You Are Who You Eat With: Barriers to Adopting Animal-Free Diets

Author: Emily Franko

You Are Who You Eat With:
Barriers to Adopting Animal-Free Diets

Emily Franko

Advised by
Professor Juliet Schor

Boston College
Department of Sociology
May 2017

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Department of Sociology Honors Program
and
the MCAS Honors Program

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Professor Juliet Schor, for her guidance throughout this project. Her expertise and words of encouragement contributed greatly to the development and completion of this study. Second, I would like to thank Professor Paul Gray for his support as I wrote the proposal for this study, as well as the other students in the Fall 2016 Senior Thesis Seminar for their suggestions and critiques as I developed my proposal. I would also like to thank the many professors who encouraged me throughout this process and talked through my ideas for this project with me: Professor Christopher Constas, Professor Michael Malec, Professor Brian Gareau, and Professor Gustavo Morello. I would especially like to thank Professor Mark O'Connor for his mentorship over the past three years, for teaching me the importance of having a well-made head rather than a well-filled one, and for encouraging me to give the best of myself to the world—and to get my hands dirty along the way.

I would also like to thank all those who gave their time to participate in this study. I cannot state their names here, but I greatly appreciate their willingness to share their experiences with me for the sake of this project. I must also acknowledge Mashfiqur Khan from Boston College Research Services; his guidance regarding Qualtrics contributed greatly to the completion of this study. Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family members and friends who have supported me not only through this thesis but also throughout my academic journey thus far. Thank you for encouraging me in my passions and helping me discern how I can offer those passions to the world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In this study, I examine the barriers to successfully adopting vegetarian and vegan diets. While many people try to adopt these diets, not all are able to maintain them. What factors contribute to this failure to maintain vegetarianism and veganism? This study investigates the reasons for this lack of success by asking questions such as the following: Do people find it too expensive to buy vegetarian-friendly food? Are there not enough vegan options available in restaurants to commit to not eating animal products? Do gender norms affect success rates? Are meat and other animal products simply just too tempting not to eat? Does the stigma attached to veganism and vegetarianism deter people from maintaining these types of diets? How do vegetarians and vegans justify the exceptions they make within their diet? These inquiries seek to better understand whether the challenges to adopting vegetarian and vegan diets are primarily structural, cultural, or personal. In order to address these research questions, this study focuses on two types of "failed" vegetarians and vegans: individuals who tried to adopt these diets but now no longer follow them and individuals who currently identify as either vegetarian or vegan but make exceptions to their respective diets.

RATIONALE

In *Invitation to Sociology*, Peter Berger says that sociological investigation "is not the excitement of coming upon the totally unfamiliar, but rather the excitement of finding the familiar becoming transformed in its meaning" (Berger 1963:21). Food is one of the most familiar human experiences. It is a basic human need. For the majority of my life, food has carried a variety of meanings: energy, sustenance, pleasure, comfort, etc. Recently, however, I have come to encounter food in a new way. My diet is no longer based solely on my personal preferences or my health goals. I have come to understand my diet to be not only personal but

also political; my food choices are an opportunity for me to express my values and influence the economy in a way that favors these values. This thought process has led me to transition to a vegan diet, as it promotes more humane activity in our food system and reduces harm to our planet. I have thus experienced Berger's aforementioned statement in a personal way; my new knowledge of our food system's impact on the environment has transformed food's meaning in my own life, and I now make my food choices differently because of the new significance food holds. Meanings, however, are rarely stagnant. Therefore, I chose to investigate the familiar—our diets—through my thesis project to illuminate the significant but often overlooked meanings that these diets hold.

My investigation will "prick the bubble of pretense," as it is a study of "bad faith" (Berger 1963:143). Through my research, I aimed to expose an opportunity to shed the veil of this bad faith and enact our freedom. Berger says that to live in "bad faith" is to "pretend something is necessary that is in fact voluntary" (Berger 1963:143). By participating in bad faith, we evade our human freedom and the weight of making our own decisions (Berger 1963:143). Recognizing instances of bad faith in society, however, enables us to act upon our freedom:

> Society provides for the individual a gigantic mechanism by which he can hide from himself his own freedom. Yet this character of society as an immense conspiracy in "bad faith" is, just as in the case of the individual, but an expression of the possibility of freedom that exists by virtue of society. We are social beings and our existence is bound to specific social locations. The same social situations that can become traps of "bad faith" can also be occasions for freedom. Every social role can be played knowingly or blindly. And insofar as it is played knowingly, it can become a vehicle of our own decisions (Berger 1963:145).

This project has deemed the consumption of animal products to be an act of bad faith. People often consider meat and dairy to be normal and necessary elements of a healthful diet, despite

research that suggests that these products harm both our bodies and Earth. My study not only focuses on individuals who have recognized that the consumption of animal products is generally not necessary but also illuminates the ways in which society perpetuates this instance of bad faith. The subjects of my study have, at least for a time, recognized their social roles as food consumers and have attempted to "play this role knowingly" by abstaining from eating meat and other animal products. They have understood this role to be an "occasion for freedom" and have exercised this freedom by trying to adopt vegetarian or vegan diets. Many are successful in doing so, demonstrating that, for most, animal product consumption is in fact an act of bad faith. Yet, other people are unsuccessful in this attempt. Why do some people who, at least for a time, wanted to leave the system that perpetuates this bad faith find it too difficult to do so?

In this way, by answering this question and studying the barriers to successfully maintaining vegan and vegetarian diets, I investigated the social forces behind this message of bad faith—that meat and dairy consumption is necessary—in society. Do some barriers to vegetarianism and veganism expose the power relations at play within the food industry, as many people have vested interests in maintaining a successful meat and dairy industry? Is this bad faith incidental and simply perpetuated by inertia, as meat and dairy have been part of the common U.S. diet for many years? Is diet only a matter of appeasing our taste buds? In other words, are the barriers to vegetarianism and veganism structural, cultural, personal, or some combination of the three?

The findings of this study have environmental import, for barriers to vegetarianism and veganism inhibit more sustainable lifestyles, irrespective of the nature of these barriers. If my findings were to expose structural barriers to vegetarianism and veganism, my findings would also have political and economic import, for structural barriers imply that societal forces

intentionally perpetuated by human beings hinder one's ability to successfully maintain vegetarian and vegan diets. If this is the case, it is important to consider who benefits from these barriers and whom these barriers disempower. If my findings were to expose cultural barriers to vegetarianism and veganism, solutions within the social realm of society should be emphasized, and cultural norms should be examined and changed to reduce and eventually eliminate these barriers. It is, of course, important to consider how structure and culture influence and inform one another when thinking about possible solutions.

My study, thus, seeks to promote food and ecological justice. From my standpoint as a researcher, food justice is not just an issue of quantity. While food insecurity is a major issue that needs to be addressed in the U.S. and on a global scale, it is also an injustice to feel unable to eat the foods that best align with one's values regarding physical health, environmentalism, and/or animal cruelty. Because meat and dairy consumption is an instance of bad faith in our society, many people do not recognize that eating animal products (or not eating animal products) can be a conscious choice. By exposing the barriers to vegetarian and vegan diets, however, my study reveals that these barriers are, in many cases, impermanent. With this study, I hope to show that lifestyles that promote a less exploitative relationship with Earth are possible, as well as inspire further research and action regarding how to make those lifestyles more viable in our society. We have lived amidst food all our lives; in fact, we have lived *because of* food all our lives. But by approaching food choices from a sociological point of view, I aim to "[make] us see in a new light the very world in which we have lived all our lives" (Berger 1963:21).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature

My study had the potential to uncover a variety of barriers to successfully adopting vegetarian and vegan diets in society. My findings could have revealed that structural barriers hinder one's ability to fully embrace vegetarianism or veganism, but they also could have shown that cultural and personal barriers play a more significant role in deterring people from maintaining these diets. It is therefore important to understand several factors that influence diet—structural, cultural, and personal. I have thus explored three theoretical perspectives regarding influences on diet: cultural industrialization, class, and culture and identity. Given that a variety of factors influences one's diet, using three theoretical frameworks ensures that my literature review is nuanced in a way that reflects the complexity of my subject matter. Although these perspectives are diverse, each has been supported by sociological research; the use of these three perspectives in conjunction with one another therefore have allowed me to gain a holistic understanding of diet formation, particularly regarding the presence of meat and other animal products in one's diet. As these three perspectives complement one another, they, at least in part, compensate for each other's weaknesses by addressing one another's blind spots.

Cultural Industrialization

In "The Cultural Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," Theodore W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer describe culture under capitalism as being controlled by those that hold economic power; they shape the culture so that it becomes a means to their own ends—an industry from which they can profit (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:3-4). According to Adorno and Horkheimer, all aspects of culture—films, art, radio, magazines, even the layout of the city—are set up in a way that makes the worker "more subservient to his adversary—the

absolute power of capitalism" (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:3). In this way, culture is no longer a product of history and group identity; rather, the upper class mechanizes the culture in order to serve its own interests.

Adorno and Horkheimer maintain that, under capitalism, "the whole world is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry" (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944:7). Food is no exception. The food industry has undergone dramatic changes in recent years; in fact, for the majority of human existence, the idea of a "food industry" was a foreign concept. People ate what they grew and what was available to them in their regions. With increased technology and globalization, however, human beings have commodified food; food is no longer only a matter of sustenance and survival but also of power and profit. Our global agri-food system focuses not on the farms that grow the food but rather on the corporations that sell it (Sage 2012:15). In his analysis of this system, Colin Sage remarks that "it is important to recognise how central food has been in establishing global divisions of labour and maintaining the enormous disparities of wealth, power, and opportunity that result" (Sage 2012:20). Food is being passed through the filter of the culture industry.

Consumers have consequently become more subservient to the private companies that took advantage of open trade markets, espoused under the philosophy of liberalism, to increase their consumer base and profits (Sage 2012:23). Meat production worldwide has increased more than five times since 1950 (Wrenn 2011:10), indicating an expanding market for revenues. As such, not only food processing companies but also a variety of other industries have become involved in the meat industry and therefore have a vested interest in ensuring that this industry thrives:

> …the entire agri-food system is clearly underpinned by a very wide range of ancillary industries, services and institutions. These

> include manufacturers and suppliers of machinery, equipment, materials, energy, advertising and public relations; financial services, providing a range of functions, from the provision of credit and insurance against loss, to fostering more speculative activities such as trading in commodity futures; and "food governance", encompassing the regulation of food standards, from the global level by the Codex Alimentarius through to national food safety authorities. Finally, the agri-food system is underpinned by continuous research and development conducted, for example, by publicly funded, university-based scientists, as well as those working in the laboratories of the major food companies themselves, although the distinction between them is becoming increasingly unclear as university facilities and personnel are used for product development (Sage 2012:31-32).

Thus, as food production becomes industrialized, private food-processing companies gain power as other industries become increasingly reliant upon them to survive in the current globalized market. This reliance denotes the totalistic way in which these companies control the industry and influence consumer actions.

Globalization has increased the power of these companies and their influence not only within the food system, however, but also in the cultures in which this food system functions:

> Globalisation of the agri-food system is not simply about extending the reach of private sector actors, or measured by rising volumes of internationally traded goods, however, but embodies the creation of new norms and standards, regulations and institutions, consumption patterns and scientific practices. von Braun and Diaz-Bonilla (2008), for example, refer to the "science, knowledge, and information content of the agri-food system becoming increasingly internationalised" as evidence of globalisation. While this normative observation may be correct, the increasing application of science and technology developed for the purpose of maximising agricultural output rather than meeting local food and livelihood needs comes at a cost. Western scientific knowledge invariably displaces empirically derived and context specific local knowledge that has evolved over generations and which has served to sustain livelihoods in often risk-prone environments (Sage 2012:23).

Although a brief historical analysis of the way in which human beings have produced and gathered food would reveal that food industrialization is a recent trend, this tendency has been normalized and naturalized and has caused various harmful food production practices to be taken for granted. These new norms serve to reinforce a power structure that benefits large corporations and minimizes the agency of those who hold less power in the industrialization process.

In the meat industry, specifically, this normalization can be seen in the use of the slaughterhouse system to kill animals for food. Human beings have come to believe that it is their natural right to treat animals as inferior, as this hierarchy is the "natural order of things" (Taylor 2013:541). In the current globalized society, nonhuman animals are to be exploited as resources; "like those segments of the human population who are seen as biopolitical threats or drains on the state…, the lives of nonhuman animals are considered not for their own sake but only in terms of how they may benefit or endanger those humans about whom the state is concerned" (Taylor 2013:543).

Throughout this process, it is not only the animals being prepared for slaughter that lose their sense of agency, for farmers, factory workers, and consumers also lose their power to act of their own accord in this slaughterhouse system. Meat companies require that animals be bred in certain ways in order to meet production standards. Pigs, for example, are now raised to have larger litters, less fat on their backs, and to be more obedient. These changes in breeding practices, however, are not choices of farmers but rather mandates of meat corporations, therefore specifying the conditions in which farmers can raise their livestock (Taylor 2013:544). Slaughterhouse employees, too, lose their agency, as they are subjected to "spatial partitioning, hierarchical observation and arrangement, surveillance, and assessment of workers" (Taylor

2013:546) in their work environments. Finally, the public's agency is also reduced, as media messages regarding meat production are often misleading and therefore bring about misinformed decisions about diet. The "happy meat" campaign exemplifies this distorted messaging, as it provides a false sense that consumers, by buying "happy meat," promote the protection of livestock rather than illuminating the way in which their purchase facilitates an exploitative, violent process (Taylor 2013:548). In this way, profit-seeking corporations augment their own influence in the food system by shaping the beliefs of others involved in this system and controlling the conditions in which these individuals make their food decisions, ensuring that these choices benefit the company and do not deviate from systemic norms.

Dr. Melanie Joy, a social psychologist and activist in the vegan social movement, has termed this totalistic perspective as "carnism." Carnism is "the invisible belief system, or ideology, that conditions us to eat certain animals" (Joy 2015). It is a system of oppression, indicating that there is an active oppressor involved. As discussed above, various companies and industries have a vested interest in sustaining this belief system, for it creates profit. Meanwhile, since carnism is largely invisible because it has been normalized, individuals do not perceive their agency to resist these societal and systemic forces. Carnism, thus, inhibits our natural empathy and defends against any actions (i.e. vegetarianism, veganism) that are deviant from its norms (Joy 2015).

Class

Various authors have explored the relationship between diet and socio-economic status. Pierre Bourdieu elucidates this relationship in "Distinction: A Social Critique in the Judgment of Taste." Bourdieu puts forth the theory that a person's class determines his or her taste in food, clothing, art, music, etc. About food specifically, Bourdieu says that "it is clear that tastes in

food cannot be considered in complete independence of the other dimensions of the relationship to the world, to others and to one's own body, through which the practical philosophy of each class is enacted" (Bourdieu 1979:36). According to his research, "plenty" and "freedom" characterize the meals of the working class (Bourdieu 1979:36), as they often consist of large dishes able to be shared easily, such as soups or pasta. Form, however, characterizes the bourgeoisie's relationship to food (Bourdieu 1979:37); both what they eat and how they eat reveals a concern for appearances—both physical and social (Bourdieu 1979:37-38).

Aguilar specifically studies the relationship between diet and class in relation to meat and dairy consumption within the context of intentional communities throughout the U.S. She concludes that class is a major determining factor in whether or not individuals eat meat and dairy. Her subjects that identified as middle-class viewed the decision to willingly abstain from these products as "a logical extension of their commitment to nonviolence" (Aguilar 2015:80), while subjects with lower-class backgrounds saw this decision as "a bourgeois class privilege" (Aguilar 2015:80). This conclusion supports the previous findings of Mary Rizzo's research into the "Minneapolis Co-op Wars" during the 1970s. Rizzo found that "counterculturalists" during this period adopted a diet in accord with their political and philosophical ideologies. However, these individuals often failed to acknowledge how their class background shaped these beliefs, therefore ignoring the ways in which class influenced their diets (Aguilar 2015:80-81).

Aguilar specifically discusses how class impacts attitudes toward meat and dairy consumption in an intentional community in the Northeast region of the U.S. called Acorn. The upper- and middle-class members of this community, like the activists of the 1970s studied by Rizzo, saw their decision to be vegans as a way to "live their convictions" (Aguilar 2015:90). However, the experience of another community member named Joseph, who was raised in a

lower-class family, illuminates the ways in which a vegan diet is connected to socio-economic status. Joseph felt excluded from his community and looked down upon by the middle- and upper-class members for his desire to eat meat. He even proposed a plan to his community for how to ensure that they bought meat from farms that used ethical practices, which the rest of the community rejected, suggesting that he bought meat with his personal funds (Aguilar 2015:90). During his interview, Joseph said, "Personally, I think this [diet] is about class. When you don't have much money, you eat whatever is on the table. And if you do have a lot of money, then you can afford to be vegan. It is more expensive to not eat meat, and some people just can't afford to do that" (Aguilar 2015:90).

