

#VEGAN:

A critical analysis of the discourses around food, identity and responsibility from vegan Instagram influencers

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Abstract

In the UK we need to reduce the amount of meat we produce and consume in order to prevent climate disaster and poor public health. Vegan Instagram influences have been key figures in providing society with knowledge on why and how people should live meat free. The discourses provided to us by these 'influencers' about, food, health, ethics and environmental concerns are extremely powerful as they shape our everyday food thoughts and practices. However, there has been relatively little academic research into the knowledge produced by these online food influencers. Therefore, this study aimed to identify some of the contemporary discourses around veganism on Instagram. Particular attention was paid to how these discourses framed the responsibility for animal welfare, human health, and environmental concerns. The research analysed the profile of 6 vegan Instagram influencers; @chakabars, @earthlinged, @deliciouslyella, @rachelama, @kingcook and @crueltyfreeclairey. The data was analysed using a Foucauldian style discourse analysis. Two main themes were identified. The first was 'hard veganism' that focused on the moral justifications for veganism. It was found discourse focused on the justifications for veganism was critical of the livestock industry and unevenly burdened individuals with the responsibility for preventing climate disaster, protecting animals and preserving human health through by consuming a vegan diet (e.g. Christopher, Bartkowski, Haverda, 2018). Therefore, veganism was associated with practicing one's moral beliefs and acting in a

utilitarian way to societal constraints we live in. The second theme was 'soft veganism' that referred to images and talk on food. 'Soft veganism' framed the food industry positively for providing people with many vegan food options and making veganism 'easy'. Vegan food was also used to construct vegan subgroups that were aimed at challenging stereotypical views on veganism as an elite white practice (Harper, 2012) and breaking down barriers that prevented some people from engaging with a vegan lifestyle. Therefore, this research found that Instagram is a space where multiple vegan identities are constructed with varying levels of political involvement and philosophical engagement. This research concludes that Instagram may be a useful tool for influencing people to reduce their meat consumption, as it allows people to select knowledge on how to practice veganism that best suits their identity, beliefs and lifestyle.

1. Introduction

Academics from fields of public health, nutrition, economics, governance and environmental sustainability agree that to improve health and prevent catastrophic damage to the planet we need to change the way we produce and consume food (EAT-Lancet, 2019). It is stated to prevent extreme climate disaster individuals need to drastically reduce the amount of animal products they consume (meat, fish, dairy and eggs) (EAT-Lancet, 2019; Mekonnen & Hoekstra, 2012). A study by Poore and Nemececk (2018) on data from 38 700 farms worldwide found that more than 80 percent of farm land is used for livestock rearing, but that this only produces 18 percent of the calories and 37 percent of the protein humans consume. Moreover, livestock rearing is responsible for 58 percent of greenhouse gas admissions, 57 percent of water pollution, 56 percent of all air pollution and 33 percent of freshwater withdrawals (Poore & Nemececk, 2018). Furthermore, there are now numerous studies that show there is a link between high meat consumption and increases in non-communicable diseases such as cancer and diabetes (Rohrmann et al, 2014; EAT-Lancet, 2019). Therefore, there is an urgent need for society to reduce the amount of meat we consume. This is particularly significant for Western societies such as the UK as we consume large quantities of meat (Carrington, 2018).

As a result, there has been a rapid rise in the number of vegans in the UK from 150 000 in 2014 (Scarborough et al, 2014) to over 3.5 million in 2018 (Petter, 2018; Hancox, 2018). This rise in veganism has been accompanied by considerable media attention (e.g. Lundahl, 2017; Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018). However, research has found that the way in which veganism is framed in the media greatly influences people's thoughts, attitudes and beliefs towards it (Lundahl, 2017; Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018; White, 2018; Greenebaum, 2012a). Until 2013 veganism was presented in the media as an uncool fringe movement (e.g. Lundahl, 2018; Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018) and was even stigmatised as 'aggressive extremism' in some newspapers (see Cole & Moragan, 2011). However, celebrities in the media have played an integral role in the popularisation of veganism in mainstream society, changing it from a marginalised, radical and political diet into an 'eco-chic' consumption practice (see Lundahl, 2018; Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). The popularisation of veganism has also been attributed to 'influencers' on Instagram who use their platform to share information about the food system and provide us with knowledge on how to be vegan (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019; Hancox, 2018). Moreover, the rise of veganism is most predominant among individuals under that age of 35 (ARS,

2017) which has been accredited to this group's interaction with vegan 'influencers' on social media (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019; Hancox, 2018). Consequently, vegan Instagram influencers are extremely powerful as they provide people with food knowledge and position individual food choices within wider societal discourses of risk, aversion, responsibility and morality (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). For example, they tell us how to cook without meat and live more sustainably in order to prevent climate change, reduce harm to animals and to optimise our health.

However, most of the current academic research on the framing of veganism has focused on traditional media outlets such as animal rights campaigns, television, newspapers and documentaries (e.g. Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018; Morgan & Cole, 2011; Lundahl, 2018). Therefore, this research aims to explore contemporary vegan discourses on Instagram to shed light on the discursive elements that define veganism amongst the 'social media generation'. In the following section I will discuss how food knowledge shapes everyday life and how celebrities in the media has become central in constructing and distributing this information. I will then discuss previous literature on veganism and outline the main themes and debates within the relatively new field of 'vegan studies' (Wright, 2015). Afterwards I will build a rationale for using Instagram as a data source and discuss why this is important to study with regards to veganism, public health, ethics and environmental concerns in the UK. Next, I will discuss the theoretical framework before presenting my methodology. Finally, I will present my findings and discussion and finish with my conclusion.

1.1 Food celebrities and food knowledge in the UK

In the United Kingdom individual dietary choices have become the main focus for the blame, and the prevention of societal risks such as disease and climate disaster (Lupton, 1996). In countries such as the UK which characterised by neoliberal political rule, individual freedom is prioritised over excessive state intervention (Lupton, 1996). As a result, individuals are expected to self-regulate their own behaviour (e.g. diet) in order to prevent risks (e.g. climate disaster) (Lupton, 1996). The relationship between the construction of 'risks' and self-regulation is explained in Foucault's (1977) theory of governmentality. Foucault writes that 'expert knowledge' provides guidelines and advice by which individuals are surveyed and compared against norms (Foucault, 1977). For instance, in the UK, National Health Service's (NHS) Eatwell Guide advises that people should eat no more than 70g of processed or red meat a day in order to avoid the risk of bowel cancer (Eat Well Guide, 2018). Similarly, it advises that individuals should eat 'sustainably sourced' fish twice a week and incorporate more beans and pulses into their diet for protein to avoid the (Eat Well Guide, 2018). It argues that a diet that follows these rules is more sustainable thus better for the planet thus implies that eating this way is the 'right' way to eat (Lupton, 1996). Therefore, it is expected that individuals act out of self-interest and societal duty by staying within these guidelines to maintain a healthy body and avoid the risk of climate disaster (Guthman, 2011; Guthman 2013; Lupton, 1996). However, individuals who engage in 'risky behaviour' or act out of the norm, such as eating large quantities of red meat, are considered to be immoral and lack self-control as they are not acting within the best interest of self and society (Guthman, 2011; Guthman 2013; Lupton, 1995). Consequently, critical nutrition theorists state that food and nutrition guidelines do more than simply

inform us on what is 'good' to eat (e.g. Hayes-Conroy, 2015; Coveney, 2006); they are used to construct certain moral identities.

Food celebrities in the media play an integral role in constructing, reproducing and circulating this knowledge on 'good food' (Johnston & Goodman, 2015). Food media such as cook books, home cookery shows, and images of food on Instagram construct what we should and shouldn't eat in order to define our identities as moral citizens, maintain our health and prevent climate disaster. For example, Jamie Oliver implies that to prevent the 'obesity epidemic' families (particularly mothers) should cook from scratch every day (Wilson & Woolhouse, 2017; Barnes, 2017). Similarly, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall advocates that individuals should consume more home grown veg, organic foods and sustainable fish to save our planet ("Fish Fight", 2014). Subsequently 'food celebrities' inform us on how to be good, healthy, responsible and educated citizens (Johnston and Goodman, 2015). In turn, individuals internalise these messages and adjust their food thoughts and practices in accordance with these 'standards'. For instance, Thomas et al (2014) found that mothers felt responsible to cook from scratch every day in order to prevent their child from becoming obese.

Not only does information provided to us by food celebrities shape our individual food thoughts and practices, it also influences food politics (Goodman, Johnston & Cairns, 2017). For instance, British celebrity chef turned 'moral entrepreneur', Jamie Oliver, has dominated mainstream food discourses in the UK. In his most recent health campaign/television programme, 'Jamie's Sugar Rush', sugar, and those who consumed it were positioned as responsible for the poor health of the nation and a stretched National Health Service (NHS) (Wilson & Woolhouse, 2017). As a result of this programme and the accompanying twitter campaign a sugar tax has been implemented in the UK, increasing the price of fizzy drinks, chocolate and sweets ("Soft drinks industry", 2018). This displays that in the UK, mediated voices of celebrity chefs have become an extremely influential form of biopolitical power as individuals, and even governments, regulate their food policies and practices in relation to the knowledge provided by these 'lifestyle experts' (Goodman, Johnston & Cairns, 2017; Barnes, 2017).

However, there has been little research into the food knowledge provided to us by 'vegan food celebrities' (otherwise known as influencers) on media platforms such as Instagram. Taking in to account the urgent need for a global reduction in meat consumption (EAT-Lancet, 2019) and the power of celebrity voices in food politics today, I argue that vegan 'influencers' are extremely important figures for research as they provide individual with knowledge on how to live a meat free life. In the following section I will outline the main themes and debates within 'vegan studies' (Wright, 2015). Then I will explain why Instagram is a useful source for data collection.

1.2 The mainstream vegan movement

There are many interpretations and motivations for veganism (Kerschke-Risch, 2015; Greenebaum, 2012b). The three predominant justifications are referred to as 'vegans for animals, people and planet'. For some people veganism is about ending the exploitation and suffering of animals. Therefore, they choose to avoid all food, clothing, cosmetics and

entertainment that exploits animals (Greenebaum, 2012a, 2012b). This is most in line with the definition of veganism that was coined in 1944 by Donald Watson of the UK Vegan Society (Vegan Society, n.d.). However, there are some other more contemporary justifications for becoming vegan (Harrington et al., 2018). For instance, some vegans focus on the health benefits of a plant-based diet (Greenebaum, 2012b). While others reject the consumption of animal products due to the harm the industrialised agriculture system causes the environment (Greenebaum, 2012b). I will refer to these different 'types' of vegans as 'ethical', 'health' and 'environmental' vegans respectively. Often vegans identify with all justification on varying degrees, however, some identify more strongly with some justifications of veganism over others (Kerschke-Risch, 2015). However, there is a debate over the effectiveness of emphasizing ethical, health, or environmental justifications in the media when trying to advocate for veganism and the reduction of meat consumption in society (Greenebaum, 2012a, 2012b; Godfray et al, 2018).

For instance, Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, (2019) makes a distinction between two types of discursive strategies that have been used to promote veganism in mainstream society. The first group is often used by animal rights charities (ethical vegans). These discursive strategies include images and text that aim at transforming public perceptions of the meat, dairy, poultry and fishing industries by revealing the cruelty towards animal caused by these activities (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). These campaigns often draw analogies between human suffering and animal suffering (e.g. Kim, 2011). For example, Kim (2011) found that the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) campaign's "The Holocaust on Your Plate" and "We Are All Animals" compared to Jewish people during the Holocaust and African people during slavery to farm animals. In these campaigns it is argued that speciesism is a form of domination and oppression over non-human animals which is equated to racism (Kim, 2010; Ryder, 2010). Therefore, racial hierarches are compared to species hierarches in order to challenge the societal norm of consuming some animals while cherishing others (Kim, 2011). Animal liberation discourses associated with 'ethical' veganism (White, 2018) are in line with the utilitarian belief that human and non-human animals should have equal rights to life and safety (Joy, 2001). Therefore, campaigns that promote veganism for these reasons focus on criticising the capitalistic food industry for profiting from exploitation and harm towards animals (Portwood-Stacer, 2012). As a result, this kind of veganism advocates the complete abolition of animal use (Portwood-Stacer, 2012). Therefore, 'ethical' veganism is not just a diet but a moral lifestyle and political commitment that extends to clothing and other products. Consequently, this construction of veganism argues that to be vegan you must engage in an alternative political lifestyle that challenges the 'normal' way of thinking about and consuming animals (Joy, 2001; Greebebaum, 2017; Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019).

However, Kim (2011) argues that likening the mistreatment of animals to horrific events such as the Holocaust and dominant oppressive structures such as racism is extremely offence to those who have experienced or continue to experience discrimination. Although PETA may not have intended to cause offence, they received criticisms from Jewish and African American communities (Kim, 2011). Therefore, this suggests that campaigns that humanise animals by comparing animal suffering to human suffering are politically ineffective as it can be interpreted that vegans are privileged animal rights activists who care more about the concerns of animals than humans (Greenebaum 2012b; Greenebaum,

2017; Kim, 2011). Furthermore, in arguments that prioritise animal rights, an assumption that veganism is equal to 'cruelty-free' is often made (White, 2008). When animal rights activists position animal rights and equal to human rights they distract from the fact that many humans also suffer in the industrialised agriculture industry (White, 2018). For instance, it was found that migrant workers in Spain who produce over three billion tonnes of fruit and vegetables every year for Britain and Northern Europe suffer exploitation, misery and suffering (Palumbo & Sciurba, 2015). This again reinforces the idea that animal rights activists are extremely privileged as they are not, or do not need to be concerned about the suffering of humans (Greenebaum, 2016). Consequently, mainstream animal liberation campaigns may deter people from wanting to identify as vegan or engage with vegan practices as they undermine the exploitation and suffering experienced by humans. However, these campaigns are curated for the purpose of shocking people as they are usually only seen once thus need to be memorable. Therefore, it is possible that vegan information on Instagram is less 'extreme' (and potentially more effective) as it is content that is viewed regularly and is more permeant thus can be revisited again and again and does not need to necessarily shock people (e.g. a recipe).

Similar to animal liberation campaigns, documentaries such as *Vegucated* and *Forks over Knives* have used 'shock' and 'shame' tactics to raise awareness of the environmental impact of the livestock industry, animal welfare issues, and the negative health effects of eating a diet high in meat (Christopher, Bartkowski and Haverda 2018). These documentaries deliver this information in entertaining and memorable ways by using emotional rhetoric, science-based evidence and individual testimonies (Christopher, Bartkowski and Haverda 2018). In an analysis of vegan documentaries *Vegucated* and *Forks over Knives* Christopher, Bartkowski and Haverda (2018) make a distinction between 'holistic veganism' that is orientated at reducing animal cruelty and environmental degradation and 'health veganism'. They found that discourse on 'holistic veganism' is more political and was used to critique the excesses of capitalist profiteering in the livestock industry (Christopher, Bartkowski and Haverda, 2018). In contrast they found that discourse on 'health veganism' reinforced the neoliberal ideologies of health, individualism and responsibility as discussion centred around 'eating correctly' in order to achieve optimal health (Christopher, Bartkowski and Haverda, 2018; Guthman, 2011). The construction of a vegan diets as a 'healthy diet' and a focus on food has become popular in mainstream society (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019; White, 2018; Christopher, Bartikowki & Haverda, 2018).

Thus, the second discursive strategy that Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, (2019) argue is used to promote veganism in mainstream society is images and talk around vegan food (e.g. online, food industry). Unlike 'ethical' and 'environmental' justifications for veganism discourse on 'plant-based diets' prioritise the aesthetics of vegan food by rebranding it a trendy, desirable, healthy, normalized and mainstream lifestyle (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019; White, 2018). This kind of veganism is often referred to as a 'plant-based diet' which is used to emphasise the significance of food and health over other vegan political practices (e.g. animal rights liberation) (Christopher, Bartikowki & Haverda, 2018; White, 2018). Here, veganism is presented as an individual 'healthy lifestyle choice' rather than a movement committed to ethics or being critical of a capitalistic food system (White, 2018). Thus, veganism is constructed as a 'choice' for self-improvement which serves to remove it from accusations of being 'radical' or 'extreme' (Christopher, Bartikowki & Haverda, 2018; White,

2018). Therefore, it is argued that 'health veganism' is adopted for hedonistic reasons. For example, one might become vegan to reduce risks of cancer, diabetes and heart disease or for aesthetic reasons such as losing weight or gaining clearer skin (Lundahl, 2018). Consequently, this version of veganism is more popular in mainstream society as adopting a vegan diet for these reasons may seem more important or relatable to some people than criticising a food system and animal ethics (White, 2018; Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019).

However, critical research on veganism argues that this 'depoliticised veganism' is centred around privileged northern European constructions of 'good food', consumerism, health and slimness (Harper, 2012; Lundahl, 2018; Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018). For instance, mainstream depictions of a vegan diet include lavish salads, green smoothies, organic locally grown fruit and vegetables and expensive super foods (Shah, 2018). Furthermore, Lundahl (2018) found that articles on Veganism in the popular British newspaper, the Daily Mail, focus primarily on celebrities who follow the diet, selling vegan commodities (e.g. vegan protein shakes) and its potential for weight loss (Lundahl, 2018). In one particular article Beyoncé and Jay Z act as 'lifestyle experts' (Lewis, 2010) as the article talks about how the power couple have gone on a 22-day vegan diet. It focuses on Beyoncé's incredible slim figure shortly after giving birth to twins and suggests that the vegan diet is responsible for this. Therefore, veganism is framed as something that is desirable as it results in health and slimness and is made attainable through individual consumption choices (Lundahl, 2018). This reinforces the neoliberal ideology of consumerism and the individual responsibility for health (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018) as it suggested that one can choose to be environmentally conscious, healthy and slim by buying in to the diet even if it is for only 22 days. As a result, other factors that influence an individual's ability to be healthy or slim such as time, money and dedication to a strict diet and exercise regime are undermined (Guthamn, 2011). Thus, it is implied that anyone can become vegan, healthy and slim if they chose to while ignoring the fact that some people do not have the recourses to buy in to this construction of a vegan diet (e.g. time and money to source unique ingredient). Consequently, veganism has been made popular in the mainstream by reducing it to a healthy trendy diet and ignoring the more political, moral or spiritual reasons why many people are vegan (e.g. changing the current food provisioning system) (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018; Portwood-Stacer, 2012; Lundal, 2018).

Moreover, White (2018) argues that the dominant discourse of 'uncritical' and 'depoliticised' veganism in mainstream Western culture has created huge financial opportunities for food retailers to capitalise on the 'vegan trend'. This has resulted in a market explosion of expensive meat replacement products, exotic superfoods and plant derived protein supplements (Simon, 2017). Therefore, a typical vegan stereotype has become that of a privileged hipster that can afford to consume an 'alternative' diet that is based around expensive 'vegan foods' such as cashew cheeses and green algae smoothies (Greenebaum, 2018). This is problematic as critical food scholars argue that this dominant discourse of veganism in mainstream society as an expensive 'trendy diet' provides a limited representation of vegan food and what it means to be vegan (Greenebaum, 2018). For example, many vegan activists, cook books, blogs and websites are often promoted by white, middle-upper class, slim females who normalise the idea that veganism is a diet for those bodies (Glasser, 2011; Harper 2012a). Furthermore, it is often assumed that to be

vegan you need to eat organic foods and shop at supermarkets such as Wholefoods which reinforces the idea that veganism is expensive and affiliated with privilege (Greenebaum, 2018). By promoting this limited view on veganism, the mainstream vegan movement ignores the influence of race, class, gender and location on an individual's experience of veganism (Harper, 2010; 2012a; 2012b; Wrenn, 2016; Wrenn and Johnson 2013). As a result, the normalisation of veganism as a white, slim, trendy and expensive diet may deter individuals who are not able to meet such criteria from learning about and practicing veganism. Consequently, veganism is constructed as an exclusive diet that does not seem attainable for many people.

Likewise, Harper (2012) argues that all ethnic minority groups are left out of mainstream vegan discourse. For instance, Shah (2018) writes that mainstream white veganism centres around a privileged 'slim' construction of a 'vegan food' such as expensive kelp noodles, chia seeds and turmeric elixirs. Therefore, the historical roots of veganism in religions including Rastafarianism, Hinduism and Buddhism and the fact that it is a diet eaten by those in poverty all over the world are ignored (Kapadia, 2018; Shah, 2018). Shah (2018), Harper (2012) and Greenebaum (2018) agree that vegan chefs who provide recipes that use whole-food ingredients and come from cultures that are historically vegan (e.g. Indian, Caribbean) are less well published in mainstream society. This has resulted in the formation of different vegan subcultures online (e.g. vegans of colour, whole food vegans and junk food vegans) that challenge dominant depiction of expensive, white, slim veganism (Kapadia, 2018; Shah, 2018).

For example, in interviews conducted by Greenebaum (2018) it was found that vegans in America from African American, Asian, Latino and Indian backgrounds emphasized an alternative vegan scene on social media that is disconnected from the 'privileged vegan' stereotype in order to promote veganism as ordinary (Sneijder & te Molder, 2005, 2009). These participants constructed a vegan diet that was influenced by their cultural heritage and based around common staple foods of fruits, vegetables, grains and pulses. They argued that 'fake meats' and processed vegan food were unnecessary, expensive and lacked flavour (Greenebaum, 2018). Furthermore, vegans with low incomes actually stated that their diets were very cheap, and they avoided processed food and stuck to 'whole foods' in order to keep their diet affordable (Greenebaum, 2018). Similarly, Veron (2016) found that food blogs were used to share recipes of vegan version of classic French recipes. She argues the focus on vegan food in these cookery blogs have indirectly circulated messages about animal rights to a population who were almost completely unaware of these issues (Veron, 2016). This shows that just like an 'ordinary diet' there are many ways to be vegan that range from expensive to cheap (Greenebaum, 2016). Therefore, this research will look at Instagram to explore how vegan foods from different cultures are represented online.

To summarise, discourse on veganism is extremely powerful as it positions individual food choices within wider societal discussions of risk aversion, responsibility and morality. However, the mainstream vegan movement promotes a depoliticised, privileged and expensive construction of veganism. This may deter many people from engaging with vegan practices. On the other hand, previous research has highlighted the potential of social media to challenge mainstream, privileged perceptions of veganism. Therefore, this research will look at the construction of veganism on social media. In the following section I

will discuss how Instagram may overcome some the issues associated with mainstream veganism and why it is import that this research uses Instagram as a data source for food knowledge.

