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Faculty of Social Sciences

School of Economic, Social and Political Science

Faith Veganism: How the Ethics, Values, and Practices of UK-Based Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Vegans Reshape Veganism and Religiosity

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by

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University of Southampton

Abstract

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Veganism, a philosophy and practice constituting the eschewal of all animal-derived products and forms of animal exploitation, has grown exponentially in the UK over the past decade, including among individuals of faith. This phenomenon has been increasingly studied within social science, but there is one area that is noticeably absent in existing scholarship: how religion intersects with veganism. Given the perceived centrality of animal bodies to Abrahamic religious observance, coupled with potential ethical similarities between veganism and religion as possible guiding forces in an individual's life, this intersection is pertinent to study. I ask, how are Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans reshaping and redefining veganism and religiosity in late modern Great Britain?

I recruited 36 UK-based vegans identifying as either Muslim, Jewish, or Christian, and conducted a multi-modal qualitative methods study in 2021, comprising interviews, diary methods, and virtual participant observation. I then thematically analysed the data, drawing on theories relating to Bourdieusian sociology, reflexive religiosity, and embodied ethics and values.

This research reveals that religion and veganism are often mutually constituted, with veganism being understood by faith vegans as an ethical lifestyle that may be incorporated into their religious lifestyles. Religious ethics, values, and principles are reflexively interrogated, enabling participants to bring together faith and veganism. However, for many, religion is non-negotiable, so specific knowledge and support is sought to aid the negotiations that take place around religious practice. Through reflexive religiosity, religious practice becomes veganised, whilst veganism becomes faith based.

I develop a series of concepts that help explain the characteristics of faith veganism, such as faith vegan identity, faith vegan community, faith vegan ethics, and faith vegan stewardship, as well as contribute new ways of theorising veganism: as transformative, mobile, reflexive, and more-than-political. Thus, this empirical study offers a new understanding of veganism, one that intersects with and is underpinned by religion, and which I term faith veganism.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
Table of Tables	7
Table of Figures	8
Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship	10
Thesis Dedication	11
Acknowledgements	12
Chapter 1 Introduction	13
Chapter 2 Literature Review	20
2.1 Veganism	20
2.1.1 Multiple Veganisms	20
2.1.2 (Vegan) Intersectionality	23
2.1.3 Becoming Vegan	27
2.1.4 Lived Vegan Experience	30
2.1.4.1 Learning.....	30
2.1.4.2 Support and Maintenance	30
2.1.4.3 Food Practices	31
2.1.4.4 Stigma and Deviance	32
2.1.4.5 Management Strategies	33
2.1.4.6 Activism.....	34
2.2 Religion and Consumption Practices	34
2.2.1 Veg*nism.....	34
2.2.2 Ethical Consumption.....	38
2.2.3 Food	40
2.3 Theoretical Framework	43
2.3.1 Research Context	43
2.3.2 Theoretical Lens	46
2.4 Research Questions	51

Chapter 3 Methodology	52
3.1 Abrahamic Religions – A Brief Introduction	52
3.1.1 Islam.....	52
3.1.2 Judaism.....	54
3.1.3 Christianity.....	56
3.1.4 Secularisation.....	58
3.2 Methodology	58
3.3 Research Design	60
3.3.1 Sampling.....	61
3.3.2 Data Collection.....	66
3.3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews	66
3.3.2.2 Diary Methods	68
3.3.2.3 Virtual Participant Observation	71
3.3.3 Multiple Qualitative Methods	73
3.4 Data Analysis	74
3.5 Positionality and Reflections.....	76
Chapter 4 Ethics and Values in Principle: Faith Veganism.....	81
4.1 Introducing Faith Veganism.....	81
4.2 Faith Vegan Identity and Community	86
4.3 Faith Vegan Ethics	89
4.4 Cultural Deviance as Religious Observance.....	94
4.4.1 Deviance	94
4.4.2 Purity and Pollution	97
4.5 Veganism as Religious Practice.....	99
4.6 Conclusion.....	105
Chapter 5 Ethics and Values in Becoming and Belonging: The Faith Vegan Journey	106
5.1 Becoming a Faith Vegan	106

Table of Contents

5.1.1	Trigger	108
5.1.2	Ethical and Religious Navigation	111
5.1.2.1	Ethical Navigation	111
5.1.2.2	Religious Navigation	114
5.1.3	Transformation	119
5.2	Learning How to be a Faith Vegan	120
5.3	Support and Belonging.....	125
5.4	Conclusion.....	132
Chapter 6	Ethics and Values in Practice: Veganising Religion	134
6.1	Transformation of the Mundane	134
6.2	Negotiating Religious Practice	142
6.2.1	Veganising Religious Practice.....	142
6.2.1.1	Substitution and Veganisation	143
6.2.1.2	Individualisation of Practice	148
6.2.1.3	Lesser-Known Vegan-Friendly Alternative Practices	151
6.2.2	Religion Superseding Veganism	151
6.2.2.1	God’s Word as Final.....	152
6.2.2.2	Desire to Participate	153
6.3	Habitual Reflexive Negotiation	155
6.4	Enacting Faith Vegan Stewardship.....	160
6.5	Conclusion.....	166
Chapter 7	Conclusion.....	167
Appendix A	Participant Information Sheets	182
A.1	Study 1 – Muslim Participants	182
A.2	Addition of Virtual Participant Observation – Muslim Participants.....	189
A.3	Study 2 – Jewish Participants.....	194
A.4	Study 2 – Christian Participants	201
Appendix B	Consent Forms	208

Table of Contents

B.1 Study 1 – Muslim Participants	208
B.2 Addition of Virtual Participant Observation – Muslim Participants.....	210
B.3 Study 2 – Jewish and Christian Participants	211
Appendix C Recruitment Images	213
Appendix D Interview Guides	214
D.1 Muslim Interview Guide	214
D.2 Jewish Interview Guide	221
D.3 Christian Interview Guide.....	227
Appendix E Group and Diary Guidelines	233
E.1 Study 1 – Muslim Participants	233
E.2 Study 2 – Jewish Participants.....	235
E.3 Study 2 – Christian Participants.....	237
Appendix F Coding Frame	239
Appendix G Participant Summary Template.....	260
Appendix H Networks and Communities Matrix	261
Bibliography.....	271

Table of Tables

Table 3.1	A list of research participants and key attributes	64
Table 4.1	Is eating a religious practice?.....	99
Table 5.1	Community membership among participants.....	126
Table 6.1	Faith vegans' reported relationships with food.....	135

Table of Figures

Figure 2.1	Recreation of McDonald’s (2000:5) process of learning to become vegan.....	27
Figure 2.2	Recreation of Giacomani et al.’s (2021:9) phases and steps of the vegan career	28
Figure 5.1	The journey to becoming a faith vegan.....	107
Figure 6.1	Ingredients for Leah's mum’s chickenless soup.....	136
Figure 6.2	Leah's mum’s chickenless soup	136
Figure 6.3	Zakir’s futoor of lentil soup, vegetable tagine, and potato, spinach, and harissa borek	137
Figure 6.4	Laila’s plant-based seviyan.....	137
Figure 6.5	Michelle’s tofish and chips from her local vegetarian takeaway.....	138
Figure 6.6	Sara’s raw green salad with edamame beans, brown rice, and chunky mango chutney	139
Figure 6.7	Beth's advent calendar	143
Figure 6.8	Nicola's vegan turkey roll and roast dinner	143
Figure 6.9	Beth's nut roast	144
Figure 6.10	Louis's mince pies.....	144
Figure 6.11	Michelle's mini vegan Christmas cake.....	144
Figure 6.12	Jacob's homemade vegan wholemeal challah	145
Figure 6.13	Daniel's vegan honey cake.....	145
Figure 6.14	Leah's vegan honey alternatives.....	145
Figure 6.15	Zakir's zumeeta for Suhoor	147
Figure 6.16	Sara's kale smoothie	147
Figure 6.17	Leah's vegan purchases	155
Figure 6.18	Michelle's care package	155

Table of Figures

Figure 6.19	Michelle's vegan manicure	156
Figure 6.20	The process of negotiating new challenges.....	157
Figure 6.21	Michelle's son's banana, apricot, and walnut muffins	159
Figure 6.22	Sara's homegrown radishes.....	163
Figure 6.23	Joanne's harvest.....	163
Figure 6.24	Sara's compost bin.....	163
Figure 6.25	Nicola's homemade vegetable stock.....	163
Figure 6.26	Food donated by a local supermarket	164
Figure 6.27	Vegetable curry and rice ready to distribute	164

Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Ellen Atayee-Bennett

Title of thesis: Faith Veganism: How the Ethics, Values, and Practices of British Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Vegans Reshape Veganism and Religiosity

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Parts of this work have been published as:

Atayee-Bennett, E. (2023) 'Eid-al-Adha and Sacrifice: Vegan Alternatives from within Islam', *The Vegan Society*, 28 June. Available at: <https://www.vegansociety.com/get-involved/research/research-news/eid-al-adha-and-sacrifice-vegan-alternatives-within-islam> (Accessed: 20 January 2024).

Signature: Date: 27 January 2024

Thesis Dedication

I dedicate this PhD
To you my dearest Gran,
Your love and dedication
Have made me who I am.

I'd so hoped you'd see me finish,
But it was not meant to be,
Instead, you're looking down from Heaven,
I know you're proud of me.

Among your last words spoken,
You did say to me,
Be brave, be strong, keep going
'Til you finish your PhD.

And now that I have finished,
I owe much thanks to you,
With your guiding spirit light,
There's nothing I can't do.

When I pass my viva,
I'll celebrate down here,
And maybe, just maybe,
From Heaven I'll hear a cheer.

I love you with all my heart,
I'll miss you 'til I die,
I long for the day we reunite,
'Til then; this is not goodbye.

In loving memory of my dearest Gran xxx

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Late modern Great Britain can be described as a carnist society (Joy, 2010), where consumption of animal-based products is viewed as natural, normal, necessary, and nice (Piazza et al., 2015), and where the systemic exploitation of animal bodies comprises a significant proportion of our food production and leisure activities (Pickett, 2021:11). However, we are often told in contemporary society that adopting a plant-based diet is the single best thing we can do to both help the environment (Poore and Nemecek, 2018) and improve our health (Greger and Stone, 2017). Furthermore, it is not uncommon to hear about the abuse prevalent in factory farms and slaughterhouses and the awful conditions animals are often subjected to (Kemmerer, 2012:292-300). Consequently, veganism has become a household name, attracting much attention from both mainstream media (Brookes and Chatupnik, 2023; Cole and Morgan, 2011; Lundahl, 2020) and social media (Sanford and Lorimer, 2022), and it is arguable that this attention is reflective of current trends and concerns with climate change, animal rights, and health amongst the population.

Although the term 'veganism' was coined in 1944 (Hertweck, 2021:29), it has only been in the past couple of decades, when people, especially in the West, have started to challenge and resist hegemonic carnist norms, thereby resulting in a huge surge in veganism, with the number of vegans in the UK quadrupling between 2014 and 2019 (The Vegan Society, 2024b). The Sainsbury's Future of Food Report (2019:6) also suggests that vegetarians and vegans are set to make up a quarter of the British population in 2025. Meanwhile, the organisation Veganuary, which encourages individuals to go vegan for January, sees record sign ups year on year with 706,965 participants globally in 2023 (Veganuary, 2023a), over 600,000 participants in 2022 (Veganuary, 2022), and around 582,000 participants in 2021 (Veganuary, 2021). Focusing on the 2023 Veganuary campaign, a YouGov survey found that 4% of the British population took part, whilst a Veganuary report found that more than 1,700 British media stories featured Veganuary, and that during January 2023 alone, at least 1,610 new vegan products and menu options were launched globally (Veganuary, 2023b). Thus, veganism is arguably becoming more accepted and experimented with in British society. As people of faith increasingly become aware and inquisitive about veganism, more questions will arise as to how veganism and religion can be negotiated in accordance with one another. My research will provide answers to such questions.

Where policy is concerned, the UK Food Strategy, which informs UK Government policy, has identified meat and dairy as high contributors to climate change (National Food Strategy, 2021:82) and concludes that to achieve our climate change goals, the population must reduce

the amount of meat consumed (p.84). Additionally, in the COP26 conference in Glasgow, the UK's chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, called for a move towards plant-based diets as a means to mitigate climate change (Beament, 2021). If plant-based diets are to be incorporated into policy, research into behaviour change, specifically around the adoption and practice of veganism, will become ever more pertinent as time goes on. Behaviour is a complex matter though and as I explore in Chapter 2, there are many influences in a person's life that can encourage or inhibit certain practices.

In terms of academic knowledge, studies exploring veganism are on the rise and have been so for the past couple of decades. These studies have broadened our understanding of the multiplicity of veganism and thus the various forms veganism can take, from ethical veganism, which is characterised by ethical concerns for nonhuman animals (Strumos, 2022:5) to corporate veganism, which denotes the commercial and consumerist side of veganism evidenced by the increasing range of vegan offerings in shops and eateries (Sexton et al., 2022:5). As my review of the vegan studies literature in Chapter 2 indicates, academic studies exploring veganism tend to favour the secular context, rarely engaging with religious contexts specifically. Where studies exploring veganism in relation to religion do exist, they are largely of a theological and theoretical nature, and rarely sociological or empirical. Those that do adopt an empirical framework tend to focus on South Asian religions, such as Jainism and Buddhism, which have a longstanding culture of vegetarianism (Kumar, 2021:206). Meanwhile, the Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which do not share such dietary norms are noticeably absent where empirical studies on veganism are concerned. This thesis thus takes a sociological and empirical approach to fill this research gap, studying the understandings and lived experiences of veganism among a group of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans in the UK. Through this research, I contribute to the burgeoning field of vegan studies, offering a new understanding of veganism, which I term *faith veganism*.

With so little study on the intersection of religion and veganism, one may initially question whether vegans who also identify with an Abrahamic faith do indeed exist. Fortunately, a quick social media search confirms that thousands of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans exist, with many living in Britain. Additionally, there are numerous religious organisations, influencers, and blogs who advocate for veganism within these religions, such as the Jewish Vegetarian Society, Jewish Veg, Christian Vegetarians and Vegans UK, CreatureKind, Green Islam, and The Vegan Muslim Initiative. Furthermore, in June 2019, the world's first Jewish vegan centre was opened in London by the Jewish Vegetarian Society (Balsam, 2019), whilst earlier in 2017, over 70 rabbis around the world signed a declaration calling on Jews to become vegan (Rocker, 2017), which as of 2023 has increased to over 200 signatures (Jewish Veg, 2023). With vegan activism on the rise in each of these faith traditions, a need emerges to research this previously

unstudied demographic to explore their understandings and experiences of veganism, and thereby broaden current scholarship.

The study of veganism within Abrahamic religions is particularly interesting to research, since these religions have histories steeped in animal husbandry and animal sacrifice (Bowen, 2012:76; Davis, 2017:5), as well as rituals (Foltz, 2006a:121; Stiefel, 2021:200) and festival meals centred around dead animal bodies (Avieli, 2017:162; Benkheira, 1999:90; Hastorf, 2017:244). Thus, these three religions initially appear oppositional to the vegan practice of eschewing all animal-derived foods, items, and exploitation (Strumos, 2022:4). Moreover, veganism and religion share an intriguing similarity where they both have the potential to serve as strong guiding forces in an individual's life. As such, some writers regard ethical veganism to hold a status akin to religion (Strumos, 2022), whilst others have argued that it may even be considered a religion in its own right (Johnson, 2015; Rhodes, 2014). With such a curious relationship, questions arise as to how the two may come together and interact, as well as the negotiations that take place in lived experience, particularly where Abrahamic religions have such meaty histories and cultures. My research will thus provide insight into how religion intersects the vegan experience and how religion and veganism reshape one another.

Furthermore, Muslim and Jewish vegans are an especially interesting demographic to study, due to instances of Islamophobia and antisemitism in modern Western discourse, particularly in discussions around meat and animal welfare. This is due to concerns around animal cruelty in kosher and halal slaughter (Lever, 2019) and Western perceptions of Muslim practices as barbaric (Grumett, 2015:21). Moreover, there is even evidence of such racism among the vegan community, with a pertinent example being the racist exploitation of the Holocaust in the animal rights movement. Organisations such as PETA¹ have used the Holocaust and slavery as analogies for animal exploitation in their campaign materials, analogies which are upsetting and exclusionary to Jews and Black people (Kim, 2011). How antisemitic and Islamophobic perceptions affect the lived experiences of Muslim and Jewish vegans has thus far remained unknown; in Chapter 4 however, I shed light on this topic by introducing the terms *faith vegan identity* and *faith vegan community* to denote the niches vegans of faith carve out for themselves in their search for safe spaces and common understanding.

My research not only studies a previously unstudied demographic, but it also advances academic understandings of veganism by providing insight into how religiosity and veganism intersect and reshape one another. As such, my central research question is, how are Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans reshaping and redefining veganism and religiosity in late modern

¹ People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

Great Britain? Additionally, I have devised three further research questions to facilitate greater insight into this emerging topic. My research will explore how individuals identifying with an Abrahamic faith understand veganism in relation to their religion and what religious and cultural beliefs, values, and practices shape their experiences. It will also discuss how one becomes a vegan of faith, what sources of support and belonging they draw upon, and how they negotiate specific practices.

My participants are practicing vegans who identify as either Muslim, Jewish, or Christian, who are over the age of 18, and who have lived in the UK for at least five years. There is also considerable ethnic and religious diversity in my sample, which adds a rich dimension to my research. To answer my research questions, discussed above, I conducted a multiple qualitative methods study, comprising semi-structured qualitative interviews, social media-based diary methods, and virtual participant observation, between March and December 2021. Through this research, I explored a range of topics including motivations, food practices, ritual practices, relations with others, and embodied beliefs and values. I analysed the data using thematic analysis and an interpretivist epistemology, drawing on theories relating to Bourdieusian sociology, reflexive religiosity, and embodied ethics and values, in particular.

Key findings from this research include how the intersectional experience of religion and veganism merits its own term, *faith veganism*, and how this is underpinned by religious ethics and principles that are seen to align with and complement veganism. Religion and culture were central to the identities of most participants, so further findings indicated that vegans of faith may also adopt a *faith vegan identity* and seek likeminded community, a *faith vegan community*, as a source of support and information. Religious practice is often non-negotiable, so specific knowledge is sought to aid not only with the learning journey that accompanies lifestyle transformation, but also with the various negotiations that take place. For many, religious practice becomes veganised and transformed, albeit keeping in line with religious principles and teachings, whilst veganism becomes reimagined in faith-based ways. Thus, veganism and religion become mutually constitutive. Overall, research participants understood veganism to be an ethical lifestyle which complemented and was incorporated into their religious and cultural lifestyles. As such, I understand and acknowledge faith veganism to be an all-encompassing lifestyle, not just a diet. Whilst I seek to discuss all aspects of this lifestyle throughout this thesis, there may be sections where I appear to focus predominantly on food, due to the importance of food in religious communities and lived experience. Nevertheless, I also include discussions on non-food practices, ethical beliefs and principles, and views towards animals to more accurately represent how veganism was understood by my research participants.

Chapter 1

These findings not only further academic knowledge and broaden the current scope of scholarship, but they will also inform both activism efforts and future policies seeking to encourage behavioural change. In particular, they will offer organisations and individuals in positions of authority the opportunity to explore how they might better encourage their respective communities to adopt more ethical and sustainable practices. All in all, my research will initiate diverse conversations, broaden the academic debate, and fill current gaps in knowledge. Now, I turn to outline my thesis structure.

In Chapter 2, I review the literature relevant to my research, first exploring veganism, or more accurately veganisms in plural, to examine the various ways it is understood and practiced, as well as what is known about the processes of becoming a vegan and the various forms of lived vegan experience. The studies in this section, however, attend to a largely secular context and do not explore how religiosity intersects with the vegan experience. Thus, I turn my attention to religion, broadening discussion to explore vegetarianism and veganism, ethical consumption, and food within religion to gain insight into the factors that may inform my own research. Next, I turn to my theoretical framework, firstly exploring the research context, namely late modernity and religiosity in Britain, before narrowing in on my theoretical lens, specifically Bourdieu's concepts of habitus (1990a), field (1983), and capital (1986), Beck's (2010) reflexive religiosity, Sweetman's (2003) reflexive habitus, and Sayer's (2011) exploration of values and ethical concerns. I bring my literature review to a close by outlining my central research question, and three supporting research questions.

In Chapter 3, I outline my methodological design, where I critically engage with methodologies for studying self-reflexivity and the lived experience of religion and lifestyle practices. I begin with a brief description of each Abrahamic faith in my study, exploring dietary injunctions, views towards animals, any existing debate relating to vegetarianism and veganism, and any key challenges associated with each religion. Then I discuss and evaluate my ontological and epistemological approaches, before detailing my research design. Also in this subsection, I outline my participants and their key attributes in Table 3.1. I then turn to outline my analytical approach, before finishing with a discussion on positionality and reflections.

In Chapter 4, the first of my data findings chapters, I focus on ethics and values in principle and introduce the term *faith veganism*, which also comprises part of this thesis's title. This term highlights the important intersection between religion and veganism, which to date, has been largely absent in academic scholarship. Thus, my research adds to the vegan studies literature a veganism that intersects with religious beliefs and practices. This chapter seeks to explore the characteristics of faith veganism, as well as how religious ethics inform embodied dispositions. As such, I contribute multiple other new terms in this chapter, including *faith vegan identity*,

faith vegan community, and *faith vegan ethics*. These ethics, and specifically the religious principles that drive them, inform *faith vegans'* embodied dispositions, and pave the way for *faith vegan stewardship*, which denotes the veganisation of religious stewardship and explains how faith vegans characterise concern for the entirety of God's world. Such coalitions between veganism and religious ethics also prompt the construction of veganism as an ideal way of living out one's religious life, albeit involving the disruption of established social, cultural, and dietary norms. Thus, faith veganism becomes *cultural deviance as religious observance*. In addition to the centrality of religious ethics in informing faith veganism, we can also distinguish faith veganism from nonreligious veganism, due to the way in which it characterises religious practice for faith vegans.

In Chapter 5, I focus on ethics and values in becoming and belonging to understand how the journey to becoming a vegan differs for faith vegans, as well as the sources of support and belonging they draw upon. I begin this chapter by outlining my own model entitled "The journey to becoming a faith vegan", before exploring in depth three of the key milestones in the becoming journey: trigger, ethical and religious navigation, and transformation. In these subsections, we discover how a trigger catalyses the reflexive examination of pre-existing embodied dispositions resulting in lifestyle and behaviour change, how faith vegans engage in dialogue with religious ethics and feel empowered to reinterpret them in line with veganism, a process I term *autonomous moral re-engagement with religion*, and how upon transforming into a faith vegan, they acquire what I term a *reflexive faith vegan habitus*, which can be understood as a developed set of embodied dispositions informed by faith vegan ethics, but which remain consistent with their religious habitus. I then turn my attention to the learning journey, drawing upon the Bourdieusian concepts of field (Bourdieu, 1983:312) and capital (Bourdieu, 1986:243) to understand how one's environment facilitates, or hinders, the learning journey, as well as the types of knowledges and skills, and their sources, a faith vegan must acquire. Lastly, I explore support and belonging and find that faith vegans often do not interact with traditional vegan spaces; here we see a preference for digital communities, social networks, and communities centred upon both veganism and religiosity, which I term *faith vegan communities*.

In Chapter 6, I focus on ethics and values in practice, to understand how veganism, religion, and culture are negotiated in everyday life. I make the argument that faith veganism is transformative, and how through faith veganism, mundane food and eating practices become a medium of religious performance. I then turn to religious practice and discuss how faith vegans negotiate traditionally non-vegan practices, by reshaping and veganising them. Thus, through faith veganism, religion is reimagined, reshaped, and rearticulated. This transformative nature of faith veganism also reveals a sense of mobility, whereby faith vegans continually seek to behave in an ever more ethical manner. Here, I offer a further model, entitled "The process of

Chapter 1

negotiating new challenges”, to demonstrate how faith vegans reflexively negotiate new challenges as they arise, and further engage in practice transformation. I end the chapter by going full circle and exploring how the concept of faith vegan stewardship, which I outline in Chapter 4, is enacted, with a particular focus on the practices that go beyond faith veganism, such as ethical consumption, anti-consumption, self-sufficiency practices, charity work, and volunteering.

In Chapter 7, I conclude my findings and answer my central research question, how are Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans reshaping and redefining veganism and religiosity in late modern Great Britain? I explain how religion reshapes veganism through the formation of a nuanced form, faith veganism, and I discuss this intersection in depth. I then examine how religion is reshaped by faith veganism and faith vegan stewardship, thereby demonstrating that the two are, in essence, mutually constituted. In this chapter, I outline my contributions to academic scholarship and key conclusions that advance current understandings of veganism. I then discuss the limitations of this study, before ending with a message of hope for the future.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to explore existing scholarship on the topic of veganism and broader consumption practices in relation to religion, in order to provide a foundation for my own research and enable me to contribute new knowledge to the sociology of veganism. I begin by exploring vegan studies literature to understand how veganism is discussed in scholarship, as well as some key aspects of the vegan experience. Here, I reveal a key research gap, namely the lack of empirical research examining the intersection between veganism and religion. To gain useful insight, I broaden discussion, drawing on literature from various disciplines, including religious studies, consumer studies, and food studies, to explore how religion intersects and shapes various consumption practices. Thus, this section takes religion in relation to consumption as its key focus. Next, I turn to explore both the context in which I situate my study and my theoretical framework, drawing on social theory relating to modernity and identity, the sociology of religion, and Bourdieusian sociology. I conclude by outlining my research questions. Any reference to vegetarianism and veganism, or vegetarians and vegans, collectively, will hereon be referred to as veg*anism and veg*ans respectively.

2.1 Veganism

2.1.1 Multiple Veganisms

The Vegan Society (2024a), a British charitable organisation and authority on veganism, defines veganism decisively as “a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude – as far as is possible and practicable – all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.” Academics, meanwhile, argue for the existence of multiple “veganisms” (Giraud, 2021:105; Wrenn, 2019c:190); resultingly, veganism is examined and interpreted in multiple ways in academic literature. As a practice, veganism is argued to be “fairly rigid and universal” (Stephens Griffin, 2017:59), requiring the avoidance of all animal-derived products (Cherry, 2006:156; Greenebaum, 2018:680), but as an identity, it is fluid, complex, and subjective (Stephens Griffin, 2017:59; Strumos, 2022:5). As such, veganism is regarded as being multifaceted and entangled with various other identities, viewpoints, and experiences (Strumos, 2022:5). Thus, the form veganism takes is likely to vary according to one’s motivations or engagement with the lifestyle. I will now explore some well-known forms of veganism discussed in academic scholarship.

Ethical veganism, as its name suggests, is centred upon ethics, particularly a philosophy of animal rights and the avoidance of animal suffering (Greenebaum, 2012a:130). As such, it takes

the form of an anti-speciesist practice (Cole and Morgan, 2011:135), which often comprises ethical consumption and anti-consumption (Harding and Day, 2021:4); these are discussed further in Section 2.2.2. Ethical veganism is also regarded a belief system (Strumos, 2022), and as such, is now a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 (p.14), being recognised both in UK and US law as sharing a similar status to religion (Rhodes, 2014; Johnson, 2015); Strumos (2022) refers to it as “nonreligion”. Given the entanglement with belief, ethical veganism constitutes a key part of an ethical vegan’s identity and may thus be considered an identity category in its own right (Wright, 2021:3).

Ethical veganism also becomes a form of political veganism, with many social scientists and vegan activists arguing that it is fundamentally a form of political resistance (Cochrane and Cojocanu, 2023, Wrenn, 2011) and collective action (Judge et al., 2022), campaigning for nonhuman animal rights (Wrenn, 2023b). Given its political nature, many scholars have referred to it as various types of movement, including political (Bertuzzi, 2017), consumer (Bertuzzi, 2017), cultural (Cherry, 2006), social (Cherry, 2006; Greenebaum, 2018), and lifestyle (Cherry, 2015; Gheihman, 2021; Haenfler et al., 2012). These movements may take the form of political solidarity and duty (Cochrane and Cojocar, 2023), exerting one’s power through consumer choice (Bertuzzi, 2017:135), the promotion of a lifestyle as a means to foster social change (Haenfler et al., 2012:2), challenging dominant ideologies such as carnism² (Joy, 2010) and speciesism³ (Singer, 2015), and engaging in multispecies solidarity (Reggio, 2022). What all these movement types share in common is a desire to effect positive change in society.

Many scholars argue against veganism being defined as a movement however (Munro, 2005:88; Rhodes, 2014:166; Wright, 2015:22), since non-participation in movement activities does not cancel out one’s veganism (Cherry, 2015:60). Studies have shown that ‘vegan’ and ‘activist’ are two separate labels (Thomas et al., 2019:838); a vegan is not necessarily an activist, and an animal activist is not necessarily vegan (Bertuzzi, 2017:131). Consequently, veganism has been described simply as a tactic (Dickstein et al., 2022:65) employed by other movements to challenge dominant narrative in society (Munro, 2005:88). For example, the animal rights (Munro, 2005) movements especially have been known to employ veganism as a protest (Bertuzzi, 2017:139) and a boycott (Adams, 2015:63; Dickstein et al., 2022:59; Munro, 2005:87).

Most vegan scholars regard veganism as originating in a philosophy of total liberation and antispeciesism (Wrenn, 2016a:212-213; Wright, 2015:9), and whilst ethical veganism is widely

² A belief system conditioning individuals to consume certain nonhuman animals.

³ The assigning of different rights to different beings based on their species membership, often underpinning prejudice against and exploitation of certain nonhuman animal species.

considered to embody this philosophy, it is not the only form of veganism in existence. One form of veganism which has risen in popularity in recent years due to concerns around climate change (Pendergrast, 2016) is environmental veganism. This is underpinned by environmental ethics and concerns around the environmental impact of animal agriculture but is not necessarily followed as strictly as ethical veganism. For example, one could opt for leather over a plastic vegan alternative, which is deemed to be a less environmentally friendly choice (Greenebaum, 2012a:130). When understood through an ecofeminist lens meanwhile, vegan environmentalism can also oppose the hegemonic logic of domination and advocate for a more compassionate relationship with nature, thereby enabling multispecies flourishing (McGregor, 2022:214). As such, environmental veganism retains a similarity to ethical veganism.

Health veganism, meanwhile, is a form of veganism driven by a motivation for achieving good health, and is largely restricted to diet (Greenebaum, 2012a:130). Further, it is often associated with corporate veganism, discussed below, due to a growing range of vegan health foods (Sexton et al., 2022:5). Such a focus on health appears more readily acceptable by society at large (Hartwell et al., 2021), but it is criticised by ethical vegans who regard health vegans as being less sincere (Greenebaum, 2012a:134-135), due to a greater likelihood of dietary lapsing and consumption of non-vegan foods (Markowski, 2023:11).

Corporate veganism, or “Big Veganism” (Sexton et al., 2022), characterises the merchandising (Estok, 2021) and commercialisation of veganism (Giraud, 2021:129), evident through the ever-increasing range of vegan offerings (Sexton et al., 2022:15). The market for alternative proteins has grown considerably in response to climatic and health-related concerns (Sexton, 2018:587); as such, numerous agri-businesses have brought to market innovative and often highly processed products, which although comprised solely of plant ingredients, mimic the appearance, taste, and texture of animal foods (Clay et al., 2020:953; Sexton, 2018:593). This does in part help with the mainstreaming and destigmatising of veganism as a broad category, particularly through media representation and celebrity adoption of veganism (Lundahl, 2020), but it can also result in veganism being perceived as a fad (Cole and Morgan, 2011:139) that is fashionable but for a time (Giraud, 2021:129). As such, corporate veganism is argued to be divorced from ethics, animal liberation, and antispeciesism (Wright, 2015:9), and instead characterises a “veganwashing” by large corporations and capitalism more broadly (Bertuzzi, 2022:15). Such neutralisation of the cause is further evident in the industry’s apparent preference for the term ‘plant-based’ in describing products (Giraud, 2021:130), a decision which is considered to be more palatable to the wider consumer base (Clay et al., 2020:955).

In addition to the forms of veganism discussed thus far, other intersectional approaches to veganism have been theorised, each characterising a political stance, much in the same way as

ethical veganism does. These are explored in 2.1.2 (Vegan) Intersectionality. Aside from the political, veganism may also serve religious purposes, as we shall explore in Section 2.2.1 of this chapter, such as the embodiment of religious principles (Shah, 2011) and eating in the way one believes God intended (Avieli and Markowitz, 2018:210; Calvert, 2008:123). Indeed, by the end of this thesis, I will argue for a further vegan typology, one which intersects with religion.

Defining veganism is thus messy business and it is clear why Wrenn (2019c:190, emphasis in original) speaks of “many *veganisms*”. The definitions above are all academic understandings of veganism, however; in everyday lived experience, what veganism means often differs among individuals (North et al., 2021). Throughout this thesis, I adopt an ethical understanding of veganism, defining it as a dietary and lifestyle practice, requiring abstinence from animal-derived products, and which is underpinned by ethical beliefs concerning animals and the environment.

2.1.2 (Vegan) Intersectionality

The literature on veganism has a strong focus on intersectionality, in many cases responding to veganism as a political practice, and partially exposing struggles and contradictions in certain spaces. In this thesis, I am interested in exploring the overlooked intersection between veganism and religiosity, which contrary to other studies, may not take on a political form, but nevertheless plays a central role in shaping experience.

I turn now to discuss intersectionality. As a conceptual term, intersectionality originates in the scholarship of Crenshaw (1989), who examined the interactions between race and gender in the shaping of black women’s lived experiences. However, as praxis, it is argued to originate earlier (Collins and Bilge, 2016:53; Mirza and Gunaratnam, 2014:128), being evident in the scholarship and activism of the Combahee River Collective (1982), hooks (1984), and Lorde (1984), all of whom expressed concerns around the interconnections between race and gender in black women’s lives. Thus, intersectionality arose to counter identity politics’ conflation of and insufficient attention to intragroup differences (Crenshaw, 1991:1242).

Intersectionality recognises that the sources of inequality and oppression are multiple, arising from the interconnection between social identities and structural oppression (Mirza and Gunaratnam, 2014:128). Thus, our multifaceted identities are not experienced singularly, but rather simultaneously (p.129) within “intersecting, mutually constructing social structures” (Collins, 2007:597). Intersectionality thus provides a space to mediate the tensions that arise from such frictional interactions (Crenshaw, 1991:1296) and in this way, becomes both a theoretical and methodological paradigm (Cho et al., 2013:785). It locates multiple marginalised people at specific intersections (Crenshaw, 1991:1245), includes their

perspectives (Choo and Ferree, 2010:131), and serves as both a political intervention (Cho et al., 2013:785), and tool for empowering people (Collins and Bilge, 2016:36).

Although intersectionality's roots are within critical race theory and black feminist thought, it has now branched out to explore other social identities. For example, ethical veganism may be understood as a form of intersectional praxis, seeking to “de-center the archetypal human [...] in a way that benefits both marginalized human groups and other animals” (Trigg, 2021:93). However, in practice, expressions of veganism are not only often anthropocentric (Gough, 2023), but they may also be discriminatory and oppressive to marginalised human groups, whilst privileging others, as I shall demonstrate. Veganism has been examined through multiple lenses, including gender studies (Lockwood, 2021), critical race theory (Harper, 2010a; 2010b; Navarro, 2021), queer theory (Quinn, 2021; Simonsen, 2012), and others, but one intersection which is neglected in empirical research is that of religion; this is where my academic contribution lies.

I will now discuss class, sex, and race in relation to veganism, by identifying intersectional approaches to veganism that seek to challenge specific oppressive social structures, as well as the intersectional inaptitude some expressions of veganism demonstrate.

An anti-capitalist approach to veganism (Nibert, 2002; 2013), much like ethical veganism, opposes injustices associated with capitalism (Wrenn, 2016a:212-213), in particular the animal agricultural industry's exploitation of nonhuman animals, which is a direct result of capitalism's prioritisation of profit-making over ethics and nutrition (Greenebaum, 2017:366). Vegans can respond to this through consumer-based resistance, such as anti-consumption (Harding and Day, 2021:4), although scholars have argued that consumer-based action alone is insufficient as a form of resistance (Wrenn, 2011:19). This is in large part due to the rise of “plant-based capitalism” (Giraud, 2021:129) or “Big Veganism” (Sexton et al., 2022), which continues to support capitalism and its injustices rather than oppose them (Wrenn, 2016a:212-213). Instead, they engage in “veganwashing” (Bertuzzi, 2020:15), depoliticising veganism and presenting it solely as a consumption lifestyle (Greenebaum, 2018:687). Further, these expressions often target the middle-class wealthy consumer, by selling processed and pre-packaged vegan foods at a higher price than their non-vegan counterparts (Sexton et al., 2022:5). Vegan advocacy organisations themselves also often emphasise this consumeristic side, communicating a class neutrality and sense of vegan privilege (Gough, 2023:22; Greenebaum, 2017). Vegans, however, assert that following a vegan diet is overall cheaper than a diet comprised of animal-products, since vegan staples (rice, beans, potatoes, etc) are often among the most inexpensive items available (Greenebaum, 2017:358); indeed, vegans of a lower social class do exist, and have been shown to manage on a low budget (Giacoman et al., 2023a).

Feminist veganism (Wrenn, 2023a) highlights and challenges the connections between sexism and speciesism (Salmen and Dhont, 2023), which are argued to exist in patriarchal and omnivorous societies (Adams, 2015:168; Wright, 2015:125), where both women and animals are objectified (Adams, 2015:157) and sexualised (Wright, 2015:117). Such sexualisation is evident even in vegan activism, however. PETA⁴ has widely been criticised for exploiting human female bodies in pornographic ways, which Wrenn (2016b) calls “social movement prostitution” and “vegan pimping”, since the male-led organisations recruit female volunteers⁵ to engage in naked protests in the streets (p.89). Such activism is counter-intuitive, as it is argued to both oppress women and reinforce the oppression of animals (Glasser, 2011:52). Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of these female bodies are white and thin (Greenebaum, 2017:365), which is not only exclusionary to those of other races (Greenebaum, 2018:686), but it also feeds into “social movement sizeism” and stigma towards fat vegans (Wrenn, 2017).

Vegan activist organisations have also exploited the male body to counter associations that have emerged between, firstly, femininity, homosexuality, passivity, and veganism, and secondly, masculinity, heterosexuality, virility, and meat-eating (Quinn, 2021:264). Due to such associations, heterosexual vegan men are often feminised (Greenebaum and Dexter, 2018:637; Salmen and Dhont, 2023), have their masculinity questioned (Nath, 2011:266; Wright, 2015:124), or receive homophobic insults, such as having their food called “lesbian food” (McKay, 2018:251). Many vegan men therefore seek to redefine masculinity in ways that incorporate care ethics as “the ultimate expression of masculinity because it requires courage, self-control and resolve to feel and express compassion and empathy for animals” (Greenebaum and Dexter, 2018:645). Others, meanwhile, perpetuate hegemonic masculinity through “heganism”, which portrays the vegan male body as hypermasculine and alpha male (Wright, 2015:31), and places the focus on health, not animals (p.155). Through heganism, health-conscious men not only pursue good health (Fidolini, 2022), but they also counter perceptions of “the weak and emasculated vegan and validate the vegan movement” (Greenebaum and Dexter, 2018:644). This in turn constitutes a form of activism as the strong male vegan body comes to represent the epitome of health and morality (Oliver, 2023a:8). However, such reclaiming, reasserting, and redefining of masculinity fails to challenge the sexist underpinnings of carnist and patriarchal society (p.645), and thus does little to erase the gender-based injustices veganism seeks to eradicate (Estok, 2021:337; Lockwood, 2021:303).

⁴ People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, a mainstream vegan activist organisation.

⁵ Some volunteers may be male, but participants in naked protests tend to be overwhelmingly female (Wrenn, 2016:89).

Black veganism highlights and challenges the interconnected nature between racism and speciesism (Ko and Ko, 2017) and encourages black vegan activists to articulate veganism through their lived experiences (p.53). As such, Black veganism can be understood to be a methodological tool that produces new knowledge (p.126), and better addresses the root cause of interconnected oppressions (p.92). The American vegan movement, and veganism more broadly, are guilty of overlooking the deeply woven connections between injustices, and instead are argued to be infused with Eurocentrism (Ko and Ko, 2017:52), which takes each form of oppression to be singular and separate (p.92). Eurocentric veganism is also criticised by black vegans for implying associations between blackness, criminality, and deviance (p.80), in turn suggesting that it is through veganism that “black people *can* be civilized” (p.77, emphasis in original). Furthermore, such expressions of veganism are also argued to be infused with colonial practices such as gentrification (Polish, 2016:388) and the privileging of white histories and experiences (Navarro, 2021:287).

Unsurprisingly then, veganism has also come to be associated with whiteness (Polish, 2016; Rosenfeld et al., 2023a) and white privilege (Harper, 2010c:37; Wright, 2015:31), and this is further exacerbated by the underrepresentation of black vegans in vegan organisations (Greenebaum, 2018:686). Resultingly, many black African Americans consider veganism incompatible with their ethnicity (Greenebaum, 2018:690) or even taboo (p.685), whilst those who do become vegan are often accused of rejecting their family and culture, as well as “acting white” (p.690). This has inspired the coining of the term ‘Black veganism’ (Ko and Ko, 2017), which seeks to decolonise veganism (Polish, 2016) by preserving and privileging the knowledge and histories of communities of color (Navarro, 2021:287) and giving them a voice (Adewale, 2021; Harper, 2010b). This in turn helps them to decolonise their bodies (Harper, 2010c:29; Markowitz and Avieli, 2022:13), grants them opportunities to engage in anti-racist practice (Navarro, 2021), and provides a sense of belonging (Rosenfeld et al., 2023a).

Vegan organisations are also guilty of emphasising religious slaughter and animal exploitation in non-Western countries in their campaign materials (Gough, 2023:23-24), presenting foreign practices as especially barbaric (Wrenn, 2016a:133-137) and reinforcing colonialist ideas around the “uncivilized” non-Westerner (p.134); vegan organisations thus implicitly communicate a “white savior” narrative (p.134). Kim (2011) discusses in depth two of PETA’s travelling exhibits which juxtaposed images of animal suffering with images of human suffering, most notably victims of the Holocaust, black slaves, and other historically subordinated human groups. These exhibits generated considerable controversy and were condemned by many black and Jewish leaders; this “racist exploitation” was seen to undermine “their claims to full humanity by reawakening taboo historical associations with animals” (p.326). The animalising of black vegans (Ko and Ko, 2017:20) is perceived as “elitist” and “colonizing” (Harper,

2010c:35), as not only are black and ethnic minority bodies rendered animal-like (Ko and Ko, 2017:21), but they also become “a form of utilitarian commodification” (Polish, 2016:383) which seeks to sell a message (p.382). Such insufficient attention and sensitivity to the intersectional experiences of other groups thereby constitutes a barrier to the formation of cross-group alliances in the fight against connected structural injustices (Kim, 2011:313).

Vegan intersectionality is thus key for understanding the diversity in lived experience, as well as uncovering relevant power imbalances and structural injustices. Religion has not yet been considered in intersectional perspectives, however by the end of this thesis, I will contribute an intersectional perspective that focuses on religion and veganism. In particular, I am interested in how faith and veganism become mutually constitutive in shaping understandings and experiences.

2.1.3 Becoming Vegan

Now that we have explored academic understandings of the multiple veganisms that exist and veganism’s relationship with intersectionality, it is time to turn to lived experience. A natural starting point is the process of becoming vegan, for which there are a couple of models. Figure 2.1 outlines McDonald’s (2000:5) “process of learning to become vegan”, whilst Figure 2.2 outlines Giacoman et al.’s (2021:9) “phases and steps of the vegan career”. A further insightful study applies the transtheoretical model, a model of behavioural change, to the process of becoming vegan and comprises: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination (Mendes, 2013:144). Given numerous similarities in these models, they will be explored in conjunction with one another.

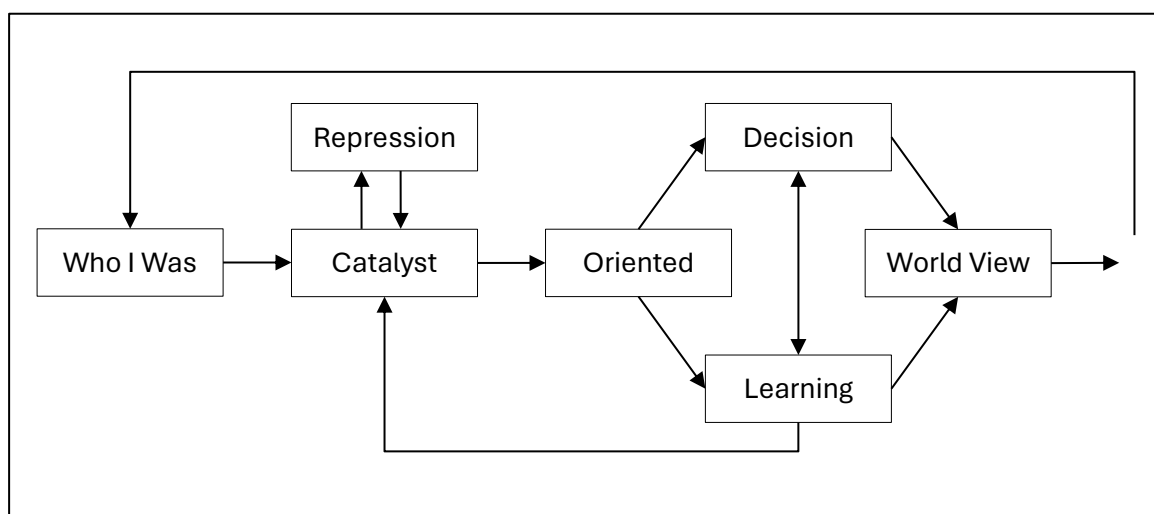


Figure 2.1 Recreation of McDonald’s (2000:5) process of learning to become vegan

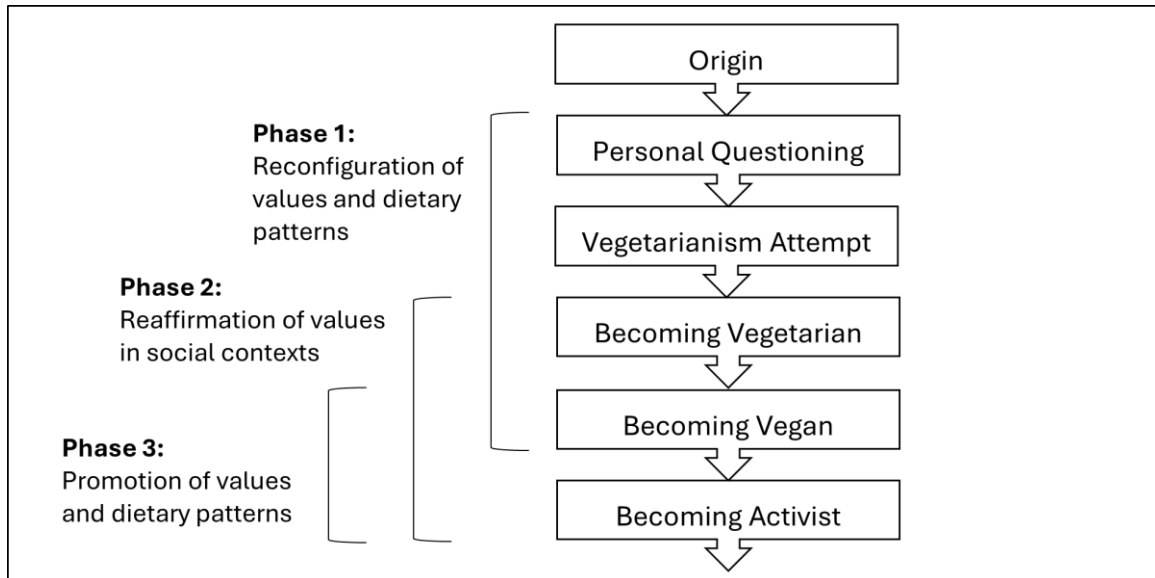


Figure 2.2 Recreation of Giacomani et al.'s (2021:9) phases and steps of the vegan career

“Who I was” (McDonald, 2000:6), “origin” (Giacomani et al., 2021:9) and the precontemplation stage (Mendes, 2013:146) refer to the individual and their previous socialisation and experiences, all of which summarises who they were prior to their vegan journey. At this stage, the individual is unlikely to be considering veganism as a possibility for themselves.

This is followed by an awareness of veganism and a period of contemplation (Mendes, 2013:146). McDonald (2000:8) speaks of catalytic experiences, typically learning about animal cruelty, which prompt the individual to engage in personal questioning, thereby commencing the reconfiguration of their values and dietary patterns (Giacomani et al., 2021:9). In more recent years, vegan advocacy films have become a common catalyst (Weik von Mossner, 2021); some such as *Earthlings* have elicited strong emotions in the individual, thereby taking the form of a moral shock (Jasper, 2011:292). Moral shocks are commonly used in the animal rights movement as they generate negative moral emotions (Jasper and Poulsen, 1995) which propel the individual into action, since moral emotions inform everyday ethical reasoning (Nussbaum, 2001:1; Sayer, 2011:148). Other productions, such as the mockumentary *Carnage*, construct a counterfactual future, and in so doing, communicate a vegan utopia (Adams, 2022), whilst *What the Health* and *Game Changers*, documentaries exploring health, have garnered interest in veganism without the emotional dimension (Hartwell et al., 2021), due to an emphasis on scientific content (Vainio, 2019:75). Subculture affiliation can also provide a setting for catalytic experiences; many vegan punks first learnt about veganism upon joining the punk subculture and listening to punk lyrics (Cherry, 2015:62). The information that one comes to know through these catalytic experiences is constructed as a “truth narrative”, that is a revelatory awakening that depicts a previously unknown reality and carries an affective power, for example the ‘truth’ of factory farming. Thus, truth narratives constitute a knowledge that is not only learnt, but also

felt, and which also contributes to a sense of shared identity and shared social bonds among vegans (Oliver, 2023b:6).

McDonald (2000:10) explains that some people repress the information and continue their existing habits. For children who have a catalytic experience, repression is especially common, and it is not until they are older and more independent that they become vegan (Hirschler, 2011:161). Those that do not repress the information become “oriented”, whereby the individual engages in further “learning” and ultimately makes the “decision” to become vegan (McDonald, 2000:11-15). This is akin to the “preparation” stage, which involves learning how to be vegan in readiness for actual “action” (Mendes, 2013:147) and the reaffirmation of one’s values in social contexts (Giacoman et al., 2021:9). It is here where Giacoman et al.’s diagram differs; where McDonald and Mendes only reference veganism, Giacoman et al.’s (2021:12-15) model lists “vegetarianism attempt” and “becoming vegetarian” as key steps that precede “becoming vegan”. Mendes (2013:147) however, separates “becoming vegan” into “action” and “maintenance”, referring to a continual striving so as to not relapse. Where motivations are concerned, the most common is said to be concern for animals (North et al., 2021:7), with environmental ethics (Kerschke-Risch, 2015:101) and health increasingly common too (Dyett et al., 2013:123; Radnitz et al., 2015:32). Social justice beliefs are also said to be common motivations, particularly for the Black community in both America and Israel (Harper, 2010c:29; Markowitz and Avieli, 2022:13).

The final step in the becoming journey is “world view” for McDonald (2000:15) and “termination” for Mendes (2013:147). A less ambiguous word for these would be ‘transformation’, as the vegan has acquired a new worldview and has terminated their striving; they are now established as a vegan. They have typically redefined edibility and now regard the consumption of animal-derived foods to be a ‘moral impossibility’ (Panizza, 2020), as well as undergone a taste transition, where new flavours become valued (Twine, 2018:177) and visceral disgust towards meat develops (Becker et al., 2022). Numerous psychological studies have also observed differing personality traits between vegans and omnivores, for example, vegans exhibit more open-mindedness and positivity towards animals (Kováč and Halama, 2022), lower social dominance (Braunsberger et al., 2021), and an absence of human supremacy beliefs (Weber and Kollmayer, 2022), all of which likely developed or were consolidated during this transformation stage. Giacoman et al. (2021:17) include this transformation as part of the “becoming vegan” stage and instead regard the final step in the process to be “becoming activist”, since a large number of vegans go on to engage in vegan activism. Upon embracing veganism and for some, vegan activism as well, the individual completes the final phase of the vegan career by promoting their values and dietary patterns for others to see (p.9).

These models outline the process to becoming a vegan, with an implicit focus on ethical veganism, due to an emphasis on animal cruelty in catalytic experiences and an assumption that involvement in animal activism naturally follows lifestyle change. The influence of religion and culture remains absent in these discussions, however, so a research gap emerges as to what the process of becoming a vegan of faith looks like.

2.1.4 Lived Vegan Experience

2.1.4.1 Learning

As we saw in the previous section, learning plays a key role in the process of becoming a vegan (McDonald, 2000:11), however since veganism is in essence “an always ongoing process” (Stanescu, 2012:36), as well as a set of knowledges which inform practice (Gvion, 2022), learning may also be regarded a key aspect of lived vegan experience. To live as a vegan, one must acquire certain knowledge and skills (Laakso et al., 2022:10), including cooking abilities (Twine, 2014:636), nutritional knowledge (Laakso et al., 2022:11), and purchasing knowledge, such as what products to buy, where to find them, and how to check that what one is buying is indeed vegan (p.10). This often involves understanding ingredient lists (Greenebaum, 2012a:137), knowing which restaurants and cafés offer vegan options (Laakso et al., 2022:10), and how to order food in food outlets (McDonald, 2000:20).

In McDonald’s (2000) study, vegans typically acquired such information from books and leaflets (p.13), whereas nowadays social media and the Internet have become valuable learning resources. These digital spaces are sources of knowledge and social support, since members can share experiences (Hungara and Nobre, 2022:2), acquire knowledge and skills (Lawo et al, 2020:8), access resources (pp.8-10), ask questions (Laakso et al., 2022:10), and learn how to respond to anti-vegan comments and beliefs (p.13). Indeed, vegans, more so than non-vegans, turn to social media particularly to inform themselves (Kley et al., 2023:885), as the information is better tailored to their preferences and interests (p.10). Digital communities thus become valuable sites for learning and play a key role in practice transformation (Lawo et al., 2020:18).

2.1.4.2 Support and Maintenance

In addition to being a valuable site for learning, social networks are also key sources of support and belonging (Williams et al., 2023:5). Within the American punk subculture, social networks were very strong with positive vegan discourse prominent, consequently, vegan punks were strict in their practice and shared a clear understanding of what it meant to be vegan (Cherry, 2006:159). Vegans with a weak vegan social network meanwhile, tended to be slacker in their practice, occasionally consuming non-vegan foods (Cherry, 2015:67) and coining their own

definition of what it means to be vegan (Cherry, 2006:160). The social networks one associates themselves with may therefore either help or hinder the practice of veganism (Cherry, 2015:65). Many have even argued that social networks are essential for the maintenance of a vegan lifestyle (Cherry, 2006:157; Oliver, 2023b:13), as neither individual willpower (Cherry, 2006:157) nor a collective identity are considered powerful enough to ensure continued practice (p.161).

Technology and the Internet have revolutionised modern ways of living however, including communities and the way we interact with others; as such, we are witnessing a move away from face-to-face vegan communities towards digital vegan communities (Hungara and Nobre, 2022:1). Indeed, in many recent studies, digital vegan communities have been shown to be invaluable sources of support for vegans (Giacoman et al., 2023b:9; Laakso et al., 2022:15; Oliver, 2023b:13).

Finding the right community is imperative however, as not all spaces are supportive ones. Studies have revealed instances of fat-shaming in vegan groups which silences and alienates fat vegans (Wrenn, 2017:97), insensitive and racist discourse, such as Holocaust and slavery analogies, which alienates Jewish and black vegans (Kim, 2011), and tensions arising between vegans where motivations are concerned (MacInnis and Hodson, 2021:10); ethical vegans often question the sincerity of health vegans (Greenebaum, 2012a:134) and regard themselves more authentic (p.137). Many vegans do however report being part of a supportive vegan community (Cherry, 2006; 2015; Giacoman et al., 2023a), as well as having supportive non-vegan family and friends, who adopt the role of “non-vegan vegan advocates” (Twine, 2014:635). As part of this role, they cook the occasional vegan meal, buy vegan products, and speak positively of veganism to others, all of which assists with the normalisation of veganism (p.636). Such social networks are beneficial for one’s ongoing vegan practice.

Other factors important in maintaining a vegan lifestyle include social approval (Williams et al., 2023:7), the attendance of vegan social events (Cherry, 2006:160), and one’s motivations. Those with ethical motivations find it easier to maintain veganism than those with health motivations (Ruehlman and Karoly, 2022), a finding echoed by D’Souza et al. (2022:9) who found catalytic experiences to play a key role; those depicting animal cruelty and generating an emotional response (McDonald, 2000:8) or moral shock (Jasper, 2011:292) aided in vegan lifestyle maintenance, much more so than those which did not.

2.1.4.3 Food Practices

A major part of the vegan lifestyle is dietary practice. Many vegans often seek to keep their dishes similar to their non-vegan counterparts (Paxman, 2021:9) and this is easily done through substitution (Twine, 2018:172). Many veganise regular, everyday foods (Paxman, 2021:9),

holiday foods such as Christmas ham and Easter lamb (Laakso et al., 2022:10) and cultural foods, such as meat on the BBQ (Nath, 2010:268); this can easily be done due to the wide range of meat, egg, and dairy substitutes now available (Kerlake et al., 2022; Twine, 2018:172). Many vegans also report a newfound open-mindedness, where new foods, such as exotic vegetables, seaweed, and varieties of mushrooms, that previously would have been rejected, are now explored (Twine, 2018:176). Similarly, some report experimenting with foods and discovering new ways of using foods; one example being vegan meringues which are made with aquafaba, the water from a can of chickpeas (p.174). Veganism thus calls for cooking competency and a degree of creativity. All in all, these practices, and particularly the navigating of such practices, are underpinned by continual reflexivity (Giacoman et al., 2023b:14), although over time, such practices can and do become automatic (p.13). Nevertheless, whenever vegans encounter new products or situations, reflexivity will re-emerge (p.11) and once again require the individual to acquire more knowledge.

2.1.4.4 Stigma and Deviance

Veganism is often ridiculed both in the UK media (Brookes and Chalupnik, 2023; Cole and Morgan, 2011), and in films and television (Wright, 2015), with vegans being described as extreme (Twine, 2014:632), judgemental (Greenebaum, 2012b:317-318), oversensitive, hostile (Cole and Morgan, 2011:139), and radical (Wright, 2015:94), leading to scholars coining the terms “vegaphobia” (Cole and Morgan, 2011) and “hegemonic anti-veganism” (Cole and Stewart, 2021). Such anti-veganism is also evident online (Aguilera-Carnerero and Carretero-González, 2021), in advertising (Trauth, 2021), and in countries where meat-eating is dominant, such as Turkey (Bagci and Olgun, 2019). The presence of such stigma can, in the first instance, deter individuals from becoming vegan (Markowski and Roxburgh, 2019), whilst for those who are already vegan, it can evoke feelings of exclusion and disapproval from others, contributing to reduced psychological health (Bresnahan et al., 2016:13), and ultimately the marginalisation of vegans in society (Cole and Morgan, 2011:149).

Personal relationships may also be affected (Hirschler, 2011:170), with both social exclusion and self-imposed exclusion common (Twine, 2014:632), due to a lack of support (Bresnahan et al., 2016:12), mockery (Greenebaum, 2017:363), and friendship breakdown (Hirschler, 2011:163). Due to their new dietary requirements and ethical beliefs, vegans may be considered a “killjoy” (Twine, 2014), and relationship closeness with friends and family can reduce (Vandehei and Perry, 2023), leading to feelings of anxiety and loneliness (Edwards, 2013:123). Lack of social support has been shown to impact the strictness with which one follows a vegan lifestyle and could thus pose a challenge to lifestyle maintenance (Cherry, 2015:67).