Ocejo also investigates the relationship between taste and class. His investigation of upscale butcher shops in New York City, however, challenges Aguilar's findings that meat eating is often looked down upon by the upper class. Trends toward high quality "craft" and "artisanal" food made locally brought about upscale butcher shops throughout the U.S. (Ocejo 2014:108). The popularity of these shops challenge the notion that meat is more desired in diets of the lower class:

> New upscale butcher shops are unique in their industry because their workers hold and promote a meat philosophy that espouses good taste in meat and suits omnivorous "foodie" tastes. This philosophy encompasses several more tenets of where "meat" should come from and how meat "should" be produced, and promotes what "good" taste in meat is. Food in general is a significant indicator of high social status, but today the lines separating "high" from "low" have been redrawn from those that demarcated French haute cuisine … Cuisines and food products in the current symbolic economy, for instance, can get elevated to an elite status for being "simple" and "handmade" on a "small scale" (Johnston and Baumann, 2010). The philosophy of new upscale butcher shops reflects these ideals for meat, and restructures the value system that determines meat quality (Ocejo 2014:109).

Ocejo's research is evidence of "cultural omnivorousness," the trend that some "elites [are] becoming more open to incorporating some examples of low- and middlebrow culture into their consumption habits" (Ocejo 2014:107) named by Peterson after studying musical tastes in 1992 (Ocejo 2014:207). However, it should be noted that, although these findings contradict ideas about what is traditionally eaten in upper-class diets versus lower-class diets, this study still supports the assertion that class determine one's dietary choices. These butcher shops are specifically "upscale" and espouse values, such as ethical animal treatment and quality of taste, associated with the upper class.

When considered together, Aguilar and Ocejo's studies illustrate a major class-based factor regarding diet: access. Members of the middle and upper classes have both the financial means and cultural capital to accommodate diets such as vegetarianism and veganism. They also, however, have the freedom to buy meat from upscale butcher shops. For members of the lower class, however, efforts to adopt vegetarian and vegan diets might be particularly costly, time-consuming, and inconvenient due to the circumstances to which their socio-economic status obliges them (Wrenn 2011:19). In general, members of the middle and upper class have access to a wider variety of food items, while members of the lower class are typically restricted in their diet due to a lack of resources—both financial and cultural.

Culture and Identity

In "Deciphering a Meal," Mary Douglas explores the idea of food as code. If food is a code, she asks, what is its message (Douglas 1972:61)? Food, thus, is a language that expresses the systems that constitute the social order:

> If food is treated as code, the messages it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries. Like sex, the

> taking of food has a social component, as well as a biological one. Food categories therefore encode social events (Douglas 1972:61).

People's diets are not only a matter of personal preference; rather, they are a product of an individual's social environment and reflect the ways human beings see themselves and the world around them.

Meat consumption and the active decision to abstain from eating meat are therefore linked to one's culture and identity. In a study regarding public reluctance to eat less meat as part of a sustainable diet, for example, Macdiarmid, Douglas, and Campbell note the following:

> Fischler (2011) describes how the medical discipline of nutrition tends to overlook the importance of social aspects of eating, and we would argue that there is a danger that this could occur in tackling dietary change to limit environmental damage. Roxin (2005) describes food as a *social vehicle*, which serves functions beyond nutrition. To emerge from this study were some, but certainly not all, of the potential socio-cultural barriers to reducing meat consumption. Pleasure, status, habit, social pressures and social norms are powerful determinants of eating behaviours and have been associated with eating meat … Eating meat is the dominant and normalised dietary habit in many developed countries … and therefore encouraging dietary change will be difficult to achieve without shifting social norms (Macdiarmid et al. 2015:492).

In this way, these researchers' study brought to light the way that food, culture, and identity are connected and the ways in which this connection could potentially present a barrier to reducing meat consumption.

Julia Twigg holds that meat resides at the top of the hierarchy of foods, as "it stands in a sense for the very idea of food itself" (Twigg 1983:21). The meanings of meat, however, transcend a form of sustenance and carry cultural significance as well; meat is associated with qualities such as "strength, aggression, passion, [and] sexuality" (Twigg 1983:22). Eating meat, then, is believed to promote these qualities in human beings who eat it. Despite nutritional studies suggesting otherwise, meat has become associated with athleticism and body-building—

an association utilized by the meat industry through athletic sponsorships to promote their brands (Twigg 1983:23). Meat is also believed to encourage a fierce and aggressive temperament, which often translates into courage and bravery. Assertive sexuality, too, is thought to be born of a diet with large amounts of meat, as meat's supposed ability to incite passion results in a stimulation of lust (Twigg 1983:23-24).

Because of the association of meat with these traits, meat, and particularly red meat, is considered especially important for men. The cultural meanings of meat mirror many cultural meanings of masculinity: force, muscle, strength, dominance. Meat, thus, is generally accepted as a necessary element of men's diets, for it is responsible for the increase of these qualities in men. Vegetarian food is therefore often seen as inappropriate and inadequate for men for its lesser status. Culturally diffused images of vegetarians present "pale faced and slightly feeble" (Twigg 1983:24) individuals—the opposite of the muscular, dominating images that embody culturally accepted ideas of masculinity (Twigg 1983:24).

While a meat-free diet is associated with weakness according to social norms, vegetarians and vegans have also used their choice to abstain from meat as a way to challenge the social hierarchy that establishes these norms. Like meat, vegetarian and vegan foods have taken on societal meanings of their own:

> Put briefly, … vegetarianism asserts the existence and importance of a different sort of 'power' and 'vigour' from that traditionally embodied in meat; the 'life' in vegetarian food is closely connected with images of lightness, sunshine and eternal youthfulness in conscious opposition to what is perceived as meat's embodiment of death, decay and corruption, and these opposing qualities underwrite a series of political, aesthetic and moral perceptions (Twigg 1983:29).

Individuals have harnessed these meanings of vegetarianism (and veganism, for this diet has similar implications) to assert their unwillingness to subscribe to and support a hierarchical

social system that privileges certain groups over others, such as males over females and humans over non-human animals. To these individuals, meat is associated not with honorable qualities such as strength and courage but rather with destructive traits, such as cruelty and violence, used to systemically oppress particular groups (Twigg 1983:27). A rejection of meat has therefore come to symbolize a rejection of injustices such as sexism and speciesism. As a result, vegetarianism and veganism have become, in many cases, identifiers of individuals committed to fighting for social justice in a variety of settings.

One expected setting in which veganism has been used to work towards a social justice issue is the vegan abolitionist movement, which aims to end all use and exploitation of non-human animals (Wrenn 2011:11). This movement maintains that, due to the current neoliberal capitalist economic system, non-human animals are seen as commodities to be used for the benefit of human beings. Those involved generally believe that these animals are sentient beings and therefore should not be exploited in this way (Wrenn 2011:11). As a result, many individuals have rejected the commodification of non-human animals by committing to a vegan lifestyle as "a consumer-based site of resistance" (Wrenn 2011:16). The vegan abolitionist movement thus recognizes that "what we choose to purchase and consume can become an important political act" (Wrenn 2011:17) and that "by continuing to consume products which represent objectionable ethical practices, the consumer is responsible for upholding that injustice" (Wrenn 2011:17).

Vegetarianism and veganism are not solely linked to justice issues concerning animal rights, however. Because of these diets' associations with morality and resistance against the social hierarchy, other social movements have also adopted them in their efforts to fight for non-animal related causes. Pacifism, in many different settings, for example, has been historically

linked to vegetarianism (Twigg 1983:27). Vegetarianism has also been connected with the feminist movement since the 1880s, as meat has been understood to exemplify the "egotism, selfishness and coldness of heart that denies the natural empathy between human beings and beasts" (Twigg 1983:28). The movement claimed that these same forces cause the systemic oppression of women in society and therefore embraced vegetarianism as a method to both symbolically and tangibly counter these forces.

Perhaps most surprisingly, however, is the adoption of veganism by the punk subculture. Punk, according to the participants in a 2015 study conducted by Elizabeth Cherry, "describe[s] a state of mind and a willingness to change society" (Cherry 2015:59) through a "DIY, or 'do it yourself' approach" (Cherry 2015:57). While punk's main avenue for this change is independent music, veganism also plays a major role in this subculture. Cherry found that the individuals she interviewed involved in punk subculture see their adoption of veganism as "an identity shift and a private form of low-conflict action" (Cherry 2015:60). For punks, making personal choices that align with one's beliefs and identity are critical in efforts to change the larger social system (Cherry 2015:69). As "these vegans were not 'pushed' into veganism by their personal problems, but were rather 'pulled' by their social contacts" (Cherry 2015:66), this study also demonstrates the way in which one's culture and social setting influence his or her identity.

As demonstrated by the association between vegetarianism and veganism and various social movements, members of these movements have used these diets to indicate their commitment to issues of social justice. Twigg summarizes the link between vegetarianism and veganism and social justice below:

> Vegetarianism … is not only a reflected version of the hierarchy. It also challenges and disrupts the meaning contained in the hierarchical arrangement. Thus it presents vegetarian food not just negatively in terms of avoidance or abstinence from the

> undesirable, but in terms that stress its own positive and superior qualities. It is something of itself and not just dominant food minus meat (Figure 3.2). This is extended into the way vegetarianism as a way of life and commitment is perceived. Vegetarian food is also wholefood and as such links with a series of other positive images of wholeness—moral, psychological, medical—that are part of this milieu (Twigg 1983:28).

Vegetarianism and veganism, thus, are not simply matters of taste but of personal and political identity.

Methodological Literature

In this study, I used intensive interviews and a survey to collect data. Intensive interviews are used to collect qualitative data and utilize a semi-structured format (Gray et al. 2007:156). One of this method's major strengths, therefore, is that it allows for flexibility within the conversations (Gray et al. 2007:159). As my research is highly inductive, this flexibility was important, for in my interviews I was be able to probe for additional information about topics that the interviewee finds relevant to the study. While I had ideas about potential barriers to vegetarianism and veganism based on my own experience and preliminary reading prior to these conversations, these semi-structured interviews allowed me to uncover barriers that I had not previously encountered. Additionally, intensive interviews allow for in-depth conversation about a topic. This potential for in-depth discussion was of particular importance in my study, as there are several potential reasons why someone decides to become a vegetarian or vegan or to revert back to an omnivorous diet after attempting vegetarianism or veganism; often individuals consider multiple motivations in these decisions. The detailed, nuanced descriptions of one's experience as a vegetarian or vegan obtained from my interviews thus guarded against an oversimplification of the issue.

The method of intensive interviewing, however, also presents limitations within sociological research. These limitations include the following: difficulty generalizing due to small sample sizes, difficulty replicating the study due to lack of standardization during the interview process, difficulty identifying interviewer bias, and difficulty coding large amounts of qualitative data (Gray et al. 2007:172-173). To combat these potential weaknesses, I also utilized survey research in my study. As surveys are typically used for deductive research (Gray et al. 2007:146), I used my survey to test the variables that interviewees' discussed as being determinants in their lack of success following vegetarian or vegan diets. Surveys are easily distributed and therefore allow for larger sample sizes. Generalizations made based on survey studies, thus, are often more legitimate than generalizations made from interview studies. Unlike interview questions, survey questions are standardized and therefore reduce risk of bias. Survey data is also typically quantitative and therefore easier to code. It also provides an opportunity for statistical analysis; this analysis complemented my highly qualitative interview data. However, in-depth, open-ended responses, which are important to this study (as discussed above), are hard to capture using a survey. My interview and survey data will therefore buttress one another, as these methods compensate for many of the other's weaknesses.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TOPIC

My research was inductive in nature. There are many potential explanations for "failed vegetarianism/veganism"—structural, cultural, and personal (as noted above in the literature review). Through my study, I aimed to explore these potential barriers in order to enhance our understanding of people's diets regarding meat and other animal products.

For my study, I first conceptualized the dependent variable—failed vegetarianism and failed veganism. To do so, I determined four categories of "failed" vegetarians/vegans:

1) individuals who have attempted a vegetarian diet but now eat meat

2) individuals who identify as vegetarian but allow for certain exceptions in their vegetarian diet (e.g. eats fish, eats meat on holidays, etc.)

3) individuals who have attempted a vegan diet but now are vegetarian or eat meat

4) individuals who identify as vegan but allow for certain exceptions in their vegan diet (e.g. eats eggs, flexible diet when traveling, etc.)

As my research is inductive in nature, it was important that I remained open to learning about new independent variables that influence successful and unsuccessful attempts at vegetarianism and veganism through my research. The following list therefore contains variables that I identified as potential barriers prior to collecting data and variables that I discovered were relevant through the data collection process: motivation for adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet, prevalence of meat consumption in family of origin, willingness to inconvenience him/herself or others to adhere to diet, feelings of stigmatization or alienation, presence of support network for maintaining an "alternative" diet, feelings of agency within one's diet, accessibility of vegetarian or vegan food options, rigidity of perspective on sustainable/ethical eating practices, lack of nutritional value in vegetarian/vegan diets, personal cravings for foods containing animal products, lack of time to cook vegetarian/vegan food, and gender. I operationalized these variables in the following ways:

Motivation for Adopting a Vegetarian or Vegan Diet

During interviews, I asked interviewees why they originally adopted a vegetarian or vegan diet, allowing them to provide an open-ended response. In my survey, I asked respondents to rank three motivations for their adoption of a vegetarian or vegan diet: concern for health, concern for environmental sustainability, and concern for animals.

Prevalence of Meat Consumption in Family of Origin

In order to determine the role that socialization and upbringing play in shaping the consumption of animal products in one's diet, I inquired about the food customs of participants' families of origin. During interviews, I asked what their experience with food was like growing up, what their family food culture was like, and if any members of their immediate or extended family were vegetarians or vegans. In the survey, I asked more pointed questions about their experience with food during childhood, such as how often respondents' families ate meat while growing up and if any members of their immediate or extended family were vegetarian or vegan.

Willingness to Inconvenience Him/Herself or Others to Adhere to Diet

This variable inquires how respondents handle situations in which eating is a social activity. I coded any discussion of an interviewee's vegetarian or vegan diet being an imposition on another person under this variable. This variable also included any discussion of others' (i.e. partner, spouse, children, etc.) reliance on the interviewee for food provision. In the survey, I asked respondents to rank various statements regarding how much specific social situations involving food (i.e. having to regularly prepare food for others, relying on others to prepare their food) influenced their decision to move away from or make exceptions within their vegetarian or vegan diets.

Feelings of Stigmatization and Alienation

As vegetarians and vegans engage in non-normative behavior, they sometimes encounter feelings of stigmatization or alienation for their choice to adhere to these diets. During interviews, I measured this variable by inquiring about reactions of family members and friends to their chosen diets, as well as asking about situations in which they felt uncomfortable making the choice to not eat meat or other animal products. In the survey, respondents were asked to rank

statements that measured feelings of stigmatization, such as "I stopped following a vegetarian/vegan diet because my family/friends disapproved of my decision" and "It would have been easier to maintain a vegetarian/vegan diet if there were not a negative stigma associated with vegetarianism or veganism in society."

Presence of Support Network for Maintaining an "Alternative" Diet

I measured this variable in two main ways. First, I asked how the respondents' friends and families reacted when they first adopted a vegetarian or vegan diet. Second, I asked respondents if other members of their family or close circle of friends are also vegetarian or vegan (or were also vegetarian or vegan when respondents followed these diets).

Feelings of Agency Within One's Diet

Because an omnivorous diet is a social norm, society is therefore organized in a way that privileges this diet. Vegetarians or vegans might therefore feel like they have little agency in their diets. To measure these feelings of agency, interviewees were directly asked if they felt like they had agency within their own diet. Several interviewees made statements pertinent to this question at other points throughout the conversation as well, and these statements were coded under this variable. The survey tested this variable by asking respondents to rank statements such as "I feel in control of my food choices."

Accessibility of Vegetarian or Vegan Food Options

During interviews, discussion of lack of options in restaurants, dining halls, and other public eating settings, as well as limited financial resources to buy vegetarian or vegan food, were coded as accessibility issues. I asked more specifically about these issues in the survey, asking them to rank statements regarding accessibility of vegetarian and vegan food in grocery stores

and restaurants. I also asked if socio-economic status prevented them from buying vegetarian and vegan foods.