1.3 The potential 'new power' of Instagram in food knowledge

In the West we are we are currently experiencing a shift in the way expert knowledge (power) on food is created, distributed and accepted among society (Timms & Heimans, 2018). As society we beginning to question old power regimes of a singular 'experts' who provide exclusive top down knowledge (e.g. government nutrition institutions, food industry) (Timms & Heimans, 2018). Instead, people are demanding 'new power' which involves networked governance, radical transparency and crowd participation in businesses, institutions and social movements (Timms & Heimans, 2018). I argue that the vegan movement promoted on Instagram is a form of 'new power' as it aligns with these rules (Timms & Heimans, 2018). For example, vegan Instagram accounts produce knowledge that challenges 'old power' nutrition institutions by challenging the belief that one *needs* meat to be healthy (Joy, 2001; Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). It has done so in a transparent way by sharing the everyday life practices and experiences of vegans via Instagram 'influencers' that promote the movement and use photographs and videos of their physical bodies as proof of health (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). There is no singular expert or leader within the movement, instead I argue there are many 'experts' that co-create knowledge and different ways of practicing a vegan lifestyle (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). Therefore, it is possible that influences construct many different ways of 'doing veganism'. Furthermore, the vegan movement on Instagram encourages crowd participation through interaction via likes, comments and recipe ideas (Laestadius, 2018). This is a potentially fun and engaging way for people to engage with veganism. Indeed, others have accredited the rise of veganism in the UK to '*Instagram lifestyle influencers*' who post about veganism on their pages (e.g. Abidin, 2016; Laestadius, 2018; Sharma & De Choudhury, 2015). Therefore, I argue that knowledge shared about veganism on Instagram by 'influencers' is extremely important to examine as it shapes our beliefs and practices about alternative, healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

'Influencers' are Instagram users who regularly post about lifestyle practices, such as a vegan diet, and have a large number of followers in comparison to the number of people they follow (there is no exact number ratio that can determine if someone is an influencer) (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017; Maares & Hanusch, 2018; Abidin, 2016). They create an accessible and authentic identity by sharing their everyday lifestyle choices, bodies, successes and failures through images, videos and text (Khamis, Ang & Wellig, 2017; Abidin, 2016). For example, a vegan Instagram influencer may post a picture of the meal they cooked and provide the recipe stating that they used ingredients available at a high street supermarket to show that the diet is accessible. Another influencer may focus their page on animal rights liberation. While a different influencer may write about the health implications of a vegan diet. Unlike food discourses from celebrity chefs in the mainstream media, Instagram users can select the influencers they follow thus can tailor the advice and information they want to hear. Individuals also may follow several influencers at the same time, therefore, revive a wide range of information about the same topic (Laestadius, 2018) Moreover 'followers' and 'influencers' can also easily interact with one another providing

constant feedback and tailoring of information. Hence, Influencers simultaneously act as experts and peers by providing knowledge on why and how to be vegan in ways that is fun, interesting, achievable and relatable to their followers (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). Therefore, I argue that vegan Instagram Influencers have become a fundamental part of modern-day health and environmental governance these 'lifestyle experts' provide us with knowledge on how to live more sustainably and have made veganism popular (Johnston & Gooman, 2015). In thus, this has influenced the availability of vegan foods and vegan options (White, 2018)

Furthermore, social media can be used as a tool to organise individuals and communities, to challenge dominant ways of thinking about food by providing a space to connect and source information (Sormanen & Dutton, 2015; Gerbaudo & Trere, 2015). For example, Veron, (2016) found that In France social media has connected scattered vegan communities from all over the world creating a sense of belonging and shared identity, making it extremely easy to learn practical tips. It is particularly important to look at Instagram when researching food knowledge as individuals, especially young people, now seek most of their food education online over traditional outlets such as doctors and dietitians (Vaterlaus, et al, 2013; Lohse, 2013). Instagram has enabled vegan lifestyle information to reach a society beyond vegan readers thus has the potential to encourage many people reduce their meat consumption and think critically about the food system (Veron, 2016). As it is virtual food information on Instagram also extends to audiences that would not usually be reached by physical campaigns (e.g. those who live in rural areas). As #vegan is a popular trend on Instagram it appears in often the 'explore' pages of people accounts ('Best #vegan hashtags, 2019; Laestadius, 2018) and is therefore likely to reach 'new' people even if they do not search for it. Moreover, people who use Instagram are on it for an average of 32 minutes per day everyday (Hayden, n.d.). Unlike doctors' advice, animal rights campaigns, documentaries, cooking programmes or government nutrition information that you may see or hear a couple of times a year, Instagram sends contestant daily reminders and prompts to their followers about the food they should eat in the palm of their hand. Therefore, Instagram enables contestant and easy access to nutrition advice and food information.

Unlike Facebook or twitter, with Instagram you have to post an image with every post which has resulted (Laestadius, 2018). This has resulted in the platform being used for a lot of advertising (Laestadius, 2018). For example, companies pay influencers to post images of them using their products as their influencers are perceived to live a desirable lifestyle. Hence, vegan influencers use their Instagram account to promote vegan products and challenge the dominant ways of thinking about the relationship between health, animal welfare and the planet (Maares & Hanusch, 2018). As a result, vegan influencers act as modern-day food activists and consumption experts as the knowledge they produce is aimed at enrolling individuals into particular lifestyles and buying particular products (Maares & Hanusch, 2018; Sormanen & Dutton, 2015). Consequently, Instagram influencers are extremely powerful as they position individual food choices within wider societal discourses of risk, aversion, responsibility and morality (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019).

To summarise, Instagram is a powerful tool for sharing knowledge on food. It allows individuals from document their everyday food choices, the effects they have on their bodies and the justification for eating a certain way. Unlike traditional media outlets

(documentaries, newspaper, ect) using Instagram is an everyday practice, therefore, it is possible that information on veganism is constructed in a less 'extreme' way than mainstream animal rights campaigns. Instagram is also heavily imbedded in the marketing industry, thus informs people about where to consume vegan food. Moreover, in contrast to the mainstream media documentation of the vegan movement, there are many 'leaders' of the vegan movement on Instagram. Therefore, it is possible that veganism is constructed in many different ways. Thus, food discussions on Instagram lead by vegan 'influencers' provide an interesting avenue to explore.

1.4 Problem statement

Academics from fields of public health, nutrition, economics, governance and environmental sustainability agree that to improve health and prevent catastrophic damage to the planet there need to be a drastic global reduction the amount of meat that is produced and consumed (EAT-Lancet, 2019). One way to do this is to consume a vegan diet. However, the mainstream vegan movement promotes a depoliticised, privileged and expensive construction of veganism. This deters many people from engaging with vegan practices. However, research has indicated that social media is a space where alternative and potentially more inclusive ways of 'doing veganism' as constructed and shared. Vegan influencers on Instagram are key figures in popularising and shaping vegan trends. However, most of the academic research on the construction of veganism in the media has focused on traditional mainstream outlets such as television, newspapers and documentaries (e.g. Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018; Morgan & Cole, 2011). Therefore, this research aims to explore the contemporary discourses around veganism on Instagram to shed light on the discursive elements that define veganism amongst the 'social media generation'.

1.5 Research aims and questions

This research aims to answer the following questions:

In what different ways is veganism constructed by Instagram influencers? How do these representations compare to each other and mainstream constructions of veganism?

- Explore the contemporary discourses around veganism and consumption produced by vegan Instagram influencers in UK
- Explore how influencers construct different vegan identities- what communities do they identify with? What economies are they part of?
- Explore how vegan influencers on Instagram construct 'vegan food'
- To understand how such discourses, frame the responsibility for human, animal and environmental health
- To determine the dominant power relations supported/rejected within these discourses- whose interest does this specific construction of 'vegan food' and 'vegan identity' serve?

2. Theoretical Framework

I used Instagram posts to explore the different ways 'veganism' and the responsibility for preserving 'health' and preventing 'climate change' have been constructed. I argue that Instagram is a popular and accessible source of lifestyle knowledge, therefore, is responsible for providing many of the discourses we use to make sense of ourselves and the world we live in (Rose, 2016; Laestadius, 2016). Consequently, discourses on Instagram construct social understanding surrounding ethics, health, the environment and responsibility. Moreover, lifestyle discourses supplied by Instagram influencers are imbedded in political, historical, and societal positions (Rose, 2016; Laestadius, 2016) and are shared, used and reproduced by people and in turn make up our subjectivities (Gavey, 1989). By conducting an analysis of discourses provided by vegan Instagram influencers, I was able to explore some of contemporary discourses that construct 'veganism' currently available in our society and culture and attempt to theorise why they are popular, what the implications of these discourses might be, and whose interests they seem to serve.

During this research I took a social constructionist and discursive approach (Burr, 2015). Therefore, I aimed to identify the different ways that Instagram influencers used text and image to construct a vegan identity, vegan practices and vegan food (Rose, 2016). This research complies with the argument that all knowledge is created and shared through 'a system of statements which construct an object' (Parker, 2014, p. 5), known as discourses. Therefore, I argue that our understanding of veganism, and the ways we understand responsibility concerning topics of health, ethics and environmental issues come from the discourses that are socially, historically and culturally available to us (Burr, 2015; Rose, 2016). Consequently, knowledge about any phenomenon is a social construct and is transient therefore claims to truth cannot be made (Gavey, 1989). Instead, I take the position that information on health, ethics and the environment are embedded in political, historical and societal positions and can be understood in multiple ways (Rose, 2016; Burr, 2015). Thus, I argue that a social constructionist position is the most appropriate theoretical framing for this research as it will allow me to explore the multiple ways veganism is constructed by Instagram influencers (e.g. healthy diet vs animal rights).

The data from this research was analysed using Foucauldian style discourse analysis (Rose, 2016). The first assumption underpinning this approach is that language (text, image, music) plays an important role in constructing knowledge in our social and psychological life's (Rose, 2016; Willig, 2013). Furthermore, discourses are socially, culturally and historically specific constructing certain ways of seeing the world (Parker, 2014). From a Foucauldian perspective, the discourses that are available to us place individuals in positions of power and reinforce dominant ways of viewing things (Edwards and Potter, 1992). For instance, the discourses around lifestyle are extremely powerful as they construct what it is to be a 'good' citizen (e.g. environmentally and health concerned) and how individuals can achieve this status (e.g. practicing correct eating) (Rose, 2016; Burr, 2015). Likewise, discourses on diet construct what is 'normal' to eat. For instance, in the UK this always included animal products thus discourse on protein intake reinforces human power over non-human animals (Joy, 2001). Central to Foucauldian thought is the concept of a relationship between discourse and institutions (e.g. government, agro-food industry). Such perspectives state that knowledge is bound up with ways of organising, regulating and administering social life

(Willig, 2013). In terms of food, the way discourses construct what it is to 'eat well' and who is held accountable for illness and environmental disaster in turn influences public health and environmental policies (Burr, 2015). For instance, suggesting that individuals are responsible for avoiding societal risks by choosing to 'eat well' causes food policies that are focused on changing individual consumption choice. In contrast, stating that the government is responsible for ensuring the agro-food industry produces in environmentally sustainable ways could implement policies that are focused on macro-level change. Therefore, using a Foucauldian perspective will help reveal how individuals are positioned within relations of power in the context of the current popularization of veganism (Rose, 2016).

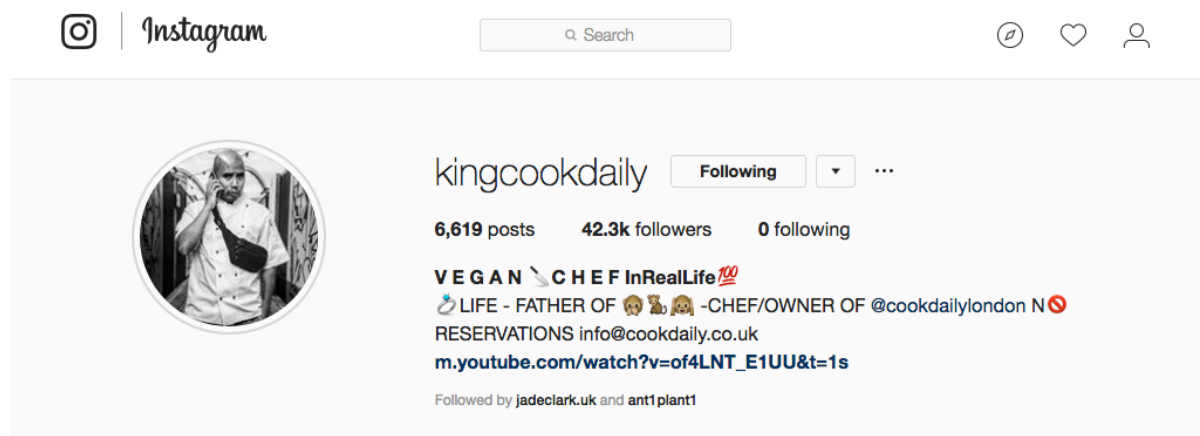
This research will also be informed by critical nutrition theory as this will help identify who profits from certain regimes of power within food information (e.g. individuals responsible for individual and global health) (Hayes-Conroy, 2015). Critical nutritionists state that in the West food choice has become the main focus of health and environmental discourse (e.g. Crawford, 2006; Lupton, 1996). Mainstream food information in the media often implies that health is in personal control through a good diet (Crawford, 2006; Wilson & Woolhouse, 2017). However, the influence of privilege on enabling people to make 'good food' choices is often ignored. As a result, individuals with less privilege are stigmatised due to making perceived 'bad' food choices while more privileged individuals are applauded for making 'good' choices that are often only possible due to financial and personal capital (Wilson & Woolhouse, 2017). For example, in public health discourse obesity is the 'obesity epidemic' is predominantly conceptualised as a product of poor personal choice, lack of will power and inadequate nutritional education (Guthman, 2011). However, obesity rates in the UK are highest among individuals (specifically women) from ethnic minority groups and those lower socioeconomic groups (Bartley, 2016). Therefore, this suggests that health is not a factor of individual choice but instead a reflection of social inequality (Guthman, 2011). Furthermore, the dominant framing of the individual responsibility in mainstream health communication has coincided with government austerity cuts (Crawford, 2006; Gard 2012). Critical nutrition theory argues that implying poor health is a result of 'bad' individual food choice detracts from alternative social and political explanations for societal disasters. For instance, Guthman (2011) argues that obesity is dominantly framed as a result of bad individual lifestyle choices (e.g. eat fast food, do not exercise). However, Guthman (2011) states that obesity is in fact a result of governmental subsidies that have caused fast, processed and unhealthy foods to be cheaper than fresh, unprocessed, healthy foods. In combination structural inequality (race, class gender) that inhibits people from accessing the resources (time and money) that enable them to make 'good' food choices. Thus, it is argued that the predominant framing of individual responsibility for health serves to remove responsibility from the government for ensuring have access to healthy food (e.g. implement subsidies that make healthy food affordable, ensure people have enough money for food by providing good welfare). In turn, austerity cuts to obesity clinics, or child welfare are justified as it is implied that poor health and obesity are a personal failure, rather than a result of structural inequality (Guthman, 2009; Crawford, 2006; Wilson & Woolhouse, 2017; Hayes-Conroy, 2015). Therefore, this theory will provide a lens to explore the dominant power relations that are supported and challenged within veganism (e.g. is the power/responsibility to prevent societal risks situated with individuals or with governments).

3. Methodology

3.1 Instagram profile selection

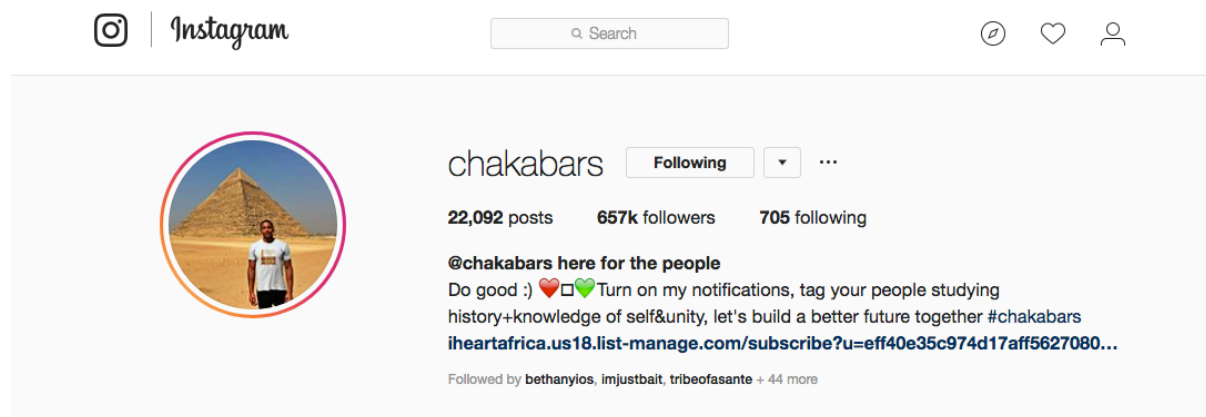
This research analysed the posts of six vegan ‘influencers’ Instagram profiles. The personal Instagram account of the researcher was used as a starting point to search for vegan influencers. The researcher followed over 20 different vegan Instagram accounts. Therefore, several criteria were used to select accounts that were appropriate for this research. First, the account had to be associated with an individual person who had ‘influencer’ status in order to analyse how ‘vegan influencer’ identity is constructed. Second, the main topic documented on the account had to be food (including animals as feed) in order to determine how ‘vegan food’ is constructed. Third, the account holder had to be from the UK or based in the UK as the data will be analysed with reference to the recent rise of veganism in the UK and to the current neoliberal British societal/political context. Lastly, the different accounts selected were chosen as they seem to represent different ‘types’ of vegan subculture as mentioned in the literature on veganism (e.g. Harper, 2012, Portwood-Stacer, 2012). For example, some focus on animal liberation while others document recipes. These criteria were checked using the website www.influencerdb.com and by physically looking through each page. This process resulted in six suitable accounts to analyse: @kingcookdaily, @rachelama_, @chakabars, @cruetyfreeclairey, @earthlinged and @delisouslyella. I will now give a brief introduction to the profiles to give an insight into why they are interesting to analyse and compare.

3.2 The profiles

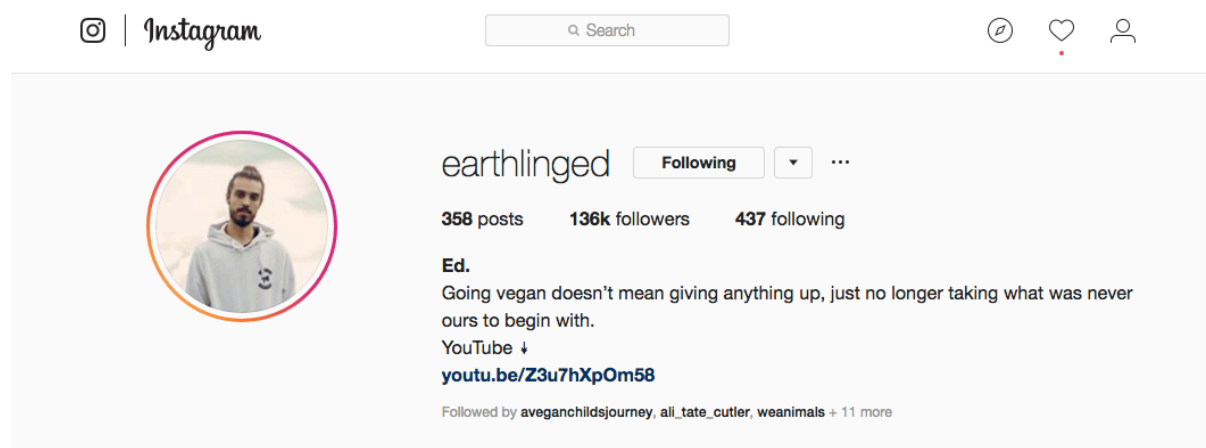


The first profile chosen was vegan chef King Cook Daily and has been selected due to his celebrity fan base and recent collaborations with the large British supermarket chain Sainsbury's, spice brand Schwartz and popular restaurant chain Wagamama's. King, as he is referred to on social media, has received a large following as his London restaurant Cookdaily. It has become a frequent meeting place for celebrities in the UK rap artists JME and Professor Green (Considine, 2017). King has Laotian heritage and grew up on a council estate in East London. He serves dishes inspired by the food he ate growing up and visiting friends houses. These include foods from southeast Asian, British, Caribbean and African cultures. Although he has a celebrity fan base King states that his eatery is for ‘everybody’ and wants to avoid the vegan stereotypes of the ‘raw-juice’, ‘yoga-mummies’ and ‘white

men with dreadlocks' (Connick, 2018). King says, "I'm turning people from the hood vegan" and prides himself for being popular with teenagers to grandmothers and rappers (Connick, 2018).

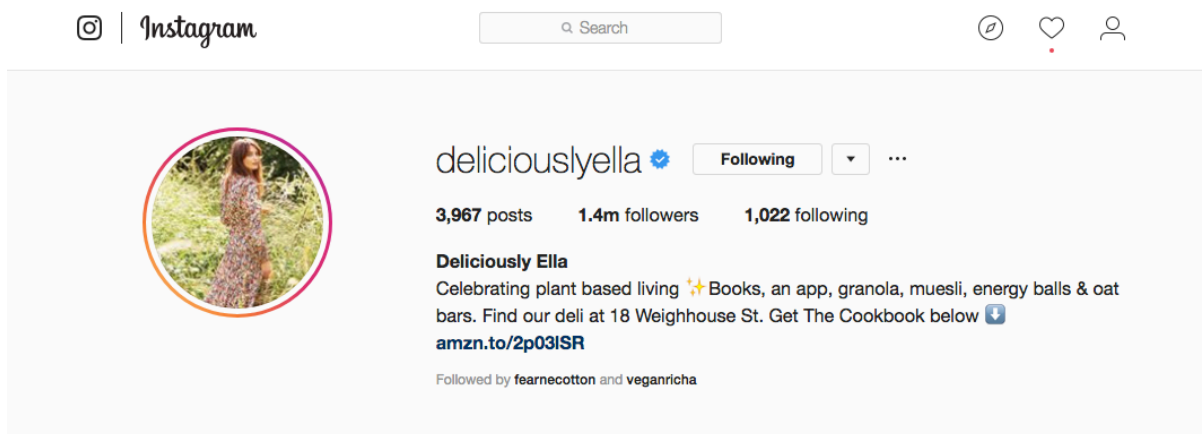


The second Instagram influencer selected for data collection is Chaka Bars. He has Bajan heritage and grew up in Leeds, North England. His Instagram page focuses on social justice and veganism and food are a recurrent theme. Chaka posts controversial images about meat consumption, he promotes water fasting and he often post pictures of vegan food from different cultures. He also talks about colonialism and colonised diets. Chaka was a personal trainer and served in Iraq for the British Army and posts videos of himself working out. He now devotes his time to raising awareness of social injustice and does a lot of charity work. He has recently started importing exotic fruit to the USA and will soon deliver to the UK (via www.fruitsnrootz.com) and promotes this on his page.

