Investigating Language and its Effect on Vegan Stigma

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Abstract
Veganism has recently become popular, receiving media coverage and gaining traction as a preferred dietary choice for many individuals. This diet has been shown to have positive benefits on individual health, environmental impacts, and animal rights. However, although vegan diets may seem positive, there appears to be a significant stigma associated with veganism. The present research seeks to gain more insight regarding the prevalence of vegan stigma, why this stigma exists, how vegan bias appears, and how language can be used to frame these diets in ways that might alter individual attitudes. The following research seeks to determine if framing vegan and omnivore diets ascetically or hedonically can manipulate a participant’s attitude towards veganism. The results of the research indicate that language, gender, diet, and frequency of meat consumption have significant effects on participants attitudes towards veganism, however more research must be conducted to further study this phenomena.

Keywords: vegan, vegan stigma, vegan bias, language, ascetic, hedonic, diet, attitudes

Introduction/Literature Review
A vegan diet is one in which individuals consume a wide variety of plant-based products, while avoiding animal-based products like meat, fish, eggs, and dairy. Between 2006 and 2016, there was a 350 percent increase in individuals opting for a vegan diet in the UK, many of them under the age of 34 (Marsh, 2016). Recently veganism has become a fad: several celebrities have endorsed vegan diets, and many new products have become available for vegans. The popularity of veganism is likely due to the diet’s low environmental impact, positive influence on health, and ability to consider animal rights. With this recent surge in interest, considerably more media attention has been focused on vegan and vegetarian diets. However, not all news is good news, and the discourse around these diets can have implications in terms of individual attitudes and behaviors. In this research, an experimental survey was conducted to determine if the discourse around vegan diets has an effect on individual attitudes towards veganism. Exploring the relationship between the language used around diets and individual attitudes towards different diets is essential because what we choose to consume has a direct influence on our environmental impact. The population is expected to grow over the next few decades and environmental issues associated with agriculture are expected to increase; understanding attitudes towards environmentally friendly diets, and understanding how to change these attitudes may be important in figuring out a way to feed the population in sustainable fashion.

Researchers have found that in terms of climate change “the livestock sector is a major player, responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions measured in CO2 equivalent. This is a higher share than transport” (Steinfeld, Gerber, Wassenaar, Castel, Rosales, & Haan, 2016, p. xxi). As climate change continues to intensify, changing the discourse around vegan diets will be important in encouraging more individuals to adopt plant-based diets in attempts to reduce our impact on the environment. Vegan diets, as well as vegetarian and other low-meat diets, are considerably more environmentally friendly than the traditional American diet. Traditionally, Americans are known for consuming large amounts of meat. In fact, on average, the United States consumes about 270 pounds of meat per person per year, that’s more meat than almost any other country in the world, only falling short of Luxembourg by about 30 pounds per person (Barclay, 2012). Animal agriculture is a significant source of environmental degradation;
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“livestock activities contribute an estimated 18 percent to total anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions for the five major sectors for greenhouse gas reporting: energy, industry, waste, land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF), and agriculture” (Steinfeld et al., 2016, p. 112). In terms of percent of global anthropogenic emissions, livestock account for 35-40 percent of methane, 65 percent of nitrous oxide, and 64 percent of ammonia (Steinfeld et al., 2016). The animal agriculture sector also contributes tremendously to deforestation and erosion; “in the Amazon, cattle ranching is now the primary reason for deforestation” (Steinfeld et al., 2016, p.272). Additionally, “livestock are the major contributor to soil erosion on agriculture lands, accounting for 55 percent of the total soil mass eroded every year” (Steinfeld et al., 2016, p.73). The statistics are also grim for water use and pollution; “the water used by the livestock sector is over 8 percent of global human water use” (Steinfeld et al., 2016, p.272). Lastly, in the United States, livestock are responsible for about “37 percent of pesticides applied, 50 percent of the volume of antibiotics consumed, and for 32 percent of the nitrogen load and 33 percent of the phosphorus load into freshwater resources” (Steinfeld et al., 2016, p. 273). These statistics reveal that the effect of the animal agriculture industry on our natural environment is widespread and severe. Therefore, vegan diets that directly avoid supporting this sector should be considered a fairly easy way to lower one’s environmental impact.

