exceptionally fattening, and we know that obesity is related to many diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart attacks. For this reason, Dr. Campbell, after conducting research that showed that people who ate the most animal-based foods contracted more chronic diseases than people who ate largely plant-foods, became a strong advocate for a whole-food plant-based diet. Similarly, Casasnovas and Carrillo-Bucaram turned to veganism to help their bodies recover from diseases and remained vegan after obtaining good results.

Beardsworth and Keil (1992) stated that reasons for becoming vegan often are multiple and subject to modification overtime. One can combine one, two, three, or all four of these reasons for becoming vegetarian/vegan. Although a particular motivation for becoming vegetarian/vegan maybe more dominant at the beginning, other reasons

sometimes are added once the person's diet has changed. Indeed, Fox and Ward (2008) found that this was particularly true concerning the environmental justification for becoming vegetarian/vegan. Indeed, even if environmental concerns are rarely the main reasons for people to become vegetarian/vegan, they are often raised in addition to other reasons and are often mentioned once individuals have already become vegetarian/vegan for health or for ethically related reasons. Additionally, the authors found that environmental concerns can sometimes motivate some vegetarians to go further in their diet and become vegan (Fox and Ward 2008:426). Ellen DeGeneres for example, illustrates well how the various reasons for becoming vegetarian/vegan can be intricate. She stated:

[...] and you think about the consumption and how fast they have to mass produce, and you can't possibly put together in your head one healthy happy animal. They are all in pain, they are all treated badly, they are all diseased, and they are all pumped with antibiotics. And they are just so many...and environmentally...I do it because I love animals and I saw the reality, and I just couldn't ignore it anymore, but a lot of people do it for, you know, for other reasons and they are many ways to do it (CBS News 2010).

Even though her main motivation for becoming vegetarian/vegan is for the welfare of animals, she goes on to mention the use of antibiotics on animals, and she states that the animals are all diseased, which indicates that she is also vegan for health reasons. Lastly, even though she does not elaborate on it, she also mentions the environment as a reason for becoming vegan.

#### *The Hierarchy of Reasons for Becoming Vegetarian/Vegan*

The four different reasons for becoming vegetarian/vegan, namely, ethical, health, environmental, and religious reasons, are not always evaluated equally by society



at large nor, more specifically, by some vegetarians/vegans. Indeed, some consider the ethical reasons, that is, not to consume any animal-derived products so as not to harm or oppress animals, as being hierarchically superior to all other reasons (Fox and Ward 2008).

Establishing a hierarchy among justifications for becoming vegetarian/vegan is problematic, however. It is challenging, first, because individuals who become vegetarian/vegan for ethical reasons are not necessarily morally irreproachable. Indeed, even if strict vegans avoid wearing clothes made of animal fur, they do not always pay attention to wearing clothes that are manufactured ethically. Admiring a supposedly ethical vegan because he/she does not hurt or exploit animals, does not make sense if the person is wearing clothing made by exploited children in Asia.

The second problem in hierarchizing reasons for becoming vegetarian/vegan is that individuals are not all equal in the sacrifices that they need to make to become vegetarian/vegan. Indeed, studies show that lactose maldigestion is far more prevalent among people of color and non-Westerners than among White individuals (Rao et al. 1994). As a result, people of color often feel devaluated in their experience as vegans by this hierarchy among justifications for becoming vegan, some feeling that their intolerance or allergy to lactose lessens their merit in becoming vegan.