We can thus understand vegan practice to be deviant (Giacoman et al., 2021) as it disrupts cultural norms and directly challenges the dominant culture (Twine, 2014:628). However, unlike most discussions of deviance which carry negative undertones (Ben-Yehuda, 2011:38), we could instead regard veganism to be a form of “creative deviance” (Douglas, 1977) or “positive deviance” (Boyle, 2011; Lundahl, 2020). Creative deviance refers to “creative adaptations of rules to new life situations” (Douglas, 1977:60), of which the climate crisis and factory farming can certainly be considered. “Positive deviance” meanwhile refers to any actions that “contribute to the moral, economic, or intellectual growth of a society” (Boyle, 2011:268), which veganism evidently does through its rejection of unethical practices and ideas. Such forms of deviance can have huge potential for social change (Ben-Yehuda, 2011).

2.1.4.5 Management Strategies

Despite many instances of vegan stigma in society, it is not shown to inhibit vegan lifestyle maintenance (Brouwer et al., 2022). Rather, vegans learn management strategies to overcome the challenges faced (Twine, 2014), such as negotiating vegan identity around omnivores (Buttny and Kinefuchi, 2020), and adapting to or negotiating norms (Salmivaara et al., 2022), for example, seeking to keep vegan dishes similar to their non-vegan counterparts, so as to demonstrate that they are not all that different after all (Paxman, 2021:9). Others described a series of “face-saving” techniques (Greenebaum, 2012b), such as avoiding confrontation (p.317), being strategic about when and how they discuss veganism (p.318), emphasising the health benefits of veganism (p.319), and leading by example (p.320). All of these management strategies seek to reduce vegan stigma and challenge the aforementioned negative impacts of it, such as exclusion and marginalisation (Bresnahan et al., 2016:13; Cole and Morgan, 2011:149).

Aside from coping with stigma, there are other more practical management strategies for negotiating the dominant “meat culture” (Potts, 2016). Prior to eating with omnivores, vegans need to plan ahead to ensure there will be something to eat (Paxman, 2021:10) and to avoid uncomfortable situations (Cherry, 2015:64). When sharing spaces with non-vegans, meanwhile, vegans tend to practice boundary management, such as having allocated storage areas in the kitchen and keeping utensils and cooking implements separate (Twine, 2014:633). Another useful management strategy is finding new social networks (Greenebaum, 2012b:316; Hirschler, 2011:163; Twine, 2014:632) or attending social events which reinforce motivations (Cherry, 2006:160) and provide a much-needed sense of belonging and community to otherwise isolated and lonely vegans (McDonald, 2000:17), which as we saw earlier are regarded key to the maintenance of a vegan lifestyle (Cherry, 2006:157; Oliver, 2023b:13).

2.1.4.6 Activism

With veganism being, at its core, an ethical belief (Strumos, 2022) exercised through political resistance (Cochrane and Cojocanu, 2023), vegan activism becomes a key practice for many ethical vegans (Giacoman et al., 2021:17), who feel a strong urge to educate non-vegans about animal cruelty (McDonald, 2000:17). There are many ways in which vegans perform their ethical beliefs, from traditional grassroots activism, such as attending demonstrations (Munro, 2005), to sharing their stories on YouTube (Harding and Day, 2021) and food pictures on Instagram (Pilař et al., 2021). The presentation of self is also argued to be a form of activism (Cherry, 2015:70), with many men, in particular, pursuing a strong, athletic body to present veganism as healthy and desirable (Oliver, 2023a:8). Others seek to show that the lifestyle is realistic and doable in other ways (Greenebaum, 2012a:139), for example, showcasing their skills to others (Twine, 2014:636) and getting creative with food (Twine, 2018:174). Indeed, sharing vegan food with non-vegans can present a positive image of veganism and elicit change in others (Paxman, 2021:10).

To conclude this section on lived vegan experience, vegan scholarship paints a detailed picture of what the vegan experience is likely to look like. Whilst most studies draw on the lives of ethical vegans, there is little to no mention of religious identity or practice, so it remains unclear how these intersect and reshape the vegan experience; herein lies the research gap I will seek to fill.

2.2 Religion and Consumption Practices

Given the lack of studies exploring religion in relation to the vegan experience, I broaden discussion to explore other consumption practices that have been studied in relation to religion. To follow on from the previous section, I begin with an exploration of how veg*nism has been studied empirically in religious contexts, before examining ethical consumption and food consumption more broadly. In this thesis, I adopt a conceptual understanding of religion as constituting a combination of features, including, but not necessarily all present, belief, culture, identity, social relationships, practice, and power (Woodhead, 2011), all the while being subject to constant social reconstruction (p.122).

2.2.1 Veg*nism

Studies exploring veg*nism and religion are largely theoretical in nature and draw predominantly on religious studies. Few sociological studies of an empirical nature exploring veg*nism and Abrahamic religion exist, so I include other religions in this discussion to add further insight.

Chapter 2

In Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, there is a long history of vegetarianism, so connections between religiosity and the eschewal of meat are deeply embedded in religious life (Tuminello III, 2018:93). Jains also avoid eggs and honey, so for them, transitioning to veganism tends to only require the elimination of dairy products (Shah, 2011:114). Abrahamic religions, meanwhile, do not share this experience, and instead centralise meat consumption and the use of animal-derived items in many festival meals and rituals (Benkheira, 1999; Davis, 2017); veg*nism thus becomes an alien concept to followers of these religions. Nevertheless, all religions share similar principles connected to compassion, responsibility, and peace (Covey, 2021:191; Kalechofsky, 1998; Long, 2011; Stilt, 2009:13).

Of the empirical studies exploring religion and veg*nism, many discuss motivations. As is true for vegans more broadly (Kerschke-Risch, 2015:100), concern for animals is also a major motivation for vegans of faith, albeit for them, it is connected to religious principles. The most studied religious principle in relation to veg*nism is that of *ahimsā*, or non-violence, which features in Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Jains adhere to *ahimsā* in the strictest way (Tuminello III, 2018:91) through strict dietary regulations (Babb, 2011:203), dictating that root vegetables and all animal-derived foods, except dairy products, must be omitted from the Jain diet (Donaldson, 2016:53). As such, vegetarianism is key to the Jain way of life (Babb, 2011:198; Shah, 2011:111; Tuminello III, 2018:93). Whilst religious practice is a key motivation for Jain vegetarianism therefore, motivations for Jain veganism tend to relate to compassion and an objection to animal exploitation, rather than the more traditional motivations of self-control (Vallely, 2003:17). This could be due to exposure to Western values, such as animal rights, social change, and environmental sustainability, which many young Jains have linked to the principle of *ahimsā* (Shah, 2014:520). We thus see evidence of religious individuals being exposed to secular ideas which they then combine with their religious ideas to religionise their motivations.

Other religious beliefs that are associated with motivations for veg*nism include the Sikh belief that vegetarianism is a spiritual practice favourable to God (Jhutti-Johal, 2018:152-153) and the Indic beliefs surrounding the accrual of karma, one's spiritual positioning (Gaffney, 2004:226), and the liberation of the self (Miller and Dickstein, 2021:2). In Indic philosophy, it is believed that killing another will cause karma to be bound to the individual, which in turn will prevent liberation from the cycle of reincarnation (Shah, 2011:111); thus, these motivations are largely driven by a concern for oneself, as opposed to a concern for the suffering other. Sufi vegetarians meanwhile have cited spiritual reasons (Foltz, 2006a:109), specifically Qur'anic teachings as their motivation for a vegetarian diet (Bennison, 2011:218), Orthodox Christians consider periods of veg*nism to aid with discipline and spiritual growth (Ware, 2019:133), and Seventh Day Adventists believe a healthy body pleases God (Nath, 2010:364). Thus, veg*ns of faith seek

to please God through their veg*nism, as well as embody religious beliefs and principles through their veg*n practice.

The African Hebrew Israelite Community, a Jewish group living both in Israel and the USA, advocates and practices veganism (Avieli and Markowitz, 2018; Markowitz and Avieli, 2022; Miller, 2021). The group's founder originally established a vegan diet, believing it would restore community members' health and vitality, both of which were seen to have been debilitated by slavery and American modernity (Markowitz and Avieli, 2022:3). Other motivations now include the potential to work towards their goals of salvation, peace, and sustainability (Miller, 2021:218), and the belief that God wants humans to follow a vegan diet due to Edenic (Avieli and Markowitz, 2018:210) and Messianic dietary imagery (Miller, 2021:24); in the Bible, Genesis 2 depicts the Garden of Eden as a vegan paradise, whilst Isaiah 11:6-9 implies a vegan world when the Messiah returns. These latter motivations, albeit expressed as Biblical vegetarianism and a desire to return to the Golden Age, are cited among Christian communities too (Calvert, 2008:132).

Whilst many veg*ns of faith share motivations with the vegan community more broadly, we nevertheless see evidence of a religionising of motivations, whereby motivations are connected to and consolidated by religious beliefs and principles. Such consolidation is suggested to help with lifestyle maintenance, with research claiming that religious individuals are more likely to sustain their veg*n practice when they feel their decision is supported by religious and cultural reasoning (Kaza, 2005:405).

Where the lived veg*n experience among individuals of faith is concerned, empirical research is limited, but a handful of studies offer glimpses of insight. To begin this discussion, a selection of studies reveal that individuals are reshaping religious practice and identity through veg*nism. Shah (2014:517) studied second-generation Jains in the UK and USA and found that many have redefined Jain dietary practices. She notes that some diasporic Jains have opted to omit dairy products and introduce root vegetables into their diets (Shah, 2019:340), believing this to be more in alignment with the principle of *ahimsā* in contemporary society than the more traditional vegetarian diet (Shah, 2011:115; Tuttle, 2018:16), since Western dairy industrial practices contradict their values (Shah, 2011:114). As such, they placed an emphasis on spirituality, ethics, and values, more so than on rituals and worship (Shah, 2011:116; 2014:522), reshaping what it means to be Jain.

Jews living in late modern American society are also engaging in identity reconstruction, by picking and choosing the aspects of Jewish practice that resonate most with them personally; such emphasis on individuality thus allows these Jews to renegotiate and reconstruct their Jewish identity (Croland, 2019:95, 100). Labendz (2019:300) comments on his own experience

of being a Jewish vegan, explaining how he “intentionally cultivated an appreciation for how veganism can reflect Jewish values” and so being vegan, for him, feels Jewish. Krone (2019) also explores identity, in particular the relationship between “Jewish” and “vegan”, however she tackles the topic from an ecological and philosophical perspective, arguing that it is an ecological worldview that ties both Jewish and vegan identities together. It is unknown, however, whether Christian and Muslim vegans are also reshaping religious practice and identity through veganism in similar ways.

Practices are also explored in the literature, although not in great depth. Jewish veg*ns appear to adopt the practices of the wider veg*n culture, however they seek to distinguish themselves by producing a unique Jewish veg*nism (Labendz and Yanklowitz, 2019a:xii). This commonly involves the renegotiation of culinary practices (p.ix), and the invention of Jewish foodways and ritual traditions (Labendz, 2019:302), as well as experimenting (Krone, 2019:128) and being selective with Jewish practices (Croland, 2019:100). Religious practice can thus be reimagined and reshaped through the lens of veganism. Again, the practices of Christian and Muslim vegans remain unknown.

Studies also suggest that one’s socio-cultural context influences the likelihood of veg*n practice. Veganism appears to be more common in Jain diasporic communities (Shah, 2011, 2014, 2019; Vallely, 2003:13), but rather than attributing this to geographical factors, it is the social influences one is exposed to that explain such differences. Indeed, Tuminello III (2018:94) points out that young Jains living in Indian cities are more likely to follow diasporic perspectives, due to minimal contact with ascetics, whilst older Jains living in the diaspora, who had previously had more interactions with Indian life, are more likely to display traditional orthodox perspectives. Furthermore, one’s socio-cultural context can also influence the role diet plays in one’s religious practice and identity (Shah, 2011:112). For example, many Jains reported that vegetarianism had become even more central to their identity when living in the West, where it is not the norm (Shah, 2011:109; Vallely, 2003:13), and this was especially evident when individuals were challenged or questioned by peers as their differences helped to emphasise vegetarianism as a central aspect of what made them Jain (Shah, 2011:113).

Individuals identifying with an Abrahamic religion do not have a normative vegetarian culture on which to turn, so they must be exposed to veg*nism elsewhere. Croland (2019:95), in his study on the intersections between Jewishness, veg*nism, and punk culture, reaches similar conclusions to Cherry (2006) who emphasised the role of social networks in advocating and maintaining vegan lifestyle change. With veganism becoming ever more popular in British society, we can hypothesise that the British context provides a socio-cultural context which

could expose individuals following an Abrahamic religion to veganism, but as of yet, no empirical data is available to either support or refute this hypothesis.

Where Muslim veg*ns are concerned, a handful of studies point towards stigma within Muslim communities. Oleschuk et al. (2019:350) explored cultural repertoires surrounding meat-eating in Canada and found that Muslim veg*ns face numerous difficulties, including navigating social norms linked to hospitality and commensality, where giving and receiving food is closely related to respect, the risk of others perceiving them to be rejecting or disrespectful of their culture and religion, and the potential for others to challenge their religious identity. Moreover, others have found many meat-eating Muslims to become defensive (Perlo, 2009:112) and critical when faced with veg*ism (Foltz, 2006a:108). It is unknown what difficulties Jewish or Christian vegans may face.

To counteract such stigma and promote religious principles connected to compassion, there are instances of veg*n activism within religious communities. Buddhist monasteries and centres across Asia actively advocate veganism and respect for animals (Tuttle, 2018:21), thereby playing a central role in animal and veg*n advocacy. Where there is an absence of a normative veg*n culture among the Abrahamic religions however, it is individuals who are taking the lead with activism. Within Muslim communities, more activism appears to be happening in the West (Ali, 2015:280) with most activists thought to be Western reverts (Foltz, 2006a:84), whilst in Jewish communities, many Jewish vegans are promoting plant-based diets and lifestyles through the organisations and forums they have created (Labendz and Yanklowitz, 2019a:ix), as well as the publication of multiple Jewish recipe books and resources (Krone, 2019:122). Thus, veg*ns of faith may be actively engaged in raising awareness of the connections between the vegan lifestyle and religious principles within their respective communities.

Compared to the section on veganism above, which painted a detailed picture of secular vegan experiences, very little is known about the experiences of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans. Thus, in-depth empirical research is needed to reveal how one becomes a vegan of faith and how they negotiate vegan and religious practices in conjunction with one another. My research will shed light on this currently understudied topic and will seek to fill the previously identified research gaps.

2.2.2 Ethical Consumption

Veganism is both an ethical consumption and anti-consumption practice (Harding and Day, 2021:4), so I turn now to discuss ethical consumption more broadly. Ethical consumption is a way of consuming that bases decisions on personal and moral beliefs (Crane and Matten,

2004:2), thereby contributing to “moral selving” (Allahyari, 2000), which refers to how one seeks to become a more virtuous person through their practices and conduct (Barnett et al., 2005:30). Ethical consumption relates to a whole host of environmental, ecological, and human concerns, and grants consumers the opportunity to “make a difference” (Adams and Raisborough, 2010:256), as it takes the form of political action (Barnett et al., 2005) and contributes to progressive social change (Clarke, 2008). Anti-consumption, meanwhile, refers to the morally construed practices of refraining from purchasing objectionable items and thereby reducing one’s complicity with an objectionable system or entity (Portwood-Stacer, 2012:96). Ethical vegans evidently do this through their eschewal of animal-derived products in protest against the animal agricultural industry (Greenebaum, 2017:356).

Multiple studies have highlighted religion as a key driver of ethical consumption and anti-consumption in low-income and non-Western countries, such as Pakistan (Hasan et al., 2023) and Morocco (Hamelin et al., 2013). In these contexts, religion is shown to have a much greater influence on pro-environmental behaviour than in higher-income countries (Zemo and Nigus, 2021); indeed, a study on environmental action in places of worship in Toronto, Canada found that it was not a priority for many communities there (Caldwell et al., 2022). Religiosity is attributed to guiding sustainable consumption behaviour in Pakistani Muslims (Batool et al., 2023), positive attitudes towards green products in Indonesia (Suhartanto et al., 2024), ethical consumption practices more broadly in India (Adil, 2022), and a reduction in food consumption and waste in China (He and Tian, 2023). However, the study in China further observed discrepancies between different income levels, with those on lower incomes demonstrating more ethical consumption practices than those on higher incomes (He et al., 2022). These studies thus point, surprisingly, to the hypothesis that higher income is a barrier to ethical consumption among religious individuals.

Further studies reveal however, that it is intrinsic religiosity more specifically which influences ethical consumption behaviours. Intrinsic religiosity refers to the way in which one lives and serves religion, with emphasis placed on religious commitment (Allport, 1960:257; Allport and Ross, 1967:434); thus, individuals with intrinsic religiosity are more committed to the spiritual and ethical sides of religion (Arlı and Tjiptono, 2014:390; Vitell, 2009:158). Extrinsic religiosity meanwhile refers to the self-serving predisposition to use religion for one’s own personal benefit (Allport, 1960:257; Allport and Ross, 1967:434); thus, those with extrinsic religiosity engage with religion more so for social or personal needs (Arlı, 2016:207). Saudi Arabia, a Muslim majority country, is reported to have high levels of extrinsic religiosity; consequently, food consumption culture trumps religiosity, leading to high levels of food waste (Elshaer et al., 2021) and high meat consumption (Ashraf and Alanezi, 2023:2). Similarly, studies in Indonesia found that those exhibiting an intrinsic religiosity were more disapproving of animal harm than

those with an extrinsic religiosity (Pasaribu et al., 2021). Therefore, it is one's relationship with religion that determines whether religiosity will drive ethical consumption or not.

Turning to a Western context, where overconsumption has long been problematic (Humphery, 2010:22), we have recently witnessed an ethical turn where ethical concerns are increasingly guiding consumer decision-making (Lewis and Huber, 2015:291). Ethical consumption has come to refer to an ever-growing number of things, including animal testing, the treatment of workers, political issues, and environmentalism, among others (Carrier, 2012:1). Members of diasporic religious communities are absorbing these ideas (Shah, 2014:520), as are Christians in the UK, for whom ethical consumption may become a channel through which their faith can be practiced (Clove et al., 2011:100). Exploring Christian Fairtrade consumers, Cloke et al. (p.99) found that faith and consumption shape one another; resultingly, ethical consumption may become a preferred method of consumption for individuals of faith (p.101) and can in turn be considered an enactment of faith (p.100).

In another study on Quakers in Britain, Collins (2012) found that what appears to be ethical consumption is in fact an enactment of the Quaker way of being. Unlike secular ethical consumers who are concerned by issues in the social sphere, Quakers' motivations and orientations are instead focused on observing Quaker testimony (pp.194-195). Thus, ethical consumption can be understood through a religious lens as a means of putting into practice religious teachings to become a better believer and practitioner of religion, especially for those with intrinsic religiosity.

In conclusion, it is clear that religion intersects with and may be closely associated with ethical consumption, but it is not known what this looks like where veganism in particular is concerned.

2.2.3 Food

A major aspect of veganism is dietary lifestyle, so it is imperative to also explore food. Food is not just a material item that one consumes to fuel the body (Mol, 2021), it is also hugely formative, shaping our identity (Fischler, 1988), both culturally (Fischler, 1990) and spiritually (Pikering, 2009:134), as well as contributing to a sense of belonging (Fischler, 1988; Valley, 2003:20) or exclusion (Fischler, 1988). Social boundaries are commonly defined through the sharing of food (Avieli, 2017:117), since people eating together need to share the same dietary rules, knowledge, and rituals (Julier, 2013:22); participation in cultural and dietary norms (Hastorf, 2017:46) therefore determines inclusion and membership (Julier, 2013:103; Symons, 1994:342). Meat is argued to play a huge role in determining membership of social groups, since "both consuming and avoiding meat convey social identity and affiliation" (Ali, 2015:276).

Through our interactions with foodstuffs, the food itself becomes shaped by how we relate to it (Carolan, 2011:72) and new knowledges emerge (Roe and Buser, 2016:585). For example, the food we eat signifies our social environment (Barthes, 1997:23), evokes memory (p.24), is symbolic, and communicates a multitude of information about ourselves (Khare, 1992:28). Food also plays a key role in our upbringing and the ways in which we see the world; individuals are socialised through food, dishes, and food ideologies which informs their positioning in the wider social order (Beardsworth and Keil, 1997:97). Indeed, culture and religion are deeply embedded in food practices, especially for Jews (Gross et al., 2020). Many, such as Ultra-Orthodox Jews, believe certain foods maximise spiritual benefit (Peles et al., 2021), whilst religious feasts aid with social solidarity (Gopi, 2021) and the reinforcing of social norms (Ratcliffe et al., 2019:89). Compliance and observance of these therefore help to shape one's identity (Julier, 2013:16), reaffirm one's heritage (Rouse and Hoskins, 2004:246) and determine membership of social groups (Hastorf, 2017:231).

A foodstuff that elicits particular meaning for members of Abrahamic religions, Muslims especially, is that of meat. Halal meat is argued to be a key carrier of Muslim identity (Ali, 2015:269), whilst offering meat to guests is a deeply embedded cultural tradition in Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia (Aleshaiwi, 2023). In the UK, meat is normalised in recipe videos consumed by South Asian British Muslims (Mroz et al., 2023), whilst among the broader Christian and secular community, factors such as commensality, eating in restaurants, and the significance of Sunday increase the likelihood of eating meat (Horgan et al., 2019). The consumption of meat also has ritual value, with ceremonies often being centred around a meat-based meal (Benkheira, 1999:90), for example the Sabbath meal (Avieli, 2017:162), the Sunday roast (Hastorf, 2017:244), and Islamic feasts (Benkheira, 1999:90).

Meat-centric meals and the sharing of such food therefore unites members of religion (Andersen, 2014) and binds them to their faith (Feeley-Harnik, 1995). Taking away meat then is perceived as a symbolic threat (Rosenfeld et al., 2023b), which disrupts the meal (Adams, 2015) and creates a barrier to commensality (Julier, 2013) and by extension, social inclusion (Fischler, 1988). As such, many develop a meat attachment (Graça et al, 2015), and reconcile their consumption of meat with beliefs such as dominion over animals (Salonen, 2019) or that meat is a symbol of masculinity (Rothgerber, 2013).

Meat is the foodstuff that is most highly regulated in the Abrahamic religions, however; as such, most food taboos relate to meat (Adams, 2015:5). It is interesting to note therefore that the avoidance of these, through veganism, is considered by some members of the black American community as taboo (Greenebaum, 2018:685) and un-Islamic by some Muslims (Foltz, 2001:40). This is likely due to the embeddedness of animal-derived products in local cuisines

(Hastorf, 2017:74) and religious and culinary identities (p.71); refusing them suggests a new identity affiliation and causes offence (Ali, 2015:276).

Meat can also be understood through the lens of purity and pollution (Douglas, 2002). Food is primarily defined as something that is edible (Hastorf, 2017:22), however it may be categorised as edible-inedible, clean-unclean, and from a religious perspective, as in Islam, *halal*⁶ or *haram*⁷ (Bowen, 2012:76). Matter is classified, ordered, and divided up (Douglas, 2002:36), with animal foods being among the most categorised (p.167), especially for Jews and Muslims who emphasise the importance of the slaughter method (Hastorf, 2017:228; Lever, 2019:890). Vegans meanwhile do not consider animal-derived products to be consumable (Panizza, 2020:4) and instead determine the edibility of food based on the ethical decision (Adams, 2015:xxxix) to avoid harm to others (McDonald, 2000:16).

Meat is evidently central to the dietary experiences of many Muslims, Jews, and Christians, with many studies revealing the curious status it holds as both a highly revered foodstuff and a highly regulated one. What remains unknown, however, is how the dietary experiences of these individuals change when this food item is absent, as in the case of veganism.

To conclude this section on religion and consumption practices, I wish to reiterate the important potential religion has as a guiding force in one's life. Religion is considered a "fertile ground" for the development of morality (King et al., 2020:606) and therefore informs ethics to a large extent for those who identify as religious (p.595). However, religious ethics are not interpreted in universal ways; for example, just as some Sufi Muslims are inspired by Islamic ethics to go vegetarian (Bennison, 2011:218), other Muslims turn to Islamic ethics for guidance on how to raise and kill animals for food (Lever and Fischer, 2018). Thus, religious ethics are often ambiguous, and their applications in everyday life can lead to different lived experiences and understandings among members of the same religion. With so little known about how religious ethics guide veganism among Muslims, Jews, and Christians, a research gap emerges which this thesis will seek to fill.

⁶ Permissible.

⁷ Forbidden.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Research Context

The context of my research is that of late modern Great Britain. In late modernity, traditional social institutions, such as religion, have weakened (Giddens, 1994:56; Lash, 1994:114) and traditions are disappearing (Beck, 1992:2; Campbell, 1996:149), leading to what theorists have termed detraditionalization (Heelas, 1996:2). In the absence of traditional authority, individuals are called upon to make their own decisions, relating to their own identities and lifestyles (Beck, 1994:15). We thus see a rise in individualisation in the West (Giddens, 1994), which transforms identity “from a ‘given’ into a ‘task’” (Bauman, 2001:144); a few studies have shown how individualisation has led many diasporic communities to reconstruct their religious identities through veganism (Croland, 2019; Shah, 2011; 2014). Individualisation empowers Jain vegans to reflexively reinterpret how best to observe the principle of *ahimsā*, and ultimately reshape their dietary practices (Shah, 2011:116; 2014:522) by omitting dairy products and introducing root vegetables into their diets (Shah, 2019:340). Similarly, among American Jews, individualisation allows them to renegotiate and reconstruct their Jewish identity (Croland, 2019:95, 100), with some adopting veganism as it is seen to better reflect Jewish values (Labendz, 2019:300).

Traditionally, identity was dictated by predefined social roles, however in recent decades it has been transformed into something that is “mobile, multiple, personal, self-reflexive, and subject to change and innovation” (Kellner, 1992:141). Late modernity has thus transformed the social landscape and given rise to many personal identity narratives (Bennett, 2003:146).

Consequently, it is also becoming ever more unstable and fragile (Kellner, 1992:143), with many creating and recreating their identities as fashions change (p.142); consumption is one area where individuals gain autonomy over their identities and adapt their consumer behaviours to match their chosen identities (Bocock, 1992:145). Where religion is concerned, identities are changing too, with more fluidity than ever before reported among Jews in the West (Cohen and Eisen, 2000:38). With the blurring of boundaries between the Jewish and non-Jewish, individuals are plunged into a continual quest for meaning, identity becomes multiple, and “a piecemeal approach to selfhood” emerges (p.38). As such, many are embracing new identities and finding new ways to be Jewish, as is the case for Jewish vegans across the world (Croland, 2019; Krone, 2019; Labendz, 2019).

Continuity in one’s self-identity and constancy in one’s environment supports feelings of security and confidence; this is referred to as ontological security (Giddens, 1992:92). This too is being threatened and transformed in late modernity, where traditional sources, such as stable family relationships, community, and religion, are diminishing in the contemporary context

(Shah, 2014:514). In their absence, the adoption of a particular lifestyle can offer “a particular narrative of self-identity” (Giddens, 1991:81), which in turn can provide a sense of stability (Warde, 1994:882); thus, veganism may offer ontological security and the sense of a stable identity. However, it is also argued that traditions are not necessarily disappearing; many are instead maintained, rejuvenated, or even constructed (Heelas, 1996:3). Nevertheless, the social context is undergoing change and religious culture is not as authoritative as it once was (Giddens, 1994:56; Lash, 1994:114). In response, we see a rise in individualisation (Giddens, 1994), which requires reflexivity.

Reflexivity refers to the ways in which individuals in late modern societies must reflect on their lives, make individual choices (Beck, 1994:15), and engage in constant self-monitoring (Sweetman, 2003:546). Individuals therefore must make sense of their lives by reflecting on what is important to them and how they want to live their lives (Heelas, 1996:5). Consumer culture in particular transforms lifestyle and consumption into life projects, requiring the individual to both make choices about who they want to be and acquire the necessary goods and experiences. This enables the individual to display their individuality and perform their chosen lifestyle (Featherstone, 1991:86). Modern life thus charges us with the responsibility (Beck, 1994:13) of becoming what we are (Bauman, 2001:144); this has been described by theorists as a “reflexive biography” (Beck, 1992:135) or “reflexive project” (Giddens, 1991:5; 1992:30). Giddens (1990:124) defines his ‘reflexive project’ as the process in which “an individual must find her or his identity amid the strategies and options provided by abstract systems.” In this way, vegans must find and construct their vegan identity, all the while navigating not only a carnist, consumeristic society, but also competing understandings of what comprises veganism. Thus, vegans must adopt strategies that give them a sense of authenticity and enable continued practice (Greenebaum, 2012a).

Turning to explore religiosity in late modern Britain, we witness a rise in secularism (Berger et al., 2008:9), a phenomenon “peculiar to the European corner of the world” (Davie, 2010:165). Proponents of the secularisation thesis argue that religion no longer plays a central role in everyday life (Bruce, 1995; Wilson, 1982), and whilst statistics show that the Church has lost its authority in society (Bruce, 2000:229; Wilson, 2016:29), other theories suggest that it is only participation in a religious community that has declined, whilst religious belief and identity remain (Davie, 2010:172; 2013:140). Many such studies exploring secularisation base their conclusions solely on an analysis of the Christian faith however (Heelas et al., 2005; Hiebert, 2018; Houtman and Aupers, 2007; Voas and Crockett, 2005), so it would perhaps be more appropriate to describe this phenomenon as “dechristianization” (Mouzelis, 2012:215). Moreover, if examined regionally, another assertion would be that Christianity is being “de-Europeanized” (Beck, 2010:23).

Recent census data has shown that whilst there is an overall reduction in Christian self-identification (Office for National Statistics, 2022), there is both an increase in black majority Churches (Goodhew, 2012:3) and minority religions (Davie, 2015:43). Religion thus remains central to the everyday lives of many minorities in Britain, for example Muslims (Berger et al., 2008:120; Turner, 2010:658), Jews (Graham, 2014:38), and Jains (Shah, 2014:513), whilst a growing number of individuals are researching and embracing religion for the first time (Beck, 2010:29). Resultingly, the secularisation thesis is coming under greater scrutiny with many theorists now arguing against it (Berger, 1999; Davie, 2013), since the argument that modernity causes a decline in religion has been empirically disproven (Berger et al., 2008:10). Beck (2010:26) adds further that secularisation has in fact “paved the way for the revitalization of religiosity and spirituality in the twenty-first century.”

Scholars who disagree with the secularisation thesis argue instead that we are witnessing a “spiritual revolution” (Heelas et al., 2005) or “spiritual turn” (Houtman and Aupers, 2007), which refers to the rejection of a ‘religious’ identity in favour of a ‘spiritual’ one (Berger et al., 2008:14). More specifically, it is a move away from religious texts, dogmas, and authority towards ‘heart work’ and an existential experience of divinity (Mouzelis, 2012:215). This often involves reflexively constructing one’s identity from “a spiritual marketplace” (Bender, 2003:69); as such, individuals are actively engaged in their own spiritual formation (Roof, 1999:75). Individuals who remain committed to their religious traditions meanwhile, may renegotiate their identity and practices within the context of religion, as is the case with subjectivisation. The subjective turn in religion describes a reflexive approach to religious practice and belief, whereby individuals may turn away from religious roles and obligations and instead turn towards “life lived by reference to one’s own subjective experiences” (Heelas et al., 2005:2).

Traditionally, religious institutions both socialised and formed the identities of their followers (McAlexander et al., 2014:859), however, as the authority of religion is declining in late modern society, many are reflecting on their identities (p.865) and moving towards “a religiosity that is based increasingly on individualization” (Beck, 2010:29), evidence of which can be found in the American Jewish community (Croland, 2019:100) and Muslims across Europe (Jeldtoft, 2011:1142; Torrekens et al., 2022:15). Beck (2010:30) argues therefore that it is more appropriate to discuss the pluralisation of religion, since individualised forms of religiosity are emerging (p.33). Religions have therefore not disappeared, instead they have changed their appearance (p.39). Whilst individualisation causes some people to reject their religion, others reflect on it and reinvent it, searching for new meanings (Hiebert: 2018:65-66) and adopting a reflexive religiosity (Mouzelis, 2012:216-218), which is discussed in greater depth below.

2.3.2 Theoretical Lens

I want to begin by acknowledging the roots of academic vegan studies. Vegan studies stems from ecofeminism, Critical Animal Studies, human-animal studies, and posthumanism (Wright, 2021) and seeks to understand “what it means to be a vegan” (Wright, 2015:14). It commonly draws on feminist ethics of care theory (Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1993) and ecofeminist theory (Gaard, 1993; Mies and Shiva, 1993; Phillips and Rumens, 2015) to explore and express concern for the ‘other’. As a result, many scholars exploring veg*nism take a similar theoretical standpoint (Brookes and Chałupnik, 2022; Mukhtar and Todd, 2023; Salmen and Dhont, 2023); I, however, adopt a different approach. My main lens is religious ethics, as I am not so much interested in how people of faith care in a sense of attending to the need of a vulnerable group or the environment, rather I want to explore how they care in a sense of being faith-bound ethicists. The focus thus is on how one becomes a faith ethicist in a new way, rather than how one works out particular care relations with others, although the two are likely to be evident and connected in this research.

To understand how one becomes a faith-ethicist in a new way and to examine how, through their lived experiences, they demonstrate care in alignment with their religious beliefs and ethics, I draw upon the sociology of Bourdieu, specifically that of habitus (1990a:53), field (1983:312), and capital (1986). Bourdieu defines habitus as a system of dispositions which are linked to social structures (fields) and predispose individuals towards particular practices, perceptions, and appreciations (Bourdieu, 1990a:53), thereby informing a whole manner of behaviours and gestures, from significant ones to minute specificities in how we perform certain actions (Bourdieu, 1984:466). Beginning with primary socialisation from the family, it is further developed by subsequent experiences, such as education and religion (Bourdieu, 1977:87). Whilst individual habituses are different, many aspects will be shared with those of the same gender, race, class, and so on (Maton, 2012:52); as such, individuals may have a class habitus (Bourdieu, 1990a:60) or religious habitus (Bourdieu, 1991:22), and upon becoming vegan, develop a vegan habitus (Giacoman et al., 2021:3). Habitus is thus a product of history which shapes, but does not determine, practice, both at the individual and collective levels (Bourdieu, 1990a:54-55) so that practices become expected and taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1977:80).

Habitus emerges within specific social contexts, which Bourdieu (1983) refers to as a ‘field’. A field is a spatial metaphor (Swartz, 1997:117), referring to social spaces that are structured and organised around particular rules, norms, values, and hierarchies (capital) (Power, 1999:50); as such, membership of a field assumes a sense of understanding (Bourdieu, 1990a:66). Fields can be examined at both a macro level and a micro level. At the macro level, the socio-cultural context constitutes one field, whilst the religious field would be another (Bourdieu, 1991). At the

micro level meanwhile, we can identify various fields, including the fields of science, law, education, and art (Power, 1999:50); thus, fields can be multiple, with micro fields interacting with the macro field. Further, fields interact with habitus and capital, discussed below, with fields shaping the habitus, which in turn renders fields meaningful (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127).

In this thesis, I adopt a macro understanding of field, working specifically with the field of late modern British society. This field has certain understandings of how relevant religion is to everyday life and how it may be practiced, as well as understandings of veganism; thus, the concept of field is useful for understanding the influences of structured social space on lifestyle decisions and practices. However, as we have seen throughout this chapter, the field of late modern Great Britain is changing, both in the sense that religion is becoming less authoritative and more individualised (Beck, 2010; Giddens, 1994), whilst veganism is becoming more accessible and acceptable in broader society (Lundahl, 2020; Oliver, 2023b); insightful findings remain to be found where these two topics intersect.

Fields are dependent upon capital (Power, 1999:50), since it is around capital that fields are structured, and thus defined (Swartz, 1997:117). Bourdieu (1987:4) outlines four types of capital: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Economic capital refers to money, cultural capital includes knowledge, skills, and cultural goods, such as books and art, social capital includes social connections and networks (Bourdieu, 1986:243), and symbolic capital is “the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate” (Bourdieu, 1989:17). Capital relates to more than just the acquisition of resources, however; these types of capital not only provide individuals with knowledge or support, but they also afford the individual status and advantage within their field (Swartz, 1997:162). Thus, individuals consistently seek to accumulate capital so as to remain competitive and claim ever more status in an environment where power is unequally distributed (p.117).

In becoming vegan, vegans may need economic capital to purchase vegan alternatives (Kerlake et al., 2022), cultural capital, such as cooking skills (Twine, 2014:636), and social capital, such as vegan communities for support (Cherry, 2006:157). In their existing communities, they may appear to lose status or advantage, due to their adoption of a way of life which is not only contrary to the norm, but directly challenges it (Twine, 2014:628), whereas within vegan communities, they gain status, being able to claim both vegan identity and authenticity (Greenebaum, 2012a) which assists with the nurturing of social networks and lifestyle maintenance (Cherry, 2006; 2015). A further type of capital useful to this research is religious capital, comprising knowledge of one’s religious tradition, engaging in religious activities, an emotional attachment to the religion, and an embeddedness within the religious

Chapter 2

community (Iannaccone, 1990:299; Stark and Finke, 2000:120). In this thesis, I use capital predominantly to understand the resources a vegan of faith must acquire in order to become and live as a vegan of faith. I also briefly explore how, in different spaces, vegans either gain or lose status so as to demonstrate the role capital accumulation plays in the maintenance or advancing of status within different social contexts.

Habitus, field, and capital all interact in the production of practice, which refers to the actions individuals do in society (Rey, 2007:39). Maton (2012:50) explains, “practice results from relations between one’s dispositions (habitus) and one’s position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)”. Practice is therefore not determined by habitus alone (p.51), but instead is influenced considerably by the interrelations between various fields and capitals (Rey, 2007:39). The practices of members of the same group are thus more or less harmonised, since they share a similar habitus (Bourdieu, 1990a:59). Bourdieu (1990a) applies his practice theory to the analysis of a variety of topics, including kinship, domestic space, and ritualised actions, whilst scholars of religion have more recently drawn on the notions of habitus and practice for their excellent potential in explaining religious practice and religious belief (Rey, 2007:128), both of which are relevant to my own research.

Some have criticised Bourdieu’s notion of habitus as being overly deterministic however (Jenkins, 1982:272), implying a lack of flexibility in everyday practice. Others meanwhile regard this a mistake, arguing that habitus does not determine action, but rather it offers a framework that simply guides action (Ostrow, 2000:318). Bourdieu himself responds to such criticisms, explaining that habitus produces “an infinite number of practices”, albeit “limited in their diversity” (1990a:55). There is thus room for improvisation (Bourdieu, 1990b:63), so long as one acts within the norms and rules of the social arena (p.61). On the whole, habitus is said to resist change quite effectively due to the greater influence primary socialisation has over socialisation later in life (Swartz, 1997:107), but change does nevertheless occur, albeit slowly, since habitus permits continuous correction and adjustment (Bourdieu, 1977:83).

Indeed, within the context of the changing field mentioned previously, we witness further changes relating to habitus and practical reason. Practical reason, that is the embodied dispositions and cognitive beliefs with which one reasons, is derived from one’s habitus (Bourdieu, 1998), but where late modern societies are characterised by increasing complexity and rapid change (Crossley, 2001:113-114), a near “constant disjunction between habitus and field” emerges (Sweetman, 2003:541). Reflexivity thus becomes “incorporated into the habitus” to help navigate these disruptions (p.541).

Sweetman (2003) thus develops Bourdieu’s notion of habitus for contemporary times, referring to it as “reflexive habitus”, a concept which also develops Beck and Giddens’s notion of

“reflexive modernization” (Lash, 1993:204). Sweetman (2003:537) attributes the rise of the reflexive habitus to the changing field and features of late modernity, such as detraditionalization, individualisation, globalisation, and consumer culture, all of which “contribute towards a continual and pervasive reflexivity that itself becomes habitual” (p.541). Indeed, consumer culture demands habitual reflexivity, requiring us to engage in constant self-monitoring and self-improvement (Featherstone, 1991:92), whilst globalisation and the media expose individuals to diverse experiences and ideas (Giddens, 1991:169) and thus also alternative ways of life (Giddens, 1994:97), like veganism. Sweetman (2003:540) explains, “competing claims to knowledge, meanwhile, ensure that even the most mundane decisions – over what sorts of food to eat, for example – must be carefully monitored and potentially revised.” Thus, in the field of late modern British society, individuals acquire the disposition to be reflexive (p.537), thereby transforming Bourdieu’s somewhat limited concept of habitus into a “reflexive habitus”.

Within religious contexts, we can speak further of a reflexive religious habitus (Shah, 2014:521), whereby individuals bring their pre-existing religious habitus to the conscious level (p.515) and interpret and put it into practice in multiple ways (p.521), albeit remaining consistent with their religious tradition (p.516). For the Jains in Shah’s (2011) study, their emphasis of *ahimsā* as being at the heart of the Jain way of life led them to reshape Jain dietary practice and regard veganism as a vehicle to maintain *ahimsā*. (Reflexive religious) habitus is thus a useful concept to draw upon in this research as it offers insight into the social contexts participants live within and the ways in which their ways of thinking and behaving in the world inform their lifestyle decisions and practices.

The transformations around habitus and field arise alongside other late modern transformations, namely that of religious individualisation and reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010). Under the individualisation of faith, believers “re-cast pre-existing religious worldviews and develop composite religious identities” (p.14); relevant examples would be that of the Muslim vegan, the Jewish vegan, and the Christian vegan. But identities such as these do not magically form; they require a process of examination, evaluation, and reconstruction, for which reflexive religiosity is key.

Mouzelis’s (2012) exploration of reflexivity is extremely insightful where religion is concerned and especially important as it draws on non-Eurocentric approaches to identity construction (Shah, 2014:516). In his paper, Mouzelis (2012:217-218) dichotomises reflexivity and gives us the terms *cataphatic reflexivity* and *apophatic reflexivity*. Cataphatic reflexivity refers to the rejection of religious authority and its institutions in favour of constructing an individualistic, continuous, religious biography, whilst apophatic reflexivity refers to the deconstruction of

habitual ways of thinking and behaving in the search for self-realisation. This is explored further in Shah's (2014:515) research, where she observes reflexive thinking in second-generation Jains residing in Britain and the USA, which was "consistent with both the Jain tradition and with wider social processes in late modern societies" (p.516). Thus, through cataphatic reflexivity, some Jains reconstruct their Jain religious biography (p.521) by adopting a vegan diet (p.520). In the Abrahamic religions meanwhile, Jews are renegotiating and reconstructing their Jewish identity (Croland, 2019:95), with veganism being one way to enact Jewish values (Labendz, 2019:300). Other studies reveal individualisation of belief and the negotiating of religious norms among Muslim youth (Torrekens et al., 2022), how *ijtihad*⁸ is not only allowable but encouraged in Islam (Mukhtar and Todd, 2023:276), and how Christians are interpreting the Bible in different ways according to preformed ideologies (Perry and McElroy, 2020).

Reflexivity is not the only way in which one reasons, however. Humans are sentient, evaluative beings whose "relation to the world is one of concern" (Sayer, 2011:1). As such, our reasoning processes draw not only on conscious reflexive thought, but also upon embodied feelings, emotions, values, and intuitions (p.4). Indeed, others have emphasised the role one's conscience plays in reasoning practices, describing it as a form of "emotional consciousness" (Thagard and Finn, 2011:151), "ethical intuitionism" (Huemer, 2005; Stratton-Lake, 2002), and "moral compass" (Joshi, 2006:62; Shah, 2014:521). As we saw earlier, the journey to becoming vegan often starts with a catalytic experience which evokes a series of emotions and feelings, in turn engaging the individual in evaluation and reflexivity (Giacoman et al., 2021:10; McDonald, 2000:9). Thus, it is the embodied and visceral responses to the catalyst that initiate conscious reflexivity (Sayer, 2011:38). But what is it that causes these emotions and feelings to arise when exposed to animal cruelty, for example? Sayer (2011:119) argues that we are relational beings, who, through our own vulnerabilities (p.112), are capable of fellow-feeling, that is the ability to recognise another's feelings and demonstrate sympathy in response, where appropriate (p.118). As such, we are also ethical beings, drawing on moral and ethical ideas to engage in constant evaluation (p.143). This ethical reflection could involve examining moral emotions, reconsidering memories or moral stories, reflecting on norms or the views of others (p.170), or for people of faith, reflecting on what God would think (p.162). Arguably, the purpose of our continuous evaluation, whether conscious or embodied, is to pursue flourishing and wellbeing (p.215). We can hypothesise then that vegans of faith strive for animal flourishing, environmental flourishing, and personal flourishing, in the sense of bodily and mental wellbeing, as well as religious obedience and enactment of faith.

⁸ "The practice of thinking, reasoning, and debating to draw conclusions based on the human application of thought, considering the overall spirit of Islam" (Mukhtar and Todd, 2023:269).

Thus, we see how our embodied emotional and visceral dispositions catalyse reflexivity, which in late modernity, takes the form of a reflexive religious habitus, reflexive religiosity, and religious individualisation in religious contexts. I therefore adopt a theoretical framework drawing upon Bourdieu's (1983; 1986; 1990a) concepts of field, capital, and habitus, as well as the works of Beck (2010), Sayer (2011), and Sweetman (2003), to explore how religious ethics inform embodied dispositions and how a trigger can catalyse the reflexive examination of said embodied dispositions, thereby resulting in behaviour and lifestyle change and the reshaping of religion and veganism in late modern Great Britain.

2.4 Research Questions

Whilst a rich body of literature now exists pertaining to the study of veganism, empirical research is largely limited to the secular and neglects the lived experiences of vegans of faith, particularly the Abrahamic faiths. There is thus a need for sociologically empirical research on this topic. To better explore the experience of vegans of faith therefore, I adopt the aforementioned theoretical framework, to understand how veganism and religion come together in everyday lived experience. With all of this in mind, my central research question is *how are Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans reshaping and redefining veganism and religiosity in late modern Great Britain?* To help me answer this question, I also pose three further research questions:

- How do understandings of veganism change form when intersected with religion?
- How does one become a Muslim, Jewish, or Christian vegan?
- How are veganism, religion, and culture negotiated in everyday practice?

Exploring the intersections between veganism and religiosity will shed light on the religious vegan experience and demonstrate how religious ethics inform embodied dispositions.

Exploring how one becomes vegan will show how triggers catalyse the reflexive examination of said embodied dispositions, thereby resulting in behaviour and lifestyle change. Exploring the negotiations in everyday practice will outline how vegans of faith live and understand religion and veganism, thereby offering insight into how both religion and veganism are being reshaped in late modern Great Britain.

Chapter 3 Methodology

The religious context in which this research is situated relates to the three Abrahamic faiths, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. I begin this chapter by introducing each religious context in turn to set the scene of this research. I then discuss how I executed this research, outlining my epistemological and methodological choices, as well as data collection, data analysis, and positionality and reflections.

3.1 Abrahamic Religions – A Brief Introduction

3.1.1 Islam

Islam was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him, hereafter ﷺ) in the 7th Century AD in what is now Saudi Arabia (Brown, 2011:12). It has since spread across the globe, creating Muslim communities in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and even the West (Green, 2020:1) and comprises around one fifth of the world's population (Ruthven, 2012:1).

Islamic law, *Shari'a*, is derived from the Qur'an, *hadith*⁹, and rules drawn from consensus or precedent within the Sunni¹⁰ and Shia¹¹ traditions (Bennison, 2011:212). From these, Islamic dietary law is derived, which states that alcohol, pork, carrion, blood, and meat which was sanctified in the name of any other than Allah¹² are forbidden (The Qur'an, 2012, 2:173, 5:90). Meat that is lawful to eat meanwhile is termed *halal*¹³. One major criterion is that the animal is slaughtered according to *dhabiha*¹⁴ slaughter practice (Lever, 2019:890), whilst another criterion states that halal meat can only be sourced from animals that have been well cared for since birth (Foltz, 2006a:126); halal certification standards, however, tend to only concentrate on the slaughter process (Furber, 2017:27). With so much emphasis on halal meat, it has become central to the Muslim identity (Ali, 2015:269), forming a tacit belief within the Muslim community that Muslims who eat halal meat are good Muslims (p.271). Consequently, the majority of Muslims consume meat (Foltz, 2006a:25), a practice rarely questioned (p.105), due to a perceived "normalness" of meat-eating in Muslim communities (Oleschuk et al., 2019:349).

⁹ Narrations of the sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

¹⁰ The largest branch of Islam.

¹¹ The second largest branch of Islam, also called Shi'a or Shi'ite Islam.

¹² God.

¹³ Permissible.

¹⁴ Islamic method of slaughter prescribed by Islamic law.

Scholars argue that halal slaughter practices in contemporary society (Benzertiha et al, 2018:4) breach Islamic law however, due to the violation of animal welfare teachings (Masri, 2007:87; Mukhtar and Todd, 2023:269; Shaikh, 2022:442), which renders the meat unlawful (Masri, 2007:137). Moreover, dairy and egg products, which do not require halal certification, are also thought to breach Islamic law due to intensive farming practices which again violate animal welfare teachings (Furber, 2017:18). With permissibility now questionable (Foltz, 2006a:116), some Islamic scholars have put forth arguments for vegetarianism (Ali, 2015; Foltz, 2001; Mukhtar and Todd, 2023) and veganism in Islam (Shaikh, 2022). Other scholars, however, have cautioned against proscribing the consumption of permitted foods (Dahlan, 2021:227) and thus consider veg*nism to be un-Islamic (Izzi Dien, 2000:146). The consumption of animal products is merely a permission however, not an obligation, so one can choose whether to consume them or not (Masri, 2007:97).

Whilst an emerging debate on veg*nism is arising, scholarship in this area remains minimal (Zaki et al., 2021:1435), perhaps due to the unquestioned assumption that halal meat is humane (Oleschuk et al., 2019:349), since Shari'a law requires compassion in slaughter (Foltz, 2006b:152). Studies exploring animals in Islam and Islamic texts meanwhile are more numerous (Masri, 1987; 1989; 2001; 2007; Tlili, 2012; 2015; 2018). Islam has a rich history of compassion towards animals (Stilt, 2009:13), with many references evident in Sufi literature (Robinson, 2018), as well as numerous stories in the *hadith* and *sunnah*¹⁵, depicting Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ great concern for animals (Abdul Rahman, 2017:2). Moreover, Allah is said to greatly reward those who demonstrate kindness to animals (Kemmerer, 2012:245). The discussion rarely progresses beyond halal slaughter to ask whether this practice is even moral or necessary in the modern age, however (Mukhtar and Todd, 2023:265).

The notion of 'dominion' is evident in Islamic thought (Stilt, 2009:16), however the associated term, *khilafa*, is widely translated as vice-regency and implies guardianship of the natural world (Khalid, 2005:104). Although the 'dominion' God gave to humans is regulated by injunctions relating to the avoidance of harm and the demonstration of kindness (Furber, 2015:7), many still understand the term to be indicative of hierarchy, so it is commonly used to justify animal exploitation (Frayne, 2018:202); anthropocentric and speciesist attitudes are therefore common among Muslims (Tlili, 2012:6).

An event in the Islamic calendar of particular concern to vegans would be the animal sacrifice, which is performed annually on Eid-al-Adha (Bowen, 2012:76). The Eid sacrifice is not deemed obligatory by the majority of Islamic schools of thought (Shaikh, 2022:445), however it is widely

¹⁵ The traditions and practices of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

perceived in the Muslim community to be a religious obligation (Benkheira, 1999:109; Foltz, 2006a:121). Sacrifice is difficult to perform in Western countries however (Bowen, 2012:93), so many opt to send money to a poorer country where the sacrifice can take place instead (p.96). Some Islamic scholars have more recently confirmed that it is permissible to donate money directly to the poor and refrain from funding animal sacrifice (Shaikh, 2022:447), thereby offering a vegan-friendly alternative.

In summary, veganism is permissible and supported in Islam (Shaikh, 2022), but is often overlooked due to the dominant culture of meat-eating (Oleschuk et al., 2019:349), human supremacy beliefs (Tlili, 2012:6), and the emphasis placed on animal sacrifice (Foltz, 2006a:121). In the absence of empirical research, we do not know what Muslim veganism looks like.

3.1.2 Judaism

Judaism has the longest history of the Abrahamic religions, originating in the Near East over three millennia ago (Goodman, 2018:xxi). Today, Jewish communities are predominantly situated in Israel and the USA, but many diasporic communities can be found across the globe too (Solomon, 2014:16).

Two key Jewish texts include the *Tanakh*¹⁶ and the *Talmud*¹⁷, from which *halakhah*, Jewish law, is derived (Linzer, 2019:182-183). From this, *kashrut*, Jewish dietary law, is further derived (Kalechofsky, 2006:97). Kashrut outlines strict and complex laws pertaining to which animals are fit for consumption (The Torah, 1963, Vayikra/ Leviticus 11); pork is a well-known example of a forbidden meat (Douglas, 2002:30). Of the animals that are permissible to eat, the strict laws of *shechita*, Jewish slaughter, must be observed (Lopes Cardozo, 2019:12). Additionally, it is forbidden to both consume blood (The Torah, 1963, Vayikra/ Leviticus 17:12) and mix meat with milk (The Torah, 1963, Shemot/ Exodus 23:19; 34:26; Devarim/ Deuteronomy 14:21). Foods that conform to Jewish dietary laws are termed *kosher*¹⁸ (Turner, 2011, p.87).

Jewish scholars are beginning to question the permissibility of modern farming practices, arguing that cramped conditions and the forced separation of mother cow and calf, for example, are in violation of Jewish law (Cohn-Sherbok, 2006:87). Furthermore, even when shechita is done in Jewish slaughterhouses, there are often severe violations of the *tza'ar ba'alei chayim* principle (Lopes Cardozo, 2019:12), which literally means “the pain of animals” (Kalechofsky,

¹⁶ The Hebrew Bible.

¹⁷ The book of Jewish law.

¹⁸ Fit or proper (for consumption).

1998:110) but is understood to mean that Jews must show “kindness to animals” (Cohn-Sherbok, 2006:85). Others are expanding discussion to ask whether it should be considered a sinful act to consume such meat (Linzer, 2019:182), whilst others refer to Bereshit (Genesis)¹⁹ to argue that God intended for humans to be vegetarians (Cohn-Sherbok, 2006:87). Neither meat-eating nor vegetarianism is commanded in Judaism however, thus the choice is optional (Kalechofsky, 2006:97). As such, many scholars and rabbis have written books promoting veganism in Judaism (Kalechofsky, 1998; Labendz and Yanklowitz, 2019b; Schwartz, 2001; 2020; Yanklowitz, 2015), whilst over 200 rabbis, as of 2023, have called on Jews to become vegan (Jewish Veg, 2023).

Veganism aligns well with both prophetic teachings (Kalechofsky, 2004:176) and Jewish values (p.173), with Tanakhic depictions of the Edenic and Messianic worlds as vegan being particularly motivational (p.169). As a result, veganism has become hugely popular in Israel, with a study in 2014 revealing that an estimated 5% of the Israeli population were already vegan, whilst a further 13% were planning on adopting a plant-based diet in the near future (Aharoni, 2014). As such, Israel has earned the reputation of being not only an ‘animal-friendly’ nation (Alloun, 2020:25), but also the most vegan country in the world (Klein Leichman, 2020). Some publications suggest that diasporic Jews, especially in America, are also exploring this lifestyle (Labendz and Yanklowitz, 2019a:ix), however in the absence of empirical research, we cannot be sure of the extent.

Some Jews consider veganism to be an easy way of keeping kosher, however as Stiefel (2021) highlights, kashrut is more complex than just the processing of meat products. Grape and associated products must be kosher compliant (Stiefel, 2012), as must food handling and preparation practices, even in vegan restaurants (Stiefel, 2021:196-197). Furthermore, there are many ritual items in Judaism that must be made with animal-derived materials; for example, the Torah scroll and other sacred texts must be made with animal parchment, the tefillin phylacteries used during worship must be made from leather, and the shofar, a horn which is blown on certain synagogue services, must come from a Bovidae²⁰ animal (p.200). These items can be sourced from animals that died naturally however, which may be a preferred option for vegans (Yanklowitz, 2015:10).

Where human-animal relations are concerned, the concept of ‘dominion’ is evident in the Tanakh and Talmudic laws (Kalechofsky, 2006:94), however many understand this to mean stewardship as opposed to exploitation, and that humans must show compassion to all of

¹⁹ Bereshit (Genesis) tells the story of the Garden of Eden.

²⁰ Cloven-hoofed, ruminant mammals, such as cattle, sheep, and goats.

God's creatures (Cohn-Sherbok, 2006:82). In addition to a concern for animals, environmental ethics are also of particular importance to Jews (Seidenberg, 2017; Tirosh-Samuelson, 2005; 2017). As such, many Jewish values are cited in the literature on Jewish veganism, including *ba'al tashchit*, use nature prudently, *pikuach nefesh*, guard your health, *klal Israel*, community responsibility (Kalechofsky, 1998), and *tikkun olam*, healing the world (Croland, 2019:97), all of which veganism is seen to embody. Scholars are concerned that these Jewish values are being violated in modernity, however, due to intensive, industrial practices which harm animals and the environment (Cohn-Sherbok, 2006; Lopes Cardozo, 2019); as such, veganism is seen to offer a return to Jewish ethical values (Schwartz, 2020).

In summary, veganism is permissible and supported in Judaism (Schwartz, 2020), but challenges remain for Jewish vegans, such as navigating non-Jewish eating establishments and ritual items (Stiefel, 2021). However, there are ways to negotiate these challenges (Yanklowitz, 2015:10), but in the absence of empirical research in the British context, we do not know what this looks like.

3.1.3 Christianity

Christianity finds its origins with Jesus in the Near East approximately two thousand years ago (Woodhead, 2014:1). It has since spread across the globe and is now the world's largest religion (p.56). It remains the dominant religion in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2022), despite evidence of secularisation (Berger et al., 2008:9).

Christians follow the Bible which comprises the Old Testament, the Jewish scriptures, and the New Testament (Woodhead, 2014:5), which relates to the teachings of Jesus Christ (p.8). Despite sharing scripture with Judaism, Christians have long ignored the dietary laws in Leviticus (Davis, 2017:6), referring instead to passages in the New Testament which are seen to permit the consumption of all foods (Albala, 2011:13). Consequently, Christianity as a whole does not outline any specific or permanent dietary rules (p.8).

Despite the absence of a dietary law, many Christian denominations have specific dietary practices, many of which are plant-based in some capacity. Many Seventh Day Adventists are vegetarian (Calvert, 2008:128), Orthodox Christians are supposed to observe a vegan diet on Wednesdays and Fridays (Remele, 2018:117), as well as during Lent (Ware, 2019:133), and there are minority denominations, such as The Order of the Cross who are strictly vegetarian (Calvert, 2008:125). Furthermore, modern secular vegetarianism is said to have its roots in Protestantism (Calvert, 2007).

Despite many supposedly vegetarian-friendly practices, studies have noted discrepancies between teachings and practice (Foster, 2018; Nath, 2010; Sampson, 2018). For example, Foster (2018:110) explains that the Mormon Church is very animal-friendly and appears to dislike meat consumption (p.109), however, many Mormons today seem unaware of such teachings (p.110), eating considerable amounts of meat and demonstrating cynicism towards the animal rights movement (p.111). In a similar example, animal advocacy was once regarded a Christian duty by Evangelical Christians, however the dominant view now is that animals were created for humans to use (Sampson, 2018:66). Even amongst the Seventh Day Adventist Church where vegetarianism is advised (McBride et al., 2021:5), the consumption of meat is becoming more common as the church is becoming more mainstream (Nath, 2010:364). Foster (2018:111) suggests that the influence of the wider meat-eating culture is the likely reason behind these changes.

Speciesism is commonly found in Christian thinking (Perlo, 2009:77), due to a long-held assertion that there is a distinct division between humans and animals. As such, many Christians draw the idea of dominion from Genesis 1:28²¹ (Waldau, 2002:214) and believe that humans have a divinely sanctioned right to use animals and nature (p.206). It is this way of thinking and behaving that led the American historian, Lynn White Jr. (1967:1205) to pen his highly influential paper on the ecological crisis and essentially blame Christianity for it, declaring, “especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen.” In response, Christian ecotheology was born which reinterpreted dominion as stewardship (Covey, 2021:184), but as Twine (2023) has noticed in Western societal climate change discourse, the animal remains curiously absent.