Vegan diets also have positive consequences for individual health and animal welfare. Several health benefits associated with a vegan diet include lower cholesterol, lower body mass index, lower blood pressure, reduced risk of diabetes, and reduced risk of certain cancers, such as colon, stomach, and prostate (Radnitz, Beezhold, & DiMatteo, 2015). In terms of animal welfare, vegan diets avoid supporting the organizations that inflict the most harm on animals. In the United States over 9.1 billion land animals are killed for food every year (Cassuto & Eckhardt, 2016). Additionally, the suffering these animals endure during their short lives before slaughter is severe. Many states actually exempt farm animals from anti-cruelty statutes, demonstrating the industry’s ability to ignore as well as actively disengage from considering animal wellbeing (Cassuto & Eckhardt, 2016). In the livestock sector, economics often trumps animal welfare; for example, the de-beaking of chickens and the docking of pig and cow tails are standard practices that allow animals to be packed in tight quarters, increasing production and animal cruelty at the same time (Cassuto & Eckhardt, 2016).

With all this information pointing to the positive ramifications of a vegan diet, one might think this is an extremely popular movement, but that is not the case. As positive as these diets may seem, many individuals continue to hold negative attitudes towards these diets for various reasons. Many comics, images, and jokes allude to veganism in a fairly negative light; for example, one New Yorker comic displays a woman talking to a few friends saying, “We tried a vegan Thanksgiving this year, but our family still showed up” (New York Times, Diffée) (See Appendix A). This comic illustrates the common notion that vegan food is not good. Moreover, the woman even thinks that vegan food is bad enough that it could deter her family from coming over during the holidays. These kinds of images are plentiful, and often express negative notions about vegan and vegetarian diets (see Appendix A for more images).

Cole & Morgan (2011) analyzed just under 400 UK national newspaper articles containing the word vegan, vegans, or veganism. In this analysis, positive representations included excellent reviews of vegan food, or explanations of arguments for veganism. Neutral
representations included those that mentioned veganism with no evaluation, for example, reviews on food and travel. Finally, negative representations included those which mentioned some kind of derogatory discourse; these discourses included (in order of occurrence) “ridiculing veganism, characterizing veganism as asceticism, describing veganism as difficult or impossible to sustain, describing veganism as a fad, characterizing vegans as oversensitive, and characterizing vegans as hostile” (Cole & Morgan, 2011, p. 139). In their analysis, researchers concluded that 5.5 percent of the newspaper articles could be categorized as positive, 20.2 percent could be categorized as neutral, and 74.3 percent could be categorized as negative (Cole & Morgan, 2011). This finding is intriguing, indicating that an overwhelming majority of articles that mentioned veganism discussed it in a negative manner. Media representations have significant effects on individual attitudes, and this kind of negative media representation is likely to influence individual’s ideas about these diets, potentially deterring people from eating in ways that are beneficial to themselves, animals, and the environment. Clearly, there is some sense of negativity towards veganism, and scholars have been interested in studying from where this negativity stems.

Previous researchers have studied vegans and vegetarians as symbolic threats towards the status quo (MacInnis & Hodson, 2017). These researchers hypothesized that because vegan and vegetarians choose to abstain from meat eating, which conflicts with the majority values, omnivores perceive them as a symbolic threat, which contributes to the negative attitude some individuals foster towards vegans (MacInnis & Hodson, 2017). These researchers found that attitudes towards vegetarians and vegans were similar to, if not more negative than attitudes towards other commonly prejudiced groups, like immigrants, asexuals, atheists, blacks, and homosexuals; in fact the only group that was evaluated more negatively than vegans and vegetarians were drug addicts (MacInnis & Hodson, 2017). Additionally, MacInnis & Hodson (2017) found that vegans and vegetarians are often perceived as “better off than others” or “hostile in intent”. These researchers found that omnivore’s prejudice towards vegans may stem from a realization that vegans are morally correct by not exploiting animals combined with an unwillingness to refrain from meat-eating (MacInnis & Hodson, 2017). Specifically, MacInnis and Hodson (2017) hypothesize that vegans and vegetarians may be subject to discrimination because their values and ways of life undermine the traditional way of life for many. These researchers are not the only ones who have attempted to understand from where this bias stems.