Rigidity of Perspective on Sustainable/Ethical Eating Practices

Some participants expressed a shift in perspective on their diets from a more rigid, "black-and-white" perspective, believing that eating any meat or other animal product was unhealthy for the environment or incongruent with their personal values, to a more flexible, nuanced perspective in which they believed they could incorporate meat and other animal products into a sustainable diet and/or their personal value system. As this shift occurred over a longer period of time, most data for this variable was collected during interviews. However, some survey respondents indicated this shift in perspective in open-ended survey responses.

Lack of Nutritional Value in Vegetarian/Vegan Diets

Some respondents pointed to vegetarian or vegan diets as a cause of physical health problems, such as fatigue or vitamin deficiency. These responses were coded under this variable. Lack of nutritional value in vegetarian or vegan diets was discussed during interviews in response to open-ended questions about difficulties adhering to these diets. This variable was then further tested in the survey by asking respondents to rank statements such as "I stopped following a vegetarian or vegan diet because it was hurting my health."

Personal Cravings for Foods Containing Animal Products

I coded statements made during interviews that expressed a desire to stray from a vegetarian or vegan diet due to cravings for meat or other animal products under this variable. The survey further tested this variable by asking respondents to rank statements such as "It would have been easier to maintain a vegetarian or vegan diet if I did not like the taste of non-vegetarian or non-vegan foods." I also asked self-identifying vegetarians and vegans what exceptions they make to

their diet. In the possible responses, I included the statement "I will eat non-vegetarian or non-vegan foods when I crave them."

Lack of Time to Cook Vegetarian/Vegan Food

I coded statements in both interview and survey responses that expressed busyness or a lack of time to prepare vegetarian or vegan food under this variable.

Gender

I measured this variable using the categories of male, female, and other (please identify).

UNITS OF ANALYSIS

My data came from various individuals who fit into one of the four previously explained categories of failed vegetarianism/veganism. I used a snowball sampling technique for interviews. I also recruited participants for my study in person at the 2016 Boston Veg Food Fest, as well as by word of mouth among various social networks to which I am connected. Red Lentil, a vegetarian restaurant in Watertown, and the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry newsletter advertised the opportunity to participate in my study through an interview. I distributed the survey via my personal social media and e-mail (many vegetarian and vegan groups online declined to share my survey with their members, as they have a rule about not posting advertisements for studies on their websites). Others also shared the survey on social media—both individuals and groups, such as Climate Justice Boston College and Real Food BC. However, the survey was not limited to Boston College students.

Interviews and the survey were open to anyone over the age of 18 who fit into one of the four specified categories. For my interviews, I chose to interview people outside of the Boston College community, as Boston College's dining options and meal plan do not reflect a typical dining experience. The two Boston College students that I did interview did not follow

vegetarian or vegan diets exclusively at Boston College, if at all. However, given that I recruited for my study throughout Boston, most participants lived in Boston or its surrounding areas (although some interviewees lived in other areas as well). Although I was conscious of gender balance for my interview sample, it was difficult to find males to interview, resulting in a 7:3 female to male ratio for my interview sample. The majority of survey responses also identified as female (specific survey demographics are discussed in the "Data Analysis" section of this paper and can also be found in Appendix A).

DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY

For my data collection, I conducted a series of 10 intensive interviews to determine the barriers to adhering to a diet free of meat and other animal products. These interviews were semi-structured to allow for flexibility within the conversation and to complement my inductive research model. Interviews took place either at a mutually agreed upon public location in the Boston area, such as a café, or via Skype (for participants who did not live in the Boston area). Interviews were approximately 30-45 minutes in length. The interview script used during these conversations can be found below:

Current Eating Habits

1. Please tell me about your current eating habits. Which of the following four categories best describes you?

    1) You have attempted a vegetarian diet but now eat meat.

    2) You identify as vegetarian but allow for certain exceptions in your diet (e.g. eat fish, eat meat on holidays, etc.).

    3) You have attempted a vegan diet but now are a vegetarian or eat meat.

4) You identify as vegan but allow for certain exceptions in your diet (e.g. eat eggs, flexible diet when traveling, etc.).

2. For how long have you been eating this way?

Eating Habits During Childhood/Adolescence

3. Please tell me about your experience with food growing up. What did you like/dislike generally? How did you decide what to eat on a daily basis?

4. What was your family food culture like?

5. Were any members of your family vegetarian or vegan when you were growing up? If so, how did this family member explain this choice to you, if at all? What were your reactions to this person's diet at the time?

5. How would you categorize your family's socio-economic status as you were growing up? Did you see this status influence your family's diet in any way, and if so, how?

Decision to Adopt Vegetarian/Vegan Diet

6. When did you first try to adopt a vegetarian/vegan diet? How long did you follow this diet?

7. Why did you decide to adopt a vegetarian/vegan diet?

8. What were the reactions of your family/friends when you adopted this diet? Were they supportive, indifferent, hostile, curious, etc.?

Obstacles to Maintaining Vegetarian/Vegan Diet

If category 1 or 3:

9. How long were you a vegetarian/vegan before moving away from this type of diet?

10. Why did you stop following a vegetarian/vegan diet? What specific experiences/influences led you to that decision?

If category 2 or 4:

11. For how long have you been mostly a vegetarian/vegan?

12. What types of exceptions or accommodations do you make in your diet that do not strictly adhere to a vegetarian/vegan diet? Why do you make these exceptions in your diet?

All interviewees:

13. What is/was the hardest part about being a vegetarian/vegan?

14. Have you ever been in a situation in which you've felt uncomfortable making the choice to not eat meat/other animal products? What were the circumstances?

15. What would make it easier for you to maintain a vegetarian/vegan diet?

Current Influences on Eating Habits

16. Are many of your friends vegetarians and/or vegans or have tried to adopt vegetarian and/or vegan diets?

17. Do you feel like you have agency in your diet? That is, do you feel like you are able to choose to eat the foods you want, or do you feel like there are external restrictions that dictate what you do and do not eat? If so, what are they?

18. What kind of messages do you see in the media (commercials, food branding, billboards, etc.) about meat and dairy products? What is your reaction to these messages? Have they influenced you at all in your decision to eat or not eat meat and dairy (if applicable)?

19. Has your current socio-economic status influenced your decision to go vegetarian/vegan and/or eventually move away from a vegetarian/vegan diet?

20. How do/did you see your decision to be a vegetarian/vegan fit into your identity as a whole, if at all? Is/was it a significant part of who you are? If so, why? If not, why not?

From these interviews, I determined a series of independent variables that seemed to affect one's lack of success in adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet. I then created a survey using

Qualtrics to further test these variables, inquiring about the topics discussed during my conversations with interviewees. The survey yielded 208 completed responses (Appendix A indicates that 235 agreed to the statement of informed consent, but 208 finished the entire survey). Questions and results for this survey can be found in Appendix A.

DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGY

My data was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. I transcribed all ten interviews and manually coded their data. As my survey data was primarily quantitative, I processed this data using Qualtrics and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). I used T-tests to compare several variables and determine if there were statistically significant differences in survey data.

DATA ANALYSIS

For this study, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews and collected 208 survey responses. For more convenient reference during the data analysis, the four categories of respondents are listed again below:

1) has attempted a vegetarian diet but now eats meat

2) identifies as vegetarian but allows for certain exceptions in his/her vegetarian diet (e.g. eats fish, eats meat on holidays, etc.)

3) has attempted a vegan diet but now is vegetarian or eats meat

4) identifies as vegan but allows for certain exceptions in his/her vegan diet (e.g. eats eggs, flexible diet when traveling, etc.)

When category or group numbers of participants are used throughout the data analysis, they refer to this list of categories.

After ten interviews, my research began to reach a point of saturation; I received many similar responses to various interview questions. The following chart provides a brief background for the interviewees that participated in this study (all names have been changed to protect the confidentiality agreement made with interviewees):

Name	Age	Gender	Race	Category Number	Time as Vegetarian/Vegan
Layla	19	Female	White	4	Just over 1 year
Adam	36	Male	Black	2	2.5 years
Emma	27	Female	White	1	4 years
Connor	21	Male	White	3	3 months
Leah	24	Female	White	2	9 years
Abigail	27	Female	White	2	8 years
Maddie	22	Female	White	3	4 months
Peyton	22	Male	White	1	3 months
Tess	44	Female	White	1	18 years
Charlotte	54	Female	White	2	36 years

Demographics of survey respondents can be found in Appendix A. It is important to highlight that the majority of participants—in both interviews and the survey—were young, white females from the northeastern region of the U.S. (survey respondents were 85.62% white, 85.62% female, and 76.03% from the Northeast). These demographics must be considered when interpreting the data. The lack of ethnic, gender, and regional diversity might affect this study's findings, as more perspectives from other intersectional identities and other regions could have yielded different results. In order to generalize this study's findings to more of the population, a study that includes more gender, ethnic, and regional diversity is necessary.

Social Barriers

The most salient barriers described during my interviews were social. Here, I define a barrier as "social" if the full adoption of a vegetarian or vegan diet is hindered by the influence of other people's words and/or behavior. Interviewees described three main types of social barriers:

1) A vegetarian/vegan diet is an imposition on others and causes social situations involving food to be awkward.
2) Motivations for vegetarian/vegan diets are not generally understood in society. Comments made by others to interviewees about their vegetarian/vegan diets attempted to alienate or stereotype them.
3) Eating meat is a social norm. Meat is therefore very present in restaurants, grocery stores, etc. It takes both effort and knowledge to go against this social norm.

Vegetarianism/Veganism as an Imposition on Others or Source of Awkwardness/Rudeness

Interviewees described their vegetarian or vegan diets as being an imposition on others or as the cause of awkwardness in social situations involving food. Several respondents talked about the ways in which their vegetarian or vegan diets were particularly difficult to maintain when they were living or eating with their parents. Since their parents were often the ones cooking meals for the family, some interviewees found it to be an imposition on their parents to have to learn to prepare a new kind of cuisine to accommodate one member of the family. Abigail, a 27 year old white female, grew up in a family that ate meat regularly, with the exception of pork, as her father was Jewish. At shared family meals, which happened twice a day (breakfast and dinner), it was always expected that she and her brothers ate whatever her mother cooked for them. Her adoption of vegetarianism, therefore, disrupted her family's

normal ways of eating. Abigail described her mother's reaction when she came home from college for the first time after adopting a vegetarian diet and how those reactions influenced her to move away from a stricter vegetarian diet:

> I remember coming home for a holiday and visiting for Christmas and telling my mom that I wasn't going to eat meat anymore. And she was just like, "I don't know what to do with you." … She was like, "I literally don't know how I'm gonna feed you." And that's when I realized that being pescetarian was going to make it possible for me to continue to have family life. So my mom was like, "Okay, fish. We can work with that." And since then we eat a lot of fish whenever I'm home (Abigail).

Abigail felt that her decision to eat a vegetarian diet was an imposition on her mother, the person making the meals for the entire family, for she would have to learn how to make vegetarian meals for her. Her mother had little knowledge of how to prepare vegetarian meals and even asked Abigail if she only ate salad, since she was now a vegetarian. Rather than making her mother learn how to prepare vegetarian food, Abigail chose to allow for fish in her diet—a food that her mother already knew how to cook and that her family already ate.

Maddie, a 22 year old who formerly followed a vegan diet for four months in order to ensure that she was eating nutritional food, also described the difficulty she had maintaining her vegan diet when she was with her parents. Maddie chose to adopt a vegan diet when studying abroad in Vienna, Austria. She described this time of her life as one of independence and individuality, and this freedom enabled her to adopt this diet with relative ease while abroad. She struggled, however, when her parents came to visit her in Vienna. She felt like her family wanted to be in "vacation mode" (Maddie) during their visit, but her vegan diet prevented them from indulging in the way they otherwise would have if she were not following a vegan diet. Eating out with her father in Vienna was particularly difficult: "I think he outwardly was like super supportive of it, but you could tell like was frustrated that he was on vacation and wanted

to indulge, like I was saying before. And I was like not indulging, which made him more conscious I think of what he was eating to indulge" (Maddie). Maddie asked her family to be supportive of her vegan diet, and they were in the sense that they agreed to eat at restaurants that had vegan options, but she felt that it made eating with them awkward because it made them self-conscious about their own food choices.

Maddie also commented that she was more likely to maintain her vegan diet amidst the awkwardness that it caused with her family than with her friends. During her interview, she reported, "I think it's much different with friends because I'm much more willing to concede to my friends. But with family, there's a comfort level there where it's like, 'I'm willing to be a burden to you'" (Maddie). Consequently, when she returned to the U.S. after her semester abroad, she chose to no longer follow a vegan diet because she did not think she could balance eating with friends and continuing a vegan diet. Several other respondents described instances of eating with friends in which their decision to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet either made situations involving food awkward or prevented them from participating in social activities with friends. Connor, a 21 year old white male who previously followed a vegan diet for three months out of a concern for the environment (and as a competition with a friend), described the ways in which he felt his decision to follow a vegan diet hindered his ability to socialize with his peers:

> Food is a big part of friendship and building community. Me not being able to eat meat and fish and all that prevented me from doing certain things. I remember when some of my BC friends wanted to go to the movies and wing night, so I'm not going to go and not eat wings. It was preventing me from being social … So I'm either going to not go, or eat meat. And I ended up eating meat … Because the whole point of going is to eat the wings. Although the whole point of going is to talk, and it's a social thing, I thought I'd be left out if everyone was eating wings and I'm not. Because I like wings and the only reason I'm not eating wings is because I'm

> following this diet. I thought it would be easier being vegan if I wasn't put in these situations, because I would be tempted to eat wings at that moment (Connor).

Similarly, Leah, a 24 year old white female who stopped eating meat both because she did not believe it was morally right to do so and because she did not like the taste, commented that eating out with friends in college was very difficult as a vegetarian. Her friends often wanted to go to fast food restaurants, where there were few vegetarian options. Layla, a 19 year old female who had been vegan for slightly more than a year after learning more about animal cruelty issues, found that her friends also often wanted to go out for foods that do not align with her vegan diet, such as pizza and burgers.

Friends, thus, seem to have a significant influence on one's decision to maintain or not maintain a vegetarian or vegan diet. In fact, when asked what would make it easier for them to maintain these diets, several respondents replied, "If more of my friends/peers were vegetarian/vegan." In response to this question, Layla said, "I guess if my roommates, which is my boyfriend and his cousin, if they were vegan, or at least vegetarian. It would make it a little easier, since they are always offering me their food" (Layla). Similarly, Connor responded, "If other people were vegan or vegetarian. You are who you run with. If my friend group is vegan, I'm going to be a vegan" (Connor). To the same question, Maddie replied, "I think if more of my peers were vegans, then I would definitely feel like I wasn't being a burden to them in making those vegan diet choices" (Maddie). Abigail replied similarly but also noted that having a peer group with other types of dietary restrictions—not just vegetarianism—would make it easier to maintain her vegetarian diet:

> I mean definitely the more that I'm around people who are vegetarians. Or even just like in situations that cater to a variety of health concerns and needs, the more it's easy. So like if I'm with a group, and I'm the only vegetarian, which used to be the case much

> more often, it was more of like my thing that I had to figure out, and I'd be like, "Can we go to this restaurant instead of this one?" I would be looking for what the option was. And the more that I'm in groups where there are other people with similar… or even if it's not the same dietary restriction—*a* dietary restriction—then it's like not just my problem (Abigail).

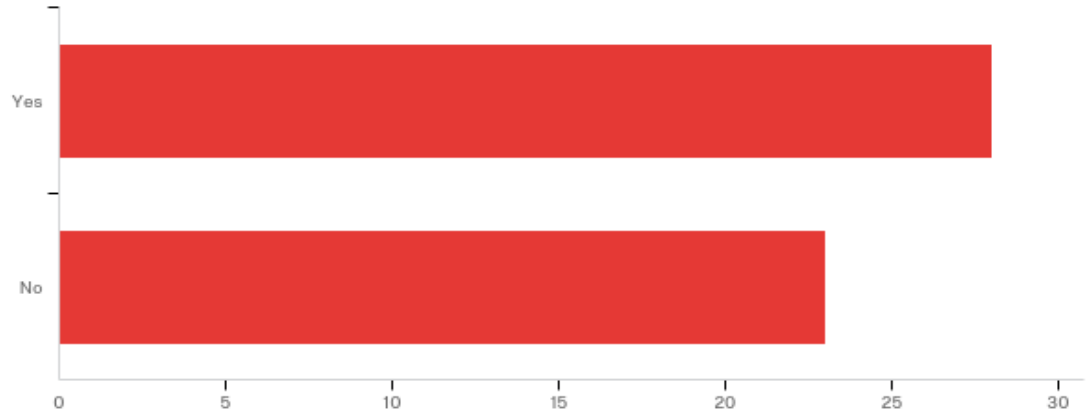
Unlike many other people that I interviewed, Peyton, a 22 year old white male who adopted a vegetarian diet for almost three months after learning about meat's environmental impact in a sustainable agriculture class, convinced his roommates to also adopt vegetarian diets when he decided to do so. This provided him with a support system and ensured that there was no meat in his apartment during the three months when he was vegetarian. He and all of his roommates, however, eventually gave up vegetarianism, further supporting the notion that having peers with similar diets helps people maintain these types of diets.