There are nevertheless calls for a Christian veg*nism, with Reverend Professor Andrew Linzey writing widely on topics including animal rights (1976, 1987), animal theology (1994, 2007), and animal suffering (2009). He has also co-edited with Clair Linzey on books exploring vegetarianism and veganism (2018a), and animal ethics (2018b). Other scholars have also joined him in arguing for a Christian veg*nism (Clough, 2017; Covey, 2021), pointing to Genesis²² as evidence of God’s original intention for us to be vegan (Covey, 2021:189), as well as key Christian values, such as peace and compassion (p.191).

In summary, there is a rich history of vegetarianism within Christianity (Calvert 2007; 2008), despite discrepancies in actual practice (Foster, 2018; Nath, 2010; Sampson, 2018). Further,

²¹ “God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the Earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”” (Genesis 1:28, NIV).

²² Genesis tells the story of the Garden of Eden.

there is a strong case for a Christian veganism (Clough, 2017; Covey, 2021), but in the absence of empirical research in the British context, we do not know what this looks like.

3.1.4 Secularisation

To complete this context-setting introduction, it must be noted that each faith can and does have its own secular cultural identities. Thus, being Muslim, Jewish, or Christian, not only conveys religious meanings that relate to religious laws, rituals, and practices, but it also conveys cultural meanings which may relate to a shared cultural or ethnic identity. This is particularly true for Jews, who do not associate Jewish identity solely with the religion of Judaism, but also, and indeed separately, with genetics, culture, ethnicity, and more (Glenn and Sokoloff, 2010:4). Where Muslims are concerned, non-practising Muslims in the West who lead very secular and irreligious lives may opt to identify as “cultural Muslims”, indicative of both an ethnic identity which is connected to a Muslim majority country and a lack of religiosity (Yilmaz, 2023:633). Further, with secularisation on the rise in Britain (Berger et al., 2008:9), expressions of Christian identity may also be more cultural, for example identifying as Christian as it is the religion one was raised with, but neither having strength in belief (Voas and Crockett, 2005:18), nor belonging to a church (p.24).

3.2 Methodology

I am interested in lived experience, as well as the processes involved in decision-making, so the theories I am working with have informed my methodological choices. In this study, my ontological assumption of reality is relativist, in that I accept that reality is multiple and dependent upon those interpreting it (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:110), which in this case, are my participants. Although, some elements of the perceived reality may be shared (p.110), harking back to Bourdieu’s (1990a) concept of habitus. As such, this research is based on a social-constructivist paradigm, since both the vegan experience and the underpinning beliefs and values may be perceived differently by different people, may change over time, and may differ according to the relational context (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:113); this connects to the theories on reflexivity (Beck, 1994) and individualisation (Giddens, 1994). To implement this social-constructivist paradigm, I adopt an interpretivist epistemology, as I am interested in making sense of my participants’ own constructions of their experiences; the knowledge contributed by this study is thus based on understanding interpretations and meanings that are not directly observable (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012:46). To generate this knowledge, I use a qualitative methodological approach, employing mixed qualitative methods, which is explored in detail in Section 3.3.3.

Studies exploring religion often use social-constructivist and interpretivist methodologies. The study of religious practices can often be extremely complex, since individuals each hold agency to interpret and perform teachings in different ways (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012:46). This is best understood through the lived religion methodological approach, which separates the actual everyday experience of religious individuals from prescribed religious beliefs and practices (McGuire, 2008:12); in so doing, it explores both how religion is interpreted and practiced by individuals and how it is experienced in different situations (Knibbe and Kupari, 2020:159). Orsi (2003:172), one of the earliest proponents of the lived religion approach, explains that the study of lived religion asks key questions, such as how do people make sense of religion and how are individuals “shaped by the worlds they are making as they make these worlds”? In this way, it emphasises the diverse and constantly changing network of beliefs, practices, identities, and experiences (McGuire, 2008:185) which occur at the individual level (p.12). This suggests that individualisation plays a central role in enabling a person to reconfigure their religious practices to make them compatible with everyday life (Jeldtoft, 2011:1144). The most useful way for understanding the various practices, perceptions, and behaviours therefore is interpretivism (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:62).

Such methodologies are also widely used in studies exploring veganism and other food and lifestyle practices, with ethnographic methods and interviews being particular favourites. Ethnographies appear to be the dominant approach when a whole community is being studied, as in the case of Sered’s (2021) study of Kurdish women and the intersection between religious sensibilities and gendered food preparation practices, Rouse and Hoskins’s (2004) study on African American Sunni Muslims and the importance of soul food to them, and Markowitz and Avieli’s (2022) study exploring the vegan diet and daily practices of the African Hebrew Israelite Community in Israel. When individuals are being studied however, for example vegans who are usually the minority in society, interviews tend to be the favoured method, for example Twine’s (2014) study on vegan food practices, Paxman’s (2021) exploration of vegan identity management techniques and food practices, and Oliver’s (2023a) study of vegan men’s consumption of mock meats. On the whole, interpretivist qualitative techniques are widely employed in studies exploring food and lifestyle practices, since it is through practices that meaning is often situated and performed (Joose and Marshall, 2020:610). Additionally, such methods allow for a greater focus on materiality (p.612), capturing more fully the rich diversity of practices and experiences (p.611).

I am thus critically engaging with methodologies for studying lived religious and vegan experience, alongside the reflexive expression of beliefs and identity. I derive insights from the aforementioned studies and their methodological choices, leading me to adopt an interpretivist epistemology, which seeks to achieve an in-depth understanding and is widely argued to be the

best approach for exploring experiences (Hunter and Ainlay, 1986:3; Lichtman, 2014:12), actions, culture (Benton and Craib, 2011:234), and religion (Geertz, 1973:14; Wuthnow, 1986:121). As such, it is a valuable tool for social scientists as it not only offers insights into the beliefs and meanings that inform and shape actions and behaviours in society (Hay, 2011:172), but it also enables the researcher to extract these values and beliefs, which oftentimes are constructed at a level deeper than individual consciousness (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012:46). This complexity requires the researcher to unpick such ideas through interpretation (Hunter and Ainlay, 1986:3). Giddens's (1984:284) "double hermeneutic" describes how in social research, there are in fact two processes of interpretation: firstly, the social actor interprets the field of study to create their own understanding of what the everyday expectations of social life are, and secondly, the researcher interprets what the research participants share with them. In essence, the research becomes a co-construction between researcher and participant (Rapley, 2001:306), since no empirical data can be considered untouched by researchers (Silverman, 2007:54).

There are some drawbacks to interpretivism however, but I do not consider them to be particularly problematic in my own research. Qualitative research is sometimes criticised in the academic world for its lack of generalisability (Flick, 2014:34; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012:48), however generalisability is not my objective in this research. Rather, I strive to explore contextuality and attain knowledge related to meaning and experiences (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012:48), since any experience is valid in its own right and does not need to be generalisable for it to be worthy of academic enquiry. Another criticism of interpretivism is the risk of bias, misunderstanding, or misinterpretation, as language can often be ambiguous and meanings can be contested (Edwards and Holland, 2013:93). Furthermore, since the researcher reports what they *think* these meanings mean (Geertz, 1973:14), inaccuracies can easily occur (p.15). Qualitative researchers respond however by emphasising the need for researcher reflexivity and positionality for overcoming bias (O'Reilly and Kiyimba, 2015:101), which I provide at the end of this chapter in 3.5 Positionality and Reflections.

3.3 Research Design

I conducted this research in two stages: a pilot study (hereafter referred to as Stage 1) in Spring 2021 with the Muslim participants, and the remainder of the study (hereafter referred to as Stage 2) in Summer and Autumn 2021 with the Christian and Jewish participants. This research was conducted during the coronavirus pandemic, when the UK was still subject to numerous restrictions and measures. As such, I was limited in how I could carry out this study, but nevertheless made the most of the circumstances and constraints, working within them very

well. I chose to study the Muslim vegans first as Ramadan was fast approaching (April 2021) and because Islam was the religion I was most familiar with; I am a Muslim vegan myself, and I had already conducted a similar study with Muslim vegans for my Masters dissertation (Atayee-Bennett, 2019). The pilot study enabled me to test out my research methods and better prepare for Stage 2. I achieved considerable success with the group of Muslim vegans, so I only made minor changes in the second study with Jews and Christians, which I discuss later in this chapter.

In terms of ethics approval, I submitted two applications, one for Stage 1 and one for Stage 2, and an amendment to add virtual participant observation into Study 1, as I had not included this in my initial ethics application. Appendix A shows the Participant Information Sheets and Appendix B shows the Consent Forms. Each document was largely the same for each group, with only minor differences, namely the insertion of the relevant religious identity.

3.3.1 Sampling

The number of research participants totalled 36, comprising 12 Muslim vegans, 12 Jewish vegans, and 12 Christian vegans. I chose to recruit 12 participants from each religion as interviews are time consuming (Mason, 2018:135) so a large number would not have been manageable. I felt that 36 interviews in total would not only be manageable but would also be sufficient for giving me significant insight into my research topic.

When recruiting participants, I set the following criteria: participants must identify as vegan, identify as either Muslim, Jewish, or Christian, be over the age of 18, live in the UK, and have done so for five or more years. I focused on identification rather than a set list of actions or behaviours however, as I did not want to define what veganism was or was not, since, as I outline in my Literature Review, there are many interpretations of what veganism is. All agree that it involves following a plant-based diet however, so I felt identifying as vegan would be sufficient for getting the data I needed. I also felt that the word 'vegan' would attract more people who were ethically minded and for whom veganism was a lifestyle, versus 'plant-based' which is often associated more so with diet, and which permits the occasional consumption of animal-derived foods (North et al., 2021:6).

Similarly, where religion was concerned, I focused on self-identification, rather than a set list of actions, behaviours, or beliefs, as studies demonstrate that religious identity is being reshaped and reinterpreted in late modernity, in line with rising instances of individualisation and reflexive habituses (Karlsson Minganti, 2010; Shepherd, 2010). I had assumed that focusing on self-identification where religious identity was concerned would be sufficient, and whilst this was the case for Christians and Muslims, I found that my study attracted a small number of Jews

who strongly identified as Jewish, but not in a religious sense. I discuss this more in 3.5 Positionality and Reflections. Nevertheless, all participants who volunteered for the study identified with one of the Abrahamic faiths, either religiously or culturally; this remains in alignment with my research questions, so I left it to the participants to interpret for themselves what it means to be Jewish, Muslim, or Christian.

Whilst my participants are people who have a set of practices and a way of talking about those practices, and who can thus be categorised as *faith vegans*, I wish to emphasise that I have not imposed a label on them; rather, they themselves have self-identified as meeting the criteria for this study and volunteered to participate. So, whilst not all participants shared a similar level of religiosity, they have still self-identified as belonging to one of the faith groups being studied. I therefore include everyone in my discussions, regardless of how well they fit in with the faith vegan label, as they all contribute to my findings in varying ways.

I only interviewed individuals over the age of 18, for two reasons. First, to keep ethical requirements as simple as possible, and second, due to the assumption that adults are more likely to adopt lifestyle changes than minors, however there are media reports exploring veganism among teenagers that dispel this assumption (Duncan, 2021; Marsh, 2016). I decided to focus on the British context only, rather than the global context, as this enabled me to maintain a consistent focus where societal influences were concerned and ensured that all my participants lived in a shared field (Bourdieu, 1983). A minimum level of consistency is recommended in qualitative research as it improves the quality and robustness of the research data (Flick, 2007:64), so I added an extra criterion that participants had to have lived in the UK for at least five years, so as to ensure that they had had sufficient interaction with the British context.

My understanding of the human in this research takes research participants to be evaluative, ethically minded for a variety of reasons, concerned with working within religious teachings and principles, and remaining respectful of religious and/or cultural norms. This aligns with my theoretical framework which draws on theories relating to reflexive religiosity, ethical reasoning, and reflexive dispositions (Beck, 2010; Sayer, 2011; Sweetman, 2003).

In Table 3.1 I provide a list of my participants and their key attributes. In total I recruited seven Muslim women and five Muslim men, six Jewish women and six Jewish men, and seven Christian women and five Christian men, so I largely maintained a gender balance. Where religion is concerned, it is worth noting that most participants identified mainly with the religion in general but when probed would name a denomination or sect, however this was not a significant part of their identity. When I asked Liam and Hassan how they self-identify religiously, however, they answered with a subgroup straight away: Quaker and Shia Muslim,

respectively. In terms of ethnic identity, Muslim participants were largely either South Asian or white converts, Jewish participants were all Ashkenazi but varied ethnically, with White British, North American, South African, and Eastern European reported, and Christian vegans were all white, with most from Britain, but a few from the US and Europe. The ethnic identity column lists what participants reported. Participants were also spread across the UK, with considerable geographical variation among the Muslims and Christians, whereas the Jewish participants were largely concentrated around areas with a large Jewish diasporic population. I did not ask participants whether they identified with a particular class, although some did specifically refer to themselves as middle class. Nevertheless, I was able to infer class from other information they shared with me, such as education level and occupation. Resultingly, I regard at least 34 of the participants to be middle class; the remaining two are likely working class. Where education level is concerned, at least 33 of the participants were university educated, with 14 educated to postgraduate level, and six either working towards or having already completed a doctorate. There was thus a high level of academic engagement within my sample.

Pseudonym	Religion	Gender	Age Group	Ethnic Identity	Vegan For
Sara	Muslim	Female	20s	White European	2 years
Mohammad	Muslim	Male	40s	White British	6 years
Laila	Muslim	Female	20s	South Asian	1 year
Nadia	Muslim	Female	20s	South Asian	3 years
Maryam	Muslim	Female	20s	Middle Eastern	5 years
Zeinab	Muslim	Female	30s	South Asian	16 years
Ibrahim	Muslim	Male	50s	White British	37 years
Kareem	Muslim	Male	20s	Mixed (White British/ Irish)	6 years
Aaliyah	Muslim	Female	20s	South Asian	2 years
Farah	Muslim	Female	30s	Mixed (White British/ South Asian)	4 years
Zakir	Muslim	Male	30s	Arab	4.5 years
Hassan	Muslim	Male	30s	Middle Eastern	7 years
Hannah	Jewish	Female	30s	White Other/ Ashkenazi	13 years

Pseudonym	Religion	Gender	Age Group	Ethnic Identity	Vegan For
Shira	Jewish	Female	20s	White Other	6.5 years
Daniel	Jewish	Male	40s	Other	1 year 7 months
Jacob	Jewish	Male	50s	White British	4 years
Leah	Jewish	Female	50s	White British	4 years
Ari	Jewish	Male	20s	White European/ Ashkenazi	7 years
Elijah	Jewish	Male	20s	Ashkenazi	4 years
Isaac	Jewish	Male	20s	White Other	9 years
Ethan	Jewish	Male	30s	White Other	7 years
Judith	Jewish	Female	30s	White Other	15 years
Tamara	Jewish	Female	40s	Ashkenazi	2 years
Maya	Jewish	Female	20s	White Other	6 years
Sam	Christian	Male	20s	White British	1 year
Beth	Christian	Female	40s	White British	5 years
Kate	Christian	Female	20s	White British	2 years
Nicola	Christian	Female	40s	White Other	7 years
Louis	Christian	Male	40s	White European	7 years
Liam	Christian	Male	40s	White Irish	8 years
Michelle	Christian	Female	40s	White British	17 years
Malcolm	Christian	Male	40s	Mixed (White British/ Irish)	5 years
Damian	Christian	Male	30s	White European	7 years
Amy	Christian	Female	40s	White British	4.5 years
Joanne	Christian	Female	40s	White British	23 years
Jessica	Christian	Female	30s	White British	4 years

Table 3.1 A list of research participants and key attributes

Stage 1

To identify participants, I used purposive sampling. This involves selecting individuals with particular factors (Neuman, 2014:274); in my case this was my list of criteria as I needed to ensure research participants would be able to inform my research. Purposive sampling produces highly insightful data (p.273), however, such samples cannot be said to be representative of the wider population (p.274); this is rarely the objective of qualitative research anyway (Flick, 2014:176).

Where recruitment was concerned, I employed convenience sampling, which as its name suggests, is where participants are recruited in an easy and convenient manner (Neuman, 2014:273). I made considerable use of social media in my recruitment stage, as this was a convenient way to access my target population, given the prevalence of vegan groups online. During this stage, I posted in the Facebook Group, *Vegan Muslim Community*, and through this I recruited six participants. I also posted on my personal Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn profiles and asked anyone who might be interested to email me. In all of my recruitment posts, my criteria were made very clear. This helped me to find a further two Muslim vegans. I also received an email from another Muslim vegan, who said they had seen my research advertised online, but it was not clear whether they had seen it in a Facebook group or on my own personal social media profiles. The images used in my recruitment posts are shown in Appendix C.

To help me recruit the remaining research participants, I made use of snowball sampling, which is where research participants or other contacts share the research on the researcher's behalf and ultimately refer additional participants to the research study (Browne, 2005; Neuman, 2014:275). Leighton et al. (2021:38) speak of the benefits of combining snowball sampling with social media as it helps to reach a wider audience in a shorter space of time. As I made considerable use of social media during the recruitment stage, I also benefitted from this approach in my own study. Various contacts shared my posts, tagged people in them, or forwarded them to others and through this additional support, I found my final three Muslim vegan participants.

Stage 2

To identify Jewish and Christian participants, I again made use of purposive sampling (Neuman, 2014:274). I had hoped to achieve a similar level of success in Stage 2 as I had achieved with the Muslim groups, so I adopted the same recruitment strategies as those in Stage 1, beginning again with convenience sampling (Neuman, 2014:273). I posted in some Jewish and Christian Facebook groups, for example the *Jewish Vegan Society - JVS* and *Christian Vegans UK* groups. I

only found one Jewish vegan and one Christian vegan through these, however. I also emailed the Jewish Vegetarian Society who advertised my research on my behalf, but again only found one Jewish vegan. Whilst several people did enquire after having seen my research advertised in these spaces, they ultimately decided not to participate as they felt the diary would be too time intensive for them. I opted instead therefore to post in localised vegan groups that were more secular, such as *London Vegans*, *Vegan Southampton*, and *Vegan Scotland*, among others, and through this I found four Jewish vegans and four Christian vegans. The images used in my recruitment posts are shown in Appendix C.

As with Stage 1, I also posted on my personal social media accounts; through this approach, I found two Jewish vegans and three Christian vegans. I also received emails from a further three Jewish vegans, but as with Stage 1, it was not clear where exactly they had seen my research advertised. I was also fortunate to find one Christian vegan through networking at university. To find my final Jewish vegan participant and my final three Christian vegan participants, I made use of snowball sampling (Neuman, 2014:275), whereby my contacts or participants themselves referred other people to the study.

3.3.2 Data Collection

In this study I made use of multiple qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, social media-based diary methods, and virtual participant observation.

3.3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

I conducted 36 semi-structured interviews in total. The Muslim interviews took place during March and April 2021, the Christian interviews took place between June and October 2021, and the Jewish interviews took place between June and November 2021. The interviews tended to last between 60 and 90 minutes, however the shortest was 40 minutes and the longest was 2 hours 25 minutes. All of the interviews were conducted online, using either Microsoft Teams or Zoom, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and were recorded using the in-built recording software that these platforms offer. I did have a couple of minor connectivity issues, but this was not particularly disruptive and did not affect the quality of the interviews overall.

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews as I wanted to ensure specific topics and questions were discussed (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:31); the interviews were particularly insightful for understanding my participants' habituses (Bourdieu, 1990a), their ethics and values (Sayer, 2011), and the reflexive processes they engaged in linked to both religiosity (Beck, 2010) and everyday life (Sweetman, 2003). I formulated three interview guides with questions specific to each religion, see Appendix D, and I worked through the relevant guide in each interview but at

times did leave out questions if they had already been answered or if I had already ascertained they would not be relevant. Similarly, I also asked new questions in response to what my participants told me, and thus engaged in probing to obtain further information and uncover hidden meanings (p.140). Probing also helped to improve rapport and the quality of communication between the participant and myself (Silverman, 2006:110). The questions were open and exploratory, so that I could explore the various topics in-depth (Legard et al, 2003:14; May, 2011:134) and obtain rich data (Oppenheim, 1992:81). Since my participants answered the questions in their own words (May, 2011:135), I gained insight into their personal perspectives (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015:27) and could better explore their ideas and feelings (Lichtman, 2014:246).

The interviews also enabled me to explore events that I had not personally experienced before, for example specific experiences (Edwards and Holland, 2013:90) and practices in significant detail (Hitchings, 2012:65). This is especially valuable for themes which are often invisible in society (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:3-5), such as religion and veganism. Semi-structured interviews were therefore an extremely useful method as they allowed me to discuss themes relevant to my research questions, specifically the intersections between veganism and religion and the becoming journey, whilst also offering my participants the opportunity to direct the conversation (p.31). Moreover, interviews were a practical option, given the time and resources available to me (Silverman, 2006:113).

Whilst interviews are an excellent qualitative method, they do also have some limitations. As they are time-consuming to conduct, transcribe, and analyse (Mason, 2018:187), it is not possible to conduct lots of interviews, so it is common to have small sample sizes (Creswell, 2015:5). However, given my study's focus on individual experience, I do not regard a smaller sample size to be a major limitation. Bias is also a risk, for example if a participant did not feel comfortable telling the truth, whether this was due to poor rapport (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:79), cultural differences between the researcher and researched (p.76), or the fear of judgement, as in the case of social desirability bias, where participants present their reality in a way that they deem to be more socially acceptable, but which is not wholly accurate (Bergen and Labonté, 2020:783). I feel I built good rapport with my participants however, with many telling me that I was a friendly and approachable individual and that they were pleased to have met me. Furthermore, I also made it known that I was religious and vegan, so as to put my participants at ease that I was in some way similar to them. For this reason, I feel I limited these risks as much as I possibly could have by being friendly, open, and understanding at all times.

A further risk is misrepresentation. The researcher could misunderstand the language used or meanings described (Edwards and Holland, 2013:93), whilst interviewees could recount an

event inaccurately, either due to forgetfulness or being ignorant of certain circumstances (May, 2011:158). Further, inaccurate answers could result from the participant not having an existing opinion on the topic. In this case, answers given would have been formed during the interview and would quite often be the first thing that came to mind; such answers may not be entirely reliable therefore (Peek and Fothergill, 2009:47). Nevertheless, this could equally be understood as a co-construction between the researcher and participant (Rapley, 2001:306), whereby I, as the researcher, provide a valuable space for my participants to reflect, something which they may not have in their everyday lives. Given the existence of these limitations, I considered it important to also employ other methods which would build on the interviews and make my data more robust and credible.

3.3.2.2 Diary Methods

To better examine everyday practices and eliminate the risk of inaccuracies as previously discussed, I decided to engage in diary methods over a period of around three months. I opted to conduct the diaries in a group setting so as to also benefit from group discussions, as well as transform the group into a support group. In this way, participants can also encourage each other to contribute more (Tinkler, 2013:151), which is valuable since some studies have suggested difficulty with engagement where personal diaries are concerned (Alaszewski, 2006:67). I therefore decided to make use of social media platforms, namely WhatsApp and Facebook, and thus settled on social media-based diaries. This method was particularly insightful for exploring my participants' lived religious and vegan experiences, as well as paint a more accurate picture of their habitus(es) (Bourdieu, 1990a), the field(s) in which they were situated (Bourdieu, 1983), and the capital they had accumulated (Bourdieu, 1986).

Stage 1

The Muslim diary group ran from 12 April until 25 July 2021 and captured the whole of Ramadan²³, Eid-ul-Fitr²⁴ and Eid-al-Adha²⁵. This group ran slightly longer than three months, as Eid-al-Adha fell on 20 or 21 July, depending on which moonsighting authority one follows, so I decided to extend the group a couple of weeks so I could capture this religious experience too. I was not sure whether to conduct the group on WhatsApp or Facebook, so I gave my participants the choice of which to join. Six joined the Facebook group and ten joined the WhatsApp group, with four of those being in both groups. Whilst a couple of participants regularly posted in the Facebook group, there was little interaction, and it was clear early on that there was more

²³ The ninth month of the Islamic calendar where Muslims fast from dawn until sunset.

²⁴ Literally the Festival of Breaking the Fast. This festival marks the end of Ramadan.

²⁵ Literally the Festival of Sacrifice. On this festival, a livestock animal is typically sacrificed.

engagement in the WhatsApp group. The WhatsApp group was also easier to transcribe, as the ordering of posts would move around on Facebook depending on when interactions occurred or comments were added.

Prior to starting the diaries, I sent a guidance document, see Appendix E, to all of the participants with a list of ideas, so they knew what was expected of them (Alaszewski, 2006:75). I also suggested participants keep a meal diary as this form of data collection facilitates the recording of empirical data in the absence of the researcher but can also serve as a reflective prompt for the participant (Joose and Marshall, 2020:619). Only one Muslim participant completed this for me over the space of two weeks, however.

Stage 2

The Jewish and Christian diary groups were conducted over the summer and autumn and ran for three months. The Christian group ran from 19 July until 22 October 2021, whilst the Jewish group ran from 16 August until 19 November 2021 and covered the High Holy Days, including Rosh Hashanah²⁶ and Yom Kippur²⁷. The Christian group was the only group that did not fall over a major religious holiday and for this reason, I resumed it from 1 December until 31 December 2021, with the permission and agreement of participants, in order to capture the Christmas vegan experience too.

Due to the poor engagement in the Facebook group in Stage 1, I decided not to offer the Jewish and Christian participants a choice and instead stated that the diary group would be conducted on WhatsApp, and only if they had objections to joining, could they refrain from doing so. One Christian participant asked to be discounted for social anxiety reasons; instead, she kept a private diary, which she sent to me at the end of the diary period. Similarly, only one Jewish participant asked to be discounted due to time constraints; as such, he chose not to keep a private diary. Moreover, as I had had some difficulty recruiting Jewish participants, some were only able to contribute to the group for one or two months, as opposed to the full three months, due to joining the study after the diary group had started, making their contribution limited. As with Stage 1, I shared a guidance document with all participants prior to launching the diary groups; an example is given in Appendix E. In terms of the meal diary, three Christians completed a meal diary for the full three months, whilst one Jew recorded their meals in the diary group each week for the full three months as well.

²⁶ Jewish New Year celebrated in September or October.

²⁷ Jewish Day of Atonement celebrated in September or October.

There are many benefits to conducting diary methods. Where diaries are conducted over a set period of time, they offer more accurate insight into daily life (Hyers, 2018:150), so it is possible to gather data relating to practices, activities and feelings (Alaszewski, 2006:112; Cucu-Oancea, 2013:235), which informed my third research question on negotiating practices, in particular. Diary methods are also excellent for overcoming the memory problems which can arise during interviews (Alaszewski, 2006:113). This is because participants can share data in real time, which is especially useful for repetitive behaviours like meals, since diaries provide the opportunity to capture lots of valuable data that otherwise would not be easy to track (Hyers, 2018:151). This all helps to increase accuracy, thus providing more reliable data (Cucu-Oancea, 2013:235). Many participants also opted to share photos in the diary groups, which gave me excellent insight into their everyday lives as it was an easy way for them to present information to me (Tinkler, 2013:150). Furthermore, my diary groups were not particularly intrusive (Hyers, 2018:151), which may have helped my participants to engage more willingly with them.

A common limitation of diary methods is the possibility for high costs (Alaszewski, 2006:114; Cucu-Oancea, 2013:235), however I avoided this by choosing to conduct the diaries on WhatsApp and Facebook, which are free and familiar platforms. All groups were closed and private, so only accessible to participants, whilst data on WhatsApp is automatically encrypted, adding an extra layer of security (WhatsApp, no date). Another limitation is finding individuals who are willing and able to keep a diary in the format presented (Alaszewski, 2006:114); I experienced difficulty in recruiting Jewish vegans for this reason. Of the participants who do consent to taking part, it is likely they will not have the habit of keeping a diary, so persuading them and reminding them to contribute can be a challenge (p.67). When the groups started to get quiet and no posts had been shared for a few days, I posted a reminder of either how much time was left or a list of ideas of things to share; this often prompted a couple of new posts from participants. I found that some participants posted diary entries very regularly, whilst others posted very little at all. For diaries to be successful therefore, they rely on diarists to be self-disciplined or for the researcher to send regular reminders (Hyers, 2018:152).

As with interviews and perhaps more so, there is also a risk of social desirability bias, as participants may share specific thoughts and actions that they feel will be accepted in the group, yet withhold valuable information or alter the truth if they feel it would not be well received (Bergen and Labonté, 2020:783). Similarly, diarists could be selective with what they share, choosing only to post things that they *think* the researcher wants (Hyers, 2018:152), so there is a possibility of missing out on valuable information relevant to the research. This leads me on to my final, albeit optional, data collection method, virtual participant observation.

3.3.2.3 Virtual Participant Observation

The interviews and diaries were compulsory aspects of my research, whereas virtual participant observation was optional, due to it being a late addition to my research design. I had already recruited all the Muslim participants and completed their interviews when I decided to add virtual participant observation, so it was too late to make this method compulsory for them. I therefore decided to make it optional for everyone. For this reason, I conducted much less participant observation than I did of the other methods. Nevertheless, I still gathered some valuable data which provided further insight into the daily lives of my participants, since participant observation is ideal for exploratory studies (Jorgensen, 1989:13). As with the diaries, virtual participant observation offered excellent insight into my participants' habitus (Bourdieu, 1990a), field (Bourdieu, 1983), and capital (Bourdieu, 1986), and ultimately their lived vegan experience.

Ordinarily, participant observation involves participating in the participants' lives on a daily basis over a significant period of time (O'Reilly, 2012:113), however this, by its nature, is intrusive and time intensive (Kozinets, 2010:55). As I had already obtained extensive data from the interviews and diaries, and due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, I therefore chose to conduct online calls, using WhatsApp video calls and Microsoft Teams, since visual methods like this can add depth to other findings (O'Connell, 2013:44). I did not record these calls, rather I took copious notes while the participants either gave me a cooking demonstration or a tour of their kitchen, or in some cases both during the same call. My participants did most of the talking, however I did ask several questions for clarification or probing purposes (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:140). I was conscious of the need to write notes on as much as possible, but especially anything that would be relevant to my research (O'Reilly, 2012:101).

I conducted six online calls in total, two with Muslim vegans, two with Jewish vegans, and two with Christian vegans. The calls lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour 20 minutes in length. In Twine's (2018) research exploring vegan eating practices, he used participant observation and interviews to gather data. He explains that where regular practice is concerned, it is common for actions to become routinised and thus performed at the unconscious level. Where this is the case, it is likely participants will not report the reasons behind such actions to the researcher, as they may have lost awareness of what those reasons were (p.170). Roe (2006:117) also made use of visual methods, specifically video diaries, to explore the embodied material relationships between individuals and their foodstuff. The visual nature of the research thus enriched both other data and the commentary that the participants themselves offered during the video (p.116). Virtual participant observation was thus the ideal method for bringing all my data

together and identifying key points that my participants had not reported in the interviews or diaries.

I found these ethnographic calls to be extremely insightful for observing and better understanding the spaces where daily routines took place (Wills et al., 2016:472), which in my study was predominately the kitchen. In the case of the cooking demonstrations, I had the opportunity to observe a practice in action and get a sense of what it was like from the participant's own perspective (Kusenbach, 2003:469), as well as learn about the significance of certain foods in my participants' daily lives. Some themes seemed especially prominent in the ethnographies, yet they had not been emphasised by the same participants in the other data collection methods; examples include ethical consumption and self-sufficiency practices, which are explored in Section 6.4. This method therefore proved useful for highlighting key topics which, as Twine (2018:170) explains, could have existed at the unconscious level, so the participants did not think to report them as extensively elsewhere. In the case of the kitchen tours, I learnt about staple foods and favourite treats, as well as foods that were purchased but rarely consumed, so the setting directed the conversation. This is what Joose and Marshall (2020:613) refer to as a "fridge story", whereby the participant conducting the tour talks about the foods in their kitchen spaces. Wills et al. (2016:478) also made use of cooking demonstrations and kitchen tours in their study, explaining that conducting research in this way helped to reveal the entanglements that take place in the kitchen and offer insight into the practices that the participants could not easily put into words in the interviews (p.472). In a couple of the tours, my participants spoke about what it was like to share food preparation spaces with non-vegans; virtual participant observation thus created the space to discuss topics that might not have come up in either the interviews or the diaries (p.470). This method is also useful for overcoming bias that might result in other methods, since there is no opportunity for participants to report practices differently as the researcher is watching in real time (O'Connell, 2013:32).

As participant observation was an optional part of my research, only a few participants expressed a willingness to partake in this. Consequently, I had limited data and could not triangulate my findings with all participants' data. Additionally, there was only so much data I could record during the short call, so the limits on my time limited my findings. Also, where I did not record the calls and instead relied on notetaking, the onus was on me to make sufficient notes for analysis (O'Reilly, 2012:101). A further limitation was the virtual nature of the research; I was limited by what was visible on the computer screen and so was not fully immersed into the setting as one would be with face-to-face participant observation (Flick, 2014:296). By being at a distance, I was also unable to practice all the "arts of noticing" (Tsing, 2015:37), specifically I was unable to smell, touch, or taste the foods being shown to me. Nevertheless, the inclusion of

virtual participant observation in this study offered further insight into the topic at hand and provided me with a further opportunity to triangulate my findings, an opportunity I would not have had, had I not employed this method.

3.3.3 Multiple Qualitative Methods

I opted to use multiple qualitative methods, as multiple methods offer more insight than one single method. This is because each method can focus on different aspects of the research thus painting a more holistic picture (O'Reilly and Kiyimba, 2015:97). This also achieves various additional benefits including greater completeness, expansion, and validity (Bryman, 2006:105-107), which are particularly useful given the understudied nature of my research topic. Multiple methods also enable the researcher to engage in triangulation, whereby various data sources are combined to produce additional knowledge (Moran-Ellis et al, 2006:47) and improve validity (Hammersley, 2008:23). Triangulation can also be a valuable tool for highlighting how experiences differ (p.25).

Where studies on food practices in particular are concerned, Joose and Marshall (2020:610) recommend combining qualitative methods and emphasise the benefits of using a variety of interactive methods, explaining that these allow material objects and foods to steer the conversation more so than the researcher, enabling new topics and discussions to arise (p.612). By using multiple qualitative methods and triangulating my findings therefore, I gathered robust data which benefits from accuracy, richness, validity, and credibility (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:60), and was thus extremely informative for answering my research questions.

I felt that the interviews were most useful for understanding the various influences at play in my participants' lives, such as reflexivity (Beck, 2010; Sweetman, 2003), as well as their perceptions, beliefs, and values on particular topics (Sayer, 2011); this was particularly relevant for my first two research questions. The diaries shed light on the everyday and helped to paint a detailed picture of my participants' habitus (Bourdieu, 1990a), field (Bourdieu, 1983), and capital (Bourdieu, 1986). As such, the diaries provided valuable insight into everyday practices, as well as a snapshot of ritual experiences, where the religious festivals were concerned, assisting me in answering the third research question. The virtual participant observation gave me the opportunity to observe practices in action (Bourdieu, 1990a) and also helped to highlight particular things that were mentioned in the interviews, as well as emphasise important points that the participants had perhaps overlooked or failed to recognise as important in other methods. This too helped to answer the third research question. These three methods together produced 1,989 pages of research data, comprised of over 665,000 words and 959 photos,

thereby providing an excellent illustration of the experiences of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans in the UK.

3.4 Data Analysis

As I explained in 3.2 Methodology, I implemented a social-constructivist paradigm through the adoption of an interpretivist epistemology, which was informed by qualitative methodologies and the lived religion methodological approach. I therefore drew on interpretivist analysis techniques to analyse my data. I recorded the interviews using the in-built software provided by both Microsoft Teams and Zoom, and then used these recordings to transcribe the interviews. This produced 36 written transcripts ready for analysis. I also transcribed each of the diary groups and had a further set of transcripts relating to those. Where the virtual participant observations were concerned, I jotted field notes for each, before typing these up into individual Microsoft Word documents. Further, in all documents, I used pseudonyms so as to protect the identity of my participants from the outset (Wiles, 2013:41).

To analyse my data, I used thematic analysis. I began by uploading my transcripts and field notes to NVivo, before conducting thematic coding, which identifies and analyses patterns in a data set facilitating interpretation (O'Reilly and Kiyimba, 2015:75); this enabled me to identify key themes in my research (Barbour, 2008:217; Gibbs, 2007:38). I started with deductive, or concept-driven, coding where I identified codes based on my interview questions, as well as the key theories and concepts that I had read about in the literature (Gibbs, 2007:44; Saldaña, 2021:40). I then advanced my coding frame by including an element of inductive, or data-driven, coding where the data itself informs the codes through the emergence of other themes (Gibbs, 2007:45; Saldaña, 2021:41). Coding is an essential first stage in thematic analysis as it enables the researcher to make comparisons, identify patterns, and produce explanations (p.78). Above all, coding facilitates data retrieval and makes the process of analysis much simpler and straight-forward (Gibbs, 2007:48; Rubin and Rubin, 2012:192). I focused predominantly on descriptive coding which summarised the topic being discussed or referred to (Saldaña, 2021:134), attribute coding which recorded participants' key attributes (p.112), emotion coding which recorded participants' emotions and feelings (p.160), and values coding which recorded participants' values, beliefs, and attitudes (p.167). This produced a long list of codes, which I categorically themed, producing a more manageable coding frame.

I had ten top-level code categories: community, consumption practices, emotions, food, identity, misc., religion, the body and beyond, towards ethics and interpretation, and veganism. Within these ten codes I had a further 330 subcodes which in some cases were up to four levels deep with sub-subcodes and sub-sub-subcodes. My coding frame is outlined in Appendix F.

This was quite a messy process, since I attempted a coding frame quite early on, beginning with food, identity, religion, and veganism as key codes and gradually building out from there. As I came across new categories, I made decisions as to whether they needed to be a new top-level code or whether they were best placed under one of the already existing top-level codes or subcodes. Due to the large number of (sub)codes, there is some overlap in categories, but I sought to be as specific as possible and ensure references were coded under all relevant codes to facilitate data recall and effective organisation.

Once I had coded all the transcripts, I then produced a one-page visual display for each participant (Saldaña, 2021:347); see Appendix G for the template I created. This recorded key attributes, participants' values, participants' emotions, knowledge that participants drew upon, key themes in the interviews, diaries, and if applicable, virtual participant observation calls, and a few paragraphs summarising their background and a brief commentary on each of the key themes. These one-page visual displays proved to be a valuable resource as I could easily revisit participants' data and quickly compare experiences. They also highlighted common themes across the sample.

I also produced a series of matrices (Saldaña, 2021:347), including community membership, challenges faced, self-identity concepts, and motivation, among others, both on Microsoft Word and Excel, as well as summaries relating to each diary group and the virtual participant observation calls. See Appendix H for an example of the networks and communities matrix. Throughout the data analysis process, I also kept analytic memos to help me think through my themes and concepts (p.351), thereby clarifying my understanding and assisting me in reaching my research conclusions. All in all, I sought to sort my data, reduce it into manageable themes, and produce analytical arguments that advance the current state of scholarship (Rennstam and Wästerfors, 2018).

To transform my data from a complex set of codes and notes into the data chapters that follow, I sought to organise my data in different ways. My detailed coding frame helped me to review and recall interesting themes, whilst the participant profiles helped me to get a feel for who my participants are and what is important to them. From here, I could see similarities emerging which became themes that I decided to pursue. The matrices also helped me to identify themes; in some of them I used colour coding to help themes become more visually apparent. For example, in the networks and communities matrix, shown in Appendix H, I used a traffic light system, where membership of a community which was supportive of veganism was in green, membership of a community which was unsupportive of veganism was in yellow, and a lack of community was in red.

I also engaged in reflection, where I first sought to very briefly answer my research questions. This helped me to identify topics that needed to be addressed in the data chapters, for example how does one actually become a faith vegan? Where there is not much written about faith vegans, I had to make sure I covered the basics, namely a definition of faith veganism, characteristics of this new social phenomenon, and what faith vegan identity and practice look like. I also reflected on interesting themes and topics emerging from my data, as well as thought about my data in new and creative ways. This produced a fairly long list which I then merged with my concise research question answers. Next, I whittled down this list by removing repetition, and categorising ideas until I was able to pull out three distinctive topic areas and within that, three rough chapter structures. I then wrote the draft chapters, but I still had to move some sections around, as after writing, it became clear that some sections would be better placed elsewhere. After much review and rewriting, the final version was realised.

3.5 Positionality and Reflections

I am a white British woman and I regard myself a vegan of faith, having been raised in a non-practicing Christian household, before converting to Islam aged 18. I have since married a Muslim man and we have two children together. As a family, we observe Islamic, Christian (to some extent) and secular festivities. I became vegan just before my 21st birthday, so at the time of writing, have been vegan for nine years. My positionality meant that I felt very confident with my understanding of concepts discussed in the Muslim interviews, fairly confident in the Christian interviews, but less confident in the Jewish interviews. I therefore spent considerable time reading up on Judaism to advance my knowledge, but I was also fortunate to have found Jewish participants who were more than happy to give me detailed explanations to aid my learning and understanding.

One of the common criticisms of qualitative research is the risk of misunderstanding, especially if researchers misinterpret or misrepresent particular social meanings (Geertz, 1973:14). Due to my positionality, coupled with my extensive research, I felt I had sufficient knowledge to make informed interpretations of the experiences described to me by my research participants. However, being a white British convert meant that my knowledge of other cultural influences was somewhat lacking. I also do not feel particularly immersed in any one religious community, although I do attend events organised by the Hazara community in Southampton from time to time. Whilst they are hugely welcoming to me, my limited Persian language skills and social anxiety still leave me feeling like an 'other'. Thus, it was difficult for me, prior to conducting this study, to fully understand how becoming vegan would alter one's experience within the wider community and how this community might respond to an established member becoming vegan.

Being vegan, I was also very clear on the vegan experiences described to me, as well as the names of brands or organisations. I was often asked in the interviews whether I was vegan myself and when I confirmed that I was, the participants became more specific, for example naming brands or products that may be unknown to a non-vegan. I think being both religious and vegan helped to build rapport and develop trust and openness between myself and my research participants (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:76), putting them at ease to be open and honest with me (Lichtman, 2014:252). Given my links to Islam and Christianity, I feel I built the best rapport with the Muslims and Christians, however I still built rapport with my Jewish participants, as I was honest about my lack of knowledge, yet open about my enjoyment of learning about Judaism. One Jewish participant had queried my intentions before consenting to participate in the research project, as she did not want to contribute to any study that might portray Judaism in a bad light or persuade people away from it. After this conversation and my openness about being religious myself, we developed good rapport and she went on to be one of the participants who contributed the most to my study. In fact, she shared lots of information about Judaism more broadly with me to help me learn more about her understanding of the religion and the reasons behind certain rituals and customs.

Turning now to reflections, I wish to first discuss a point of concern in this research, which was instances of atheism among participants. I had expected to find some secular, non-practicing individuals, but I was surprised to learn that three of my Jewish participants actually doubted the existence of God, and instead assumed a secular cultural identity, as discussed in Section 3.1.4. When I asked about this in the interviews, it became clear that identifying as Jewish does not automatically mean one is religious. In fact, 'Jewish' can refer to a multitude of identity types, including "genetic, cultural, social, religious, physical, legal, linguistic, literary, and more" (Glenn and Sokoloff, 2010:4), making it possible for a few of my participants to identify strongly as Jewish due to the racial, historical, and social ties associated, yet at the religious level, not ascribe to the idea of there being a God. I was concerned, initially, that this would affect my study given that religion is a central focus, but upon reflection, these Jewish participants still consumed Jewish foods, observed many Jewish festivals, especially ritual meals, and engaged with the Jewish community, so food and culture still played a key part in their "Jewishness", albeit their interpretation of what made them Jewish was more along the lines of race and culture, rather than religion. Furthermore, in having been socialised as Jewish, their individual habituses and epistemological understandings of the world were still informed by Jewish values, beliefs, and principles. The participants in question were Ethan, Tamara, and Shira, all of whom reported a lack of belief in God. Ethan, having experienced antisemitism in a previous workplace, had become motivated to embrace his Jewish identity, emphasising it to others and introducing his non-Jewish girlfriend to Jewish cultural foods, as well as observing

some Jewish festivals. Tamara meanwhile regularly attends synagogue, sends her daughter to Hebrew school, and enjoys celebrating Jewish festivals and Jewish culture, whilst Shira works for a Jewish organisation, enjoys reading Jewish texts, and intends to dedicate herself more to Jewish life and practice once she gets married and starts a family. Whilst these individuals therefore doubt the existence of God, they are still very much immersed in Jewish life and are thus likely influenced by elements of faith-based lifestyle and practice. Indeed, sociologists of religion highlight believing as only one aspect of religion (Woodhead, 2011), with identity and belonging, which were evident among these participants, equally significant aspects (Day, 2011:192). Indeed, Day (2011:191-192) explains how otherwise non-religious people can “believe in belonging”, that is to say they engage in “performative belief”, whereby they bring into being a religious identity related to social belongings, despite being better described as non-religious. Thus, I opted to keep these three participants within my data set for analysis, since they evidently incorporated cultural and social forms of religion into their everyday lives.

Where methods are concerned, I found it very useful to conduct a pilot study as that helped me to test my methods and refine my interview questions in preparation for Stage 2. The interviews were extremely informative, however upon reflection, I do feel I kept them quite structured and could have allowed a little more flexibility and fluidity in the discussion. Another point to note is how the interview process may have prompted participants to think through connections that they had not previously done, which could be methodologically problematic. However, given that embodied dispositions, values, and emotions inform reasoning practices (Sayer, 2011:4), I do not feel that an absence of conscious, reflexive thought problematises my methodology, since the knowledge is already there. Through the research process, I have provided a valuable space and time for my participants to reflect, something they may not have had in their everyday lives, thereby allowing embodied understandings to be translated into conscious, reflexive thoughts.

Through the diary methods, I managed to collect far more data than I was expecting to collect. I had feared that participants would not be willing to post much and that I would be lucky to get one post a week. However, this was by no means the case, and instead I was fortunate to find many participants who willingly shared their daily practices, meals, and reflections with me. Whilst the purpose of these groups was for me to obtain research data, they also offered benefits to my research participants who appeared to use the groups for their own ends. Many asked questions, for example Jacob, who was unaware that you could buy a vegan challah, asked what other Jewish vegans did, Michelle asked how other Christians navigated the Communion wine, and Zakir asked for advice relating to the Eid sacrifice. Some used the group for inspiration, asking one another for the recipes of the meals they had photographed and shared in the group, whilst others found the group educational. Isaac, a secular Jew whose

knowledge of Judaism was limited, joined the diary group first and did the interview a couple of weeks later. He told me in the interview that the diary group was proving to be an educational experience for him, as he was learning about Jewish rituals and practices that he had not heard of before.

Given my positionality, I do feel that I participated too much in the Muslim diary group, however. I shared my own experiences of interacting with the Muslim community and celebrating Islamic events as a means of engaging others in conversation, but in so doing, I think I became too much of an active participant in my own research. It is especially important for qualitative researchers to be aware of their own attitudes, beliefs, and biases, when collecting and analysing data, since a researcher's own social positioning can potentially influence the direction of the discussion (Rubin and Rubin, 2012:72), especially when the researcher plays an active part in participating in the research (Silverman, 2006:112). For this reason, I took a step back in the Jewish and Christian groups and only posted if I had a question or was offering praise or condolences. Despite my reduced interaction in these latter two groups, I still feel rapport built up among the participants in all three groups. For example, when the first Christian diary group ended, lots of participants said how they looked forward to catching up with each other in December, which I found quite rewarding, considering it was my diary group that had brought these individuals together.

The virtual participant observation was also successful. I had not initially comprehended the benefit this would have for my research, so it was not until I had completed the first one, that I appreciated just how insightful this method could be. For example, participants told me about aspects of their everyday life that had not come up in the interviews or the diaries, such as gardening and composting, which related to their aspirations of being environmentally friendly. Consequently, I wish I had made virtual participant observation a compulsory data collection method, so I could have done more of it. However, I fear that would have made it a lot harder to find willing participants, especially given the difficulty I had had just in recruiting Jewish participants who were willing to both do an interview and keep a diary. Alternatively, I wish I had been able to do in-person ethnographies, especially where religious observances and rituals were concerned, as that would have provided considerably more insight into my research topic; unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic restricted what was possible for me. It was also interesting to note that it was mainly women who volunteered to take part in the virtual participant observation; out of the six ethnographies, only one was with a male participant, perhaps hinting at gender imbalances within the kitchen.

Turning to data analysis, I maintained a high level of organisation throughout the analysis stage and am confident that the analytical techniques I chose were of satisfactory quality to enable

Chapter 3

me to draw out interesting and insightful research conclusions. I did only employ one analytic method though, thematic analysis, so if I had had more time, I would have sought to complement this with another method, such as narrative analysis (Andrews et al., 2008). I do not consider only using thematic analysis to be a limitation however, but I do recognise the potential for further analysis; something I could perhaps explore in a postdoctoral study. However, through thematic analysis, I uncovered a series of insightful findings, which I explain in depth in the subsequent three data chapters.

Chapter 4 Ethics and Values in Principle: Faith

Veganism

Whilst others have hinted at overlaps in the practices of nonreligious and religious vegans (Stephens Griffin, 2017:45), the way in which veganism is understood nevertheless varies, giving rise to numerous different typologies of veganism, as was discussed in Section 2.1.1. The influence of religion on understandings of veganism has thus far been absent in academic debate, however. As such, this chapter draws on data from all three methods, the interviews, diary entries, and field notes, to answer the first of my research questions, how do understandings of veganism change form when intersected with religion? In turn, it introduces to scholarship a new typology, *faith veganism*.

I begin by *introducing faith veganism*, first defining this term, before revealing the potential for clashes in outlook and values between *faith vegans* and nonreligious vegans, leading faith vegans to differentiate and separate themselves from the broader vegan community. Alongside this separation, we witness the formation of a *faith vegan identity* and *faith vegan community*. I then turn to explore the set of ethics underpinning faith veganism, which I term *faith vegan ethics*. This set of ethics also gives rise to *faith vegan stewardship*, which explains how faith vegans veganise the religious principle of stewardship and through it, characterise concern for the entirety of God's world. In merging their veganism and religiosity, faith vegans also construct veganism as an ideal way of living out their religious lives, but one which involves the disruption of cultural and social norms and the redefinition of ethics and edibility; in this way, faith veganism becomes what I have termed *cultural deviance as religious observance*. I end this chapter by building on this point further and arguing for *faith veganism as religious practice*. Throughout the remainder of this thesis, I do not always state the religion of the participants in discussion, due to widespread similarities, but should the reader wish for this information, the table of participant attributes can be referred to on page 63.

4.1 Introducing Faith Veganism

As we saw in the Literature Review, there are multiple understandings and typologies of veganism. One understanding that has so far been absent from scholarship, however, is how veganism intersects with religion. Thus, the key contribution of this chapter is a new typology of veganism, which I term *faith veganism*, and which I define as *a form of veganism that is intersected with religion and informed by religious ethics and principles*. A *faith vegan*, meanwhile, is a vegan whose vegan experience is intersected and often underpinned by their

religiosity. I opt for *faith* vegan(ism) as opposed to *religious* vegan(ism), since as we saw on page 77 in the previous chapter, participants did not always identify as religious, despite being strongly connected to religious beliefs and/or communities. Indeed, studies on the lived religion approach demonstrate that lived religion is, in fact, very individualised. Furthermore, studies seeking definition clarity on the terms ‘religion’ and ‘faith’ understand faith to not only be broader than religion, but also more subjective and personal (Paul Victor and Treschuk, 2020:110). Thus, faith encompasses an individualised understanding of one’s relationship with religion, spirituality, and God. I therefore believe ‘faith’ better reflects the individuality and diversity evident among participants and have thus chosen to name this new typology as such.

As this chapter will reveal, faith veganism is guided in large part by ethics, much in the same way as ethical veganism is (Greenebaum, 2012a:130). However, ethical veganism is largely associated with the total avoidance of animal use and exploitation (Stephens Griffin, 2017:6), and whilst many participants did identify as an abolitionist or “progressive abolitionist” (Louis), some others did not consider the consumption of animal by-products to be inherently wrong. Herein lies the first differentiator for faith veganism, albeit not evident in all participants. For Shira, traceability is key. She does not take issue with the eating of eggs per se but since she is not particularly fond of their taste nor does she know where to source traceable eggs, she chooses not to consume them. Similarly, Beth believes God intended us to live natural lives off the land, which could involve the consumption of milk, eggs, and honey, but not meat. She explained,

“If I had a little goat in the back garden that was, that I fed and watered [...] maybe have it's milk [...] but not, not to actually eat. So to use the products, maybe the honey, if the honey was farmed properly or, not farmed, but we got honey ethically. Yes, maybe. But yeah, I think we're too far gone to do that now.”

Sara also does not consider animal consumption to be inherently wrong, however considering the harm the animal agricultural industry has on animals and the climate, she chooses to be vegan. She explained,

“In Islam, we shouldn't really eat that much meat [...] it should be once a week or like twice a week. And I feel like if this is how the whole world was acting, then I probably wouldn't be vegan because we probably wouldn't have that many issues of like massive farming and torturing animals. It would be a lot more like ethical.”

Shira, Beth, and Sara can envisage a world where animal consumption takes place in an ethical manner. However, they feel such a world is not realistic or accessible at present, so for them, veganism becomes the only viable option for enacting religious ethics responsibly.

Among participants there was also an emphasis on mutual co-existence, living in harmony, and maintaining the balance in the environment, in reference to the Islamic principle of *mizan*²⁸. Aaliyah spoke of a co-existence where humans and animals can benefit from one another in a way that she does not deem to be exploitative or cruel:

“I agree animals aren't for us to do things to, but animals can be with us and you can stay with animals, you can benefit from animals like if you, you know, needed milk because you were ill like the animal could benefit you, but you also give back to animals so it's kind of living with balance in terms of nature and like living in harmony as well.”

Animal consumption and the using of certain animal products are permissible in all three Abrahamic faiths so a curious tension arises whereby animal consumption becomes both religiously acceptable and unacceptable at the same time. Participants acknowledge the religious permissibility of such consumption, but they emphasise the conditions that religious law applies to this consumption to justify why it should be strictly controlled and ideally avoided in order to live in accordance with religious principles. So, whilst animal consumption is permissible within the religions in principle, participants were keen to advocate that veganism is *more* in line with what they perceive to be the ethical spirit of religion.

Clashes in the outlooks of faith vegans and nonreligious vegans are thus a potentiality, leading to many faith vegans seeking to distinguish and separate themselves from the broader category of vegans, which they perceived as secular and nonreligious. A further example is how faith vegans emphasised the need to also show compassion to other humans, a value they felt was lacking among nonreligious vegans. Nicola explained, “I think sometimes what gets missed is compassion for the human”, whilst Ibrahim added, “I do find there are some vegans who are almost anti-human”. Ibrahim and Hannah had previously clashed with vegans online over differences in their views, which had alienated them both from what they perceived to be a secular vegan community. In these cases, the perceptions held by participants originated from first-hand experience, either face-to-face or online, of having interacted with vegans or observing their behaviour. They were made to feel different and thus distinct from the group of nonreligious vegans; not the feelings of support portrayed in the literature (Cherry, 2006:160; 2015:68; Williams et al., 2023:7). With much vegan discourse emphasising the centrality of the animal, the human can be lost sight of, further contributing to exclusionary messages (Greenebaum, 2017:366). Faith veganism thus encompasses humans in its circle of concern and is mindful of how the vegan message is shared with others.

²⁸ Balance.

Given their experiencing or witnessing of such clashes, many participants held negative perceptions of nonreligious vegans, revealing “vegaphobic” (Cole and Morgan, 2011) views, akin to the discourse observed in the British media which describes vegans as militant, hostile, unreasonable, hypocritical, and annoying (Brookes and Chałupnik, 2023; Cole and Morgan, 2011). Despite being vegan themselves, participants distinguished themselves from other vegans, considering vegans as a category to be too radical, and described them as preachy, pushy, scary, extreme, aggressively militant, and annoying, among other negative adjectives, many of which clashed with their religious values. Ethan said, “if there’s one thing that does my head in, it’s a preachy vegan”, whilst Mohammad admitted, “I’ve got very little time for people who are too aggressively militant.” Hannah avoided vegan gatherings, as there are “too many vegans in one place, like they get pushy and scary,” whilst Nicola explained, “some vegans are very extreme and it’s very hard to be around that all the time I found.” Joanne even sought to keep away from vegan organisations, as “I always find they’re kind of almost still trying to convert you”, despite her having been vegan for 23 years. These findings are in stark contrast to other studies which found that vegans turn to other vegans for support and regularly seek to be in vegan spaces (Cherry, 2006, 2015).

Many participants also held negative perceptions of vegan events and therefore kept their distance. Isaac recounted the time he went to a vegan event: “it was a very kind of a hippy kind of, let’s be one with nature man kind of thing. So I was like, OK, I’m leaving now.” Isaac’s experience of the event and the feeling that he did not align with the identity perpetuated there led him to feel distanced from the vegan community. Elijah and Mohammad, meanwhile, avoided vegan events due to their preconceived ideas of what they would be like. In addition to kashrut concerns, namely whether the food would be kosher or its preparation in line with Jewish legal regulations, Elijah explained that he did not attend vegan events, as:

“I don’t know if I would really feel like I belong there [...] people who are not wearing very much and like with long hair and like, and that’s just kind of like hippy kind of people, that’s just what I’m kind of imagining, like there would be a lot of that there and it’s not really me.”

Mohammad shared similar sentiments, explaining:

“The average vegan festival, I would sort of typically regard all of the acts as being leftist, trendy, health craze, fashion-orientated, all things which are, or junk food or confectionery based, all things I’m really not into. So it’s paying to go along to an echo chamber of really annoying people, and I’d rather sit around with a bunch of people who aren’t vegan and get them to go vegan.”

These participants associate vegans with specific stereotypes which do not align with their own identities. Consequently, they feel that they would not belong in secular vegan spaces and thus have less desire to interact with them. Whilst faith vegans share similar ethics and principles with nonreligious vegans, as this chapter will reveal, this does not always result in a shared identity or common sense of belonging; identity alignment thus becomes important for realising a sense of belonging. The key finding here is that faith vegans differentiate themselves, as the negative perceptions they hold of nonreligious vegans do not align with their religious values and ethics.

Participants also held strong views towards organised vegan activism. Generally, the consensus was that raising awareness of veganism is necessary but aggressive methods should be avoided. It was interesting to note that a majority spoke of aggressive and judgemental forms of activism without prompt, suggesting an association with secular-perceived organised vegan activism as being aggressive and judgemental. Those who spoke negatively of it alluded to a clash with religious values, particularly those of non-judgement, compassion, and kindness. Shira struggles “with quite a lot of vegan activism. I find it quite judgmental and I find some of the language that vegan activists use quite inappropriate.” Leah also thinks “that vegan activism can be ridiculously extreme and uncompromising and bombastic and declaratory and judgmental. And I don't like those things.” The negative perceptions held by faith vegans and the resulting clashes with their religious values thus constitute a barrier to their engagement with organised vegan activism in secular spaces. Nicola felt activists adopted an “us versus them” mentality, which as a Christian, she really struggled with. She used to do activism herself, but after experiencing a clash with her Christian values, she stopped; “I think it's probably my Christianity that stops me being an activist.” Beth also feels her Christian values prevent her from supporting activism, explaining, “it doesn't sit right with me, the hate side of it.” Both would prefer a model emulating Jesus's behaviour of compassion and understanding.