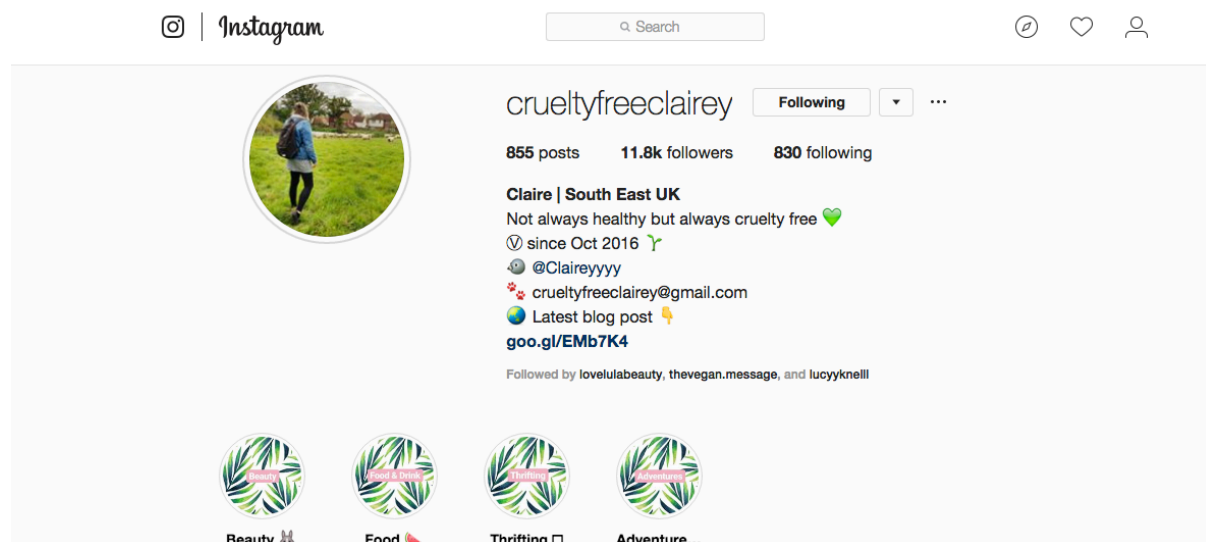


Earthling Eds page is strongly focused on animal rights activism. He is the co-founder and co-director of the animal's rights activism group Surge. Surge focuses on large scale vegan campaign who encourage the public to actively question how their choices impact the lives of others through education and documentaries ("About ", 2019). In 2017-2018 Ed toured

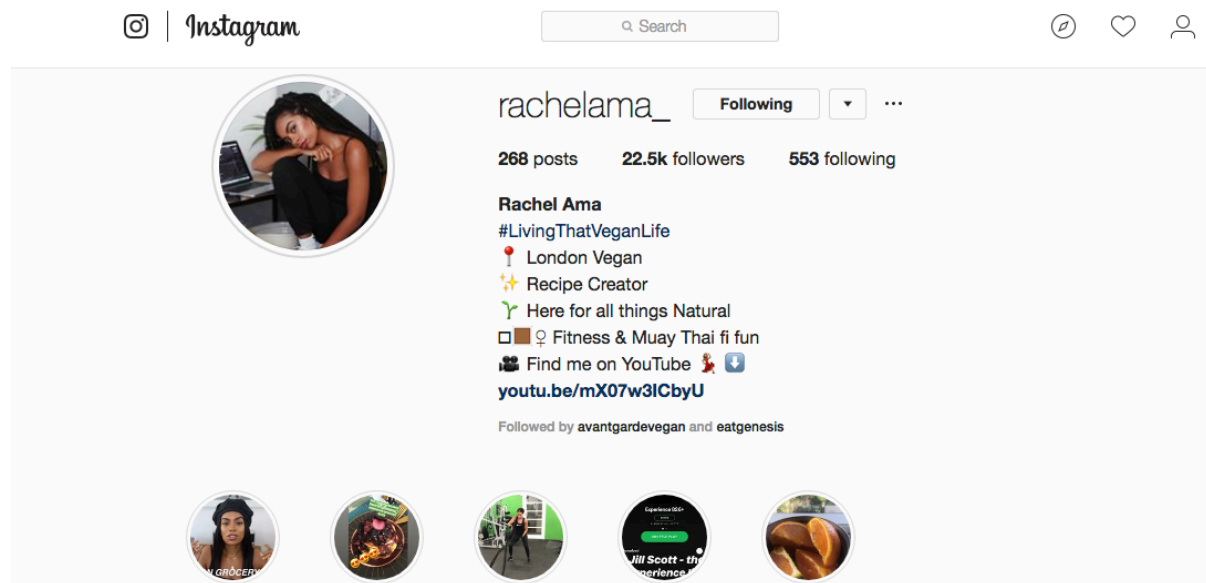
the UK in a van campaigning for animal rights and promoting veganism at universities across the country (“About”, 2019). He is also responsible for organizing the protest that resulted in the fur band at London Fashion Week September 2018 and has appeared on many television interviews in the new inkling BBC and ITV. Ed actively tries to convert people to veganism through talk and debates. He stands on streets and approaches individuals asking direct questions about morality and animal suffering. He films and posts these debates on his Instagram. Ed also uses virtual reality tools to promote vegan lifestyles. He owns a clothing brand, has created a vegan documentary and will be opening a non-profit vegan diner in central London in 2018 where money created will fund future vegan campaigning (“About”, 2019).



Deliciously Ella is the owner of several commercial ‘plant-based’ products including an award-winning app, several cookbooks, a Deli and a range of cereal based products sold in several mainstream food outlets and supermarkets in the UK (“Our Story”, n.d.). She is the daughter of politician and granddaughter of Lord Sainsburys owner of Sainsburys supermarket. Ella uses her personal blog to promote the health benefits of plant-based living and states this has helped her manage a condition that affected her automatic nervous system (“Our Story”, n.d.). Her page mainly focuses on recipes from her cook book/app and images of Ella doing yoga and running.



Claire, known as Cruelty Free Clairey on Instagram switched to veganism in 2016 and has used her Instagram page to document that a vegan diet can be 'easy'. She states that the only thing you cut out from your diet when going vegan is animal cruelty (Rollins, 2017). The focus of her profile is 'easy' vegan food, such as, vegan ready meals. Claire promotes large scale supermarkets who sell vegan products as her mission is to inform people about how simple 'the switch' can be. This includes posting pictures of foods that are 'accidentally' vegan.



London born vegan recipe creator and YouTube star @rachelama_ uses her platform to share her own vegan recipes and work out regimes. Rachel has documented Caribbean vegan culture at Notting Hill Carnival (Caribbean and African carnival in London) and creates her own Caribbean inspired recipes. She also speaks about the roots of veganism in the Rastafarian religion. Rachel started that she started her vegan YouTube channel as when she became vegan she did not see any influencers that she could relate to and hopes that her platform will inspire people like her and people in her friendship group (Bonnett, 2018).

3.3 Selection of Instagram posts

In total 240 Instagram posts (post refers to the text and image as a whole) were analysed. This included 40 of the most liked posts from each vegan 'influencer'. The most liked posts were chosen as these are the post that the followers of the influencers engaged with the most, thus, may reflect some of the most important discourses on veganism in social media. I manually selected the most liked posts between the dates of 17/10/18 and 17/10/17 as this represents a time when veganism has become very popular in the UK (Hancox, 2018). To select the posts, I looked through the all the posts between these dates on each profile and noted the post with the highest number and lowest number of likes. I then made a range from lowest to highest number of likes as this was different for each influencer (e.g. for Chaka Bars this was 8000 < 40 000, but for Cruelty Free Clairey this was 800 < 3000). I then selected all posts that were towards the highest end of scale until I reach saturation. If the post selected did not contain content on food, vegan identity, the environment,

animals, ethics or health it was not included. Therefore, the next post highest liked post including such content will be selected.

The post was then screenshotted, and if the text from the description could not be fully seen it was copy and pasted in to Microsoft Word document. Each post was inserted into a word document under the name of the influencer. Once all posts are collected into a work document it will be printed to form a type of transcript. Each post was coded in order to gain insight into the purpose of the visual content. For instance, categories included brand advertisement, health, animal, or recipe. This gave insight into the visual content use, for example, to promote a sale or to educate or to motivate one to become vegan. There could be more than one code for each image. Next, these codes were then organised into a table in word. The left-hand side of the tables documented the code, while the right-hand side of the table have a reference to the image and influencers the code applied to in order to ensure easy access to original image it is was needed (see Annex 1).

3.4 Analysis

The aim of this analysis is to identify how Instagram vegan influencers use language and image to construct 'good food' and 'vegan identifies' and to see how these constructions position people within relations of power. Thus, this research takes a social constructionist epistemological stance, which assumes that knowledge is socially, historically, and culturally situated (Lyons & Chamberlain, 2017). Furthermore, images play an important role in modern communication and construction of identity (Rose, 2016). Therefore, language and images construct rather than reflect reality (Foucault, 1997; Rose, 2016). During analysis assumptions (e.g. equal access to resources) and wider social ideologies (e.g. neoliberalism and individual responsibility, normality of meat) were identified. Furthermore, the text and images were inspected for how they legitimize or challenge existing social structures and power relations (Rose, 2016). The transcript was read several times to familiarise myself with the data. Next, themes across the whole data set were identified such as 'individual responsibility for planet', 'veganism as an easy diet', 'brand promotion' and 'veganism as an exclusive diet'. To identify these themes, I manually highlighted parts of the text and images and made notes on themes on the printed words documents. The data was then grouped together in themes and the researcher will interpret these into larger thematic categories. This resulted in two broad categories. The first category was 'hard veganism'. This theme was comprised of extracts that constructed 'individual responsibility' for animals, health and the planet. The second thematic category was 'soft veganism'. This theme was comprised of extracts that focused on food and role of identity in vegan subcultures. The data was then be re-read and checked for discrepancies that do not support the researched interpretation of the data. Therefore, the analysis is not a linear process but a reflective one. Any discrepancies were noted and incorporated into the discussion.

3.5 Data management

Information shared on public social media platforms such as Instagram that is not password protected can be used for research without informed consent (Laestadius, 2016). Despite this all influencers used for this research were contacted and given a brief description of the purpose of this research. Unfortunately, none responded. Therefore, the collection of this data proceeded with the rules that state publicly available information on social media is

available to use without conformed consent. All individuals selected also has influencer status. So they actively want people to view their page in order to spread their message, sell their good and promote their restaurant. Thus, the data collected from the Instagram accounts of the influencers treated like any other media data from 'food celebrity' in media research (e.g. Jamie Oliver in Barnes, 2017).

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Hard Veganism: Individual responsibility

In the following three sub-chapters I will discuss how Instagram influencers use discursive techniques to justify 'why' individuals should become vegan. I refer to this discourse as 'hard veganism' as it was constructed through statements that had strong moral underpinnings that implied individuals were predominantly responsible for causing thus preventing animal cruelty, poor health and avoiding climate disaster through their dietary practices. I will begin with analysing extracts that construct 'ethical' justifications for veganism. Then, I will for on to discuss discourses on 'health veganism'. Last, I will discuss the environmental justifications for veganism before moving on to the second half of the results section.

4.1.1 For the animals

In the following extract the influencer Earthing Ed uses several discursive strategies to challenge the prevailing ideology of carnism (eating meat is, natural, normal, necessary and nice) (Joy, 2001) by implying that it is immoral to farm, butcher, cook and eat animals. In this discourse on 'ethical' veganism, veganism was constructed as an 'political lifestyle' that focused on practicing activism and ending animal suffering and exploitation (Greenebaum, 2016). Similar to previous research on mainstream animal rights campaigns (e.g. Kim, 2011) these findings reveal that animal liberation justifications for veganism on Instagram also rely heavily on humanizing animals and comparing animal suffering to human suffering.

Extract 1:



Image 1. Destroying families

Earthlinged. (2018, March 28). Who do we force to suffer for us in the name of tradition?

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bg32pdLIXs5/>

earthlinged Who do we force to suffer for us in the name of tradition? In the name of a meal? How many families do our choices as individuals tear apart? Here you can see terrified lambs desperately trying to get back to their mothers. You see, the bond between mother and child is not exclusive to the human species. It is a bond that is essential in nature, as maternal love and nurturing is crucial for the continuation of a species. Newborns and children need to be given love and must receive care in order for them to develop into healthy adults, enabling their species to continue. Family love isn't something limited to humankind.

• Celebrating Easter by eating children is absolutely barbaric, lambs are the epitome of innocence and yet we butcher them mercilessly in the name of tradition. You can celebrate Easter without harming defenceless beings. Please choose vegan.

In Extract 1, the photograph on the left side is of a sheep appearing to give a kiss on the forehead of her lamb. This is an act that is symbolic of human love and affection and is often given by mothers to their children. Ed writes 'the bond between mother and child is not exclusive to the human species' and argues that all species need maternal love to develop and continue reproduction. Here the lamb is compared to a human baby and is constructed as 'defenceless' and 'innocent' and it is assumed that it should have the chance to live and be loved. Furthermore, using words such as 'child', 'mothers' and 'families' Ed directly parallels sheep family bonds to human family bonds ('Family love isn't something limited to humankind', Extract 1). Therefore, during analysis this Instagram image and caption gave me a sense of affection, compassion and familiarity towards the animal's bond as family love is something most humans desire and can relate to. Moreover, on the right side there is an image of baby lambs who are separated from their mothers by a wall. One lamb appears to be trying to escape back to the 'mother' sheep on the other side ('terrified lambs [are] desperately trying to get back to their mothers', Extract 1). This image clearly implies that the separation of lambs from their mothers is stressful. Here Ed essentialises the notion of what it means to be human or in a family- to be cared for and protected. As a result, eating

lamb for an Easter Celebration is constructed as a 'barbaric' act as it is stated that 'you can celebrate Easter without harming defenceless beings' (Extract, 1). Furthermore, it is implied that humans have the free choice and the moral obligation to stop 'destroying families' as it is stated that we 'do not need meat' to be able to celebrate an event (Extract, 1). Therefore, Ed categorises 'meat eaters' as immoral and 'merciless' while 'vegans' are constructed as people who practice 'moral and righteous' behaviours. Therefore, this strict moral categorisation between vegans and non-vegans implies that meat eaters are responsible for the cruel treatment of animals due to their merciless dietary choices. I argue that this may be intended to guilt meat eater into veganism. Indeed, as a consumer of this media and a non-vegan I a felt a sense of shame for eating (and sometimes even enjoying) lamb at Easter.

This image is even more emotive considering it was posted in the same week that 81 children were separated from their families at the US-Mexican border due to Trump's administration of a brutal immigration policy (Smith, 2018). Trump had begun exclaiming about building 'the wall' and images circulated the media of distraught children detained in wire cages while their parents were being deported (see 'Children separated', 2018). This case received extreme outrage from Trump's party, his opposition and the public (Smith, 2018). Therefore, although there is not a direct comparison it is possible that Ed constructed this post at this specific date to draw analogies between the event at the US-Mexican border and his case for veganism/animal liberation in order to strengthen his argument that separating 'mothers' from 'children' is an unnecessary and cruel act. Here Ed aims to destabilise the human/animal divide by suggesting the mistreatment of animals should receive the same level of outrage as the mistreatment of humans. However, as a white, well-educated male, Ed probably has not had to face many human rights issues. Therefore, capitalising on the suffering of other humans to make a case for veganism is distasteful at the least. In fact, previous research has found that Animal rights campaigns that used the Holocaust and slavery to explain the current mistreatment of animals in the agri-food industry received much criticism from some Jewish and Black community leaders for concerns over anti-semitic and anti-black notions (Kim, 2011). Kim (2011) argues that this is not only offensive but also an ineffective way of convincing individuals to become vegan. For instance, suggesting lambs experience the same distress as Mexican children did when being separated from the parents suggests that these two experiences are equal. Therefore, Ed constructs a 'hard veganism' as it is implied that to 'be vegan' you have to believe that animal rights are equal to human rights. Consequently, this extreme moral position could deter people who believe human rights are more important than animals rights from the vegan movement as it implied that to 'be vegan' you need to consider both equal (Kim, 2011).

However, in Extract 2, Ed uses his Instagram page to challenge the mainstream perspective of vegans as 'extreme' animal rights activists.

Extract 2:



earthlinged • Following

earthlinged For the past couple of weeks the mainstream media has been trying to create a vegan vs farmer mentality, portraying vegan activists as militant, violent, extremists. One of their main targets has been @thesavemovement, with news outlets reporting that activists are scaring workers and the press has been attempting to showcase farmers as victims, when the only real victims are the animals.

-
Today, on Valentine's Day we joined



11,611 likes

FEBRUARY 14

Add a comment...



Image 2. Animals are not property.

Earthlinged. (2018, February 14). *For the past couple of weeks...* Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BfMLnx3FGoc/>

earthlinged For the past couple of weeks the mainstream media has been trying to create a vegan vs farmer mentality, portraying vegan activists as militant, violent, extremists. One of their main targets has been @thesavemovement, with news outlets reporting that activists are scaring workers and the press has been attempting to showcase farmers as victims, when the only real victims are the animals.

-
Today, on Valentine's Day we joined @thamemarketanimalsave in bearing witness to sheep being auctioned off and sold for slaughter, we went armed with flyers about how the farmers could receive help in switching from animal farming to arable farming. The flyers listed the organisations that would help them and also previous farmers who had made the transition. We went with the intention of showing that this isn't a vegan vs farmer situation and that for many farmers, there is a way that they can continue farming but without needlessly exploiting animals.

-
Six farmers took the information with an open-mind. However unfortunately we were assaulted by a farmer who was mocking us for laying roses at the entrance to the market. It's frustrating that vegans are the ones being portrayed as violent and militant when in a situation where vegans and farmers were together, the aggression and violence came from the farmers themselves. Nevertheless, it's so important that we don't regress and fulfil the negative and false portrayals of vegan activists that the media is trying to create and I think it's important to understand that most farmers were born into these industries and just as most of us were conditioned to believe that eating animal products is moral, they have been conditioned to believe that farming animals is also moral.

-
The mainstream media won't report on the fact that we are trying to provide positive education, they want us to be seen as violent. So it's more important than ever that we remain strong and positive activists and although we must never be passive, we must not sink to their level and we must always keep the focus in mind, which is the end of animal exploitation.

-
@forliberation & with @letallbejust



Keogh, E. (2019). *Anti-abortion protesters...* The Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.thejournal.ie/abortion-protest-2-4472155-Feb2019/>

Extract 2 is commenting on an event where vegan activists protested at Thame Market where sheep were being auctioned to farmers. The influencer has used his platform on Instagram to resist the mainstream media's construction of vegan activists by sharing an alternative narrative ('the mainstream media won't report the fact that we were trying to provide positive education', Extract 2). Within this extract 'ethical vegans' are constructed in two opposing ways. Like previous research on the mainstream media's portrayal of vegans, the mainstream media here is also accused of representing vegan activists as 'militant', 'violet' 'extremists' (see Cole & Morgan, 2011). Within this statement farmers are positioned as 'victims' of abuse from vegans which implied that vegans were aggressive during their protest. On the other hand, the influencer denies this identity by stating vegan activists were only there to lay flowers down for the animals who Ed states are the 'true victims'. He argues that him and his fellow activists were in fact assaulted by the farmers and states that the only 'aggression and violence' came from them. Therefore, Ed denies the accusation of aggression from the mainstream media.

However, Ed also constructs farmers as 'victims' of a society and agriculture industry that conditions us to believe killing and eating animal products is morally acceptable ('conditioned to believe that farming animals is also moral', Extract 2). Therefore, an 'ethical perspective on veganism' allows Ed to analyse how the wider social norms within the UK (carnism and speciesism) have influenced how animals are viewed and treated. However, within his protest Ed targets individual farmers and meat eaters. Ed writes that he came in peace armed only with flyers of how farmers could switch from animal farming to arable farming. Although this is not necessarily 'aggressive' (as the mainstream media suggested) it is easy to recognise this may be belittling towards the farmers as Ed is highly critical of their career and condemns their practices. Furthermore, Ed constructs farmers as 'naive victims' of a system that has conditioned them to believe farming is a moral practice, rather than individuals who have actively chosen or enjoy farming as a career ('most farmers were born into these industries' Extract, 2). This is especially condescending as the message was delivered from someone with little farming background as he implies that he knows more about farming than individuals who have been doing this job all their life. Therefore, Ed positions himself as an enlightened 'educator' on a mission to end animal exploitation ('we

were trying to provide positive education...about how farmers could receive help switching from animal farming to arable farming', Extract 2). He thus implies that his way of living (excluding all animal products) is the morally correct way of living and imposes his beliefs on others. Moreover, Ed and another activist are holding up signs that read 'ANIMALS ARE NOT PROPERTY' (Extract 2). This statement actively rejects the notions that animals are a commodity that belong to farmers thus the act of buying animal products and subsequently endorsing this industry is condemned. Therefore, veganism is constructed as an anti-consumption lifestyle where not buying meat products is used to 'boycott' the meat industry (Carvalho de Rexende, 2015, p.396). Hence, individuals are positioned as responsible for adopting new lifestyle practices by breaking norms that are related to 'proper' eating and confronting existing social structures of carnism and speciesism (Joy, 2001; Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019).

As a result, 'veganism' is constructed as a moral political lifestyle that challenges the mainstream way of thinking about animals, food and national industries such as farming. When analysing Extract 2, I could not help but be reminded of the anti-abortion protestors that stand outside of hospitals in Ireland (Keogh, 2019). Three protestors stood outside Drogheda hospital with signs reading 'BABIES ARE GODS PROPERTY' (Keogh, 2019). Hence, I argue that Ed's beliefs that 'animals are not property' parallel the beliefs of strict Catholics who argue that abortion is a sin and should be illegal. Thus, beliefs around animal rights in discourse on 'ethical veganism' is strongly akin to strict religious beliefs that have little room for compromise or open to discussion ('we must never be passive', Extract 2). In fact, an ethical vegan activist Jordi Casamitjana is currently taking legal action to register veganism as a religion (Ewens, 2018). However, it is possible that a such strong stance in discussions on veganism encourage resentment towards the movement (Cole & Morgan 2011; Greenebaum, 2016). Just as anti-abortion campaigns draw a huge amount of outrage and criticism from the majority who argue that the choice for an abortion is a woman's right, I argue that Ed's visible protests to end animal ownership may encourage similar resentment (e.g. Cole & Morgan, 2011). It is therefore possible that the construction of a 'hard veganism' through statements that imply veganism is a strict religious like practice deters many people from engaging with this lifestyle.

Moreover, the actual ethical implications of a vegan lifestyle are contested. Ed writes that 'the only real victims are the animals' (Extract 2). However, White (2018) and Greenebaum (2016) argue that this dominant focus on animal liberation deters from the fact that many humans are also exploited in the capitalistic agricultural food complex. For instance, many of the foods that vegans eat such as, fruits, vegetables, coffee, grains and chocolate require demanding human labour from workers who experience exploitation (Harper, 2012b). In Britain most of these products are imported from other countries where farmers who are often migrant workers work for long hours, in harsh conditions, for extremely small salaries (Palumbo & Sciarba, 2015). Furthermore, individuals who work in the farming and slaughterhouse industries are often economically, physically and psychologically exploited (Eisnitz, 2006; Foer, 2010; Schlosser, 2002). By implying that animals are the only beings to suffer in the agricultural industry Ed ignores the suffering of others, thus encourages resentment and a justifiable critique of veganism as a privileged, self-righteous and patronizing practice (Greenebaum, 2017). Therefore, I argue that an 'ethical vegan' stance may not be a very helpful way to popularize a diet that does not include meat.

