

# Food Fight: How Vegans and Non-Vegans Manage Moral Differences

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#### **Objectives**

- I- Explore how morality plays a role in the identity transformation of vegans
- 2- Examine how different moral grounds between vegans and non vegans affect their social relations
- 3- Identify how businesses that cater to vegans are judged

#### Why is this important?

- I-Meat consumption has decreased by 10% since 2001 with the biggest decline in pork (4.5% decrease)
- 2-Milk consumption has been declining in the last 10 years by around 25%
- 3-Vegan labeled food products have experienced steady growth over the past few years (approximately 3.3 percent in 2015).

### Methodology

Interviews with vegans and non-vegans

Facebook
comments on
food related
posts (vegans and
non vegan)

Analysis

Observations in supermarkets and restaurants that target vegans

#### **Findings**

The relational identity transformation process. What happens when a vegan is present at the dinner table?

"Well when you start reading about animal products and you start researching it at some point [becomes all what you think] about [how] the animal conditions are."

1- Interaction with outside world

4- Social

tensions

"I am not very extreme in my beliefs. I do think that animal welfare is important but I respect [your choice]"

2- Moral Judgment

3- Renegotiations of moral

boundaries

5-Change in social relations (selection and retention)

6- Further

nurturing of

ideology

"I feel like maybe for about a year and half I pretty much isolated myself because it was just too hard to like go out and see everybody doing this stuff that I was so morally opposed to"

"See..if you look into our mouths...
You can see we have a set of teeth for tearing meat as well as flat teeth for grinding plants. Omnivores

people..We were created to have a diet of BOTH ..hate over dramatic vegans want to just scream YEAH! UR GUNNA DIE! Because such n such!"

Non-vegan participants

"[Vegan extremist] turn people off. If you want to have an adult and reasonable discussion on something I am all in it!"

"We had issues with family trying to pass us chicken broth or cheese or stuff so there are some people we just don't trust anymore because we never know what they are going to do because they don't care"

Vegan participants

## Tips for businesses that cater to both groups

- I-Emphasize social cohesion as part of the positioning of the brand
- 2- Separate kitchens and utensils for the vegan options on the menu to avoid contamination with non-vegan products
- 3- Avoid claiming moral superiority of vegans in communication

"We go to a place for sushi and the owner is vegan but in order to have a restaurant she has two menus. One with fish and one without. There are two separate preparations so there is no contamination or things like that".

#### Contributions

#### I-Theory:

- a :How do social boundary negotiations take place between people with different moral habitus?
- b- How does this affect future consumption and social relations?
- 2- Policy making: Health Canada is already thinking of removing dairy and reducing meat consumption in its annual food guide. Understanding non-vegans' moral anchors can help policy makers advocate their changes in more effective ways
- 3- Social: By understanding the moral grounds of the opposing side, both vegans and non vegans can be more open to one another