Survey results support the hypothesis that having peers with similar diets helps one maintain his or her vegetarian or vegan diet. Survey respondents were asked to rank (from 0 to 10) a series of statements beginning with "It would have been/be easier to maintain a vegetarian or vegan diet…" One of these statements was "if more members of my social network were also vegetarians or vegans." For those who gave up vegetarian or vegan diets completely, the mean ranking for this statement was 6.67. This was also the most highly ranked statement out of nine statements for these respondents. For those who identify as vegetarians or vegans but make exceptions within these diets, the mean ranking for this statement was 5.45. This was the fourth most highly ranked statement out of nine statements for these respondents (issues of access and availability ranked more highly). However, for both groups, this statement was ranked by the most number of people (respondents did not have to rank each statement), indicating that, out of all the conditions listed, a lack of peers who also adhere to vegetarian or vegan diets was commonly experienced as a barrier to maintaining these diets. I also conducted significance tests

for this statement between different age groups and found no statistically significant difference between age groups.

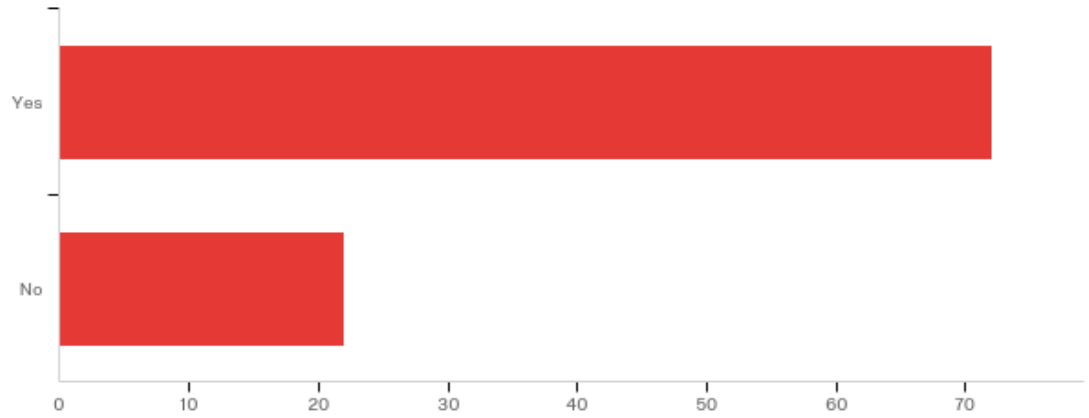
Respondents were also asked if someone in their family or close circle of friends was also vegetarian or vegan while they adhered to these diets. Among those who no longer follow vegetarian or vegan diets, 54.90% of respondents said yes, while 45.10% said no. Among those who still identify as vegetarians or vegans, 76.60% said yes, while 23.40% said no. These survey results can be seen below (numbers on x-axis represent count rather than percentage):

Categories 1 and 3: Was anyone in your family or close circle of friends also a vegetarian or vegan when you were following a vegetarian or vegan diet?



Answer	%	Count
Yes	54.90%	28
No	45.10%	23
Total	100%	51

Categories 2 and 4: Is anyone in your family or close circle of friends currently a vegetarian or vegan?



Answer	%	Count
Yes	76.60%	72
No	23.40%	22
Total	100%	94

A large majority of respondents who mostly maintain their vegetarian or vegan diets therefore tended to know at least one other person who was also vegetarian or vegan, while only slightly more than half of those who had given up these diets completely knew someone who was vegetarian or vegan when they followed these diets. In this way, having peers with similar diets seems to play an important role in vegetarians’ and vegans’ probability of continuing these diets. Further research would need to be conducted to know if having only one family member or friend with a similar diet increases the likelihood of someone maintaining a vegetarian or vegan diet or if a larger portion of someone’s social circle being vegetarian or vegan is needed to increase this likelihood.

Along with situations involving family and friends, interviewees described several circumstances in which they were hosted in a more formal setting and felt awkward or rude

because of their vegetarian or vegan dietary choices. Peyton described the challenge of maintaining a vegetarian diet at his uncle's house for a family gathering:

> When I went over to my uncle's maybe for like Thanksgiving… I don't know, maybe it was like a birthday party or something over at my uncle's house. And they're like, I would say big meat eaters. Everything seems to have meat in it. And so I just remember distinctly, this was like in the heart of being a vegetarian, and I was like, "I don't want to break tonight," but it's also just really hard because I feel like they're going to notice. So I told a couple of my cousins, "Okay, look out for me tonight." But I would never tell my uncles or my grandma because I think they would just like, I don't know… like these big macho dudes… vegetarianism would just never cross their mind. So like, I don't know, I didn't feel like it was a good idea. Not that they would really care, but I didn't feel like dealing with all of that just because of the way I'm trying to eat (Peyton).

In this case, Peyton upheld his vegetarian diet. In many cases, however, other interviewees described similar situations—being hosted in a more formal setting than eating at home with family or eating out with friends—in which they chose to stray from their vegetarian or vegan diets in order to avoid being rude to their hosts or causing an awkward social situation during the meal. Connor, for example, described an instance in which he was at his friend's cousin's house and the meal being served contained chicken. "I didn't say, 'I'm not eating this,'" he recalled as he reflected upon his decision to eat the chicken despite his attempt at following a vegan diet at the time. "In my mind, that would be really rude" (Connor).

Abigail described a particularly salient situation that influenced her to allow for meat within her now mostly vegetarian diet. She was at an elderly couple's house for dinner, and they did not know that she was a vegetarian. Abigail speculated that they did not even understand what being a vegetarian meant. For dinner, the couple served fried chicken with nothing else. Abigail had to make a choice between not eating, which would have been very obvious, and potentially offending her hosts or straying from her vegetarian diet and eating meat. Ultimately,

she decided to eat the meat. Abigail reported that she was satisfied with that decision, even though she got very sick from eating meat after a long period of vegetarianism. Because of this experience, she now intentionally eats meat, meat broth, or something that has been cooked with meat every few months in order to ensure that she keeps the enzymes in her stomach that allow her to digest meat. She will therefore be able to eat meat without getting sick if she is ever in a similar situation again—one in which she feels compelled to eat meat in order to avoid being rude to someone hosting her (Abigail).

Abigail anticipates confronting this experience this upcoming summer, as she has plans to stay with her partner's family for an extended period of time. Her partner's family lives in a rural community and farms for a living. Meat is a significant part of their diet, as they raise their own livestock. Anticipating her time with them this summer, Abigail commented:

> Yeah, that's gonna be an interesting one to sort out because my appetite for meat is not very big, you know? Like it doesn't sound appealing to me anymore. So I'll probably be like, "Oh, I'll have a bite," but not have much because it's just not… like I can't imagine eating a steak right now … I think as I get to know them better … I'll probably stick more to just eating the way that I want to, but probably to begin with, you know, I'll try a little bit of whatever because it's such a big cultural thing for them (Abigail).

In this way, Abigail allows meat in her mostly vegetarian diet in situations in which she feels like rejecting meat would be rude to the person hosting her for the meal.

Tess, a 44 year old environmental studies professor who was a vegetarian from age 16 to 34, described a similar situation in which she was on a farm and served a meal that contained meat that had been raised there. Because the person who made and served the meal to her had put so much effort into the meal—from slaughtering the animal all the way to serving it—she felt her rejection of the meat was disrespectful. "I couldn't help but feel almost rude that I wasn't partaking in that," she said during her interview (Tess). In this particular instance, she did not

eat the meat, but she said, “I walked away, and I regretted that I didn’t try it. And that I also felt like I was rude to someone in a way, and I would have liked to celebrate his culinary arts and his approach rather than reject it” (Tess). This experience, along with other similar situations, eventually influenced her to move away from vegetarianism and incorporate meat into her diet once again.

Just as several interviewees discussed their desire to not be perceived as rude or imposing by others because of their diets, many survey respondents indicated that navigating social situations with food was difficult for them for the same reasons. When asked what the hardest part about following a vegetarian or vegan diet is/was, responses included the following: “feeling like its a burden on others i.e. when they cook for you or when deciding on a restaurant,” “feeling that I was always inconveniencing people and feeling rude when I was unable to accept others' hospitality because of my vegetarianism,” “the fear of going to someone's house and telling them you won't eat the meal they prepared for you,” “having to prepare food for yourself in social settings,” and “bringing alternatives to parties.” This awkwardness causes many people to either to give up their vegetarian or vegan diets or allow exceptions within these diets when others prepare the meal for them. 31.03% of self-identified vegetarians and 32.35% of self-identified vegans indicated in the survey that they are willing to eat foods that do not adhere to their specified diets when someone else prepares the meal for them.

This feeling of awkwardness or rudeness of rejecting certain food in another’s home seemed to be exacerbated when traveling in other cultures. Several interviewees had experiences being abroad after adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet, and in most of these cases, eating meat was a norm of the cultures in which the interviewees lived. Since interviewees were typically foreigners being hosted in these cultures, they felt a strong obligation to abide by cultural norms

and therefore either strayed from their vegetarian or vegan diets while abroad or later decided to adopt a more lenient diet to be able to share in foreign cultures in future experiences abroad. Abigail recounted her experience during a semester she spent studying in France. She had already adopted a vegetarian diet by this time, but she decided to allow meat in her diet when she ate at home with her host family. When asked if her family knew that she was a vegetarian, she replied:

> Yeah, but it was like sort of a cultural thing that they didn't really understand what that meant, so I just sort of dropped it eventually. They were Algerian, and it was like a very heavy meat, like red meat kind of based diet. And so they were just very, very confused, and it eventually just became … just easier to drop it and eat whatever they're making (Abigail).

In this case, the combination of a cultural lack of understanding of vegetarianism and the context of being hosted in another's home caused Abigail to allow meat in her diet during this time.

Tess, too, experienced difficulties maintaining her vegetarian diet while living abroad. She lived and worked in Latin America for a period of time and also found cultural differences in cuisine to be a barrier to successfully maintaining her vegetarian diet. It was difficult for her to avoid food cooked in animal fat, as this is commonly used in Latin American cooking. She also commented that people there often eat meat three times a day—once with each meal. This "omnipresence of meat" (Tess) made it difficult for her to maintain a vegetarian diet in Latin America. One experience in which her vegetarianism and Latin American culture clashed particularly stood out to her:

> I lived in Bolivia for a little while. I had a family who used to make food because … I didn't have a kitchen. So I'd go and have food at this woman's house, and it took a long time to explain that I didn't eat meat. That was always really hard because people are eating subsistence food, and it was hard to explain. It just doesn't make sense from that perspective when calories are so important … And often meat's important to celebrations and stuff. So like

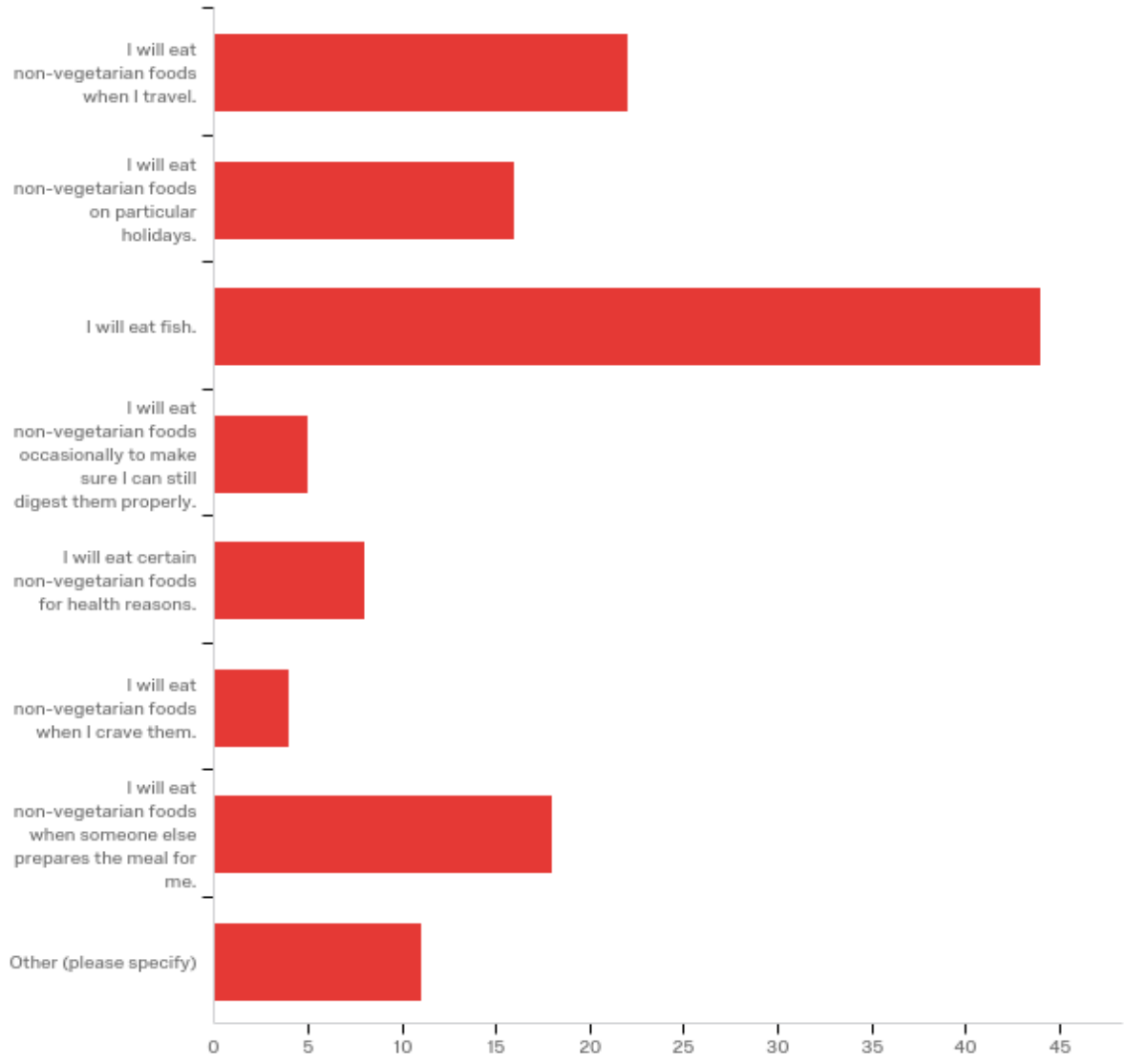
> one time in Bolivia I ate black spider monkey. It was like a delicacy, and I don't know… I could just smell in the room something was different. There was something different about this meal. And I was like, "Oh, I don't eat meat," and she was like "Oh, it's not meat." And I was like, "That sure looks like meat." And it tasted to me pretty awful … I was with a friend, and he did eat meat, so I was like trying to hide and put it on his plate. So that was a really awkward moment. Yeah, I faked it. It was so bad. I was like, "Here ya go," and I felt like she still saw. It was just very, very awkward. But it was like there was a cultural, language divide that just I couldn't bridge in that moment. And plus like that I had just been given this like prized piece of meat. So that was tough (Tess).

Similar to Abigail's situation in France, the relative absence of vegetarianism in a different culture combined with the context of being hosted by others made Tess feel rude to her hosts by rejecting the meat they served her. Maddie, however, lived in Vienna for several months, where a vegan lifestyle is not only culturally accepted but also prevalent. She commented that living in this setting made it easier for her to be a vegan there, further highlighting the role that cultural norms play in influencing one's diet while traveling abroad.