Farah, meanwhile, is concerned about the delivery of activism. In discussing the Cube of Truth²⁹, she explained, “there's a lot of triggering content in there, and I feel like the format of being out in the town centre, and not really knowing who the people are, who are going to come across you, I have some ethical issues with that.” Faith vegans, with their inclusion of humans in their circle of concern, struggle with what they perceive to be secular modes of organised vegan activism. These methods are considered divisive, triggering, judgmental, and unethical, which may to some degree be intentional; moral shocks are widely used in animal activism to elicit an

²⁹ A vegan outreach and education method whereby activists, who wear a Guy Fawkes mask and are dressed all in black, typically stand in a square formation in public spaces and hold an electronic device playing graphic footage of animal exploitation and abuse.

emotional response in individuals and shock them into action (Jasper, 2011:292). Faith vegans, however, envisage a kinder, more compassionate form of activism that is more mindful of the human; some therefore engaged in individualised forms of activism within their religious communities, which I discuss further in Section 5.3.

All in all, we witness the emergence of a new typology of veganism. This section has highlighted how faith vegans may not necessarily align with abolitionism and instead might emphasise mutual co-existence and reciprocity with animals, all the while emphasising veganism as a religious ideal due to the harms caused by the modern animal agricultural industry. Due to the potential for clashes in outlook and values, faith vegans may hold negative perceptions of nonreligious vegans, seeking to avoid interactions with them and their activities. Thus, faith vegans carve out their own identities, communities, and set of ethics, as the subsequent sections will reveal.

4.2 Faith Vegan Identity and Community

In addition to clashes over beliefs and values, faith vegans may feel further alienated and excluded from the wider vegan community due to instances of stigma, which was experienced or observed by a number of Muslim and Jewish participants. For Zeinab, it was Islamophobic comments by other vegans that led her to leave the secular vegan communities she had been a part of. She described some encounters on social media:

“They would post about the sacrifices of Eid and people would say things like oh I want, my religion tells me to go to Pakistan and slaughter a load of Muslims.”

“Someone replied to me like oh, and I'm sure she went on this run after just seeing the [name] in my name, going oh when you eat that goat, I hope it's worth it and all this stuff you know, I hope you choke and all this stuff and I'm just like I'm vegan [laughs] what? There's no goat here.”

She explained how she felt there was so much “toxicity” within vegan communities, that she ultimately kept away from the secular groups where these instances of Islamophobia took place. Laila had also observed Islamophobic comments in digital vegan communities:

“I've seen that there's a lot of, you know, activists like British ones and the American ones that kind of use Islam as like a way to be like “this is cruel” [...] people that use like halal as an excuse to bring people to veganism, I would say that's wrong, because [...] you're picking one religion and using that, and then that's also Islamophobic as well.”

Zeinab added:

“There’s been this whole thing of halal meat and we’re put in a very difficult position where we agree with some of the arguments of production and things like that, but the Islamophobia that is tied with these arguments is just like, no we're not on board with that.”

The key finding here is that Islamophobia is embedded in some vegan discourse, which highlights animal sacrifice and halal slaughter as especially cruel, thereby othering and maligning Islam and Muslim communities. Such discourse is likely connected to perceptions of Muslim practices as barbaric (Grumett, 2015:21), and has been noted in other studies exploring vegan organisations’ campaign materials (Gough, 2023:23-24). Through the construction of Muslim practices as barbaric, vegan organisations perpetuate a colonial, “white savior” narrative (Wrenn, 2016a:134), with veganism presented as a solution for rehabilitating such criminality (Ko and Ko, 2017:80). Indeed, just as Ko and Ko (2017:77) argued that Eurocentric veganism seeks to provide a means through which black people can be “civilized”, so too does it imply a means through which Muslims can be ‘civilised’. In reality, however, such discourse creates a sense of exclusion for Muslims from secular vegan spaces, leaving them at risk of Islamophobic abuse. Further, it does little in the way of offering support to Muslims who are transitioning to veganism.

Whilst none of the Jewish participants spoke of having had antisemitic abuse directed at them by a member of a vegan community, there were some points of contention raised, such as how factory farming is commonly likened to the Holocaust. Maya explained, “there's only so many times you can see people comparing factory farming to the Holocaust before you're like, [despairing tone] ‘no, no’.” Leah, also passionately explained:

“One expression often used by vegan activists that disgusts me and pushes me away is the use of the term Holocaust to apply to the killing of animals for food. There is only one Holocaust- that of Jewish people by Nazi Germany. It is both deeply offensive and, in my view, destructively undermining of the animal rights cause, to conflate the two. They are not morally equivalent and it’s pernicious at best to appropriate a uniquely Jewish experience in this way.”

Kosher slaughter did not appear to be targeted in the way halal slaughter was, so Judaism was not othered in quite the same way. This could in part be due to a wider prevalence of Islamophobia (Green, 2019), or the greater visibility of halal slaughter compared to kosher slaughter (Lever, 2019). Nevertheless, Jewish vegans perceive the comparison between the Holocaust and factory farming to be a form of dehumanisation where the Jewish victims of the

Holocaust are paralleled with factory farmed animals; such “racist exploitation” (Kim, 2011) of the Holocaust in animal activism is thus seen to undermine Jews’ “claims to full humanity by reawakening taboo historical associations with animals” (p.326). Kim notes that such analogies are not new and have long been condemned by Jewish leaders (p.325). Further, studies exploring Black veganism have explored how Black people are also equated with animals (Ko and Ko, 2017:20), which is not only perceived as “elitist” and “colonizing” (Harper, 2010c:35), but also creates barriers to the formation of cross-group alliances in the fight against connected structural injustices (Kim, 2011:313). Such commodification of non-white bodies is connected to colonialism (Polish, 2016:388) and dominant vegan narratives associated with whiteness and white privilege, all of which disempowers Black vegans (Greenebaum, 2018:693). In a similar way, Jews and Muslims are disempowered and excluded, and above all othered, indicating that secular vegan communities are not always supportive or safe spaces for minority groups (Ko and Ko, 2017:51).

Jewish and Muslim participants were, on the whole, disengaged from secular vegan communities due to conflicts with religious beliefs, values, and identity, although some points of contention were also raised by Christian participants, particularly concerns that nonreligious vegans were too judgemental and lacked compassion towards humans. For faith vegans therefore, secular vegan communities did not offer the communities of support described in academic literature (Cherry, 2006:157; Greenebaum, 2012b:316; Hirschler, 2011:163; Oliver, 2023b:13; Twine, 2014:632). Religious communities meanwhile proved very important to participants, offering a sense of belonging, community, and shared experience. But with Abrahamic religions originating in societies relying on animal husbandry and the consumption of animal products, veganism remains largely alien to these religious traditions. Thus, religious communities also offer insufficient support to faith vegans.

Just as some vegans othered Jewish and Muslim vegans, some religious communities also othered vegans. Maryam, a Muslim of Middle Eastern origin who moved to the UK aged eight, is of the opinion that the wider Muslim community regard veganism as a “Western thing” and that she has been “westernised.” She recounted how her mum said to her, “these white people are brainwashing you” and how she is “eating poor people food.” Zeinab on the other hand, who is Indian, finds that the Muslims she interacts with associate vegetarianism with Hinduism and thus respond to her veganism, saying, “are you becoming Hindu?” She explained, “it’s a bit insulting that you see it, you know you take it as a slight on my faith.” Damian, meanwhile, a Catholic, discussed some of his interactions with Christians, including a priest who referred to vegans as “crazy people” and other Christians who think “veganism comes from the devil.” Such exclusionary viewpoints do not appear to inhibit faith vegans’ maintenance of veganism,

as has been noted elsewhere (Brouwer et al., 2022), but they can alienate individuals somewhat from their religious community and again render the community an unsupportive one.

In response, Muslim and Jewish vegans in particular, are carving out a new identity for themselves, which combines their religious, cultural, and vegan identities; what I term *faith vegan identity*. Maya explained, “I think I'm definitely part of like a hyper-specific like Jewish vegan niche. [...] because it influences the way that we talk about Judaism.” Similarly, Aaliyah “would probably say the Muslim veganism is what I kind of follow”. In this way, faith vegans exhibit “individualization of belief” (Beck, 2010:140), re-casting pre-existing religious identities and perspectives to ultimately develop and adopt composite religious identities (p.140), which as we see here, combines religious identity with vegan identity. Through their faith vegan identity, faith vegans are discovering new ways to be Muslim, Jewish, and Christian. Veganism thus shapes one’s religiosity, and one’s religiosity shapes one’s veganism; the two become mutually constitutive.

Connected to this, we see the emergence of *faith vegan community*, communities centred upon both veganism and religion, or more precisely, a specific faith vegan identity. These communities are safe spaces centred upon shared understanding and shared meanings, which are absent from Islamophobic and antisemitic comments that were commonly encountered in secular vegan groups. Exactly how faith vegans engage with these communities will be explored in greater depth in Section 5.3 Support and Belonging.

4.3 Faith Vegan Ethics

At the beginning of this chapter, I defined faith veganism as being guided in large part by ethics, but how precisely was this word understood by participants? Veganism is often described as an ethical lifestyle because of its ethical philosophy of eschewing consumption, exploitation, and harm of animals (Cole and Morgan, 2011:135; Wright, 2015:7), yet religious ethics guide the raising and killing of animals for food (Lever and Fischer, 2018). It is therefore vital we are clear on how study participants understood and used the term *ethics*, since evidently there is some contradiction in its use.

First and foremost, the ‘ethical’ was guided by one’s understandings of religious ethics, principles, and teachings, demonstrating that ethics and morality are not only informed by religion (King et al., 2020:595), but it is also where they originate (Beck, 2010:144); religion is thus a “fertile ground” for the development of morality (King et al., 2020:606). Religious principles were embraced and embodied, thus forming the foundation for study participants’

understandings of ‘ethical’, and consequently underpinning their vegan philosophy and practice. In this way, religious ethics inform the embodied dispositions of faith vegans.

For Farah, learning about the *sunnah*³⁰ and *seerah*³¹ of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ played a key role in her becoming vegan; upon recognising a disconnect between Islamic ethics and modern practices, she felt compelled “to redress the balance.” Shira meanwhile was inspired by her Jewish Youth Movement and their preaching of the Jewish principle *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). Liam, on the other hand, found that veganism fitted in well with Quakerism’s peace testimony and Jesus’s teaching to love your neighbour. Religious ethics, values, and teachings, whether that’s Islam’s *sunnah*, Judaism’s *tikkun olam*, Quakerism’s peace testimony, or Christianity’s golden rule of doing unto others as you would have done unto you, guide the individual in their ethical reasoning practices. They do not automatically lead one to veganism however, so religious principles only form the foundation of participants’ interpretation of ethics.

Participants placed an emphasis on religious ethics more so than religious law, which was understood to be a “bare minimum” (Aaliyah); religious ethics, meanwhile, were understood to encompass so much more. Both Farah and Aaliyah worry that Islamic law is too “black and white and doesn’t consider everything” (Farah). Farah fears “we’ve become a community who kind of reduces our religion to these legalities when actually we were given the whole life of the Prophet peace be upon him to know how to do ethics and morals as well.” Aaliyah added, “it’s not about I’m allowed to do something, it’s about trying to be better, you know, trying to improve the world as one, not just doing the bare minimum.” This view was echoed among Christian and Jewish participants; Beth explained:

“A lot of things are permissible in Christianity, so God gave us free will, so we can do anything we want, but it’s what we choose to do that’s important. And so, it’s not really, it’s not really about permission for me, it’s about what is right to do. And yes, God’s given us the animals and we can choose to use them how we want, but surely choosing to be kind and to be gentle, not to eat them if we don’t have to, to me, has got to be what God intended.”

Religious law is thus understood to outline permissions, but it does not inspire individuals to use their free will and engage in ‘good’ action. Enacting ethical principles therefore is about going beyond basic permissions and seeking to do more in order to be a ‘good’ person. ‘Good’ in

³⁰ The traditions and practices of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

³¹ The life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

this paragraph could be substituted for 'right', 'moral', or 'ethical'. Participants therefore reflect their religiosity through their understanding and embodiment of ethics and their application in everyday practice (Shah, 2011:8). But ethical principles are broad and can be put into practice in multiple ways, so how did participants apply them?

To answer this, we must turn to the animal. In all three Abrahamic faiths, the consumption of animals is not only permissible but widely practiced; it has become a social and cultural norm. But all three faiths also preach compassion and kindness towards animals, which is often lost in everyday practice. Faith vegans place great emphasis on these values and embody them through fellow-feeling (Sayer, 2011:118-119), which loosely can be understood as the ability to recognise another's feelings and demonstrate sympathy in response, where appropriate. Fellow-feeling is argued to be crucial to our social being (p.119) and the formation of ethical sensibilities as it influences our experience of living and quality of relations with others (p.148). Whilst Sayer's (2011) work predominantly concerns human relations, Nussbaum (2011:34) lists one of the ten central capabilities of humans as "being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature." Fellow-feeling can thus be extended to the world of non-humans, as Farah explained when I asked her to define morality:

"How would I expect myself to be treated as a sentient being, and God has made us, you know, caliphs³² of this Earth, so we need to look out for the wellbeing of other sentient beings. [...] I can relate to my experience what a sentient being must feel. The sentient being must feel sad when they're separated from their family members, must feel fear when they see other animals being killed in front of them, must feel sadness when they're locked in battery farms their whole entire lives, must feel depression. [...] What's moral is me striving to fulfil that role of caliph on the Earth and looking out for the wellness of other beings."

Farah draws on the Islamic principle of *khilafa* (stewardship) but extends her outlook to include the sentience of animals. To be a good *khalifa*, or *caliph* (steward), and to act morally, she believes she must ensure the wellbeing of animals, keeping them safe from harm or negative emotions. This recognition of animals as sentient beings and the ability to relate to them was shared by multiple participants. Ethan explained, "of course it feels pain, it's alive, like it doesn't, I don't need scientific studies to tell me that like an animal will feel pain." Amy echoed this, saying, "when you kill something, it's going to feel pain [...] killing a pig, it squeals, it bleeds." Recognising the sentience of an animal was presented as natural and obvious, requiring little effort from the individual.

³² Stewards.

In addition to recognising an animal's pain, faith vegans also related to such feelings, imagining them as their own. Kate spoke of the need to "put yourself in the shoes of that animal", whilst many others echoed Liam's words, highlighting the importance of "treating souls like you'd want to be treated." In this way, participants related to the world through their concern for others (Sayer, 2011:1). Recognising animals as sentient and demonstrating fellow-feeling are thus key determinants of what is ethical; anything that harms a sentient creature or that would not be wished for oneself is generally deemed unethical.

Ethics goes beyond the concept of suffering, however; flourishing is important too (Sayer, 2011:8). Judith understands animals to be "autonomous individuals that have sentience and the capabilities to have family and friends", whilst Ethan understands them to "have thoughts, emotions, pains, consciousness." With animals being individuals in their own right, the freedom to live life to the fullest, not just without pain, becomes key. When Nadia sees photos or videos of animals suffering, whether in laboratories or factory farms, "it just breaks my heart because I think like they deserve a life or they deserve happiness as well as we do." Zakir meanwhile wishes animals could "have the freedom that I would like for myself." Ethics is thus understood not only as the avoidance of suffering, but also the enablement of flourishing for all species.

Furthermore, most participants demonstrated a biocentric worldview, shattering hierarchies and viewing humans and animals as equal, thereby exhibiting lower social dominance (Braunsberger et al., 2021) and an absence of human supremacy beliefs (Weber and Kollmayer, 2022). They thus extended their interpretations of the various religious principles to incorporate God's Creation more broadly, with a particular focus on animals. Kate believes "God made us all equal", whilst Malcolm and Liam both include animals in their understanding of the term 'neighbour'. Liam explained, "I am part of the environment, so my neighbour is everything in the environment". Ibrahim also considers animals to be "equal members of the community and deserve to be treated with respect." He added, "what I get thrown at me is 'alright then, so you're on an island, it's you and a cow, when are you going to eat the cow?' I said, 'see, that's your problem. You're thinking about eating the cow. I'll be thinking about how can me and the cow live together?'" Ibrahim demonstrates a biocentric worldview where he and the cow have equal right to live. He does not consider himself superior to the cow, or the cow as a potential source of food, instead they are two equals in a shared environment. Religious principles, ethics, and values are thus reinterpreted to encompass the entirety of God's Creation, not just the human species. Research participants were wholly aware that we live in a multi-species world (Hurn, 2012:205; Westerlaken, 2020), living alongside countless animal, plant, and mineral varieties, and they were mindful of others and their rights.

Some were also deeply concerned by the consequences of human life on the environment.

Ethan recounted a flight to Indonesia:

“I knew that we were getting close to Indonesia from the screen. I looked down and you can see like plantations, like, palm oil plantations. And it's when you can see it from an aeroplane, it really hits you, and you're just like, shit the bed, like Indonesia is just turning into palm oil, like the whole lot. And it's devastating. [...] But the same thing's happening with coffee basically, so coffee is happening in South America where like huge parts of the Amazon rainforest has been cleared out to grow coffee. I thought “I'm done”.”

Ethan has witnessed environmental degradation with his own eyes and is concerned by how biodiversity hotspots have been transformed into plantations in response to human demand. He consequently avoids palm oil and coffee in his diet, as well as animal products. All of these examples highlight participants' embodied cognitive beliefs (Sayer, 2011:125) which underpin their values, or “‘sedimented' valuations” that over time have come to form ethical dispositions (p.25).

Faith veganism therefore shares many ethical similarities with ethical veganism (Greenebaum, 2012a:130), but the underpinning set of ethics for each differ. The ethics underpinning ethical veganism are grounded in secular debate (Dutkiewicz and Dickstein, 2021:8; Wrenn, 2023b:150), whilst for faith vegans', understandings of 'ethical' are founded in religious principles and ethics. In particular, they draw upon values around compassion, kindness, and stewardship, but which are extended and reinterpreted to include all of God's Creation within their circle of concern and which ultimately leads to faith veganism. In this way, veganism is rooted in their pre-existing identity (Oliver, 2023b:7) as individuals of faith guided by religious ethics, particularly those concerning animals and the environment. This understanding of ethics was exhibited among participants from all three Abrahamic faiths. We can speak therefore, of *faith vegan ethics*, referring to the combination of religious and secular vegan ethics, which together underpin faith veganism. Küng (1990) advocates for a “world ethos”, or “Weltethos” in the original, outlining a global understanding based on principles which world religions have in common; he speaks largely in relation to the ‘golden rule’ of doing unto others as you would have done unto you, which he observes is present in Confucian, Vedic, and Abrahamic traditions. This same ‘golden rule’ was evident across participants from all three religious traditions in my study, but was applied in such a way that led to veganism.

Faith vegan ethics drive the individual towards an imperative to be good and ‘ethical’ towards all of God's world; I term this imperative *faith vegan stewardship*. In broader academic literature, stewardship is theorised in a multitude of ways, both in relation to religion and secular matters.

The form of stewardship I am interested in in this study is the religious principle of stewardship, which features in all three Abrahamic religions and which refers to the guardianship of the Earth on behalf of God (Ehrenfeld and Bentley, 1985; Khalid, 2017; Le Roux, 2016). It thus demands environmentalism and taking care of nature. Whilst veganism, particularly in its ethical and environmental forms, is one way of enacting stewardship, I argue that the form witnessed in my study may be defined more specifically as *faith vegan stewardship* as it not only implies a taking care of the world on behalf of God, but it is also veganised, with participants adopting a more biocentric outlook and incorporating into it vegan principles, such as a nonhuman animal's individual subjectivity (Fox, 2006) and nonhuman animal rights (Wrenn, 2023b). In turn, the individual is motivated to be a kind, ethical steward to all other beings and the environment. Faith vegan stewardship informs the way faith vegans think about veganism and characterises how religious ethics inform one's vegan principles and practice. In Section 5.1.2, I discuss how faith vegan ethics and faith vegan stewardship are consolidated by an *autonomous moral re-engagement with religion*, whereby faith vegans engage in dialogue with religious ethics and feel empowered to reinterpret them in line with veganism, whilst in Section 6.4, I detail how faith vegan stewardship is put into practice.

4.4 Cultural Deviance as Religious Observance

We have seen how veganism shares much in common with religious ethics, values, and principles, yet it remains othered within religious discourse and religious communities. Further, faith vegans do not find belonging or a sense of support from secular vegan communities, resulting in the need for a faith vegan identity and community. Considering both the “meat culture” (Potts, 2016) of the UK, and the importance of meat and animal-derived products to Muslim, Jewish and Christian identity (Ali, 2015:269; Davis, 2017), veganism could be considered deviant (Giacoman et al., 2021) as it disrupts cultural norms and directly challenges the dominant culture (Twine, 2014:628). But whilst it may be deviant, there are many arguments for it to be considered not only a form of religious observance with foundations in theological discourse, but also as purity and wellbeing, both of which are of huge importance in religion (Douglas, 1999, 2002). In this section, I present veganism as cultural deviance which is performed with the goal of deeper religious observance.

4.4.1 Deviance

I discuss faith veganism in relation to cultural deviance as veganism actively disrupts the social and cultural norms of animal consumption and challenges resulting inequalities and injustices towards certain nonhuman animal species. Giacoman et al. (2021) draw on Becker's (1963)

concept of deviant career to better understand why and how some individuals adopt an “outsider identity”, but religion remains absent in such discussions. The why in my research is clear: faith vegans seek to lead a lifestyle that is more aligned with their religious values and principles, but I would argue against faith vegans assuming a complete “outsider identity” based largely on dietary decisions. Whilst they may become outsiders in carnist culture (Giacoman et al., 2021:8), their veganism does not take them beyond the confines of religion; indeed, their religious identity tends to supersede their vegan identity. Thus, within their respective religious communities, they remain insiders, albeit with a lifestyle practice that is culturally deviant as it disrupts and challenges the norm. Exactly how they alter their identity was discussed in Section 4.2 above, whilst changes in practices will be explored in the subsequent two chapters.

Studies on deviance tend to have negative undertones, implying otherness and stigmatisation (Ben-Yehuda, 2011:38), and whilst veganism evidently goes against the dominant normative carnist culture (Joy, 2010) and is thus a dietary and lifestyle deviation, I want to steer clear of theories and conceptions that imply negativity, incompatibility, and otherness, and instead demonstrate that veganism is entirely compatible with religion, and indeed complementary. Instead, terms such as “creative deviance” (Douglas, 1977) and “positive deviance” (Boyle, 2011; Lundahl, 2020) can be more meaningful here. Creative deviance refers to “creative adaptations of rules to new life situations” (Douglas, 1977:60), of which the climate crisis and factory farming can certainly be considered. “Positive deviance” meanwhile refers to any actions that “contribute to the moral, economic, or intellectual growth of a society” (Boyle, 2011:268), which veganism evidently does through its contest of unethical practices and ideas. Such forms of deviance can have huge potential for social change (Ben-Yehuda, 2011), and where my specific research focus is concerned, could help to engage religious communities in discussions around modern ethical crises, and seek to ‘green’ or even ‘veganise’ religion, as Chapter 6 will explore. Further, participants made strong connections between veganism and the potential for improved religious observance, so the key finding here is that through veganism, faith vegans engage in cultural deviance in order to better practice their respective religions. In other words, they disrupt the social and cultural norm of animal consumption in an effort to return to what they perceive to be God’s intended norm: veganism.

Animal slaughter and consumption are undeniably permissible within all three Abrahamic religions, however participants were keen to emphasise the contradictory nature between religious values, such as compassion and kindness to animals, and modern animal farming and food production practices. Participants generally highlighted these contradictions to evidence the propriety of veganism, by emphasising contextual differences between the time of revelation and the modern day. Nicola spoke of early Christians, “they were eating meat once every three

or six months or something like that [...] these were celebration meals, so they're the ones that got written down", whilst Beth explained, "Jesus may have been in a little fishing boat, whereas we're sending out huge, big trawlers with massive nets." Muslims, meanwhile, reflected on the realities of halal slaughter and how practices today are in stark contrast to the practices of seventh century Arabia. They spoke of how Islamic teachings are being violated, and if one wishes not to violate said teachings, veganism becomes an ideal solution. Zeinab passionately explained,

"If anyone has made anything haram, it's the industries, it's the meat industries and you know capitalism has made the halal meat industry haram [...] You have to go back and look at what is halal in terms of meat production and re-educate yourself on what is halal [...] it's the industry, it's these practices that are making it haram."

Zeinab draws on her knowledge of Islamic teachings and evaluates the legality of the halal meat industry, concluding that their practices are in violation of Islamic law and are thus haram. Zakir meanwhile makes the claim that the halal meat industry is in fact a misinterpretation; "Halal's being conveniently misinterpreted for our own kind of pleasure, tastebuds", and thus implies that the correct interpretation would be something along the lines of veganism. Here we see evidence of a reflexive religious habitus (Shah, 2014:521) and cataphatic reflexivity (Mouzelis, 2012:217), whereby faith vegans review and respond to new information, which actively constructs their faith vegan selves. In this way, faith vegans constructed factory farming and modern animal processing practices as deviant; an ironic finding, considering how normalised these practices have become.

All in all, veganism was not seen to conflict with religion, rather it was seen as a way of life through which one could fulfil their religious duties and embody religious values. Nadia explained, "being a Muslim, you can live any sort of lifestyle that is like within reason", and for her, veganism is well within reason. Judaism for Ari is all about striving to live "a really ethical life, trying to make the world a better place. And I think that's kind of what, yeah, what's at the heart of veganism as well." An important distinction which I explore further in Section 4.5 below is how veganism was rarely portrayed as an alternative lifestyle identity, but rather a practice that aligned with the individual's ethical and religious beliefs and principles. Thus, veganism becomes an important vehicle for deeper religious observance.

Through their disruption of the social and cultural norm of animal consumption, faith vegans redefined edibility. Animal flesh is among the most classified of foods, where edibility and permissibility to consume are concerned (Douglas, 2002:167), but nevertheless animal by-products and many meats, poultry, and fish are considered edible and permissible in all three religions, subject to a series of conditions. Faith vegans, through the processes of faith vegan

stewardship and reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010), which are explored in greater depth in the next two chapters, redefine religious injunctions around edibility and instead determine the edibility of foods based on ethics (Adams, 2015:xxxix) and the avoidance of harm (McDonald, 2000:16). As such, for faith vegans, animal products become inedible (Panizza, 2020:4).

4.4.2 Purity and Pollution

An interesting dichotomy arose in my research, which echoes Douglas's (2002) work on purity and danger: faith vegans demonstrated an understanding of veganism as purity, and animal products as pollution. Vegan foods, and more broadly the vegan philosophy, were idealised as pure, with participants understanding veganism to be God's intended diet for humankind, whilst the consumption of animal foods was understood to have come about due to human greed and God giving humans a concession. Hannah explained,

“Animals were there to be companions, not to be food, and it was only asked after [...] the sins, the floods, Noah, that God said, and now you can eat meat because clearly you need something to control yourself or to handle your urges or whatever [...] meat was a concession.”

In applying Douglas's (2002:36) conception of dirt as “matter out of place”, we can understand animal products to be “matter out of place”, or more specifically matter that, when consumed, takes advantage of, or even violates religious injunctions, and thus transgresses the boundaries of spiritual perfection and Godly intention. As we saw in Section 4.3, faith vegans place huge emphasis on religious ethics and principles and as such seek to pursue an ethical lifestyle. Where consumption practices are concerned, faith vegans navigate their ethical beliefs in this area by recategorising food items. In the process of redefining edibility in line with their newfound faith vegan ethics and beliefs, plant-based foods were categorised as not only edible, but also peace (Joanne), cleansing (Ari), good, and pure (Ibrahim). Animal foods, meanwhile, in becoming inedible, also became wrong (Sara), disgusting (Nicola), unethical (most participants), and thus polluting.

What is it that renders vegan food pure and animal products polluting, though? Wholefoods were portrayed as fresh (Ari), clean (Beth), nutritional (Nadia), and healthy (most participants), and became synonymous with life, whilst animal foods symbolised death and suffering, due to the many stories recounted by participants that related to animal maltreatment and their capacity for sentience, and thus suffering. Further however, the relation of these foods to religious discourse is also key here. For the Jewish and Christian vegans in this study, veganism was synonymous with both God's original intention (many participants referenced Genesis 2 as depicting the Garden of Eden as a vegan paradise) and the Messianic world (some quoted Isaiah

11:6-9 which implies a vegan world when the Messiah returns), whilst animal consumption was viewed as human greed and weakness (some referred to the Israelites' craving for meat and God's displeasure at this as detailed in Numbers 11); here we see the purity of God juxtaposed against the pollution of human greed and weakness.

For Muslims meanwhile the connection was less obvious, and as such the emphasis tended to be on the violation of religious law in modern farming and slaughter practices, rendering most animal products in capitalist society haram as per Islamic law, and thus unethical and polluting; in contrast, plant-based foods became the idealised alternative and thus pure. Sara said, "if I went back to eat meat, I would feel like what I'm doing is wrong and I would feel really bad about myself." Despite being permissible under Islamic law, halal meat had become inedible, due to the knowledge of the unethical practices and religious violations involved in its production. Ibrahim, in response to his viewing of Shaykh Hamza Yusuf's³³ 'Ramadan Ruminations Lesson 5: Goodness and Purity' on YouTube³⁴, reflected:

"Here he talks about goodness and purity and how what we eat affects our actions - if we eat good then we are likely to do good, if we eat bad things - then we are likely to do bad things. He talks about just because something is Halal, it does not mean we should eat it and examples a chicken that has been pumped with hormones. [...] It's intertwined within our faith. Like you mentioned before about eating is an act of worship- what do we want that act to say of us? If what we eat is good and pure then that means our act of worship is also filled with goodness."

Through reflexive practices, Ibrahim has connected the manner of eating with the quality of his worship and thus identifies a link between the "good and pure" nature of veganism and the potential for better worship. Similarly, Sara, who refers to meat consumption as a wrongdoing, hints at the idea that such consumption would negatively impact her sense of self. What one consumes therefore was seen to directly inform the quality of one's religious worship and authenticity.

Veganism was evidently understood in a very positive light, as pure and nurturing, not only in and of itself, but also for the human body, mind, and soul. Conversely, animal-derived products were seen as polluting and thus undesirable for optimum wellbeing. But within larger society, animal consumption remains the norm, whilst veganism remains othered. We can thus understand the adoption and practice of veganism to be a form of cultural deviance, whereby

³³ Shaykh Hamza Yusuf is an American Islamic scholar, author, and co-founder and president of Zaytuna College, a private Muslim liberal arts college in Berkeley, California.

³⁴ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGfjT0q9-Q>.

the cultural and social norms of animal consumption are disrupted, and edibility redefined, with the intention of both fostering a deeper religious observance, and nourishing and nurturing all aspects of one's being.

4.5 Veganism as Religious Practice

In the interviews, one of the questions I posed to participants was, “do you consider the practice of eating to be a religious practice?” This question elicited an array of diverse responses, as summarised in Table 4.1.

	Yes	It can be/ It is context-dependent	No
Muslims (12)	8	1	3
Jews (12)	6	2	4
Christians (12)	4	1	7
Total (36)	18	4	14

Table 4.1 Is eating a religious practice?

Whilst all participants had drawn connections between veganism and religion, only a little over half recognised a connection when it came to eating more broadly. At least two thirds of the Jews and Muslims considered eating to be a religious practice, which is unsurprising given that these religions have detailed dietary injunctions and thus an association with eating practices and religion, compared to only a third of Christians. Eating can thus be a way to enact religious principles and beliefs but is not in itself always a religious practice for people of faith.

Through faith veganism however, eating gained a spiritual or religious significance. Liam says, “eating in this way is, it is an aspect of my spirituality [...] I’m choosing to not do harm”, whilst Ari explained,

“Observant Jews who are vegan will make eating into like a religious or spiritual experience through, for example, saying blessings [...] it really focuses your attention on like gratitude, and appreciating that, like, this is something that like, yeah, has literally sprouted out of the Earth. Like that's such a miracle.”

Joanne also transforms her eating practices into a spiritual experience. She explained,

“Eating is important, and it's good and you are, you know, we are good and worth having a lovely meal and to pause and to celebrate it. You know I don't want to, just rush and have something that's just left over, you know, I want to it to be special [...] marking that moment I think is something that I do daily.”

The key finding here is that, for faith vegans, eating takes on a spiritual form, where perhaps it did not when they consumed animal products, a point I explore further in Chapter 6. This spiritual form is different from enacting a religious principle or observing religious law, since it is about nurturing a spiritual self that is not only more-than-principle, but also an embodied, affective spiritual being. Ibrahim explained, “I feel that being vegan has opened up a door that has allowed me to search for a deeper meaning and understanding of Islam and my faith.” Farah, meanwhile, shared:

“I really sort of relate to that what Imam Hussain³⁵ said, radiAllahu anhu³⁶, about it being spiritually beneficial to cut meat out of your diet. I've definitely felt that, like I feel a lot, I have a lot more empathy since I've given up meat. And so I really feel that spiritual boost from it. So I'd say it's actually improved my closeness to God, it's improved my practice in that respect. Like just that heightened empathy.”

Unsurprisingly then, many also experienced spiritual benefits as a result of their veganism. For some, such as Zeinab, “it's actually renewed my faith in some ways you know, ‘cause of this understanding of we are stewards and you know how we fulfil that role.” Faith veganism thus highlights the religious principles and ethics that align so well with veganism and engages individuals with new values, such as humility (Sara), peacefulness (Joanne), gratitude, and mindfulness (Ari). Sara described her spiritual experience with veganism:

“It connects me to a more like down to Earth perspective, like in our garden we grow, like I try to grow a lot of things that I eat [...] it does bring me back to Earth and sort of observing nice things like a worm eating my kale or something like that, which I don't know if it's spiritual, but it feels great.”

In Section 6.1 I explore how veganism takes mundane activities like food preparation, eating, and gardening, and transforms them into spiritual experiences, but it is important to note here how through this transformative process, faith veganism nurtures the spiritual self in everyday lived experience. Further, it infuses the faith vegan practitioner with feelings and values that have spiritual associations, thereby giving them the sense of spiritual ascension. Veganism as a

³⁵ Grandson of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and third Imam (Muslim leader) in Shia Islam.

³⁶ May Allah be pleased with him.

whole therefore, is experienced corporeally, cognitively, and spiritually and can take the form of a more-than-human, transcendent experience.

Given that veganism aligns with and is incorporated into Abrahamic religions, I argue that faith veganism can also be understood to be a religious practice. Whilst faith vegans did not use those exact words, most reported their veganism to be both an expression and enactment of their religious beliefs, values, and principles, as well as a means to nurture their religious and spiritual selves. Veganism thus takes the appearance of a religious practice as, for faith vegans, it symbolises and facilitates religious observance. In this way, veganism becomes implicit religion, that is to say an equivalence is made between one's veganism and one's religiosity, a similar finding to McCalman (2023), who describes environmentalism as implicit religion, and speaks of one participant for whom "a Christian was an environmentalist" (p.4, emphasis in original). Also of note, is how veganism was not wholly perceived by faith vegans as an alternative lifestyle, but rather a lifestyle practice that complemented and consolidated their faith-based lifestyles. Through this construction, veganism was not othered, but instead was seen to be incorporated within religion.

Veganism offers faith vegans the means to embody religious ethics and values through what they eat and how they lead their lives. As we saw earlier in Section 4.3, across all participants, there is a move away from "the bare minimum" (Aaliyah) of religious law, towards a desire to go above and beyond, and live in the way deemed most aligned with religious ethics. Thus, whilst moral beliefs are important, individuals feel a need to live out their convictions; spiritual devotion often provides the impetus needed to engage them in action (King et al., 2020:595). Here we see that through their vegan lifestyle, faith vegans live out their moral convictions and enact religious principles in the form of religious practice. Elijah considers veganism to be "a prerequisite to being a good human, which in itself is a prerequisite to being a good Jew", whilst Leah understands there to be "moral and ethical requirements on Jews, on people who are Jewish that absolutely drive you towards a decision that says if I'm caring for the planet, if I'm caring for animals, then being vegan is where I should be."

In addition to becoming an ethical being through practice, veganism also enabled individuals to demonstrate respect and care to God's Creation through their everyday practices. Malcolm feels that veganism is "more of a Christian life, because it's showing respect, not just to God and humans, it's showing respect for animals." Therefore, through veganism, one can embody and enact the role of the good steward:

"We can't just turn a blind eye and say, "well actually, you know, God made this world, He'll look after it". We have to think, well actually if He's put us in charge and we're

kind of responsible for it, we have to do everything we can to protect it and I think being vegan is part of that.” (Amy).

Veganism thus becomes the practice of stewardship; I combine the two concepts together to form *faith vegan stewardship* which emphasises the performance of religious stewardship through veganism. One can believe in the importance of stewardship and care deeply about animals and the environment, but without doing the action itself, one cannot be said to be truly putting into practice the religious principle. The practice of veganism thus facilitates the embodiment and enactment of one’s religious convictions and beliefs. In Shah’s (2011) study on Jain veg*ns, she identified vegetarianism and veganism as “vehicles to maintain *ahimsā*”, however there is a long tradition of vegetarianism in Jainism, with diet given particular attention due to the explicit link with *ahimsā*. However, no such tradition of veg*nism exists in the Abrahamic religions, and consequently, there are no links between plant-based diets and religious principles. Participants have thus had to forge the connection themselves, demonstrating the prevalence of reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010) among faith vegans.

The enactment of religious principles was not the only motivation driving faith vegan practice, however. Veganism was also understood to be God’s intention for humankind and so in being vegan, they were fulfilling God’s vision and desire. This was especially the case for Jews and Christians, who share the biblical tradition of the vegan Garden of Eden in Genesis. Leah explained, “it’s generally believed in Judaism that we were intended to be vegetarian”, whilst Nicola and Damian said respectively, “I think that the original plan was for us to be vegan” and “I think this is the way that we’re supposed to eat as a Christian.” Both Beth and Liam also believe that “Jesus would have probably been vegan now” (Beth).

With such beliefs, it comes as no surprise that faith vegans had also interpreted their religious traditions to be promoting veganism as the ideal for humankind. Damian asserted, “we are actually being a good Christian by being vegan”, whilst Nicola feels she is “supposed to be vegan in living out my Christian life.” Zeinab meanwhile believes Muslims “have a really solid theological base for our practices”, whilst Laila and Aaliyah explained respectively, veganism “is kind of the best way to follow [Islam]” and “[veganism is] just part of my religion.” The key finding here is that faith vegans had on the whole interpreted veganism as a religious recommendation or, to some extent, commandment. In being vegan, they were fulfilling God’s wishes and becoming better followers, thereby transforming veganism into a religious practice. Here we see the spiritual impetus that drives faith vegans to live out their moral convictions (King et al., 2020:595).

Such beliefs are also key for the maintenance of faith veganism, as they promote a strong individuality, characterised by a strong willpower and a strong sense of self, which Cherry

(2006:157) argued were insufficient for maintaining one's vegan practice; the willpower embodied by my study participants took the form of religious conviction, however. Kareem explained, "my religion, I think that's keeping me vegan", whilst Mohammad said, "I absolutely believe my religion requires me to be vegan", before describing veganism as "the correct Muslim action". In connecting veganism to their religions, participants developed a deep resolve to maintain their veganism as it had in essence become an embodied, religious practice that gave them the sense of being better believers and practitioners of their respective religions. Many participants spoke of having strong ethical beliefs and principles which have their foundations in the individual's religious conviction, so in linking their vegan practice to their religious conviction, they reinforced their veganism (Perlo, 2009:1) and achieved a strength in willpower, that I argue *is* sufficient for maintaining one's vegan practice.

Not only did veganism give individuals the feeling of being better practitioners of their religion though, but it also literally helped them to observe their religion's teachings. In Quakerism there are four testimonies, peace, equality, truth, and simplicity, "but it's up to you how you interpret it" (Liam). Liam explained, "the peace testimony was something I really wrestled with [...] I'm not [...] a pacifist by any stretch of the imagination". Veganism "was a really easy way for me to express a kind of pacifism and a kind of equality." Veganism, for Liam then, literally enables him to fulfil one of the Quaker testimonies and is thus instrumental to his practice of Quakerism.

Furthermore, a few Jews felt that in being vegan, it made the observance of kashrut law simpler, since they no longer had to worry about the mixing of meat and dairy items, the waiting period after consumption, or the separation of crockery and cutlery. Jacob explained that one of the "slight side reasons why I became vegan is that it actually simplifies food selection, because you don't need to worry about it fundamentally, if it's vegan, then it's, you can have it pretty much." Ari explained,

"I really love that you can keep kosher through veganism [...] those two things intersect and like really focus on the same sort of principles and values [...] that's something that I also recommend to friends as well, if they're kind of struggling with the concept of kashrut, I say, well, you know, like I am vegan and that's how I keep kosher."

Hannah, whose family did not keep kosher whilst she was growing up, feels that in being vegan, she is much more able to keep kosher and so attributes veganism to her better observance of Jewish dietary law. She said, "out of the hundred or so or whatever kosher laws, being vegan eliminates like 80 to 90% of them." Whilst veganism simplifies the observance of kashrut law, Maya was keen to highlight that Jewish vegans must still be mindful of certain things, however. For example, when eating out, grape products might not be kosher, or the crockery and cutlery might be contaminated if they had been used for both meat and dairy. Additionally, when

consuming food from Israel, the food needs to be ‘tithed’, involving a ritual where a small portion is removed, and the holiness of the produce transferred to that small portion in accordance with Jewish law.

Just as veganism made the observance of religious dietary law easier, those same dietary restrictions made the observance of veganism easier too. Leah attributed her ease in maintaining veganism to her Jewish observance, explaining, “being kosher meant I always had a set of rules about what food I did and didn’t eat, it was not hard for me to follow new rules when I chose to do so.” Through religious dietary injunctions, participants developed self-discipline (King et al., 2020:600), so the key finding here is that being accustomed to following dietary injunctions makes following vegan principles considerably easier. Further, with Jews and Muslims being religious minorities, they were already accustomed to being different to those around them, so it did not phase them to be different in a dietary way too. In fact, Ethan preferred it that way, explaining, “being the only Jewish person, the only vegan, and then when you kind of encounter others who are like you, it’s a little bit like, well, I’m the only vegan in the village.” Such comfort with difference also aided vegan lifestyle maintenance.

For many, veganism became a confirmation and outward expression of their faith. Nicola explicitly stated, “my being vegan is an expression of my Christian faith”, whilst Zeinab explained, veganism “is a reaffirmation of my faith, you know, and the principles of Islam.” The practice of veganism is thus rendered a religious practice, as it is through this that faith vegans can express and reaffirm their religious beliefs and identity. Whilst halal meat has become a marker for Muslim identity in the West (Ali, 2015:269), equally the eschewal of halal meat and the consumption of vegan foods, which for Muslim vegans better align with the Islamic concepts of *halal*³⁷ and *tayyib*³⁸ (Kamali, 2021:38), can also be an expression of one’s Muslim identity; just as eating vegan can also be an expression of one’s Jewish and Christian identities. The key finding here is that faith veganism helps to nurture the religious self.

In conclusion, faith veganism can be considered an embodied religious practice, giving faith vegans the sense of becoming better believers and practitioners of their religions. Faith veganism, which is in intimate conversation with religious ethics, values, and principles, draws on reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010) to become a performance of religion itself. Faith veganism thus presents faith vegans with the opportunity to articulate their faith in new ways, by expressing their own religious tradition through the vegan movement and connecting it to their own soteriological goals; this has also been observed among Jain vegans (Miller and Dickstein,

³⁷ Permissible.

³⁸ Wholesome, clean, pure.

2021:14). It is through faith veganism therefore, that a faith vegan may perform their religious, or faith vegan, identity.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have answered the first of my research questions, how do understandings of veganism change form when intersected with religion? The key contribution of this chapter is a new typology of veganism, *faith veganism*, which I define as *a form of veganism that is intersected with religion and informed by religious ethics and principles*. Due to faith veganism's grounding in religion, there is a potential for clashes in outlook and values between faith vegans and nonreligious vegans, resulting in the former seeking to avoid interactions with the latter. Furthermore, stigma and exclusion, especially experienced by Muslim and Jewish vegans, are creating the need for new identities and safe spaces, centred upon both religiosity and veganism. As such, faith vegans are carving out a new identity for themselves, which I term *faith vegan identity*, as well as new communities, which I term *faith vegan community*. A further coalition key to this research is the combination of religious and secular vegan ethics, which is true of all Abrahamic faiths at the very least. This creates what I term *faith vegan ethics*, and it is this set of ethics that underpins faith veganism. These ethics, and specifically the religious principles that drive them, inform faith vegans' embodied dispositions and give rise to *faith vegan stewardship*, which explains how faith vegans veganise the religious principle of stewardship and how through it, they characterise concern for the entirety of God's world. Faith vegan stewardship informs both one's principles and one's practices.

The combining of religiosity and veganism also prompts the construction of veganism as an ideal way of living out one's religious life, albeit involving the disruption of social, cultural, and dietary norms. As such, faith veganism becomes *cultural deviance as religious observance*; through this, edibility and ethics are redefined, particularly around the conceptions of purity, pollution, and wellbeing (Douglas, 2002). With religious ethics and principles being at the very heart of faith veganism, it can also therefore be understood to be a religious practice and a new way of articulating one's faith tradition in late modernity; reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010) guides this process. This chapter has evidenced how religious ethics inform embodied dispositions, but how does one make the transition from consuming animal products to eschewing them? In the next chapter, I explore how a trigger can catalyse the reflexive examination of said embodied dispositions, resulting in lifestyle and behaviour change.

Chapter 5 Ethics and Values in Becoming and Belonging: The Faith Vegan Journey

Becoming vegan constitutes the adoption of a lifestyle that goes against the dominant carnist culture (Joy, 2010) and rejects social norms that may be deeply intertwined with religious and cultural traditions and practices (Hastorf, 2017:228; Twine, 2014:628). In so doing, one pursues a path of marginalisation (McDonald, 2000:17) and invites difference and exclusion (Julier, 2013:103). What then inspires individuals to choose such a lifepath for themselves? In this chapter, I draw on findings predominantly from the interviews but also from select discussions in each of the diary groups to answer the second of my research questions, how does one become a Muslim, Jewish, or Christian vegan? I begin by presenting a diagram which outlines the process of becoming a faith vegan, before explaining in depth some key milestones in the becoming journey, such as trigger, ethical and religious navigation, and transformation. I then explore how one learns to be a faith vegan, drawing on the Bourdieusian concepts of field and capital, before ending the chapter with a discussion on support and belonging, where I expand on the term *faith vegan community*.

5.1 Becoming a Faith Vegan

Frameworks exist that explore the process of becoming vegan, such as McDonald's (2000) vegan learning process, Giacomani et al.'s (2021) vegan career, and Mendes's (2013) application of the transtheoretical model to the process of becoming vegan, all of which were outlined in the Literature Review. These frameworks neglect the complex ethical and religious navigation my participants engaged in, however, describing instead a more secular experience of becoming vegan. As such, they do not accurately portray the process of becoming a faith vegan. I therefore offer an amended model in Figure 5.1 below.

My model combines, rearranges, and adds to these existing frameworks. Unlike Giacomani et al. (2021:17) though, I do not include 'becoming activist' as part of the process, since few participants identified as an activist; one can be vegan without being an activist. After illustrating the model, I define each step concisely, before exploring three key steps in greater depth.

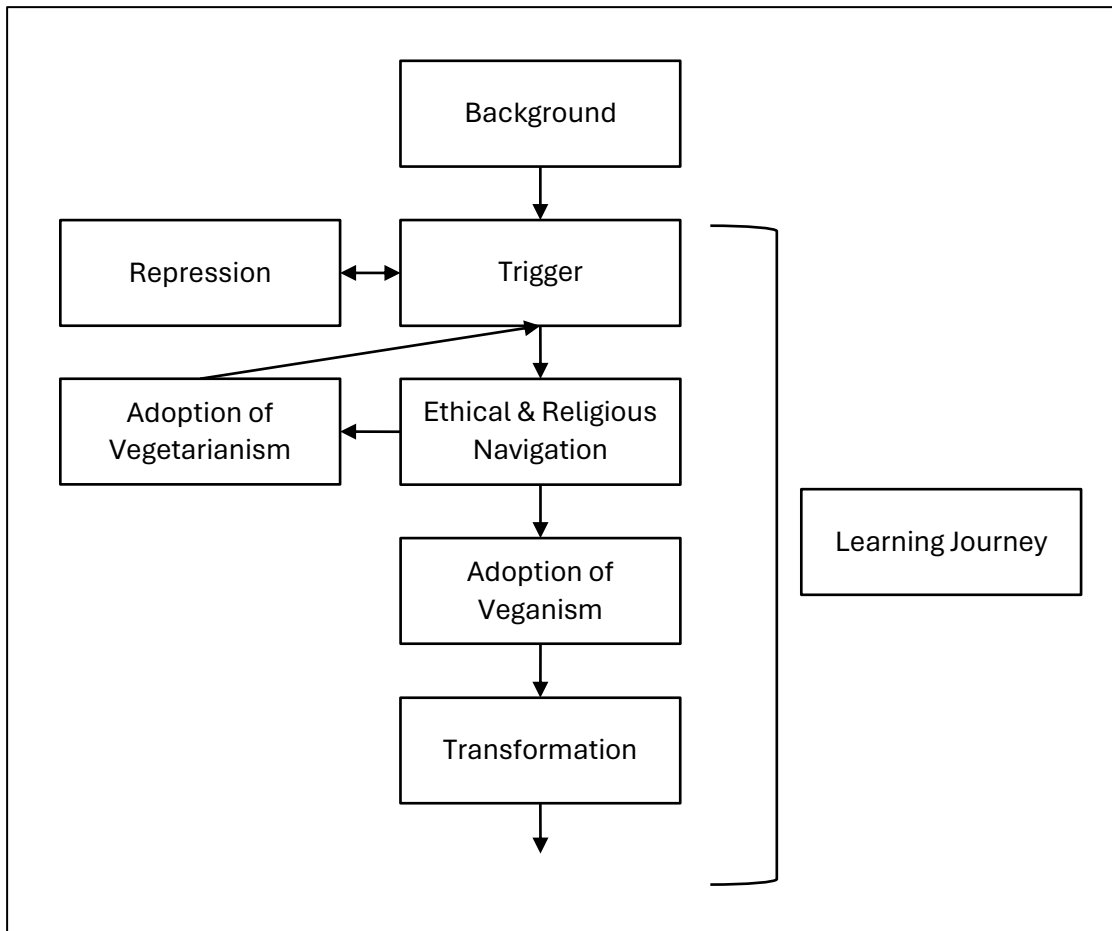


Figure 5.1 The journey to becoming a faith vegan

Background refers to the individual and their previous socialisation and experiences, or what we can call their habitus (Bourdieu, 1990a), all of which summarises who they were prior to their vegan journey. This step aligns with McDonald’s (2000:6) “who I was”, Giacoman et al.’s (2021:9) “origin” and Mendes’s (2013:146) “precontemplation” stages.

Trigger refers to the experience that opens an individual’s eyes to veganism and propels them into action; it is at this point that the vegan journey begins. McDonald (2000:6) refers to this as a “catalytic experience”, whilst Giacoman et al. (2021:10) include it in their “personal questioning” stage and Mendes (2013:146) in the “contemplation” stage.

Repression, a sideways step in the journey of becoming vegan, may or may not occur. This is where individuals were exposed to veganism or animal cruelty but did not make any lifestyle changes in response. Instead, they repressed the information, and it was only when another trigger occurred later in life that they took action. Among participants, this occurred in those who had wanted to go vegetarian as a child but whose parents were not supportive, and in those who had experienced a trigger during childhood but who had been socialised to accept the killing and consumption of animals as normal. McDonald (2000:6) includes repression in her framework, but Giacoman et al. (2021:9) and Mendes (2013:144) do not.

Ethical and religious navigation outlines the process of evaluation and reasoning that participants engage in when evaluating whether what they have witnessed in the trigger is ethical or unethical, and whether the proposed action, i.e. veganism, aligns with their respective religions. Giacomani et al. (2021:10) include reflexivity in their “personal questioning” stage, and Mendes (2013:146) in the “contemplation” stage, but for faith vegans, reflexive religiosity more specifically is a fundamental stage which was until now absent from academic studies on veganism, so I afford it its own step in the becoming model.

Some may then move onto the *adopting vegetarianism* step, following a vegetarian diet for many years before being exposed to further material that opens their eyes to veganism. This stage was experienced by 23 participants, and is thus important to include in the model, just as Giacomani et al. (2021:13) have.

Next, participants move onto the *adopting veganism* step, where individuals begin to practice veganism but are still learning and engaging in considerable reflexivity. This stage mirrors McDonald’s (2020:6) “decision”, Giacomani et al.’s (2021:15) “becoming vegan”, and Mendes’s (2013:147) “action” and “maintenance” stages.

Transformation is the final stage, encompassing conviction and the development of new tastes and understandings about the world. This mirrors McDonald’s (2000:6) “world view”, Mendes’s (2013:147) “termination”, and Giacomani et al.’s (2021:19) argument for the development of a new vegan habitus within their “becoming vegan” step.

Learning, I argue, cannot be fitted linearly into such a model, as McDonald (2000:11) and Mendes (2013:147) have; Mendes, however, uses the term “preparation” as opposed to learning. Rather, learning begins with the trigger and continues forth, since it is an ongoing, progressive journey, which to some degree never ends.

5.1.1 Trigger

The trigger is the event that initiates the journey to becoming a faith vegan. Generally, participants described a few triggers that all exerted an influence, with different triggers prompting their vegetarianism to their veganism. Overall, however, there were four main categories of trigger.

For many participants, the trigger was interactions with vegan friends or partners. Whilst this was less of a singular trigger moment and more of a series of interactions that gradually planted seeds, it was these relationships that ultimately propelled the individuals onto their vegan journey. Damian, Liam, and Hassan all went vegan following their partners’ adoption of veganism. Damian explained that he and his girlfriend were pescetarian until his girlfriend

decided one day she was going to try veganism. At first, he thought it was ridiculous, “until she told me one thing, and that's, you know, you are a human being, you're supposed to drink human milk, cows supposed to drink cow [...] she told me something extremely logical.” Three Jewish participants and three Christian participants were also introduced to veganism through conversations with vegan friends. These interactions thus served as a series of triggers that planted seeds in the individuals' minds and prompted them to begin ethical and religious navigation. Social networks can therefore play an important role in one's exposure to and inspiration to adopt veganism (Cherry, 2006), for faith vegans and nonreligious vegans alike.

In some cases, participants were interested in becoming vegan but had not yet acted. A health event then demanded immediate action and gave them the final push. Tamara had wanted to go vegan but had met resistance from her wife; it was only when they discovered their baby had a dairy allergy that Tamara went vegan so she could continue breastfeeding. Michelle had also wanted to go vegan but did not due to her husband's disapproval. When she had a bad eczema flare up and was recommended by others to avoid dairy, she decided to go vegan and saw improvements. As social beings, we prioritise our relationships with others (Sayer, 2011:148), sometimes even over our ethical beliefs, but our health can overrule our concerns and allow us to make changes. Further, whilst others may look at veganism disapprovingly, when it becomes clear that it can promote healthfulness, these views can change from disapproval to acceptance.

For four participants, religion itself served as the trigger. Shira became vegan during a gap year with her Jewish Youth Movement, which “gave the Jewish lens and my understanding of Jewish values with veganism”, whilst Farah's studies on the *seerah*³⁹ inspired her to make dietary changes. In addition to the influence of his wife, Liam also decided to adopt veganism as it was an easy way for him to observe the peace testimony within Quakerism. For Kareem meanwhile, whilst he was raised vegetarian by a vegetarian mother and a vegan father, he feels that it was his Islamic studies that gave the ultimate push towards veganism. He explained, “standing in front of God on the Day of Judgment [...] your mouth will testify that you ate things that you knew had come from harm [...] I wouldn't want my body parts to do that. And I wouldn't be able, if I can't justify it in front of God, then I'm not going to do it.” The key finding here then is that, through the application of religious values and ethics to modern practices, religion itself can become a trigger for veganism.

The most common form of trigger, however, was the witnessing of animal cruelty either first-hand or in the media. Judith shared the story of her becoming vegetarian aged 11:

³⁹ The life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

“I went into a butcher with my grandmother, and I saw like all of these like hanging carcasses and it was like, this lightbulb moment for me, I was just like, shit, like those are cows. Like how hectic is that? You know, and like, that was like the first time I kind of realised. Like this, like somebody lost their life, like right now, and this is their body, you know? And like, how is this respectful and how is this kind? And it was just like this lightbulb went on in my mind. I remember like, feeling so panicked.”

Other first-hand experiences included Laila and Zeinab’s witnessing of an animal sacrifice in their childhood, which had always stayed with them; only when they gained autonomy were they able to begin their vegan journey. For Laila this came upon leaving her abusive marriage and for Zeinab it was becoming a teenager and being able to cater for herself. Further, a third of participants described having watched a documentary or hard-hitting footage that served as their trigger; documentaries and media have been recognised elsewhere as a common trigger (Giacoman et al., 2021:11; Harding and Day, 2021:7). These included *Cowspiracy*, *Earthlings*, *Forks Over Knives*, *Okja*, *Game Changers*, *Carnage*, and other adverts and footage shared by vegan activists.

Whether it was witnessing animal suffering first-hand or through a screen, the experience can be a harrowing one, generating a series of negative emotions (Harding and Day, 2021:6; McDonald, 2000:9). Participants described feeling shocked, horrified, angry, heartbroken, guilty, and ashamed. These emotions comprise a mixture of “reflex emotions”, short-term emotions in response to a stimulus (Bericat, 2016:492), and “moral emotions”, which relate to judgement and indicate approval or disapproval (p.493). Of particular interest here are moral emotions (Turner and Stets, 2006), which theorists have postulated are experienced when social norms are violated (Bericat, 2016:503; Turner and Stets, 2006:546). In the case of veganism however, it could be argued that no social norms have been violated, since animal farming and slaughter is a fundamental part of carnist culture. We can understand therefore that it is the religious values of compassion and kindness that are being violated, and it is this violation that cause moral emotions to arise. Disgust and anger are common responses to moral violations committed by others, which one has interpreted as inhumane or offensive (Turner and Stets, 2006:553), and which participants felt went completely against the loving and compassionate spirit of their religions. Recognition of one’s own deviance from moral values (p.557) was common too; upon recognising their own contribution to moral violations, many reported moral emotions such as panic, sadness, shame, and guilt. Leah “was ignorant of all those things. I really just had not been exposed to it, which I feel ashamed to say as someone who likes to think they’re kind of engaged in the world and relatively informed.”

The information that is revealed in these triggers is constructed as “truth” (Oliver, 2023b:5), which following exposure, becomes impossible to not know (McDonald, 2000:9); thus, the individual is compelled to act. However, the embodied emotional reactions to this “truth” can also challenge religious belief. Whilst challenges to religious belief were either non-existent or tended to be very short-lived, the issue persisted within two participants. Zakir explained, “my veganism had made me question my Islam [...] it's something that is so strongly ingrained in orthodoxy and that's, to veer away from it sometimes makes you question the whole concept as well.” Judith meanwhile said, “for a religion that encourages kindness and compassion, it's pretty counterproductive to say that it's OK the way that we mass breed, produce and like abuse and slaughter animals.” She added that she struggles on Yom Kippur when people “daven⁴⁰ and beg for forgiveness for all of the sins that we've done but like why is that only once a year when we literally are taking away, like we're murdering every single day, you know, on a mass scale and like, why isn't that addressed on Yom Kippur?” Whether or not the “truth” revealed in triggers prompts questioning of one's religious beliefs, the key finding here is that triggers, particularly those that are hard-hitting, generate negative emotions which then catalyse the reflexive examination of embodied dispositions. Moral emotions thus inform everyday ethical reasoning (Sayer, 2011:148; Nussbaum, 2001:1), and for faith vegans particularly, initiate ethical and religious navigation.

5.1.2 Ethical and Religious Navigation

A fundamental step in becoming a faith vegan, which has largely been neglected from existing models, is *ethical and religious navigation*. During this stage, faith vegans are guided by their embodied ethics and values, and engage in reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010), whereby religious beliefs, values, and principles are evaluated, reinterpreted, and re-applied through veganism. I divide this section into its two respective parts: ethical navigation and religious navigation.

5.1.2.1 Ethical Navigation

Humans are ethical beings, having the capability to evaluate and judge practices as ‘ethical’, although not always behaving in an ethical manner (Sayer, 2011:143). Ethics therefore goes hand in hand with evaluation; whilst religious law is largely directive, ethics are not so “black and white” (Farah). In the absence of definitive ethical guidelines therefore, how do participants evaluate whether something is ethical or unethical, according to their understanding of ethics, as discussed in Section 4.3? The answer falls into two categories: *feeling* and *thinking*.