Previous research has examined “do-gooder derogation” or “the putting down of morally motivated others” (Minson & Monin, 2012, p.200) by studying meat-eaters’ attitudes towards vegetarians These researchers noticed that openly morally superior behavior sometimes provokes annoyance or ridicule rather than approval or respect. This phenomenon is made apparent by popular phrases like “goody-two-shoes” or “goody-goody” which demonstrate the common negative stereotype of good behavior (Minson & Monin, 2012, p.200). Minson and Monin (2012) theorized that any minority group which departs from the status quo, behaving in an unpopular morally relevant way, runs the risk of being perceived as condemning others’ behavior. These researchers conducted two studies in which they examined participant’s views regarding vegetarians, as well as the degree to which participants felt vegetarians judged their morality. In the first phase of the study, researchers found a correlation between “anticipated
moral reproach and do-gooder derogation”, suggesting that the more negatively participants felt that vegetarians would judge their moral standing, the more negatively they rated vegetarians (Minson & Monin, 2012, p.205). In the second phase of the study, participants were randomly assigned to either a “threat” condition or a control condition; participants in both conditions were asked to rate vegetarians on a number of traits, and reflect on how they thought vegetarians would perceive them (Minson & Monin, 2012). The only difference between conditions was that in the “threat” condition, participants considered how they thought vegetarians would perceive them before they rated vegetarians while in the control condition the order was reversed (Minson & Monin, 2012). The results supported the researchers’ hypothesis, that simply being asked to think about vegetarian’s perceptions of meat-eaters decreased their ratings of vegetarians as a group. This finding is incredibly important when considering perceptions about vegan and vegetarian diets as it suggests that part of the reason a stigma exists around these diets is the idea of “do-gooder derogation”. When individuals feel a threat of being morally judged, and especially of being judged negatively, their natural reaction is to put-down the source of the threat, allowing the individual to avoid this aversive moral criticism (Minson & Monin, 2012). Previous research has shown that a stigma towards veganism does in fact exist; the following literature is concerned with scrutinizing the language around veganism and vegetarianism.

Cole (2008) notes that many discourses of veganism and vegetarianism frame these diets as ascetic, restrictive, or extreme, and stress the avoidance of animal-products. Merriam-Webster defines ascetic as, “practicing strict self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline” (Ascetic, n.d.). Additionally, synonym discussion of the word “ascetic” contains words and phrases including, “strict discipline”, “firm restraint”, “standards enforced without indulgence or laxity”, “inflexibility”, and “abstention from pleasure and comfort or self-indulgence” (Ascetic, n.d.). Ascetic discourses about veganism contain words and phrases similar to the ones listed above and contribute to the notion that veganism is extreme, difficult, and characteristic only of those with tremendous willpower. Cole (2008) uses the following paragraph as indicative of ascetic language within vegan discourses,

“The omission of meat from the diet is known as vegetarianism. This broad definition includes subsets, where practices vary according to the degree of restriction of animal products in the diet. At the mild end of the scale are semi-vegetarians who omit red meat and poultry from the diet. The more extreme practice of vegetarianism, carried out by vegans, requires the consumption of no foods of animal origin. This excludes all dairy products from the diet and often the use of animal products such as leather is avoided” (as cited in Neal et al., 1993, p. 24, emphases added)