To summarise, similar to research on the portrayals of veganism in the mainstream media (Cole & Morgan, 2011; Kim 2011), this research found that Ed relied on drawing analogies between human suffering and animal suffering to construct an ethical justification for veganism (e.g. Mexican children at the wall a likened to lamb and sheep being separated). Instagram also provided a space where the influencer could challenge the way the mainstream media constructed vegan activists (e.g. Ed denied that him and his peers were aggressive). However, an ethical perspective on veganism implies that veganism is a strict moral practice with little room for compromise or debate and involves explicitly challenging 'normal' eating practices and beliefs around animals. It is therefore possible that a hard, ethical construction of veganism is unappealing to some people (Kim, 2011). In the following extract I will discuss how 'health veganism' puts people rather than animals at the centre of their debates and the potential consequences this has for the image of veganism.

4.1.2 For your health

In this subchapter I will discuss how influencers Chaka Barz and Deliciously Ella use Instagram to construct veganism as ‘a healthy diet’. In the following extracts (3, 4, and 5) Chaka uses several discursive techniques to challenge that consuming meat and other animal products ‘normal’, ‘natural’, ‘necessary’ and ‘nice’ (Joy, 2001). Within this discourse veganism was constructed as a diet that is used to transform, heal and maintain human health and to prevent non-communicable diseases and food allergies (lactose intolerance, cancer, diabetes). In line with previous research on the mainstream media construction of ‘health veganism’ the term ‘vegan’ was only used a few times and was replaced by a ‘plant-based diet’ which emphasised the corporeal connection to the diet over other ethical or environmental justifications (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018).

Extract 3:

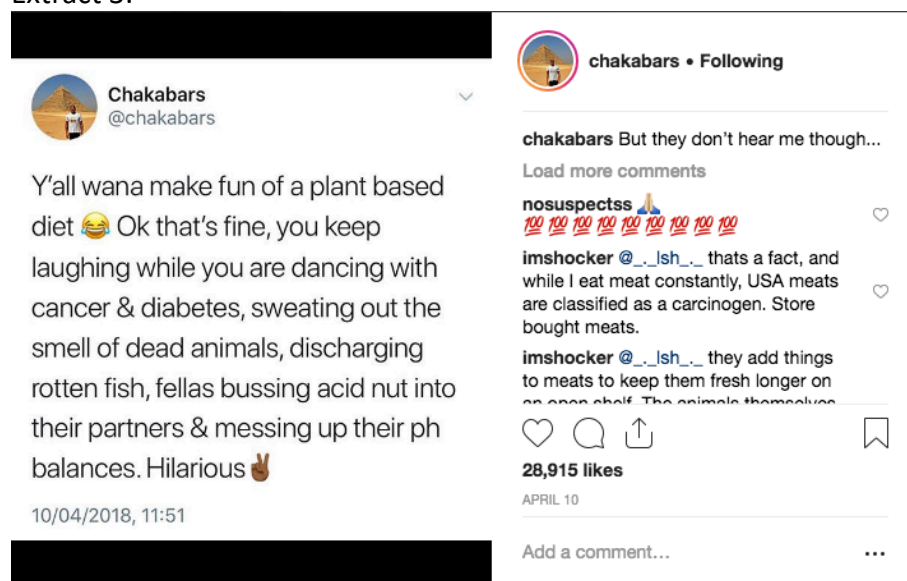


Image 3. *But they don't hear me though.*

Chakabars. (2018, April 10). *But they don't hear me though*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BhZUdUrFJPg/>

Extract 4:



Image 4. You're not lactose intolerant.

Chakabars, (2018, November 3). *Cows milk is not humans food*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bpurt4lh1xg/>

Extract 5:



Image 5. Me on my 80's.

Chakabars (2018, May 6). *Love to DR @arislife_*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BibBB1cl1G5/>

In extracts 3, 4 and 5 meat and dairy consumption is problematised. It is indicated that consuming these products causes diabetes and cancer (Extract 3 and 5). Chaka creates a sense of disgust around consuming meat and fish as he implies that individuals sweat out the smell of dead animals [and] discharging rotten fish' and pass on these negative effects to their partners (Extract 3). He also argues that drinking cow's milk is unnatural for humans, therefore, suggests that lactose intolerance is only result of choosing eating 'improperly' and not a malfunctioning of the human body ('You're just not a baby cow', Extract 4). This is used to build the case that eating vegan is the 'healthy' and 'natural' way for humans to eat while consuming dairy and meat products is 'unhealthy' and 'unnatural'. However, Chaka

argues that people are not listening to what is good for them ('But they don't hear me', Extract 3). So in Extract 5 Chaka uses a picture of his friend Dr Aris who he states is 71 and 'can still run up stairs' and has been 'a raw vegan for 41 years' to prove that eating a 'raw vegan diet' will lead to a long and healthy life. As a result, Chaka positions himself as a 'health expert' as he has 'proof' that eating a plant-based diet will prevent disease. It is therefore implied that people should listen to him and follow a plant-based diet over governmental nutritional advice as it is implied that this promotes an 'unhealthy' lifestyle (e.g. eating dairy, meat, fish) that causes disease.

Within this discourse of 'veganism as a healthy diet' individuals are positioned as responsible for preventing disease by seeking alternative nutrition information and avoiding meat and dairy products (Extract 3, 4 and 5). Similar to mainstream nutrition, food and health discourse in the media, Chaka takes the extreme position that individual diet choice is the main cause of disease (Guthman, 2009; Johnston & Goodman, 2015; Wilson & Woolhouse, 2017). This responsabilisation of health is typical of neoliberal ideology where individuals are increasingly held accountable for their own success (health) through self-regulation (e.g. diet), while the role the government has in producing healthy citizens (e.g. making healthy food affordable) is often ignored (Rose, 1999; Johnston & Goodman, 2015). As a result of this dominant way of thinking about how health is achieved, alternative explanations for disease are often overlooked. For instance, obesity and its associated risk factors (e.g. diabetes, cancer) are most common amongst people from lower socio-economic status groups (Guthman, 2009; Bartley, 2017). This suggests that it is disease as a result of social inequality (race, class, gender) and the environment one lives in rather than a personal failing to restrict ones eating (Guthman, 2009; Bartley, 2017). For example, in the UK fresh fruit and vegetables are more expensive than processed pre-prepared foods as these foods have been made cheap due to government subsidies, corporate control and marketing (see De Schutter, 2014). Similarly, stress reducing and health enhancing activities such as using a gym and going holidays are expensive. Therefore, people with lower incomes have less access to resources (money) that enable them to live healthy lifestyles than that people with higher incomes. For example, in Extract 5 Chaka states that a healthy diet that contains just fruit and drinking only coconut water will lead you to live healthily in to your 80's. He then suggests that if you need to 'heal' you should take a trip to Panama to visit a wellness centre. However, for many people in the UK taking a quick trip to Panama and eating only fruit is not attainable or affordable. Moreover, suggesting people should 'heal' themselves distracts from the responsibility the government has in ensuring people have access to the resources that enable them to be healthy (e.g. ensuring healthy food is affordable, ensuring healthy work life balance to reduce stress). Consequently, Chaka reinforces existing relations of power by implying that individuals have complete control over their diet and health while masking the structural burdens (e.g. unequal access to time, money) that shape everyday meal practices and healthy lifestyle 'choices' (Johnston & Goodman, 2015).

Moreover, Johnston and Goodman (2015) remind us that 'food celebrities' do not exist only to teach us about 'good food', they are also commercial brands that sell their own goods. Therefore, Slocum et al (2011) argues that the construction of individual responsibility around food, health and consumer choice (e.g. choose the right food, choose the right recipes) by 'food idols' helps to promote their brands and sales. For instance, Chaka's

Instagram is used to promote his fruit delivery company ‘fruits’ n’ roots’. Therefore, it is likely that he gains sales from promoting the idea that you can take control of your health by consuming a diet that contains a large amount of... you guessed it – fruit!

Similarly, in Extract 6 Deliciously Ella is pictured holding a photograph of her cook book. She states that ‘so few of us’ eat enough fruit and vegetables. She argues that it is extremely important for our health to consume more of these ingredients and implies that people do not consume as they do not know how to prepare them (‘make them more beautiful and delicious’). Thus, she argues that ‘the only way to change that is to change perceptions of these kinds of ingredients’ and implies that if you buy her cook book you will start loving and eating more vegetables. However, within this statement Ella assumes that people do not eat veg due to individual ‘taste’ or lack of knowledge. In doing so she ignores the multiple other reasons as to why individuals do not eat veg (e.g. other foods are cheaper). In doing so Ella ignores the influence of her own privilege as a white, upper class female, with a large kitchen, extensive access to equipment and ingredients and a career focused around food has in enabling her to consume as much veg as she wants. Thus, like other research on mainstream veganism Ella assumes that race, class and gender do not influence one’s access to resources (time, money, knowledge) and experience of veganism (e.g. Harper, 2012). Instead Ella implies that a lack of veg consumption is due to ‘poor taste’ and poor consumption ‘choices’ (‘the only way to change that is to change perceptions’, Extract 6) (Greenbaum, 2016). Therefore, I argue both Ella and Chaka construct veganism as a healthy dietary choice and position individuals as responsible for taking control of their health (by making good food choices) while ignoring how structural inequality (e.g. access to money) may impact someone’s ability to ‘choose’ to eat more veg. Moreover, the use of an individual framing of health veganism works in favour to promote the consumption of their brands. Similar to mainstream nutrition advice (e.g. Wilson & Woolhouse, 2017) and the mainstream vegan movement (e.g. Harper, 2012) a focus on the individual responsibility to be ‘healthy’ masks other socio-political explanations as to why people don’t consume enough fruit and veg.

Extract 6:



Image 6. Make them beautiful and delicious.

Deliciouslyella. (2018, August 23). There was a moment last year... Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bm0ItnGAS2q/>

deliciouslyella There was a moment last year where I genuinely thought about stopping Deliciously Ella. We got caught up in such a negative conversation and the whole idea of eating well seemed to be so confused. I realised at this point there was only one way forward if I wanted to keep our mission to make veggies a little cooler going, and that was to be ok with everyone having an opinion on us. As long as we were still helping broccoli and lentils become part of our everyday then it was worth it. So few of us manage to eat our five a day (barely more than 1/4 of the UK) and the only way to change that is to change the preconceptions of these kinds of ingredients is to make them beautiful and delicious, and I believe that's important for our health and for the health of our planet. I've spent a long time working on building that inner strength to not mind what anyone thinks and eighteen months later I've never ever felt happier or more excited about what we do. We need more plants, more love, more happiness, more joy and more community. Seeing the podcast hit #1 and you guys fall in love with the book honestly makes my heart want to explode with love and pride for this community. Thank you thank you thank you, happy book day and happy cooking ❤️ The book will be in all bookshops from today and online on Amazon too (link in our bio), I hope it helps everyone in your life get a little more excited about their veggies ☑️

However, with responsabilisation there also comes a sense of personal empowerment (Johnston & Goodman, 2018). The ability to gain new knowledge from vegan Instagram influencers on health and diet may empower people to broaden their food choices and practice more healthy eating habits (Johnston & Goodman, 2015). For instance, in the following Extract 7 Chaka uses his Instagram page to challenge the common misconception that a vegan diet is lacking in essential nutrients and that we need meat to be healthy (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018). Moreover, images were used to counter the stereotypical belief that a vegan identity is for 'white, skinny females' or 'hippy types' (Harper, 2012; Greenebaum, 2018; Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018). It is argued that a lack of representation of other identities within veganism deters people who do not meet these standards from engaging with the movement (Harper, 2012; Greenebaum, 2018). Thus, the aim of Extract 7 seems to be to empower people who would not normally be influenced by mainstream vegan discourse to consider this alternative lifestyle practice.

Extract 7:



Image 7. Vegans on the left, meat eaters on the right.

Chakabars. (2018, April 13). I'm just posting this picture because... Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bhg4ZxXIFSE/>

chakabars I'm just posting this because salty flesh devourers get mad and vegetables eaters love it lol

Also it is true you can ask anyone from this picture, the guys on the left are vegan. Also I used to eat meat 3x per day, I have been vegan for 4 years. After snapping my shoulder I lost all of my muscle and built it back with a plant based diet. 🧘 Most of the men in this picture are now vegan :) Also don't leave some emotional ass comment about how I dividing the world with my food beliefs. I'll just block you, nobody cares to hear your rant.

In line with previous research on the mainstream constructions of veganism, extract 7 challenges the 'common knowledge' that one needs to eat meat to be fit and healthy (see Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018; Lundahl, 2017). In the image Chaka is located in the middle of a group of young men he is training in a fitness class he runs called 'Spartanfam' (Bradshaw, 2013). The class is run in parks throughout London and focuses on using park apparatus and body weight only (Bradshaw, 2013). Chaka positions himself as an expert on both vegan and non-vegan diets as he exclaims he once ate meat three times a day (Extract, 4). However, he states that he has been vegan for four years now and that all the men in the picture are vegan which suggests that this is his favoured lifestyle as he (as a fitness expert) has encouraged others to follow him. The influencer states that he healed and rebuilt strength in his snapped shoulder muscle eating only a plant-based diet. Therefore, he implies that a plant-based diet has the same or even better essential healing and muscle building nutrients as a diet that contains meat (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018). Furthermore, the influencer refers to meat eaters as 'salty flesh devourers' and to vegans as 'vegetables eaters'. The words 'salty flesh devourer' has connotations of a greed, ravenous and an animalistic nature whereas 'vegetable eater' sounds thoughtful, normal and very human (Extract, 7). Therefore, he constructs veganism as the correct and human way of eating while he pathologizes meat eating as animalistic. This is reinforced in the image in Extract 7 ('vegans on the left..'). In today's Western society large, muscular and lean bodies are favoured in men and seen as a symbol of health and self-discipline (Adams, 2015). This is a body type associated with high levels of meat consumption which is seen as a masculine practice and is used to reinforce patriarchal gender roles (Adams, 2015; Roe & Hurley, 2018; Gough, 2007). However, the 'vegans' in the photo are extremely well built and leaner than the 'non-vegans' who appear to be less lean and smaller. Therefore, I argue this post is used to challenge the popular belief that vegans are typically female, 'skinny hippy type of person' and that humans need meat to be 'built' (p.g. 13 Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018).-This is important as Roe and Hurley (2018) found that men avoided eating alternatives to meat-based meals as they did not have the social reference point to encourage them to do so (e.g. male vegan role model). Therefore, it is possible that Chaka's Instagram is constructed for the purpose of providing a male vegan role model.

Moreover, the majority of the vegans are not white. Thus, the influencer constructs an alternative vegan identity to destigmatise the mainstream stereotype of vegans as 'skinny, white, females' (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018; Shah, 2018). For instance, Greenebaum (2018) and Harper (2012) argue that many vegan stereotypes assume whiteness and that vegans of colour are not represented in the mainstream vegan movement. This is problematic as people need to see others like them in the vegan movement in order to become interested in being vegan and feel comfortable engaging in discourse on alternative, healthy and sustainable lifestyle (Greenebaum, 2018). several of the interviewees in Greenebaum's (2018) study who were vegans from African American,

Latino, and Asian identities stated that they used social media to source information that highlighted different representation of vegans (Greenebaum, 2018). Therefore, the findings from this research confirm Greenebaum's (2018) results as Chaka uses his Instagram pages to construct and represent an alternative vegan identity that is strong, muscular, male and black. Therefore, I argue that vegan Instagram Influencers use social media to construct alternative vegan identities that challenge mainstream misconceptions of vegans. This potentially empowers people to broaden their thoughts about 'healthy diets' and who can engage with veganism (Johnston & Goodman, 2015). It is therefore possible that Instagram is a useful tool in sharing knowledge on health and lifestyle as people can select role models that they relate to and aspire to. In contrast to mainstream health and sustainable lifestyle advice which is often limited, singular and assumes privilege (Johnston & Goodman, 2015).

However, Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, (2018) found that vegan documentaries on Netflix used hyper-masculine identities (e.g. firefighter, professional boxer) and a focus on the health benefits of the diet to counteract the dominant belief that veganism is a feminine practice. On one hand, this may serve to address the gender disparities in adopting a vegan diet as is currently disproportionately women (Greenebaum & Dexter, 2018). However, Johnston et al (2011) and Wright (2015) found that portrayals of 'hegans' in the media often reinforce traditional ideologies of hegemonic masculinity that are not representative of 'everyday' vegan men (Greenebaum & Dexter, 2018). In the following extract the Influencer delves deeper into his experience of veganism, health, masculinity and body size:

Extract 8:



Image 8. Just fruit.

Chakabars. (2018, January 2). *Just fruit*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BddAMQeLJs/>

chakabars In August I met @arislife_ and he schooled me about a raw wholefoods plantbased diet. Since August I have ate 80-100% raw foods. I've seen an improvement in my energy and my general happiness. Now some people who are fighting their ego battle with the "You need to be big, You lost size, you need to have gains..." Well I have been travelling, I can be big if I want to be, but that's more based on my training. I have just been maintaining, I do 500 push ups and squats a day, that's all I've been able to do right now. My days are full of project planning, grass roots work and travelling. I am fit and healthy, when I do the next boxing match I might just eat fruit the whole time. Right now I'm in Ghana and just eating fruit, I'm happy healthy and blessed. My dad was a body builder, I feel like many body builders have body dysmorphia, but the only reason we don't discuss it like we do anorexia, is because of sexism and capitalism. I think that the body dysmorphia that body builders are experiencing, is a human personification of the system of capitalism using the human body as a representation of being bigger for no reason. Really it's just male insecurity. Many body builders have heart attacks and organ failures because of all of the animal products they consumer and the unrealistic way they train. It's like adding more weight to a car but not increasing the size of the engine. It doesn't make you faster, fitter, or better able to fight. That said, do whatever makes you happy, just make sure you are healthy and know why you are doing it. This isn't an attack on body builders, but more a look at the psychological health, of those who believe that they need to be bigger for no reason. It might be a hard pill to swallow because nobody talks about it, I was in military gyms, I lifted weights, I was a person trainer for nearly 10 years, I worked in gyms, got my clients to lift weights for a few years before I solely adopted body weights. Functional natural training is best for the health of the body. If you are thinking of cutting out animal products but still was to maintain, it's easy, keep your training regime up, you will lose fat but gain muscle. #chakabars

In line with previous research Chaka embodies a hyper masculine identity and focuses on the health benefits of a vegan diet (Wright, 2015; Greenebaum & Dexter, 2018; Johnston, 2011). In extract 8 Chaka constructs a 'healthy vegan diet' as one that contains 80-100% raw wholefoods and states, 'when I next do the boxing match I might just eat fruit the whole time'. He also states that he worked in military gyms, as a personal trainer and lifted weights (Extract, 8). However, the appropriateness of this diet for maintaining his physique is contested as he states, 'some people' (e.g. followers) have commented on him loosing muscle. The image displays three photographs of Chaka topless each with a title noting the diet he was eating at the time. There shows a very slight decrease in body size from eating a 'cooked' vegan diet to eating 'just fruit'. However, he remains extremely 'fit' looking. Therefore, this image is used to imply that you can be strong and fit eating 'just fruit'. Chaka states that 'I can be big if I want to be, but that is more to do with training'. Therefore, he denies that his fruit only diet has greatly impacted his muscle loss and argues that is more to do with a change in his fitness regime. Thus, he reinforces the idea that a wholefoods plant-based diet is good for physical fitness by stating that cutting out animal products and maintaining a training regime will help you lose fat and gain muscle. Thus Chaka, 'proves' his masculinity *despite* that fact he is vegan (Wright, 2015). However, Wright (2015) argues this construction of an ultra-masculine health conscious 'hegan' encourages the belief that men can only be vegan if they are also express these qualities. As a result, this deters some men from engaging with veganism if they do not meet such standards (Roe & Hurley, 2018; Wright, 2015; Greenebaum & Dextrer, 2018)

On the contrary, by completely dismantling how we perceive 'proper eating' Chaka opens up critical discussions on societies relationship between nutrition, economics, gender and health. For instance, Greenebaum and Dexter (2018) found in their study that vegan men reject many values of traditional masculinity. Similarly, Chaka rejects the idea that 'bigger is better' amongst men (Extract 8). He explains that the current societal obsession of 'bigger' muscles symbolising better fitness in men is actually not healthy and is in fact very destructive (Adams, 2015). He argues that it leads to excessive consumption of meat which

in turn results in heart attacks and organ failures. He states that many men who body build experience body dysmorphia which he states is 'a human personification of the system of capitalism [and sexism]' (Extract 8). Thus, the need for men to consume copious amounts of meat to be 'bigger for no reason' is framed as a result of the British economic system which is managed not for the health of people but rather to profit corporations and the small elite who run them (e.g. global meat retailers) (Stuckler et al., 2012; Lupton, 1996). Therefore, I argue that looking at veganism from a 'health' perspective, Chaka is able to move away from the depoliticised individualistic explanation of health and reflect on the wider socio-economic structures (e.g. capitalistic food system) and the influence they have over the lifestyle practices and health of individuals in society. As a result, men are constructed as victims of a capitalistic food industry and gender standards that pressure them into eating large quantities of meat in order to look a certain way, rather than individuals who choose to eat incorrectly. This may encourage people to think about the socio-political structure that shapes the way we eat.

To summarise discourse on 'health veganism' was used to challenge the idea that eating animal products is 'normal', 'healthy' and 'necessary' (e.g. 'you are just not a baby cow' Extract, 4). Within this discourse a healthy diet was constructed as a 'vegan diet' and one that contains mostly fruit and vegetables ('me in my 80's' Extract, 5). Chaka also used his Instagram page to challenge the stereotype that veganism is a white, female practice (Harper, 2012). Although, the socio-economic structure in the UK was somewhat framed as responsible for encouraging 'bad food practices' this explanation was limited only to a very small sector of the population (e.g. male body builders). Therefore, I argue that the dominant framing in 'health veganism' was that extreme belief that individuals are responsible for their health by 'choosing' to eat a vegan diet high in fruit and veg. This masks other explanations for the current high levels of cancer, obesity and society today (e.g. healthy food is more expensive than unhealthy food). However, in contrast to discourse that focuses on animal liberation, discourse on 'health veganism' positioned people at the centre of the benefits of a plant-based diet. It is therefore possible that people can be empowered to be vegan through a focus on health rather than shamed into the practice. This potentially encourages more people to engage with veganism than an 'ethical vegan' perspective. In the following section similar themes of individual responsibility were found in regard to discourse on 'environmental veganism'.