⁴⁰ Recite the prescribed liturgical prayers.

Interestingly, these are the two categories that refer to the decision-making, or “judging”, approaches within the Myers-Briggs personality model (Briggs Myers and Myers, 1995:29), and which were also observed, but not elaborated upon, by both McDonald (2000:19) and Giacomani et al. (2021:9). There is evidently an element of personality or predispositions (Sayer, 2011:150) in how one evaluates ethics therefore, and this can be understood sociologically as embodied religion and embodied ethics (feeling) and reflexivity and reflexive religiosity (thinking).

A large number of participants were led by their feelings; the evaluation of ethics can therefore be very corporeal. Three locations in the body were specifically identified as being a site of ethical evaluation: the gut, the heart, and the mind:

“I trust my gut a lot more than I probably should.” (Hannah)

“If I was making a decision like that, I would go with my own heart and trust that I'm a good enough person.” (Jessica)

“You see the videos of those kinds of thing, [...] your mind says to it that's not right.” (Hassan)

The gut is widely associated with intuition, which we understand here as moral intuitions or one's conscience (Thagard and Finn, 2011:150), the heart is associated with love, indicating Jessica's embodiment of loving values, whilst the mind is a place of rationality and indicates Hassan's embodiment of ethics and reason. Values and ethics can thus occupy and influence different body parts, as well as the body as a whole. For Beth, veganism “just feels morally right”, but it is not clear where exactly this feeling is taking place. Many other participants spoke of feelings and corporeal experiences linked to ethics, without attributing those feelings to a specific body part. We can thus understand this immediate sense of what is right to be a form of ethical intuitionism (Huemer, 2005; Stratton-Lake, 2002). A further example of this would be the internal compass, described as keeping them on an ethical path:

“You've built an internal religious, moral, ethical compass, and that's steering you in a direction, and you know when you're going off path [...] being Muslim, we know where that internal compass comes from, right? Ultimately it just comes from God. And it's a way of telling us, take a step back and think about what you're about to do.” (Kareem)

“I find having been a Christian for me supports that ethical decision, it supports that decision to say well yeah it is the right thing to do, because your religion is a guide of what's right and wrong. It is a compass for me” (Malcolm)

“This kind of internal compass about what feels right for me. And how does that fit into the bigger scheme? Because of course it's not just about me, but it's about, you know, the world as a whole.” (Tamara)

For Kareem and Malcolm, their internal compass is very much God-driven and evident of embodied religion. They have internalised their religious beliefs and values and develop bodily feelings in the form of their compass feeling ‘off’ when they begin to stray from what they deem to be a religiously ethical path. Tamara, meanwhile, who is more culturally Jewish, places an emphasis on ethics and thus demonstrates embodied ethics, whereby she has internalised her cultural ethics and values, and just in the same way as Kareem and Malcolm, develops bodily feelings when she begins to stray from her ethical path. A “moral compass” such as this has been noted among studies with Jains (Shah, 2014:521) and Indian American Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs (Joshi, 2006:62), and is described as being a tool that assists with the negotiations and challenges associated with competing values in pluralist societies (Shah, 2014:521). Regardless of whether one is more religious or cultural then, it is inevitable that individuals will be faced with numerous negotiations when living in multicultural societies such as Great Britain. Evaluation thus becomes an ethical imperative in late modern societies.

Regardless of how one understands conscience, it can certainly be understood as a form of reason (Sayer, 2011:153), as it is, in essence, an internal sense of right and wrong, or as Thagard and Finn (2011:150) call “moral intuition”, which can take the form of an “emotional consciousness” (p.151). Moral intuitions can arise in light of new information, or a trigger, and when that information is of an ‘(un)ethical’ nature, the conscience will generally take a moral stance and pass judgement (p.162); for the individuals in this study, the judgement was that veganism is the most ethical behaviour. The key finding here is that faith vegans will draw on feelings generated by their conscience, or “internal compass” (Kareem; Tamara), to guide them in their ethical reasoning practices, and therefore in their journey as a faith vegan. Whether something is ethical can thus be evaluated through *feeling*, relying on bodily feelings, one’s internal compass, one’s conscience, and even one’s emotions. Thus, feeling itself is a reasoning practice (Sayer, 2011:153).

Other participants meanwhile demonstrated a *thinking* approach to their evaluative practices, thus engaging in reflexivity. Farah says she has engaged in much “moral navigation” throughout her vegan journey, with many others describing the questions they ask themselves to reach an answer. For some, these questions relate to religious beliefs and values, further demonstrating the centrality of religion to some participants’ understanding of ethics:

“Is it kind? Do I need to? Do I need to have that? [...] what would Jesus do? [...] if Jesus was looking on, would he be pleased?” (Beth)

“First is it halal? Is it haram? Then vegan or not?” (Sara)

It is common to look to a role model when evaluating how ethical something is (Sayer, 2011:162). Sometimes the role model can be someone of religious importance, like Jesus for Beth, or sometimes it can be the religious teachings themselves, as is the case for Sara. Oftentimes however, the point of focus is the self and how one would feel in the position of the being in question. Many thus asked questions relating to the sentience of animals, further evidencing their practice of fellow-feeling (p.118) and faith vegan stewardship:

“Would I be happy if someone did this to me and that includes animals [...] I wouldn't be happy if people treated animals, treated other humans like this, treated me like this. So therefore, I don't want to treat animals that way either.” (Malcolm)

“Why would I make anything suffer that doesn't need to suffer?” (Amy)

“We've been put as guardians to the Earth and we're responsible and it's not OK to torture animals, and I, if I know that it's not OK for me to hit my cat, it's not OK for me to then pay someone to abuse a cow or another animal, and just sort of close my eyes and pretend, I don't know this is happening.” (Sara)

As discussed earlier, the sentience of animals was recognised by study participants, and many were able to imagine an animal's suffering as their own. Resultingly, many reflected on their own desires and fears and sought to avoid anything deemed harmful to animals. Many would also reflect on the wider consequences of their actions, further evidence of a biocentric worldview:

“I often asked myself the question, ‘what if everybody else did the same thing as me, would the planet be a better place or not?’ And if the answer is no, then I try not to do it.” (Sara)

“Responsibility acts like a ripple across the ocean. What I do affects my family, affects the neighbours, affects the environment.” (Ibrahim)

Here, we see the application of ethical navigation, both in embodied and reflexive forms, to the goal of faith vegan stewardship, whereby faith vegans think about the possible consequences of a given action and make a decision which aligns with their objective of caring for God's Creation. But it was not only their interpretations of ethics that they had to navigate; they also had to navigate religious discourse itself.

5.1.2.2 Religious Navigation

After concluding that veganism is ethical and should be adopted, many participants still had to navigate their religion's beliefs and teachings to find a way to connect veganism to their religion.

It must be emphasised at this point that generally, participants did not feel the need to check the permissibility of veganism within their religious traditions, suggesting an embodied understanding of how the two were already aligned and complementary, or alternatively, an indication of religion's reduced authority in late modern societies (Giddens, 1994:56). Regardless, veganism merely represented the eschewal of some foods and the continued consumption of other foods; essentially, they were not embarking on *new* practices that could fall outside of religious belief and practice. Veganism was also symbolic of religious ethics and values, so participants easily made a connection between the two without the need for much research. Challenges arose for faith vegans where certain rituals and practices were concerned, as will be discussed in Chapter 6, so religious navigation became necessary both for correct religious observance and self-justification to others.

Despite an overall ease connecting veganism and religion, participants nevertheless had rehearsed responses should they be questioned by co-religionists, in which they were extremely confident referencing religious values and teachings that supported or even promoted a vegan lifestyle. This demonstrates a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986:243), or more specifically religious capital (Iannaccone, 1990:299), which was invaluable to faith vegans, but which non-religious vegans did not need to amass. Such knowledge was in part acquired from faith vegan communities, which I explore in Sections 5.2 and 5.3, and in part through reflexive practices, namely reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010), whereby participants reflected upon and reinterpreted religious beliefs and practices. More specifically, there is considerable evidence of cataphatic reflexivity (Mouzelis, 2012:217), where participants revised their practices in light of new information and reflection.

Key to participants' reflexive religiosity was religious individuality, which was inferred by many: "I'm Jewish in my own Jewishness" (Ethan) and "everyone's Islam is different" (Zeinab). Participants thus felt a sense of agency in how they lived as religious beings; religious individuality such as this has also been observed among Jews (Croland, 2019:95) and Muslims (Jeldtoft, 2011; Torrekens et al., 2022) in other studies. We can draw on the lived religion approach (Ammerman, 2007; Knibbe and Kupari, 2020; McGuire, 2008) to understand the multiple ways in which religion is lived by individuals, so not only can we speak of an "individualization of belief" (Beck, 2010:140) therefore, but also an individualisation of religious practice, as this thesis demonstrates. Such religious individuality was central to the reimagining of religiosity and the performance of religion in new ways.

Furthermore, among participants, religion was widely understood to be transformational, requiring reinterpretation as time progresses:

“While Halacha⁴¹ can’t change, the interpretations of how to implement it have.”

(Leah)

“I personally believe that the Bible is written for us to interpret in our own way. And if the Bible was written in 2021, like there would be no mentions of slaughter, of sacrifice.” (Sam)

“Islam doesn't change in that we can't add or take away from the Qur'an. The entire process of jurisprudence is people interpreting, drawing analogies, inferring, evaluating, and so it's not bid'ah⁴² to evaluate.” (Mohammad)

Many participants commented on the need to interpret religious texts and then apply those interpretations to the modern world. In a sense, it is “the values that are instilled in the Qur'an” [or Torah or Bible] (Zakir) which become the most guiding aspect of religion, rather than the “text that is over 2000 years old and meant for a different culture” (Liam). And it is these values that participants emphasised so strongly as being in alignment with veganism.

Reflexive religiosity was prevalent among the majority of participants, but of notable interest was the increased practice of reflexivity during Ramadan for Muslim vegans. Farah listened to daily *tafsir*⁴³ during the month, whilst Ibrahim listened to a series of talks and reflections by Islamic scholars, Abdal Hakim Murad and Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, on YouTube. Laila prefers “to stay up and continue reading and learning through the night”, whilst Sara, Mohammad, Zakir, and Ibrahim, in particular, shared lengthy reflections on numerous topics in the Muslim WhatsApp diary group. For Muslim vegans, the exceptional month of Ramadan inspires a re-engagement with Islam and demands a slowing down and a re-examination of what the religion is understood to teach; in this way, Muslim vegans engage in *ijtihad*⁴⁴ (Mukhtar and Todd, 2023:276) and further consolidate their faith veganism.

Also of note was how throughout the month of August, the Christian WhatsApp diary group was transformed into a Bible study group by a few participants, who decided to read Proverbs together. The same passages were interpreted in varying ways by each individual, but

⁴¹ Jewish law.

⁴² Innovation.

⁴³ Exegesis of the Qur'an.

⁴⁴ “The practice of thinking, reasoning, and debating to draw conclusions based on the human application of thought, considering the overall spirit of Islam” (Mukhtar and Todd, 2023:269).

particularly in vegan ways. For example, Proverbs 17:1⁴⁵, was read and interpreted “with my “vegan glasses” on” (Nicola). Nicola reflected:

“Of course as vegans we know there's plenty of choice! And we too can "feast"! But most people don't go vegan due to the taste of meat/dairy... We prefer what might be considered less for peace than to take part in feasting that causes strife. (I read harm...)”

This same verse was referenced by Joanne in the interview. Where Nicola understood the verse to refer to the avoidance of harm, Joanne reflected on Christian values of peace and simplicity and how that aligns with veganism. Despite two different, albeit similar, interpretations, this verse, which neither mentions veganism nor meat consumption, has been interpreted in a vegan way.

Michelle also shared a prayer that had been included in the morning prayers of a church she used to attend. She “found it quite profound and meaningful for vegans.” It read:

“Just as a table without bread
is a needy one,
so absence of charity
is ruin to the soul,
for the soul walks by love
and the one who does not love
abides in death.
Bless our full table, Lord.
Help us to supply the need
of others
and walk in love.
Amen
(John, monk of Farne)”

Michelle reflected:

“I'm obviously reading more into it than what the author probably intended, but it made me think of people who aren't vegan, as people who "abide in death" as they consume

⁴⁵ “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet, than a house full of feasting, with strife.” (Proverbs 17:1, NIV).

death. And also about how plant agriculture can feed and sustain more people than animal agriculture.”

Again, this passage neither makes reference to veganism nor meat consumption, yet Michelle has focused on the word “death” and understood it to refer to animal slaughter. In all of these examples, we can see evidence of reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010), and to some degree cataphatic reflexivity (Mouzelis, 2012:217), whereby participants have taken a piece of information and reflected upon its underlying message, all of which informs the revision and transformation of their religious practice. The key finding here then is that veganism offers a filter through which religion can be reinterpreted.

Humans themselves were understood by participants to be evaluative beings (Sayer, 2011:1), with both the capacity and the responsibility to reflect. Leah said, “humans are designed / wired to create, evolve, enquire, imagine and explore so I do struggle to accept that some things decided by Rabbis centuries ago can’t be reinterpreted.” Hassan further added, “basically whatever religion says, I think through it, I mean like in lots of hadiths and that, it says religion is for thinkers.” Zakir meanwhile tends “to go deeper than superficial interpretation of Quran and hadith. We have been blessed with intellect.” Participants thus felt empowered to engage in interpretation and evaluate tradition themselves (Sayer, 2011:128). This level of interpretation does however require a fair degree of religious knowledge, but in a literate and wealthy country such as the UK, where knowledge is largely accessible, the capital required to engage in such religious interpretation was, on the whole, available to participants. Further, such analytical activities may only be permitted within a field accepting of religious individuality and reflexivity, and a time of individualised faith; otherwise, it would be taboo and much less possible (Beck, 2010:144). Thus, the field of the UK is conducive to reflexive religiosity and religious reinterpretation.

The key finding here is that through religious navigation, faith vegans practice what I term *autonomous moral re-engagement with religion*. *Autonomous* because participants felt empowered to self-govern and make decisions based on their own values, *moral* because they exhibited a deep concern for religious ethics and morals, *re-engagement* because they emphasised such ethics and values as being core to the religion but neglected in modern discourse, so they were re-engaging with them as opposed to engaging with them for the first time, and *with religion* because it was religion itself that was being examined and reinterpreted. In essence, this term refers to reflexive religiosity but with a core ethical focus. Through this process, participants not only transformed their understandings of religion, but they themselves also transformed into a faith vegan.

5.1.3 Transformation

Transformation is the final stage, encompassing conviction and the development of new tastes and understandings about the world. In the case of faith vegans, conviction developed after they were convinced that veganism was not only the most 'ethical' course of action, but that it also had a strong theological basis within their religion. It is also at this stage where they form faith vegan identities and acquire further cultural, religious, and social capital that combine veganism and religion, thereby providing a stronger sense of self and belonging.

Upon transformation, one notable change was that tastes had changed. Kate described trying cow's milk after a long time, "I actually retried cow's milk a few months ago [...] and I actually really didn't like it. Like, I just cannot drink it now. So my tastes have changed." Similarly, Ethan, a vegan of seven years described the vegan cheese and tofu products of the past as "vomit" and "flipping vile", whereas nowadays he regularly enjoys these products, although this could in part be due to improved quality. Taste transition is acknowledged in Twine's (2018:177) work, where he explains that the readjustment of food routines and the learning of a new competency of taste form part of the transformation process. Although it is arguable that other factors are at play too, such as the development of visceral disgust (Becker et al., 2022), which was present among many participants. Only five years previous, Sam regularly consumed meat, but now meat is "an instant turn-off" and an "absolute no-go." He explained that he has to walk past a butchers and a fishmongers when going to do his morning shop and he "can't think of anything worse than eating those kinds of food. Just like the smell, like the taste, like where it's come from, just like the suffering that those animals have had to go through." Amy meanwhile has previously turned down invites to social events due to visceral disgust. She had been invited to a staff meal but when she found out they were going to have a large gammon or joint, she thought, "I didn't want to see it and smell it, so I didn't, made an excuse and didn't go to that, 'cause it just, I found it a bit sickly." She explained, "meat makes me feel quite sick, the smell of it and yeah, I think it's a bit grim." Ibrahim also develops feelings of nausea around meat. He explained, "when I met my wife's family, the amount of meat that was consumed was just quite, made me physically sick just thinking about it." Meat is the most common foodstuff to elicit visceral disgust (Becker et al., 2022:3), however Nicola did say that since going vegan, cheese now makes her "feel disgusting" too. The overlapping of ethics and aesthetics therefore changes perceptions and tastes (Twine, 2018:177) and makes what once looked tasty and appealing, become disgusting and nausea-inducing. This is also likely due to the total eschewal of meat, since studies have shown that visceral disgust develops following a period of avoidance (Becker et al., 2022:11), which of course was the case for all participants.

Perceptions and worldviews had also changed. What was once normal and religiously permissible had become strange and disgusting. Aaliyah finds “it a bit strange actually, consuming milk from an animal now”, whilst Maryam now finds “it weird not to be vegan.” Further, animals were no longer considered food (McDonald, 2000:15), so understandings of edibility were redefined (Douglas, 2002; Panizza, 2020:4). As Farah explained, “I now see the animal. I can't eat this.” When looking at an animal product, individuals no longer just saw the material item, they could see beyond by envisioning an animal and to some degree its past as a living, sentient being before having its life cut short.

Participants' biocentric worldviews, as discussed in Section 4.3, were also either formed or consolidated. Such a worldview is also present in nonreligious vegans (McDonald, 2000:16), however, faith vegans connect their perspectives to their religious ethics. Through continued practice of veganism, cognitive beliefs about the world are consolidated (Sayer, 2011:125) and upon transformation, these same practices become habitual, forming new embodied dispositions (p.131); in short, a vegan habitus is achieved (Giacoman et al., 2021:6). Within religious contexts, however, a commitment to one's religious habitus is still maintained. In her sample of Jain vegans, Shah (2014:521) referred to her participants as having a reflexive Jain habitus. The same could be applied here and we could speak of a reflexive Muslim/Jewish/Christian habitus, since participants both maintained a commitment to their respective religious habitus and demonstrated reflexivity in how they interpreted and applied religious principles and ethics. However, I argue this could be taken a step further by describing this as a reflexive Muslim/Jewish/Christian vegan habitus, or more neatly as a *reflexive faith vegan habitus*. Through their transformation into a faith vegan, participants' religiosity and veganism were consolidated into *faith veganism* and as such both their religious worldview and their vegan worldview shaped their newfound habitus; in essence, the reflexive faith vegan habitus is informed by faith vegan ethics. This new habitus plays a key role in maintaining a vegan lifestyle as new ways of understanding the world, and more specifically religion, had been realised.

5.2 Learning How to be a Faith Vegan

Becoming a faith vegan involves both learning and unlearning ideas about the world (Oliver, 2023b:7). To accomplish this, one must acquire capital, specifically cultural capital, in the form of knowledge and skills, and social capital, in the form of support and belonging (Bourdieu, 1986:243), both of which may be helped or hindered by the field in which one is situated (Bourdieu, 1983:312). Field and capital also play a key role in maintaining a vegan lifestyle. Little

framework exists on how to be a faith vegan however, so participants were effectively pioneers in this new field.

Participants embarked on their vegan learning journey at different times, so the ease of becoming vegan differed substantially among participants. The longest standing vegan is Ibrahim who has been vegan for 37 years, having gone vegan as a young man in the 1970s. When he began his vegan journey, there was little support, so he relied heavily on his local library and health food shop; the experience of someone becoming vegan nowadays could not be more different. The field of the UK has changed to one where veganism is “a normal minority” (Amy) and more “mainstream” (Jacob; Liam; Michelle), but this change has only happened recently. Ethan has been vegan for seven years and in that time, he observes that veganism has “snowballed”. For individuals who have become vegan in the past couple of years or who are contemplating making the change, the field of the UK is now perceived, by participants, to be a very supportive environment.

Participants described how, in the UK, there are countless vegan options in shops and restaurants, and how one can go anywhere without any difficulty, oftentimes without any preparation at all. Ari said,

“It's pretty easy to be vegan. Like you can go out anywhere. And like, I just got back from Wales, I went on annual leave to like Snowdonia hiking last week and they had some tiny little café in a village where there were like five houses, they did like a vegan breakfast.”

Such ease in accessing vegan food grants individuals a confidence that can assist them in transitioning to veganism. In addition to accessing food, participants also felt that there is an awareness and understanding of veganism among the general population, which is considerably less prevalent in other countries. Jessica explained, “I feel so lucky that we've got the options that we have and the acceptance and the awareness that we have. I don't feel the need to explain myself as much or validate it as much.” Jessica recently had to work in Turkey for two months and she repeatedly found that others did not understand what veganism was, so they kept offering her non-vegan foods; she does not face the same difficulties in the UK. The field of the UK therefore facilitates veganism, by offering ample opportunities to learn about veganism and access vegan items.

These factors also aid with the maintenance of a vegan lifestyle. Malcolm explained,

“It's getting easier because there's so much more available and it's so much more accepted in society. And even outside the foods, you know, you go into the supermarket now, you're getting a lot of toiletry and cleaning products that advertise

themselves as vegan, so it's easier to find it, because there's so many things now and everything, clothing and everything, they're saying they're vegan, that's making it easier.”

Products that are suitable for vegans are now routinely labelled as such making it easy to identify them. Further, they are easily accessible in a whole range of eateries and shopping outlets, making it convenient for consumers to locate and purchase them. Malcolm also remarks how veganism is accepted in society, a belief echoed by many other participants across all three religions. That veganism is now, to some degree, normalised within the field of the UK, makes the vegan lifestyle somewhat less othered, and thus more straight-forward to maintain.

During the learning journey, one must acquire knowledge and a range of skills to facilitate the successful adoption of veganism, what Bourdieu (1986:243) refers to as cultural capital, which within the field of late modern Great Britain is fortunately in abundance. Some key elements of cultural capital transitioning vegans must acquire include:

- 1) The arguments for veganism: Louis and Nicola spent considerable time watching documentaries to amass this type of cultural capital, as this not only informs one's motivations and conviction (McDonald, 2000:11), but also makes for a more effective activist should that be the path one chooses. Thus, this form of capital affords vegans the status of being a person in the know.
- 2) The practicalities of *doing* veganism: This includes learning new cooking skills, such as cooking with new foods (Ethan), veganising meals with replacement products (Farah) or working with meat alternatives like seitan (Zeinab), substituting ingredients, particularly eggs (Shira) and milk (Daniel), nutritional requirements (Sara), how to read ingredients labels (Kareem), where to eat out (Jacob), and which shops to frequent (Leah). Liam remarked, “you kind of have to relearn to cook. It's a different type of cooking.” Additionally, learning how to veganise cultural dishes or ritual foods becomes particularly important for faith vegans; this is explored in Chapter 6. This type of learning is essential for both successful vegan practice (Paxman, 2021:9; Twine, 2014:636; 2018:172) and healthfulness (Laakso et al., 2022:11), as well as for counteracting the risk of consuming food which has now become inedible (Giacoman et al., 2023b:6).
- 3) Management strategies: Participants reported planning ahead (Kareem), taking food with them (Louis), boundary management when sharing spaces with non-vegans (Leah), and significant research, particularly when travelling (Ari). Especially in new places, as with

travelling, participants spoke of using trusted sites, like Happy Cow⁴⁶ (Jacob) to help them find vegan eateries, or opting for self-catered accommodation (Michelle). This type of capital is important, particularly during times or in spaces where one could get caught out. Similar management strategies have also been noted in the literature as playing a key role in the maintenance of a vegan lifestyle (Paxman, 2021:10; Twine, 2014:636; Williams et al., 2023:4). However, the adoption of veganism can cause vegans to lose status and advantage within their respective communities, or even become subject to stigma, as was discussed in Section 4.2. Thus, the acquisition of capital associated with management strategies can assist vegans in maintaining their existing level of capital and remaining competitive and included in their respective spaces.

4) How to be a faith vegan: Individuals need to become acquainted with religious discourse that supports their veganism, such as pro-vegan teachings and values, as well as develop responses to the teachings and practices that appear to be anti-vegan. Further, they need to learn how to navigate specific rituals and practices, as Section 6.2 will explore. The key finding here is that religion adds an extra dimension to veganism, so faith vegans must acquire extra capital, that nonreligious vegans need not, in order to successfully negotiate the two. This constitutes a form of religious capital, comprising knowledge of one's religious tradition, engaging in religious activities, and an embeddedness within the religious community (Iannaccone, 1990:299; Stark and Finke, 2000:120). As with capital associated with management strategies, this type of capital also helps with status maintenance, and reduces the risk of the faith vegan being perceived as a heretic and excluded, providing they can demonstrate the deeply-woven connections between veganism and their religion, and thus its acceptability as a lifestyle practice.

The forms of cultural capital listed above can be gained from research, such as reading books (Isaac), searching the Internet (Aaliyah), or watching videos on YouTube (Kareem) and Netflix (Louis), as well as from communities themselves, especially digital communities and social media (Nadia). Such sources are also common among vegans more broadly (Giacoman et al., 2021:14-15; Harding and Day, 2021:7; McDonald, 2000:13), but another source unique to faith vegans is reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010), as one engages with religious ideas and narratives, and reinterprets them or reflects on them. This creates new ideas and knowledge (new cultural and religious capital) which guides them in their journey towards establishing themselves as faith vegans.

⁴⁶ An app and website with an international listing of vegetarian and vegan eateries and shops.

Social capital is also hugely important for learning how to be vegan, and this refers to social networks and communities (Bourdieu, 1986:248). In the modern world, social media and digital communities play a key role in the process of learning (Kley et al., 2023:885; Laakso et al., 2022:10; Hungara and Nobre, 2022:2). Unsurprisingly therefore, many study participants sought out vegan groups, pages, and videos in order to learn from others. Laila “followed a lot of pages on Instagram, like people, what kind of meals they eat, things like that”, whilst Tamara gained knowledge from the wide range of vegan groups she had joined on Facebook. Social media and digital communities are therefore valuable sites, where participants can acquire knowledge and skills (Lawo et al., 2020:8) as well as access resources (Patra, 2015:103), all of which play a key role in practice transformation. The knowledge and resources contained on these platforms are generally shared by other vegans, so digital communities tend to be a non-hierarchical learning platform where everyone can learn from each other (Hungara and Nobre, 2022:2). Aaliyah uses her social media platform to educate others about veganism, but equally she acknowledges that there are times when she herself gets stuck, so she turns to the digital communities she is a member of to ask questions (Laakso et al., 2022:10) and explore responses to anti-vegan perspectives and practices (p.13). Social media is argued to be a go-to learning resource among vegans in particular (Kley et al., 2023:885), as it offers personalised information better tailored to one’s preferences and interests (p.10). This was certainly the case for participants who had become vegan in recent years and thus had access to social media. Facebook groups, Instagram pages, and YouTube videos were among the most popular sites for learning how to be vegan, as they were easily accessible and consumable, and were created by like-minded others who had the relevant cultural capital that participants sought.

Many participants were very clear that they did not join digital communities for socialising purposes, however. They instead joined these spaces in order to obtain recipe inspiration or keep updated on vegan news. Hannah, who has previously clashed with vegans online, explained, “I’m a part of some vegan Facebook groups. I don’t like them. [...] I struggle with the vegan community as much as that exists. But I stay in the Facebook groups for like food recommendations [laughs]. But like, I don’t talk to them ‘cause they annoy me.” Malcolm also admitted to not being very active in vegan groups, but explained, “I joined some groups on Facebook, just to see recipes and things like that to be honest.”

In addition to inspiration and recommendations, digital communities also enable individuals to keep abreast of new products, new eateries, and upcoming events; they are spaces for exchanging information (Lawo et al., 2020:10). Beth joined her local area’s vegan Facebook group as it shares information, such as “which restaurants do vegan stuff, who has vegan menus, where’s good to eat”, as well as being “based mainly around food or ‘Asda’s got a new product range’ and somebody will photograph it.” Michelle also joined her local area’s vegan

Facebook group “just to find what’s quite local, find stuff.” The level of interaction within digital vegan communities could therefore be minimal, but members remain members for the occasional inspiration or information that might appear on their feeds. The key finding here is that many participants used online secular vegan groups solely as a source of information, or cultural capital acquisition, thereby rendering them sites of consumption, as opposed to sites of contribution and socialising, since they lacked interest in the social side of digital communities. Longstanding vegans, who had become vegan before or in the early days of social media, were most likely to use digital communities in this way. They had already acquired sufficient cultural capital, so did not need to use these groups for learning purposes, but they did need to keep abreast of developments in the vegan world. Digital communities thus provided an excellent opportunity to stay updated without much commitment.

Participants also spoke of digital vegan communities centred upon religiosity. Online vegan Muslim spaces were valuable sources of cultural and religious capital (Zaki et al., 2021:1433), helping individuals learn how to be a Muslim vegan, by giving insight into religious arguments, relevant teachings, management strategies, and the practicalities of navigating religious and cultural practices as a vegan. When faced with a dilemma, Aaliyah will turn to “the Vegan Muslim Community group as well, like what people do, like in those kinds of scenarios.” She described it as “a really good supportive group because like you’ve got a lot of active people on there who bring a lot of Islamic knowledge.” With no books and very few organisations set up that encourage veganism within Islam (Zaki et al., 2021:1435), the Internet, and particularly social media, became the go-to place to inform oneself (Kley et al., 2023:885) and gain religious capital. Spaces such as these are what I term *faith vegan communities*, communities centred upon both veganism and religiosity. I explore these in greater depth below.

5.3 Support and Belonging

In Table 5.1, I briefly outline the communities that participants reported to be a member of. Just over three quarters of participants reported to be a member of a religious community, a similar number to those who were members of a digital vegan community, whilst just over half of the Muslims and Jews were members of a faith vegan community, compared to just two Christians. Moreover, half of the participants had vegan friends, whilst just under half had at least one vegan close family member, so support networks were available for many. Where face-to-face vegan groups were concerned however, only ten participants reported to be a member of these. Within this ten, groups included a vegan group at work (Jacob), vegan activist groups (Farah, Jessica, Judith, and Nicola), Vegan Runners (Amy and Malcolm), an extended social network (Tamara), and local vegan groups (Louis and Michelle). As we will see below however, these

participants did not always attend meetups regularly. This table suggests an overall lack of interest in engaging with the wider in-person vegan community, but a strong interest in alternative sources of support. Given the emphasis in the academic literature on the importance of in-person vegan social networks (Cherry, 2006:157), why, among my sample, is there such a profound disinterest? Or are the figures misleading, and rather than disinterest, it is more of a transition towards alternative sources of community?

	Muslims (12)	Jews (12)	Christians (12)	Total (36)
Religious community	8	9	11	28
In-person vegan community	1	3	6	10
Digital vegan spaces/ community	9	8	10	27
Faith vegan community (online or offline)	8	7	2	17
Vegan friends	5	6	7	18
Vegan family members	4	3	8	15

Table 5.1 Community membership among participants

In the modern world, society is certainly becoming ever more virtual, with the Internet and social media now playing important roles in many aspects of our everyday lives (Castells, 2010); indeed, it was largely through digital vegan communities and social media that I recruited the participants for this study. The Internet, alongside globalisation, changes the relationships between the local and global, and instead renders both within immediate reach (Giddens, 1990:64). As such, virtual communities bring people together into a shared space without being limited by the distance between members. As we will explore later in this discussion, digital faith vegan communities were particularly appealing to Muslim vegans who tend to live far apart.

Furthermore, recent events, namely the Covid-19 pandemic, have also likely influenced the proposed transition of vegan communities from offline to online (Hungara and Nobre, 2022:1). The lockdowns prevented face-to-face interactions from going ahead during this time, with Nicola explaining, “up until Covid and stuff, we were still getting together and having meals, you know, sometimes once a week”. In their absence, digital communities offered the opportunity for individuals to interact with others without breaching the restrictions in place. Such membership has continued, despite in-person activities resuming.

Aside from the restrictions, face-to-face communities are not practical for everyone, due to other commitments, for example, both Michelle and Tamara have children. Michelle explained, “there was a meetup group for a while, and I did go out for meals and meet people, not so much the last couple of years, it's harder having to get babysitters and stuff.” Tamara was also concerned about time:

“There's a gathering once a month here in our city for vegans, but it's always in the evening. And you know, when you've got small children, like, yeah, I'm not going out at eight o'clock at night to go to some party. I just can't, I'm too tired. So, and I don't want to leave the kids, so yeah, that's put a hamper on it.”

Attending face-to-face communities therefore requires a time commitment, that not everyone is able to commit to, due to parental responsibilities or other activities. Digital communities meanwhile offer individuals all the benefits of a community without the same level of commitment that a face-to-face community demands and so may be a preferred option for busy or otherwise engaged individuals.

Three quarters of study participants (27) had joined vegan groups on Facebook, Yammer, and WhatsApp, vegan pages on Instagram, and even vegan meetups on Zoom. Whilst the other nine participants did not mention digital communities, none specifically said they had not joined. In Section 5.2 we explored their value as a learning resource, now we will explore their potential as a source of support and belonging.

Digital communities were described as a source of support and community by numerous participants due to shared identities, shared experiences, and the sharing of knowledge (Hungara and Nobre, 2022:2; Lawo et al., 2020:10). Tamara, whose family of origin had not been supportive of her veganism, described digital communities as being a huge source of support for her: “I joined a bunch of vegan Facebook groups both in English and also in Swedish, which is my main other language. And hearing what other people were doing, what they were cooking, that was a big source of support for me.” She explained that she has joined a whole range of vegan groups, including a Jewish vegan group, a vegan recipes group, and a vegan breastfeeding group. These groups offer Tamara support (Lawo et al., 2020:10) and access to peer networks (Laakso et al., 2022:12) which in turn offer both social and cultural capital related to her various interests.

Even my WhatsApp diary groups were seen by some as a support group and source of community. Aaliyah shared, “I feel so happy we've got this group and we can support each other!” Sara also said, “I enjoyed being part of this group and connecting with people who share similar experiences as I do.” Louis and his wife Nicola also felt a sense of community from the

diary group, with Louis sharing, “thank you all for sharing your thoughts and accepting ours during this time. It was comforting to Nicola and I to feel we were not alone and isolated.” Many participants did not personally know other vegans who were also of the same faith group, so these WhatsApp diary groups provided the first opportunity to interact closely with others like themselves, in turn offering new social capital. Participants gained access to peer networks (Laakso et al., 2022:12) and a space where they could share their experiences (Hungara and Nobre, 2022:2) and practices with others (Lawo et al., 2020:10), which not only provided cultural and religious capital in the form of shared knowledge, but also a sense of belonging and community.

As we saw earlier on page 123, faith vegans also need to acquire religious capital related to faith veganism. Secular vegan groups and religious groups are not rich sources of this capital, and with tensions around identity in both of these groups, they do not provide a rich source of social capital either. Hence, we see the emergence of faith vegan communities, which I introduced in Section 4.2. There, we saw how many study participants demonstrated a need to find spaces centred around this niche of connected veganism and religiosity, due to instances of stigma and a lack of shared identity with nonreligious vegans. In this section, I build on this to demonstrate how these faith vegan communities provide that much needed sense of belonging, as well as the valuable cultural, social, and religious capital necessary for becoming a faith vegan.

Ari and Shira already had established Jewish vegan friendship groups, which they felt made their social experiences easier and shaped their views on the world. Ari explained, “I’m in a little bit of a bubble ‘cause I kind of, I live in the world, my like vicinity is fully vegan and I think that kind of colours my perception a bit.” Shira’s experience was similar. She explained:

“Pretty much all of my Jewish friends are at least vegetarian, and I think it means that when I’m with my friends, from my youth movement or kind of extended friends through them, it means that it makes dietary and it makes social situations and dietary needs much easier.”

Others supported religious vegan spaces but kept their social participation to a minimum. Leah and Jacob have both joined the Jewish Vegetarian Society, which Jacob describes both as “vegan in all but name” and “a grouping of like-minded people.” Leah meanwhile said of her engagement with the organisation:

“I am a member of the Jewish Vegan Society, more because of an access to resources rather than, I don’t, I’ve never been to a meeting, I’ve never, I’ve never done anything active. It’s more because I can you know see a, and because I want to be supportive, I

want to show that I'm, you know, want to give them a few quid to help them along their way.”

Jewish vegan spaces were thus very important for Jewish vegans, offering them access to resources and support, or cultural and religious capital, on how to be a Jewish vegan, as well as social capital since these spaces offered a safe and relevant space for Jewish vegans to come together. In these spaces, participants could learn from one another, as well as gain a sense of belonging and support.

The experience was similar for Muslim vegans; however, their spaces were entirely online. Aaliyah emphasised the role these communities played in offering support and a sense of belonging:

“Social media is really great in terms of like vegan friends and everything. Like we've got our group and then there is like a vegan Muslim WhatsApp group as well [...] And then you've got like people on Instagram as well, like vegan Muslims, so definitely don't feel alone. And I think it's mainly the social media and the groups which have really helped, like if I didn't have that, I would really be stuck, I would be like well what do I do?”

Without faith vegan communities then, there is a risk of loneliness and exclusion, and as we have seen, secular vegan groups are not always safe spaces for faith vegans. Zeinab explained:

“I wanted specifically a vegan community that wasn't centred around whiteness, if that makes sense you know, and centred around almost like some often middle-class narratives and you know and particular narratives that completely ignore, you know intersectionality.”

As we saw in Section 4.2, Zeinab had both experienced and witnessed Islamophobic comments in secular vegan groups online. Thus, these groups did not provide what other studies have suggested: “a sense of belonging, affiliation, and support, so alleviating feelings of segregation” (Williams et al., 2023:5). Rather, in Zeinab's experience, vegan groups centred upon whiteness perpetuated segregation and created a barrier to belonging and support. She ultimately found the Facebook group, Vegan Muslim Community, a group which was described by many participants as being not only a valuable resource for Muslim vegans, but also a safe zone for them. Farah “found it such a great support group”, “I love that place, they make me feel like a properly sane human being. That's for more moral support, because I think you get cross-examined a lot as a Muslim vegan.” For Farah and Zeinab, the Vegan Muslim Community Facebook group is an excellent source of cultural, religious, and social capital, bringing together veganism and Islam.

In addition to this group, some Muslim vegans also built their own faith vegan communities through social media activism. Nadia, Maryam, and Aaliyah had all created social media accounts to share photos of vegan food or information relating to veganism within Islam, targeting a specific audience. Nadia explained, “the food Instagram that I have, that's kind of where I post pictures and just kind of like join the vegan faith community.” Sharing photos of food on Instagram and accompanying them with hashtags such as #vegan and #veganfood has been noted elsewhere to be a means of identifying and interacting with a supportive community (Pilař et al., 2021:12), but my participants did this in a faith vegan way. Aaliyah had also developed her own online community of Muslim vegans, through her Instagram account, Facebook page, and WhatsApp group, where she aims “to promote the Islamic vegan perspective to other Muslims through social media.” For Aaliyah, it is all about inspiring others to act too. She added, “you've got like planting the seed as well, if I tell another Muslim person about this, they could become an activist and then they could tell another person, and that's how it kind of grows quicker.” These Muslim vegans demonstrated a desire to raise awareness of veganism within the Muslim community, and in so doing, built their own faith vegan communities. Thus, the religious capital acquired from existing Muslim vegan spaces grants these individuals a confidence to share their faith veganism with others.

Muslims were not the only ones who found support in online vegan faith communities, however. Tamara had found the Jewish vegan group she was a member of very useful, whilst Jessica “joined a lot of Christian vegan groups on Facebook because I felt like that was like the only place where I could really find that connection.” Further, these vegan Christian groups reassured her that “there's other people that are living and thinking in the same way”, since in other groups, “you don't see a great deal of interaction I think between faith and veganism.” Such online communities therefore offer individuals a sense of comfort in knowing they are not alone and provide valuable religious capital that cannot easily be found in other places. This capital helps to inform their reflexive practices and leads them to connect their veganism to their religiosity.

The location of participants affected the potential for faith vegan communities, however. Jewish vegan communities could be both in-person and online; given how large and concentrated the Jewish diaspora is in London, it was easy for in-person Jewish vegan groups to form. Ari and Hannah, both Reform Jews, emphasised the increasing commonality of veg*nism in Jewish spaces. Ari explained, “the synagogue that I belong to actually recommends keeping kosher through veganism [...] at any like synagogue, like events or anything, we will have vegan food.” Hannah shared a similar experience, “more and more Jewish gatherings, especially of like the Reform progressive type Jews, are vegetarian anyway.” The Muslim diaspora is much more spread out across the UK however, so it was much harder to form in-person Muslim vegan

communities; consequently, none were reported. For Muslim vegans to come together therefore, the only viable option was digital communities, so it is unsurprising that the Vegan Muslim Community and similar online groups were so popular among Muslim vegans.

An interesting discovery from this research is that the desire for a faith vegan community was largely absent among Christian vegans. Only Nicola and Jessica reported to have joined Christian vegan spaces, which, similar to the Muslim vegan spaces, were digital communities. Christian values are argued to be characteristic of the West, permeating all aspects of everyday life (Beck, 2010:144), so it is probable that Christian vegans do not feel the need for a Christian vegan group, since Christianity is not a minority religion in the UK, unlike Islam and Judaism. Six Christian participants, meanwhile, reported to be part of face-to-face secular vegan groups, but three implied a lack of attendance, whilst a further two only attended vegan running groups which are centred predominantly on exercise, as opposed to social meetings. Christian participants therefore did not demonstrate a need to interact with either a Christian vegan community or a secular vegan community. Nevertheless, fifteen Christian participants had vegan friends and/or family members, more so than any other religion; Christian vegans therefore benefitted from existing support networks and perhaps did not need further support elsewhere.

Only Damian and Joanne reported not having any vegan friends or family members. Damian does have a Christian vegan colleague at work whom he appreciates, but he nevertheless still experiences feelings of isolation and loneliness. He has therefore just started “to develop my social network, focusing just on vegan people” by joining online vegan communities. Joanne, meanwhile, is a long-time vegan, having become vegetarian in her teens for several years before becoming vegan whilst studying 23 years ago. She describes herself as “self-reliant” and deeply connects her veganism to her Christianity. Whilst her friends and family members are not vegan themselves, they are extremely supportive. Support is not solely derived from dedicated vegan communities, therefore; it could instead come from existing social communities.

We can understand these networks of supportive friends and family members to be valuable sources of strength and encouragement that help to sustain the participants’ vegan lifestyles, much in the same way that Cherry (2006:157) argued in relation to face-to-face vegan communities. Some participants had even convinced family members to go vegan, such as parents and siblings, or had become vegan at the same time as their spouse, as was the case for Sam, Nicola, Louis, Liam, and Hassan. This created a support bubble and removed the need for support elsewhere. In fact, fifteen participants, eight of which were Christian, had vegan family members, either a parent, sibling, or partner, and eighteen participants had vegan friends.

Of the non-vegan friends and family members, participants described how they would go out of their way to cater for them, cook meals for them, share recipes with them, and pick up vegan shopping for them without them asking for it; they assume the role of “non-vegan vegan advocates” (Twine, 2014:635). Leah told me about her aunt who is “really supportive and she cooks vegan food for me if I go round there, she buys me vegan, she goes out shopping, she sees a vegan thing, she buys it for me”, whilst Maryam’s younger sister “eats like 90% vegan, and so like we cook together. Sometimes she cooks for me.” Nadia meanwhile is anxious about being given non-vegan food at the mosque, but should this ever happen, she knows her sisters would “stick up for me and be like, ‘she’s eaten, she’s just eaten at home’” so she could easily evade eating non-vegan food. Previous studies have suggested that friends and family members are not always supportive (Hirschler, 2011:162; McDonald, 2000:12), whilst more recent research suggests that a fear of stigma from friends and family still exists and thus prevents individuals from trying veganism (Markowski and Roxburgh, 2019). My research findings, however, indicate that participants’ non-vegan friends and family members demonstrated a high level of open-mindedness and support, indicative of a changing field (Bourdieu, 1983:312), whereby it is becoming ever easier to be vegan in the UK. Veganism is now regularly mentioned in the media and everyday discourse (Brookes and Chałupnik, 2023), and vegan products are widely available (Sexton et al., 2022) in shops and eateries which is all helping to normalise it as a valid lifestyle choice, thereby making it easier to maintain due to ease of access and increased acceptance in society.

Scholars (Cherry, 2006:157; Greenebaum, 2012b:316; Hirschler, 2011:163; Twine, 2014:632) have suggested that there is a need to interact with a face-to-face vegan community for a sense of support and belonging, as well as successful maintenance of one’s vegan practice, however my research reveals a diversification in sources of support and belonging, with faith vegans turning to digital vegan communities, faith vegan communities, and existing social and family networks. All of these sources play a key role in strengthening and maintaining participants’ faith veganism.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored the journey an individual takes in becoming a faith vegan, as well as the learning process and key sources of support and belonging, to answer the second of my research questions, how does one become a Muslim, Jewish, or Christian vegan? The key contributions of this chapter include an understanding of how one both becomes and learns to be a faith vegan, which have been absent from the academic literature until now, as well as an understanding of how faith vegans engaged with *faith vegan communities*, and what they

derived from them. This chapter demonstrated how a trigger catalyses the reflexive examination of pre-existing embodied dispositions, both ethically and religiously, which I have termed *autonomous moral re-engagement with religion*. This can be understood as a form of reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010) centred upon religious ethics, through which faith vegans feel empowered to re-engage with and reinterpret religious ethics, values, and principles. The becoming journey then culminates in the adoption of veganism and the transformation into a faith vegan, involving the acquisition of a *reflexive faith vegan habitus*, which can be understood as a developed set of embodied dispositions informed by faith vegan ethics, but which remain consistent with their religious habitus.

A key part of the faith vegan journey, which to some degree never ends is the learning journey and this involves the acquisition of a set of capitals, namely cultural, social, and religious. Communities, both digital vegan communities and faith vegan communities prove to be valuable sources of these capitals. Such communities also provide support and a sense of belonging, but digital vegan communities are not always safe spaces or well interacted with; faith vegan communities meanwhile are excellent sources of support and knowledge for Muslim and Jewish vegans, in particular. Another source of support available to participants comprised supportive networks of friends and family members, which is indicative of a changing field (Bourdieu, 1983:312), whereby it is becoming ever easier and more accepted to be vegan in the UK. This chapter has explored how embodied dispositions are reflexively examined, reinterpreted, and transformed, resulting in lifestyle and behaviour change, but how does this contribute to the reshaping of religion in late modern Great Britain? The next chapter explores how faith vegans negotiate veganism in everyday practice and how religious practice itself is veganised.

Chapter 6 Ethics and Values in Practice: Veganising Religion

In the previous chapter, we explored how faith veganism transforms the individual, however in this chapter I argue that it is transformative in other ways as well. This chapter draws on data from all three methods, the interviews, diary entries, and field notes, to answer the third of my research questions, how are veganism, religion, and culture negotiated in everyday practice? I begin by exploring how, through faith veganism, there is a *transformation of the mundane*, whereby mundane food and eating practices become a medium of religious performance. I then turn to discuss *negotiating religious practice* where I explore how faith vegans negotiate and veganise traditionally non-vegan practices. Thus, through faith veganism, both the mundane and the religious are reimagined, reshaped, and rearticulated. This transformative nature of faith veganism also reveals a sense of mobility, so next I explore how faith veganism engages faith vegans in *habitual reflexive negotiation*, whereby faith vegans continually negotiate ethical ideas and practices and consistently seek to behave in an ever more ethical manner. I end the chapter by exploring how faith vegans enact *faith vegan stewardship*, particularly the practices that go beyond faith veganism, but which tend to be driven by the same motivations for faith veganism.

6.1 Transformation of the Mundane

We typically regard food and food practices as mundane, often overlooking how food can in fact be formative, becoming us (Mol, 2021), shaping our identity (Fischler, 1988) and transforming itself into situations (Barthes, 1997:26). Indeed, the way in which we eat communicates considerable knowledge about ourselves as eating subjects. It can allude to our ethical worldview as in the case of vegan foods, our religious identity in the case of religiously prescribed or ritual foods, our ethnic and cultural identity in the case of regularly consumed cuisines, and our tastes and preferences through what we enjoy consuming. Food is therefore a carrier of knowledge, identity, and individuality; what we eat and how we eat it says something of us. Veganism can complicate matters though, raising, for some, ethical conundrums of whether to follow a path of ethics, or one of culture, for example. Key to navigating such conundrums is reflexivity.

As we saw in Section 4.4, vegans redefine edibility. Through this redefinition and the renegotiation of foodstuffs, reflexivity becomes integrated with eating routines (Giacoman et al., 2023b:5). It influences food choices for vegans, especially at the beginning of one's journey

where one is relearning how and what to eat. Over time, such reasoning practices are committed to memory and become embodied and automatic (Giacoman et al., 2023b:13), indicative of the adoption of a vegan habitus (Giacoman et al., 2021:3). For faith vegans more specifically however, reflexivity remains central to navigating veganism in line with religious practice, as Section 6.2 will explore below, as well as in the formation of a reflexive faith vegan habitus.

Reflexivity plays a role in transforming the mundane too, however. In Section 4.5, we saw how faith veganism can take the form of a religious practice, and one of the examples I gave was how eating gains a religious and spiritual significance through faith veganism. Faith veganism can therefore be understood to be a modality of religious performance which is transformative in nature. It facilitates or complicates one's relationships with food, and it transforms mundane food and eating practices into religiously significant ones. In Table 6.1, I outline the various ways in which faith vegans reflexively related to food as part of this transformational process.

Relationship	Description
Ritual	Food as instrumental to religious ritual and performance
Culture	Food as a carrier of cultural and ethnic identity
Health	Food as nourishment for the body
Community	Food as bringing people together
Creativity	Food as an expression of individuality and creativity
Regulation	Food as powerful and/or requiring regulation

Table 6.1 Faith vegans' reported relationships with food

Religious performance takes many forms; indeed, Woodhead (2011) suggested that the five main uses of the term religion were culture, identity, relationship, practice, and power, all of which are reflected in the table above. Thus, through faith veganism, the mundane, that is food itself, food preparation, and the act of eating, become mediums of religious performance.

Ritual

To begin this discussion, faith vegans related to food in a ritual sense, regarding certain foods and food practices as instrumental to religious and ritual practice. Ari described Pesach⁴⁷ as “a spiritual and religious experience involving food” which,

⁴⁷ The Jewish festival of Passover celebrated in March or April, which celebrates the Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt.

“Forces you to have some kind of like sensory experience and that sensory experience might be unpleasant, like dipping the herbs in the saltwater and eating that, I hate that. I hate parsley generally, but the point is not, oh, like food is just for pleasure, the point is also like it is an experience, and this experience is supposed to mimic something and you can actually feel a little bit of what you're trying to talk about. You make it real. [...] It's not just a history of like, this is what happened thousands of years ago [...] let's actually kind of experience a little bit of it.”

In the case of ritual eating, it is actually religion that transforms the mundane act of eating into a religious and spiritual experience, enabling practitioners to embody both religion and history, as well as express their religious identity through their food practices. Faith veganism further facilitates this transformation, however; as I suggested in Chapter 4, eating takes on a spiritual form for faith vegans, where perhaps it did not when they consumed animal products.

Culture

A majority of faith vegans related to food in a cultural sense; food became a carrier of their cultural and ethnic identities, especially for Jews and Muslims. Tamara “can connect to my culture through the food”, whilst for Daniel, “food is a big part of Jewish culture”. Many Muslims also enjoyed consuming cultural dishes connected to their ethnic identities, for example Hassan regularly eats Afghan dishes, Aaliyah often eats Bengali dishes, and Ibrahim, who is a white convert married to a Mauritian woman, enjoys both British and Mauritian dishes. However, where culture was concerned, faith veganism could complicate this relationship, particularly where many much-loved cultural dishes are non-vegan.



Figure 6.1 Ingredients for Leah's mum's chickenless soup



Figure 6.2 Leah's mum's chickenless soup

For those with considerable cultural capital linked to cooking competency, this became a task of veganising dishes (Paxman, 2021:9), see Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2 of Leah's mum's vegan

chickenless soup which is a Shabbat⁴⁸ favourite. However, as Tamara found, not all dishes could successfully be veganised: “I'm not going to make Grandma's meatballs. I just can't figure that out. So, you know, I just have to let that go”.

For those with a strong cultural identity, particularly the Jewish vegans, all of whom identified as Ashkenazi, it was not an option to stop consuming cultural foods. In consuming Ashkenazi dishes, these participants reassert not only their Jewishness, but also their Ashkenazi identity and heritage. As Leah said, “food and Jews kind of go together [...] food is a big part of being Jewish.” Food is intertwined with one’s identity (Fischler, 1988) and memory (Lupton, 1994); as such, Tamara wants “to pass on those good food memories to my children [...] but in a vegan way.” Whilst Tamara has successfully veganised many of her childhood favourite dishes, many others, such as her grandma’s meatballs, have thus far been unsuccessful. Her veganism has therefore posed a significant challenge to her cultural way of eating, causing her to feel that she has “lost that connection in some ways” and “having to lose that bit of my identity.” The conundrum then becomes which pull is stronger: culture or ethics? Jewish vegans chose ethics, but as we see with Tamara, it can come at a cost.



Figure 6.3 Zakir's futoor⁴⁹ of lentil soup, vegetable tagine, and potato, spinach, and harissa borek⁵⁰



Figure 6.4 Laila's plant-based seviyan⁵¹

For Muslim vegans, cultural dishes were by and large easy to veganise through adaptation or substitution (Twine, 2018:172). Meat biryanis became vegetable biryanis, dishes traditionally made with meat were made with vegetables or beans, see Figure 6.3, and desserts such as seviyan were made instead with plant-based milks, see Figure 6.4.

⁴⁸ The Sabbath day, starting at sundown on Friday and lasting until sundown on Saturday.

⁴⁹ Another word for iftar, breaking the fast.

⁵⁰ A Libyan pastry.

⁵¹ South Asian vermicelli pudding.

Christian vegans also navigated cultural dishes with relative ease. Veganised versions of British cultural dishes, such as fish and chips, were available in many eateries, see Figure 6.5, whilst vegan alternatives were readily available in all major supermarkets making substitution widely practiced (Twine, 2018:172). As such, Malcolm, who was raised on a meat and two veg diet, can still enjoy mince and tatties⁵² now and again, albeit veganised.



Figure 6.5 Michelle's tofish and chips from her local vegetarian takeaway

Connecting back to Bourdieusian sociology, we can understand these faith vegans to have a food habitus, which informs their food choices. Other studies have explored how class, gender, and neighbourhood influence food choices linked to healthfulness and ethics (Baumann et al., 2019; Johnston et al., 2012; Ehlert, 2021), but here we see how culture and ethnicity predispose individuals towards choosing cultural dishes connected to their cultural and ethnic upbringing (Woodhall-Melnik and Matheson, 2017:810). Given their reflexive faith vegan habitus, as explored in Section 5.1.3, faith vegans have to negotiate cultural foods and learn how to veganise them. Since culture and food are central to most faith vegans' lives, it is not desirable to abandon these dishes, so a challenge arises where continuing these cultural practices in a vegan way is concerned.

The consumption of cultural foods was not a daily occurrence for any of the faith vegans studied, however. Instead, there was considerable diversification in their eating practices, with most eating several different cuisines each week. This is likely due to the context of late modern Great Britain; being such a multicultural nation (Shah, 2014:521) there is greater access to a diverse array of cultural ingredients, and being a consumerist society (Gurney, 2017), there are many restaurants and takeaways of all different cuisines to choose from. In fact, very few faith vegans identified a dominant cuisine in their everyday eating practices. As such, the challenge of veganising cultural foods was lessened at the everyday level. The British field thus allows and

⁵² A popular Scottish dish, traditionally made with minced beef and mashed potato.

encourages diversification in eating practices, which in turn facilitates faith veganism. Nevertheless, cultural foods gained extra religious and ethical significance, which they perhaps would not have had prior to the adoption of faith veganism, as a result of negotiating and connecting veganism to religious principles.

Health

As we saw in Section 4.4, vegan food was often synonymous with healthfulness and purity, two concepts often emphasised in religion (Douglas, 1999, 2002); as such, for some faith vegans, vegan food, or by extension faith veganism, facilitated a healthy relationship with food and symbolised good health. Daniel’s main reasoning for becoming vegan was a desire to “live longer and not suffer from ailments”, whilst other participants described health benefits as an added bonus of their veganism. Veganism transforms food from something to eat into a source of nutrients (Giacoman et al., 2023b:8), which were understood to nourish and form the physical body, contributing to good health. As such, many made food choices based on health knowledge. Despite not liking quinoa, Nicola mixes it with rice as she considers it healthy, Hassan snacks on dried fruit and nuts, Beth regularly consumes nutritious smoothies, and Sara is a keen follower of Dr Greger’s daily dozen⁵³, regularly enjoying raw vegetable salads, see Figure 6.6. As Liam explained, “I definitely eat way better now than I’ve ever eaten in my life.”



Figure 6.6 Sara’s raw green salad with edamame beans, brown rice, and chunky mango chutney

Whilst vegan foods were seen by most participants as having health benefits, the adoption of veganism itself also facilitated health-related learning and thus catalysed a healthier way of life.

⁵³ Dr Greger’s daily dozen is a checklist of key vegan food groups that are recommended for daily consumption for optimum health. The list is located here: <https://nutritionfacts.org/daily-dozen/>.

Elijah explained, “veganism’s kind of raised my awareness of eating healthily and like eating a lot more like fruits and vegetables and like keeping it natural, like wholefood plant-based is actually what I’m trying to do nowadays.” Thus, the vegan philosophy, when followed, was understood to also nurture the mind, by reconciling one’s behaviour with one’s beliefs and values (Williams et al., 2023:5), and fostering good mental health, positive emotions, and moral conduct. Nadia explained,

“[Veganism’s] done wonders, like my body, my mental state, it’s taught me loads of things, being more open-minded with things. And I see it’s made me love animals more or care more about my planet and make me more open-minded of how other people would eat or how other people would feel.”

Veganism is thus a transformative, embodied experience, exerting an influence on the individual, not only physically but also mentally. Just as bodies need regular sustenance for optimum physical health (Mol, 2021:43), the same could also be argued for optimum mental wellbeing. Tamara said, “one reason why I have to be vegan is to show compassion to my own body”. Living in accordance with the vegan philosophy thus fosters the right mental ecosystem to enable an individual to lead a lifestyle that is better aligned to their religious values and principles, thereby enabling them to enact those same religious values and principles corporeally. In this way, faith veganism transforms the mundane act of eating into the religiously rewarding act of self-care.

Community

Some faith vegans related to food in a social sense, recognising the role food plays in bringing communities together, which is especially important in religious life and for maintaining a sense of belonging (Fischler, 1988; Julier, 2013:22). During Ramadan, one of Ibrahim’s relatives passed away: “we dropped some food off to the family tonight [...] Food plays such an essential role in life, not just for sustenance but binding families together.” Faith veganism could complicate matters when sharing food with non-vegans, however, but equally it could facilitate the relationship since vegan food is “inclusive” (Jacob) and “allows you to eat with your neighbour. You can sidestep dietary laws really easily” (Liam). Shira and Ari also enjoy hosting dinners for their friends, with Ari explaining, “I really enjoy eating with others for sure. I find it really difficult to eat like on my own.” Where the host is a faith vegan, faith veganism can make commensality easier, rendering eating a more social and inclusive event, but if the host is non-vegan, the experience could be complicated and require management strategies, as explored in Section 5.2. Faith veganism thus transforms the mundane act of eating together into an ethical and inclusive means of bringing (religious) community members together.