Words like “omission”, “restriction”, “omit”, “extreme”, and “avoided” demonstrate the ascetic nature of these discourses. This language frames vegans as extremists, and contributes to the notion that abstaining from meat is inherently difficult or negative. Ascetic discourses of veganism also imply that being vegan is uncomfortable, and lacks indulgence. These discourses reproduce a notion of hierarchy in which meat eating is placed at the top and normalized, and veganism at the bottom and ostracized (Cole, 2008). Cole (2008) suggests that creating alternative discourses where veganism is considered as less restrictive may be helpful in altering assumptions about these diets. For example, a discourse which stresses a vegan diet as hedonic,
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rich in diverse plant-based foods, and which frames meat eating as ascetic, wherein individuals deny themselves of healthy disease-preventing foods and restrict themselves to eating predominantly animal-products, might alter individuals attitudes towards vegan diets (Cole, 2008). Merriam-Webster defines hedonic as, “of, or relating to, or characterized by pleasure” (Hedonic, n.d.). Altering the discourse around veganism to frame the diet in a more positive light may have repercussions in terms of individual attitudes and their likelihood to embrace a meatless diet.

Environmentalists may be interested in researching this topic because, as stated earlier, diet has an enormous effect on an individual’s environmental footprint. Widespread acceptance (or at least tolerance) for vegetarian and vegan diets might have a significant effect on our environmental impact as a country. However, the current discourse about veganism is not likely to produce acceptance or tolerance for these diets. The following research is focused on the effect that vegan discourses have on individual attitudes towards veganism. Specifically, this research looks to answer what kinds of attitudes individuals hold towards vegan diets, and if individual attitudes towards veganism can be manipulated by a passage that frames veganism as hedonic versus ascetic. Changing assumptions about veganism, and challenging individuals to think critically about where their food comes from can potentially encourage more people to eat in ways that are less environmentally destructive. It is necessary to unpack the meaning hidden in our everyday language about veganism; this growing understanding of the ways in which our language affects our assumptions about veganism is directly tied to the potential for more people to develop a different mindset and change their behavior. The following research is designed to answer the research questions below:

1. Is there a stigma towards vegan diets?
2. Can attitudes be manipulated by a passage that frames veganism as ascetic or hedonic?

Researchers hypothesize that a stigma does in fact exist towards vegan diets and that it is likely due to the reasons suggested previously in the literature review. Additionally, the author hypothesizes that attitudes can be manipulated by a passage that frames veganism as ascetic or hedonic; more specifically, the author hypothesizes that individuals who read a passage that frames veganism as hedonic will be more likely to rate vegan diets as more favorable than those who read a passage that frames veganism as ascetic.

**Method**

To assess public opinion about vegan diets, a survey was distributed to individuals online. Surveys were distributed via multiple platforms, including NYU classes, email, and Facebook. Surveys were posted to Facebook and shared by several individuals, which facilitated survey distribution to multiple networks. In addition to Facebook, surveys were disseminated by email to students and staff in the Environmental Conservation Education program at New York University Steinhardt. Lastly, surveys were distributed to personal networks (family and friends) by an email thread. In order to determine if discourses about vegan diets have an affect on individual opinions, the author created a two-part experimental survey. The survey assessed individual attitudes towards vegan and omnivorous diets, as well as demographic information. Individuals were randomly assigned to groups and primed with one of two passages. The first
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was a control passage that framed vegan diets as ascetic, and omnivorous diets as hedonic; the second was a manipulation passage that framed vegan diets as hedonic, and omnivorous diets as ascetic. These priming passages were randomly shown to individuals before they were instructed to complete the survey; half of the participants received the control passage, and half of the participants received the manipulation passage. The priming passages are below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Priming Passage:</th>
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<tr>
<td>A vegan diet is one in which individuals entirely avoid animal based products. Vegans do not eat any kind of meat, and restrict themselves to a plant-based diet. Vegetarians (on the milder end of the spectrum) eat a diet that excludes meat, fish, and other seafood. In addition to abstaining from meat, Vegans (on the more extreme side of the spectrum) omit eggs, dairy, and dairy products including cheese, milk, and whey from their diets. Additionally many vegans avoid products that come from animals like leather, or gelatin. Non-vegans, or omnivores, tend to enjoy a diet rich in meats, potatoes and grains. Omnivores allow themselves to eat other animal-based products like eggs, and dairy.</td>
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<th>Manipulated Priming Passage:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A vegan diet is one in which individuals enjoy a wide variety of plant foods such as cereals, pastas, rice, grains, vegetables, leafy green vegetables, fruits, tofu, hummus, nuts, and seeds. In a vegan diet cheese, eggs, and high-fat dairy foods are consumed sparingly, or not at all, as their presence tends to replace more desirable healthy plant-based foods. Non-vegans, or omnivores, tend to restrain themselves to a diet consisting mostly of meat, potatoes, grains, and sweets; reducing their consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables. Meat-eaters tend to restrict themselves to a limited range of animal-based products, which reduces their consumption of plant-based products. Meat eating leads to a higher risk of degenerative diseases, poorer health, and reduced life expectancy. Vegans live longer, healthier lives by consuming a diet full of disease-preventing plant-based foods.</td>
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</table>