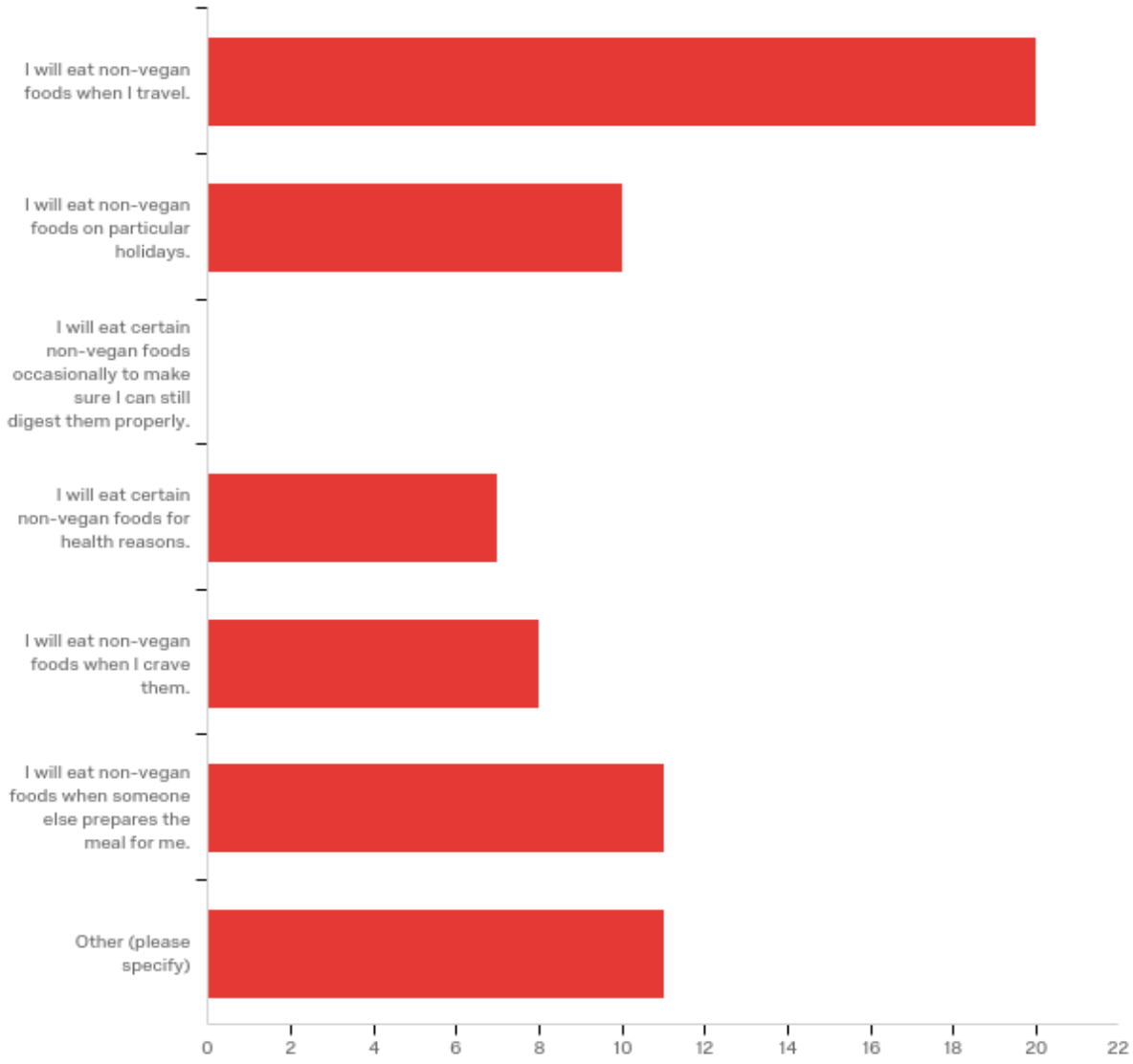
The particular challenge of maintaining these diets abroad was emphasized in survey responses. While not all responses specified that this meant traveling abroad, similar issues can arise when traveling within the U.S. as well, for there are various U.S. subcultures, some of which are more accepting of vegetarianism and veganism than others. When asked what the hardest part about maintaining their diets is, several respondents who identified as vegan included traveling in their answer. These responses indicated that it was difficult to find a variety of vegetarian or vegan food when traveling, that is was difficult to manage their nutritional needs when traveling, and that their vegetarian or vegan diets often hindered them from experiencing an important part of the culture. Traveling seemed to be especially challenging for those who identified as vegans; while only 37.93% of self-identified vegetarians (category 2) said they

would make exceptions in their diets when they travel, 58.82% of self-identified vegans (category 4) said they would make exceptions in their diets when they travel. Eating non-vegan foods when traveling was the most common exception self-identified vegans made within their vegan diets, further highlighting the difficulties vegans have maintaining their diets in other cultures. These survey results can be seen below (numbers on x-axis represent count rather than percentage):

Category 2: What kind of allowances do you make within your diet? Please select all that apply.



Category 4: What kind of allowances do you make within your diet? Please select all that apply.



Another context in which interviewees faced social barriers to maintaining their vegetarian or vegan diets was living with a significant other. Partners often make meals together; interviewees, therefore, often chose to make allowances within their diets so they do not impose their food choices on their partner. Abigail, a woman in her mid-twenties, had witnessed this several times as many of her friends entered into serious romantic relationships. She had seen many of her peers give up their strict vegetarian diets in order to accommodate a

partner who was not willing to adopt a vegetarian diet. In many cases, these friends (usually women) cooked meat at home since they were sharing the meal with their partner, but they still chose to eat vegetarian meals outside of the home. She described the way she had seen her friends negotiate this decision in their lives:

> I think it becomes more of managing priorities—of it being like, "Well, at this stage in my life, this is what makes sense." Yeah, and then even look at like having kids and stuff. Like it's really hard for people to imagine raising kids as vegetarians. So to frame it positively, friends I've seen go through that transition, I think it becomes more about like… rather than it being this line in the sand of "I don't eat meat," it becomes more of, they would say, more like, "I try to be conscientious about my consumerism." So they might… I would say those people still tend to be committed to like shopping at farmers markets, buying locally sourced things, but they've like negotiated in that relationship. Like, "Okay, I'm not going to give up my values completely, but at the same time I understand that I'm not going to force my dietary choices on you" (Abigail).

Emma, a 27 year old white female who followed a strict vegetarian diet for four years after beginning to question the necessity of eating meat while in college, had experiences that aligned with this observation, for she described the ways in which her relationship with her boyfriend influenced her to shift away from a vegetarian diet. When she lived with roommates in the past, she more easily adhered to her vegetarianism, for she cooked all her meals for herself. Now, however, she lives with her boyfriend, who is not a vegetarian. In her speculations about what it would be like to adopt a vegetarian diet once again while living with her boyfriend, she said the following:

> In a relationship situation, it feels more like a joint effort and that it's more of a shared meal. It's a group effort. I guess I could choose not to eat whatever meat we have, but I'm less inclined to do that. If I were to make that concentrated effort to going back to being vegetarian, I would almost have to include my significant other somehow. Because it's more a part of the day to day, I

> would have to make additional parts of the meal to supplement what I want to eat, or he'd have to eat vegetarian as well (Emma).

In this way, living with a significant other can lead to flexibility within vegetarian or vegan diets or a shift away from them altogether, as vegetarians or vegans often cook meals with their partner and do not want to impose their food choices on him or her.

Some survey respondents indicated that cooking meals for their partners and families while being themselves vegetarians or vegans was the hardest part about following their diets. Responses to "What is/was the hardest part about maintaining a vegetarian or vegan diet" included "cooking different meals for myself and those in my family that wanted meat," "avoiding making two meals for my husband and in [sic] (my husband eats meat.)," and "having to cook a separate meal for myself and then another meal for everyone else." However, despite this data and the data collected during interviews, there was no statistically significant difference between single and married survey respondents regarding a responsibility of buying and preparing food for others being a barrier to maintaining their vegetarian or vegan diets. It is interesting to note that respondents who have attempted but no longer follow vegetarian and vegan diets ranked the statement "It would be easier to maintain a vegetarian or vegan diet if I did not have to regularly buy/prepare food for others" higher on a Likert scale than respondents who still maintain these diets with exceptions. The mean rankings for this statement for respondents in categories 1, 2, 3, and 4 were 5.68, 3.68, 5.67, and 3.33, respectively. This data implies that the responsibility of buying and preparing food for other people was experienced as a barrier to maintaining vegetarian and vegan diets more for people who had attempted but given up these diets than for people who follow these diets but allow for certain exceptions.

Consistent Alienating Comments Made to Vegetarians/Vegans

Several interviewees discussed the ways in which they felt alienated by others because of their choice to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet. Friends and/or family members made comments to them that were either subtly or overtly hostile to this choice. Connor and Leah, for example, experienced these remarks subtly. Connor's friends thought that his veganism was "stupid" (Connor) and made remarks such as, "I love meat. Why wouldn't you eat meat?" (Connor). Connor attributed these comments to a lack of awareness about the social impacts of eating meat. Layla also encountered belittling comments, sometimes jokingly, from her friends when out at restaurants. When they ordered non-vegan food, they pressured her into eating it, saying things like, "It's okay. You can have some" (Layla). These comments made Layla feel uncomfortable and, to her, reflected a lack of respect for her own agency in her diet. Similarly, Leah felt that others tried to infringe upon her agency in her own diet. At first, her family was supportive of her choice to be vegetarian. However, when she expressed that she intended vegetarianism to be a long-term diet, she experienced "casual putdowns of being vegetarian" (Leah) from her family. One recurring "casual putdown" came from her younger sister. Whenever her mom used the same knife to cut meat and Leah's food, her sister said, "You're not the type of vegetarian where you can't mix meat" (Leah). In this way, both Layla and Leah felt that others tried to define and belittle their identities as a vegan and vegetarian, respectively, with these comments.

Adam, a 36 year old man who grew up in the Caribbean, has been a vegetarian for two-and-a-half years. He adopted this diet to lose weight, but he neither liked nor trusted meat from a young age. During his time as a vegetarian, Adam has also experienced this feeling of alienation due to his choice to be a vegetarian. At social gatherings with his male friends, they often ask

him, "You're still not eating meat? What's wrong with you?" (Adam). It was not these comments that bothered Adam, however, but rather the constant question of "why?". During his interview, he emphasized that friends and family consistently ask him why he is a vegetarian. He did not perceive this question to be coming from a place of curiosity, however, but rather from a place of hostility toward this decision. When asked what the hardest part about being a vegetarian was, he responded, "Mental. Like I said, everybody around me, they think it's not normal. So it's like, 'Why? Why? Why?' They ask why way more than 'Thank you very much' or 'Good job.' Just '*Why*?' And I gotta explain people" (Adam). When asked what would make it easier to maintain a vegetarian diet, he responded, "Don't live around certain people … people that don't care. People that… they don't pay mind to you, but they always got something to say. Always asking 'why?' Two and a half years of 'why?'" (Adam). These constant questions became exhausting for Adam, as he perceived them to be criticisms of his choice to not eat meat.

It is important to note that not all of these comments were made as jokes or subtle criticisms; at times, they reflected a genuine concern for the health of the person electing to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet. Layla and Peyton, however, encountered overtly hostile reactions to their dietary decisions. Although they were initially supportive of her vegan diet, Layla's friends eventually became overtly disapproving of this choice, making comments like, "We're so sick of your veganism" (Layla) after she would make vegan food for them as a friendly gesture. She also recounted a time that she wore a Humane League shirt. Upon seeing it, her friend said, "Oh, I thought that was a cool human league shirt. But it's just a dumb veganism shirt" (Layla). Layla expressed her surprise at these comments; she originally thought the hardest part about following a vegan diet would be finding vegan options or overcoming

personal cravings for non-vegan food. She did not encounter these difficulties to the extent that she thought she would; rather, she found the hardest part about being vegan was dealing with the disapproval and closed-mindedness of her friends and family.

Peyton also experienced overtly hostile reactions to his choice to be a vegetarian. He found that this decision was very polarizing among his peers. While some people were very supportive of this decision, others openly disparaged this choice:

> I feel like a lot of people thought that it was some like statement in the sense of like, "Oh, we're better than you." Like I felt like I got that type of response from people who I wouldn't have expected. Like somehow being a vegetarian, even bringing it up in casual conversations and not in like a stereotypical way of like, "I'm gonna be vegetarian and make sure everybody knows" and like be obnoxious… like I would not even intend to bring it up that way. I would just casually say it when we're eating so people recognize that I'm not eating meat. They would still like go with that stereotype of like, "You're a vegetarian, and you want to preach about it and let everybody know that you're better than them" for some reason or another. So that was surprising for me. People that I knew already, they thought that just because of the way I ate, I'm a completely different person (Peyton).

In this way, people—even people that knew him well—made assumptions about Peyton solely based on his choice to not eat meat. Peyton attributed these reactions to the ways that the media portrays vegetarians—as radical, self-righteous "tree-huggers."

Although survey respondents ranked the statement "It would be easier to maintain a vegetarian or vegan diet if there were not a negative stigma of vegetarians or vegans in society" relatively low (between 3.44 and 3.80 in all categories of respondents) compared to other similar statements posed, some of them still indicated that the stigmatization of vegetarianism or veganism was the most difficult barrier to overcome while following these diets. To the question "What was/is the hardest part about being a vegetarian or vegan?", open-ended survey responses included the following: "social stigma of it in high school," "the verbal disapproval from family

in supporting my decision to be a vegetarian is difficult to deal with," "people have too many ignorant assumptions about my diet," and "not being 'that vegan girl' with friends and family who aren't vegan/vegetarian, simply because I want what's best for them, and I think being vegetarian or vegan is what's best for a lot of people." As stigmatization seems to be a common experience among vegetarians and vegans, feelings of alienation are a significant social barrier to maintaining these types of diets and can potentially lead people to give up these diets altogether if their feelings of alienation outweigh their motivations for adopting these diets.

The Omnivorous Diet as a Social Norm

Several people interviewed also described the normalization of eating meat and other products as a barrier to maintaining vegetarian and vegan diets. In a way, this social barrier underlies the other social barriers discussed above, but it is worth noting its influence separately. Since an omnivorous diet is a social norm and therefore taken for granted, society is arranged to cater to this diet and assumes that people adhere to it. For some, it is difficult to feel like they have full agency in their diet amidst a culture that normalizes eating these products:

> I think society as a whole very much promotes that there's meat in every single dish. Like if you go to a restaurant for instance, I feel like half the dish would always be meat. Maybe a quarter is a vegetable and a quarter like a grain. Like that's like a very typical meal, and that's what my mind goes to when I think of such a thing. So in that sense I don't feel like I have full agency. I feel like you're always subtly pulled or pushed by the societal norm of what a meal is. So I don't feel like I have full control when I go over someone's house because I feel like that replicates a societal norm (Peyton).

Peyton also commented that this societal norm is even replicated at the grocery store—the place where someone would seem to have the most agency over his or her diet because he or she can choose what to buy and not buy. He noted that the proportions of prepackaged vegetables usually imply that they are made to be side dishes rather than the main portion of the meal,

compelling the person to fill the rest of the meal with some sort of meat. In this way, following a vegetarian diet requires a very active attitude toward one's diet; if one is passive, he or she will most likely adhere to the social norm of an omnivorous diet.

Connor's word choice in his interview reflected feelings of this lack of agency in his diet. He made comments such as, "There are going to be circumstances in my life where I just can't avoid eating meat" and "There's always going to be events where I just have to eat this" (Connor). He believed that "society is so entrenched in eating meat" (Connor), and this norm was extremely hard to challenge because he felt that he needed to stand up and say no to meat and explain that decision. "Since society is so pro-one side, pro-meat … then it becomes hard to speak out against it," he said during his interview. "It almost becomes a fight every time you say no, and you have to back up why you are a certain way" (Connor). Society's expectations of meat-eating, therefore, was a significant barrier for Connor; he felt that he could not continually act against this norm by following a deviant, vegan diet.

Layla and Leah both described specific contexts in which they felt this social norm hindered their own or others' ability to follow their vegan and vegetarian diets, respectively. Layla described her experience while working at a children's camp one summer. She asked the director of the camp if they could arrange to have vegan meals for her, but the director said no. Another counselor was also vegan and initially tried to maintain this diet at the camp, but the director told her that she was not allowed to do so. Both were told that they had to set a good example for the kids at the camp, and following a vegan diet was not doing so, since they would not be able to eat much food at the camp. In this way, the social norm of an omnivorous diet translated to a quasi-rule against being vegan. Similarly, Leah worked at an elementary school. At the school, it was mandatory for students to take milk with their lunch. Reflecting on this

rule, she stated, "I feel that's a very interesting pressure to put on people. Obviously there are exceptions when you state that you are a vegetarian or vegan, but your family has to state it for you. I feel like there's this idealism that to be healthy, you must eat meat … We teach in health class that it's healthy to have a small amount of meat in your diet everyday. And we don't teach the alternatives" (Leah). Like at the summer camp, this school imposed a diet containing animal products as a rule rather than presenting it as an option or recommendation. Together, these examples from Layla and Leah demonstrate the ways in which society perpetuates this norm from a young age.