Creativity

Many faith vegans relished the challenge to veganise dishes and experiment with new foods that previously they would not have cooked with (Williams et al., 2023:5). In this way, faith vegans enjoyed a creative relationship with food, which faith veganism facilitated as it opened up new possibilities for faith vegans. For many, this creative relationship played an instrumental role in acquiring cultural capital and learning how to eat as a vegan. Ari explained, “veganism has forced me to kind of think outside of the box. And look for like new recipes, and just be more creative with my cooking. I would say I like eat a really wide variety of things. I like to try a lot of new things as well.” Veganism has thus been a positive experience for Ari, opening his eyes to new foods and inspiring him to be more creative (Twine, 2018:174). Similarly, veganism has transformed Nadia’s cooking practices. She explained, “I think going vegan, I’m more experimental, like I’ll try different food. I’m more open to options, whereas before I’d kind of stick to what, home food.” Shira and Leah also enjoy experimenting with flavours and foods, whilst Farah likes “to mimic things that I’ve eaten out, so I’ll eat something and I’ll be like that’s good, and then I can usually work out what’s in it from how it tastes and then I remake it.” The key finding here is that faith veganism transforms the mundane act of cooking into a creative experience which develops the faith vegan into a more open-minded, experimental, and creative cook. Thus, through food, faith vegans can express their identity and individuality.

Regulation

Some also described a relationship with food linked to regulation. For Jews and Muslims, food practices are subject to various dietary injunctions, whilst for vegans, irrespective of faith or none, food is regulated according to its composition, with only plant-based ingredients considered edible. Within veganism, further regulation may occur, for example, health-conscious vegans favour wholefoods over processed foods, and thereby regulate their food intake based on healthfulness. Regulation may also be understood in a more behavioural and spiritual sense, however, as Ibrahim explained:

“You can easily build up an association with food, an unhealthy association with food [...] a link between what we eat and our emotions [...] the habit is built up quite easily, but it’s very difficult to change [...] when you eat more ethically, you start to break that when you begin to see the relationship between yourself and the environment and then food, you start to break that, but it is hard, isn’t it? That’s our kind of all of our jihad⁵⁴ is to do with our desires and the desires of the stomach is the biggest one.”

⁵⁴ An Islamic term denoting personal struggle or internal, spiritual striving.

Ibrahim sees connections between what one eats, desire, emotions, habit, and struggle, and feels that regulation is necessary for a healthy relationship with food. As such, he regards faith veganism to be an optimum form of regulation, that is not only beneficial to oneself, but also to the whole of God's Creation. This messy entanglement also harkens back to my previous assertions in Chapter 4 that faith veganism is seen both as purity and religious practice. In this way, Ibrahim transforms the mundane act of eating into the religiously rewarding act of jihad.

In summary, faith vegans relate to food in multiple ways, with each of these relationships revealing a potentiality for religious performance. The key finding here then is that food and food practices can be rethought through faith vegan practice, not as something mundane, but as something religiously significant. Mol (2021) theorises eating in relation to the physical, and whilst she talks of "semipermeable boundaries" (p.142), her theorising is focused within the human form, and does not consider aspects of the extra-human, namely the spiritual or social. Roe and Buser (2016:587) meanwhile describe food as "a medium of performance". I bring these ideas together and extend them to argue that through faith veganism, the mundane act of eating becomes religious performance.

6.2 Negotiating Religious Practice

Religious practice, ritual, and tradition are highly personal, important, and non-negotiable for many, so can present challenges for faith vegans; as such, continued observance of religious practice is thus dependent upon reflexivity. This section explores the religious challenges faced and how these are negotiated in line with veganism. Drawing on the lived religion approach (Ammerman, 2007; Knibbe and Kupari, 2020; McGuire, 2008), this research offers insight into the lived experience of faith veganism by asking, how do faith vegans negotiate and veganise religious practice? Most practices in all three religions were successfully veganised, however there was at least one matter in each religion that could come into contention with veganism and thus create tensions. For Muslims, it was the animal sacrifice performed on Eid-al-Adha, for Jews, it was ritual items that as per Jewish law had to be derived from animal leather, and for Christians, it was the Communion wine. In this section, I first explore how religious practices were veganised, before turning to explore non-negotiable practices, and how participants navigated these.

6.2.1 Veganising Religious Practice

Participants veganised their religious practice in numerous ways. Here, three key themes emerged: the substitution and veganisation of religiously significant foods and items,

individualisation of practice, and the adoption of lesser-known vegan-friendly alternative practices.

6.2.1.1 Substitution and Veganisation

Perhaps the easiest challenge to overcome was that of traditional foods. Where Christian values and culture are argued to have permeated all aspects of everyday life in Western society (Beck, 2010:144), and where the consumerist field of the UK (Gurney, 2017) is replete with vegan alternatives (Sexton et al., 2022), Christian vegans found it very easy to source traditional Christmas foods that were vegan. The practice of veganising traditional Christmas foods therefore comprised a simple swap: omitting non-vegan foods and purchasing, or cooking, vegan equivalents. To replace the milk chocolate advent calendar, Christian vegans bought advent calendars from vegan chocolate brands, see Figure 6.7. To replace the meat element in the Christmas roast, most participants bought a vegan meat alternative, such as a vegan turkey roll, a nut roast, or a Wellington, see Figure 6.8 and Figure 6.9, and then cooked the traditional roast potatoes, vegetables, and gravy to accompany it. Vegan desserts and sweet treats were abundant in shops too, so Christian vegans could continue to enjoy mince pies and Christmas cake, see Figure 6.10 and Figure 6.11, among other traditional treats. The field of the UK therefore facilitated the substitution and veganisation of traditional foods at Christian celebrations.



Figure 6.7 Beth's advent calendar



Figure 6.8 Nicola's vegan turkey roll and roast dinner



Figure 6.9 Beth's nut roast



Figure 6.10 Louis's mince pies



Figure 6.11 Michelle's mini vegan Christmas cake

An interesting side note here is how the Christmas dinner as we know it today is in some ways a Victorian invention and so has a relatively short history within broader Christian history (Kelleher and Rodgers, 2007:23). Despite being a more modern practice, Christian participants nevertheless accepted and observed this celebration as a major Christian practice. We thus see evidence of how religious culinary practices have already evolved throughout history and can argue that the veganising of traditional Christmas foods, and indeed Jewish and Muslim dishes too, beckons the advent of vegan religious culinary practices. It is therefore reasonable to expect further changes in religious culinary practice in the future.

For Jewish vegans, traditional foods also required negotiation, since “food is integral to a lot of religious ritual” and “Jewish cultural life” (Leah). Culturally Jewish foods are not readily available across the UK, and instead tend to be localised in kosher shops that may be found in Jewish diasporic areas. Vegan alternatives to such foods are even less readily available; as such, it was more common among Jewish vegans to veganise cultural foods by sourcing vegan ingredients and cooking a vegan version of these foods from scratch. Among Jewish vegans

then, cultural capital linked to cooking competency became essential for successfully veganising religiously significant foods.

On Shabbat⁵⁵, it is a *mitzvah*⁵⁶ to perform blessings over wine and bread; challah, the braided bread consumed on Shabbat, is traditionally made with eggs, however. Whilst some participants bought a vegan ‘water challah’ from their local bakery, some participants made their own; Figure 6.12 shows Jacob’s first attempt at a wholemeal challah. For the wine, either kiddish wine or grape juice may be used, which participants reported to be vegan-friendly.



Figure 6.12 Jacob's homemade vegan wholemeal challah

The Jewish calendar has many holidays, most of which have traditional foods associated, although many of these are not vegan; they are easily veganised however, so pose little challenge to Jewish vegans. By way of example, it is customary on Rosh Hashanah⁵⁷ to eat honey cake and dip apples in honey, but participants used vegan alternatives, such as date syrup and plant-based honeys, see Figure 6.13 and Figure 6.14.



Figure 6.13 Daniel's vegan honey cake



Figure 6.14 Leah's vegan honey alternatives

⁵⁵ The Sabbath day, starting at sundown on Friday and lasting until sundown on Saturday.

⁵⁶ Commandment.

⁵⁷ Jewish New Year celebrated in September or October.

The Jewish diary group ran between August and November, so I was only able to collect images and reported experiences relating to holidays between those dates, however in the interviews Jewish vegans spoke of traditional foods associated with other holidays too. This included potato latkes⁵⁸ and doughnuts at Hanukkah⁵⁹, hamentashen pastries⁶⁰ at Purim⁶¹, gefilte fish⁶² and kneidlach⁶³ at Pesach⁶⁴, and cheesecake and dairy products at Shavuot⁶⁵. Again, Jewish vegans said these were easy to veganise overall, but unlike traditional Christian foods, vegan equivalents were not always readily available, so Jewish vegans had to cook vegan versions themselves from scratch. Tamara recounted a Zoom cook-along with her synagogue at Purim the year before and how she made vegan hamentashen pastries, whilst the other attendees made non-vegan ones. Leah meanwhile explained how she cooks vegan versions of gefilte fish and kneidlach during Pesach. This demonstrates the ease with which Christian vegans can veganise traditional foods versus the requirement on Jewish vegans, generally, to have the cultural capital necessary to veganise their cultural dishes which are so central to religious observance. Where Islam is concerned, no traditional Islamic foods were reported, other than dates in Ramadan; rather individuals prepared veganised cultural dishes at religious events. Muslims, therefore, did not have the additional burden of having to navigate either religiously prescribed or religiously significant foods as Jewish vegans did.

Muslims did however have to navigate a month of fasting in Ramadan. From dawn until dusk, Muslims that are able must refrain from consuming food and water; eating and drinking may only take place at night-time (Ruthven, 2012:161). At sunset, Muslims eat *iftar*, the meal that breaks the fast, and prior to sunrise, they eat *suhoor* or *sehri*, a typically high-calorie meal with slow-release energy. At these meals, Muslim vegans veganised favourite dishes and substituted ingredients with wholefoods and fresh produce to ensure a successful fast. For most Muslim vegans, it was easy to be vegan during Ramadan with most participants either saying that veganism made no difference to their Ramadan experience, or that it actually made it easier. Sara explained, “fried chicken [...] makes you just bloated at night and you get a stomach-ache

⁵⁸ A potato fritter in Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine.

⁵⁹ A Jewish festival in November or December, commemorating the recovery of Jerusalem and the rededication of the Second Temple.

⁶⁰ Ashkenazi Jewish triangular pastries traditionally filled with apricot, prune, or poppy seed.

⁶¹ A Jewish festival in February or March, commemorating the saving of the Jewish people from Haman, a royal vizier of the Achaemenid Empire, as recounted in the Book of Esther.

⁶² An Ashkenazi Jewish dish consisting of a mixture of poached, ground, deboned fish, such as whitefish, carp, or pike.

⁶³ Ashkenazi Jewish dumplings made with matzah meal, also called matzah balls or matzo balls.

⁶⁴ The Jewish festival of Passover.

⁶⁵ A Jewish festival celebrated in May or June, commemorating the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai.

and you feel bad about yourself. Whereas vegan foods produce a lot of fibre, you don't get a stomach-ache [...] more fibre just makes you more full.” Kareem and Zakir on the other hand were concerned about consuming sufficient calories during the nights of Ramadan, as “traditionally vegan food is low in calories” (Kareem). This was easily overcome however, by consuming “calorically dense foods” (Kareem) and maintaining a “conscious effort to consume the adequate calories in a wholesome way” (Zakir). These practices were, however, dependent on both the acquisition of cultural capital, specifically nutritional knowledge, and reasoning practices, especially around meal planning. To maintain good health throughout the fasting period then, Muslim vegans prioritised the consumption of wholefoods, fresh fruit, water, and oats, and reduced the consumption of caffeine and fried foods. Considerable reasoning practices were thus exhibited by participants, with a great deal of thought going into the nutritional and calorific content of foods:

“I have gone back to my roots and am having Zumeeta. A barley-based dish that North African Bedouins/Berbers have eaten for centuries. I mix in a little halwa⁶⁶ and dates to add flavour. Nutrient and calorie dense.” (Zakir, see Figure 6.15)

“I often struggle to get all the nutrients I need, especially during Ramadan, and this kale smoothie does wonders! I’m really against the idea of multivitamins, unless medically advised. [...] I think they are nowhere near as effective as getting the nutrients from wholefoods, as Allah has intended us to.” (Sara, see Figure 6.16)



Figure 6.15 Zakir's zumeeta⁶⁷ for Suhoor



Figure 6.16 Sara's kale smoothie

⁶⁶ A Middle Eastern confectionary made from flour or semolina, oil, sugar, water, and flavourings.

⁶⁷ A flour made with wholegrains, such as barley, and which is traditional to Libya.

It was not only meals that required substitution or veganisation, however; ritual items had to be adapted too. For Jewish vegans, there are many non-vegan ritual items, with some items being easier to negotiate than others. Leah explained that it is obligatory to light candles each evening at the start of *Yom Tov*⁶⁸; “as a vegan I made a point of buying candles for this purpose that are made of vegetable oil rather than beeswax.” Veganising candles was thus an easy task, given the wide availability of vegan candles in the field of the UK.

The Seder plate at Pesach, a plate of different foods and items that symbolise different aspects of the Passover story, was equally quite easy to veganise. Two of the most common items are non-vegan, namely a lamb bone and a hard-boiled egg, but Jewish vegans explained that they replaced these items with vegan alternatives that kept in line with the associated symbolism. Hannah explained,

“The Seder plate in and of itself is a relatively modern tradition. There's, none of them are obligations. [...] We now do a beetroot because a beetroot looks bloody, and so that represents the blood of the sacrifice. [...] As long as it represents it to you, that's fine in our interpretation.”

Ari also substituted the bone with a beet, whilst Tamara “might draw a picture of a bone instead.” Where the egg is concerned, Ari “substituted with an avocado because that's supposed to like be round and like symbolise life.” Where the Seder plate is traditional, as opposed to obligatory, there is flexibility in how Jewish vegans can interpret the symbolism, making it an easy ritual to veganise.

In sum, substitution and veganisation became two key skills necessary for veganising religious traditions and rituals. This again echoes the imperative on faith vegans to acquire religious capital so as to ensure successful observation and practice of religion in a vegan way. The acquisition of such capital is reliant upon research and, to some degree, reflexive religiosity, as Chapter 5 discussed.

6.2.1.2 Individualisation of Practice

As we saw in the previous chapter, faith vegans widely engage in reflexive religiosity as part of their journey to becoming a faith vegan. Such reflexive practices do not cease upon transformation of habitus, however; rather, reflexive religiosity remains key for negotiating religious practice on an ongoing basis. Here, reflexive religiosity was employed to interrogate

⁶⁸ A religious festival day.

and critically engage with the underlying values, intentions, and imagery of rituals with the end goal of finding a vegan way to observe them.

For Muslim vegans, the greatest challenge was the Eid sacrifice, where a livestock animal is sacrificed on Eid-al-Adha and its meat shared with the community, particularly the poor. It is practiced by Muslims across the world, but for Muslims in Britain, it is done by donating money abroad where the sacrifice will take place. It is widely thought to be an obligatory practice, but it is in fact only considered *mustahab*⁶⁹ by the majority of schools of thought (Shaikh, 2022:445). Among study participants, sacrifice was a contentious matter with two participants sending money abroad to pay for it, two participants not yet observing it⁷⁰, and the remaining eight participants opting to veganise their practice. They did so by emphasising and reapplying the underlying values and intentions in order to discover a vegan-friendly way of observing the Eid sacrifice. They tended to either donate money to a charity that distributed plant-based food to poor people or distribute vegan food to the poor and homeless themselves:

“We'll set up like a food tent on Eid-al-Kabir⁷¹ and we'll just give food to the homeless, so I will make sure that I've paid for like a vegan meal.” (Farah)

“Other foods that we can distribute, you know, like flour, oil, rice, you know, anything else but meat.” (Zeinab)

“Sticking with feeding communities [...] using charities that work on the ground in different developing countries to feed them through non-animal means.” (Kareem)

These Muslim vegans recognised the obligation to give charitably on Eid-al-Adha, but they rejected the idea that the charity had to be through sacrifice or distributing meat. As we saw in Section 4.3, an emphasis is placed on what participants deem to be the ethical spirit of religion; as such, the values that underpinned the sacrifice were interrogated. Farah explained, “the idea behind [the Eid sacrifice] is that you're sharing food with people who have less money so they can celebrate the day too”, whilst Zakir believes, “sacrifice is giving something away that's important to you. OK. Not the animal that you pull off the street that you've killed. That's not what sacrifice is.” The requirements of sharing food with the needy and giving away something of value were reinterpreted and applied in a vegan way, enabling the religious practice to be

⁶⁹ Highly recommended, there is reward in doing it but no punishment in refraining from it.

⁷⁰ Aaliyah and Maryam still live with their parents so are not yet expected to partake in the sacrifice. In many Muslim families, the parents will contribute financially towards the sacrifice on behalf of the whole household, so no expectation is placed on those still living in the parental home.

⁷¹ Another name for Eid-al-Adha.

transformed and veganised. In this way, Muslim participants demonstrated not only individualisation of belief (Beck, 2010:140), but also individualisation of practice by observing the Eid sacrifice in multiple different ways, albeit all vegan-friendly. Muslim vegans could thus partake in the Eid sacrifice without the needless spilling of animal blood.

Whilst animal sacrifice is no longer performed within Jewish and Christian communities, violent, sacrificial imagery is still very much embedded in Jewish and Christian discourse. For vegans, this could be uncomfortable and led some to opt out of customary religious practice. Daniel explained that on Yom Kippur⁷², “the prayers involve a lot of talking through the temple service and animal sacrifices. There are a few bits that I particularly don’t like: a lot of it involves the high priest flicking blood around, there are two goats and one of them is pushed off a cliff.” He added that “details of sacrifices [...] is basically constant for all festivals.” On Yom Kippur in particular, however, there is a kneeling practice associated with this imagery. Leah explained:

“It’s the only time in the year in the Jewish calendar where we kneel in synagogue [...] and the point at which you’re doing it is whilst recounting all of these animal sacrifices [...] As a vegan I feel, and more as just someone who cares about animal rights really I suppose than as a vegan, but it just feels quite uncomfortable to me so I chose this year not to kneel.”

Leah is uncomfortable with the sacrificial imagery in the Yom Kippur prayers and was thus unwilling to kneel in acceptance of such practices. As a vegan and animal lover, she opts out of this practice, demonstrating individualisation of practice, as well as a willingness and confidence to respond differently to others in the synagogue.

Where Christianity is concerned, Joanne is critical of “sacrificial language and the way that that’s become the dominant method” and how “the acceptance of violence is somehow legitimate in some way.” She connects this imagery to the practice of Communion, and in protest, she has decided not to receive Communion. Other Christians, however, did not make such a connection, so their decision as to whether they would receive Communion or not related more to whether the Communion wine was vegan. The key finding here is that religious practice can thus be reinterpreted and reimagined through the lens of veganism, in the same way that religious beliefs can. This process, which culminates in an individualisation of practice, is reliant upon reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010), specifically the reflexive practices of interrogation and interpretation of underlying values, intentions, and imagery.

⁷² The Jewish Day of Atonement celebrated in September or October.

6.2.1.3 Lesser-Known Vegan-Friendly Alternative Practices

Animal sacrifice was also a central element of other religious practices, namely the Jewish practice of kapparot, and the Islamic pilgrimage, Hajj; these could therefore be problematic for vegans, although vegan-friendly alternatives are available. On Yom Kippur, the customary atonement ritual of kapparot may be done by waving money around one's head, which is then donated to charity, or by waving a chicken around one's head, which is then slaughtered halachically⁷³. Daniel received an envelope in the post that asked for monetary donations, so he could engage in this ritual in a vegan way, but he was aware that many in his local community still perform the ritual with a chicken. Judith was also concerned by this ritual, emphasising the importance of “encouraging people to be kinder and to be more compassionate in today's setting because we have alternatives, I get it that historically speaking, we may not have had those alternatives, but now we do.”

Animal sacrifice also constitutes a key rite of Hajj, however the Qur'an itself may be interpreted as indicating that Hajj can be completed without partaking in the ritual slaughter of an animal (Shaikh, 2022:447). Hajj is a pilgrimage that Muslims are encouraged to do at least once in their lifetime, but among participants, it was only Zakir who had done it. He opted against financially contributing to the sacrifice of an animal and instead chose to spend his money on “some food for the local poor people to kind of feed them, you know, anything that's kind of plant-based towards their actual Eid meal.” He was warned that his Hajj might not be accepted if he did not pay towards animal sacrifice, but he was not dissuaded and regarded the matter to be between him and God. As we can see there are vegan alternatives to these practices, but they are not widely known due to the cultural norm of animal sacrifice. As such, the veganisation of religious practice requires the faith vegan to acquire religious capital, specifically around what the lesser-known vegan alternatives are and how they can be performed.

6.2.2 Religion Superseding Veganism

For some faith vegans, however, religion is prioritised and religious practice non-negotiable, even when it is non-vegan. Thus, for some, religion supersedes veganism. Two key themes emerged here: God's word as final, that is to say, one may not question or refrain from what is perceived to be a religious commandment, and a desire to participate in practices, despite a vegan alternative not existing.

⁷³ In accordance with Jewish law.

6.2.2.1 God's Word as Final

Returning to the Eid sacrifice, both Nadia and Sara are of the opinion that sacrifice is obligatory and as such, they send money abroad for an animal to be sacrificed. As was the case for most faith vegans, religion superseded their veganism and without having found a way to observe this practice in line with veganism, they have had to accept it. Nadia explained, “my religion comes first [...] I don't like [sacrifice], but for religious reasons you have to accept that.” Sara meanwhile found that veganism made the Eid sacrifice more meaningful for her, explaining, “when you're a vegan and you're actually saying like, ‘yeah, I'm going to give money to have this cow killed and to share the meat to feed families and destitutes’, that's sort of, you sort of get to understand a bit more the meaning of sacrifice.” Being forced to go against one's principles thus has the potential to render the practice more meaningful, culminating in a more spiritual experience, as one is very much conscious of what has been sacrificed for God: both an animal's life and one's principles. Arguably, Sara and Nadia make a far greater sacrifice than non-vegan Muslims for whom the sacrifice constitutes clicking a few buttons online and transferring some money abroad.

Within the Jewish diary group, meanwhile, there was considerable discussion around the possibility of the third temple being built⁷⁴ and whether animal sacrifice would resume. Maya understands the paschal sacrifice⁷⁵ to be an obligation; as such, should it happen within her lifetime, “I would have to make my peace with it.” Daniel also opined that it would resume but he did not consider the rebuilding of the temple to be anytime soon, so it was not something he needed to worry about. Ari, Jacob, and Leah, meanwhile, were hopeful that sacrifice would not resume. Ari explained, “we've moved away from ancient traditions”, with Leah adding, “if it's OK to use a time switch on Shabbat there'll be all sorts of inventive ways to accommodate contemporary preferences.” Jacob on the other hand said the resumption of animal sacrifice would be “a major issue” and “something which is so backward”. The latter three viewpoints again echo how religious beliefs and worldviews can change and how reflexive religiosity has the potential to reimagine religious practice and views towards it. More specifically, it suggests that the violent and sacrificial imagery embedded in Abrahamic religions can be rethought and reenvisioned in more compassionate and vegan ways. But it must be emphasised that these

⁷⁴ Before they were destroyed, the temples in Jerusalem were a centre of Jewish life and constituted the most sacred place of worship for Jews. It is believed that in the last days, the exiles of Israel will return, and the temple will be rebuilt.

⁷⁵ The mandatory sacrifice of a lamb on the evening of Passover (Pesach) which is conducted in the temple and which everyone must eat from the following night. It is believed that when the Third Temple is rebuilt, sacrifices will resume, and every Jew will be obligated to contribute a lamb for the paschal sacrifice, as well as eat from it.

perspectives remain specific to these individuals; there are undoubtedly many others, like Maya and Daniel, who perceive the paschal sacrifice to be an obligation and thus, would consider it wrong to both question it and refrain from it.

The construction of God's word as final demands people of faith to accept and make peace with all commandments, regardless of how one feels about those practices. Thus, for some faith vegans, tensions with one's veganism may arise, and if no vegan-friendly alternative is obvious, the faith vegan must make peace with the practice. However, as we see from this discussion, such tensions appear to be not only minimal, but also either infrequent or not yet applicable.

6.2.2.2 Desire to Participate

Due to the significance of religion to most participants' lives, there was a desire to participate in certain rituals, even when those rituals were not vegan-friendly. Whilst not a challenge for all, the matter of the Communion wine could raise questions for some Christians. Of note here is how this ritual is given an optional status, as opposed to obligatory, as well as how it was emphasised as being an infrequent practice. Different Churches had different stances on what the Communion 'wine' should comprise. Some Churches had a vegan Communion 'wine', so no issue was posed to Christian vegans attending these churches, whereas other Churches require a non-vegan red wine, such as Michelle's Church of England church. Since it is not vegan, she has opted not to take the wine. Nicola, meanwhile, attends a Lutheran church, which again uses a non-vegan red wine, and where the norm "is intinction, which is dipping the bread in the wine". She explained, "I have spent a good deal of time thinking it through and decided for myself to carry on with intinction. It's a very small amount of wine and like I said, I'd rather take part than not." Partaking in religious ritual is of great importance to Nicola and since the amount of non-vegan substance she is consuming is minimal, she has opted to prioritise the religious practice. We once again witness reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010) in practice, whereby Christian vegans must negotiate rituals and consciously decide whether or not to partake in the practice. Beth, meanwhile, attends a Baptist church, and their Communion 'wine' is a non-alcoholic vegan blackcurrant drink; as such, she partakes in this ritual. The church itself therefore plays a key role in the veganisation of Christian ritual, albeit unconsciously, and so the religious field in which one finds themselves either facilitates, hinders, or problematises religious practice.

Ritual items associated with Jewish worship practices were also problematic, and arguably more so due to the regularity of their use and their status as a *mitzvah*⁷⁶. Some Jews wear tefillin, leather phylacteries, which contain a small piece of animal parchment (Stiefel, 2021:200). Maya

⁷⁶ Commandment.

explained that as per Jewish law, tefillin must be made from animal leather, but the animal does not have to have been slaughtered; finding an animal that died of natural causes is difficult and costly though, so Jewish vegans negotiated this practice by sourcing their tefillin second-hand. Hannah outlined the discussions with her Rabbi:

“I was uncomfortable buying tefillin because, well, leather, but I wanted to participate in that mitzvah (commandment). He and I spoke for ages about how to get non-leather tefillin, which was super expensive and not technically kosher. No-one else would know. We then settled on me using my grandfather’s - his were going to go to waste as he was too ill to wear them, and recycling them made more sense than buying new ones. It isn’t the most vegan-friendly option, but I did it so an animal’s death would not be wasted.”

Maya also has second-hand leather tefillin. She explained, “mine were passed to me actually through my bat mitzvah⁷⁷ teacher, which is really rare. He was like, ‘I can get anyone tefillin who would wear them’ and I said, ‘I’ll wear them’. He got some for me.” For any Jewish vegan wishing to participate in the *mitzvah* of wearing tefillin, there is no way around using animal leather, but more ethical options are available, namely obtaining second-hand tefillin or buying tefillin made with the leather of an animal that died of natural causes, although Maya said these cost five times the price of regular tefillin. This example highlights a rare but critical tension between veganism and Judaism and evidences the reflexive negotiations that take place.

In summary, religious practice represents a key concern for faith vegans, given the centrality of *doing* religion to religious identity and belief. Most religious practices could be veganised by substituting ingredients or items for vegan alternatives (Twine, 2018:172), engaging in individualisation of practice by interrogating and reinterpreting underlying values, intentions, and imagery, or by opting for a lesser-known alternative practice that is vegan-friendly. These processes, however, were heavily reliant on reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010) and the acquisition of specific religious and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1986:243; Iannaccone, 1990:299), which are being pioneered and shared by other faith vegans.

For the majority of participants, religion superseded their veganism, but for a minority, this also meant some practices could not be veganised. This was either because they considered God’s word as final and they were unaware of vegan alternatives, or because they wanted to participate in the ritual, but no vegan alternative was accessible to them. Consequently, they

⁷⁷ A coming-of-age ceremony for Jewish girls. A bat mitzvah teacher teaches Jewish girls in preparation for this ritual.

Veganism is a journey not a destination, so faith vegans were generally at different stages. Very few go fully vegan overnight, rather the transition to a vegan lifestyle is more of “a gradual evolution” (Leah), requiring habitual reflexivity and a continuous series of negotiations. Usually, a plant-based diet precedes veganising other products, such as clothing, shoes, bags, toiletries, and cleaning products. For example, Figure 6.17 shows Leah’s recent vegan purchases, whilst Figure 6.18 shows a “care package” Michelle created for her friend with breast cancer. She said, “She’s not vegan, but of course everything I got her is.” This process continues until veganism influences every aspect of one’s lifestyle. Michelle sought out a vegan manicure, see Figure 6.19, Nicola and Louis have a vegan sofa, and Jessica ensures that her hairdresser and energy supplier are vegan certified. Leah, meanwhile, is currently on the lookout for a vegan car. Ethical consumption and anti-consumption practices often become entangled with this too, which I explore in Section 6.4 below.



Figure 6.19 Michelle's vegan manicure

Faith veganism cannot ever be considered a settled state, as challenges can and do arise at any time. This can wreak havoc with the emotions, propelling the individual into a state of precarity, and demanding further decision-making, which may require further capital or compromises.

Beth posted in the diary group:

“Hi all. Haven’t posted for a while. Been feeling a bit of guilt and shame. On Monday I took [son] to our Church kids outing to [a farm adventure park]. I hated it, seeing the cow milked with mechanical pump but all the kids loved it. Two of the parents also grew up on a farm and it’s all “normal” for them. [Son] was actually more interested in running riot in the play areas but I felt really awful for taking him somewhere I disagree with just to “fit in” with the other church parents and so he didn’t feel left out.”

For Beth, the challenge was a trip to a farm adventure park, which she opted to go to, so that her son would not feel excluded. The experience, and compromise to her veganism, however, led to strong negative emotions, which affected her interaction with the diary group for a while. She thus had to work through this state of precarity in order to regain her sense of vegan legitimacy and get back to a more stable position. In such circumstances, reflexivity re-emerges (Giacoman et al., 2023b:11) and faith vegans repeat various steps in the becoming model, Figure 5.1, which we saw in Section 5.1.

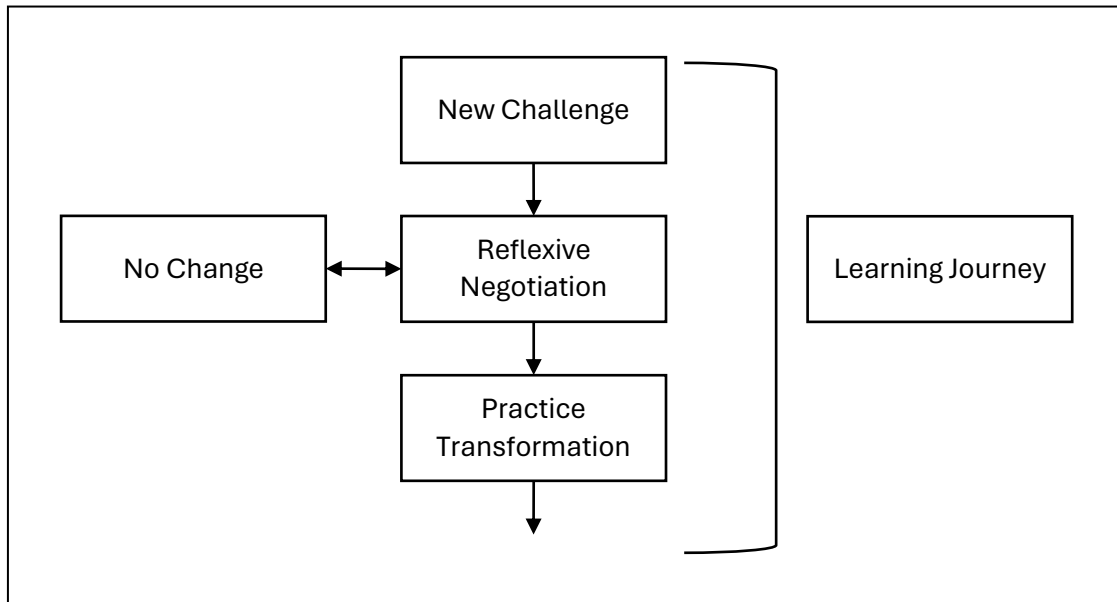


Figure 6.20 The process of negotiating new challenges

To illustrate the process of negotiating new challenges, I offer a second model, see Figure 6.20 above, which is a shortened and slightly altered version of my becoming model. This process begins with a trigger in the form of a *new challenge* faced, such as the Church trip Beth talks of, which then prompts *reflexive negotiation*. I term this stage reflexive negotiation, as opposed to ethical and religious navigation, due to a key difference between the two models. The model of negotiating new challenges, above, relates only to practice transformation, whereas the model of becoming a faith vegan relates to the transformation of both practice and principle, requiring not only changes in practice, but also in mindset. Such a journey requires the acquisition of cultural and religious capital, which the faith vegan can later draw on when faced with new challenges. As such, in the model discussed here, it is unlikely that the faith vegan will need to navigate ethical and religious beliefs as they have already done this; instead, they need to negotiate practice, and this is achieved through the reflexive evaluation of the capital already acquired. This then leads to a decision being made, either that the individual will make *no change*, as may be the case where no vegan alternative exists, or that the individual will engage in more ethical practice, demonstrative of *practice transformation*. Despite this model being largely based on the reflexive examination of existing capitals, a *learning journey* is still present

as the faith vegan is learning how to respond to previously unexperienced situations and in the process, gains further cultural and religious capital. To demonstrate this model in practice, I offer four examples of nonreligious challenges that emerged from my research and that could arise at any time in one's vegan journey: travelling, parenting, healthcare, and petkeeping.

Most people enjoy travelling, faith vegans included. When outside of the vegan-friendly field of the UK, it can become more challenging to maintain one's vegan practice, particularly if one is in a less vegan-friendly field. Faith vegans reported engaging in considerable research and reflexivity prior to going on holiday, with many singing the praises of Happy Cow⁷⁸. Jacob and Isaac also make use of the Vegan Passport, a document available from the Vegan Society which explains in 78 languages what the passport holder does and does not eat. Others favoured self-catered accommodation or planned their itinerary around vegan eateries. For example, Ari, who identifies as "a big traveller", engages in considerable research and makes use of the Happy Cow app and Airbnb to ensure he can "experience the culture of the place that I'm in through food, obviously like in a vegan way." Where travelling was concerned, research and reflexivity became key practices, enabling faith vegans to continue their ethical journey; this example illustrates practice transformation.

Parenting creates a series of dilemmas for faith vegans, and indeed vegans more broadly, the first of which is whether to raise one's child(ren) vegan. As a single parent, Michelle raises her two sons vegan, but others with non-vegan partners tended to allow their children to make their own decisions; here we see decisions falling under both practice transformation and no change. Despite allowing her son to consume non-vegan foods, Beth is nevertheless keen to instil the vegan philosophy into her son, but still faces challenges with her son's school perpetuating carnist culture. She recounted some recent events:

"So [son] will say to me, 'is milk good for you?' And I'll say 'no', but then he'll come home and say, well, Mr. [teacher's surname] his teacher, 'Mr. [teacher's surname] says milk is good for you'."

"In the kids' books, like he, they bought one home about farming, and you know, and I'm like that's not, that's not what a farm is like, but having to sort of grit my teeth because that's what the school have provided."

Similarly, Amy, who works in a school, struggles with being asked questions by children and not being able to answer without angering parents. She added,

⁷⁸ An app and website with an international listing of vegetarian and vegan eateries and shops.

“I've done Eco Club at school, which I volunteer and run, and that's been really hard because I've touched on veganism in the fact that I've been able to say like, this food is better for the planet than that food based on that. But you know, a lot of parents don't want me to tell their children that.”

The school system thus becomes a challenge to navigate, and becomes a field where veganism is still very much ostracised and largely outside the control of the faith vegan. Parents then seek to arm their child(ren) with cultural capital relating to veganism to counter the carnist messages they receive in school; they strive for the most ‘ethical’ action from a position of relative powerlessness, where they lack control within the school setting. Michelle, meanwhile, who is raising her sons vegan, did not report any difficulties with her sons’ school, instead presenting a much easier experience of vegan parenting. During the diary group, her oldest son went on a Scout camp and had to take cake, see Figure 6.21. She added that there would be other vegans there too, so in Michelle’s sons’ environments, veganism appears to be more normalised. In the examples of travelling and parenting, we therefore see the importance of field (Bourdieu, 1983:312) in maintaining the vegan lifestyle.



Figure 6.21 Michelle's son's banana, apricot, and walnut muffins

Another challenge is health, since health issues could arise at any time and without warning. During the diary group, Michelle’s son was diagnosed with Crohn’s disease and was prescribed a liquid diet for six weeks. Initially, the sample provided was non-vegan but since he was not due to start the diet just yet, Michelle was able to research and find a dairy-free alternative, although “it's unlikely to be vegan because of the vitamin D, which I didn’t question, I'm just pleased they were happy to provide a dairy-free version.” Here we see a compromise being made, where Michelle has sought out the most vegan-friendly option she could find, but where there is a chance the product may not be entirely vegan.

Michelle also has to take prescriptions herself which are not vegan, and “I will feel immensely guilty” but she has no choice but to take them. Tamara also recounted deliberating whether to allow her daughter to have a vaccination which contained gelatine. She was told there was no alternative, so in the interest of wellbeing, she allowed her daughter to get it. These instances, where no vegan alternative is available, are indicative of *no change*, although arguably the most ethical course of action could be considered looking after oneself. Further, whilst some non-vegan consumption takes place, this is still in line with The Vegan Society’s (2024a) definition of veganism: “as far as is possible and practicable.”

A final example is that of petkeeping. Ethan and Sara both have a cat, and they both purchase non-vegan cat food; the outcome is one of no change. Ethan explained, “our only like pitfall again is the cat, like we have to get her meat [...] she needs the nutrients that a cat does.” Nicola, on the other hand, has a dog who is mostly vegan but still eats non-vegan treats, which she feels “a little bit guilty about”. Nicola explained that her dog had recently been poorly, and the vet had advised a bland diet of rice and chicken. After some deliberation she decided to give him some chicken, but once his health improved, “we’ve slowly gone back to his vegan diet”, since the vet confirmed that his ill-health had nothing to do with veganism. Where faith vegans care so deeply about animals, their ethical priority becomes the wellbeing of their animal companions, despite this involving the purchase of non-vegan pet food.

In summary, we see how faith veganism engages faith vegans in *habitual reflexive negotiation*, whereby faith vegans continually negotiate ideas and practices and consistently seek to behave in an ever more ethical manner. Arguably this is also how intrinsically religious individuals practice faith, perceiving it to be a commitment and a constant striving to be better religionists (Allport, 1960:257; Allport and Ross, 1967:434). In this way, veganism and religion are both reimagined and reshaped, in a mutually constitutive way. Thus, the key finding here is that faith veganism is not only transformative in nature, but it also makes transformation itself habitual. This links back to my previous argument of a *reflexive faith vegan habitus*, which can be understood as a developed set of embodied dispositions informed by faith vegan ethics, and which we see here in practice. Indeed, in addition to being a key part of the becoming journey, reflexivity is also an integral part of the vegan experience which re-emerges any time a new challenge arises (Giacoman et al., 2023b:11).

6.4 Enacting Faith Vegan Stewardship

In Chapter 4, I introduced the term *faith vegan stewardship*, which explains how faith vegans veganise the religious principle of stewardship and through it, demonstrate concern for the entirety of God’s world. For faith vegans, stewardship was in large part enacted through their

faith veganism, but there were other behaviours they engaged in that also characterised faith vegan stewardship, such as ethical consumption, anti-consumption, self-sufficiency practices, charity work, and volunteering. In this section, I explore how stewardship is transformed, and faith vegan stewardship enacted in everyday practice, in addition to faith veganism.

A majority of participants enacted faith vegan stewardship through ethical consumption practices, expressing concern for many different issues in addition to animal welfare. As such, faith vegans reported buying from ethical companies and sustainable brands offering products that were vegan-certified (Sara), cruelty-free (Aaliyah), Fairtrade (Joanne), ethically made (Maya), locally sourced (Zakir), eco-friendly (Jessica), and sustainable (Shira). Many would also look for recyclable or environmentally friendly alternatives in a bid to minimise their plastic consumption, such as paper packaging (Joanne), a vegan alternative to reusable cling film made with soy wax instead of beeswax (Leah), and bamboo toothbrushes (Ethan). Amy also purchased a Soyabella machine so she could make her own vegan milk “just to save on packaging because we get through so much plant milk.” Furthermore, Zakir drives an electric car, whilst Ethan has a hybrid car and reads books on a Kindle, as he does not want to buy paper books.

Clothing was also a concern where plastic and ethics were concerned. Aaliyah and Sara both wear abayas⁷⁹ and hijab⁸⁰ as part of their Muslim identity, but as Sara remarked, “it's very difficult to find any Islamic clothing for women [...] that is not made out of polyester.” She added, “if I'm going to be vegan for environmental reasons, then I need to [...] apply the same logic from an Islamic perspective, looking at the supply chain of everything that I do and the effects of everything that I do, which is a lot of mental calculations.” She later shared in the diary group that she had recently bought some vegan hijabs which were advertised as “biodegradable and environmentally-friendly”. She and Aaliyah also seek to buy linen or cotton abayas due to their concern about polyester releasing microplastics into the environment.

All of these ethical consumption practices provide faith vegans with the opportunity to reflexively respond to modern concerns (Cloke et al., 2011:103); ethical consumption may therefore become a preferred way to consume for ethically minded people of faith (p.101), and can in turn be considered an enactment of faith (p.100). As we saw previously, faith veganism can be understood as a religious practice and here we see that the same claim can be made for ethical consumption, as it broadens the opportunities through which one can enact faith vegan stewardship.

⁷⁹ A full-length, long-sleeved, loose-fitting Islamic robe-like dress worn by some Muslim women.

⁸⁰ A head covering, typically a scarf, worn by many Muslim women.

Faith veganism can also be regarded as anti-consumption (Harding and Day, 2021:4), which refers to the morally construed practices of refraining from purchasing objectionable items and thereby reducing one's complicity with an objectionable system or entity (Portwood-Stacer, 2012:96). Faith veganism removes faith vegans' complicity with objectionable animal agricultural practices, but there are seemingly vegan industries that faith vegans took issue with as well. As we saw in Chapter 4, Ethan also refrains from coffee and products containing palm oil due to his concerns over the impact plantations have on the environment. He also rigorously checks products to ensure they have not been tested on animals or have links to China where animal testing has long been required. Louis is also keen to avoid any company associated with slave labour. These additional checks and eschewals were guided by the biocentric worldview held by faith vegans and further demonstrated their concern for and awareness of the entire lifecycle of products. Although speaking in relation to meat, Sara highlighted the importance of reflecting on the origin of one's purchases:

“Meat-eaters can never know where the food fed to the animals they eat originated from. It could be grown on stolen land, grown in an environmentally harmful way, or feeding into a system of oppression of communities (eg soy beans grown to feed animals are a large contributor to the deforestation of the Amazon, killing of biodiversity and of native populations).”

The key finding here is that as part of the becoming process, discussed in Section 5.1, and as part of habitual reflexive negotiation, discussed above, faith vegans engage in research and reflexivity which then guides their broader consumption, and anti-consumption, practices. These decisions are guided by their desires to be good vegan stewards and to better enact their religion's values and principles, as well as aligning with their biocentric worldview. Thus, stewardship gets incorporated into consumption practices and is performed in a vegan way.

Faith vegans also reported to engage in self-sufficiency practices. Many faith vegans grew their own produce, see Figure 6.22 and Figure 6.23, which Louis considers “part of the vegan experience”, whilst others managed waste in ethical ways. Some faith vegans kept a compost bin, see Figure 6.24, most reported to recycle, and Jessica shared her love of upcycling. Nicola also regularly makes a vegetable stock from her vegetable peelings, see Figure 6.25, as well as roasting seeds for a snack rather than throwing them away. In these ways, faith vegans creatively made use of waste and transformed it into something of benefit. In working towards self-sufficiency, faith vegans can minimise their reliance on broader food systems and have better control over the lifecycle of their foodstuffs; as Sara explained, “the waste from fruits and vegetables can turn into a nice compost - completing the lifecycle of nature without creating too much waste.” The key finding here is that faith vegan stewardship inspires faith vegans to reflect

on their placement within Creation and the broader consequences of their actions on the world, again demonstrating their biocentric worldview. Thus, in being self-sufficient, one keeps the impact of their actions to a localised level and is able to manage this impact to ensure it has a largely positive effect on the environment.



Figure 6.22 Sara's homegrown radishes



Figure 6.23 Joanne's harvest



Figure 6.24 Sara's compost bin



Figure 6.25 Nicola's homemade vegetable stock

A small group of participants also engaged in charity work and volunteering as part of their faith vegan stewardship practices. Farah volunteers for a local charity that feeds the community, see Figure 6.26 and Figure 6.27. She shared,

“Every Friday (and some Tuesdays) in Ramadan our charity volunteers in our local community fridge. We bought in veg curry and rice today. [...] The supermarkets give their surplus and the fridge hand these out to 100/150 people per day. And they also try to give hot meals where they can. [...] Connection to being vegan for me is first of all in acting sustainably. Making sure excess produce doesn’t go to waste when so many people at the moment are in need.”



Figure 6.26 Food donated by a local supermarket



Figure 6.27 Vegetable curry and rice ready to distribute

Sara also engages in charitable activities during Ramadan, by packing up dates to distribute to Muslim households, whilst Laila and Farah shared vegan food with their neighbours. Charity, or *sadaqah*, is greatly promoted in Islam (Mohd Dasar and Sujimon, 2020:89) and consequently, many participants engaged in charitable activities, especially during Ramadan. For faith vegans, we see a connection with faith vegan stewardship, where this philanthropic work becomes both an enactment and expression of religious identity (Shah, 2020:141), albeit in a vegan way.

Tamara meanwhile explained that “volunteer work has always been really important to Jewish people.” As such, she volunteers as a lactation consultation which she feels “is connected to veganism because it's helping people to sort of, it's better for the environment not to use formula milk and also helping people to kind of reach their own goals.” She also encourages her children to donate to the food bank every time they go shopping, as she is aware of her middle-class privilege and feels that “you need to support other people where you can.” As we saw in Section 4.1, faith vegans felt that nonreligious vegans lacked compassion for humans; Louis

opined, “vegans that would reject any kind of faith tend to [...] not put as much emphasis on human rights and human welfare and human behaviour. We try, as Christian vegans [...] to judge less, but include the human element.” The key finding here then is that for faith vegans, faith vegan stewardship goes beyond traditional vegan focuses and seeks to demonstrate care for the human community, in addition to the non-human environment.

Other faith vegans engaged in volunteering activities with a more animal or environmental focus. Amy runs Eco Club at her school to introduce pupils to environmentalism, whilst Kareem volunteers at the city farm near his home. Judith also volunteers at animal sanctuaries, fosters animals before a new home can be found for them, and volunteers her time making banners for animal rights organisations. By donating their time to these causes, faith vegans could enact care for the whole of Creation and do their bit to contribute towards the flourishing (Sayer, 2011:8) of animals and the environment.

Whilst charity work is often given a religious significance (Mohd Dasar and Sujimon, 2020:89; Shah, 2020:141), the other examples of faith vegan stewardship provided in this section rarely are. However, given my earlier assertion in Section 6.1 that food and eating gain a religious significance through faith veganism, we could consider a whole host of activities that relate to consumption or the processing of consumables to also be modalities of religious performance, including shopping, cooking, gardening, waste processing, and so on. Indeed, ethical consumption has elsewhere been argued to offer a channel through which faith can be practiced and materialised (Cloke et al., 2011:100). The key finding here then is that, similar to faith veganism, the mundane everyday practices through which faith vegan stewardship can be enacted, are underpinned by religious ethics and teachings and thus constitute a modality of religious performance. All these activities also require the acquisition of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in order to learn how to perform them ethically, as well as a degree of reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010) to connect these mundane practices to religious performance.

In summary, faith vegan stewardship is enacted through multiple activities beyond faith veganism, including ethical consumption, anti-consumption, self-sufficiency, charity work, and volunteering, many of which would also fall under the broader concept of religious stewardship, but which for faith vegans, are entangled with their faith veganism. In this way, faith veganism transforms the religious principle of stewardship by veganising it and incorporating it into faith vegan practice. Faith vegan stewardship in practice further evidences faith veganism’s mobile nature, whereby faith vegans are engaged in habitual reflexive negotiation and continuous ethical improvement. Thus, faith vegans not only seek to incorporate veganism more into their life, but they also adopt other ethical practices with the intention of becoming better believers and practitioners of their respective religions.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored how faith veganism is practiced in everyday life and how religion is reshaped and veganised to answer the third of my research questions, how are veganism, religion, and culture negotiated in everyday practice? The key contributions of this chapter include understandings of faith veganism as transformative, mobile, continuous, and requiring reflexivity. Firstly, we saw how faith veganism transforms food and eating into mediums of religious performance, before turning to explore how religious practices become enactments of veganism. Most religious practices could easily be veganised, but for some participants, religion was non-negotiable. Religion superseded veganism for these individuals, so they engaged in non-vegan practice in the absence of a vegan alternative. Reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010) was thus key to the veganisation of religion, the negotiating of religious practice, and in some cases, the decision to continue engaging in non-vegan practice.

Faith veganism can also be understood to be a mobile practice, in the sense that it engages faith vegans in a process of habitual reflexive negotiation. This explains the process in which faith vegans continually negotiate practices in line with ethics, thereby seeking to behave in an ever more ethical manner. Transformation thus becomes habitual. Faith vegan practice goes beyond plant-based consumption practices however, and is entangled with faith vegan stewardship, which may be enacted in a multitude of ways, including ethical and anti-consumption, self-sufficiency practices, charity work, and volunteering. Thus, these additional mundane practices also gain religious significance and become modalities of religious performance, in the same way that eating does. We have now explored how practices are reflexively negotiated in line with religious ethics and values, but what does everything we have learnt tell us about the reshaping and redefining of religiosity and veganism in late modern Great Britain?

Chapter 7 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore veganism within religious contexts, thereby contributing a sociological and empirical study of veganism in religion, which has thus far been largely absent in academic scholarship. As we saw in the first two chapters, veganism has grown exponentially over the past couple of decades, now receiving considerable coverage in marketing (Sanford and Lorimer, 2022) and the media (Lundahl, 2020), thanks to increasing uptake of the lifestyle and producers' response to rising demand (Trauth, 2021:343). Beyond consumerism however, the vegan lifestyle attends to modern ethical crises, namely the maltreatment of animals, particularly in agriculture and industry, environmental degradation, and the climate crisis, and is thus widely considered to offer real potential for overcoming these grave concerns, as this thesis has highlighted. But how the vegan lifestyle and ethical beliefs intersected with religion was previously unknown.

Abrahamic religions are steeped in sacrificial and meaty imagery and as a result, animal-derived foods and items are common in religious eating, ritual, and practice; veganism, at first, appears incompatible or perhaps even heretical to Abrahamic religions. My study, however, demonstrates that such assumptions are false, and instead reveals that veganism is in fact complementary to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Whilst Wrenn (2019a) suggests that the majority of vegans are atheist, my research uncovers another demographic, albeit a minority, who are also engaging with veganism, and more importantly, in different ways and with different understandings. This research thus sheds light on this previously unstudied area of scholarship and contributes to academic knowledge through the theoretical concepts I have developed relating to the lived experiences of both veganism and religion, and ways in which religion is being reshaped in late modern Great Britain.

In this thesis, I have adopted a theoretical framework which draws upon Bourdieu's (1983; 1986; 1990a) concepts of field, capital, and habitus, Beck's (2010) reflexive religiosity, Sweetman's (2003) reflexive habitus, and Sayer's (2011) exploration of values and ethical concerns. These concepts helped me to explore how religious ethics inform embodied dispositions and reshape veganism, how a trigger can catalyse the reflexive examination of said embodied dispositions, thereby resulting in behaviour and lifestyle change, and how religion and veganism are negotiated and reshaped in late modern Great Britain. To assist in this exploration and to better understand veganism within religious contexts, I set a central research question: *how are Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans reshaping and redefining veganism and religiosity in late modern Great Britain?* This was accompanied by three further research questions: (i) how does veganism change form when intersected with religion?, (ii) how does one become a Muslim,

Jewish, or Christian vegan?, and (iii) how are veganism, religion, and culture negotiated in everyday practice?

My first data findings chapter, *Ethics and Values in Principle: Faith Veganism*, addressed my first research question: how does veganism change form when intersected with religion? In the Literature Review, we saw how there are multiple typologies of veganism, as well as multiple different intersectional perspectives, but one perspective that has thus far been absent in academic literature is that of religion. Thus, in answering my first research question, I have identified a new typology of veganism, one that intersects with religion, and which I term *faith veganism*, denoting *a form of veganism that is intersected with religion and informed by religious ethics and principles*. Faith veganism is by and large a form of ethical veganism due to the parallels between vegan ethics and religious ethics, however, it is distinguished from ethical veganism more broadly due to its entanglements with religion and its underpinning code of ethics being religiously grounded. Thus, this chapter explained how veganism changes form when intersected with religion, by becoming faith veganism. Further, this chapter detailed the emergence of *faith vegan identity*, *faith vegan communities* and *faith vegan ethics*, as well as how *faith veganism* can constitute religious practice.

My second data chapter, *Ethics and Values in Becoming and Belonging: The Faith Vegan Journey*, addressed my second research question: how does one become a Muslim, Jewish, or Christian vegan? In Figure 5.1 I offered a model for becoming a faith vegan, which builds on existing models of becoming vegan (Giacoman et al., 2021; McDonald, 2000; Mendes, 2013), but which is tailored to the faith vegan journey, as opposed to a more secular or nonreligious experience. This chapter revealed how a trigger catalyses the reflexive examination of embodied dispositions, resulting in lifestyle and behaviour change, before highlighting the importance of *ethical and religious navigation* to the process of becoming a faith vegan, which was less prominent and to some extent absent in other models. Given the centrality of religion to my participants' lives, becoming vegan did not constitute a simple lifestyle change. Rather, they had to navigate religious beliefs and negotiate religious practice, thereby evidencing a reflexive religiosity that became central to the process of becoming vegan. Further, their transformation into a faith vegan did not comprise the simple redefinition of edibility and adoption of different foodstuffs, rather they had to negotiate new ways of being religious, and in so doing, adopted a *reflexive faith vegan habitus*. This may be understood as a developed set of embodied dispositions informed by faith vegan ethics, but which remain consistent with their religious habitus. Thus, I advance existing studies on becoming vegan, not only through the contribution of a new model, but also through new understandings of the steps required as part of the transformational process.

My third data chapter, *Ethics and Values in Practice: Veganising Religion*, addressed my third research question: how are veganism, religion, and culture negotiated in everyday practice? This chapter highlighted the centrality of reflexive practices to the faith vegan experience, in particular reflexive religiosity and habitual reflexive negotiation. The former was important for negotiating and veganising religious practices in particular, whilst the latter was important for negotiating challenges of any nature as and when they arose. Indeed, this further revealed a sense of mobility, whereby faith veganism engages faith vegans in continuous ethical improvement, denoting a desire to engage in ever more ethical behaviour. In negotiating everyday practice, faith veganism also becomes transformative, enabling faith vegans to reflexively rethink their relationships with both the mundane and the religious, as well as reshape and rearticulate religion in a vegan way. Thus, this chapter contributed new understandings of (faith) veganism as something that is transformative, mobile, continuous, and requiring reflexivity. Through its focus on negotiating practices, this chapter also provided substantial insight into what Muslim veganism, Jewish veganism, and Christian veganism look like. Indeed, it is through practice, that faith veganism is consolidated, and religion transformed, all of which contributes to the reshaping and redefining of religion in late modern Great Britain.

These three data chapters together help to answer my central research question, how are Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans reshaping and redefining veganism and religiosity in late modern Great Britain? Let us take each in turn, starting with veganism. Numerous scholars have highlighted various nuanced forms of veganism, such as ethical veganism, which is centred upon ethics, particularly a philosophy of animal rights and the avoidance of animal suffering (Greenebaum, 2012a:130), and Black veganism (Ko and Ko, 2017), which highlights the interconnected nature between racism and speciesism, and challenges the resulting structural injustices. Whilst faith veganism does not necessarily challenge structural injustices connected with religion to mirror the previous example, I take inspiration from such naming convention, as there is an important intersection here to emphasise. Thus, the major contribution of this thesis is a new typology of veganism, faith veganism, which intersects with religion, and characterises a reshaping and redefining of veganism for people of faith.

Vegan studies literature argues that veganism is rooted in ethics, and whilst my findings align with this, a key discovery of this study is how the underlying code of ethics differs between nonreligious forms of veganism and faith veganism. Secular vegan ethics are typically regarded as having stemmed from the philosophical debates in the 1970s and 1980s between Peter Singer and Tom Regan (Dutkiewicz and Dickstein, 2021:8), which proposed both utilitarian (Singer, 1980) and rights-based perspectives (Regan, 1983). Indeed, much of modern veganism is an extension of the animal rights movement which argues for nonhuman animal rights (Wrenn, 2023b). But how are these rights defined? The process involves considerable

interpretation and debate among scholars, activists, corporations, and policymakers, the dominant conclusion being “a right to bodily integrity, autonomy, and life” (p.150). The definition of animal rights thus recognises the individuality of each animal and promotes flourishing, all the while rejecting human supremacy (p.150).

People of faith meanwhile, who accept their religious teachings and scriptures as the word of God, whom they perceive to be the ultimate authority, draw their understanding of rights from religion, however. Detailed guidance around animal and environmental rights is provided in the scriptures and religious texts of each of the Abrahamic religions, and whilst these too promote flourishing, participants expressed concern that such teachings were being violated and overlooked in modern farming and industrial practices. Nevertheless, these arguably dormant teachings are being re-engaged with, re-emphasised, and re-applied through faith veganism. Thus, we see how the very ethical structure upon which veganism is founded differs for nonreligious and faith vegans, with the former drawing predominantly on secular debate, and the latter drawing predominantly on religious ethics and teaching.

Veganism is thus reshaped and redefined through its coalition with religiosity. Religion, on the whole, takes priority in many faith vegans' lives, due to its attention with the existential, so religious belief and practice are recognised as non-negotiable for some. This is another example of how faith veganism differs to the more Western, nonreligious forms of veganism that academic studies have attended to so far. Moreover, whilst the majority of participants identified with the vegan identity, for most of them, their religious identity remained primary. Although arguably, the majority actually merged their identities to form *faith vegan identities*. Nevertheless, for faith vegans, it was clear that faith veganism was less of an alternative lifestyle, and more of a lifestyle practice that complemented and consolidated their religious lifestyles.

For faith vegans, it was critical to align their religious values with their understanding and practice of veganism. In connecting veganism to their religious lives, veganism gained religious and spiritual significance. It became a religious practice, enabling faith vegans to enact religious principles, comply with what they deemed to be God's wishes, and nurture their religious and spiritual selves. Indeed, participants found veganism overall to pose very little challenge to their religion, and vice versa; as such, they could very easily observe their religions in a vegan way. It also gave rise to spiritual benefits, such as a feeling of closeness to God, humility, greater appreciation of the world, and renewed faith. In short, faith veganism gives faith vegans the sense of being better believers and practitioners of their respective religions.

Religion thus plays a key role in maintaining faith veganism. A key argument in vegan studies is the importance of vegan communities for ongoing support and maintenance of the vegan

lifestyle (Cherry, 2006; 2015), with Cherry (2006:157) explicitly stating that individual strength and willpower are insufficient for maintaining a vegan lifestyle. However, my study reveals that faith vegans link their veganism to their religious conviction, thereby achieving a strength in willpower, that I argue is sufficient for maintaining one's faith vegan practice. In maintaining veganism, faith vegans gain the sense of being better religionists and are further motivated to maintain their practice. Thus, I contest Cherry's argument where faith veganism is concerned. That is not to say that vegan communities do not assist in vegan lifestyle maintenance, however. They were of value to many of my participants, but they were not seen to be the key to successfully maintaining a vegan lifestyle.

Whilst the practice of veganism is largely considered similar for both nonreligious vegans and vegans of faith (Stephens Griffin, 2017:45), there are multiple nuances between the two groups. Motivations were largely similar, with a concern for animals and the environment predominating, just as is the case for nonreligious vegans (Kerschke-Risch, 2015:101; North et al., 2021:7). However, unlike nonreligious vegans, faith vegans tied these motivations to their religious principles, such as stewardship, compassion, and peace, and felt compelled to act, not only due to the acknowledged injustice, but also because they saw it as their religious duty. Thus, veganism is reshaped and redefined by faith vegans as a religious practice.