The passages were created using words and ideas from Cole’s (2008) research on asceticism and hedonism in vegan discourses. In the control passage, veganism is framed as ascetic by using words like, “avoids”, “restrains”, “excludes”, while meat-eating is framed as hedonic by using words such as “allow”, and “enjoy”. In the manipulated passage, veganism is framed as hedonic by stressing the types of foods vegans do eat, as well as using words and phrases like “desirable”, “healthy”, and “wide variety”, while meat-eating is framed as ascetic by using words like, “reduce”, “restrict”, and “reduced”. The hypothesis is that the respondents’ attitudes can be manipulated by priming them to think about veganism in ascetic or hedonic ways; specifically participants who read the manipulation passage will be more likely to rate veganism as less extreme, less restrictive, and healthier than participants who read the control passage. Both sets of participants received the same survey questions (see Appendix B).

Vegan bias was measured using six Likert-scale questions about individual opinions on the relative restriction and health of vegan and omnivorous diets (See the first question matrix in Appendix B for details). Items ranged from completely false to completely true with no midpoint; a midpoint was not included because there is some evidence that by eliminating a
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midpoint on a Likert-scale, social desirability bias can be minimized (Garland, 1991). Social desirability bias is the tendency for participants to answer questions in a way that will be viewed favorably by others or to answer questions with what they believe is the “right” answer. By excluding a midpoint respondents are forced to pick a direction (either true or false), which for the purposes of this research was ideal. Additionally, items were labeled from left to right starting with “completely false” and ending with “completely true”: the language and order of the anchors on the Likert scale were intentional in an effort to reduce survey bias. Acquiescence bias is the tendency for participants to agree with or select responses that are more positive; there is also evidence that participants are more likely to select items on the left side of the scale (Friedman, Herskovitz, & Pollack, 1993). Since participants are more likely to agree with questions, anchors were labeled from true to false instead of from agree to disagree to reduce the biasing effect of this tendency. Lastly, because participants are more likely to select responses on the left, and are more likely to select positive responses, negative responses were placed on the left side of the scale to minimize the probability that these biases might influence the data.

In order to perform statistical analyses, items were numerically coded to give each participant a “vegan bias score”. Due to the nature of the questions, some items on the survey were reverse-coded. For questions one and two, “completely false” represented a score of five, while “completely true” represented a score of zero (“moderately false” was four, “slightly false” was three, “slightly true” was two, and “moderately true” was one); for questions three through six, “completely false” represented a score of zero, and “completely true” represented a score of five (“moderately false” was one, “slightly false” was two, “slightly true” was three, and “moderately true” was four). Coding the responses numerically allowed the researcher to perform statistical analyses on the data.

Once the survey data was collected, an excel spreadsheet was created to organize the data and variables in a cohesive way. Results were analyzed using SPSS; statistical tests including independent samples t-tests and ANOVA tests were conducted to determine if the results showed statistical significance. Independent samples t-tests were used to determine if gender or the independent variable (whether the participant received the manipulation or control passage) had an effect on vegan bias. ANOVA tests were used to determine if meat consumption, diet, race, or age had a significant effect on individual vegan bias. Each of these tests compared the means of the data for each group to determine if the results were significant enough to be conclusive. P-values were computed for each measure. After analyzing the data, p-values were added to the excel spreadsheet, and charts and graphs were created to display the results.