4.1.3 For our planet

Within this subchapter I will discuss how influencers Earthling Ed and Deliciously Ella construct 'veganism' as a 'solution' to global warming. 'Food celebrities' inform us of how to care for the environment, how to be a good citizen, and how to avoid risk (Johnston & Goodman, 2015; Lupton, 1996). However, in neoliberal societies such as the UK individual freedom of choice is prioritised over state intervention (Johnston & Goodman, 2015; Lupton, 1996). Therefore, in discussions on climate change there tends to be a focus on the effect of individual choices (e.g. diet) and their impact on the environment, while the responsibility of governing authorities in creating policies that protect and restore the environment are ignored (Johnston & Goodman, 2015). In turn, individual eating practices have become a way to express one's identity as an environmentally conscious, responsible and moral citizen (Johnston & Goodman, 2015; Lupton, 1996). In line with this neoliberal

ideology and previous findings of mainstream media's construction of 'environmentalist' vegans (e.g. Cole & Morgan, 2011), the following extracts from Instagram position individuals as responsible for causing 'climate disaster' through bad eating practices (meat consumption) and responsible for preventing it by practicing 'good' food choices (going vegan).

Extract 9:



Image 9. Approaching inevitable catastrophic disaster.

Earthlinged. (2018, November 1). *Happy World Vegan Day Everyone!*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BppiODkF8nw/>

earthlinged Happy World Vegan Day everyone!

As we celebrate all the progress of the past year and the unity of being vegan, I want to say thank you to everyone who is vegan and spreading the message. I'm so honoured to be in this movement with you all and to stand alongside so many incredible people doing so many selfless and courageous things.

It seems so ridiculous to me that we even have one day a year where we celebrate not needlessly butchering and exploiting other beings that co-exist on this planet with us. Also, with the United Nations recently declaring we only have 12 years left to prevent irreversible climate change, if we don't act now we will only have 12 World Vegan Days left before we approach inevitable catastrophic disaster and a complete collapse of the world as we know it.

There has never been a more important time to live vegan and to spread the message, the lives of trillions of animals and the future of our planet depends on it. So this World Vegan Day please speak up, spread the message and make sure that one day we will no longer celebrate one day, but will instead live in an entirely vegan world that the animals and planet deserve.

Follow: @gusandpetethepigs

Extract 10:



Image 10. You can't be a non-vegan environmentalist.

Earthlinged (2018, April 22). *If you do anything today for #EathDay*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bh4WvhulZya/>

earthlinged If you do anything today for **#EarthDay**, watch **@cowspiracy**. If you care about the future of this planet, the single most important change you can make is to go vegan - and it's such a simple, easy change to make.

-
A person who follows a vegan diet produces the equivalent of 50% less carbon dioxide, uses 1/11th oil, 1/13th water and 1/18th land compared to a non-vegan. Furthermore, each day a person who eats a vegan diet saves 1,100 gallons of water, 45 pounds of grain, 30 sq ft of forested land and 20 lbs CO2 equivalent. Why? Because animal agriculture produces more greenhouse gas emissions than the combined exhaust from all transportation and is responsible for 1 - 2 acres of rainforest being cleared every second and up to 91% of total Amazon rainforest destruction. This is alongside animal agriculture being the leading cause of species extinction, ocean dead zones and global water pollution.

-
Our consumption of animal products is killing the planet and of course killing billions upon billions of animals. We call ourselves the most intelligent species whilst destroying our own home, the only home we've ever known. No other species upon this Earth destroys and consumes in the way in which we do. The only way we can make a difference is as individuals uniting to collectively take a stand against the industries which exploit, murder and destroy. If you care about the planet, the easiest and the most beneficial thing you can do for our home is to be vegan.

In Extract 9 and 10 Ed constructs the planet as 'sick' and uses emotive language to stress the individual responsibility and urgency of avoiding 'irreversible climate change'. Ed writes that our oceans are dead, our water is polluted, our forests are disappearing, and that species are going extinct thus the United Nations (UN) have declared we have 12 years left to prevent the 'complete collapse of the world as we know it' (Extract 9). Within this framing of a 'sick planet' Ed and places individuals within two positions. 'Meat eaters' are constructed as responsible for the onset of 'climate change' as it is implied that their 'consumption of animal products is killing the planet'. In contrast, 'vegans' are constructed as 'selfless, moral and responsible' citizens who do their utmost to protect 'our home'. He states, 'there has never been a more important time to live vegan' as 'the lives of trillions of animals and the future of our planet depends on it' (Extract 9). Thus, it is implied that going vegan will not only protect animals but also Earth and the future of our species. The benefits of 'going vegan' for the environment are explained further in Extract 10 as the influencer informs us that animal agriculture is the largest contributor to greenhouse gases. It is stated that a person who eats a vegan diet for just one day will save 1100 gallons of water, 45

pounds of grain, 30 sq ft of forest and 20lbs CO₂. Therefore, Ed states that 'going vegan' is 'the single best thing you can do for our home' as choosing to eat this way will greatly reduce one's individual contribution to global warming (Extract 10). These claims are legitimised through the use of statistics and reference to the UN which show that these are not statements from a 'hippy sentimentalist' but true, hard 'facts' (Christopher, Bartkowski & Hedera, 2018). Furthermore, it is stated that 'going vegan' is extremely easy ('the easiest most beneficial thing you can do', Extract 10). It is therefore implied that 'meat eaters' have a moral duty to prevent a 'global catastrophe' by 'going vegan'. Consequently, individuals are positioned as responsible for preventing climate change by practicing 'good' vegan eating behaviours. Thus, similar to 'ethical veganism' I argue that Ed constructs an 'environmentalist vegan' identity as a way of displaying one has 'good' moral beliefs and responding in a very utilitarian way to the societal concern of climate change.

However, the construction of 'global warming' as a result of individual dietary failures (e.g. consuming large quantities of meat) and a problem that individuals need to 'fix' (by going vegan) is over simplistic, individualistic and distracts from other possible political and societal explanations of 'global warming' (Oels, 2006). Within Extract 10, Ed mentions that the way we 'consume' animal products is destructive, however, he fails to mention the problems surrounding the way food production is governed. For instance, in free market economies such as the UK food is commoditised, thus governments often encourage production of agricultural goods to increase economic growth (Lang, Barling & Caraher, 2009). This is supported by policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the EU. The CAP provides subsidies based simply on land area, thus, big farmers (who own a lot of land) receive more money and can invest in more 'efficient' ways of production (e.g. machinery, larger animal pens, removing hedgerows) (Lang, Barling & Caraher, 2009; Barkham, 2018). As a result, big farmers can sell high quantities of food (e.g. milk) at lower costs. This in turn pushes smaller and less intensive farmers out of business as they cannot compete with the price of produce from big farmers (small farms, less resources, higher labour, equals more expensive produce). For instance, this is why organic milk costs more than factory farmed milk. Therefore, farmers are encouraged by government subsidies to produce in more intensive ways, while smaller farms that produce in a way that is more protective of the land are pushed out of business (Lang, Barling & Caraher, 2009). Hence, it is argued that the current CAP prioritises economic growth over the protection of the environment and supporting small scale farmers (Lang, Barling & Caraher, 2009). Moreover, a portion of EU farm subsidies that are meant to support "greening" methods by encouraging wildlife friendly farming (e.g. wide hedges, regenerating woodland) are set to be cut in the EU budget in 2019 (Barkham, 2018). Therefore, it is highly possible that 'global warming' is in fact a result of a government and economic system that prioritises economic growth above other societal concerns such as degradation of the environment, animal welfare and quality of food. Hence, I do not deny that the consumption of animal products is a threat to our planet (EAT-Lancet, 2019). However, I do argue that the fact governments have encouraged these products (e.g. milk, eggs, meat) to be intensively produced via subsidies, and excessively consumed due to cheap prices and mass advertising is a factor that should not be ignored.

By removing blame from the individual 'consumer' and looking at this 'climate disaster' in a broader socio-political sense an alternative explanation arises. In other words, decades of

governmental policies that have encouraged intensive farming while disregarding the environmental impacts of these plans may also explain why our planet is 'sick'. By promoting the discourse of 'individual responsibility for the environment' (by going vegan) Ed reinforces existing cultural and political relations of power (see for examples regarding health care Shugart, 2011; Wilson & Woolhouse, 2017). Thus, I argue that the dominant discourse of 'individual responsibility' in discussions on 'environmental veganism' mask other socio-political explanations and solutions to the 'climate disaster' (Oels, 2006). For instance, Wellesley, Happer & Froggatt (2015) conducted extensive focus groups on the perceptions of meat consumption and the environment with various stakeholders in Brazil, China, UK, and USA and found that governments are the only actors with the necessary resources and capacities to direct sales to more sustainable, plant-based sources of protein. It was argued that the market is failing and that governments need to intervene at national and international levels to reduce animal product consumption and threatening rises in CO₂ (Wellesley, Happer & Froggatt, 2015; EAT-Lancet, 2019). Similarly, in an article in the Guardian, Marco Springmann, a leading researcher in 'climate breakdown' prevention states "we need more proactive governments to provide the right frameworks" (see Godfray et al, 2018; Carrington, 2018). Therefore, Ed's implication that individuals are solely responsible for having an 'moral awakening' by 'going vegan' and spreading this message across the globe (see Extract 9) ignores the power governments have in aiding a societal dietary transition towards plant based proteins (Carrington, 2018; Wellesley, Happer & Froggatt, 2015). Consequently, the framing of 'individual responsibility' for preventing 'global warming' may let politicians and the food industry 'off the hook' as the focus lays on shaming individuals' behaviour rather than holding governments responsible for implementing efficient policies (Carrington, 2018).

In addition, in Extract 10 Ed implies you can only be an 'environmentalist' if you are 'vegan' (Image 10) and states that he hopes to live in an 'entirely vegan world' (Extract 9). This implies that all meat consumption is detrimental to the environment and that he believes everyone should completely stop consuming animal products in order to prevent 'climate disaster'. However, this argument provides an individualistic, limited and singular explanation on the relationship between 'environmental recovery' and the consumption of meat and the power people have over their food choice (Tree, 2018). Suggesting that going vegan is 'the easiest most beneficial thing you can do for our home' (Extract, 10) Ed implies that veganism is faultless, and that people have complete control over the food they consume. Thus, he ignores the influence of one's economic status, geographic location, and cultural traditions on their diet and silences other potential solutions for protecting the planet (Harper, 2012; Greenebaum, 2016). Although 'being vegan' can be affordable and accessible in large cities, Greenebaum (2016) found that people must live in areas where they have access to fresh fruit and veg and have knowledge that allows them to consume a nutritionally balanced vegan diet. This is not the case for people globally. Therefore Greenebaum (2017) argues that vegans must reject a universal vegan movement. As a result, Ed's construction of 'veganism' as the singular most important thing you can do for the planet offers limited positions people who have less control over their diet (e.g. live in food desert, live in culture the celebrates meat) to be good, environmentally concerned citizens. Moreover, aggressively defending the pros of veganism with little openness to alternative ways on can live environmentally friendly has been found to be perceived as 'preachy' and confrontational (Greenebaum, 2012a). For instance, Greenebaum (2012a)

found that using a confrontational approach is ineffective as carnivores are made to feel shame and guilt about their dietary behaviours thus become defensive and unwilling to listen (Greenebaum 2012a). Therefore, I argue that Ed's call for 'global veganism' is simplistic, unrealistic and may encourage a justifiable critique of vegan privilege (Greenebaum, 2017). In doing so he may alienate those who have less power over the food they eat from considering a vegan lifestyle and reflecting on the impact of diet on the environment and ignore alternative ways our society can protect the environment (e.g. protective policies) (Harper, 2012; Greenebaum, 2016).

In the following Extract 11 @deliciouslyella took a slightly more flexible approach to convincing people about the effects of their diet on the environment and the solutions that follow. She advocates for a 'flexitarian diet'. I will now explain how this approach may be more effective way at communicating the environmental impact of meat production and consumption.

Extract 11:



Image 11. A flexitarian diet.

Deliciouslyella. (2018, October 11). *The researched found a global shit to a "flexitarian diet" was needed.* Retrived from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BoydGJagmCj/>

deliciouslyella The researchers found a global shift to a “flexitarian” diet was needed to keep climate change even under 2C, let alone 1.5C. This flexitarian diet means the average world citizen needs to eat 75% less beef, 90% less pork and half the number of eggs, while tripling consumption of beans and pulses and quadrupling nuts and seeds. This would halve emissions from livestock. In rich nations, the dietary changes required are ever more stark. UK and US citizens need to cut beef by 90% and milk by 60% while increasing beans and pulses between four and six times 🌱 The news this week is powerful, more plants for the world are desperately needed. I know it's terrifying reading and can be a little controversial but it feels wrong not to share it when it matters so much to future generations, to our children and their children and hopefully their children. Link in our stories to the full article and head to our podcast to dive a little deeper into this topic where we talk with a brilliant researcher from Oxford University about a similar study 💕

In one sense, Ella’s uses many of the same discursive and emotive tactics that Ed uses in extract 9 and 10 to construct a ‘sick planet’ and position individuals as responsible for preventing ‘climate disaster’ (‘keep climate change under 2C’) through dietary practices (‘citizens need to cut beef by 90%’) (Extract 11). She also creates a sense of fear and urgency by stating that ‘it matters so much to the future generation, to our children and their children and *hopefully* their children’ (Extract, 11). The use of the word ‘hopefully’ implies that if something is not done soon our species won’t survive which in turn implied individuals need to change their eating practices. Similarly, she uses statistic and scientific claims to support her arguments and present them as ultimate ‘truths’ (e.g. ‘we talk with a brilliant researcher from Oxford University’). However, unlike Ed, Ella does not demand that we live in ‘an entirely vegan world’ (Extract, 10) but instead states that globally people should drastically reduce their consumption of animal products by adopting a ‘flexitarian diet’ (Extract 11).

Although Ella also positions individuals as responsible for preventing climate disaster through practicing ‘good food’ choices. Rather than condemning cultural traditions (e.g. farming) Ella uses an image of popular British dinner time curry (this one looks a spinach and chickpea curry) to display to her audience that the changes they need to make to their diet may not be as drastic as they might think. By displaying that a low meat/high legume diet could be something enjoyable, familiar and something you might already do Ella potentially empowers people to believe a flexitarian diet is achievable (Johnston & Goodman, 2015). In contrast, Ed uses tactics that shame meat eaters as ‘immoral’ and argues that people should completely abstain from meat (extract 9 and 10). Therefore, Ella constructions of a ‘flexitarian diet’ and a focus on food is less strict than Ed’s extreme construction of a ‘hard environmental veganism’ that accuses individuals of ‘bad citizenship’. It is possible that Ella’s approach would engage a wider audience in to discussion on the role of meat production and consumption and the environment as it is less ‘preachy activist’ and more empowering and encouraging (Greenebaum, 2018; Greenebaum, 2012a). For instance, Greenebaum (2012a) found that using a confrontational approach (like Ed) is ineffective as carnivores are made to feel shame and guilt about their dietary behaviours thus become defensive and unwilling to listen (Greenebaum 2012a). As a result, in conversations on ‘environmental veganism’ that construct strict categories of ‘vegans as moral’ and ‘meat eater as immoral’ the ‘vegan activist’ is often criticked thus ‘issues’ concerning meat consumption and the get lost in translation and confrontation (Adams, 2015). Therefore, it is argued that gently encouraging people to consume less meat, leading by example and avoiding confrontation (e.g. Ella’s way) is a more successful way to encourage people to reflect on the impact of their diet on the environment. By adopting a less rigid approach to veganism Ella may empower people to reflect on their food choices rather create tension

and strict identity boundaries between vegans and non-vegans (e.g. Ed's approach) (Greenebaum, 2012a; Tree, 2018).

To summarise the discourse of 'environmental veganism' was constructed through statements that implied individuals were responsible for preventing 'climate disaster' by becoming vegan. It was stated that veganism is easy and was used by Ed to construct an identity of a concerned and moral citizen who does their most to protect the planet. However, individuals were unevenly burdened with the blame for the current environmental strains with life. A predominant focus on the role individual diets had in causing climate change masked the faults of governmental policies that promote intensive farming and discourse more protective farming methods. Moreover, Ed created a strict division between vegans who cared for the environmental, and non-vegans who supposedly did not. However, Ella took a less confrontational approach to 'environmental veganism' and uses an example of food to imply to people that living in a sustainable way can be enjoyable. In the second half of the result chapter I will expand on the power 'a focus on food' can have in potentially encouraging veganism across society.

4.2 Soft Veganism: A focus on food

In the first half of the results section I focussed on how vegan Instagram influencers justified veganism (e.g. ethical, health, environmental justifications). I discussed how the discourse 'hard veganism' was constructed through statements that implied that individuals cause unethical treatment to animals, poor health and 'global warming' through 'bad' meat eating practices. Hence, it was implied changing individual eating practices by 'going vegan' is a solution to these societal concerns. This requires individuals to adopt a view that animals have equal right to humans, have extensive food knowledge and resources to cook healthy meals, and to be aware of the impact of their diet on the environment. Therefore, I argue that 'hard veganism' unevenly burdens individuals with the responsibility for fixing many of the societal risks we face in this Anthropocene.

In contrast, in the second half of the result chapter I will discuss how a 'soft veganism' is constructed through statements that focus on food and the role of the food industry in veganism. Within the discourse of 'soft veganism' there was less attention was given as to the political justifications to go vegan. Instead the consumption of certain vegan foods was used to construct different vegan identities. In the first section I will discuss how the influencers used 'corporate' vegan foods to construct veganism as 'easy'. In the final section I will reflect on how the influencers have used food to construct alternative vegan sub cultures that challenged stereotypical view that veganism is associated with whiteness (Harper, 2012).

4.2.1 Vegan food and the responsibility of the food industry

Within the following Extracts the vegan Influencers Cruelty Free Clairey and Deliciously Ella used images of 'ready meals' and foods that are commonly consumed in the UK to show that you can eat 'processed', 'premade' and 'familiar' foods and still be vegan. Thus, their Instagram content to imply that 'vegan is easy' by showing that you can be vegan with

minimal time and kitchen knowledge. Therefore, Ella and Claire construct the food industry as a solution to some of the problems vegans face (e.g. perceive lack of food options).

Extract 12:



Image 12. Whole Foods ready meals.

Deliciouslyella. (2018, October 4). *I'm so so so incredibly proud*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BogdRJMghHz/>

deliciouslyella I'm so so so incredibly proud of this next step for Deliciously Ella. Standing in front of an entire freezer of our meals, the recipes we've spent years developing and testing in the deli, collecting all your feedback on and perfecting before bringing them to everyone ✨ Ready meals don't have the best reputation, but these are something completely different. All natural, no rubbish, full of veg, beans, fibre and so much flavour 🌱 Thank you @wholefoodsuk for your support on this, for sharing our excitement for plants and giving us this space to share our mission of making veggies cool. The feedback we've been getting so far has been unreal, so thank you, thank you, thank you. We really do want to innovate in this space, changing perceptions around healthy living and this feels like a big step for us in that mission and we couldn't have done it without you all ❤️

Across the UK 'ready meals' are consumed on a regular basis as a way to save time on cooking, however, they have a bad reputation for being unhealthy, lacking in flavour and high in sugar, salt and fat (Breen, 2018). Moreover, they are rarely vegan. However, in Extract 12 Ella exclaims that her ready meals do not conform to this negative stereotype ('all natural, no rubbish, full of veg, beans, fibre and so much flavour...', Extract 12). Thus, Ella constructs her own brand ready meals as a something 'completely different'. She therefore implies that her ready meals are quick, vegan and healthy and that they will 'change perceptions around healthy living' by making vegan food easy (no preparation) (Extract 12). However, Ella only sells her ready meals in Whole Foods. Paddock (2015) and Greenebaum (2018) found that 'alternative' supermarkets such as Whole Foods can be expensive and intimidating for working class people and people of colour. Therefore, I argue that in Extract 12 Ella reinforces the stereotypical image of vegan consumers as white and upper middle-class individuals who shop at 'trendy supermarkets' (Greenebaum, 2018; Harper, 2012). As a

result, I disagree that she is really ‘innovating’ or ‘changing perceptions about healthy living’ (Extract, 12).

In contrast, in Extract 13, Claire shows how popular takeaway foods can be made vegan by ordering certain items and not others.

Extract 13:



Image 13. Proper chips and mushy peas.

Crueltyfreeclairey. (2018, August 14). *Took a trip to the seaside*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BmeCwz6nXQF/>

crueltyfreeclairey Took a trip to the seaside on Sunday so obviously had to eat some proper chips & mushy peas ☐ I was so full after this - gonna blame that as to why I was really poor at mini golf afterwards 🙄😭 who else loves the beach/seaside? My ultimate dream is to live within walking distance of it. Dreamy af 🌊💚🌿

#vegan #chipsandchips #mushypeas #carbsforever #veganfoodshare #whatveganseat #vegansofig #veganjunkfood #vgang #veganiseasy #easyvegan #plantpowered #plantbased #plantpower #seaside #ukvegans #chips

In Extract 13 Claire presents a variation on a British take away classic (fish and chips) that she has made vegan simply by not ordering the fish component. This post is accompanied by the hashtag ‘#veganiseasy’ which implies that Claire has not had to make any effort to consume this ‘vegan junk food’ (e.g. go to an alternative supermarket or cook). Claire also states that she ‘was so full’ after consuming this ‘#veganjunkfood’. In contrast to Lundahl (2018) who analysed several popular British newspapers and found that a ‘vegan diet’ was commonly presented as a trendy celebrity fad diet to lose weight, Claire constructs a ‘vegan diet’ as one that is fun, filling and an ordinary part of British cuisine (e.g. ‘#ukvegan’, ‘#veganjunkfood’, ‘#veganiseasy’). Therefore, Claire challenges the mainstream misconception that vegan diet is an ‘expensive celebrity diet trend’ is that is consumed for the purpose of achieving ‘slimness’ (Lundahl, 2018). Moreover, chip shops are widely available across the whole of the UK, thus, this extract displays that vegan foods can be found

easily, cheaply and are not complicated (Sneijder & Te Molder, 2009; Veron, 2016). Therefore, I argue that Extract 12 works to normalise 'veganism' and resist the notion that is an elitist practice (Sneijder & Te Molder 2009; Veron, 2016). In contrast to earlier justifications for veganism (health, ethical, environment) that require individuals to radically change the way they think about and consume food (e.g. eat only fruit) the construction of 'vegan junk food' on Instagram implies that it is a dietary practice that easy, familiar and uncomplicated (Sneijder & Te Molder, 2009; Ewen, 2018; White, 2018). Therefore, it is possible that the construction of a 'vegan junk food movement' on Instagram has opened up veganism to a wider audience who would not have previously considered veganism due to its dominant associations with privilege (see Greenebaum, 2016; 2018) and dieting (Lundahl, 2017; Cole & Morgan, 2018).