### **More Than Just a Diet, a Spiritual Awakening**

All of the accounts that I have retrieved relate positive results from becoming vegetarian/vegan. It is interesting to note the language used to describe the state of the vegetarians/vegans studied before their change of diet and after it. The language they

employed demonstrates that becoming vegetarian/vegan is more than a change of diet. Indeed, becoming vegetarian/vegan creates a change in state of mind as well. Carrillo-Bucaram admitted that, after going back to eating meat again after her vegetarian period, she noticed a feeling of depression. When she decided to turn vegan, the words she used to describe how she felt deeply contrasted with those she previously employed in describing how she felt when she was eating meat. She stated, “And it wasn’t until I went raw again for my health, after getting hyperglycemia, that I gave up meat again and I rediscovered how good it feels to just eat plants and to eat a plant-based diet and you feel amazing and you feel filled with life because you don’t have to kill another life to feel your own” (Fully Raw Kristina 2014). Going vegan is much more than a diet for Carrillo-Bucaram, since it makes her feel “amazing, filled with life.” She later stated that taking on either a vegetarian or a vegan or a plant-based or even a fully raw lifestyle brings people towards living a more “compassionate, empathetic, loving, healthy, sustainable life, not just for you but for everyone around you” (Fully Raw Kristina 2014). This experience helped her shift her life at an early age so that she was “enlightened” later on. This lifestyle helped cure her hyperglycemia, helped her to get rid of migraines, made her skin better, her energy better, she slept better, and she ran better. The feelings that she describes embrace more than a change in her physical body, but a change at a spiritual level as well. This spiritual dimension is also described by DeGeneres as to how she feels as a vegan:

I’m healthier for it, I’m happier for it, I don’t have that...I mean I truly believe that we take in energy in our thoughts and all that stuff are important, and I believe in that kind of positive thinking and I can’t imagine that if you are putting something in your body that is filled with fear or anxiety or pain, that it isn’t

somehow gonna be inside of you, and I used to be a more anxious person, more edgy, and everything was a little more, you know jumpy and sad. I think that it's, you know, not putting that stuff in my body. And it's hard, it's hard to live your life and know that that exists and watch people do it all around you. You gotta hope that one day that a shift will happen (CBS News 2010)

Here again we see a major contrast in the terms employed to describe her state of mind before becoming vegan and after. She describes herself as an anxious and edgy person before becoming vegan; she is happier and healthier after her dietary change. Her explanation about why she feels happier following a vegan diet is particularly interesting. Indeed, there is something spiritual, almost religious in her explanation. In fact, the idea that consuming certain types of food is able to affect one's spiritual state of mind seems to be at the heart of many foods banned by religious groups. The exclusion of animals that are perceived as unclean and impure, whether in the Christian, Muslim or Jewish faiths, is for the purpose of providing individuals with a purity of spirit. Thus, vegetarianism/veganism is more than a diet, it carries with it an ideology that avoiding consuming animal products will impact your state of mind in a positive way.

### **Engagement in the Vegetarian/Vegan Community**

All of the vegetarians/vegans that I have selected made a conscious effort to spread the vegetarian/vegan message through books, seminars, videos, etc. Also, they either organized or belonged to associations dedicated to the vegetarian/vegan movement. This, again, demonstrates that vegetarianism/veganism for them is more than a simple diet. Rather, it is a complete lifestyle. For example, McCartney is very engaged in the "Meat Free Monday" campaign that encourages people slowly to change their diet by giving up meat for one day a week (Locker 2014). In addition, in 2008, he

participated in the PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) ad campaign in which he delivered a testimonial about how he became a vegetarian. In the ad, he stated, “Many years ago, I was fishing, and as I was reeling in the poor fish, I realized I am killing him – all for the passing pleasure it brings me.” The ad concluded, “I am Paul McCartney, and I am a Vegetarian”. Thus, being vegetarian/vegan becomes part of one’s identity, and not only do vegetarians/vegans express their identity as vegetarians/vegans, but most try to convince others of the benefits of such a diet.

Casasnovas created an organization called “Régèneré” to inform people about “living food” and through his association, organizes seminars and teaching programs. In his informational videos, he emphasizes that the change toward living a healthy life is not only strictly dietary. Casasnovas speaks of a “lifestyle reform”, where dietary change is coupled with exercise, plentiful sleep, and an abundant social life (Casasnovas 2011). This shows that vegetarianism/veganism goes beyond strictly a way of eating, but becomes a way of life.