**Results:**

A total of sixty-two individuals participated in this survey. Of those participants, 70 percent of them identified as female, and 30 percent identified as male. Additionally, a majority of the participants were between the ages of 19 and 29 (58 percent), were omnivores (79 percent), and identified as white (79 percent). The full breakdown of the racial demographics (see figure 1), and the ages (see figure 2) of the survey participants is shown below.
In terms of the independent variable, two questions showed a statistically significant difference between participants who read the control passage and participants who read the manipulation passage. Individuals who read the manipulation passage were considerably more likely to believe a vegan diet is restrictive (p=.048), and significantly more likely to believe that omnivores do not restrict themselves (p=.025). See figure 4 below for the results for the other questions, which hold less significance statistically. It is important to note that for all of the figures hereunder (due to reverse coding of the data) in the first two measures (vegans healthy and omnivores restrictive) a high score indicates less agreement (a score of 5 represents completely false), while in the last four measures a high score indicates more agreement (a score of 5 represents completely true).
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In terms of self-reported meat consumption, there were a few measures that displayed or were close to displaying statistical significance. Participants who reported eating meat often and always were significantly more likely to believe that omnivores eat a healthy, diverse, diet compared to those who reported eating meat never or rarely (p=.036). When asked if vegans eat a healthy, diverse diet (p=.079), or if vegans are extreme (p=.095), participants who reported eating meat often and always were more likely to exhibit a higher “vegan bias” score than those who reported eating meat never or rarely, although these results are not quite statistically significant. See figure 5 below for more details.

In terms of diet, omnivores were significantly more likely to feel that omnivores eat a healthy, diverse, diet compared to vegans, vegetarians, and pescatarians (p=.017). Other measures that were not quite statistically significant were that vegetarians and vegans were more likely to think omnivores restrict themselves compared to omnivores and pescatarians (p=.068); and omnivores were more likely to think that vegans were arrogant than vegetarians (p=.062). Although it is important to remember that considerably more omnivores responded to the survey than did vegans, vegetarians, and pescatarians. See figure 6 below for more details.
The results also display close to significant gender differences, where men (m=4.3) are more likely to rate omnivores as healthy than women (m=3.6) (p=.060). However, considerably more women responded to the survey than did men, so more data is necessary to gather more valuable conclusions. Statistical tests were computed to analyze vegan bias in respect to age and race, however there was no data that demonstrated statistical significance. This lack of difference may be due to unequal participation among groups, since the majority of the participants were young and white.

**Discussion/Conclusion:**

The results of the preceding research and previous literature demonstrate that a stigma towards veganism does in fact exist. Framing veganism as ascetic or hedonic had a significant affect on individual’s attitudes towards veganism. However, the results actually suggest the opposite of the author’s hypothesis; participants who read a passage framing veganism as hedonic were more likely to exhibit vegan bias than individuals who read a passage framing veganism as ascetic. The surprising results can be explained in a few ways. One explanation considers the possibility that although participants were primed to think about vegan and omnivore diets in specific ways, the survey is still situated in the larger society where veganism is overwhelmingly portrayed as ascetic. Another explanation for the unexpected results considers the possibility that the priming passages may not have accurately portrayed the diets in the way they were intended to; it is entirely possible that the manipulation passage (which framed veganism as hedonic) irritated participants because it endorsed a choice which could have made
them feel guilty or inferior, or prompted them to feel that they may be judged which, as previous research suggests, may lead to a negative perception of vegans (Minson & Monin, 2012).

Additionally, there were significant differences between attitudes towards vegans depending on participant’s meat consumption and dietary choice. Individuals who reported they ate meat always or often tended to exhibit more vegan bias than individuals who reported they ate meat never or rarely; and participants who reported they were omnivores were more likely to exhibit vegan bias than participants who reported they were vegetarian or vegan. These differences are supported by previous research and literature, which suggests that vegans and vegetarians may be perceived as symbolic threats to the status quo and are thus rated less favorably by meat-eaters (MacInnis & Hodson, 2017).