However, this construction of 'vegan junk food movement' is somewhat problematic. When the word 'vegan' was first used in the UK it was associated with more than just a diet, but a political life style focused on animal liberation, improving health and protecting the environmental (The vegan Society, n.d.). Some scholars (e.g. White, 2018) warn that the lack of context in this new 'commercialised veganism' means that the vegan movement has lost its potential for radical change (White, 2010; Ewens, 2018). It is argued that 'new veganism' aims to fit in to the capitalist industrial food system rather than challenge it (White, 2018). In the following extract the contrast between 'radical (hard) veganism' and 'corporate (soft) veganism' is somewhat recognised by the influencer as she acknowledges that not all 'vegan food' is accepted by 'hard' vegans:

Extract 14



Image 14. It's become kinda controversial to post McDonald's.

Crueltyfreeclairey. (2018, June 15). *I know it's become kinda controversial*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bj5RE6HHIR3/>

crueltyfreeclairey I know it's become kinda controversial to post McDonalds uh oh but this is what I ate so 🍔😭 I try not to make a habit of consuming fast food but when it's midnight and the only thing open, it's gotta be done! Pretty amazing that we can find food to eat in these places imo. Veggie deluxe with no mayo 😊 and yes - UK chips are vegan! ✨🌱🌿 p.s anyone who tries to make me feel bad / tell me it's not really vegan will be ignored so don't waste your precious time 🙄

#vegan #veganfoodshare #whatveganseat #vegansofig #vgang #plantpower #plantbased #veganjunkfood #mcdonalds #veganmcdonalds #burgerandchips #ukvegans #veganiseasy #veganfastfood #easyvegan #lazyvegan #veganburger #veganism

At the start of the post Claire writes that it's 'kinda controversial to post McDonald's' and states that she tries 'not to make a habit of consuming fast food' which implies that she knows that it is not 'good' vegan food ('anyone who tries to... tell me it's not really vegan' Extract, 14). Within this statement Claire constructs two kinds of vegans; those who think vegan options in McDonald's are 'really' vegan, and those who do not. She then exempts herself from any judgement by stating it was the only thing available at the time that she needed to eat ('when it's midnight and the only thing open' Extract, 14) and warns her followers that she will ignore 'anyone who tries to make [her] feel bad'. Thus, Claire recognises that consuming vegan McDonald's may be seen as an inauthentic vegan act (Hedeke, 2005), however, she provides little commentary as to why. In doing so Claire disregards the motivations for not consuming McDonalds and refuses to engage with anyone who tries to challenge her decision ('don't waste your time', Extract, 14).

Instead she goes on to praise McDonalds. She exclaims that it is 'amazing that we [vegans] can find food to eat in these places' and informs her followers of the vegan options so they can also order a vegan McDonalds meal ('Veggie deluxe with no mayo 😊 and yes - UK chips are vegan!' Extract, 14). In the statement she praises McDonald's for providing vegan options and promotes it for having vegan foods that are easily and readily available ('the only thing open'). Here, Claire implies that McDonald's, a large-scale capitalist industrial food company, enables access to vegan food as it is widely available, cheap and always open. Therefore, McDonalds was constructed as a 'solution' to difficulties some vegans may face when trying to find appropriate food (e.g. late at night). Consequently, in these extracts the mainstream embrace of veganism through the wide provision of 'corporate' vegan food is framed positively and is used to by the influencer to distance herself from a more 'radical' vegan identity (e.g. one who would not eat McDonalds) (White, 2018).

Similarly, in Extract 15 and 16 large supermarkets were praised by an influencer for providing many vegan options. It was implied that supermarkets were good for the vegan movement as they have provided vegan consumers with more choice and the ability to still enjoy familiar 'non-vegan' foods (e.g. meat replacements). Therefore, the notion that veganism was a restrictive, fussy and difficult diet was challenged (Sneijder & TeMolder, 2009):

Extract 15



crueltyfreeclairey • Follow

crueltyfreeclairey How can you tell if someone's vegan? Just look in their shopping basket 🛒🛒🛒 Waitrose are really spoiling us with their new own brand vegan range & they stock so many other vegan products. I was stood in this section for like 15 minutes just looking at everything ahaha. Choice? What is this new concept?! 😂 I'm so excited about the mac & greens and the creamy sauce, gonna use it to make a carbonara with the ham slices I think 😊 the pizza looks unreal 🍕 the

1,474 likes
OCTOBER 14, 2018
Log in to like or comment.

Image 15. Branded vegan food.

Crueltyfreeclairey. (2018, October 14). *How can you tell if someone's vegan?*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bo6qTQmngk/>

crueltyfreeclairey How can you tell if someone's vegan? Just look in their shopping basket 🛒🛒🛒 Waitrose are really spoiling us with their new own brand vegan range & they stock so many other vegan products. I was stood in this section for like 15 minutes just looking at everything ahaha. Choice? What is this new concept?! 😂 I'm so excited about the mac & greens and the creamy sauce, gonna use it to make a carbonara with the ham slices I think 😊 the pizza looks unreal 🍕 the nuggets are incredible & the chocolate torte was really delicious too. Will be going back again soon to try some other things I'm sure 🙌 what's everyone's favourite thing in the range so far? 🍷🍷🍷

#vegan #whatvegans eat #veganfoodshare #veganshopping #waitrose #waitrosevegan #ukvegans #vegan treats #veganiseasy #easyvegan #vgang #plantbased #plantpower #dairyfree #veganpizza #pizza #veganpudding #macandcheese #vegannuggets #veganism #veganfood #whatsinmybasket #vegan chocolate

Extract 16



crueltyfreeclairey • Following

crueltyfreeclairey Every day when I get home from work I put the kettle on & thank @tescofood for taking the dairy out of these beauties. 🍷🍷🍷

#vegan #accidentallyvegan #veganbiscuits #digestives #chocolatebiscuits #whatvegans eat #veganfoodshare #vegansofig #vgang #veganjunkfood #veganuary #veganuary2018 #plantbased

Load more comments

emmaahuston @deborahfurniss OMG PLEASE PLEASE BRING ME THESE?!!!

deborahfurniss @emmeranne

emmaahuston @deborahfurniss 🍷🍷🍷

Liked by lucyknell and 1,083 others
JANUARY 16, 2018
Add a comment...

Image 16. Thank you Tesco.

Crueltyfreeclairey. (2018, January 16). *I put the kettle on & thank @tescofood.* Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BeGxdQfBz0-/>

crueltyfreeclairey Every day when I get home from work I put the kettle on & thank @tescofood for taking the dairy out of these beauties. 🍵🍫🌱

#vegan #accidentallyvegan #veganbiscuits #digestives #chocolatebiscuits #whatveganseat #veganfoodshare #vegansofig #vgang #veganjunkfood #veganuary #veganuary2018 #plantbased

In Extract 15 and 16 Waitrose and Tesco's, two popular British supermarkets, are applauded by Claire for providing a wide range of food 'choices' for vegans and posted a picture of her food shop from Waitrose (Extract, 15). It contained 'veganised' versions of ham, chicken nuggets, chocolate torte, mac and cheese, creamy pasta sauce and a garlic and herb 'sheese' spread. This was accompanied by the message 'Choice? What is this new concept?!' (Extract, 15). Similarly, in Extract 16 a packet of '#accidentallyvegan' Tesco own brand plain chocolate digestives were posted and Claire thanks the supermarket for taking the dairy out of them ('Thank @tescofood for taking the dairy out of these beauties'). In these extracts 'vegan food' is constructed as something that is available at 'ordinary supermarkets' and manufactured by large food companies to taste similar or to mimic 'non-vegan' foods. Therefore, Claire challenges the common understanding that going vegan means you have to shop at alternative supermarkets, have a restrictive diet and live of ancient grains, green liquids and organic vegetables (Greenebaum, 2018; Lundahl, 2017). Instead she implies that vegans can still eat many of the same 'ordinary' (e.g. chips, chicken nuggets) and 'indulgent' (e.g. chocolate biscuits, chocolate torte) things that 'non-vegans' eat by consuming particular supermarket brands. The notion that a 'vegan diet' is an 'ordinary' diet is reinforced by use of the hashtag '#accidentallyvegan' as it suggests that you could be consuming vegan food without even knowing it (e.g. Tesco plain chocolate digestives). Thus, a focus on 'processed vegan foods' on Instagram is used to transform mainstream conceptions a vegan as a 'restrictive' diet to one that is fun, flexible and pleasurable (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). Therefore, similar to Extract 14, extracts 15 and 16 frame the 'food industry' as a 'solution' to several of the challenges vegans face, as it provides consumers with numerous ways to enjoy somewhat familiar creamy, meaty flavours and textures with relatively little technical food knowledge and skills ('e.g. gonna use it to make a carbonara'; 'Waitrose are really spoiling us') (Veron, 2016; Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019).

Moreover, in the construction of 'corporate veganism' the responsibility for learning how to 'be vegan' (e.g. seek alternative food knowledge, learning how to cook with different ingredients) is shifted from the individual onto the food industry. For example, in the above extracts (13, 14, 15) the Influencer does not mention of why she is vegan she simply just shows the branded vegan food she eats. In other words, the 'food industry' has presented consumers with the option to be an '#easyvegan' as individuals can simply buy a vegan identity (e.g. a moral concerned citizen) without having to engage greatly with politics on animal liberation, health or the environment ('How can you tell if someone's vegan? Just look in their shopping basket', Extract 15; 'you will be ignored', Extract 14). Therefore, Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, (2019) argue that rise of 'corporate veganism' has caused veganism to shift from an extreme and politically radical diet that requires individuals to adopt an 'activist identity' (e.g. protest, challenge industrial food system), into a diet that fits in to an 'ordinary' Western lifestyle by consuming foods within the capitalist industrial food system (e.g. supermarkets, processed foods ect). Likewise, Ewens (2018) writes that '2018 was the year veganism lost its status as a moral signifier' and argues that people no longer ask, 'why you are vegan' as 'it's just a thing you do, because you can'. This is supported in Extract 14

Claire distances herself from any engagement in debate on vegan ideology ('you will be ignored', Extract 14). Therefore, in contrast to an 'activist vegan' identity (animals, health planet) that requires individuals to act and think critically about the food they consume by challenging the 'industrial agri-food complex', a 'corporate vegan' identity is constructed through the consumption of brands of this same industry (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). Consequently, in discourse on 'corporate veganism', veganism is presented as a 'diet trend' (Jarvis, 2016) rather than a social movement dedicated to the liberation of animals, people and the planet (White, 2018). In turn, the mainstreaming over veganism through the provision of may make veganism more accessible to those who had not previously considered it (see Veron, 2016).

On the contrary, scholars warn that 'corporate veganism' has lost any possible power the 'vegan movement' has in changing the food system, improving the environment and liberating human and non-animal (Greenebaum, 2016; White, 2018). For instance, White (2018) argues that this depoliticised, commercialised, 'vegan 2.0' movement is problematic as it silences discussions and reflections on the ethical, environmental and health motivations for going vegan. Instead he states that the growth of the 'Western vegan consumer' has presented huge financial opportunities for businesses to capitalise the 'vegan trend' with little regard to the impact their products have on the environment, health and animals (White, 2018). For instance, the food Claire promotes is produced in the same capitalistic food industry that profits from the commodification of animals and the environment; the very system 'radical veganism' aims to overhaul (White, 2018). Buying a McVegan burger or chips from a Fish and Chip shop Claire personally does not consume meat but she still profits a food company that relies heavily on industrial agriculture and the intense farming of animals and fish. Similarly, supermarkets still sell flesh and dairy products, however, they just expand their market (and profit potential) to cater for vegans. Likewise, the chocolate digestives that Claire 'thanked Tesco for taking the dairy out' (Extract, 16) contain palm oil (Tesco, n.d) that is produced in ways that causes mass deforestation and is devastating to wildlife (e.g. Nicholas, Fanzo & MacManus, 2018). Therefore, giving responsibility to the 'large scale food industry' to provide vegan food gives consumers little power over the actual ethical and environmental impact of the food 'choices' as 'vegan food' becomes just an 'option' produced in to the same exploitative capitalist food production system (White, 2018). Consequently, the discourse of 'corporate veganism' silences critical reflections on food ingredients as the food industry is presented as proving 'good' vegan food. As a result, this reproduces the dominant exploitative power relations between humans and nonhuman animals in current argi-food system as 'corporate veganism' does not challenge this structure, but, supports it (White, 2018).

Therefore, the promotion of these 'corporate vegan goods' by Claire implies that she has little interest in radically changing the food system. It is therefore possible her Instagram page may exist for other reasons. For instance, financial opportunities have also arisen for vegan Instagram influencers to be funded by large food industries to advertise vegan food (Abidin, 2016). Interestingly Claire (who adopts a corporate vegan identity) is a 'Waitrose partner' (see Extract 16) which means that she is employed by Waitrose to advertise content on her page. She is also the only influencer who regularly uses hashtags on her posts and tags brand names (e.g. Tesco) which suggests that she is trying to seek further advertising opportunities by drawing the attention to her page. As a result, the fact that

Claire gave no attention to issues surrounding the current industrial food system such as the exploitation of human and non-human animals, public health and environmental impact is possibly explained. In other words, it is possible that Claire's Instagram page is not curated to motivate others to be vegan through political debate but is instead used for the hedonistic potential of gaining advertising partnerships and presenting herself as a 'morally conscious' citizen (Johnston & Goodman, 2015). Thus, the construction of 'corporate veganism' displays that there might be alternative motivations for food corporations providing vegan options and individuals being vegan (e.g. financial gain, it's just trendy).

To summarise, the construction of 'processed vegan food' on Instagram was used to display that vegan food can be easy, fun, familiar, indulgent and accessible (Veron, 2016). Arguably the rise of 'processed veganism' has led to a wide variety of 'vegan foods' being readily available in supermarkets across the country (e.g. nut milks, meat replacements) which has potentially made it easier for people to reduce their meat and dairy consumption (White, 2018). Moreover, it is unrealistic for most individuals in the UK to shop outside of the industrial agricultural food complex (e.g. farmers markets, grow your own). Greenebaum (2016) argues that associating veganism with these 'alternative' food networks (e.g. Ella and Whole Foods ready meals) reinforces the idea that veganism is a lifestyle reserved only for those who can afford it. Arguably, the promotion of 'corporate vegan food' serves to further separate a 'vegan diet' from an 'ordinary diet' (Greenebaum, 2016). Thus, the extracts from Cruelty Free Clairey serve to normalise veganism and to challenge the idea that one needs to shop at fancy supermarkets and eat really healthy to be vegan (Sneijder and Te Molder, 2009). Moreover, these extracts (and the ones from previous subchapters) display that veganism seems to exist on a spectrum of beliefs with multiple motivations. Thus, the construction of a 'corporate (soft) vegan identity' shows you can 'be vegan' without being an 'environmental activist', 'animal rights liberator' or 'extreme health enthusiast'. Therefore, the construction of 'corporate veganism' on Instagram has potentially made the vegan movement more accessible to individuals who would have previously found an 'activist identity' to be intimidating, elitist or too extreme (Veron, 2016; Greenebaum, 2018; Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019).

Therefore, I believe that the 'corporate vegan movement' has some benefits. However, I agree with White (2018) that it is important to remain critical of the possibilities the 'corporate vegan movement' has for changing the current food system and ending the suffering and exploitation within the current agri-food system. Moreover, implying that the 'food industry' solves all of the 'problems' vegans face through the provision of 'processed vegan foods' positions individuals at the mercy of food companies with little power over the food 'choices' they can make. Although 'corporate vegan' products such as 'vegan meats' may be useful for transitioning to a vegan diet they are neither necessary, particularly healthy and are expensive (Greenebaum, 2018). Moreover, a reliance on corporate vegan foods assumes that race, class and geographic location do not affect one's experience of being vegan (Greenebaum, 2018; Harper, 2012). For instance, Greenebaum (2018) found that her participants associated 'boxed' corporate vegan foods (e.g. fake meat) with being expensive, tasteless and incompatible with cooking techniques from different cuisines (e.g. Indian food). Thus, I argue that discourse on 'corporate vegan foods' seems to promote one particular way of 'doing veganism' (e.g. eating a processed diet) while masking the fact that vegan foods do not need to be 'made' by the food industry but have always existed. Natural

whole food such as staples like beans, rice, potatoes, vegetables and fruits have always been sold in supermarkets and can be cheap (in comparison to more processed meals) and are definitely more nutritious. Moreover, using these ingredients gives the consumer more power and control over the ingredients they consume (avoiding nasties like palm oil) and the possibility to create a wide variety of vegan dishes from many different cultures. Thus, in the final subchapter I will discuss how a ‘focus on foods’ is used by some of the influencers to construct different vegan identities that challenge the dominant image of veganism as a ‘white practice’.

4.2.1 Vegan food, identity and culture

Although some argue that ‘a focus on food’ in discourse on veganism distracts from the violence and suffering experienced by human and non-human animals in the capitalist agricultural system (e.g. White, 2018). This research found that ‘a focus on food’ has enabled people to construct their own unique identities within the vegan movement, thus making veganism more attractive to more people. For instance, food is deeply rooted in people’s culture and history and is used to express identity (Shah, 2018; Carolan, 2016; Bourdieu, 1984). However, Harper (2012) argues that the dominant narrative in the mainstream vegan movement is that veganism is for white people and that vegan food is “white” food, therefore, making it unappealing to people from different ethnicities (Harper, 2012). Similarly, interviewees in Greenebaum’s (2018) study stated that ‘boxed-vegan foods’ such as meat replacements and fake cheeses were expensive thus reinforced the idea that veganism was for rich, upper-middle class people. However, several of the Instagram influencers used their platform to construct alternative vegan identities that challenged the dominant construction of veganism as a ‘white practice’.

Extract 17:



Image 17. Veganism is not a new thing.

Rachelama. (2018, October 4). *Plant based diets across different cultures is not a new thing*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BohApkenHVb/>

rachelama_ Plant based diets across different cultures is not a new thing. Loved so much that I got to explore this with BBC 4 radio The Food Programme ! And there's so much more share to mainstream media about plant-based diets around the world. Took this pic at carnival where the protect started. I loveddddd doing this mini protect and hope to do so much more and share it will you all!!!! Good riddance to the extreme over production, and consumption of meat fish and dairy in the last 50 odd years. It's not sustainable. Times are changing, we are changing, and changing quickly! 🙌🌱 The program is still available for anyone who wants a listen on the way home from work 😊😊 I'll drop the link in my bio 🍷

In extract 17 Rachel Ama, who is from London and has a St Lucian heritage writes that 'Plant based diets across different cultures is not a new thing... there is so much more to share to mainstream media about plant-based diets around the world' (Extract 17). In this extract Rachel acknowledges that western mainstream media provide a limited representation of vegan diets and challenges that idea that vegan food is 'white' food (Harper, 2012). Instead she implies that the Western vegan movement could learn from other cultures. Therefore, Rachel makes a distinction between 'Western white veganism' and 'traditional veganism'. Similarly, Larbi (2018) and Shah (2018) argue that mainstream veganism ignores vegans of colour and reminds their readers that the start of veganism can be traced back to Jainism in ancient Indian civilisations, Buddhism in South East Asia and the Rastafarian movement in the West Indies. Thus, they argue that 'white vegan movements', such as PETA did not invent cruelty free living. Instead they state that this way of living is imbedded in religious teaching from across the globe (Larbi, 2018; Shah, 2018). Extract 17 confirms this as it is used by Rachel to remind people that veganism is not a 'new thing' or a 'white thing' (Larbi, 2018; Shah, 2018; Harper, 2012; Greenebaum, 2018). The image in Rachel's post is a picture of herself alongside a chef at a food stall in Notting Hill Carnival in London. This yearly carnival celebrates African and Caribbean culture and the communities that live in the city. In the background there is a food stall with a Jamaican flag a sign that writes "VEGAN FOOD" in capitals (Image 17). Therefore, I argue this image is used to construct Rachels identity as a 'Caribbean vegan' and to express to her followers that veganism existed in other cultures before it did in Western society.

Moreover, previous research found that vegans from African American, Asian, Latino and Indian backgrounds experienced stigma from their communities and families due to stereotypical image of white veganism (Greenebaum, 2018). To destigmatise veganism as a 'middle class white practice' and encourage veganism amongst different cultural groups there needs to be a greater representation of vegan chefs from different ethnicities who cook culturally appropriate vegan foods (Greenebaum, 2018). A finding from this research was that Instagram is a space where vegan chefs from different cultures were represented and showcased how to cook 'veganised' version of 'traditional' dishes:

Extract 18:



Image 18. Lao caramel noodles.

Kingcookdaily. (2018, October 21). *KWOUR MI LAO*. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BpMi2-KA9P_/

Extract 19



Image 19. Vegan Caribbean feast.

Rachelama_ (2018, August 11). *VEGAN CARIBBEAN FEAST*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BmV2k1BHBpi/>

In Extract 17 King posted a picture of Lao Caramel Noodles and states that “traditionally it includes eggs and pigs’ blood! Obviously, my version of this popular party dish is VEGAN” (Extract, 17). Here he displays to his audience that you can recreate traditional Laotian dishes to make them vegan friendly, therefore, implying that you can be vegan and still enjoy foods from your own culture. He confirms this by stating that “the elders” at his aunt’s retirement party loved it which suggests that the vegan version of the popular dish from Lao was accepted as ‘authentic’ (Heldke, 2005). Likewise, in Extract 18, Rachel Ama

explains how she uses Heart of Palm to create 'vegan salt fish' which is a popular ingredient in Caribbean cooking. She provides the recipe and directs her followers to YouTube where they can watch her create this dish. By providing people with information on how to create culturally appropriate vegan food, people of colour can be empowered to try vegan food rather than taught to believe it is something for white, middle-upper class people. For instance, Greenebaum (2018) found that her participants who were vegans from African American, Asian, Latino and Indian backgrounds stated that for veganism to be appealing to people of colour vegan recipes need to taste like foods reminiscent of their home, family and culture. It was found that most of her participants were not involved in activism but instead sought their vegan education online through social media (Greenebaum, 2018). They argued that social media provided information on alternative ways of 'doing' veganism that challenged the mainstream 'white' veganism. Likewise, Veron (2016) found that food blogs were used by people to recreate classic meat and dairy based French dishes. Indeed, this study confirmed that Instagram is a platform for information sharing that is used by vegan chefs and bloggers from different cultures to provide information on how to prepare culturally appropriate vegan food and to challenge that dominant construction of veganism as a 'white practice' in western societies such as the UK (Shah 2018; Ko n.d.; Greenebaum, 2018).