Since an omnivorous diet is assumed or expected, those who adhere to this diet rarely have to explain or justify their dietary choices to others in social settings. Vegetarians and vegans, however, often find themselves feeling compelled to do so. Because they act outside the norm, vegetarians and vegans are obliged to explain their decision to others or at least to state their dietary restrictions explicitly, as they cannot assume that there will be vegetarian or vegan options available outside of their home. As interviewees did in interviews, several survey respondents pointed to the way in which the normalization of eating animal products in society has made it difficult to maintain vegetarian and vegan diets. Some respondents indicated that having to explain their food choices to others was the most difficult barrier to overcome in their vegetarianism or veganism. When asked what the hardest part about maintaining vegetarian or vegan diets was, responses included the following: "Explaining to other people why I am vegetarian," "feeling more awkward in social situations by having to explain my choices," "having difficult conversations," and "explaining to people why it is important and having them disregard this."

Lack of Vegetarian/Vegan Options

Several interviewees felt that a lack of variety in their vegetarian or vegan diets contributed to their decision to move away from these types of diets. Although they acknowledged that there is typically at least one vegetarian option (less so for vegans) wherever they are eating—restaurants, dining halls, in their own homes—these options became repetitive and deterred them from maintaining these kinds of diets. The culture in which interviewees lived also influenced how many vegetarian or vegan options tended to be available. Additionally, the lack of options at times led to an unhealthy diet, as interviewees began to rely more on quick, pre-packaged foods, since they did not know what else to eat.

Although some found it fairly easy to eat vegetarian or vegan food in their own homes since they were able to cook it themselves, many still found it difficult to follow these diets when eating in settings where they did not cook themselves, such as restaurants, dining halls, or others' homes. Even when there were vegetarian or vegan options available in these places, they were often very limited. Interviewees commented that when they eat in restaurants, dining halls, and friends' homes, they only have one or two options—usually a salad or a couple side dishes. Leah specifically commented about the "dreaded veggie sandwich" (Leah) often found on restaurant menus; she did not find it acceptable that people thought that as long as vegetarians had an option to eat a vegetable sandwich, they would be satisfied. She understood that her vegetarian diet was a choice, but she still felt that she should have a variety of options just as meat-eaters do.

The allowance of fish within an otherwise vegetarian diet, also known as a pescetarian diet, helped several participants alleviate this barrier. Both Leah and Abigail, for example, noted that this lack of variety at restaurants and others' homes led them to incorporate fish into their

otherwise vegetarian diets—both to give themselves more options and to give others more options when they were cooking for them. Leah commented that she often looks at a restaurant's menu and thinks, "If I didn't eat fish, I couldn't be here" (Leah), meaning that there were no vegetarian options on the menu. Discussing her decision to allow fish in her diet, Abigail called her allowance of fish within her vegetarian diet an "escape hatch" (Abigail) for people who host her for dinner. "Someone will be having me over for dinner or something, … and I'll say, 'Just a reminder, I don't eat meat,' and they'll kind of like freeze. But then I'm like, 'But I'll eat fish,' and they'll be like, 'Okay, we'll have salmon.' That happens *so* often" (Abigail). In this way, allowing fish into an otherwise vegetarian diet gives both the person following this diet and the people that are eating with vegetarians more dining options when eating together.

The number of options available to vegetarians and vegans seems to depend on the culture in which they ate. While some places are more aware of vegetarian and vegan lifestyles, others are not, and there are fewer of these options to be found there as a result. Abigail, for example, told a story about a time she took a bus through rural Georgia—a place where meat is a large part of the typical diet. The bus stopped at a fast food restaurant so that the passengers could buy lunch, and the only thing that she could buy on the menu was fried okra. "It was our only food for the day, and there were no vending machines, so I got like four side servings of fried okra, and that was what I ate that day. So that was a low point" (Abigail). Although Abigail did not deviate from her vegetarian diet in this situation, this experience illustrates the ways in which some food providers have little to no vegetarian or vegan options—a major potential barrier for people trying to follow these diets.

Maddie, however, lived in Vienna, Austria for several months. Veganism is culturally accepted there, even "trendy" (Maddie), so there was often a variety of vegan options at

restaurants. She found this cultural acceptance to be helpful in maintaining her vegan diet. Before traveling home, however, she walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain. As a typical Spanish diet includes a lot of meat and cheese, she found it very difficult to follow a vegan diet there; there were often no vegetarian or vegan options on the menus of the places she ate, so she ultimately decided to allow non-vegan food in her diet during her time in Spain.

Other interviewees, however, did not attribute this lack of variety to the food culture of the place they lived but rather a lack of knowledge on their own part about vegetarian or vegan diets. They often turned to the same vegetarian or vegan foods repeatedly because they did not know how to cook a variety of vegetarian or vegan foods. Reflecting on his difficulty diversifying his vegetarian diet, Peyton said the following:

> I wasn't raised [as a vegetarian], so it was like starting on your own terms of trying to find variety, new food, trying to understand if it's nutritious or not. I just felt like I was up against a lot to actually make sure I was doing it correctly and make sure I was eating well, getting enough protein for myself, but I didn't have that like innate knowledge of how to do it. It was just like a big task to like take on without knowing anything about it (Peyton).

As a result, Peyton turned to the same options over and over—often eggs and Greek yogurt—to satisfy his hunger. These items became boring, however, and he eventually began eating meat again.

Similarly, Emma noted that she knew little about how to cook a balanced vegetarian meal, which led to a reliance on a few, "go-to" foods. During her interview, she said, "If I myself had developed different cooking techniques or developed sustainable options … I kind of just hit a wall and couldn't come up with any more ideas of what to eat besides a lot of grilled cheeses, and pasta, and quesadillas, and such. And I try not to eat those as a meal" (Emma). Emma's comment pointed to another trend that came about from a lack of options in vegetarian

and vegan diets; vegetarians and vegans often felt that their options were not only limited but limited to unhealthy foods. Leah commented that, when she followed a strict vegetarian diet, she felt "out of whack" (Leah) because she ate more carbs, as that was often the only food option she felt she had. She therefore began eating fish not only to make social situations involving food easier to navigate but also to give herself more food options that contained protein.

Within this discussion of a general lack of variety for vegetarians and vegans, a tension arose between the opinion that this issue needs to be addressed more directly and a recognition that options for people following these diets has improved within the last several years. Leah and Peyton specifically located the lack of options they experienced as vegetarians within the larger cultural norm of eating meat. Peyton noted that "the larger society … doesn't really accommodate vegetarian options" (Peyton). Leah noted that "we as a culture are not there yet" (Leah), meaning that people and institutions often do not consider the dietary needs of vegetarians and vegans. When recounting her experience working at an elementary school, Leah said the following:

> A lot of the options, when you look at the food choices, I couldn't eat anything that was on the menu for almost the whole week. Yesterday they had a vegetarian option. One day it was a salad. One day it was beans and rice. It's definitely not being weighed equally. There was definitely a lot more weight on the meals that are heavier, such as chicken potpie, versus a vegetarian can eat a salad. Or a vegetarian can eat beans and rice. Are they getting as much nutrients? Is time and thought being put into the thought that some people don't eat meat? (Leah)

In this way, Leah called for more consideration and accommodations for people who do not eat an omnivorous diet. Yet, others—typically older interviewees that have been vegetarians or vegans for a longer period of time—recognized that there are far more vegetarian or vegan options in restaurants than when they first adopted these diets. They also noted that these

options are now frequently explicitly labeled as vegetarian or vegan. To them, these changes indicate that society has become more aware of these issues and is shifting toward what they consider to be a healthier, more sustainable diet.

Survey results supported the finding that a lack of vegetarian and vegan options was a main barrier to maintaining these diets. Respondents were asked to rate a series of statements on a scale of 0 to 10 regarding how much each condition would make it easier to maintain a vegetarian or vegan diet. The mean ranking for the statement "if there were more vegetarian or vegan options at restaurants" was 5.35 for category 1, 7.28 for category 2, 6.64 for category 3, and 7.61 for category 4. This statement was also the most highly ranked for categories 2 and 4—those who self-identified as vegetarians and vegans, respectively. Respondents in categories 1 and 3 were also asked to rate a series of statements from 0 to 10 regarding how much the stated conditions influenced them to stop following their specified diets. Mean rankings for the statement "I felt like my food choices were too limited" were 6.59 for category 1 and 6.18 for category 3. In both of these groups, this was the most highly ranked statement for this question and was also the modal statement. A full report of responses to this question can be found in Appendix A.

Respondents were also asked what the hardest thing is/was about being a vegetarian or vegan. A large portion of open-ended responses to this question demonstrated that respondents felt that a lack of options was the largest barrier to maintaining these diets. Most of these responses referred to eating out at restaurants, while some also pointed to a lack of variety of foods to cook. These responses included the following: "Finding things to eat when going to a restaurant," "the hardest part of being vegan is how difficult it is to find a wide variety of food

that is vegan approved," "the hardest part is finding tasty vegan meals other than salad when eating out," and "finding different recipes to make."

Loss of a "Black-and-White" Perspective on Diet

Several interviewees described a shift in perspective over time from a more rigid belief system about eating meat and other animal products to a more nuanced understanding of how to align their diets with their personal values. Some interviewees, for example, expressed that they are willing to eat meat if they know that it was raised and slaughtered humanely rather than raised and slaughtered in an industrial setting. Generally, those who moved away from strict vegetarian or vegan diets felt that they could take a more balanced, "middle-of-the-road" approach and still live within their values rather than adhering to a vegetarian or vegan diet legalistically.

Many interviewees explained that their willingness to be lenient within their vegetarian or vegan diets or their eventual shift away from these diets resulted from a more nuanced understanding of a sustainable or ethical diet. In these cases, they began to incorporate non-vegetarian or non-vegan foods into their diet if they knew that these products were raised sustainably and humanely. Tess came to this understanding of her diet after several experiences that caused her to think about the ways in which animals can be raised for agriculture ethically. An experience on San Lopez Island stood out in her mind as a moment in which she rethought her strict vegetarian diet. While there, a professor at the University of Washington who raises his own animals and grows his own vegetables gave her a tour of his farm. He is of German descent and brought many of his cultural and familial traditions regarding slaughtering cows and making sausages with him to the U.S. After the tour, he prepared lunch for her, which included

meat of animals that he had raised and slaughtered himself. Tess made the following comments about her reaction to his offering of meat:

> And I said, "No, thank you," and I kind of questioned a lot afterwards. I'm like, "Here's an example of a farm that's doing everything right. He's like so connected to his animals. He doesn't treat them poorly. He's slaughtering in a humane way. There's a cultural aspect of making the food from his ancestors and providing it. And then I just couldn't help but feel like almost rude that I wasn't partaking in that. And to have that opportunity to eat something that was right there. Like I didn't want to miss out on those opportunities anymore (Tess).

Through experiences like this one, Tess came to a less rigid understanding of what it meant to have a sustainability-driven diet. Her comments about how her diet had changed over time summarized well the similar process that other interviewees experienced regarding their vegetarian or vegan diets:

> I think that, like I said earlier, that there's this bigger gray area. It doesn't always necessarily fit into one box. Which I think a lot of people have figured out for themselves too because they eat eggs, drink milk, have dairy products, which would also be related to land use to raise cows or having, like, sheep milk … And so, I don't know, I feel like I've kind of like found a good balance for myself. I feel like it's been an evolution, and I'm at the place where I want to be. I mean it would probably be great to really itemize like what… do a carbon and water footprint of what you eat and look at where food is traveling from and really get a good sense. Because like you estimate… you try to do your best (Tess).

Several people interviewed underwent a similar "evolution" in their diet. They came to understand a sustainable diet within a less stringent framework than strict vegetarianism or veganism. Abigail, for example, does not take issue with eating meat that has either been hunted in the wild or raised humanely. She commented, "I'm actually much more comfortable with that than I am with the idea of animals being raised and treated as if their literal existence is all about my culinary satisfaction rather than seeing them as beings with their own ontology" (Abigail).

She made an exception within her vegetarian diet, for example, when she visited her college roommate on the farm where her roommate grew up. Her dad hunted venison, which she decided to eat during her stay, since it lived in the wild; its life prior to being eaten aligned with her respect for animals' existence outside of an anthropocentric food chain. Later in the interview, Abigail expressed sympathy for her partner's perspective on raising animals for food. As discussed earlier, her partner grew up on a farm, and her family raised the animals that they ate:

> These are like small family-owned farms where there's plenty of land, and like they basically buy cows in the spring, fatten them up all summer, and sell them. And like all summer those cows are just wandering around and eating, like doing whatever they want to do. And so I don't love it, but it's also a completely different thing. And there's a way in which they're connected to the meaning of that, and part of my issue with it too in our culture is just a disconnection of not understanding where food is coming from, of people just being like, "Ground beef!" and think that it came off a tree. Like, it did not (laughter). Not how it works! And so versus like, and I've had many conversations with my partner about this, that like from as long as she can remember, she's seen animals live and die, and then like they literally have a whole cow. You split it with a neighbor, and that's what they eat all year. And like she knew that cow. There's a level of understanding of what it means and appreciating that animal's contribution in the community that I think is really important. And I probably would not have come to the convictions that I've come to if that were the setting I were in originally (Abigail).

Like Tess and Abigail, Emma also became more open to incorporating meat into her diet as long as it was ethically raised. Emma's friends worked on a farm for a year that raised animals responsibly and slaughtered its own livestock for meat. One year, she attended a Christmas dinner with her friends at the farm owners' home. The hosts and owners of the farm served pork that had come from a pig that had been raised and slaughtered on their farm. Emma decided to eat some of this pork, despite being a vegetarian at the time. Recalling the

experience, she said, "I was kind of grossed out because it had been so long, but I thought if there was any meat that I should eat, it would be responsible meat eating. There's kind of no excuse. I should be okay with this sort of thing" (Emma). After this experience, Emma became more lenient in her vegetarian diet and started to eat meat that she knew was raised sustainably. Similarly, while Maddie walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain, she allowed eggs within her vegan diet in part because she knew that the chickens were raised sustainably; during her interview, she explained her justification for this exception: "The reasoning was like, it's literally local. Like I can *see* the chickens, you know?" (Maddie).

Some participants also expressed a more nuanced understanding of their dietary choices as they related to purchasing power. By choosing not to buy meat or other animal products, they were not financially supporting the industries that they believed perpetuated environmental degradation and disrespect for Earth's creatures. Layla and Abigail, thus, commented during their interviews that they were more willing to eat food that does not align with their vegan and vegetarian diets, respectively, if they had not bought the food themselves. Layla, for example, made exceptions within her vegan diet when others offered her food that they had made. "If I'm not contributing to the purchase of that thing, then it doesn't bother me as much," she said during her interview. "I'm not going to go out and buy milk to make something. But if they've already made it, I'll try it" (Layla). Abigail, similarly, was more concerned about purchasing meat herself than if it were present in a meal she was offered. She compared the way she spent her money to a vote, and she did not want to vote for the agri-industries that used factory farms to raise and slaughter animals. Abigail, thus, has not purchased meat herself since adopting a vegetarian diet, but she has eaten meat in certain situations in which others had bought the meat and in which she felt it was more ethical to eat the meat than to reject it.

In these cases, interviewees felt that they had more agency in their diets because of their decision to be more flexible within them and allow for sustainably-raised animal products in their diets. An understanding of a "gray area" regarding the responsible consumption of animal products was therefore usually tied to a sense of empowerment in living out one's values within one's diet. Two interviewees, however, came to an understanding of this "gray area" through a feeling of powerlessness to effect change. Peyton adopted a vegetarian diet out of a concern for the environment. Throughout the few months he followed this diet, however, he struggled with feeling like his actions as one individual did not make a difference; he, by following a vegetarian diet, was not single-handedly improving the Earth's environmental state. This thought led him to come to see his dietary choices less rigidly. Because he felt that his choice to not eat meat had no significant positive effect, he eventually gave up his vegetarian diet. Reflecting on this thought process, he said, "I … got a little discouraged that my actions made a difference. Like I go back and forth with like the individual person being vegetarian can actually make a difference or not. And then I just kind of regressed to thinking that I could have a middle-of-the-road approach where I could still eat meat but not with every singe meal. So I could kind of find a middle ground" (Peyton).

Connor had a similar thought process during his shift from a vegan diet back to an omnivorous diet. He, like Peyton, originally changed his diet to reduce his harmful impact on the environment. Eventually, however, he came to think, "What difference is it if I have one little chicken breast?" (Connor). In this way, Connor's and Peyton's understanding of a "gray area" resulted from a feeling of ineffectiveness rather than empowerment. It is important to note that this more nuanced understanding of incorporating animal products into one's diet was mostly expressed by people who became vegetarians or vegans out of concern for the

environment; as Connor acknowledged during his interview, people who adopt these diets for other reasons, such as those who are morally against killing animals for food or support the animal rights movement, might be more likely to cling to a stricter vegetarian or vegan diet, as they their understanding of eating animal products is most likely more “black-and-white” than “gray.”