Carrillo-Bucaram, as previously mentioned, founded her own non-profit organization, “Rawfully Organic”, and lectures and teaches classes about the raw vegan diet. Her identity is so embedded in her diet that she is more widely known as “Fully Raw Kristina” than as Kristina Carrillo Bucaram. In fact, she introduces herself in professional meetings by her nickname.

Probably because there still are so few vegetarians/vegans in Western societies at this time, becoming vegetarian/vegan is not normative and forces individuals to proclaim their identities as vegetarian/vegan. A religious or spiritual missionary-type element also

is present here, because vegetarians/vegans tend to be so convinced of the benefits of their dietary choices, both on the physical plane as well as on the spiritual plane, that they want to “preach” about the movement.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, I have analyzed, from a sociological perspective, vegetarianism/veganism as practiced in Western societies. My first argument is that vegetarianism/veganism is more than simply a diet, it is a social movement. Indeed, as in all social movements, vegetarianism/veganism gathers individuals around a cause and encourages its members to identify themselves with the cause and to organize to challenge the existing social order. My second argument is that this movement is embedded in a society dominated by racism, classism, and sexism. Given that vegetarianism/veganism is a social movement, it is deeply affected by these systemic forces. As a result, there are more Whites than there are people of color who are vegetarians/vegans. There are more individuals from the middle and upper classes in the movement than there are from lower and working classes. Finally, there are more women than men who are vegetarian/vegan. My selection of twenty well-known vegetarians/vegans enabled me to see if my sample fits the literature on the demographic factors of race, class, and gender as they relate to vegetarianism/veganism. Concerning race, my sample did exemplify the literature in terms of the relationship between race and vegetarianism/veganism. Significantly more Whites were included in my list of well-known vegetarians/vegans, than Blacks, Latinos/as and Asians. With reference to the relationship between social class and vegetarianism/veganism, again my sample corroborates with the literature on this subject. A large majority of the twenty individuals selected were in the upper-middle and lower-upper classes and importantly, only became vegetarians/vegans after reaching these higher social classes. Interestingly

however, my sample did not match the literature which indicated that more women are vegetarians/vegans than men. In my study, there were more men in my list than women. An educated guess concerning this finding would be that, generally speaking, women tend to be under-represented by mass media, therefore less information may have been available concerning women who were vegetarian/vegan than men.

The second part of my study consisted of selecting five individuals among the twenty vegetarians/vegans to obtain more information about vegetarianism/veganism on a micro-level. The analysis of these five individuals revealed that the path to vegetarianism/veganism often is not a straight path. Individuals, before fully committing to their decision of becoming vegetarians/vegans, often experienced a back-and-forth movement between consuming meat and not consuming meat. My micro-level analysis also exposed factors that assist individuals to become and to stay vegetarian/vegan. Having a good vegetarian/vegan social network in which people can become inspired by already established vegetarians/vegans was one of the factors enabling people both to become and to stay vegetarian/vegan. Having strong social support, most importantly from family members and close friends, also plays a large part in them becoming and staying vegetarian/vegan. Finally, mass media as a source of information for individuals interested in the movement, contributes to the conversion of large numbers of people to vegetarianism/veganism.

My analysis also revealed two important factors that keep individuals either from becoming or from staying vegetarian/vegan. Negative stereotypes, particularly toward the vegan diet, can dissuade some people either from becoming or from remaining

vegan. The second factor, previously discussed, was the ease with which one can buy pieces of a once living animal in a bloodless, clean package at any supermarket. Because most do not see the piece of meat that they are about to consume as once being a living animal who has been slaughtered and cut into pieces, most individuals have no qualms about eating meat. As a result, most meat-eaters accuse vegetarians/vegans of wanting them to give up the pleasures of life including the food that they enjoy the most, and that they will soon have nothing flavorful left to eat if they follow the vegetarians'/vegans' advice. We can see pushback from meat-eaters against vegetarians/vegans on bumper stickers. For example, the following two anti-vegetarian/vegan stickers state: "Eat beef, the West wasn't won salad" or "This lettuce died just so YOU could be a vegetarian! Have a heart, eat a rock".