However, within these extracts the main focus is on food that is cooked from scratch using 'whole' ingredients. Both Rachel and King cook for a living therefore both enjoy cooking and have time to do so. This is not the case for many people. For instance, Greenebaum (2016) states that cooking with whole, fresh ingredients isn't affordable or achievable for everyone due to time (e.g. work long hours) restrictions and geographic locations (e.g. live in food desert) (Food Empowerment Project, 2010). Therefore 'whole foods' veganism may not be achievable for some. However, in contrast to Claire in the previous subchapter who constructed 'corporate veganism' that relied heavily on the food industry to provide 'vegan-boxed food', both King Cook (Laotian vegan chef) and Rachel Ama (vegan recipe creator and youtuber) use 'whole foods' and natural spices and seasoning to create vegan versions of dishes from their cultures. Greenebaum (2018) also found that this was the cheapest way to consume vegan food (if in a location where fresh food is available). Thus, I argue that using 'whole-foods' that are already used in many dishes across the globe removes power from the food industry to dictate what vegan food is (e.g. products produced, how much it costs) and instead empowers individuals to be creative and construct their own idea of 'vegan food' that reflects their cultural identity and personal tastes.

Undeniably, King Cook uses his Instagram page to promote his restaurant and his own construction of the vegan movement. In the following Extract 19 King is pictured with grime rapper JME and in Extract 20 King refers to an article in the Guardian where he explains how he hopes he will encourage 'young Londoners to love vegan food' (Considine, 2017).

Extract 20:



Image 20. Our own way.

Kingcookdaily. (2018, September 24). *COOK DAILY LAST DAY*. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BoGh_O1AE6k/

Extract 21:

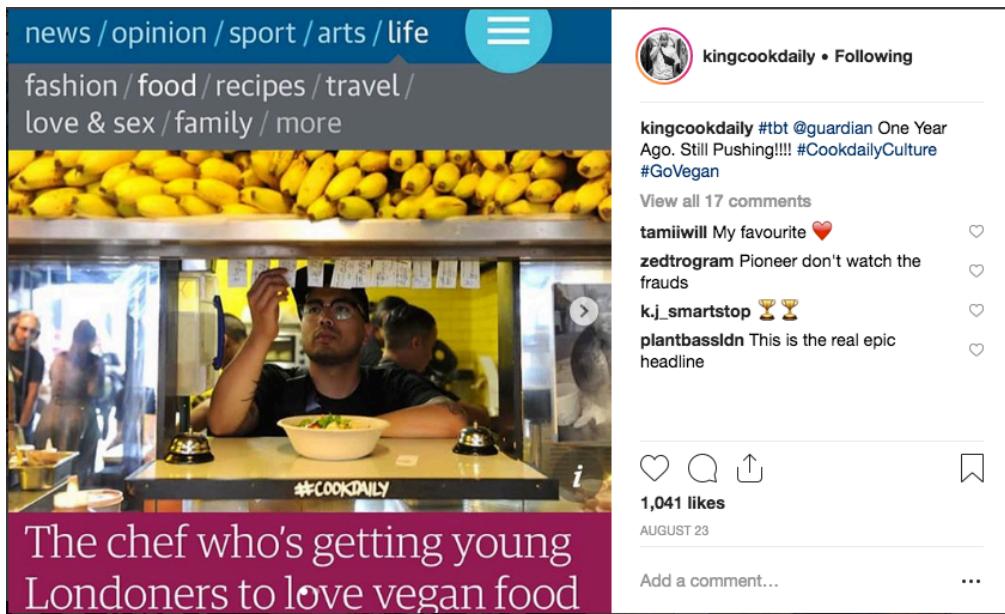


Image 21. Getting young Londoners to love vegan food.

Kingcookdaily. (2018, August 23). *#tbt @guardian One Year Ago*. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BmOKGLIALYW/>

In Extract 20, Cook who grew up in East London explains that by starting his own restaurant he no longer had to reply on ordering side dishes from 'non-vegan' establishments. Instead he states that he has created his own vegan scene that he and his friends feel comfortable in ('We fuckin did it!! our own way!! OUR OWN LANE!!', Extract 20). Grime rapper JME and friend of Cook regularly features on Cook's Instagram page is often eats in his restaurant. He states that when JME is at the restaurant it takes just one tweet from him to get 50 young boys here (Considine, 2017). By constructing a vegan scene that 'young Londoners' feel

comfortable in Cook says he hope to defy the stereotype that veganism is for white middle class people (Considine, 2017). In an interview for the Guardian King stated that he wanted to create an alternative to the ‘Chicken Shop’ (popular, cheap eatery attended by school aged teenagers at lunch, after school and dinner) where young Londoner’s could enjoy eating plant-based foods without feeling like people are looking at them weirdly (Considine, 2017). King states ‘They’re not gonna go to a juice bar in Notting Hill! But they will come here...’ (Considine, 2017). Indeed, Considine (2017) writes in the article referred to in Extract 20 that King Cook is defying the hipster stereotypes. She states that you will find teens sitting next to Hindu families, office workers and creative types (Considine, 2017). Thus, I argue that King uses his Instagram page to promote his restaurant and to construct an ‘inclusive vegan scene’ and break down the social barriers experienced in mainstream vegan spaces (Harper, 2012).

Therefore, this research found that food was a medium used by influences on Instagram to construct their own vegan ‘communities’ and to try and engage others with from outside the vegan movement. Moreover, food was also used by the influencers to connect with other influencers from inside the vegan scene (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). For instance, Instagram is used by King and Rachel to connect ‘vegan food’ with ‘vegan politics’. In Extract 17 Rachel writes ‘good riddance to the extreme over production, and consumption of meat and dairy fish and dairy in the 50 years’ while stating in from of a vegan food stall. Similarly, in Extract 22, King Cook makes the connection between ‘vegan food’ and ‘vegan politics’ by posting a picture of himself and ‘extreme ethical vegan’ Ed (mentioned in subchapter 4.1.1 and 4.1.3) at the opening of King’s restaurant:

Extract 22:



Image 22. A Familiar face: King and Ed.

Kingcookdaily. (2018, October 25). WE ARE OPEN!!!!. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BpZwkcXAmYm/>

Within Extract 21, King refers to Ed as ‘the real MVP (most valuable player) in this game’. This displays that King, a vegan chef, greatly respects Ed’s activist work on animal liberation.

Thus, unlike Claire in the previous subchapter who resisted an ‘activist vegan identity’ and focused only on consuming ‘non-meat foods’, Rachel and King both make a connection between their decision to consume a vegan diet and the political associations of veganism. Therefore, it is possible that approaching veganism through practical recipes provides a less confronting and potentially fun way of engaging with environmental citizenship and animal ethics (Veron, 2016; Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). After all we all have to eat but not everyone would feel comfortable protesting outside a sheep farm for animal liberation (see Extract, 2). Hence, I argue ‘a focus on food’ is used to construct a ‘soft veganism’ as at first glance is not overtly ‘extreme’, ‘radical’ or political but is used by King to make a bridge between food and politics. As explained in the ‘hard veganism’ section of the results, veganism that is associated with ‘extreme’ or ‘radical practices’ deters people from engaging with vegan politics (e.g. animal liberation movement, see Cole & Morgan, 2011). It is therefore possible that ‘a focus on food’ in vegan discourse may be a way to engage people in discussions on environmental and human health, and animal liberation without appearing confrontational, aggressive or threatening (Veron, 2016; Greenebaum, 2017). Thus, a focus on food is empowering rather than blaming, as it is used by influencers to tell people what to do rather than blame their audience for the things they are doing wrong (Greenebaum, 2017). Moreover, this research found that vegan Instagram influencers are no singular educators but rather part of a networked connected to each other and supporting each other’s work. Therefore, it is possible that Instagram is a place where people can receive varied theoretical practical knowledge on why and how they should reduce their meat consumption.

The final Extract I would like to provide displays how Instagram is used to share knowledge on how other cultures have used a socio-political perspective to construct veganism and the potential benefits this diet has for society:

Extract 23:



Image 23. School lunches go plant-based in Brazil.

Chakabars (2018, April 11). This made me smile 😊. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bhao1WGlC-n/>

Within this Extract 23 it is stated that four Brazilian cities are '100% plant based lunched for their student'. This decision is part of the 'Escola Sustentavel' (sustainable school) project that is aimed at transitioning the meals at public schools in Brazil to 100 percent plant based by the end of 2019 ('Historic meat reduction', 2018). It is stated that this will 'improve students, health, reduce the school's environmental impact and support local farmers' (Extract 23) ('Historic meat reduction', 2018). Therefore, in Extract 23 the consumption of state governed vegan food is constructed as a solution to several societal and global concerns our generation faces. Morgan and Sonnino (2013) confirm these statements as they argue that the public procurement of food by governments (e.g. school dinners) is a powerful, and often underused tool in the pursuit of sustainable development and the prevention of a global ecological crises. By framing the consumption of vegan food as a socio-political decision by governments (Extract, 23), rather than an individual consumer choice, responsibility for reducing the consumption of meat (and the associated benefits) is shifted from the individual on to the state. As many scholars of food and sustainable development argue, governments are the only bodies with enough power to influence a global reduction in meat consumption at the scale and rate we need in order to prevent global climate disaster and worsening public health (e.g. EAT-Lancet, 2019; Wellesly, Happer & Froggatt, 2015). Lukacs (2017) argues that in the UK 'neoliberalism has conned us into fighting climate change as individuals'. For instance, we buy reusable cups, a few choose to be vegan, or buy local and organic food. However, it is argued that these individual choices will be most beneficial when the economic system can provide viable environmental options for everyone (Lukacs, 2017). In the UK veganism is still predominately seen as an individual dietary choice, rather than a tool that governments could use to ensure people consume less meat (e.g. by governments on procuring plant-based foods) (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). Therefore, I argue Extract 23 is used to challenge the notion that veganism is only an individual dietary choice. Instead, this extract positions governments as responsible for implementing societal dietary changes. Thus Extract 23 challenges the dominant discourse in the UK of 'individual responsibility' for the prevention of societal risks through the practice of making 'good food' choices (Lupton, 1996; Johnston & Goodman, 2015). Hence, Chaka has used his Instagram page to share knowledge on how other societies have used veganism to try and prevent today's health and environmental concerns. Therefore, I argue that Instagram is a space where alternative knowledge on food, health and sustainable living is constructed, shared and connected.

To summarise, this research found that Instagram was used as a tool to share vegan recipes from different cultures. Food was used to construct different vegan identities that challenged the mainstream construction of veganism as an elitist white practice (Harper, 2012). The aim of these posts was to encourage more people to try vegan food. Although there was less explicit mention to the politics of veganism in discourse on food, King and Rachel referred to some (e.g. critiques food industry, animal rights activism). Instagram was also a space where constructions of veganism from different cultures was displayed. Therefore, it is possible that a focus on food in discussion of veganism on Instagram provides people with knowledge on how to 'be vegan' or 'eat vegan' in many different ways. Moreover, Instagram is a connected network of food experts, therefore a focus on food could lead people to learn more about the philosophical justifications for veganism (Veron, 2018).

5. Conclusion

To conclude, this research aimed to identify some of the contemporary discourses used to construct beliefs around veganism, vegan identity and vegan food on Instagram. Particular attention was given to the framing of responsibility towards animal welfare, human health and the environment. Two overarching themes were discovered.

The first main theme was 'hard veganism' which was used to encourage individual to think critically about the foods system. Within this theme veganism was constructed in three ways and was similar to research on the mainstream construction of veganism (Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018). First, veganism was constructed as a way of preventing harm to animals by not funding livestock industries. In the second subtheme, veganism was constructed as a way optimising human health. Here veganism was used to challenge dominant nutrition information which states we needs meat to be healthy. It was implied that eating meat was unnatural and will cause heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Instead a vegan diet comprised of mainly fruit and veg was framed as healthy and was it implied that following this diet would will lead individuals to a disease free and long life. Thus, dialog on 'health veganism' was aimed at empowering people to make alternative possibly healthier food choices. Third, veganism was constructed as a way of preventing catastrophic climate disaster. Scientific evidence was used to explain how eating meat was the cause of rising CO2 levels, deforestation and loss in biodiversity. Therefore, the construction of 'environmentalist veganism' was used to highlight the effects of the livestock industry on the planet. Therefore, all the subthemes of 'hard veganism' constructed veganism as a way of practicing one's moral beliefs and identifying as an educated, responsible, and concerned citizen.

In line with previous research on the mainstream framings of veganism (e.g. Christopher, Bartkowski & Haverda, 2018) the discourse of 'hard veganism' was underpinned by neoliberal ideologies of free choice, healthism and individual responsibility. Individuals were predominately framed as responsible for preventing societal disasters (animal cruelty, poor public health, environmental disaster) by going vegan. I argue that these discourses could encourage individuals to believe they are responsible for causing the mistreatment of animals, poor health, and climate disaster, while ignoring the powerful political factors that have contributed to these problems (e.g. governments subsidies support intensive farming methods). Thus, this research found that discourses that imply veganism as the 'only' solution to the societal risks silence discussion on more social-political solutions to public health and climate disasters.

The second main theme was 'soft veganism' which was constructed through statements that focused on food. This was comprised of two subthemes. In the first theme a construction of processed, premade and packaged 'corporate vegan food' available at mainstream supermarkets was used to suggest the being vegan was easy as it required little effort (e.g. cooking, sourcing ingredients). Within this discourse the food industry was constructed as responsible for providing people with vegan foods. This was used to challenge the mainstream perception that veganism is difficult, extreme and associated with radical political beliefs (e.g. Cole & Morgan, 2011; Sneijder & Te Molder, 2009). However, this framed vegans as having little power over the food they could eat. This research found

that some processed foods that are vegan still contain ingredients that are damaging to the environment. Hence this research found that the embrace of veganism in the mainstream food industry is good for popularizing veganism, however, it is important to remain critical of the ability 'corporate veganism' has in challenging and improving the current food system (White, 2018).

The second sub theme food was used to construct alternative vegan subcultures that challenged the mainstream conception that veganism is a white, upper-middle class practice (Harper, 2012; Greenebaum, 2018). Photographs of vegan foods cooked by chefs with different ethnicities using 'whole-food' ingredients were aimed at destigmatising veganism as a white practice associated with expensive, branded vegan foods (e.g. fake meats). Although some scholars argue that 'soft veganism' that centres around food may distract from the political justification for veganism (e.g. White, 2018), this research found that it has helped destigmatise veganism as an elitist practice and include more people in the vegan movement in the UK (Veron, 2016). Moreover, this research found that discourse on vegan food on Instagram was not independent of discussion on vegan politics.

In contrast to mainstream portrayals of veganism in the media that construct it as an extreme, elitist and exclusive practice (Harper, 2012; Greenebaum, 2018; Cole & Morgan 2011), this research found that Instagram is a space where multiple vegan identities are constructed that with varying levels of political involvement and philosophical engagement (Jallinoja, Vinnari & Niva, 2019). To conclude Instagram may be a useful tool for influencing people to reduce their meat consumption as it allows people to select knowledge on how to practice veganism that best suits their identity, beliefs and lifestyle.

Limitations and recommendations

There are several limitations to this research concerning the use of Instagram as data and the generalisability of these results.

As this research was a media study it could identify some of the dominant and recurring discursive patterns on Instagram about veganism provided by the six influencers. The analysis process gave insight in to how the responsibility of health, animal welfare and environmental concerns were framed. This study revealed how images and text on food was used to break down social stigmas related to veganism. I could also identify how Instagram knowledge on veganism is different to mainstream vegan discourse. However, this research was unable to study the actual lived experiences of individuals who use Instagram as a tool for sourcing information on veganism. Therefore, this study cannot claim how these different constructions of veganism impact the food practices of people who engage with them.

There are several interesting avenues to be explored here. First, research in to the comments of Instagram posts could reveal how food information provided by Instagram influencers is accepted or rejected by followers. This would give insight into how popular certain framings of veganism are. In turn, this would provide information on the best way to frame veganism (or meat reduction) campaigns.

It would also be interesting to research who the followers of these pages are. For instance, are they vegans who are already aware of their impact of their diet on this planet, health and animals. Or are they meat eaters who are curious about trying vegan recipes? Interview with people who use these Instagram pages could be an interesting follow up to this research. This could give an insight into how vegan Instagram pages are used, and if they are used by individuals who are thinking about becoming vegan (Laestadius, 2016). Moreover, interviewing people would allow research to examine if discussion of veganism online actual impact buying, eating and cooking practices.

Moreover, I only selected 6 Instagram influencers, therefore, this study is no generalisable to the all vegan Instagram influencers. I acknowledge that there are many more out there and would have definitely ended up with different result if I were to select different influences. However, the aim of this research was no to record mass trends in the vegan movement. Instead this research aimed at analysing rich data in depth to explore how alternative vegan subcultures were constructed on Instagram. To explore more general and popular themes in discussion on veganism future research could look in to the use of vegan hashtags on Instagram. This could also give insight in to how the 'general population' (non-influencer) engage with different vegan communities online (Laestadius, 2016).

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Annex

1.

Theme	Extract
<p>Morality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Diet reflection personality</i> • <i>Moral obligation to be vegan</i> • <i>Being vegan makes you a good person</i> • <i>Veganism is the future</i> • <i>Changing is possible</i> • <i>hope</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hunger is the first element of self-discipline. If you can control what you eat you can control everything (Image 4, @chakabars) - Real friends don't let you drink, smoke and eat your life away... (8, @chakabars) - 90% of my haters eat McDonald's so I don't blame them for not liking me they don't even like themselves (11, @chakabars) - I love when ppl do "ewwww" to a vegan food. What's missing, the feces? Pus? Parasites... (12, @chakabars) - Animals must think we are the devil... (37, @chakabars) - [the future is vegan → child in front of image] (9, @kingcookdaily) - ... I now get to feed my parents Vegan Food and its never to late to go vegan #BreakTheCycle #veganchef #GoVegan (29, @kingcookdaily) - I gave up meat in 2009 and it's been one of the best choices I've ever made (29, @kingcookdaily) - ... I'm gonna be at @vevolution_ tomorrow with so many amazing humans talking about the future of veganism hope to see you there! (1, @rachelama_) - 4 years ago I went on a documentary spiral and was completely heart broken and went vegan the next day and I haven't looked back since (3, @rachelama_) - We should all be vegan (10, @earthlinged) - Feel empowered and feel the strength to stand up and speak up for what is right. It is our moral obligation to take action and to use our voices, we MUST take action and use our voices. Change will not happen unless we make it happen and if we all move together as one unified voice, I truly believe that a vegan future is possible. (16, @earthlinged)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [dog vs pig] we consider a friend and another food, a notion based entirely on what we are wrongly conditioned to believe is moral and acceptable (27, @earthlinged) - ["I will never go vegan"- KFC lover → vegan] (32, @earthlinged) - How I started my vegan journey... (35, @earthlinged) - So few of us manage to eat our five a day (barely more than 1/4 of the UK) and the only way to change that is to change the preconceptions of these kinds of ingredients is to make them beautiful and delicious, and I believe that's important for our health and for the health of our planet. (24, @deliciosulyella)
<p>Disgust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cow's milk is not human's food, please take this into 2019 with you... (image 3, @chakabars) - I love when ppl do "ewwww" to a vegan food. What's missing, the faeces? Pus? Parasites... (12, @chakabars) - Ok that's fine, you keep laughing while you are dancing with cancer & diabetes, sweating out the smell of dead animals, discharging rotten fish, fellas bussing acid nut into their partners & messing up their ph balancers. Hilatious. (25, @chakabars) - I smelled death on his breath (26, @chakabars) - Catch me running away from away from all the chicken looking for plantain cooked seperatley from meat (15, @rachelama_) - [poem] Ever think about how it's actually really weird to sit down with your family and chop up and eat a corpse in the name of celebration? #thanksgiving (3, @earthlinged)
<p>Food industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For real how they talking about organic seedless watermelons (17, @chakabars) - I know it's become kinda controversial to post McDonalds uh oh but this is what I ate so.. (15, @crueltyfreeclairy)
<p>Animal cruelty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Animals as a commodity</i> • <i>Immoral treatment of animals</i> • <i>Speciesism</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whenever I hear anyone say "I would go vegan but I can't give up *insert name of food that you can definetly veganise*" I just want to scream... You don't have to give up anything as a vegan apart from animal cruelty (10, @crueltyfreeclairy) - Us as individuals are making the change and it's amazing to see, the rise of plant based eating is needed for our planet and the animals. (3, @rachelama_) - cruelty free skin care] Switching over to cruelty free skincare is really easy. There is so much choice of