The vegan studies literature widely suggests that veganism is political, with intersectional forms of veganism especially so. However, as the preceding discussion demonstrates, we can also conceive of veganism as religious. In becoming religious, an individualised, personal observance is revealed, as opposed to a more collective political engagement; although of course, this was evident among some participants too. Suffice to say, this thesis has revealed new understandings of veganism: it may be more-than-political or indeed for some, non-political.

Further, in its non-political form, we can conceive of faith veganism as a different type of intersectional experience. In Chapter 2, Section 2.1.2, we explored some key intersectional expressions of veganism, namely Black veganism, vegan feminism, and anti-capitalist approaches to veganism, all of which seek to challenge oppressive social structures and power imbalances. Black veganism particularly, seeks in part to decolonise veganism and protest against systemic racism, animality, and colonialism. Instances of racism and race issues were evident among Muslim and Jewish vegans, but unlike Black veganism, there was little indication within my sample of a desire to challenge the implicit racism and religious exploitation evident in some vegan spaces and discourse. Although, my sample was small, so further study could reveal otherwise. But what my study did show instead was a breaking away from wider vegan groups and organised activism, and the formation of specific faith vegan spaces and activities,

to counter the feelings of alienation and exclusion that were evoked. In particular, this involved the creation of and engagement with digital spaces, which enabled geographically dispersed individuals to come together and form a community centred upon shared understanding.

In the literature on Black veganism, Ko and Ko (2017), and others, speak extensively of Eurocentric veganism, criticising how it overlooks the interconnectedness of oppressions, and instead takes them as separate and singular (p.92). Eurocentric veganism also perceives blackness as criminal and deviant (p.80) and implicitly suggests that veganism is civilising (p.77), that is to say it rehabilitates blackness and allows black vegans to transcend their race (p.80). Further, Eurocentric veganism is colonial, reinforcing colonialist ideas around the uncivilised non-Westerner and their “barbaric” foreign practices (Gough, 2023:23-24); veganism thus implicitly communicates a white saviour narrative (Wrenn, 2016a:133-136). Black veganism only examines these points from a race vantage point, however. Kim (2011), in her study on PETA’s exhibits which exploited slavery and Holocaust imagery, touched upon the insensitivity of these exhibits and the controversy caused by them, but we remained unclear on how such discourse and imagery affects the lived experiences of vegans with a connection to the exploited groups.

My study builds on this research and offers a religious perspective on arguments related to Eurocentric veganism. As I detailed in Chapter 4, Muslim and Jewish vegans are also implicitly othered in Eurocentric vegan discourse, with Muslim practices, namely halal slaughter and the Eid sacrifice, painted as barbaric and unnecessarily cruel, whilst Jews are dehumanised, animalised, and commodified through comparisons between factory farming and the Holocaust. Just as Black vegan theorists have criticised Eurocentric veganism for its implicit arguments in relation to blackness, so too can similar arguments be made in relation to Muslims and Jews. Eurocentric veganism may be seen as implying that through veganism, Muslims can be civilised, freed from their religious rituals which are portrayed as criminal and deviant, and transcend their religion. For Jews meanwhile, the argument might be that in becoming vegan, they can free themselves from subjecting animals to how their forefathers were treated in concentration camps, and thereby transcend their history and race. But such approaches are not effective; instead, they disempower, other, and exclude Muslim and Jewish vegans, rendering the communities that share such discourse unsupportive and unsafe ones. Christian vegans, on the other hand, were by and large unaffected by such discourse. However, concerns were raised among Christian participants that many secular vegans seemed to be anti-religion; they responded by not disclosing their Christian identity. Compared to Muslims and Jews, Christian vegans had fewer religious and cultural challenges to navigate and could more easily pass as a secular vegan. The prejudices implicit in Eurocentric vegan discourse therefore did not appear to pose any real challenge to Christian vegans.

My research thus offers new ways of thinking about vegan communities themselves, namely that they are not all as supportive as the literature paints them to be (Williams et al., 2023:5). Rather, what is safe for a secular vegan, can be an unsafe space for a Muslim vegan, for example. Attention to identity and belongingness is thus key for studying vegan communities; a shared practice of veganism is insufficient to assume a shared identity or shared sense of belonging. Indeed, my findings revealed an overall disengagement with secular vegan in-person groups, a stark finding considering the emphasis on in-person vegan groups in vegan studies literature, and their importance for maintaining veganism (Cherry, 2006:157; Greenebaum, 2012b:316; Hirschler, 2011:163; Twine, 2014:632). Instead, we witness the emergence of *faith vegan communities*, a new type of vegan community that brings together both veganism and religiosity. These communities, which may be online or offline, are perceived by faith vegans to be safer spaces than secular ones.

My study also advances the literature on vegan community membership, offering insights that are more applicable to the modern day, which is characterised by the Internet's increasing importance for everyday living, as well as a changing socio-cultural field, which I discuss further below. My findings revealed a diversification in sources of community, with digital communities being particularly prevalent, indicative of the centrality of social media to our everyday lives. Of note here is how I recruited all my participants online, either through digital vegan communities or on social media more broadly, so all my participants had access to social media and likely engaged with digital vegan spaces. In addition to digital and faith vegan communities, social and family networks also provided a sense of community for some faith vegans, highlighting the greater acceptance of veganism in late modern Great Britain, even to some extent among religious communities.

Engaging with these community types is important for the acquisition of various forms of capital, which is essential for the successful adoption and maintenance of (faith) veganism. I drew on Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital to understand how one learns to be a faith vegan and discovered that cultural and social capital were especially key to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and support. Within this, I identified four specific types of knowledges important during the learning journey: the arguments for veganism, the practicalities of doing veganism, management strategies, and how to be a faith vegan. This latter type of knowledge constitutes a form of religious capital (Iannaccone, 1990:299), which is essential for connecting veganism and religion, and successfully negotiating the two. This is also a type of capital that nonreligious vegans do not need to amass and so it has until now been absent from discussions in vegan studies. In sum, my study highlights the importance of capital acquisition broadly to the (faith) vegan learning journey, with a key finding being that faith vegans need to amass additional forms of capital compared to nonreligious vegans.

Capital relates to more than just the acquisition of resources, however; these types of capital not only provide individuals with knowledge or support, but they are also argued to afford individuals status and advantage within their field (Swartz, 1997:162). Thus, individuals consistently seek to accumulate capital so as to remain competitive and claim ever more status in an environment where power is unequally distributed (p.117). However, in my research, status accumulation was only evident in a minority of cases. Where faith veganism enhances faith vegans' sense of being good believers, religious and cultural capital may be transformed into a form of confidence and self-awareness that strengthens their faith. This confidence also inspires some faith vegans to share their faith veganism with others, which in turn can afford them the status of being a knowledgeable authority on the topic of religion and veganism. As we saw in Chapter 5, Section 5.3, Muslim vegans, in particular, created social media accounts and groups where they promoted veganism from an Islamic perspective in the form of social media activism. Within these spaces, these individuals could acquire the status of a trusted person in the know. With faith veganism being such a new social phenomenon, a particularly interesting finding then is how it is being pioneered and shared by faith vegans themselves.

An interesting angle that my research revealed however, and which contrasts with Swartz's (1997) understandings of capital, was how becoming vegan can actually cause a faith vegan to lose status within their respective networks. In becoming vegan, they marginalise themselves within their religious communities, and in being religious, they rarely achieve a sense of belonging within secular vegan communities. This was more evident among Muslims and Jews. Thus, they are set at a disadvantage within any community that is not a faith vegan one. To minimise their risk of being perceived as a heretic or excluded therefore, faith vegans needed to acquire religious capital particularly for the purpose of status maintenance. In acquiring such capital, they could demonstrate and justify to others (nonreligious vegans and non-vegan religionists) how veganism and religion were interconnected and relevant. My contribution here therefore is a new understanding of capital, not as a gaining of status, but rather the maintaining of an existing level of status, so as to avoid marginalisation, stigma, and exclusion.

Another pertinent finding from this study is how faith vegans are doing veganism in new ways, indicative of the reshaping of veganism. Whilst practices and approaches are largely similar among both faith vegans and nonreligious vegans, the former are not necessarily interacting with the traditional vegan spaces or activities that the latter interact with. In Chapter 4, Section 4.2 and Chapter 5, Section 5.3, we saw how faith vegans are carving out their own niche spaces, *faith vegan communities*, to transform their vegan groups into ones centred upon religiosity. Further, we also saw in Chapter 5, Section 5.3 how some faith vegans engage in what could be considered vegan activism, albeit not in the traditional organised sense; participants criticised traditional organised vegan activism as being against their religious values. Instead, faith vegans

preferred more individualised forms, such as social media activism, that drop seeds and spread the message in what is perceived to be a less confrontational way. This form of activism aligns with the participants' religious values of non-judgement, education, and compassion, and thus represents a reinterpretation of vegan activism in line with religious values.

We can thus conceive of faith veganism as transformative. Not only does it reshape veganism, as we saw in the point above, but it also reshapes the individual and their understanding of religion. Firstly, it transforms the faith vegan, by catalysing a transformation of mind and habitus. It predisposes the faith vegan to approach religion in new ways by reinterpreting religious values and principles through the lens of veganism and by placing increased emphasis on what is perceived to be the ethical spirit of religion over the "bare minimum" (Aaliyah) of religious law. It equips the faith vegan with knowledge pertaining to modern ethical crises, knowledge which is not easily forgotten, and which in turn guides the individual towards more ethical practices. Secondly, it transforms practices, both mundane and religious, by imbuing them with religious significance, as in the former, or reshaping them in line with veganism, as with the latter. Faith veganism thus transforms mundane food, eating, and other consumption practices, as we saw in Chapter 6, into mediums of religious performance, as well as religion into an enactment of faith vegan stewardship.

Connected to this transformative quality, faith veganism arguably renders transformation itself habitual. Thus, we can also conceive of faith veganism as mobile or a state of continual becoming (Stanescu, 2012:36), which is maintained through committed, ongoing practice motivated by religious ethics. It is also mobile due to the potential for new challenges to arise which could disconcert the faith vegan and temporarily threaten their veganism. In such circumstances, reflexivity re-emerges, and the faith vegan once again enters a process of transformation, through which they negotiate the new challenge; faith vegans are thus engaged in a process of habitual reflexive negotiation. In addition to challenges, however, faith vegans continually seek to behave in an ever more ethical manner, and consequently, demonstrated a desire for continuous ethical improvement. This is in line with Sayer's (2011:144-145) remark that humans are stranded between their moral beliefs and actual practice, with a yearning to consolidate the two. As such, faith veganism represents a continual becoming, or a mobile state of habitual transformation, as the vision of what one wants to become is ever shifting down the imagined ethical spectrum, as detailed in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.

Faith veganism remains largely alien to Abrahamic religion, however, and whilst faith vegans report strong theological arguments for veganism, it has yet to become normalised in their religious contexts. This thesis thus theorises faith veganism as *cultural deviance as religious observance*. Faith vegans are motivated to embark on a journey contrary to the dominant dietary

culture, due to a desire to observe their religion in the way they deem most correct, a desire to enact religious principles, a feeling of ease with being perceived as different in wider society, and an evaluative engagement with the world. Thus, their own intrinsic religiosity and prioritisation of the ethical and spiritual aspects of religion guide them towards making individualised choices that are different to the dominant social, cultural, and dietary norms both in wider society and their religious communities.

In so doing, they redefine edibility and make reference to concepts akin to Douglas's (2002) work on purity and pollution. Plant-based wholefoods are seen as pure and wholesome, and are associated with the pure nature of God, whilst animal products are seen to be unethical and polluting, and associated with human greed and God's displeasure. In making such connections, faith vegans referenced Biblical verses that imply a vegan paradise⁸¹, as well as verses that highlighted God's anger at meat consumption⁸². Further, they emphasised the difference between the historical context of smallholdings and better animal welfare versus modern day industrialised factory farming; the latter was seen to violate religious teachings. Vegan studies literature has widely made reference to the redefinition of edibility during the process of becoming a vegan, and whilst it is indeed useful, I argue that this is oversimplistic. Indeed, more than just edibility needs to be redefined, so this thesis advances scholarship on this topic by emphasising how other aspects of one's everyday life must be redefined too, a point especially relevant for faith vegans. Evident in this study is how religion must also be redefined and reshaped, which leads me on to the second part of my central research question.

Just as veganism is reshaped and redefined through its incorporation within religiosity, so too is religion reshaped and redefined in vegan ways. Key to this process is an understanding of religion as being open for interpretation by all, not just leading religious scholars. The characteristics of late modern Great Britain, namely individualisation (Bauman, 2001; Beck, 1994; Giddens, 1994), reflexivity (Beck, 1992; 1994; Giddens, 1990, 1991), and reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010) lead people of faith to re-engage with their religions, whilst other societal trends, such as religious pluralism and multiculturalism (Shah, 2014:521), expose individuals to new ideas and ways of thinking. People of faith thus engage in hermeneutics, which is made possible, in large part, due to the field of late modern Great Britain, which offers ease of access to knowledge and texts, a culture of critical enquiry and open-mindedness, and values of individuality, autonomy and tolerance. As a result, faith vegans feel empowered to engage critically with their religion; we witness the emergence of what I term *autonomous moral re-*

⁸¹ Genesis 2 depicts the Garden of Eden as a vegan paradise, whilst Isaiah 11:6-9 implies a vegan world when the Messiah returns.

⁸² Numbers 11 tells of the Israelites' craving for meat and God's displeasure at this.

engagement with religion. This can broadly be understood to be a form of reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010), but which is applied specifically to ethical negotiations. Additionally, I have developed the concept of *reflexive faith vegan habitus* to highlight the nuanced forms of reflexive habitus (Sweetman, 2003) that emerge within the faith vegan context.

Faith vegans must engage in considerable interrogation and reflexivity to uncover the more vegan-aligned ideals beneath the cultural norms of carnism, human superiority, and the exploitation of animals and nature. I coin the term *faith vegan ethics* to capture how faith vegans bring together religious ethics and secular vegan ethics in order to reinterpret and reapply religious values and principles. In so doing, they reimagine religion and uncover many teachings and values that have laid dormant due to dominant cultural narratives. Veganism thus becomes a lens through which one understands religion. In turn, religiosity is veganised through the emphasis placed on certain values and principles, namely stewardship, compassion, and non-judgement, and through transformed practices which offer new understandings of what it means to be Muslim, Jewish, or Christian.

Through the extensive collection of primary data, this thesis has been successful in painting a detailed picture of what Muslim veganism, Jewish veganism, and Christian veganism look like. Whilst publications have begun to discuss what Jewish veganism entails (Labendz and Yanklowitz, 2019b; Schwartz, 2020; Yanklowitz, 2015), these studies have remained largely directive and suggestive; the latter two citations could be considered to some degree guidebooks. My study thus complements these publications by revealing how Jewish vegans negotiate Jewish rituals and practices, and how the suggestions in the books play out in practice. Of the other two religions, no dedicated study thus far exists which discusses what Muslim veganism or Christian veganism look like in practice. Studies touching on this topic have purely been theological and propose a new way of thinking about veganism in religious terms (Adams, 2017; Shaikh, 2022). Again, my research complements these studies by revealing what such veganisms look like in practice and what negotiations take place. My thesis is thus not only a valuable contribution to the scholarship on Muslim/Jewish/Christian veganism in practice, but it is also arguably a pioneering study in this field.

When a faith vegan becomes aware of ethical issues, such as the maltreatment of animals or environmental degradation, they are prompted to morally re-engage with and reimagine the ethical spirit of religion. But it is imperative to emphasise that religious beliefs and teachings themselves are not changing; God's word remains the same. It is only the way in which religious lives are lived which is changing, supporting the claims of lived religion scholars who recognise differences between how religion is practiced at the everyday level and what the teachings appear to prescribe (McGuire, 2008:12). At the heart of religion lies clear ethical directives that

are core to veganism too, so cultural discourses that have been upheld due to centuries of animal use and exploitation are now being questioned. The transformation of religion is thus not one of innovation, but one of return to the ethical and loving spirit that participants considered religion to have been born out of.

The ethical spirit that participants spoke of was connected to key religious principles, such as stewardship, compassion, and non-judgement. Through faith veganism, these religious principles themselves were veganised and reapplied in a vegan way. The most explored example in this thesis is that of *faith vegan stewardship*, whereby faith vegans enacted the religious principle of stewardship in a vegan way, thereby veganising it. In Chapter 4, Section 4.3, I discussed faith vegan stewardship in relation to principles and ethics to explain how faith vegans characterise concern for the entirety of God's world, whilst in Chapter 6, Section 6.4, I detailed how this was enacted in everyday practice, often in ways that went beyond faith veganism, but which remained an expression of concern for the world at large. This thesis therefore reveals additional practices, namely ethical and anti-consumption, self-sufficiency practices, and charity work, which may be incorporated into faith veganism, but which do not necessarily involve animals in any way. These additional practices are likely not associated with veganism ordinarily, but where they are guided by religious values and constitute concern for the Earth, they inevitably become an expression of faith vegan stewardship. Thus, the combining of religion and veganism not only gives rise to new practices, but it also catalyses the transformation of religious principles themselves.

Identity was also transformed. In late modernity, individuals are tasked with finding their identity through a reflexive construction of the self (Beck, 1992:135; Giddens, 1990:124). Whilst people of faith already have a religious and/or cultural identity, they also adopt a vegan identity upon becoming vegan. The former tends to remain primary however, although this thesis reveals that in negotiating the two, a new form emerges: *faith vegan identity*. This coalition between veganism and religion is achieved through reflexive religiosity (Beck, 2010) and the reimagining of faith and veganism together. Thus, this thesis reveals that religion is being reshaped and redefined in late modern Great Britain through the reflexive reinterpretation of one's understanding of religion, the adoption of individualised, subjective forms of religion, and the articulation of one's faith in new ways, through faith veganism.

I have now answered all of my research questions, but some points remain that need to be addressed. In this thesis, I have used the term *faith vegan(ism)* to denote the vegan experience among Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Only further study would reveal whether the term could appropriately be applied to members of other faiths as well, but on initial inspection, the articulation of faith through veganism reported by my participants is very similar to that reported

by Jain vegans (Shah, 2014, 2011). A hypothesis could certainly be put forward therefore, postulating that similar experiences of negotiating religion and veganism are reported by Abrahamic vegans and vegans of other faiths. Therein lies a recommendation for further study. What is clear here is that there is no immediate need to distinguish between the faiths when studying faith vegan philosophy. Muslim vegans, Jewish vegans, and Christian vegans all share similar beliefs, values, and principles, due to their shared Abrahamic root. As such, they all engage in similar reflexive practices and reach similar conclusions; when explaining how they think through and understand veganism, they all say very similar things. The differences emerge when negotiating their specific religious rituals and practices, but even then, the reflexive processes of reinterpreting and reapplying underlying values and deciding how to transform practice remain largely the same across the three religions as well. So, it does not matter whether one is Muslim, Jewish, or Christian, similar thought processes and conclusions emerge.

While the lived experiences of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans are largely shared, a couple of differences must be noted. Christian vegans arguably had the easiest experience of faith veganism due to the lack of rituals involving animal-derived items or foods so there was less to negotiate, the permeation of Christian values in the West (Beck, 2010:144), a greater acceptance of veganism in their communities, and the field of the UK being replete with veganised British foods and foods traditional to Christian celebrations. Muslim and Jewish vegans, in contrast, had various rituals and ritual items to negotiate which were not vegan-friendly and thus posed a greater challenge than any of those faced by Christian vegans. Further, in being religious minorities in the UK, Jews and Muslims also risked facing exclusion or lack of understanding from the wider vegan community, as well as more difficulty negotiating cultural foods and traditions, due to vegan equivalents not being readily available within the UK. As such, there was a stronger requirement for cultural capital linked to cooking competency on Jewish and Muslim vegans than there was for Christian vegans. In regard to perceptions from other members of the religious and cultural community, Jews had it slightly easier due to the prevalence of vegetarianism within Jewish diasporic communities, whilst Muslim vegans reported less acceptance and more scepticism within the wider Muslim community, although stigma was still reportedly minimal.

Overall, the reasons for these differences relate predominantly to the field of the UK, where Christianity remains the majority religion (Office for National Statistics, 2022) and where dominant British culture is infused with Christian values and principles (Beck, 2010:144). Where Jews and Muslims are minority groups, their needs and preferences are not as well catered for. It must be emphasised however, that we are witnessing a changing field, whereby veganism is becoming more accepted and normalised in British society, including among religious

communities. More people are understanding what it is, how it is done, and why it is done. In turn, more people are adopting the lifestyle, which is prompting more businesses to respond by making more vegan products and options available in shops and eateries. With greater acceptance and greater access to knowledge, support, and items to purchase, the ease with which one can become a (faith) vegan and maintain a (faith) vegan lifestyle is increasing rapidly.

Through this thesis, I have contributed to academic scholarship a sociological and empirical study that studies veganism within religious contexts. I have advanced vegan studies literature by developing a number of concepts that help us to better study and interpret faith veganism, by revealing the linkages that exist and the implications they have on lived experience. I have shed light on topics that previously were largely absent in vegan studies literature, but which are pertinent to the study of faith veganism, such as reflexive religiosity, religious capital, and religious exploitation in vegan discourse. I have offered new ways to think about veganism and revealed negotiations that are important to faith vegans. By way of some meta-level contributions, I offer some food for thought: Understandings and expressions of anything in life can be reimagined in numerous ways as a result of individualisation and reflexivity that characterise late modern life. Particularly, where we are facing numerous ethical crises in late modernity, there is a potential for systems, even those assumed stable like religion, to be reinterpreted and rearticulated in response to concerns. Embodied responses, such as emotions, drive our decision-making and thus play an instrumental role in lifestyle and behaviour change. These embodied dispositions catalyse reflexivity, which in turn reshapes our habits. Thus, life under reflexive modernisation is characterised by habitual reflexive negotiation, whereby constant evaluation becomes an ethical imperative.

I now turn to limitations. Research data was collected during 2021 and was thus affected by the Covid-19 lockdowns in the UK. Consequently, all my data collection was conducted online and whilst this certainly had its benefits, there are a couple of limitations that have arisen due to the circumstances. Due to the restrictions on in-person gatherings, I was unable to acquire significant data relating to commensality or in-person events. Furthermore, a couple of participants were relatively new vegans and therefore had not yet had the opportunity to encounter certain experiences and thus could not report on them. Additionally, I believe this research would have been strengthened by in-person ethnographic data. I would have loved to have attended some religious events with participants, and to have observed them performing more daily activities, but given the lockdown restrictions, in-person data collection was unfortunately not an option. It would make for an excellent follow-up project, however, so is something I could consider for a postdoctoral study.

Another limitation, although perhaps better understood as an opportunity, is the fact that I only explored faith vegans within the context of Great Britain. Knowing that there are many Jewish vegans in Israel and the USA, many Muslim vegans in countries such as Pakistan, Malaysia, and Qatar, and many Christian vegans in countries such as the USA, Lebanon, and Uganda, an excellent follow-up study would be to explore faith vegans in other countries, particularly those that are not as secular and multicultural as Great Britain is.

I want to end this thesis with a message of hope. With so much anxiety around the climate crisis, environmental degradation, and the widespread maltreatment of animals, coupled with a concerning lack of action, the future can look bleak. Research, such as this, is thus a valuable asset for safeguarding the future and building a peaceful, sustainable world for future generations. So, how do my research findings contribute to this future world? Vegan advocacy organisations can draw on my findings to better understand the faith vegan experience and how religion aligns with veganism. This in turn will help to improve their own advocacy efforts, facilitating more effective communication with people of faith. Religious leaders and organisations can also learn how veganism is very much aligned with religious traditions, and not at all incompatible or heretical. As such, we can engage religious leaders and communities in discussions around contemporary ethical issues, thereby accessing a larger audience and encouraging a greater number of people to engage in more ethical and sustainable practices, such as faith veganism. Where my findings consolidate the connection between veganism, ethics, and environmentalism, environmental organisations, particularly religious environmental organisations, who largely neglect discussions around diet and animals, can also gain a better understanding of the potential veganism offers for tackling environmental crises. They may therefore be encouraged to incorporate changes in their own practices and advocacy efforts. Furthermore, these findings will assist the transformation of current food and consumption systems towards more ethical and sustainable diets and consumption practices as they highlight new possibilities for religious consumption.

Appendix A Participant Information Sheets

A.1 Study 1 – Muslim Participants

Study Title: Veganism in Abrahamic Religions: An Exploration of the Vegan Experience among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Vegans in the Context of Late Modern Britain

Researcher: Ellen Atayee-Bennett

ERGO number: 63913

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. I can be contacted via email at any time on ea12g14@soton.ac.uk. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

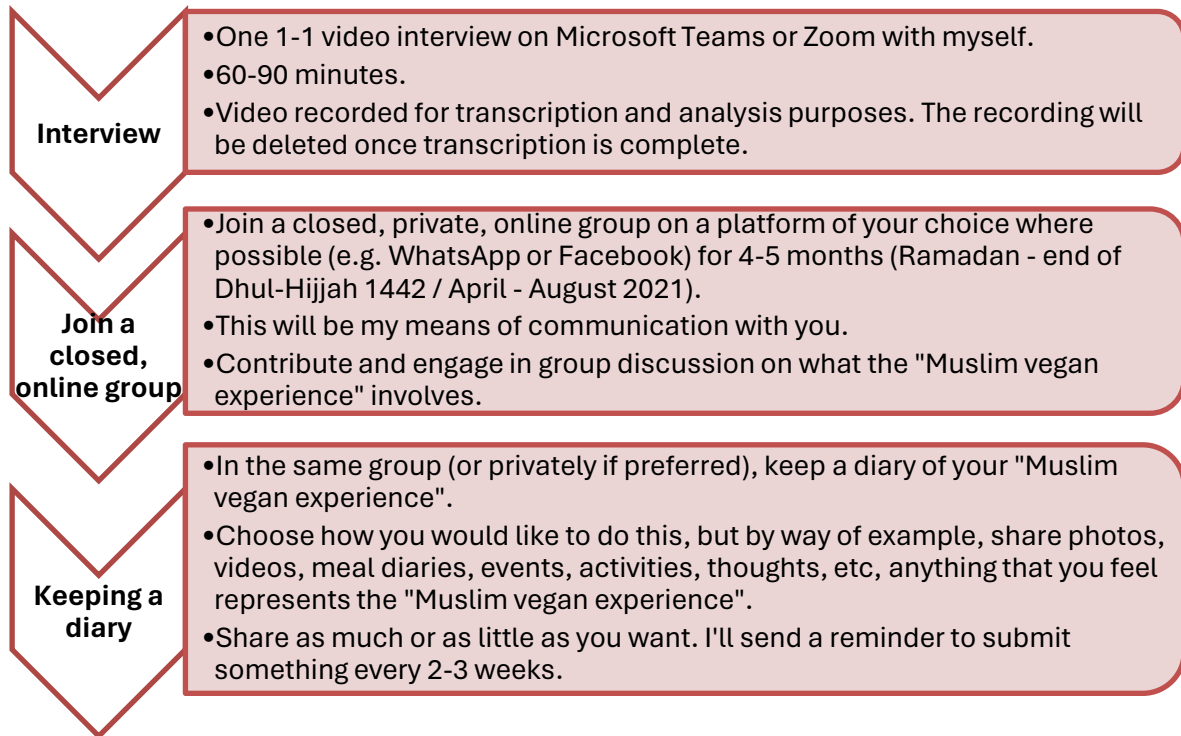
My name is Ellie Atayee-Bennett and I am a PhD researcher in the department of Sociology at the University of Southampton. This research is being conducted as part of my PhD qualification and it explores how veganism is experienced by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim vegans in the UK. I hope that this research will contribute to academic and public discussion of veganism within religious communities, foster better understanding between groups, and improve advocacy efforts. My research is funded by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council – <https://esrc.ukri.org>)

Why have I been asked to participate?

Stage 1 of my research focuses on Muslim vegans. I am looking for 12 Muslim vegans, ideally 6 male and 6 female. You have been asked to participate as you have said you identify as both vegan and Muslim, are over 18 years of age, live in the UK, and have done so for the past 5 years or more. This constitutes the requirements for participation in my study. My research would benefit enormously from your valuable experience and insight as a Muslim vegan, so I would love for you to participate in my study.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Participation involves 3 activities:



The interviews will be conducted using video, as this has many benefits for research, however if you have any strong objections, please advise as it may be possible to do an audio-only interview instead.

For further details on what is expected from the online group and diary, please see the documents, "The Online Group Guidelines" and "Diary Guidelines".

Depending on Covid-19 restrictions, I would also like to accompany you to some events and gatherings for the purpose of observing and taking field notes. If you would be happy for me to attend with you, this could constitute another form of participation. This only applies to events and gatherings that are relatively local to Southampton, however.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

Unfortunately, financial compensation is not available, so it is possible you will not experience any benefits in taking part, besides the knowledge that you are helping to improve research and understanding in this area, which may help others like yourself, with vegan advocacy efforts, or even improve understanding among religious communities. There is one possible benefit however, and that is that you may make new friends and meet others like yourself, through participating in the online group.

Are there any risks involved?

Risks are extremely unlikely, however there is a possibility of upset if you have had a very negative vegan experience. Should this be the case, you can choose to terminate the interview and/or withdraw from the research.

What data will be collected?

I am interested in learning about your vegan experience, so in the interviews, I will be asking questions about, but not limited to, your vegan journey, your religious beliefs, your eating practices, and your activities and practices as a Muslim vegan. I will collect some “special category data”, such as religious beliefs and ethnicity, as this is essential for understanding the influences on your beliefs and practices, as well as the social, religious, and cultural contexts to which you are exposed. In the online group, I will further explore your vegan experience, by analysing the topics you discuss, as well as the information you submit in your diary entries. This could include photographs, videos, meal diaries, events attended, activities, or thoughts about different things relating to the “Muslim vegan experience”. Data will therefore be collected through the interviews and the online group and all data will be collected and analysed by myself, Ellen Atayee-Bennett.

The interviews will be conducted on Microsoft Teams, or Zoom if you would prefer, and will be video recorded, as this is the type of recording these platforms offer. The recordings will then be transcribed and deleted once transcription is complete. This is essential for the purposes of data analysis. In terms of the online groups, there will be some flexibility in the choice of platform used, however by way of example, it could be a WhatsApp group or a Facebook group. This will be closed and private and I will be the only admin, so only I will be able to add members. All participants must keep what is shared in the group confidential. You will also be given a pseudonym, so no identifying information about yourself will be included with the data or in any reports of the research. All data will be stored both on my encrypted and password-protected university laptop, as well as the encrypted university system.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation and the information I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Only I, Ellen Atayee-Bennett, my supervisors and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

The signed consent forms should be sent to me using the SafeSend software which offers an extra layer of security, through secure encryption. I will explain the simple process at the time of sending the Consent Form to you. Upon receipt, the Consent Form will immediately be saved on the encrypted university system. These, along with the pseudonym key, will be saved in their own folder, with restricted access so that only I can access it, and will not at any time be kept with the data. Therefore, there will not be any identifying data kept with the research data itself at any time. The consent forms and pseudonym key will be deleted at the end of my PhD.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, please contact me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk advising of your interest. You will then need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time before 30 September 2021 without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. If you withdraw before 30 September 2021, your data will be destroyed and not used as part of the study. If you withdraw from the study after 30 September 2021, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only. To destroy the data after this date would have a detrimental effect on the research and would not enable me to complete my research by the deadline. If you would like to withdraw, please email me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk and state that you would like to withdraw. You do not need to give a reason.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include any information that can directly identify you. The research will be written up as my PhD thesis, and may also be published in academic journal articles. You are welcome to receive a copy of the research results at the end of the study. If you would like a copy, please indicate this on the consent form by initialling the relevant box and providing your email address. Alternatively, you can email me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk, requesting a copy.

A requirement of my studentship funding is that I deposit my data at the UK Data Service (<https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/>) at the end of my PhD for a period of 10 years. Here, data refers to the pseudonymised interview and closed online group transcripts, the pseudonymised diary entries and any field notes I write. None of this information will contain any identifiable

information about yourselves. This is because you will have been given a pseudonym and any direct identifiers in your data removed. The consent forms and pseudonym key will have been destroyed at the end of my PhD. Data sharing is hugely beneficial for academic research and valuable for knowledge production, as it enables other researchers to use the data in their own studies.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like further information or have any questions, please contact me at any time via email at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk.

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should firstly contact me, and I will do my best to answer your questions. I can be contacted via email at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. If you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you, please contact me via email at any time on ea12g14@soton.ac.uk and I will be most happy to help.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at

<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/Is/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will delete all identifiable information about you once the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed. The data provided, however, will be deposited with the UK Data Service for a period of 10 years.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

All data will be pseudonymised through key-coding and the removal of personal identifiers. For the duration of this study, a pseudonym key will be kept separate to the data and stored with the consent forms. Only I, Ellen Atayee-Bennett can access this code. This code and all personal information will be deleted at the end of the study.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and considering taking part in the research.

A.2 Addition of Virtual Participant Observation – Muslim Participants

Study Title: Veganism in Abrahamic Religions: An Exploration of the Vegan Experience among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Vegans in the Context of Late Modern Britain

Researcher: Ellen Atayee-Bennett

ERGO number: 63913.A1

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. I can be contacted via email at any time on ea12g14@soton.ac.uk. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

My name is Ellie Atayee-Bennett and I am a PhD researcher in the department of Sociology at the University of Southampton. This research is being conducted as part of my PhD qualification and it explores how veganism is experienced by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim vegans in the UK. I hope that this research will contribute to academic and public discussion of veganism within religious communities, foster better understanding between groups, and improve advocacy efforts. My research is funded by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council – <https://esrc.ukri.org>)

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been asked to participate as you are already taking part in my study. My research is benefiting enormously from your valuable experience and insight as a Muslim vegan, so I would love for you to participate in some virtual participant observation too.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you take part, you will engage in some virtual participant observation with me. This is where I would observe you doing a particular activity and take notes. By way of example, this could include preparing food, eating a meal, or giving me a tour of your kitchen and talking about your favourite vegan products. This would be conducted via a Microsoft Teams or Zoom call.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

Unfortunately, financial compensation is not available, so it is possible you will not experience any benefits in taking part, besides the knowledge that you are helping to improve research and understanding in this area, which may help others like yourself, with vegan advocacy efforts, or even improve understanding among religious communities.

Are there any risks involved?

Risks are extremely unlikely, however there is a possibility of upset if you have had a very negative vegan experience. Should this be the case, you can choose to terminate the interview and/or withdraw from the research.

What data will be collected?

I am interested in exploring themes related to the “Muslim vegan experience”, so I will gather data on your everyday experience by watching you do everyday activities or talk about relevant activities, such as preparing a meal, giving a tour of your kitchen, or eating vegan food. All data will be collected and analysed by myself, Ellen Atayee-Bennett.

Calls will be conducted on Microsoft Teams or Zoom, however they will not be recorded. Instead, I will only take notes. In my notes, you will be given a pseudonym, so no identifying information about yourself will be included with the data or in any reports of the research. All data will be stored both on my encrypted and password-protected university laptop, as well as the encrypted university system.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation and the information I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Only I, Ellen Atayee-Bennett, my supervisors and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

The signed consent forms should be sent to me using the SafeSend software which offers an extra layer of security, through secure encryption. I will explain the simple process at the time of sending the Consent Form to you. Upon receipt, the Consent Form will immediately be saved on the encrypted university system. These, along with the pseudonym key, will be saved in their own folder, with restricted access so that only I can access it, and will not at any time be kept

with the data. Therefore, there will not be any identifying data kept with the research data itself at any time. The consent forms and pseudonym key will be deleted at the end of my PhD.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, please contact me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk advising of your interest. You will then need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

What happens if I change my mind?

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What will happen to the results of the research?

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include any information that can directly identify you. The research will be written up as my PhD thesis, and may also be published in academic journal articles. You are welcome to receive a copy of the research results at the end of the study. If you would like a copy, please indicate this on the consent form by initialling the relevant box and providing your email address. Alternatively, you can email me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk, requesting a copy.

A requirement of my studentship funding is that I deposit my data at the UK Data Service (<https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/>) at the end of my PhD for a period of 10 years. Here, data refers to the pseudonymised interview and closed online group transcripts, the pseudonymised diary entries and any field notes I write. None of this information will contain any identifiable information about yourselves. This is because you will have been given a pseudonym and any direct identifiers in your data removed. The consent forms and pseudonym key will have been destroyed at the end of my PhD. Data sharing is hugely beneficial for academic research and valuable for knowledge production, as it enables other researchers to use the data in their own studies.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like further information or have any questions, please contact me at any time via email at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk.

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should firstly contact me, and I will do my best to answer your questions. I can be contacted via email at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

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This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. If you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you, please contact me via email at any time on ea12g14@soton.ac.uk and I will be most happy to help.

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Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be

Appendix A

disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will delete all identifiable information about you once the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed. The data provided, however, will be deposited with the UK Data Service for a period of 10 years.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

All data will be pseudonymised through key-coding and the removal of personal identifiers. For the duration of this study, a pseudonym key will be kept separate to the data and stored with the consent forms. Only I, Ellen Atayee-Bennett can access this code. This code and all personal information will be deleted at the end of the study.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and considering taking part in the research.

A.3 Study 2 – Jewish Participants

Study Title: Veganism in Abrahamic Religions: An Exploration of the Vegan Experience among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Vegans in the Context of Late Modern Britain

Researcher: Ellen Atayee-Bennett

ERGO number: 65033

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. I can be contacted via email at any time on ea12g14@soton.ac.uk. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

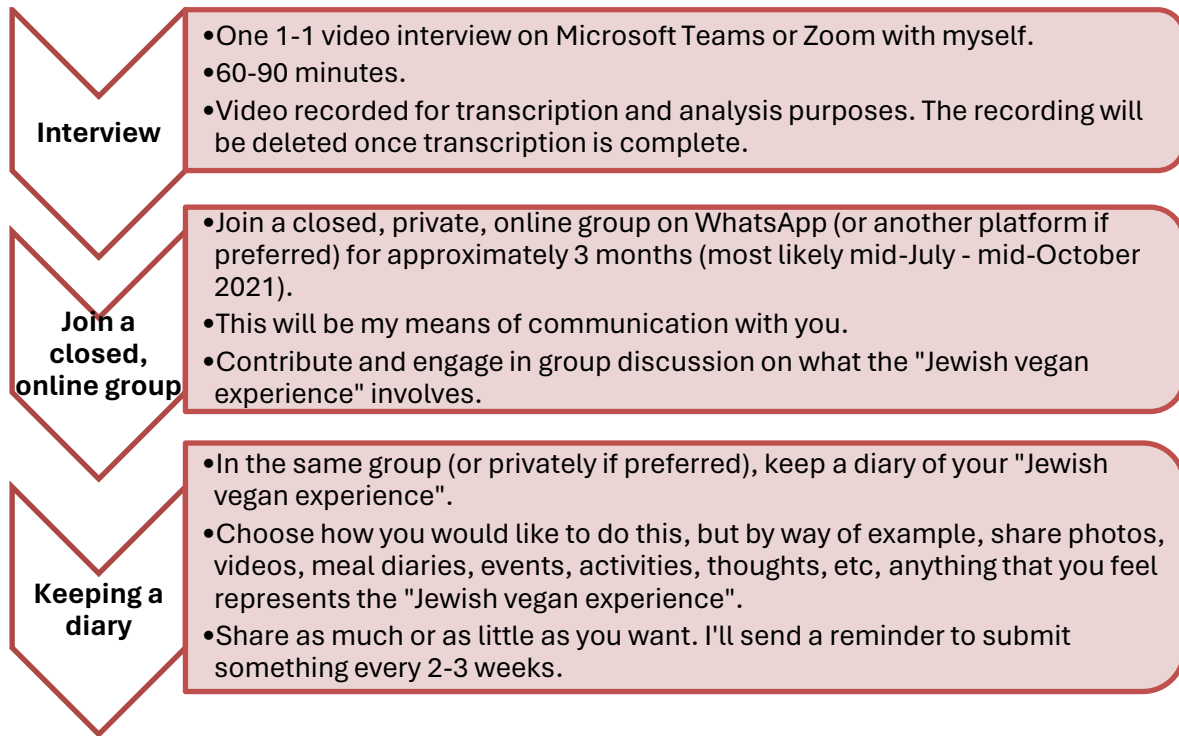
My name is Ellie Atayee-Bennett and I am a PhD researcher in the department of Sociology at the University of Southampton. This research is being conducted as part of my PhD qualification and it explores how veganism is experienced by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim vegans in the UK. I hope that this research will contribute to academic and public discussion of veganism within religious communities, foster better understanding between groups, and improve advocacy efforts. My research is funded by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council – <https://esrc.ukri.org>)

Why have I been asked to participate?

I am looking for 12 Jewish vegans, ideally 6 male and 6 female. You have been asked to participate as you have said you identify as both vegan and Jewish, are over 18 years of age, live in the UK, and have done so for the past 5 years or more. This constitutes the requirements for participation in my study. My research would benefit enormously from your valuable experience and insight as a Jewish vegan, so I would love for you to participate in my study.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Participation involves 3 activities:

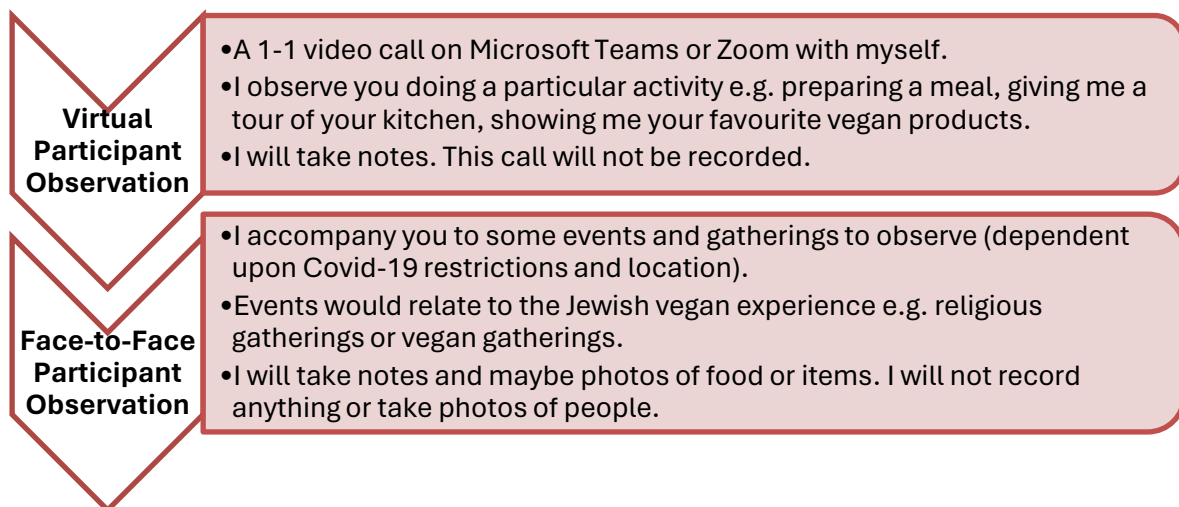


The interviews will be conducted using video, as this has many benefits for research, however if you have any strong objections, please advise as it may be possible to do an audio-only interview instead.

For further details on what is expected from the online group and diary, please see the document, "Online Group and Diary Guidelines".

OPTIONAL:

There are 2 further activities that you can choose to participate in if you wish. These are optional.



Are there any benefits in my taking part?

Unfortunately, financial compensation is not available, so it is possible you will not experience any benefits in taking part, besides the knowledge that you are helping to improve research and understanding in this area, which may help others like yourself, with vegan advocacy efforts, or even improve understanding among religious communities. There is one possible benefit however, and that is that you may make new friends and meet others like yourself, through participating in the online group.

Are there any risks involved?

Risks are extremely unlikely, however there is a possibility of upset if you have had a very negative vegan experience. Should this be the case, you can choose to terminate the interview and/or withdraw from the research.

What data will be collected?

I am interested in learning about your vegan experience, so in the interviews, I will be asking questions about, but not limited to, your vegan journey, your religious beliefs, your eating practices, and your activities and practices as a Jewish vegan. I will collect some “special category data”, such as religious beliefs and ethnicity, as this is essential for understanding the influences on your beliefs and practices, as well as the social, religious, and cultural contexts to which you are exposed. In the online group, I will further explore your vegan experience, by analysing the topics you discuss, as well as the information you submit in your diary entries. This could include photographs, videos, meal diaries, events attended, activities, or thoughts about different things relating to the “Jewish vegan experience”. Data will therefore be collected through the interviews and the online group and all data will be collected and analysed by myself, Ellen Atayee-Bennett.

The interviews will be conducted on Microsoft Teams, or Zoom if you would prefer, and will be video recorded, as this is the type of recording these platforms offer. The recordings will then be transcribed and deleted once transcription is complete. This is essential for the purposes of data analysis. In terms of the online groups, there will be some flexibility in the choice of platform used, however by way of example, it could be a WhatsApp group or a Facebook group. This will be closed and private and I will be the only admin, so only I will be able to add members. All participants must keep what is shared in the group confidential. You will also be given a pseudonym, so no identifying information about yourself will be included with the data or in any reports of the research. All data will be stored both on my encrypted and password-protected university laptop, as well as the encrypted university system.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation and the information I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Only I, Ellen Atayee-Bennett, my supervisors and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

The signed consent forms should be sent to me using the SafeSend software which offers an extra layer of security, through secure encryption. I will explain the simple process at the time of sending the Consent Form to you. Upon receipt, the Consent Form will immediately be saved on the encrypted university system. These, along with the pseudonym key, will be saved in their own folder, with restricted access so that only I can access it, and will not at any time be kept with the data. Therefore, there will not be any identifying data kept with the research data itself at any time. The consent forms and pseudonym key will be deleted at the end of my PhD.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, please contact me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk advising of your interest. You will then need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time before 31 December 2021 without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. If you withdraw before 31 December 2021, your data will be destroyed and not used as part of the study. If you withdraw from the study after 31 December 2021, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only. To destroy the data after this date would have a detrimental effect on the research and would not enable me to complete my research by the deadline. If you would like to withdraw, please email me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk and state that you would like to withdraw. You do not need to give a reason.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include any information that can directly identify you. The research will be written up as my PhD thesis, and may also be published in academic journal

articles. You are welcome to receive a copy of the research results at the end of the study. If you would like a copy, please indicate this on the consent form by initialling the relevant box and providing your email address. Alternatively, you can email me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk, requesting a copy.

A requirement of my studentship funding is that I deposit my data at the UK Data Service (<https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/>) at the end of my PhD for a period of 10 years. Here, data refers to the pseudonymised interview and closed online group transcripts, the pseudonymised diary entries and any field notes I write. None of this information will contain any identifiable information about yourselves. This is because you will have been given a pseudonym and any direct identifiers in your data removed. The consent forms and pseudonym key will have been destroyed at the end of my PhD. Data sharing is hugely beneficial for academic research and valuable for knowledge production, as it enables other researchers to use the data in their own studies.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like further information or have any questions, please contact me at any time via email at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk.

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should firstly contact me, and I will do my best to answer your questions. I can be contacted via email at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

Appendix A

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. If you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you, please contact me via email at any time on ea12g14@soton.ac.uk and I will be most happy to help.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will delete all identifiable information about you once the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed. The data provided, however, will be deposited with the UK Data Service for a period of 10 years.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

All data will be pseudonymised through key-coding and the removal of personal identifiers. For the duration of this study, a pseudonym key will be kept separate to the data and stored with the consent forms. Only I, Ellen Atayee-Bennett can access this code. This code and all personal information will be deleted at the end of the study.

Appendix A

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and considering taking part in the research.

A.4 Study 2 – Christian Participants

Study Title: Veganism in Abrahamic Religions: An Exploration of the Vegan Experience among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Vegans in the Context of Late Modern Britain

Researcher: Ellen Atayee-Bennett

ERGO number: 65033

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. I can be contacted via email at any time on ea12g14@soton.ac.uk. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

My name is Ellie Atayee-Bennett and I am a PhD researcher in the department of Sociology at the University of Southampton. This research is being conducted as part of my PhD qualification and it explores how veganism is experienced by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim vegans in the UK. I hope that this research will contribute to academic and public discussion of veganism within religious communities, foster better understanding between groups, and improve advocacy efforts. My research is funded by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council – <https://esrc.ukri.org>)

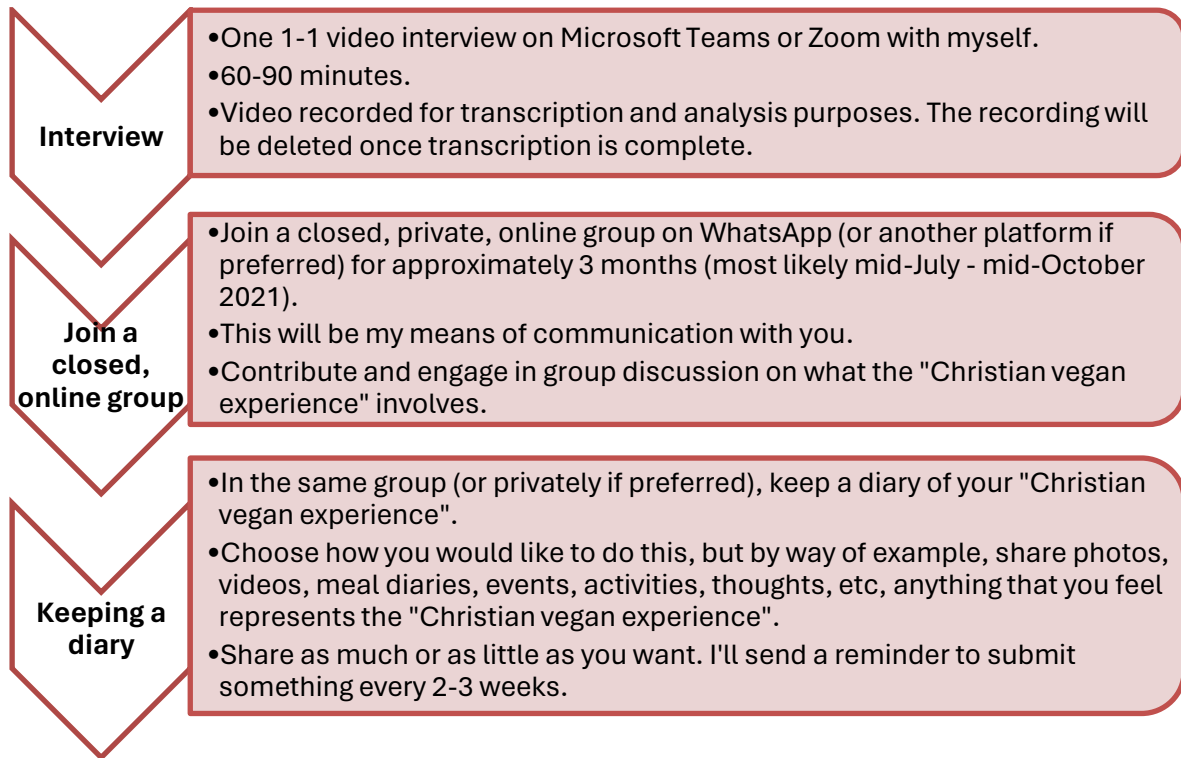
Why have I been asked to participate?

I am looking for 12 Christian vegans, ideally 6 male and 6 female. You have been asked to participate as you have said you identify as both vegan and Christian, are over 18 years of age, live in the UK, and have done so for the past 5 years or more. This constitutes the requirements for participation in my study. My research would benefit enormously from your valuable experience and insight as a Christian vegan, so I would love for you to participate in my study.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Participation involves 3 activities:

Appendix A

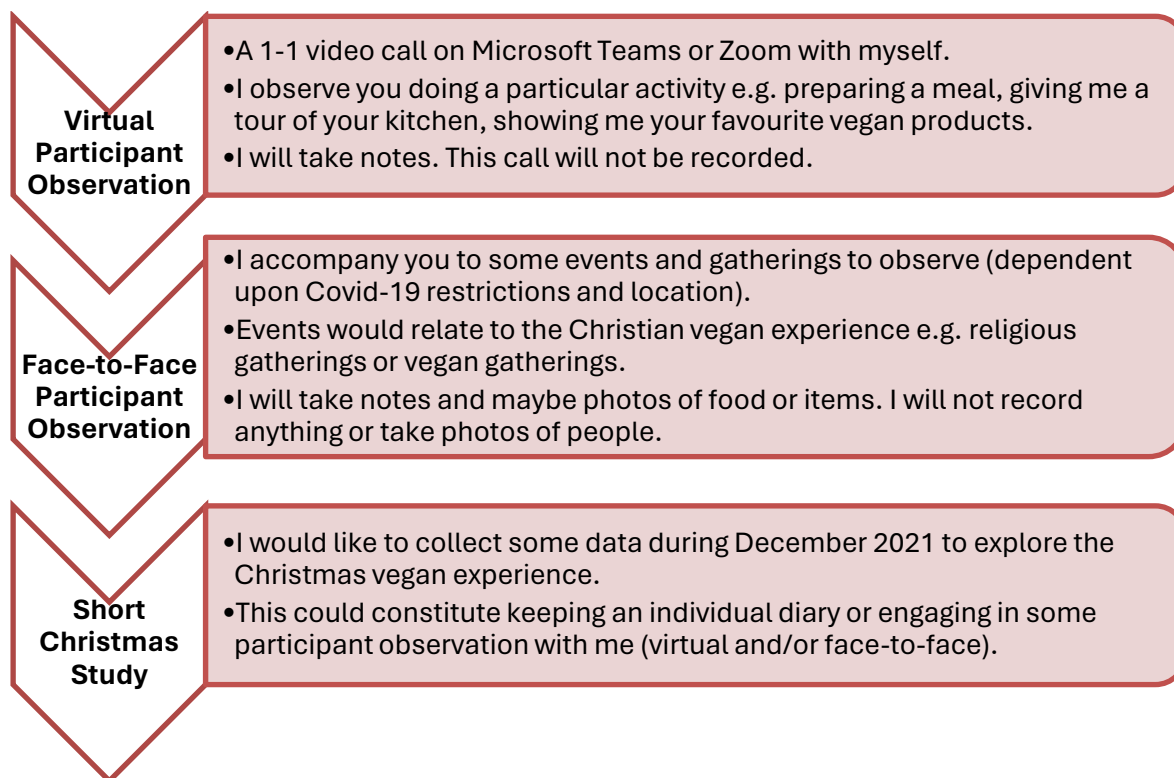


The interviews will be conducted using video, as this has many benefits for research, however if you have any strong objections, please advise as it may be possible to do an audio-only interview instead.

For further details on what is expected from the online group and diary, please see the document, "Online Group and Diary Guidelines".

OPTIONAL:

There are 3 further activities that you can choose to participate in if you wish. These are optional.



Are there any benefits in my taking part?

Unfortunately, financial compensation is not available, so it is possible you will not experience any benefits in taking part, besides the knowledge that you are helping to improve research and understanding in this area, which may help others like yourself, with vegan advocacy efforts, or even improve understanding among religious communities. There is one possible benefit however, and that is that you may make new friends and meet others like yourself, through participating in the online group.

Are there any risks involved?

Risks are extremely unlikely, however there is a possibility of upset if you have had a very negative vegan experience. Should this be the case, you can choose to terminate the interview and/or withdraw from the research.

What data will be collected?

I am interested in learning about your vegan experience, so in the interviews, I will be asking questions about, but not limited to, your vegan journey, your religious beliefs, your eating practices, and your activities and practices as a Christian vegan. I will collect some “special category data”, such as religious beliefs and ethnicity, as this is essential for understanding the influences on your beliefs and practices, as well as the social, religious, and cultural contexts to which you are exposed. In the online group, I will further explore your vegan experience, by analysing the topics you discuss, as well as the information you submit in your diary entries.

Appendix A

This could include photographs, videos, meal diaries, events attended, activities, or thoughts about different things relating to the “Christian vegan experience”. Data will therefore be collected through the interviews and the online group and all data will be collected and analysed by myself, Ellen Atayee-Bennett.

The interviews will be conducted on Microsoft Teams, or Zoom if you would prefer, and will be video recorded, as this is the type of recording these platforms offer. The recordings will then be transcribed and deleted once transcription is complete. This is essential for the purposes of data analysis. In terms of the online groups, there will be some flexibility in the choice of platform used, however by way of example, it could be a WhatsApp group or a Facebook group. This will be closed and private and I will be the only admin, so only I will be able to add members. All participants must keep what is shared in the group confidential. You will also be given a pseudonym, so no identifying information about yourself will be included with the data or in any reports of the research. All data will be stored both on my encrypted and password-protected university laptop, as well as the encrypted university system.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation and the information I collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Only I, Ellen Atayee-Bennett, my supervisors and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

The signed consent forms should be sent to me using the SafeSend software which offers an extra layer of security, through secure encryption. I will explain the simple process at the time of sending the Consent Form to you. Upon receipt, the Consent Form will immediately be saved on the encrypted university system. These, along with the pseudonym key, will be saved in their own folder, with restricted access so that only I can access it, and will not at any time be kept with the data. Therefore, there will not be any identifying data kept with the research data itself at any time. The consent forms and pseudonym key will be deleted at the end of my PhD.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, please contact me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk advising of your interest. You will then need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time before 31 December 2021 without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. If you withdraw before 31 December 2021, your data will be destroyed and not used as part of the study. If you withdraw from the study after 31 December 2021, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only. To destroy the data after this date would have a detrimental effect on the research and would not enable me to complete my research by the deadline. If you would like to withdraw, please email me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk and state that you would like to withdraw. You do not need to give a reason.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include any information that can directly identify you. The research will be written up as my PhD thesis, and may also be published in academic journal articles. You are welcome to receive a copy of the research results at the end of the study. If you would like a copy, please indicate this on the consent form by initialling the relevant box and providing your email address. Alternatively, you can email me at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk, requesting a copy.

A requirement of my studentship funding is that I deposit my data at the UK Data Service (<https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/>) at the end of my PhD for a period of 10 years. Here, data refers to the pseudonymised interview and closed online group transcripts, the pseudonymised diary entries and any field notes I write. None of this information will contain any identifiable information about yourselves. This is because you will have been given a pseudonym and any direct identifiers in your data removed. The consent forms and pseudonym key will have been destroyed at the end of my PhD. Data sharing is hugely beneficial for academic research and valuable for knowledge production, as it enables other researchers to use the data in their own studies.

Where can I get more information?

If you would like further information or have any questions, please contact me at any time via email at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk.

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should firstly contact me, and I will do my best to answer your questions. I can be contacted via email at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk. If you

remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. If you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you, please contact me via email at any time on ea12g14@soton.ac.uk and I will be most happy to help.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

Appendix A

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will delete all identifiable information about you once the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed. The data provided, however, will be deposited with the UK Data Service for a period of 10 years.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

All data will be pseudonymised through key-coding and the removal of personal identifiers. For the duration of this study, a pseudonym key will be kept separate to the data and stored with the consent forms. Only I, Ellen Atayee-Bennett can access this code. This code and all personal information will be deleted at the end of the study.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and considering taking part in the research.

Appendix B Consent Forms

B.1 Study 1 – Muslim Participants

Study title: Veganism in Abrahamic Religions: An Exploration of the Vegan Experience among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Vegans in the Context of Late Modern Great Britain

Researcher name: Ellen Atayee-Bennett

ERGO number: 63913

Please initial the boxes if you agree with the statements:

Statement	Initial
I have read and understood the participant information sheet (16 March 2021 – Version 3) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time before 30 September 2021 for any reason without my participation rights being affected. I understand that should I withdraw from the study after 30 September 2021 then all information collected about me up to this point may still be used for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only.	
I understand that the interviews will be video recorded. These recordings will be transcribed and then destroyed for the purposes set out in the participation information sheet.	
I understand that some special category information will be collected about me to achieve the objectives of the study. This relates to religious beliefs and ethnicity.	
I understand that my data will be pseudonymised so it will not be possible to identify me from the data. I may therefore be quoted directly in reports of the research, but I will not be directly identified (e.g. that my name will not be used).	
I give permission for the data that I provide (in the form of pseudonymised interview and group transcripts and diary entries) to be deposited to the UK Data	

Appendix B

Service as described in the participant information sheet so it can be used for future research and learning relating to the social sciences.	
I understand that I must keep the discussions in the private, online group confidential.	