Although I mentioned four reasons for becoming vegetarian/vegan, namely the ethical, health, environmental, and religious reasons, the five vegetarians/vegans I have selected emphasized the ethical and health reasons in particular. They spoke at length either about their concern for the welfare of animals, or their restored health after following a vegetarian/vegan diet.

As in the first part of the study where I concluded that vegetarianism/veganism is more than just a diet, I here again reach the same conclusion. The movement described by my five vegetarians/vegans is envisioned as a transformation not only on a physical level, but on a spiritual level as well. Additionally, because it is a transcendent transformation, some individuals become more heavily engaged in organizations and



associations promoting the movement than they would be if vegetarianism/veganism was simply a diet.

The new knowledge acquired through this study is important for understanding that certain social groups have knowledge and resources that enabled them to access a lifestyle such as vegetarianism/veganism. In addition, this study provides valuable information in understanding this social movement from an internal perspective.

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## APPENDIX A

### **Five Vegetarian/Vegan Biographies**

#### *Paul McCartney*

Paul McCartney was born in Liverpool on June 18, 1942, from a mother who was a professional midwife, and a father who was a cotton salesman. From 1962 to 1970, Paul forms with John Lennon, Georges Harrison and Ringo Starr the Rock band “The Beatles”. The Beatles rapidly became one of the most popular rock band in the world. Although the four members were from low middle class, they were well-educated. Paul McCartney and John Lennon indeed wrote the majority of the band’s songs as well as songs for other groups. In 1967, Paul and the other Beatles members were introduced to the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who taught them about the Indian culture and about meditation. While staying at the Maharishi’s home in India for a few weeks, Paul stopped taking LSD and became a vegetarian.

Two years later, Paul married Linda Eastman, who was a photographer. Linda was also a vegetarian and a strong advocate of the animal rights. She wrote several cookbooks promoting the vegetarian diet and created her own line of frozen vegetarian meals, while supporting many animal rights organization, such as “People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals” (PETA). (Berry 2003).

#### *Kristina Carrillo-Bucaram*

Best known as “Fully Raw Kristina” on YouTube, Kristina graduated from Rice University, in Houston, Texas, with a major in Kinesiology, specializing in Health Science, Raw Foods, and Fasting.

After being diagnosed with hyperglycemia when she was 18, Kristina tried to cure herself by adopting a low fat raw vegan diet. Her diet consisted, and still consists, mainly of fruits and vegetables, as well as some nuts and seeds. After curing herself from hyperglycemia over nine years ago, she remained a fully raw vegan since then. At the age of 20, she founded a non-profit organization called “Rawfully Organic”, in Houston, Tx. Today, “Rawfully Organic” is the largest raw, organic produce co-operative in the US, supplementing over 800 families each week. The cooperative relies entirely on volunteers (Fully Raw 2016, Rawfully Organic 2016)

### *Ellen DeGeneres*

Ellen DeGeneres was born on January 26, 1958. She began her career in her hometown, New Orleans, at a local comedy club. She then moved to Los Angeles, where she appeared on The Tonight Show, where she became the first female comedian to be invited for an onscreen discussion after the show, with Johnny Carson. DeGeneres began an acting career, playing for numerous films and sitcoms. From 1994 to 1998, she starred as the main actress on her show “Ellen” and received several Emmy nominations in the Best Actress category. She followed with “The Ellen show” from 2001 to 2002. In 1997, DeGeneres made her coming out publicly and explored some LGBT issues in her show, and in 1998, she married Portia De Rossi.

On top of winning 13 Emmys, 14 People’s Choice Awards, writing three books and starting her own record company, DeGeneres is also known for her humanitarian work. She raised money to help bring awareness to several social issues such as bullying, AIDS, stress, global warming, and breast cancer. She also supported the



rebuilding of her hometown, New Orleans, after Hurricane Katrina (Telepictures Productions Inc. In partnership with Warner Bros. Entertainment 2016).