There are several significant limitations to the preceding research including the utilization of the survey method, the participant recruitment method, the reliability and validity of the priming passages and survey questions, the reliability and validity of the vegan bias scale, the binary between veganism and omnivorous diets, and the nominalization of the Likert scale. Utilizing the survey method as a means of data collection has its limitations; respondents are limited to selecting a predetermined response to most questions, and there is little opportunity for participants to explain or elaborate on their response. However, surveys are ideal for collecting specific information on a wide range of individuals, which is why it was used in this research. Additionally, the recruitment of participants for this survey was somewhat biased. Individuals were solicited through email, NYU classes, and Facebook. This limited the number of individuals who could potentially take the survey to people in the researcher’s immediate networks. This practice created bias and increased the potential for confounding effects because the people who took the survey were not random. Also, individuals voluntarily responded to the survey. It is possible that those who volunteered have something in common that may have also contributed to survey bias. The priming passages and vegan bias scale were created for the purposes of this survey and have not been previously tested or studied. There is essentially no reliability or validity to the priming passages or the vegan bias scale, meaning that these measures may not accurately prime participants to think about these diets in the way they were intended to, and the scale may not accurately be assessing individuals level of vegan bias. The vegan bias scale also created a dichotomy between vegans and omnivores that may have skewed response data. For example, the statements “vegans eat a healthy, diverse diet” and “omnivores eat a healthy, diverse diet” were assumed to be opposites, where if a participant selected completely true for the omnivore healthy item, they were assumed to think that vegans are not healthy. This binary between vegans and omnivores does not exist in the larger society; it is entirely possible that one could think both vegans and omnivores eat healthy, diverse, diets. Lastly, the nominal coding of the Likert data is theoretically problematic. Likert data is meant to be ordinal, and assigning numbers to this data is not a statistically supported practice. Overall, the results of the research contain valuable information that can be utilized by researchers conducting similar investigations, however the limitations of the research must be taken into account.

The conclusions gathered from this research indicate that language, diet, meat consumption, and gender play a significant role in individual’s opinions towards veganism, however further research is vital to draw more valuable conclusions on this phenomena.
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References
Appendix A: Images

Figure 6: New Yorker Cartoon - Retrieved from https://www.pinterest.com/susansbuzz/new-yorker-cartoons/
“I started my vegetarianism for health reasons, then it became a moral choice, and now it’s just to annoy people”

Figure 7: New Yorker Cartoon - Matthew Diffee, Retrieved from http://www.allposters.ca/-sp/We-tried-a-vegan-Thanksgiving-this-year-but-our-family-still-showed-up-New-Yorker-Cartoon-posters_i14260401_.htm
“We tried a vegan Thanksgiving this year, but our family still showed up”
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Figure 8: Retrieved from F***jerry Instagram

Figure 9: Retrieved from thefunnyintrovert Instagram
Appendix B: Survey

The following questions are opinion based, please answer them to the degree to which you consider them to be true or false.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Completely False</th>
<th>Moderately False</th>
<th>Slightly False</th>
<th>Slightly True</th>
<th>Moderately True</th>
<th>Completely True</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegans eat a healthy, diverse, diet.</td>
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<td>Omnivores restrict themselves to a limited diet.</td>
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<td>Omnivores eat a healthy, diverse diet.</td>
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<td>A vegan diet is restrictive.</td>
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<td>A vegan diet is extreme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegans are arrogant, they think they are better than others.</td>
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How often do you eat meat?

- Never
- Rarely (only on special occasions)
- Sometimes (once a week or several times a month)
- Often (once a day, or several times a week)
- Always (multiple times a day)
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What do you think about veganism?

Have you ever considered veganism, why or why not?

Please indicate the age group you fall into.

- 12-18
- 19-29
- 30-40
- 41-51
- 52 and over

Please indicate the gender category you most identify with.

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Non-binary, gender non-conforming
- Other, please specify:
Please indicate the race category (or categories) you most identify with.

- Latino
- Black
- White
- Asian
- Multi-Racial
- Other, please specify: __________

Please indicate the diet category you most identify with.

- Omnivore
- Vegan
- Pescatarian
- Vegetarian
- Other, please specify: __________