Please continue scrolling.

Optional - please only initial the box(es) you wish to agree to:

Statement	Initial
I would like to receive a copy of the research results at the end of the study. If so, please provide your email address in the space below:	
I am happy for Ellen Atayee-Bennett to accompany me to select events and gatherings for the purposes of observation and taking notes*	

*This is dependent on Covid-19 restrictions and only if you are relatively local to Southampton.

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

Name of researcher (print name).....

Signature of researcher

Date.....

B.2 Addition of Virtual Participant Observation – Muslim Participants

Study title: Veganism in Abrahamic Religions: An Exploration of the Vegan Experience among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Vegans in the Context of Late Modern Great Britain

Researcher name: Ellen Atayee-Bennett

ERGO number: 63913.A1

Please initial the boxes if you agree with the statements:

Statement	Initial
I have read and understood the participant information sheet (22 June 2021 – Version 2) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in virtual participant observation and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time before 30 September 2021 for any reason without my participation rights being affected. I understand that should I withdraw from the study after 30 September 2021 then all information collected about me up to this point may still be used for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only.	
I give permission for the data that I provide during participant observation (in the form of field notes) to be deposited to the UK Data Service as described in the participant information sheet so it can be used for future research and learning relating to the social sciences.	

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

Name of researcher (print name).....

Signature of researcher

Date.....

B.3 Study 2 – Jewish and Christian Participants

Study title: Veganism in Abrahamic Religions: An Exploration of the Vegan Experience among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Vegans in the Context of Late Modern Great Britain

Researcher name: Ellen Atayee-Bennett

ERGO number: 65033

Please initial the boxes if you agree with the statements:

Statement	Initial
I have read and understood the participant information sheet (26 May 2021 – Version 1) and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time before 31 December 2021 for any reason without my participation rights being affected. I understand that should I withdraw from the study after 31 December 2021 then all information collected about me up to this point may still be used for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only.	
I understand that the interviews will be video recorded. These recordings will be transcribed and then destroyed for the purposes set out in the participation information sheet.	
I understand that some special category information will be collected about me to achieve the objectives of the study. This relates to religious beliefs and ethnicity.	
I understand that my data will be pseudonymised so it will not be possible to identify me from the data. I may therefore be quoted directly in reports of the research, but I will not be directly identified (e.g. that my name will not be used).	
I give permission for the data that I provide (in the form of pseudonymised interview and group transcripts and diary entries) to be deposited to the UK Data Service as described in the participant information sheet so it can be used for future research and learning relating to the social sciences.	

Appendix B

I understand that I must keep the discussions in the private, online group confidential.	
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Please continue scrolling.

Optional - please only initial the box(es) you wish to agree to:

Statement	Initial
I would like to receive a copy of the research results at the end of the study. If so, please provide your email address in the space below:	
I am happy for Ellen Atayee-Bennett to do some participant observation with me or to accompany me to select events and gatherings for the purposes of observation and taking field notes, as explained in the participant information sheet (26 May 2021 – Version 1)	

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

Name of researcher (print name).....

Signature of researcher

Date.....

Appendix C Recruitment Images

Research Participants Needed




What is the criteria?

Identify as Muslim Identify as vegan

Aged 18+ Live in the UK and have done so for 5+ years

Ellie Atayee-Bennett - ea12g14@soton.ac.uk

Research Participants Needed




What does participation involve?

Interview

- One 1-1 video interview on Microsoft Teams or Zoom with myself.
- 60-90 minutes.
- Video recorded for transcription and analysis purposes. The recording will be deleted once transcription is complete.

Join a closed, online group

- Join a closed, private, online group on a platform of your choice where possible (e.g. WhatsApp or Facebook) for 4-5 months (Ramadan - end of Dhul-Hijjah 1442 / April - August 2021).
- This will be my means of communication with you.
- Contribute and engage in group discussion on what the "Muslim vegan experience" involves.

Keeping a diary

- In the same group (or privately if preferred), keep a diary of your "Muslim vegan experience".
- Choose how you would like to do this, but by way of example, share photos, videos, meal diaries, events, activities, thoughts, etc., anything that you feel represents the "Muslim vegan experience".
- Share as much or as little as you want. I'll send a reminder to submit something every 2-3 weeks.

Ellie Atayee-Bennett - ea12g14@soton.ac.uk

Research Participants Needed




What is the criteria?

Identify as Jewish Identify as vegan

Age 18+ Live in the UK and have done so for 5+ years

Ellie Atayee-Bennett - ea12g14@soton.ac.uk

Research Participants Needed




What does participation involve?

Interview

- One 1-1 video interview on Microsoft Teams or Zoom with myself.
- 60-90 minutes.
- Video recorded for transcription and analysis purposes. The recording will be deleted once transcription is complete.

Join a closed, online group

- Join a closed, private, online group on WhatsApp (or another platform if preferred) for approximately 3 months (most likely mid-July - mid-October 2021).
- This will be my means of communication with you.
- Contribute and engage in group discussion on what the "Jewish vegan experience" involves.

Keeping a diary

- In the same group (or privately if preferred), keep a diary of your "Jewish vegan experience".
- Choose how you would like to do this, but by way of example, share photos, videos, meal diaries, events, activities, thoughts, etc., anything that you feel represents the "Jewish vegan experience".
- Share as much or as little as you want. I'll send a reminder to submit something every 2-3 weeks.

Ellie Atayee-Bennett - ea12g14@soton.ac.uk

Research Participants Needed




What is the criteria?

Identify as Christian Identify as vegan

Age 18+ Live in the UK and have done so for 5+ years

Ellie Atayee-Bennett - ea12g14@soton.ac.uk

Research Participants Needed




What does participation involve?

Interview

- One 1-1 video interview on Microsoft Teams or Zoom with myself.
- 60-90 minutes.
- Video recorded for transcription and analysis purposes. The recording will be deleted once transcription is complete.

Join a closed, online group

- Join a closed, private, online group on WhatsApp (or another platform if preferred) for approximately 3 months (most likely mid-July - mid-October 2021).
- This will be my means of communication with you.
- Contribute and engage in group discussion on what the "Christian vegan experience" involves.

Keeping a diary

- In the same group (or privately if preferred), keep a diary of your "Christian vegan experience".
- Choose how you would like to do this, but by way of example, share photos, videos, meal diaries, events, activities, thoughts, etc., anything that you feel represents the "Christian vegan experience".
- Share as much or as little as you want. I'll send a reminder to submit something every 2-3 weeks.

Ellie Atayee-Bennett - ea12g14@soton.ac.uk

Appendix D Interview Guides

D.1 Muslim Interview Guide

Introduction

Hello and thank you for joining me on this call. My name is Ellie Atayee-Bennett and I am a PhD research student at the University of Southampton exploring the experiences of Muslim vegans in the UK.

Anything that you share with me will be kept confidential, and in my work you will be assigned a pseudonym so you will not be identifiable. The information you share with me will be used for my PhD thesis and if I'm lucky, some journal articles relating to this research too. Just to confirm you don't have to answer every question if you don't want to or don't feel comfortable to do so and we can terminate the interview at any time if you need to. I've already given you a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form. Do you have any questions relating to either of those? And I know you've already signed the Consent Form, but can I just take verbal consent as well. Do you consent to taking part in this interview and study?

Do you have any other questions before we begin?

About You

To begin, I just want to ask a few questions to get to know a bit more about yourself.

How do you self-identify in terms of ethnic background and religion?

Were you born and raised in the UK? *if no:* When did you move to the UK?

Have you been Muslim all your life? *if no:* When did you revert?

What does Islam mean to you?

What does being Muslim mean to you?

How knowledgeable would you say you are on Islamic matters?

How would you describe your Islamic practice?

How do you think living in Britain has contributed to or impacted your Islam?

How do you think living in Britain has contributed to or impacted your cultural identity?

Food Biography

Thank you so much for that background information. I want to discuss food now and get a feel for your experience with food throughout your life.

Growing Up

What can you tell me about the food you ate growing up?

Talk me through your average day growing up. What sort of foods would you eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner?

Who would you eat with?

Were you involved in cooking or food preparation growing up? If so, how?

What was your favourite meal growing up?

Do you have any family favourite recipes?

How often would you eat with others beyond your immediate family, as in the case of communal eating?

What celebrations did you observe growing up?

What sorts of foods would be served during these celebrations?

What would your family serve guests?

Did your family observe the Eid sacrifice?

Did you observe any food-based rituals or traditions growing up?

Now

How does all of what you've just told me differ to the food you eat now?

Talk me through your average day now. What sort of foods do you eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner?

Who do you eat with?

Do you prepare your own food?

What cuisines do you mainly eat?

What meals do you enjoy now?

Appendix D

Do you observe any food-based rituals or traditions now?

Do you observe the same celebrations now? Do you observe any new ones?

What do you typically eat for Eid and other celebrations now?

What do you usually eat for iftar and suhoor?

What do you serve guests?

Food and Belief

Do you consider eating to be a religious practice?

Do you have any food-related values or beliefs?

How do you decide whether something is suitable to eat or not?

Vegan Experience

Vegan Experience

When did you become vegan? *if a revert*: Did you become Muslim or vegan first?

How do you define veganism?

What does veganism mean to you?

How would you define a vegan? What criteria would you set?

Are you a dietary vegan only or do you also avoid products such as leather, wool and cosmetics or other products that contain animal-derived ingredients?

If fabrics, cosmetics, etc are avoided too: Do others have anything to say about this?

If only dietary: Talk me through your decision to avoid animal foods but not other animal products. Do others have anything to say about this decision?

What's your view on using animals? Prompt: do you support abolitionist ideology (using animals full stop is wrong) or do you feel that there are some things we can use animals for?

Vegan Journey

I want to get an idea of your vegan journey over time. So how did you first get interested in veganism?

What helped you make the decision? What were your motivations to become vegan?

Appendix D

What helped you become vegan? Think support networks, organisations, etc?

How easy was it to become vegan?

What difficulties did you face in becoming vegan?

Do you feel your gender played a role in making the process either easier or more difficult?

How have you maintained your veganism over time?

What offers you support now, and how?

How has veganism benefitted your life?

How has veganism brought difficulties to your life?

How do you think living in Britain has contributed to or impacted your veganism?

When you think of your vegan identity, does this feel more of an individual identity or a collective identity? Why?

Muslim Vegan Experience

Veganism and Religion

What beliefs are important to you in your everyday life?

Do you regard them as religious, philosophical, or something else, or a combination?

What values are important to you in your everyday life?

Do you regard them as religious, secular, or vegan, or a combination?

What practices are important to you in your everyday life?

Do you regard them as religious, secular, or vegan, or a combination?

Do you feel your religious beliefs affect or influence your veganism? How so?

Were any of your motivations for becoming vegan related to religious or spiritual reasons?

What religious beliefs underpin your vegan practice?

How important is religious tradition to you?

How do you decide whether something is right or wrong? Ethical or unethical? Halal or haram?

Prompt: do you turn to religious jurisprudence, or do you reach your own conclusions through reflexivity, etc?

Muslim Vegan Experience

How do you think being a Muslim vegan differs to being a non-religious vegan?

How would you describe the Muslim vegan experience? What does it mean to you?

Is it easy or hard to be a Muslim vegan? Why?

What difficulties have you faced as a Muslim vegan?

Do you identify more so as Muslim or vegan or are the two inseparable?

Does your ethnic identity/ race alter your experience? Is that in a positive or negative way?

How do you get on at the mosque or other community gatherings where food is present?

How do you get on in Ramadan and other times when you fast?

Do you sacrifice an animal during Eid-al-Adha? Why/ Why not?

If no: What do you do as an alternative?

How do other Muslims respond to this decision?

Veganism and Islam

Do you feel veganism has a place in Islam?

How do you connect your veganism to your practice of Islam? Do you feel they complement one another, or do you feel they're contradictory?

Do you have any concerns about your practice of Islam where you choose not to eat certain foods that are halal?

If meat, fish, milk, eggs, and honey are halal, why don't you eat them?

Do you think it's right that animal foods are halal, or do you perceive them as more haram?

Becoming a Muslim Vegan

How did your religious practice and beliefs change when you became vegan?

How did your views towards animals and the environment change when you became vegan?

How did your views towards Islam and other Muslims change when you became vegan?

In what other ways did you or your values, beliefs, thoughts about things change when you became vegan?

Response from Others

Are your family Muslim? Are they vegan?

How did they react to your veganism?

How did others respond? Prompt: Muslim friends, non-Muslim friends, community members.

What comments have others said to you in response to your veganism?

Do you feel you've ever been discriminated against or stigmatised for being a Muslim vegan?

How do you manage stigma and negative comments? What coping strategies do you have?

Do you feel some groups of Muslims are more or less understanding than others? Talk me through this.

Social Networks and Relationships

Are you married?

If married: Is your partner vegan? How do you feel about this?

If unmarried: How important is it to you that your partner is vegan? Why? Why not?

Who do you live with?

Who cooks at home?

Do you have vegan friends?

Do you attend vegan events and gatherings?

Are you a member of any vegan groups or organisations?

Veganism and Place

What places make your vegan experience easier? Prompt: vegan shops, restaurants, certain people's houses, etc

What places pose a challenge to your veganism?

How does your experience differ in different places?

Do you behave differently in different places?

Do you feel your veganism affects your inclusion in different situations?

How do you get on when you eat out? E.g. restaurant, party, meal at a friend's, etc

Appendix D

Have you travelled as a vegan? How did you get on?

Everyday Life

Is veganism accessible to everyone or do you feel there are certain obstacles?

What do you buy that you feel is relevant to your vegan experience?

What events do you attend that you feel is relevant to your vegan experience?

What activities do you do that you feel are part of your vegan experience?

Do you engage in activism?

Do you have any hobbies that you feel are relevant to your vegan experience? If so, what?

Conclusion

That brings us to the end of the interview. Do you have any questions or comments before we finish?

Is there anything else that you feel is relevant that you would like to mention?

Would you like a copy of my results once I've completed my PhD?

Thank you so much for your time and all of your answers. They are all very useful!

D.2 Jewish Interview Guide

Introduction

Hello and thank you for joining me on this call. My name is Ellie Atayee-Bennett and I am a PhD research student at the University of Southampton exploring the experiences of Jewish vegans in the UK.

Anything that you share with me will be kept confidential, and in my work you will be assigned a pseudonym so you will not be identifiable. The information you share with me will be used for my PhD thesis and if I'm lucky, some journal articles relating to this research too. Just to confirm you don't have to answer every question if you don't want to or don't feel comfortable to do so and we can terminate the interview at any time if you need to. I've already given you a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form. Do you have any questions relating to either of those?

And I know you've already signed the Consent Form, but can I just take verbal consent as well. Do you consent to taking part in this interview and study?

Do you have any other questions before we begin?

About You

To begin, I just want to ask a few questions to get to know a bit more about yourself.

How do you self-identify in terms of ethnic background and religion?

Do you identify with any particular denomination or branch of Judaism?

Were you born and raised in the UK? *if no:* When did you move to the UK?

Have you been Jewish all your life? *if no:* When did you convert?

What does Judaism mean to you?

What does being Jewish mean to you?

How knowledgeable would you say you are on Jewish matters?

How would you describe your Jewish practice?

How do you think living in Britain contributes to or impacts your Judaism?

Food Biography

Thank you so much for that background information. I want to discuss food now and get a feel for your experience with food throughout your life.

Growing Up

What can you tell me about the food you ate growing up?

Talk me through your average day growing up. What sort of foods would you eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner?

Who would you eat with?

Were you involved in cooking or food preparation growing up? If so, how?

How often would you eat with others beyond your immediate family, as in the case of communal eating?

What celebrations did you observe growing up?

What sorts of foods would be served during these celebrations?

Were there any other food-based rituals or meals that you observed growing up? *Prompt: Sabbath meal, seders, etc.*

How important was food to your experience of Judaism growing up?

Now

How does all of what you've just told me differ to the food you eat now?

How strictly do you follow kashrut laws?

Talk me through your average day now. What sort of foods do you eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner?

Who do you eat with?

Do you prepare your own food?

What cuisines do you mainly eat?

Do you observe the same celebrations now? Do you observe any new ones?

What do you typically eat for Rosh Hashanah, Pesach, and other celebrations now?

Appendix D

I've read that some non-vegan foods are traditionally served at some festivities, such as apples dipped in honey during Rosh Hashanah, jelly doughnuts at Chanukah, and dairy during Shavuot. Do your family follow these customs? If so, how do you get on?

I've also read that a traditional seder plate features a roasted egg and a shank bone. What do you do?

Do you observe any other food-based rituals or meals now? *Prompt: Sabbath meal, seders, etc.*

How important is food to your experience of Judaism now?

Do you consider eating to be a religious practice?

Vegan Experience

Vegan Experience

When did you become vegan? *if a convert:* Did you become Jewish or vegan first?

How do you define veganism?

How would you define a vegan? What criteria would you set?

Are you a dietary vegan only or do you also avoid products such as leather, wool and cosmetics or other products that contain animal-derived ingredients?

If only dietary: Talk me through your decision to avoid animal foods but not other animal products. Do others have anything to say about this decision?

If leather, etc also: Do you wear tephillin? If no, why? If yes, what do you do for this?

What's your view on using animals? *Prompt:* do you support abolitionist ideology (using animals full stop is wrong) or do you feel that there are some things we can use animals for?

Vegan Journey

I want to get an idea of your vegan journey over time. So how did you first get interested in veganism?

What were your motivations to become vegan?

What helped you become vegan? Think support networks, organisations, etc?

How easy was it to become vegan?

What difficulties did you face in becoming vegan?

Appendix D

Do you feel your gender played a role in making the process either easier or more difficult?

How have you maintained your veganism over time?

What offers you support now, and how?

How do you think living in Britain contributes to or impacts your veganism?

When you think of your vegan identity, does this feel more of an individual identity or a collective identity? Why?

Jewish Vegan Experience

Veganism and Religion

Do you feel your religious beliefs affect or influence your veganism? How so?

Were any of your motivations for becoming vegan related to religious or spiritual reasons?

What religious beliefs underpin your vegan practice?

How do you decide whether something is right or wrong? Ethical or unethical? Kosher or Tref?

Prompt: turn to religious teaching? Reach own conclusions through reflexivity, etc?

Jewish Vegan Experience

How do you think being a Jewish vegan differs to being a non-religious vegan?

Do you identify more so as Jewish, more so as vegan, or are the two inseparable?

Is it easy or hard to be a Jewish vegan? Why?

Are there any vegan foods that are non-kosher that you need to be wary of?

Do you check the kosher status of typically vegan foods, such as bread?

Do you look for the kosher label as well as the vegan label?

Do you only eat foods made by vegan businesses on vegan product lines or do you eat foods made by businesses that also produce non-vegan foods?

How do you get on at the synagogue or other community gatherings where food is present?

As a vegan, how do you get on during the fasts of Yom Kippur and Tishah B'Av?

Veganism and Judaism

Do you feel veganism has a place in Judaism?

Appendix D

How do you connect your veganism to your practice of Judaism? Do you feel they complement one another, or do you feel they're contradictory?

If certain animal products are kosher, why don't you eat them?

Becoming a Jewish Vegan

How did your religious practice and beliefs change when you became vegan?

Have any practices/ festivities become more important since being vegan, e.g. Tu B'Shevat?

How did your views towards other Jews change when you became vegan?

How did your views towards animals and the environment change when you became vegan?

Response from Others

Are your family Jewish? Are they vegan?

How did they react to your veganism?

How did others respond? Prompt: Jewish friends, non-Jewish friends, community members.

What comments have others said to you in response to your veganism?

Do you feel you've ever been discriminated against or stigmatised for being a Jewish vegan?

How do you manage stigma and negative comments? What coping strategies do you have?

Do you feel some groups of Jews are more or less understanding than others? Talk me through this.

Social Networks and Relationships

Are you married? *If married:* Is your partner vegan? How do you feel about this?

If unmarried: How important is it to you that your partner is vegan? Why? Why not?

Do you have vegan friends? Any Jewish vegan friends?

Do you attend vegan events and gatherings?

Are you a member of any vegan groups or organisations?

Veganism and Place

What places make your vegan experience easier? Prompt: vegan shops, restaurants, certain people's houses, etc

Appendix D

What places pose a challenge to your veganism?

How does your experience or behaviour differ in different places?

Do you feel your veganism affects your inclusion in different situations?

How do you get on when you eat out? E.g. restaurant, party, meal at a friend's, etc

Do you go to special kosher restaurants? Vegan only restaurants?

Are you happy to eat a vegan meal in a non-vegan non-Jewish restaurant?

Have you travelled as a vegan? How did you get on? What things do you need to think about?

Everyday Life

Is veganism accessible to everyone or do you feel there are certain obstacles?

What do you buy, aside from food, that you feel is relevant to your vegan experience?

Do you do any activities or have any hobbies that you feel are part of your vegan experience?

Do you engage in activism?

Conclusion

That brings us to the end of the interview. Is there anything else that you feel is relevant to the Jewish vegan experience that we haven't discussed?

Would you like a copy of my results once I've completed my PhD? Thank you so much for your time and answers. It's been extremely interesting and insightful.

D.3 Christian Interview Guide

Introduction

Hello and thank you for joining me on this call. My name is Ellie Atayee-Bennett and I am a PhD research student at the University of Southampton exploring the experiences of Christian vegans in the UK.

Anything that you share with me will be kept confidential, and in my work you will be assigned a pseudonym so you will not be identifiable. The information you share with me will be used for my PhD thesis and if I'm lucky, some journal articles relating to this research too. Just to confirm you don't have to answer every question if you don't want to or don't feel comfortable to do so and we can terminate the interview at any time if you need to. I've already given you a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form. Do you have any questions relating to either of those?

And I know you've already signed the Consent Form, but can I just take verbal consent as well. Do you consent to taking part in this interview and study?

Do you have any other questions before we begin?

About You

To begin, I just want to ask a few questions to get to know a bit more about yourself.

How do you self-identify in terms of ethnic background and religion?

Do you identify with any particular Christian denomination?

Were you born and raised in the UK? *if no:* When did you move to the UK?

Have you been Christian all your life? *if no:* When did you convert?

What does Christianity mean to you?

What does being Christian mean to you?

How knowledgeable would you say you are on Christian matters?

How would you describe your Christian practice?

How do you think living in Britain contributes to or impacts your Christianity?

Food Biography

Thank you so much for that background information. I want to discuss food now and get a feel for your experience with food throughout your life.

Growing Up

What can you tell me about the food you ate growing up?

Talk me through your average day growing up. What sort of foods would you eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner?

Who would you eat with?

Were you involved in cooking or food preparation growing up? If so, how?

How often would you eat with others beyond your immediate family, as in the case of communal eating?

What celebrations did you observe growing up?

What sorts of foods would be served during these celebrations?

Were there any other significant food-based rituals or meals that you observed growing up?

Prompt: Sunday roast, afternoon tea, etc.

How important was food to your experience of Christianity growing up?

Now

How does all of what you've just told me differ to the food you eat now?

Talk me through your average day now. What sort of foods do you eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner?

Who do you eat with?

Do you prepare your own food?

What cuisines do you mainly eat?

Do you observe the same celebrations now? Do you observe any new ones?

What do you typically eat for Christmas, Easter, and other celebrations now?

Do you observe any other significant food-based rituals or meals now? *Prompt: Sunday roast, afternoon tea, etc.*

How important is food to your experience of Christianity now?

Food and Belief

Do you consider eating to be a religious practice?

How do you decide whether something is suitable to eat or not?

Vegan Experience

Vegan Experience

When did you become vegan? *if a convert*: Did you become Christian or vegan first?

How do you define veganism?

How would you define a vegan? What criteria would you set?

Are you a dietary vegan only or do you also avoid products such as leather, wool and cosmetics or other products that contain animal-derived ingredients?

if only dietary: Talk me through your decision to avoid animal foods but not other animal products. Do others have anything to say about this decision?

What's your view on using animals? *Prompt: do you support abolitionist ideology (using animals full stop is wrong) or do you feel that there are some things we can use animals for?*

Vegan Journey

I want to get an idea of your vegan journey over time. So how did you first get interested in veganism?

What were your motivations to become vegan?

What helped you become vegan? Think support networks, organisations, etc?

How easy was it to become vegan?

What difficulties did you face in becoming vegan?

Do you feel your gender played a role in making the process either easier or more difficult?

How have you maintained your veganism over time?

What offers you support now, and how?

How do you think living in Britain contributes to or impacts your veganism?

When you think of your vegan identity, does this feel more of an individual identity or a collective identity? Why?

Christian Vegan Experience

Veganism and Religion

Do you feel your religious beliefs affect or influence your veganism? How so?

Were any of your motivations for becoming vegan related to religious or spiritual reasons?

What religious beliefs underpin your vegan practice?

Thinking of your thought processes, how do you decide whether something is right or wrong? Ethical or unethical? *Prompt: do you turn to religious teaching, or do you reach your own conclusions through reflexivity, etc?*

Christian Vegan Experience

How do you think being a Christian vegan differs to being a non-religious vegan?

Is it easy or hard to be a Christian vegan? Why?

Do you identify more so as Christian, more so as vegan, or are the two inseparable?

How do you get on at Church or other community gatherings where food is present?

Do you do anything at Lent? Is veganism important to your experience/practices?

Veganism and Christianity

Do you feel veganism has a place in Christianity?

How do you connect your veganism to your practice of Christianity? Do you feel they complement one another, or do you feel they're contradictory?

If animal products are permissible for consumption, why don't you eat them?

Becoming a Christian Vegan

How did your religious practice and beliefs change when you became vegan?

How did your views towards other Christians change when you became vegan?

How did your views towards animals and the environment change when you became vegan?

Response from Others

Are your family Christian? Are they vegan?

How did they react to your veganism?

How did others respond? *Prompt: Christian friends, non-Christian friends, community members. What comments have others said to you in response to your veganism?*

Do you feel you've ever been discriminated against or stigmatised for being a Christian vegan?

How do you manage stigma and negative comments? What coping strategies do you have?

Do you feel some groups of Christians are more or less understanding than others? Talk me through this.

Social Networks and Relationships

Are you married? *If married:* Is your partner vegan? How do you feel about this?

If unmarried: How important is it to you that your partner is vegan? Why? Why not?

Do you have vegan friends? Do you have vegan Christian friends?

Do you attend vegan events and gatherings?

Are you a member of any vegan groups or organisations?

Veganism and Place

What places make your vegan experience easier? *Prompt: vegan shops, restaurants, certain people's houses, etc*

What places pose a challenge to your veganism?

How does your experience or behaviour differ in different places?

Do you feel your veganism affects your inclusion in different situations?

How do you get on when you eat out? E.g. restaurant, party, meal at a friend's, etc

Have you travelled as a vegan? How did you get on?

Everyday Life

Is veganism accessible to everyone or do you feel there are certain obstacles?

What do you buy, aside from food, that you feel is relevant to your vegan experience?

Appendix D

Do you do any activities or have any hobbies that you feel are part of your vegan experience?

Do you engage in activism?

Conclusion

That brings us to the end of the interview. Is there anything else that you feel is relevant to the Christian vegan experience that we haven't discussed?

Would you like a copy of my results once I've completed my PhD?

Thank you so much for your time and all of your answers. It's been extremely interesting and insightful.

Appendix E Group and Diary Guidelines

E.1 Study 1 – Muslim Participants

Online Group Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in this study. As part of this study you are asked to join a private, closed, online group. This information sheet outlines what is expected from your participation.

- Please check the group regularly as I will use this group to communicate with you.
- Please contribute to the group. You can share whatever you feel represents the “Muslim vegan experience”. For example, you could share photographs, videos, links to webpages or articles, or even your own thoughts. Whatever you like!
- If you share photographs or videos of people (i.e. yourself or others), please ensure you have their consent. Where people are shown in photographs or videos, only a description will be saved in my data, and the photographs and videos themselves will be deleted at the end of my PhD to ensure confidentiality.
- If you share content produced by others (e.g. a website, blog post or YouTube video), please ensure it is publicly available and that a link to the source is provided.
- Please engage with others by commenting and responding to the discussion.
- Everything posted in the group must be kept confidential, so please do not share information or personal details with others outside of the group.
- Unkind, discriminatory, abusive, etc language will not be tolerated.

Thank you so much! JazakAllah khairun!

Diary Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in this study. As part of this study you are asked to keep a diary of your Muslim vegan experience. How you respond to this is entirely up to you.

I strongly encourage you to share your diary entries in the online group as this is great for group discussion, however if there is something you really don't want to share in the group but feel would benefit my research, please email it to me privately via SafeSend* at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk or directly to me using my personal social media account.

Examples of things you can submit:

- Photographs (e.g. food, products, events, activities, etc)

Appendix E

- Short videos (e.g. a video diary where you talk about aspects of your vegan experience. Nothing fancy, just a video recorded on your phone is fine)
- Events and gatherings attended (e.g. religious, vegan, family gatherings, community events, etc)
- Religious events observed
- Other celebrations (e.g. birthdays, cultural observances, etc)
- Meal diaries (a template will be made available, should you wish to use this)
- Activities (e.g. activism, volunteering, etc)
- Hobbies (e.g. art, writing, music, etc)
- Purchases (e.g. vegan shoes, vegan cosmetics, etc)
- Thoughts on different topics (e.g. animal sacrifice, meat-eating, factory farming, environmentalism, etc – a paragraph is fine)
- If you come across perceptions from others (positive or negative), whether that's a comment someone has said to you, to someone else, or messages on social media, you can share the comment, but please do so anonymously

You do not by any means have to do all of these. Only share what is relevant to your life.

Similarly, if you think of something else that you feel is relevant to the Muslim vegan experience, please share it!

The important question is: **does it relate to my experience as a Muslim vegan?**

Thank you so much! JazakAllah khairun!

*SafeSend is a service that allows for documents to be sent to me securely encrypted. Let me know in advance if you want to send something and I can set up a link that will make it easier for you to send things to me.

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E.2 Study 2 – Jewish Participants

Thank you for your interest in this study. As part of this study you are asked to join a private, closed, online group and keep a diary of your Jewish vegan experience. This information sheet outlines what is expected from your participation.

- Please check the group regularly as I will use this group to communicate with you.
- Please contribute to the group. You can share whatever you feel represents the “Jewish vegan experience”. For example, you could share photographs, videos, links to webpages or articles, or even your own thoughts. Whatever you like!
- If you share photographs or videos of people (i.e. yourself or others), please ensure you have their consent. Where people are shown in photographs or videos, only a description will be saved in my data, and the photographs and videos themselves will be deleted at the end of my PhD to ensure confidentiality.
- If you share content produced by others (e.g. a website, blog post or YouTube video), please ensure it is publicly available and that a link to the source is provided.
- Please engage with others by commenting and responding to the discussion.
- Everything posted in the group must be kept confidential, so please do not share information or personal details with others outside of the group.
- Unkind, discriminatory, abusive, etc language will not be tolerated.

The Diary

I encourage you to share your diary entries in the online group as this is great for group discussion, however if there is something you don't want to share in the group but feel would benefit my research, please email it to me privately via SafeSend* at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk or directly to me using my personal social media account.

How you respond to this task is entirely up to you, but by way of example, things you can submit include:

- Photographs (e.g. food, products, events, activities, etc)
- Short videos (e.g. a video diary where you talk about aspects of your vegan experience. Nothing fancy, just a video recorded on your phone is fine)
- Events and gatherings attended (e.g. religious, vegan, family gatherings, community events, etc)
- Religious events observed
- Other celebrations (e.g. birthdays, cultural observances, etc)

Appendix E

- Meal diaries (a template will be made available, should you wish to use this)
- Activities (e.g. activism, volunteering, etc)
- Hobbies (e.g. art, writing, music, etc)
- Purchases (e.g. vegan shoes, vegan cosmetics, etc)
- Thoughts on different topics (e.g. animal sacrifice, meat-eating, factory farming, environmentalism, etc – a paragraph is fine)
- If you come across perceptions from others (positive or negative), whether that's a comment someone has said to you, to someone else, or messages on social media, you can share the comment, but please do so anonymously

You do not by any means have to do all of these. Only share what is relevant to your life.

Similarly, if you think of something else that you feel is relevant to the Jewish vegan experience, please share it!

The important question is: **does it relate to my experience as a Jewish vegan?**

Thank you so much!

*SafeSend is a service that allows for documents to be sent to me securely encrypted. Let me know in advance if you want to send something and I can set up a link that will make it easier for you to send things to me.

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E.3 Study 2 – Christian Participants

Thank you for your interest in this study. As part of this study you are asked to join a private, closed, online group and keep a diary of your Christian vegan experience. This information sheet outlines what is expected from your participation.

- Please check the group regularly as I will use this group to communicate with you.
- Please contribute to the group. You can share whatever you feel represents the “Christian vegan experience”. For example, you could share photographs, videos, links to webpages or articles, or even your own thoughts. Whatever you like!
- If you share photographs or videos of people (i.e. yourself or others), please ensure you have their consent. Where people are shown in photographs or videos, only a description will be saved in my data, and the photographs and videos themselves will be deleted at the end of my PhD to ensure confidentiality.
- If you share content produced by others (e.g. a website, blog post or YouTube video), please ensure it is publicly available and that a link to the source is provided.
- Please engage with others by commenting and responding to the discussion.
- Everything posted in the group must be kept confidential, so please do not share information or personal details with others outside of the group.
- Unkind, discriminatory, abusive, etc language will not be tolerated.

The Diary

I encourage you to share your diary entries in the online group as this is great for group discussion, however if there is something you don't want to share in the group but feel would benefit my research, please email it to me privately via SafeSend* at ea12g14@soton.ac.uk or directly to me using my personal social media account.

How you respond to this task is entirely up to you, but by way of example, things you can submit include:

- Photographs (e.g. food, products, events, activities, etc)
- Short videos (e.g. a video diary where you talk about aspects of your vegan experience. Nothing fancy, just a video recorded on your phone is fine)
- Events and gatherings attended (e.g. religious, vegan, family gatherings, community events, etc)
- Religious events observed
- Other celebrations (e.g. birthdays, cultural observances, etc)

Appendix E

- Meal diaries (a template will be made available, should you wish to use this)
- Activities (e.g. activism, volunteering, etc)
- Hobbies (e.g. art, writing, music, etc)
- Purchases (e.g. vegan shoes, vegan cosmetics, etc)
- Thoughts on different topics (e.g. animal sacrifice, meat-eating, factory farming, environmentalism, etc – a paragraph is fine)
- If you come across perceptions from others (positive or negative), whether that's a comment someone has said to you, to someone else, or messages on social media, you can share the comment, but please do so anonymously

You do not by any means have to do all of these. Only share what is relevant to your life. Similarly, if you think of something else that you feel is relevant to the Christian vegan experience, please share it!

The important question is: **does it relate to my experience as a Christian vegan?**

Thank you so much!

*SafeSend is a service that allows for documents to be sent to me securely encrypted. Let me know in advance if you want to send something and I can set up a link that will make it easier for you to send things to me.

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Appendix F Coding Frame

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub-Subcode	Files	References
Community				51	290
	Face-to-Face Groups			6	12
	Family Networks			15	23
	Lack of Community			15	25
	Online Groups			24	40
	Religious Networks			17	36
	Social Networks			32	67
	Support from Community			8	14
	Vegan Community			36	73
Consumption Practices				37	202
	Ethical Consumption			35	138
		Environmentally-Friendly		18	27
		Ethics-Led Consumer Decisions		23	39
		Fairtrade		3	5
		Minimising Plastic		14	19

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub-Subcode	Files	References
		Organic		2	3
		Packaging		2	2
		Recycling		7	8
		Reducing Waste		15	23
		Seasonality		4	4
		Second-Hand		3	3
	Other Consumption Practices			20	62
		Bulk Buying		2	7
		Composing and Green Bin		3	4
		Delivery		3	6
		Gardening		12	26
		Getting Hold of Shopping		7	11
		Market		1	1
		No Alcohol		5	5
		Supporting Local Community		2	2
Emotions				67	505
	Aggression			4	4
	Anger			6	7
	Annoyance			19	29
	Anxiety or Worry			18	31
	Comfortable			4	4

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
	Disappointment			2	4
	Discomfort			22	31
	Disgust			20	37
	Dislike			7	12
	Dread			1	1
	Embarrassment			1	1
	Enjoyment			29	54
	Excitement			13	13
	Fear			15	19
	Frustration			6	7
	Guilt			8	14
	Happiness			31	54
	Hate			12	17
	Hope			12	16
	Horrified			6	8
	Hypocritical			1	1
	Impressed			1	1
	Lonely			4	5
	Love			29	61
	Lucky			4	4
	Overwhelm			1	1
	Pride			3	4
	Relief			1	1
	Sadness or Heartbreak			19	38

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
	Shame			1	1
	Shock or Trauma			12	21
	Surprise			4	4
Food				64	2321
	Commensality			44	113
		Any Excuse for Food		3	4
		Hosting		6	8
		Inclusion vs Exclusion		22	37
		Meals as a Social Experience		12	20
		Religious Meals Shared		1	1
		Sharing Food and Eating Together		33	43
	Food in Childhood			41	371
		Commensality in Childhood		35	67
		Food Preparation in Childhood		29	36
		Food Rituals in Childhood		20	23
		Importance of Food to Religion in Childhood		20	22

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
		Religious Observances in Childhood		34	67
		Secular and Cultural Observances in Childhood		15	21
		Types of Food in Childhood		41	135
	Food Nowadays			53	961
		Secular and Cultural Observances Nowadays		21	40
		Types of Foods Nowadays		52	898
		Vegan Food Influences		14	23
	Food Practices			46	231
		Cooking for Escape		1	1
		Cooking for Pleasure		16	17
		Cooking Knowledge and Ability		11	14
		Creativity and Expression		6	10
		Experimentation		14	27

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub-Subcode	Files	References
		Food Choices		20	66
		Food Knowledge		6	14
		Lazy or For Ease		10	16
		Making Extra		8	11
		Others Preparing Food		19	25
		Trying New Foods		16	28
	Food, Religion, and Culture			60	334
		Food at Religious Observances		42	159
			Food at Christian Observances	16	70
			Food at Islamic Observances	15	46
			Food at Jewish Observances	13	43
		Foods Inspired by Religion and Culture		26	89
			Christian Foods	3	10
			Jewish Foods	11	51
			Muslim Foods	4	11
			Other Cultural Foods	12	17
		Importance of Food to Religion		31	40

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub-Subcode	Files	References
		Is Eating a Religious Practice		38	46
	Kitchen Practices			9	44
		Food Organisation		3	17
		Food Storage		3	7
		Kitchen Tools		4	10
		Sharing a Kitchen		6	8
	Relating to Food and Eating			48	242
		Cleanliness and Purity		1	1
		Connection to the Past		1	1
		Consuming Peace		1	2
		Culture		4	7
		Edibility		6	11
		Emotions		2	3
		Feeling Good		13	13
		Food and Ritual		18	39
		Food as a Statement		1	1
		Food as an Experience		7	12
		Food for Enjoyment		7	10
		Food for Health		31	98

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub-Subcode	Files	References
			Health-Led Decisions	24	61
			Healthy Foods	17	27
		Gratitude		6	10
		Healthy Relationship with Food		2	3
		Mindfulness and Attentiveness		7	18
		Spiritual Benefits		7	12
	Vegetarian Influence			19	25
Identity				47	258
	Being a Convert			8	15
	Change in Religious Identity during Lifetime			17	23
	Ethnic Self-Identification			39	71
	Merging Identities			15	19
	Mixed Cultural Upbringing			9	17
	Other Self-Identification			13	19
	Religious Self-Identification			40	94

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
Misc.				40	280
	Exercise			15	56
	Illness			9	61
	Other			11	72
	Partner or Family			17	24
	Pets			14	19
	Work			14	48
Religion				73	1518
	Religion in Britain			45	110
		Antisemitism		9	35
		Being Christian in Britain		14	21
		Being Jewish in Britain		15	22
		Being Muslim in Britain		14	27
		Islamophobia		3	5
	Religious Beliefs and Values			56	145
		Christian Beliefs and Values		24	67
		Islamic Beliefs and Values		17	45

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
		Jewish Beliefs and Values		15	33
	Religious Culture			26	76
		Christian Cultures		11	41
		Islamic Cultures		8	18
		Jewish Cultures		7	17
	Religious Knowledge			48	126
		Christian Education		8	23
		Christian Knowledge		15	18
		Islamic Education		12	30
		Islamic Knowledge		12	20
		Jewish Education		8	11
		Jewish Knowledge		14	24
	Religious Marketplace			5	7
	Religious Observances			19	141
		Christian Observances		3	13
			Christmas	1	11
			Easter	1	1

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
			Other Christian Observances	1	1
		Islamic Observances		9	88
			Eid-al-Adha	8	29
			Eid-ul-Fitr	5	13
			Other Islamic Observances	1	1
			Ramadan	8	44
		Jewish Observances		7	40
			Other Jewish Observances	3	21
			Pesach	5	12
			Rosh Hashanah	4	6
	Religious Practice			50	214
		Christian Practice		16	73
		Factors Facilitating Christian Practice		2	2
		Factors Facilitating Islamic Practice		2	3
		Factors Facilitating Jewish Practice		1	1

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
		Factors Hindering Christian Practice		2	2
		Factors Hindering Islamic Practice		0	0
		Factors Hindering Jewish Practice		1	1
		Islamic Practice		19	57
		Jewish Practice		16	56
		Transforming Christian Practice		0	0
		Transforming Islamic Practice		9	13
		Transforming Jewish Practice		2	6
	Religious Rituals			27	136
		Christian Rituals		5	30
		Islamic Rituals		12	42
		Jewish Rituals		11	64
	Religious Spaces			11	113
		Christian Gatherings		7	90
		Islamic Gatherings		2	21
		Jewish Gatherings		2	2

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
	Religious Stories and Teachings			34	295
		Christian Stories and Teachings		11	215
		Islamic Stories and Teachings		16	46
		Jewish Stories and Teachings		7	34
	Stewardship			20	37
		Christian Concept of Stewardship		11	22
		Islamic Concept of Stewardship		7	13
		Jewish Concept of Stewardship		2	2
	Understandings of Religion			44	117
		Meaning of Being Christian		11	13
		Meaning of Being Jewish		10	16
		Meaning of Being Muslim		14	16
		Meaning of Christianity		13	20
		Meaning of Islam		18	33

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
		Meaning of Judaism		12	19
The Body and Beyond				60	332
	Embodiment and Corporeality			50	203
		Being in Tune with the Body		33	57
		Bringing Religion into the Body		17	24
		Bringing Veganism into the Body		6	8
		Consumption		9	17
			Consuming Clean Foods	1	3
			Consuming Peace	1	1
		Engrained Practices and Values		21	32
		Sensory Experience		17	42
		Veganism as Religious, Embodied Practice		19	23
	Relating to Beyond the Self			41	129
		Connection		12	40

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
			Connection to God	9	15
			Connection with Family and Friends	3	5
			Connection with Oneself	4	4
			Connection with Religion	4	6
			Connection with the Wider Community	5	6
			Connection with the World	3	3
		Relationship with the Creation		38	89
Towards Ethics and Interpretation				72	1060
	Ethics and Morality			60	549
		Concern for Animals		32	104
		Concern for Social Justice Issues		8	13
		Concern for the Environment		24	50
		Context		23	52

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
		Ethics and Morality as Guidance		44	172
		Marketplace and Economics		10	40
		Peace		7	11
		Personal Principles		35	72
		Sentience		21	35
	Reflexivity			65	511
		Application of Religious Principles to Modernity		32	76
		Awareness of Own Positionality and Privilege		6	13
		Critical of Injustice and Violence		19	41
		Practical Reason		21	70
		Reflection and Reflexivity		59	250
		Research		31	61
Veganism				76	2399
	Accessibility to Veganism			37	65

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
		Availability of Vegan Products		12	19
	Barriers to Accessibility			39	121
		Access to Foods		6	7
		Changing your Status Quo		1	2
		Cost		19	21
		Giving Up Favourite Foods		3	7
		Health		9	10
		Knowledge and Education		17	26
		Lack of Authority Figures		3	4
		Location or Mobility Constraints		13	14
		Other People		4	4
		Psychological and Behavioural		4	6
		Worldview and Culture		12	20
	Challenges to Veganism			28	57
		Checking Ingredients		1	1
		Eating Out		2	2

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
		Finding Replacements		3	6
		Finding Specific Foods		1	1
		Food Preparation		4	4
		Health and Mental Health		3	3
		Ideas		1	1
		Lack of Community		1	1
		Lack of Options		1	1
		Other People		8	9
		Parenting		5	8
		Poor Quality Vegan Alternatives		2	2
		Religious Rituals		7	7
		Travelling		2	2
		Veganising Recipes		6	8
	Foods Mossed			6	8
	Gender			12	22
	Influence on Family and Friends			26	45
	Motivations for Veganism			47	124

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub-Subcode	Files	References
		Animals		34	40
		Environmentalism		26	31
		Health		23	28
		Other Motivations		13	20
	Others' Views Towards Veganism			51	310
		Curiosity and Interest		6	8
		Don't Understand		25	53
		Neutral Views		20	28
		Pushback or Stigma		41	129
		Supportive Views		41	90
	Religion as Guiding one's Veganism			19	32
	Religious Vegan vs Non-Religious Vegan			35	46
	Support for Veganism			45	92
	Travelling as a Vegan			45	179
	Trigger Events for Transition to Veganism			39	65

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
	Understandings of Veganism			47	93
	Vegan Activism			42	115
	Vegan Activities			30	38
	Vegan Education			26	63
		Educating Others		9	17
		Exposure to Veganism		10	17
		Learning to be Vegan		16	28
	Vegan Identity			37	64
	Vegan Practices			24	40
		Accommodating Non-Vegans		1	1
		Adaptation		8	10
		Pledge		1	2
		Reading Labels and Ingredients		3	4
		Substitution		13	20
		Supplementation		2	2
	Vegan Purchases			41	108
	Veganism – Diet vs Lifestyle			36	48
	Veganism as Ongoing			9	14

Appendix F

Code	Subcode	Sub- Subcode	Sub- Sub- Subcode	Files	References
	Veganism in Britain			39	65
	Veganism in Different Spaces			52	515
		Vegan Events and Gatherings		36	81
		Veganism in Religious Spaces		39	81
			Veganism in Christian Spaces	13	25
			Veganism in Jewish Spaces	13	30
			Veganism in Muslim Spaces	12	25
		Veganism in Secular Spaces		47	387
			Other Spaces	17	46
			Vegan Takeaways	13	40
			Veganism at Others' Houses	30	57
			Veganism in Eateries	40	193
			Veganism in Shops	23	51
	Views on Animal Use			39	69

Appendix G Participant Summary Template

Attributes: [Religious identity with sect/denomination] ▪ [Any change in religious identity] ▪ [Ethnic and/or national identity] ▪ Born and raised in [country] ▪ Moved to the UK [X] years ago ▪ [Gender] ▪ [Age bracket] ▪ [Geographical region] ▪ [Occupation] ▪ [Education level] ▪ Lives with [who] (their diet) ▪ Vegan for [X] years ▪ Vegetarian for [X] years prior ▪ Has a [pet]

Noticeable Themes: [Enter key themes from the interview]

Values: [Enter reported or implied values]

Knowledge: [Enter epistemological outlook or knowledge drawn upon]

Emotions: [Enter emotions reported or demonstrated]

Diary: [Enter key themes from participant's diary entries]

VPO: [Enter key themes from participant's virtual participant observation call]

Profile: [Fill the rest of the page with background commentary on the participant and elaborate on the noticeable themes above. Highlight keywords in red]

Appendix H Networks and Communities Matrix

Community that is supportive where veganism is concerned	Community that is unsupportive where veganism is concerned	Lack of community	Nothing mentioned
-----------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

	Religious	In- Person Vegan	Online Vegan	Faith Vegan	Friends	Family	Other
Sara	Mosque community (unclear how often she goes) – there are not always options	Knows of a few vegans, but not a member of any vegan groups; doesn't attend groups/events			Most friends are not vegan – mainly confusion or accepting views	Mum is OK; Dad thinks it's nonsense; sister is now vegetarian; in-laws can't understand why	Work – caters in canteen; cake event didn't cater, she didn't go to it, didn't want to make a fuss
Mohammad	Attends mosque but avoids communal eating, also seems to keep himself to himself	Not part of a vegan community; avoids vegan events – finds vegans annoying	Has joined online groups		Has many vegan friends, online and face-to-face	His parents are both vegan as well now	
Laila	Rarely attends mosque	Not part of a vegan community; doesn't attend vegan meetups	Vegan pages and groups on Facebook and Instagram	Has joined vegan Muslim groups on Facebook	Has a vegan friend; most friends are not vegan but fairly considerate	Family tells her she needs animal products for health	

Appendix H

	Religious	In- Person Vegan	Online Vegan	Faith Vegan	Friends	Family	Other
Nadia	Attends Muslim gatherings – usually something available	Isn't part of a vegan community but would like to meet others; doesn't attend vegan meetups	Follows vegan pages on Instagram	Feels she has joined the vegan Muslim community on Instagram	Muslim friends all eat meat and often tease	Muslim family all eat meat but are supportive; Uncle repeatedly questions her though	
Maryam	Unsure of her Muslim networks; she does say she avoids big gatherings	Not part of vegan community; doesn't meet up with any vegans; interested in going to vegan events though	Has joined some groups/pages on Facebook and Instagram; has a vegan Instagram page	Has joined vegan Muslim groups on Facebook and Instagram	A couple of friends are vegan; friends are supportive	Mum – negative, feels she's created a divide at home; sisters enjoy and eat vegan food	
Zeinab	Tends to avoid community gatherings due to Muslims' high meat consumption	Not part of vegan community; doesn't meet up with vegans; interested in vegan events though	Joined Facebook groups (wanted a community not centred on middle-class or whiteness); found secular groups to be Islamophobic	Has joined vegan Muslim groups on Facebook	1 vegan friend (Hindu); has supportive friends	Immediate family now supportive (there was animosity at first); extended family see it as a rejection of faith	
Ibrahim	Doesn't feel welcome in the local mosques so stopped going but plans to go again	Not part of a vegan community; doesn't like bigger events so doesn't go to vegan events	Has joined (and left) some vegan and vegan Muslim groups online	Has joined (and left) some vegan Muslim groups online		Son is vegan; wife is vegetarian; in-laws are very supportive	

Appendix H

	Religious	In- Person Vegan	Online Vegan	Faith Vegan	Friends	Family	Other
Kareem	Mosque & Muslim community – lots of pushback and rarely caters	Not part of vegan community; doesn't meet up with vegans; interested in vegan events though			Friends are non-vegan and can't cook so don't cater for him	The only vegan he knows is his Dad; Mum is vegetarian and supportive	
Aaliyah	A little interaction with the Muslim community – doesn't know if they'd cater	Not part of a face-to-face vegan community; hasn't been to any events because of lockdown but would like to go	Has joined online groups on Facebook and has her own vegan Instagram page	Has joined and created vegan Muslim groups on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp		Siblings fine; Mum accepts it but doesn't believe footage to be real; extended family don't know	Work colleagues seem to be supportive
Farah	Mosque & Muslim community don't cater; convert circle caters	Activist circles and local vegan hangouts; meets up with activists sometimes	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook	Has joined vegan Muslim groups on Facebook	Friends interested and open-minded, but some do tease	Husband generally keeps to a vegetarian/ vegan diet; family supportive	
Zakir	Attends mosque – tends to take his own food and share it	Not part of vegan community; doesn't have time due to family commitments	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook	Has joined vegan Muslim groups on Facebook	Friends from work and sports clubs; 1 vegan at work	Family generally supportive and plant-based; it can be a big issue for his Mum though	Member of The Vegan Society and Vegan Medical Professionals

Appendix H

	Religious	In- Person Vegan	Online Vegan	Faith Vegan	Friends	Family	Other
Hassan	Sometimes attends mosque – usually OK for vegan options	Not part of vegan community; doesn't go to events to meet vegans; will go to vegan festivals with his wife			Friends not vegan – they tend to eat meat, but will try to make vegan food sometimes	Vegan wife; family live far away but are open-minded	
Hannah	Synagogue caters	Finds vegans pushy and scary and doesn't want to be associated; avoids vegan events/ gatherings	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook but for food not people		Friends cook vegan for her; best friend loves the challenge	Partner pescetarian but mostly cooks vegan; parents mostly supportive	Happy to talk to students about veganism
Shira	Lots of Jewish friends and connections; not part of a synagogue though	Not part of vegan community; attends vegan fairs and markets but doesn't go to meet others	Follows a vegan page on Instagram but no others	Has and meets up with many Jewish vegan friends	Most of her Jewish friends are at least vegetarian, but many of her non-Jewish friends are not	Family fine as they mostly eat vegetarian and vegan anyway	
Daniel	Options at synagogue are poor; Shabbaton caters; Jewish work event catered	Not part of vegan community; attends vegan fairs and markets but doesn't go to meet others	Has joined online groups on Facebook	Has joined Jewish vegan groups on Facebook	Friends are supportive	Family supportive; wife tried to be vegan but couldn't keep it up	

Appendix H

	Religious	In- Person Vegan	Online Vegan	Faith Vegan	Friends	Family	Other
Jacob	Synagogue – tells them in advance he’s vegan so he’s always catered for	Is part of a vegan group at work and a member of JVS; has attended meetups with staff vegan group	Has joined the vegan group on Yammer (staff social network)	Supports the Jewish Vegetarian Society (JVS)	Has vegan and vegetarian friends; friends all generally open	Mum indifferent; Aunt and Uncle enjoy the challenge	Caterers at work will cater nowadays – see it as a challenge
Leah	Occasionally attends Shul – there might be options but they’re likely to be rubbish	Not part of a vegan community; has never gone to any meetups	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook	Supports the Jewish Vegetarian Society (JVS)	Friends aren’t vegan but always accommodate her	Family isn’t vegan but always accommodate her	
Ari	Synagogue advocates veganism	Not a member of any vegan groups	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook	Sees vegan friends at synagogue	Lots of vegan friends	Sister is now vegan; Mum and Dad have cut back; Grandma not happy though	
Elijah	Synagogue sometimes caters but it’s usually disappointing	Not part of a vegan community – concerns around kashrut and people			Has Jewish vegan friends in different places		
Isaac	Isn’t part of a religious community	Not part of vegan community; doesn’t go to any vegan groups or meetups			Friends aren’t vegan but they’re very supportive and onboard	Mum is fine now, but initially thought he would die	Cafeteria at work is always happy to adapt meals so they’re vegan

Appendix H

	Religious	In- Person Vegan	Online Vegan	Faith Vegan	Friends	Family	Other
Ethan	Isn't part of a religious community	Not part of vegan community; has attended meetups in the past but generally avoids events			Not vegan, some trialling dairy-free vegetarianism, but all supportive	Supportive family; partner is vegan; parents are largely vegetarian/ vegan too	
Judith	Isn't part of a religious community	A member of many vegan activist groups; lots of activist meetups			Lots of vegan friends	Husband is vegan; family are fine and are close to being vegan themselves	
Tamara	Synagogue – takes own food	Wife's previous colleagues, many of whom are vegan; attends some get-togethers but socialising limited by children	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook	Has joined Jewish vegan groups on Facebook	Supportive friends, most try to accommodate	Wife is now supportive but wasn't at first; other family members very negative and ignorant	Happy to talk to students about veganism; breastfeeding support groups
Maya	Jewish community – they ask for dietary requirements and will cater	Not part of vegan community; doesn't feel the need to go to vegan events; doesn't only meet with vegan friends	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook	Has many Jewish vegan friends; often hosts events at the Jewish Vegan Centre	Many friends are vegan and vegetarian	Family members are "chill about it"	At yeshiva, many other egalitarian Jews were vegan or vegetarian

Appendix H

	Religious	In- Person Vegan	Online Vegan	Faith Vegan	Friends	Family	Other
Sam	Church itself – no experience of food with them yet; Church group caters	Not part of any vegan groups	Created a vegan Instagram account; joined lots of Facebook groups		Few vegan friends; non-vegan friends joke but it's fine eating with them	Wife is vegan and Christian; family are fine (they found it harder accepting his Christianity)	
Beth	Attends Church weekly – others provide vegan food or she'll take something	Not part of a vegan community; hasn't been to any meetups	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook		Has a couple of vegan friends and a few open-minded non-vegan friends	Has 2 vegan sisters; husband not vegan but supportive; parents think she's being awkward	Colleagues at work "take the piss"
Kate	No Christian community at all Looking for a new Church to attend – not currently going	Not part of a vegan community; doesn't attend any vegan groups or meetups	Follows vegan pages on Instagram		PhD friends have other dietary needs so she is OK with them; 1 vegan friend; undergrad friends don't understand	Family and partner are neither Christian nor vegan; pushback from Dad, Gran is supportive	
Nicola	Attends Church online and runs an online Bible Study – has catered for her in the past	Has a network of vegan friends from when she was doing activism (no longer); up until COVID, was regularly meeting with them	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook	Has joined vegan Christian groups on Facebook	Many friends don't understand veganism	Husband is vegan; Dad is supportive	

Appendix H

	Religious	In- Person Vegan	Online Vegan	Faith Vegan	Friends	Family	Other
Louis	Attends virtual Church weekly – unsure if they’d cater but they’d be understanding	In some vegan groups; no longer in activist groups; up until COVID, was regularly meeting up with others	Part of WhatsApp vegan groups		Friends have become more understanding over time – it’s now less of an issue	Wife is vegan; family have accepted but not wholly supportive as they come from a farming background	Discriminated against at work
Liam	Doesn’t attend Quaker meetings all that often – might cater	Not part of the wider vegan community; doesn’t attend vegan meetups			Banter from some friends but in a friendly way; other friends enjoy vegan food	Wife is vegan; siblings are supportive; Mum is indifferent	
Michelle	Church is inclusive and caters; band caters	Has joined local vegan groups and has attended local vegan meetups (mainly in the past, less often now)	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook		Close friend is vegan; friends considerate to veganism, many not vegan	Sister and sons are vegan; Mum supportive; Dad unsupportive and moans a lot	
Malcolm	Church – food isn’t often present	Only vegan group is Vegan Runners; might attend events with Vegan Runners	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook		Still friends with vegan ex-partner; friends not vegan, lots of banter, but will accept it and cater for him	Parents don’t really understand but are accepting and curious	Interest and curiosity from staff and students at work

Appendix H

	Religious	In- Person Vegan	Online Vegan	Faith Vegan	Friends	Family	Other
Damian	Mass on Sundays and Charismatic Movement on Fridays – rarely caters	Starting to look for more vegan friends – currently has very few; has just started doing meetups (has only met with a couple so far)	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook		Only has a few friends and most of them give him stick for being vegan	Family were shocked but have accepted his veganism	A Christian vegan at his work
Amy	Doesn't go to Church but works in a Christian school – caters but she feels alone in her beliefs	Vegan Runners; attends Vegan Runners meetups	Has joined vegan groups on Facebook and Zoom		Has a lot of vegan friends	Sister is vegan; Mum supportive; husband and children anti at first but OK now	Only vegan at work – they cater but she feels alone in her beliefs
Joanne	Theological College caters; attends Church infrequently	Doesn't feel the need to engage with the vegan community; doesn't find vegan events and meetups helpful so doesn't go			Most friends are vegetarian so accommodate	Family isn't vegan but are supportive	Happy to talk to students about veganism

Appendix H

	Religious	In- Person Vegan	Online Vegan	Faith Vegan	Friends	Family	Other
Jessica	Church – doubts they would cater (Lockdown has prevented socials)	Friends from animal rights activities and vegan events; goes to meetups with these people	Vegan pages and groups on Facebook and Instagram	Has joined vegan Christian groups on Facebook	Most friends are vegetarian or vegan	Mum and sister are vegan; boyfriend is a Muslim vegan	Work caters; has experienced stigma at work though

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