DeGeneres claims her love for animals and is a long time vegan. She promotes “Meatless Mondays” and supports the “Gentle Barn”, an association that offers home for rescued animals.

### *Thierry Casasnovas*

Thierry Casasnovas was born on April 15, 1975 in the South of Perpignan, France, where he still lives at present. When he was about 21, he started to consume large amounts of alcohol and to use illegal drugs; hashish as a start and from that many other kinds of drugs. In fact, he confessed that except for heroin, he took almost every drug that it was possible to take. A long period of consuming LSD, about three or four years, seriously damaged his body. He then met a woman with whom he remained in a relationship for five years. This relationship helped him to stop taking illegal drugs but it did not curtail his alcoholic consumption. This heavy consumption impacted his liver as well as his pancreas. His destructive lifestyle, paired with an excess of physical activity, which included long distance running, degraded his body severely. He decided to become vegetarian to help his body recover, and ultimately became vegan. At the age of 25, he decided to become a raw vegan. At this time, he had only limited information concerning this food diet since he had no Internet connection. He chose the food he consumed based on his body’s response to it. Unfortunately, his health did not improve because of his diet and he progressively lost a lot of weight.

At this stage, he was unable to move anymore and was slowly dying. At this time he became interested in instinctive nutrition, or instinctive nutrition, which is a way to feed yourself only with natural products that have not been transformed in any way. Casanovas followed this diet for a while and slowly began to feel better and became to gain weight (Casanovas 2011; 2014)

At this time, Thierry Casanovas informs thousands of people concerning the raw vegan diet through his association, “*Régénère*”, and organizes seminars and teaching programs.

#### *T. Colin Campbell*

T. Colin Campbell was born on January 1, 1934 and was raised on a dairy farm. From his early childhood, milk thus was center in his nutrition and he was used to hear that cow’s milk built strong bones and teeth. He was the first in his family to go to College, and chose Pennsylvania State University to study pre-veterinary medicine, and then he attended veterinary school at the University of Georgia for a year and then transferred to Cornell University when he is offered scholarship money to do his master’s degree and study animal nutrition. His Ph.D. research study at Cornell University was dedicated to finding ways to make cows and sheep grow faster, to be able to produce more animal protein. At this time, Campbell was convinced that a diet rich in meat, milk, and eggs was a good and nutritious diet, and that the American diet, with plenty of animal protein food, was the best in the world. After obtaining his Ph.D. degree, Campbell worked at MIT, where he was in charge of discovering and isolating the chemical responsible for the deaths of millions of chicken a year, namely dioxin.

Following his work at MIT and a teaching position at Virginia Tech, Campbell began working on a project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development whose primary goal was to investigate the unusually high prevalence of liver cancer in Filipino children. At this time, it was widely thought by Universities professors and government members that the childhood malnutrition in the world was caused by a lack of protein, especially from animal-based foods. What Dr. Campbell and his colleagues discovered at this time however was in total contradiction from this thought. Indeed, he and his team discovered that children who ate the highest-protein diets were from the wealthiest families and they were the ones most likely to get liver cancer. A similar Indian study confirmed his results. Campbell was taken aback and decided to start a research investigating the role of nutrition, especially protein, in the development of cancer. This research became funded for twenty-seven years by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the American Cancer Society and the American Institute for Cancer Research. Campbell and his team discovered that casein, which makes up 87% of cow's milk protein, consistently and strongly promoted cancer. Other proteins coming from plants did not promote cancer however. Following these results, Dr. Campbell began his most popular comprehensive study of diet, lifestyle and disease called "The China Study". His results showed that people who ate the most animal-based foods got the most chronic disease, while people who ate the most plant-foods tended to avoid chronic disease.

Since then, Dr. Campbell is a strong advocate of the vegetarian/vegan diet. He organized and taught at Cornell University the first course on vegetarian nutrition in an American University (Campbell 2006).