Like some interviewees, some survey respondents indicated that they make exceptions within their vegetarian or vegan diets when they know that the animals from which their food products came were raised ethically and sustainably or if they have not personally bought the item. When indicating in the survey what kind of exceptions they make within their vegetarian or vegan diets, respondents said, “I will eat meat if killed by hunter friends,” “I will eat fish only in the summer when it is locally and sustainably caught,” “I used to allow for local farm eggs but became vegan 6 months ago and stopped,” and “I still don't eat meat, but I'll have cheese pizza or something. As long as I have not personally paid for the item.”

Nutritional Barriers

Some interviewees expressed concerns that a vegetarian or vegan diet could not provide them with all of the nutrition necessary for a healthy diet. While some interviewees had specific medical conditions that compelled them to eat certain animal products (as prescribed by a doctor), most interviewees who expressed this concern simply perceived on their own that a vegetarian or vegan diet generally lacked nutritional value. Getting enough protein was the main concern mentioned during interviews. However, others acknowledged that they felt even healthier after adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet and that concerns about getting enough protein are only myths perpetuated by the media.

Out of all ten interviewees, only one made exceptions within her specified diet due to a medical condition. Layla identified as vegan and had hypothyroidism. Due to her medical condition, her doctor advised her to eat foods that contained cholesterol. As a result, she decided to eat eggs once or twice a week. Other participants were not advised by doctors to move away from or make allowances for certain animal products within vegetarian or vegan diets; however, they themselves perceived that these diets would not be able to sustain them nutritionally and therefore made exceptions within these diets or moved away from them altogether. The most frequently mentioned concern during interviews was the potential inability to get enough protein from vegetarian and vegan diets. Adam, for example, when asked why he decided to include fish once a week in his otherwise vegetarian diet, replied, "I need the protein. The vitamins are fine, but sometimes I actually need some type of meat" (Adam). Abigail felt similarly about dairy. She identified as vegetarian but noted in her interview that she could never be vegan, as dairy products such as yogurt and cheese were her largest source of protein; she did not think she would be able to get enough protein without these products.

Other participants spoke more broadly about their concerns about maintaining an active lifestyle while adhering to vegetarian or vegan diets. Connor was an active runner, so his mother was concerned that he would lose weight while continuing to train on a vegan diet. Peyton, a senior in college, decided to try vegetarianism with his roommates. However, after a short time, they agreed to try pescetarianism instead, believing that it was a healthier diet in order to maintain their levels of physical activity:

> [My roommates] thought they wouldn't get enough nutrition or thought it was going to be too difficult to create a diet that was as nutritious as they need to be as active people. So I think that's when we conceded that we would be pescetarians because they thought that that would be easier to maintain an active lifestyle and get enough nutritional value (Peyton).

Like interviewees, survey respondents similarly expressed a concern that their vegetarian or vegan diet was harming their health. Respondents who had attempted vegetarian or vegan diets but eventually gave them up were asked to rank the statements "It was hurting my health" and "I was concerned that continuing this diet would hurt my health in the future" on a scale of 0 to 10 regarding how much these reasons influenced them to stop following these diets. The means for these statements were 4.68 and 4.20, respectively. Several respondents also cited health-related issues as the hardest part about being vegetarian or vegan. Many respondents indicated that they lacked protein in their diet, constantly felt tired or hungry, and resorted to eating too many carbohydrates and unhealthy foods as vegetarians or vegans. As discussed in some interviews, some survey respondents who identified as vegetarian or vegan made exceptions within these diets for health reasons. 13.79% of respondents who identified as vegetarians said they allowed non-vegetarian foods in their diet at times for health reasons, while 20.59% of respondents who identified as vegans reported they allowed non-vegan foods in their diet at times for health reasons.

It is important to note, however, that while some interviewees expressed concerns about getting proper nutrition on vegetarian and vegan diets, others felt that they felt healthier while following vegan diets specifically. Layla was surprised in the month after deciding to go vegan that she felt much healthier than she had before. She attributed this in part to the lack of dairy in her diet; "I just felt so clean and so good," (Layla) she said. Maddie also attributed her improvement in health to the lack of dairy in her diet after going vegan, claiming that it relieved congestion in her nasal cavity and gave her healthier skin. There are therefore mixed responses to the questions of the healthfulness of these diets; while some felt they caused health problems, others felt they improved their health. It is also important to recognize that vegetarian and vegan

diets are not standardized; vegetarian or vegan does not necessarily mean "healthy." While some vegetarians or vegans might consistently eat very nutritional vegetarian or vegan foods, other vegetarians or vegans might consistently eat unhealthy foods. Vegetarian or vegan diets, thus, will affect people's health differently.

Personal Cravings

Some interviewees pointed to personal cravings for meat or dairy products as a barrier to maintaining strict vegetarian or vegan diets. Meat or dairy products tempted them because they liked the taste of them. In some cases, these cravings became easier to resist and eventually subsided, while in other cases, interviewees still allowed exceptions within their vegetarian or vegan diets or shifted away from these diets altogether in order to indulge these cravings.

In his adoption of a vegetarian diet, Adam had to overcome his affinity for barbeque chicken. He found it particularly difficult to maintain his vegetarian diet in the summer because of all the barbeques that occur during this time of year. During his first summer as a vegetarian, he had a difficult time resisting eating barbeque chicken. Now, however, having been a vegetarian for two and a half years, he can grill barbeque chicken for others, such as his children or friends that he hosts at his house, but he does not eat it. Connor, however, originally attempted to follow a vegan diet but named his taste for meat as the hardest part about veganism. He noted that his concern for the environment, his main motivation for adopting a vegan diet, did not erase the fact that he enjoyed eating meat, so he was still tempted to eat meat during his time as a vegan and eventually reincorporated it into his diet. Maddie also followed a vegan diet while living abroad in Austria but returned to an omnivorous diet when she came back to the U.S., in part because she missed certain non-vegan foods from home.

While cravings for non-vegan foods influenced Connor and Maddie to shift away from their vegan diets, Layla still identified as a vegan but sometimes made exceptions within this diet to indulge cravings for non-vegan foods—particularly dairy. Thinking about these exceptions, she recapped an interaction she had had with her boyfriend a few days prior to her interview: "He brought home pasta the other day and said, 'Have some.' So I tried to cut off the corner that had less cheese and had some" (Layla). In this case, Layla made an exception within her vegan diet by eating cheese, but she made a point to eat *less* of the cheese. She did not specify whether she tried to eat less cheese in an effort to still uphold her values that inspired her veganism or because dairy tended to cause her health problems (she revealed this at another point during the interview), but it is interesting to note that, even while indulging her craving, she tried to make a "more vegan-like" choice.

Several survey respondents indicated that personal cravings were also barriers for them in maintaining their vegetarian or vegan diets. 6.90% of respondents within category 2 said that they allow for non-vegetarian foods in their diet when they crave them, while 23.53% of respondents within category 4 allow for non-vegan foods in their diet when they crave them. In this way, it seems that personal cravings are generally more of a barrier to adopting a vegan diet than a vegetarian diet. This might be due to the fact that vegan diets are more restrictive. This difference could also be due to the fact that it is seemingly more common to have a taste aversion to meat than food containing other animal products, such as cheese and desserts. In fact, some survey respondents identified resisting cravings for these items as the hardest part about being vegan ("I still crave cheese," "Cheese is addictive"). However, further research would need to be conducted to confirm that personal cravings are more of a barrier for vegans than vegetarians.

Time Barriers

A lack of time to prepare one's own food was brought up during interviews multiple times as a challenge to maintaining a healthy vegetarian or vegan diet. Interviewees acknowledged that these diets necessitate more homemade meals, as there are fewer vegetarian or vegan options in restaurants and dining halls. Interviewees discussed the ways in which their busy lifestyles prevented them at times from cooking meals at home and therefore required them to rely on vegetarian or vegan meals made elsewhere, which were often limited, repetitive, and less healthy. This reliance on premade meals contributed to a feeling of a lack of agency in one's vegetarian or vegan diet and ultimately led some interviewees to move away from these diets.

Participants that described busyness as a barrier to maintaining vegetarian and vegan diets noted the way that this busyness led to a reliance on outside sources for food. Because they were not the ones preparing the food, they had less autonomy over what food they were eating. Tess summarized this difficulty well in her interview:

> I think the biggest challenge is to be able to make your meal from scratch and have the time and balance in your life to be able to do that. If you don't, you're kind of restricted to some sort of portion of your meal that's been sort of processed or prepared already … So like that's one thing that I think is a challenge. I feel you have to be committed to cooking in the kitchen, which just isn't always feasible when you are working [or] you've got kids (Tess).

A busy schedule does not only prevent people in the workforce and with kids from adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet. Leah felt this barrier as a teenager. She wanted to adopt a completely vegetarian diet in high school, but her sports practice schedule prevented her from having time to cook her own meals. As her mother was not willing to cook separate meals for her, Leah waited to adopt a vegetarian diet until she had more time to cook for herself. Similarly, Maddie

explained how her schedule impacted her diet. For her, she felt like she has less control over the food she ate when she had a particularly busy day and was not able to come back to her room to cook (she lived in a residence hall on a college campus). On these days, she had to buy her meals from the dining hall, which had limited vegetarian and vegan options; speaking about this experience, she said, "I definitely think that I ten times out of ten would have a healthier meal if I was cooking at home than if it's coming from the dining hall" (Maddie).

This lack of time to cook therefore often translates to a lack of nutrition in a vegetarian or vegan diet. Leah, after believing she had enough time to cook for herself to adopt a vegetarian diet, still found herself often busy and began to rely on pre-made, processed foods. In order to expand her healthy food options, she decided to allow for fish in her diet. When asked about her motivations for this decision, she said:

> I felt like I was young making this choice, and … I was busy—student council, sports, studying for tests—and I would constantly make the easy choice for food instead of the informed choice for food. I would eat pastas. And I would eat bread when I was hungry. I wasn't snacking on something healthy, like a trail mix, or having something around where I knew I could eat it. It was more like trying to feed my hunger (Leah).

Emma also associated her lack of time to cook with her poor nutrition as a vegetarian. Because she did not always have time to prepare a vegetarian meal at home, she often ate pre-made, carb- and cheese-based foods. She felt that she did not have time to learn how to cook foods that would allow her to have balanced vegetarian meals, such as tofu, and therefore relied on processed foods in her diet. Ultimately, Emma encountered a particularly busy time in her life, and her vegetarianism became less of a priority. She did not have the time to focus on making sure she had a balanced vegetarian diet and began to eat meat again, for cooking a piece of meat

and a vegetable on the side, she believed, was a reliable way to ensure she ate a balanced meal amidst this busy time.

Some survey respondents also noted not having sufficient time to prepare vegetarian or vegan meals as a barrier. In response to the question "What is/was the hardest part about being a vegetarian or vegan?", responses included "too much effort to prepare meals," "food prep was much more involved and took a lot more planning and time," and "having to cook more." This barrier of insufficient time to cook, however, came up during both interviews and surveys less frequently than other barriers, such as social barriers and a lack of vegetarian or vegan options.

Subscribing to Gendered Meanings of Meat Eating

Previous literature on vegetarianism discussed the association between masculinity and eating meat; society often views meat eating as a masculine activity that enhances virility and associates a meatless diet with weakness and fragility—qualities often associated with femininity. For the majority of men that I interviewed and the men discussed by others during their interviews, getting enough protein in order to maintain an active lifestyle was a central concern. Women, however, did not tend to emphasize a potential loss of strength and physical ability as a concern within a vegetarian or vegan diet in the same way.

Abigail was particularly aware of the gendered meanings of meat and discussed this extensively during her interview. As a queer woman, she seemed to be particularly aware of this issue, for she did not subscribe to a traditionally "feminine" identity in many areas of her life. She explained that she often partakes in more "masculine" activities, such as smoking cigars and drinking whiskey. When she tells someone that she is a vegetarian, therefore, they are often surprised because this decision does not align with the other masculine activities in which she

participates. During her interview, she described her observations of the gendered expectations of meat eating:

> Men, masculinity is tied with eating meat, for sure, and to some degree like athleticism, like being tough and things like that. So I think it's seen as like, "Well, if you're an athlete, then you would definitely eat meat. You wouldn't be able to make that choice [to not eat meat] anymore." And I'm like, "Okay, whatever." … Yeah, there's a lot, I think, there … Like in TV and movies, there's like a thing about like, "Urrrrrr!" [growling noise]. Like men are tough and eat meat and steak and burgers and things. Oh my gosh, something that really annoys me is like how men think that they know how to grill just by virtue of being men. It's very funny. Like men don't necessarily know anything about grilling, but that's very embarrassing to be known. I've seen plenty of men pretend that they know how to grill and then ask a woman and be like, "I really have no idea what I'm doing." It's like there's this association there that that's supposed to be a shared knowledge (Abigail).

She also noted that the people who teased her about her choice to be a vegetarian for several years were all men. She remarked, "My brothers and my guy friends would like tease me about it, would like question my decision, like joke about like trying to sneak meat into like my sandwich or something like that … They were good natured about it, but it definitely bothered them and like seemed strange in a way that none of my female friends really cared" (Abigail).

The gendered meanings of eating meat that Abigail described were also present in other interviews. While all participants described social barriers to maintaining their vegetarian or vegan diets, many of these barriers were described as others' ignorance about issues related to agri-business or an unwillingness to impose on others. Male interviewees, however, emphasized the hostility they experienced from their peers for their choice to not eat meat. As discussed earlier, Adam's friends constantly asked him, "Why?" or "What's wrong with you?" or made comments such as, "Come on man, you gotta get back [to eating meat]" (Adam). Peyton also experienced hostile reactions to his decision to be a vegetarian. He was surprised at how quickly

people who knew him well stereotyped him as "some crazy tree hugger who was going to drop out of school" (Peyton) when they found out he was a vegetarian. While it is not possible to generalize from these few examples, it is important to note that only one female who was interviewed, Layla, described this kind of extreme negative reaction to their choice to not eat meat. Family and friends often felt like females' vegetarian or vegan diets were inconvenient or impositions on their own food choices, but almost no women interviewed described these negative reactions as attempts to insult their character or values, as Peyton and other men did.

Peyton also highlighted Abigail's observation about the association between eating meat and athleticism. During his interview, he described the experience of one of his roommates, who also tried to follow a vegetarian diet at the same time Peyton did. This roommate was a very physically active male and constantly commented about struggling to get enough protein as a vegetarian. Now, no longer a vegetarian, his roommate's typical diet consists of "two eggs in the morning, a couple of chicken breasts for lunch, [and] some slab of meat for dinner" (Peyton). Reflecting on his roommate's experience, Peyton remarked that he does not think that, in general, men believe they can get enough protein or nutritional value from a vegetarian diet that will allow them to maintain an active lifestyle. During interviews, some women mentioned the fact that they were conscious of their protein intake while following vegetarian or vegan diets, but they did not express concern that they would not get enough protein to remain physically active while following these diets. The only exception was Maddie's experience while walking the Camino de Santiago in Spain; as this was a very physically strenuous experience, she was particularly concerned about her ability to get enough protein from a vegan diet during this time. However, vegan options on the Camino de Santiago were limited.

The demographics of this study also reflect the ways in which expectations around eating meat are gendered in U.S. society. I interviewed 7 females and 3 males, as males who had attempted vegetarian or vegan diets were much harder to find. The majority of survey respondents were also women; 85.62% of respondents identified as female, while 11.64% identified as male. During his interview, Peyton noted that, besides his roommates that also tried to go vegetarian with him, he did not know any men who are vegetarian or vegan. He did, however, know women who were vegetarian or vegan. These demographics, along with these observations, reflect the reality that it is much more typical and accepted for women to adopt meatless diets than it is for men.

Survey responses, however, were ambivalent regarding perceptions of masculinity being a barrier to maintaining vegetarian and vegan diets. There was no statistically significant difference between males and females for the mean of respondents’ ranking (from 0-10) of the statement, “It would be/would have been easier to maintain a vegetarian or vegan diet if there were not a negative stigma associated with vegetarianism or veganism in society.” However, respondents in categories 1 and 3 were also asked why they stopped following vegetarian and vegan diets. Statistical analysis showed that there was a statistically significant difference between males and females for the statement “My friends and family disapproved of my decision,” indicating that others’ disapproval influenced males more than females to shift away from vegetarian and vegan diets. One male survey respondent referenced this disapproval in his response to the question “What is/was the hardest thing about being a vegetarian or vegan?”:

> Other people's perceptions and disapproval. They think you are doing it be [sic] needlessly difficult or because you are overly sensitive. As a male, other men definitely belittled and made jokes about me not eating meat because meat is "manly". People also go out of there [sic] way sometimes in really just cruel ways to eat non-vegan things in front of me or try to offer them to me.