	<p>quality products – a small step to take for the love of animals (25, @rachelama_)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You guys know that I like to eat plant based foods as they are to save animals first and then look after ma body.. (32, @rachelama_) - Factory farmed or grass-fed, they all end up in the same place (1, @earthlinged) - Be ones less person harming animals (5, @earthlinged) - For non-human animals, life on this planet is worse than the narrative of the scariest horror movie you could ever imagine. They are enslaved, they are beaten, they are mutilated, they are torn away from their friends and families, they are castrated, they have their teeth pulled out, they have their skin ripped from their bodies, they are maimed, they are tortured, they are boiled alive, they are cut into pieces and they are eaten (8, @earthlinged) - These are the individuals who the diner exists for, those who deserve the right to freedom just as we do. (11, @earthlinged) - Every single individual who has died since you started reading this post all had their own unique personality and experience of life (21, @earthiged) - There is no ethical way to use others and to objectify and to commodify other living beings is always immoral, no matter how it's done. Non-human animals do not exist to serve us and therefore any infringement upon their rights as individuals is immoral and cannot be justified. There is no humane way to needlessly inflict violence onto someone else, someone who suffers and someone who has a will to live. Use is abuse and once we begin to use others, we abuse others. Abolish speciesism in your life, reject all forms of animal commodification and speak up for others (24, @earthiged) - In memory of the forgotten mothers (34, @earthiged)
<p>Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stop pretending that being overweight (a sickness created by capitalism) is a good thing... (image 6, @chakabarz) - Doctors won't make you healthy. Nutritionists won't make you slim... (image 9, @chakabarz) - I love when ppl do "ewwww" to a vegan food. What's missing, the feces? Pus? Parasites... (12, @chakabars)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Love to DR @arislife_ as he is the reason I eat predominately raw food now. He is 71, can still run up stairs... (21, @chakabars) - [image topless men. vegans on left → non-vegans on right] I'm just posting this because salty flesh devourers get mad and vegetable eaters love it lol... (23, @chakabars) - Ok that's fine, you keep laughing while you are dancing with cancer & diabetes (25, @chakabars) - This fruit is called star apple, it tastes like custard jelly, coconut banana icecream... protects from cancer (32, @chakabars) - Trevor Smith diagnosed with cancer... he is now cancer free (33, @chakabars) - ... Plant based whole foods doing what whole foods do best, feeding the body mind and souls and summer days (28, @Rachelama_) - So few of us manage to eat our five a day (barely more than 1/4 of the UK) and the only way to change that is to change the preconceptions of these kinds of ingredients is to make them beautiful and delicious, and I believe that's important for our health and for the health of our planet. (24, @deliciosulyella) - Many body builders have heart attacks and organ failures because of all the animal products they consume and the unrealistic way they train (39, @chakabars)
<p>Physical appearance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Being vegan influences your physical appearance</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [Vegans on left] I'm just posting this because salty flesh devourers get mad and vegetable eaters love it lol... (23, @chakabars) - [posed picture, beauty conscious] (1, @rachelama_) - [cruelty free skin care] (25, @rachelama_)
<p>Global warming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Changing diet will prevent global warming</i> • <i>Current food system and meat consumption responsible for global warming</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Us as individuals are making the change and it's amazing to see, the rise of plant-based eating is needed for our planet and the animals. (3, @rachelama_) - The United Nations recently declaring we only have 12 years left to prevent irreversible climate change. If we do not act now we will only have 12 world vegan days eft before we approach inevitable catastrophic disaster and a complete collapse of the world as we know it... (7, @earthlinged) - If you care about the future of this planet, the single most important change you can make is to go vegan - and it's such a simple, easy change to make. (28, @earthlinged)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our consumption of animal products is killing the planet and of course killing billions upon billions of animals. We call ourselves the most intelligent species whilst destroying our own home, the only home we've ever known. No other species upon this Earth destroys and consumes in the way in which we do. The only way we can make a difference is as individuals uniting to collectively take a stand against the industries which exploit, murder and destroy (28, @earthinged) - It's easy to think our own actions don't matter but it adds up to a terrifying picture when you put it all together, and whilst I normally err away from controversy I can't not share this when it's so critical to our planets health (4, @deliciouslyella) - So before anyone says it, food miles are a teeny tiny part of the issue, so we can't shift the problem onto things like this anymore. (4, @deliciouslyella)
<p>Science/ Truth claim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Claims are legitimised by statistics</i> • <i>Truth claims</i> • <i>Scientific support (e.g. reference to University)</i> • <i>These facts are undeniable ultimate truths</i> • <i>Global warming is caused by meat farming and going vegan will prevent catastrophic disasters</i> • <i>West largest consumers of meat</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stop pretending that being overweight (a sickness created by capitalism) is a good thing... (image 6, @chakabars) - Love to DR @arislife_ as he is the reason I eat predominantly raw food now. He is 71, can still run up stairs... (21, @chakabars) - Us as individuals are making the change and it's amazing to see, the rise of plant-based eating is needed for our planet and the animals. (3, @rachelama_) - Factory farmed or grass-fed, they all end up in the same place (1, @earthlinged) - Heading to Lincoln tonight to do outreach at the University of Lincoln... (2, @earthlinged) - You cant love animals and eat them (4, @earthlinged) - The United Nations recently declaring we only have 12 years left to prevent irreversible climate change. If we do not act now we will only have 12 world vegan days eft before we approach inevitable catastrophic disaster and a complete collapse of the world as we know it... (7, @earthlinged) - We don't need to over exaggerate what happens to animals, cold hard facts say enough about the industries which we are fighting against (26, @earthinged) - now more than ever it's important that we share how amazing plants are with the world because scientists say we have 12 years to stop the climate breakdown that's happening and changing your diet is right at

	<p>the top of the list of things we need to do ASAP to stop this The world switching to plant-based eating would cut global greenhouse gas emissions by 23% (half of that benefit comes from trees re-growing on the 3.1 billion hectares of farmland land that wouldn't be needed). If you want more persuasion, then it's worth knowing that since the year 2000 an area of tropical forests the size of the UK, France, Germany, Spain and Portugal put together has been cut down or burnt for livestock grazing and feed, with the last two years being the highest on record. Deforestation is now the leading cause of wildlife extinction. We're also currently killing about 56 BILLION farmed animals a year, and that doesn't include anything from the sea. (4, @deliciouslyella)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The researchers found a global shift to a "flexitarian" diet was needed to keep climate change even under 2C, let alone 1.5C. This flexitarian diet means the average world citizen needs to eat 75% less beef, 90% less pork and half the number of eggs, while tripling consumption of beans and pulses and quadrupling nuts and seeds. This would halve emissions from livestock. In rich nations, the dietary changes required are ever more stark. UK and US citizens need to cut beef by 90% and milk by 60% while increasing beans and pulses between four and six times 🌿... brilliant researcher from Oxford University (10, @deliciouslyella)
<p>Knowledge sharing/instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Young teaching old</i> • <i>Need to spread a message</i> • <i>People are being deceived by current food industry</i> • <i>People are unaware of what happens to animals</i> • <i>Urgent</i> • <i>Need to enrol people in to veganism</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Love to DR @arislife_ as he is the reason I eat predominantly raw food now. He is 71, can still run up stairs... (21, @chakabars) - How a fridge should look (28, @chakabars) - @oatly have taken over so many of the boards at Kings Cross... Imagine how many people have seen this!!... (5, @crueltyfreeclairy) - KWOUR MI LAO I made this for my Aunts Retirement Party! Traditionally it includes eggs and pigs blood! Obviously my version of this popular Lao party dish is VEGAN and the great this is that the "the elders" love it 😊 (5, @kingcookdaily) - [The chef who is getting young Londoners to love vegan food] (13, @kingcookdaily) - ... I now get to feed my parents Vegan Food and its never to late to go vegan #BreakTheCycle #veganchef #GoVegan (29, @kingcookdaily) - I'm so grateful for all the amazing humans spreading information through documentaries, activism, and

	<p>sharing epic food creations without meat fish and dairy. For me living and growing up in a city (London), who knows how long it would have taken me to see what was going on behind the happy KFC chicken poster without these documentaries (3, @rachelama_)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The more reactions shares and views on programs discussing lifestyles that reduce the consumption of meat, the more they will broadcast these topic thus spreading awareness! IT'S NOT A FAD!! (6, @rachelama_) - Heading to Lincoln tonight to do outreach at the University of Lincoln... (2, @earthlinged) - ... spread the message, the lives of trillions of animals and the future of the planet depends on it. So this World Vegan Day please speak up, spread the message and make sure that pne day we will no longer celebrate one day, but we will instead live in an entirely vegan world that the animals and the planet deserve (7 @earthlinged) - There isn't time to wait, we need every vegan to speak up and spread veganism far and wide across every corner of the earth (21, @earthinged)
<p>Group vegan identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not a fad</i> • <i>A group here to stay</i> • <i>Connected</i> • <i>Share group goal</i> • <i>That can be acheieved in many ways made up of different individuals e.g. junk/lazy food, body builder, fashion, 'ethnic' foods</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - #veganlondon #cookdailyculture (1, @kingcookdaily) - Big up my bro the real MVP in this game #VeganLondon (4, @@kingcookdaily) - As we celebrate the progress of the past year and the unity of being vegan... (7, @earthlinged) - One of the reasons we started The Official Animal Rights March was to foster a sense of unity in the vegan community across the country and indeed across the globe. Although we may have moments where we feel isolated, mocked and even outcasted by non-vegan friends and family, we are not alone. We are all part of a global movement of millions of individuals who are all collectively opposing the use of animals and are taking a stand against the industries which commodify and exploit the innocent. <input type="checkbox"/> Feel empowered and feel the strength to stand up and speak up for what is right. It is our moral obligation to take action and to use our voices, we MUST take action and use our voices. Change will not happen unless we make it happen and if we all move together as one unified voice, I truly believe that a vegan future is possible. (16, @earthinged)
<p>(personal identity- linked to group identity)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [fit black] Trevor Smith diagnosed with cancer... he is now cancer free (33, @chakabars)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ...I dropped out of school when I was 15 with no GCSEs... I had no qualifications... (29, @kingcookdaily) - [The streetwise chef inspiring a new generation to go vegan] (33, @kingcookdaily) - [beauty, fashion conscious] (1, @rachelama_) - It's a complete change to the diet I was brought up on and many others (23, @rachelama_) - I'm a simple vegan who likes to make loads of food that can last a few days so I can play around with them for dinner and lunch (35, @rachelama_) - My dad was a body builder... I was in the military gyms, I lifted weights, I was a personal trainer for 10 years (39, @chakabars)
<p>Easy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Familiar</i> • <i>Uncomplicated</i> • <i>Accessible</i> • <i>Cheap</i> • <i>Quick</i> • <i>Recipe sharing</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tried the Waitrose Mac & Greens for dinner tonight!... Pretty amazing we can even buy this sort of thing though- deffo a good option when you cant be bothered to make anything or you haven't got time. (6, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [basket of ready meals] (7, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [image of chips & mushy peas] (10, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [vegan fry up] (12, @crueltyfreeclairy) - ... this is just a jar of sauce with fried veggies and green lentils (14, @crueltyfreeclairy) - I know it's become kinda controversial to post McDonalds uh oh but this is what I ate so.. (15, @crueltyfreeclairy) - I stood in this section for like 15 mins just looking at everything ahaha. Choice? What is this new concept? (7, @crueltyfreeclairy) - The official saving p's face because corner shops are behind on vegan treats (9, @rachelama_) - [cruelty free skin care] Switching over to cruelty free skincare is really easy. There is so much choice of quality products – a small step to take for the love of animals (25, @rachelama_) - Vegans are slaying this food game! Making it easier and easier for people to get involved in cutting out meat, beaut times (29, @rachelama_) - not necessarily to go completely vegan if that's not right for you, but to significantly up our plant-based cooking (4, @deliciouslyella) - A ten min dream (9, @deliciouslyella) - So simple, so yum and it literally took me five minutes this morning having made the rice last night. If you're making it all in the morning I would do quinoa instead

	<p>as that takes just 10-12 minutes to cook (26, @deliciouslyella)</p>
<p>Popular culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Celebrity endorsement</i> • <i>Target younger audience</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [JME and King outside his restaurant] (2, @kingcookdaily) - High grade, black bean sauce ect (4, @kingcookdaily) - Before I opened @cookdailylondon #JME and I would eat at non-vegan establishments and make up our own Vegan Meals by selecting sides and shit!! Years later here we are!! Look at the scene now my bro!! (10, @kingcookdaily) - [The chef who is getting young Londoners to love vegan food] (13, @kingcookdaily) - [The streetwise chef inspiring a new generation to go vegan] (33, @kingcookdaily) - Not sure which I prefer!! Writing on trains or writing on menus... (41, @kingcookdaily) - I cannot wait to see the growth of veganism at carnival (@rachelama)
<p>Veganism gone mainstream</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mainstream</i> • <i>Not missing out</i> • <i>Vegan junk food</i> • <i>Vegan version</i> • <i>Vegan restaurant options</i> • <i>Flexitarian</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hellmann's vegan mayo... the fact that we don't have to live without mayo is 10/10 dontcha think (2, @crueltyfreeclairy) - As you may have seen on my insta story this week @oatly kindly sent me their three new oat milks... (3, @crueltyfreeclairy) - Tried the Waitrose Mac & Greens for diner tonight!... Pretty amazing we can even buy this sort of thing though- deffo a good option when you cant be bothered to make anything or you haven't got time. (6, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [basket of ready meals] (7, @crueltyfreeclairy) - ... doughnuts for this weeks Bake Off! Does anyone know when the vegan week is going to be? (8, @crueltyfreeclairy) - Whenever I hear anyone say "I would go vegan but I can't give up *insert name of food that you can definitely veganise*" I just want to scream... You don't have to give up anything as a vegan apart from animal cruelty (10, @crueltyfreeclairy) - I know it's become kinda controversial to post McDonalds uh oh but this is what I ate so... (15, @crueltyfreeclairy) - I stood in this section for like 15 mins just looking at everything ahaha. Choice? What is this new concept? (7, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [timeout magazine] Vegan mecca CookDaily has reopened in Hackney (1, @kingcookdaily)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NEW COOKDAILY SPECIAL. THE JME BOWL: JOLLOF RICE, FRIED PLANTAIN... (7, @kingcookdaily) - ... I'd like to thank Wagamama for one of the biggest vegan food collaborations in the UK. England saw a major British food chain serving Asian food based on Japanese Cuisine work with a small independent vegan restaurant #COOKDAILY!!! It took the London Vegan Culture MAINSTREAM (8, @kingcookdaily) - VEGAN SHEPERDS PIE.. my kids absolutely love this time of day... (11, @kingcookdaily) - Yes this is VEGAN yes this looks INSANE. Vegan junk food at its finest. - I made the vegan KFC a while ago on my channel which was shockingly like KFC... (39, @rachelama_)
<p>Difficult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Complex</i> • <i>Strict</i> • <i>Rules</i> • <i>Preparation</i> • <i>Expensive</i> • <i>Recipes</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Love to DR @arislife_ as he is the reason I eat predominantly raw food now. He is 71, can still run upstairs... (21, @chakabars) - Trevor Smith diagnosed with cancer... he is now cancer free (33, @chakabars) - I have ate 80-100% raw foods (39, @chakabars) - As much as a love food (obv) I do sometimes hate paying for it ... (22, @crueltyfreeclairy) - Not gonna lie, I've had a tub of nutritional yeast in the cupboard for about 6 months but have been to scared to use it because it looks like fish food... (34, @crueltyfreeclairy) - Before I opened @cookdailylondon #JME and I would eat at non-vegan establishments and make up our own Vegan Meals by selecting sides and shit!! Years later here we are!! Look at the scene now my bro!! (10, @kingcookdaily) - 4 YEARS VEGAN TODAY I've done a lot for the SCENE however I still feel alone!!! This journey can be a F#£KING lonely place!! Welcome to the kitchen (27, @@kingcookdaily) - Im contemplating taking a packed lunch just in case (17, @rachelama_) - There simply isn't time for us to wait until society becomes more accepting of veganism (21, @earthinged) - Growing up there was such stigma around the word vegan and I'll admit I assumed that vegan food was be weird, hippy, bland and unappetising but turns out I couldn't be more wrong. (4, @deliciouslyella)

<p>Taste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delicious • Satisfying • Indulgent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This fruit is called star apple, it tastes like custard jelly, coconut banana icecream... protects from cancer (32, @chakabars) - ... If you had told me it was their usual burger I'd have believed you. It has mayo and everything! Absolutely unreal. @mcdonalds please bring this to the UK im begging you. (9, @crueltyfreeclairy) - A bowl filled with plant based deliciousness... Yes I did eat the entire bowl, yes I loved it Living of plants of loving it I tell yah! (2, @rachelama_) - Super quick vegan toast heaven. Pan fried chickpeas for 5 mins or so with paprika, garlic salt and cayane pepper.... Plant powered happy days (26, @rachelama_) - turns out you can make unbelievably indulgent things without animal products, like this chocolate cake, which I used to lure you in to this post (4, 2deliciouslyella) - It's everything that I aspire to be as a community and I think it's everything that plant based cooking should be - fun, abundant, colourful, not preachy, easy and delicious (25, @deliciouslyella)
<p>Vegan diet mocked</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I love when ppl go "ewwww" to a vegan food. What's missing, the faeces? Pus? Parasites... (12, @chakabars) - I think sometimes there's this overwhelming feeling that vegan diets are so complicated, or really bland. I promise you neither are true! (23, @rachelama_)
<p>"Ethnic" vegan food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Plant based food in different cultures is not a new thing</i> • <i>Any dish can be 'veganised'</i> • <i>A lot of the food we already consume is vegan</i> • <i>You can still eat traditional foods</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is what vegan Ethiopian food looked like (20, @chakabars) - This is how vegan caribbean food looks (35, @chakabars) - We need more organic food stalls and less GMO supermarkets, who else agrees?... Love to all Ghanaians out there (38, @chakabars) - [sausage, beans, hash brown] (28, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [fry up] (32, @crueltyfreeclairy) - KWOUR MI LAO I made this for my Aunts Retirement Party! Traditionally it includes eggs and pigs blood! Obviously my version of this popular Lao party dish is VEGAN and the great this is that the "the elders" love it 😊 (5, @kingcookdaily) - NEW COOKDAILY SPECIAL. THE JME BOWL: JOLLOF RICE, FRIED PLANTAIN... (7, @kingcookdaily) - VEGAN SHEPERDS PIE.. my kids absolutrely love this time of day... (11, @kingcookdaily)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VEGAN SHEPERDS PIE.. my kids absolutely love this time of day... (11, @kingcookdaily) - VEGAN LASAGNA.. (12, @kingcookdaily) - [fry up] (15, @kingcookdaily) - [ackee & salt 'fish] (16, @kingcookdaily) - My mum made me vegan spring rolls and @truememati's mum made me vegan Icil Kofte love your mums especially when they make you Vegan food.. yaaas 😊😊😊 (30, @kingcookdaily) - Plant based diets across different cultures is not a new thing... and there is so much more to share to mainstream media about plant based diets around the world [Caribbean carnival] (5, @rachelama_)
<p>Self-promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promotion of personal brand</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ANNOUNCEMENT MY NEW RESTURAUNT IS AMLOST READY... I'd like to thank Wagamama for one of the biggest vegan food collaborations in the UK. England saw a major British food chain serving Asian food based on Japanese Cuisine work with a small independent vegan restaurant #COOKDAILY!!! It took the London Vegan Culture MAINSTREAM (8, @kingcookdaily) - ... my cookbook ain't no joke, please don't sleep on me (23, @kingcookdaily) - WE ARE OPENING A NON-PROFIT VEGAN DINER IN LONDON... income generated from the Unity Diner will have allowed us to run large scale vegan advertisement campagins in London (and hopefully more across the UK) (12, @earthlinged) - I'm so so so incredibly proud of this next step for Deliciously Ella. Standing in front of an entire freezer of our meals, the recipes we've spent years developing and testing in the deli, collecting all your feedback on and perfecting before bringing them to everyone ✨ Ready meals don't have the best reputation, but these are something completely different. All natural, no rubbish, full of veg, beans, fibre and so much flavour 🙌 Thank you @wholefoodsuk for your support on this, for sharing our excitement for plants and giving us this space to share our mission of making veggies cool. (16, @deliciouslyella) - P.136 of The Cookbook, if you haven't made them yet you need to (19, @deliciouslyella)

<p>'Considerate' consumption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consumption of certain brands as a solution to 'dying world'</i> • <i>Promotion of vegan brands/products</i> • <i>Industry responsibility to provide vegan option</i> • <i>Free market as solution to problem (neoliberal ideology)</i> • <i>Considerate consumption</i> • <i>Consumption as a 'free choice' to do the right thing</i> • <i>Brands uncritically promoted</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treated myself to my beloved @wagamama_uk but tried something different to normal (1, @crueltyfreeclairy) - Hellmann's vegan mayo... the fact that we don't have to live without mayo is 10/10 dontcha think (@crueltyfreeclairy) - ... If you had told me it was their usual burger I'd have believed you. It has mayo and everything! Absolutely unreal. @mcdonalds please bring this to the UK im begging you. (9, @crueltyfreeclairy) - @oatly have taken over so many of the boards at Kings Cross... Imagine how many people have seen this!!... (5, @crueltyfreeclairy) - ... these @sainsburys shroomdogs may have taken over - I know it's become kinda controversial to post McDonalds uh oh but this is what I ate so.. (15, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [Nando's vegan food] (23, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [Pret A Manger vegan coconut choco snack] (24, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [subway sandwich] (33, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [wagamama] (38, @crueltyfreeclairy) - Everyday I come home from work I put the kettle on & thank @tesco for taking the dairy out of these beauties (40, @crueltyfreeclairy) - [JME and King outside his restaurant] (2, @kingcookdaily) - POURING @oatly OUT FOR ALL THE DAIRY COWS #FuckDairy #GoVegan (31, @kingcookdaily) - [links to youtube for vegan recipies] - Your purchases decide their fate (13, @earthlinged)
<p>Excessive consumption & production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Overproduction as a problem that needs to be fixed</i> • <i>Bad health as a product of capitalism</i> • <i>Poor environment as a product of capitalism</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stop pretending that being overweight (a sickness created by capitalism) is a good thing... (image 6, @chakabars) - we seem to forget that North America was founded on the mess genocide of animals as well as people (27, @chakabars) - body dysmorphia that body builders are experiencing, is a human personification of the system of capitalism... (39, @chakabars) - Good riddance to the extreme overproduction and consumption of meat fish and dairy in the last 50 odd years. It's not sustainable. Times are changing, we are changing, and changing quickly! (5, @rachelama_) - Our consumption of animal products is killing the planet and of course killing billions upon billions of

	<p>animals. We call ourselves the most intelligent species whilst destroying our own home, the only home we've ever known. No other species upon this Earth destroys and consumes in the way in which we do. The only way we can make a difference is as individuals uniting to collectively take a stand against the industries which exploit, murder and destroy</p>
<p>Individual responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consumption is a moral practice</i> • <i>Individuals are responsible for fixing the plant, health, animal cruelty</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doctors wont make you healthy. Nutritionists wont make you slim... (image 9, @chakabars) - Trevor Smith diagnosed with cancer... he is now cancer free (33, @chakabars) - Whenever I hear anyone say "I would go vegan but I can't give up *insert name of food that you can definitely veganise*" I just want to scream... You don't have to give up anything as a vegan apart from animal cruelty (10, @crueltyfreeclairy) - I stood in this section for like 15 mins just looking at everything ahaha. Choice? What is this new concept? (7, @crueltyfreeclairy) - Us as individuals are making the change and it's amazing to see, the rise of plant-based eating is needed for our planet and the animals. (3, @rachelama_) - The more reactions shares and views on programs discussing lifestyles that reduce the consumption of meat, the more they will broadcast these topic thus spreading awareness! IT'S NOT A FAD!! (6, @rachelama_) - Your purchases decide their fate (13, @earthlinged) - There isn't time to wait, we need every vegan to speak up and spread veganism far and wide across every corner of the earth. Maybe that means talking about veganism to a friend or family member today, maybe that means joining your local activism groups. Whatever that may mean to you right now, I urge you to please act today, right now and into the future (21, @earthlinged) - It's easy to think our own actions don't matter but it adds up to a terrifying picture when you put it all together, and whilst I normally err away from controversy I can't not share this when it's so critical to our planets health (4, @deliciouslyella)
<p>Government and industry responsibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - France becomes first country to enforce all supermarkets to give food to the needy. (15, @chakabars) - School lunches go plant based! (24, @chakabars)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Industry should provide vegan option</i> • <i>Government bodies should encourage plant based eating</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School children should get free fruit breakfasts (29, @chakabars) - The more reactions shares and views on programs discussing lifestyles that reduce the consumption of meat, the more they will broadcast these topic thus spreading awareness! IT'S NOT A FAD!! (6, @rachelama_) - Following a meeting with the BFC last year, the article echos what Surge were told by them, that they would not place a ban on fur but would encourage designers to use other materials instead. Whilst this is a great thing, it does not guarantee designers won't use fur in the future and with the BFC refusing to ban fur, there are still no restrictions in place regarding what designers can exhibit on the catwalk in the future. (14, @earthinged) - Find them in @waitrose free from aisle from today, @wholefoodsuk from tomorrow and in @planetorganic and @bootsuk online later this week ❤️ (32, @deliciouslyella)
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