Survey results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between males and females regarding health concerns being a reason why people gave up their vegetarian or vegan diets. During interviews, both males and females discussed meat's association with athleticism and strength—qualities typically considered to be "masculine." However, the survey did not show that more males moved away from vegetarian or vegan diets for health reasons than females. This finding could be due to the fact that there were various health issues—not just lack of strength—that people experienced while following these diets. Many women, for example, expressed a concern for eating too many carbohydrates. A study that investigates the influence of specific health concerns (e.g. lack of protein, vitamin deficiency, eating too many carbohydrates) on males' and females' decisions to move away from vegetarian and vegan diets would be necessary in order to further determine if concern for lack of physical strength is more of a barrier for males than females.

Charlotte: The Exception that "Proves" the Rule

Unlike others interviewed for this study, Charlotte described vegetarianism as "not hard at all" (Charlotte) and called many of the barriers others typically faced as "non-issue[s]" (Charlotte) for her. Charlotte is a 54 year old white female who identifies as vegetarian, a diet she adopted 36 years ago, but eats fish on very rare occasions. She also does not eat dairy due to a skin problem it caused in the past; however, she allows for "incidental dairy" (Charlotte) in her diet, which she defined as dairy that will not bother her skin and that is present in small portions, such as the chocolate chips in a cookie. Charlotte adopted a vegetarian diet to be able to more easily adhere to a kosher diet; she grew up in a kosher home and found it "bizarre" (Charlotte) that her family would be very strict about not mixing kosher and non-kosher dishes at home but was not concerned about this in restaurants. By not eating meat, Charlotte eliminated this issue

altogether. She also did not particularly like meat as a child but still ate it, as this was a regular part of her family's diet.

Charlotte's interview illuminates further many of the barriers discussed in other interviews; her experiences as a vegetarian are atypical when compared to the experiences described by other interviewees, as her early exposure to and various social interactions regarding vegetarianism differed in many cases from those of other interviewees. She has therefore experienced fewer barriers than other participants and finds little difficulty following her mostly vegetarian diet. In this way, Charlotte's experiences bolster the findings of this study, reinforcing that the barriers found through the other interviews and survey do influence one's likelihood of not maintaining a vegetarian or vegan diet.

Interviewees most frequently described social barriers as the main barrier to maintaining vegetarian or vegan diets. Many expressed that it would be much easier to maintain these diets if more of their friends were also vegetarians or vegans. This, however, was Charlotte's reality; many of her current friends are vegetarians or vegans. Charlotte described her group of friends as a "liberal, left-leaning, crunchy, granola crowd" (Charlotte) and attributed this commonality of diet among her friends to shared values. Because many of her friends follow a similar diet, she does not frequently encounter many of the awkward social situations described by other interviewees or does not feel like her choice to eat vegetarian food imposes on her friends' freedom to eat what they want. She is also less likely to experience alienating comments about her diet from friends, since many of them have similar dietary restrictions.

Abigail noted in her interview that she had witnessed several friends move away from their vegetarian or vegan diets when they entered into a partnered relationship, moved in with a partner, or had children. Layla, Adam, Emma, Leah, and Tess all spoke to this issue during their

interviews as well, expressing that having to prepare food for and eat with others was a consistent barrier for them in maintaining their vegetarian or vegan diets. Charlotte, however, lives alone without a partner or children. She therefore does not have to prepare food for others who are not vegetarians on a daily basis. When asked what the hardest part about being a vegetarian is, she replied, "…It's no work for me at home because there's nothing there to eat that's not vegetarian. I can eat anything in the house because I'm the only one who eats there. I'm the only one who buys the groceries, and when people come over, those are the only things I have to make, and they're going along with my patterns, so it makes it easy" (Charlotte). Charlotte had lived with roommates and partners in the past, however, but she did not have issues maintaining her vegetarian diet during these times, as all of these people were open-minded. Reflecting on her experience as a vegetarian in a partnered relationship, she said, "Since it was in my home, we ate my way. And in their homes, I was accommodated" (Charlotte). This explicit willingness to accommodate a vegetarian diet was not a common experience among other interviewees.

Several interviewees also discussed the difficulties they had following their vegetarian or vegan diets while traveling abroad, as these diets were not commonly accepted in these cultures. While Charlotte also had experiences as a vegetarian while traveling abroad, she did not find it difficult to adhere to her diet in these cultures. She spent the summer before moving to college in Israel—a culture in which meat was not frequently eaten. At this point, she was not yet a vegetarian, but she decided to become a vegetarian immediately following this summer when she arrived at college. Growing up, Charlotte did not like eating meat, but she followed the eating habits of her parents and ate it anyway. Her experience abroad in Israel, thus, exposed her to more vegetarian options and made her realize that meat was not a necessary part of a diet.

Once she had adopted a vegetarian diet, Charlotte traveled to Cuba, a culture where vegetarianism is not common. When asked if she struggled adhering to her vegetarian diet while there, she said that it was not difficult because there was not much meat besides chicken around. She described one specific experience at a community meal there. The Cuban hosts, out of politeness, wanted to make sure that their guests were able to eat the chicken. Charlotte and the two other vegetarians on the trip said no to the chicken and explained that they were not simply being polite by doing so but rather that they did not eat chicken as part of their diet, "like an allergy or something" (Charlotte). Most other interviewees had a difficult time saying no when they were in similar situations in foreign countries, as they felt that they would be perceived as rude for rejecting the food that their hosts had prepared for them. Charlotte, however, did not. Her experience was also unique because she was traveling with two other vegetarians. Those interviewed, however, did not indicate that they traveled with other vegetarians or vegans during the experiences they discussed and therefore were most likely the only ones with their particular dietary restrictions while traveling abroad. Charlotte's comparison of her decision to not eat meat to an allergy is particularly noteworthy, for it indicates an unwillingness to compromise her vegetarianism to protect the feelings of others; she framed her vegetarianism in a way that implied that it was not simply that she *did* not eat meat by choice but rather that she *could* not eat meat. All other interviewees who described similar situations, however, expressed more of a willingness to eat non-vegetarian or non-vegan foods in order to prevent offending the person serving the food.

Charlotte described another situation in which she was hosted for a meal by her friend's Russian grandmother:

> One of my friends who went to visit her grandmother who grew up in Russia and who, ya know, walked across Europe to immigrate…

> like I'm not kidding. Melissa said, "Gemi will not understand about the vegetarian thing. Just eat the soup." And I'm like, "I'm not eating the soup." And I'm like, ya know, trying to dry off the noodle, and I'm like, I can't… it really made me uncomfortable. And Gemi said to me, "Are you a vegetarian?" And I said, "Yes," and she took the soup away from me because she knew I wouldn't want to eat that … Most people when you explain, "I don't eat meat" for whatever reason, they may think it's weird, but most people are respectful (Charlotte).

Charlotte's experience with her friends' grandmother was unique among other situations described by other interviewees, for few experienced such a rapid, unquestioning acceptance of their decision to not eat meat or other animal products. While this experience took place in the U.S. rather than another country, this example still demonstrates a situation in which Charlotte's vegetarianism was accepted amidst a culture in which this diet is not prevalent.

Charlotte's experience as a vegetarian is also somewhat unique because of the way vegetarianism was portrayed to her from a young age. Most interviewees did not have any vegetarians or vegans in their families when they were growing up and therefore had little personal exposure to these concepts until they were older; many of the messages they received as children about vegetarians and vegans therefore were most likely stereotypes perpetuated by the media. Charlotte, however, first heard about the concept of vegetarianism from her great uncle when she was 6 to 8 years old. Her great uncle told her about a man he had served with in the army who was a vegetarian; this man not only did not eat meat but also did not play pool because the pool balls were lacquered over leather—an animal product. Her great uncle spoke very highly of this man's ethics, and this story made an impression on Charlotte as a child.

Charlotte also grew up around two older cousins who were "60s radicals vegetarians" (Charlotte). At large family barbeques, her aunt always made accommodations for these two cousins to ensure that they would have food to eat:

> My aunt used to make like these chopped string beans that were kind of like a mock chopped liver. And she made a potato casserole kind of a thing. And there was always one made without the eggs so that the vegetarians could eat that. So it was clear to me as a child, even when I didn't eat that way, that everything didn't have to be made that one way. And again I don't think at the time that I really reflected on that that much, but it was there. Like, "Oh, there are plenty of things vegetarians can eat. Even if they don't eat these things, they can eat *these* things" (Charlotte).

Charlotte was therefore exposed from a young age to the idea that vegetarians have plenty of food options and that they will be accommodated at social gatherings involving food. Again, this was not a common experience among other interviewees.

Charlotte became even more aware of the wide variety of options for vegetarians during college while working for the dining hall there. She noticed that the vegetarian options in the dining hall were repetitive and often unhealthy, so she asked her supervisor if they could offer different vegetarian options. He told her that if she came up with a list of 100 vegetarian meals that the dining staff could make, he would incorporate some of them into the menu. Charlotte therefore went around her dormitory, knocking on people's doors, and asked people of "proud ethnic heritage" (Charlotte) what common meals their families ate that did not have meat in them. She ended up creating a list of over 100 vegetarian dishes, some of which her supervisor chose to offer as regular meals in the dining hall. Reflecting on this experience, Charlotte said, "I think by going around and talking to people in the dorm, it gave me more of an appreciation that vegetarian food wasn't just food that was without—that there were actually really interesting things to eat that were healthful, that there was a huge variety" (Charlotte). This is a very different narrative than those expressed by several other interviewees, as many named a lack of variety in their diet as a major barrier to maintaining their vegetarianism or veganism. Not only

did Charlotte believe there is a wide array of options for vegetarians, but she also commented that non-vegetarian diets typically have *less* variety than vegetarian diets:

> One of the things I've always found really odd is when I tell people I don't eat meat or dairy, they're like, "WHAT DO YOU EAT?" and I tell people what I eat, and I ask them what they eat because I'm curious. Like I said, I'm adventuresome, I like to learn about new foods. And you find out that people have a chicken breast, potato, and salad every night. And I'm like, "Everything you eat is *white*. That's boring." My food is never boring. It's always multi-colored and multi-textured, and I like that (Charlotte).

In this way, Charlotte believed that her vegetarian diet has facilitated rather than hindered her habit of eating a wide variety of foods.

Charlotte, however, did not refute that there are restrictions in her diet. Her perspective on these restrictions, however, deviated greatly from the ways in which other interviewees described their dietary restrictions. While other interviewees emphasized the ways in which their vegetarianism or veganism made their diets more difficult, Charlotte viewed her vegetarianism as something that makes her life easier. She commented that she does not have to go into large areas of the grocery store (the sections that contain meat and dairy), which makes grocery shopping simpler. She also noted that she typically has fewer options on restaurant menus, which makes her decision of what to order more manageable. She even described an experience she had at a vegetarian restaurant in San Francisco as "overwhelming" (Charlotte) because there were over 200 items on the menu; she was not used to having so many options from which to choose and preferred to have fewer choices so that her decision would be simpler.

It must be noted that Charlotte has followed a vegetarian diet for 36 years—the longest amount of time following a vegetarian or vegan diet out of all interviewees in this study. The ease with which she follows a vegetarian diet could also therefore be a result of having had more

time to learn how to navigate some of the barriers to maintaining this diet. Charlotte, however, was still "the exception that proves the rule" in this study. Her social experiences of vegetarianism were atypical relative to those of other participants interviewed, and she found little difficulty in maintaining her mostly vegetarian diet. While several interviewees felt rude while eating with friends and in other cultures, had to accommodate partners while preparing food, felt stigmatized for their dietary choices, and felt restricted by the lack of variety in vegetarian and vegan diets, Charlotte did not. Her experiences from a young age allowed her to see vegetarians in a positive light and to realize that vegetarians had a variety of options. Since she lived alone and had many friends who were also vegetarians and vegans, she did not encounter many of the social barriers described by others in their interviews. In this way, Charlotte's experiences provide the basis for a quasi-comparative analysis and support the findings identified throughout the rest of the study.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

While I have identified various barriers to adopting vegetarian and vegan diets in this study, I must acknowledge that these barriers do not exist in isolation from one another; they combine and interact, compounding one another and leading to nuanced conditions that inhibit people's ability to maintain these diets. As eating meat is a social norm, for example, it is expected that most people will order a meal containing meat at a restaurant. There are therefore often few vegetarian or vegan options at restaurants, causing vegetarians and vegans to have to cook more in their homes. Cooking, however, requires both time and knowledge of vegetarian and vegan foods. If one does not have this time or knowledge, she might come to rely upon more processed, unhealthy foods in her vegetarian or vegan diet and ultimately come to name a lack of nutritional value as the main barrier to maintaining her diet. In this case, however, a

variety of other barriers also influenced this decision. It is therefore important to consider how these difficulties interact and influence one another when thinking about ways to alleviate the barriers discussed in this study.

With that said, while participants pointed to various barriers in both interview and survey responses, two barriers were particularly salient: navigating social situations involving food and finding a variety of vegetarian and vegan options to eat (this lack of options was largely due to lack of availability rather than lack of financial resources). Interviewees who have been vegetarians or vegans for longer periods of time or who were vegetarians or vegans several years ago, however, noted that options for vegetarians and vegans have improved greatly in recent years; there are now more well-marked vegetarian and vegan options at restaurants, and a wider variety of fresh fruits and vegetables are available year-round rather than only during certain parts of the year. Although a lack of vegetarian and vegan options still deter many people from maintaining these diets, the increasing prevalence of these options offers individuals ways to escape the "culturally industrialized" (Adorno and Horkheimer 1944) norm of eating animal products; they are increasingly able to "opt out" of this system and not support the animal agriculture industry.

While these structural changes should continue, allowing people more access to vegetarian and vegan food, this study reveals the change in cultural norms still needed in order to enable more people to maintain vegetarian and vegan diets. Macdiarmid, Douglas, and Campbell emphasized the social aspect of eating in their study, saying, "Eating meat is the dominant and normalised dietary habit in many developed countries … and therefore encouraging dietary change will be difficult to achieve without shifting social norms" (Macdiarmid et al. 2015:492). This study of barriers to adopting vegetarian and vegan diets

supports the notion that eating is not just a physical but also a *social* act. While interviewees discussed a variety of barriers throughout their interviews, all interviewees included social barriers as an inhibitor—and for many it was the main inhibitor—to maintaining a vegetarian or vegan diet. These social barriers occurred on several levels—among family, friends, and more distant acquaintances, as well as in one-on-one interactions and in larger group settings. Survey results supported the prevalence of social barriers to vegetarianism and veganism, as discussed in the "Data Analysis" portion of this study and demonstrated in Appendix A.

When discussing these social barriers, participants continued to return to one potential solution to the social challenges of maintaining vegetarian or vegan diets: being around others who are also vegetarian or vegan. In this way, this study shares themes with Cherry's study of veganism in punk subculture. She says:

> Participants in lifestyle activism need social support for retention. This is especially important for veganism, which affects many areas of one's life, including practical aspects like grocery shopping and social situations like eating with friends. All of my participants found it easy to maintain their veganism by shopping for their own food and cooking their own meals. They found the more difficult situations to be eating with friends and family who were not vegetarian or vegan (Cherry 2015:64).

Cherry described the participants in her study as being "'pulled' [into veganism] by their social contacts" (Cherry 2015:66), as many of them sought out communities supportive of a vegan lifestyle (Cherry 2015:66). These communities were important support systems for new vegans, as they provided them with "cultural tools" (Cherry 2015), such as cooking skills, that helped them maintain their veganism. Ultimately, Cherry concluded that "self-identifying as vegan was not enough to sustain vegan practices" (Cherry 2015:67); even if they identified as vegan, participants often made exceptions to this diet if they did not have a social network of other vegans to support them (Cherry 2015:67).

I found a similar pattern in my study, for nine out of ten interviewees had few or no other family members or friends who were also vegetarian or vegan, and all nine of them found it difficult to fully maintain their vegetarianism or veganism for social reasons. Charlotte, however, had many close friends that were vegetarian or vegan, providing this supportive community described in Cherry's study. Although she did allow fish into her vegetarian diet, she ate it very rarely (about three times each year) and did so to accommodate others (rather than for added nutritional value or to indulge personal cravings). She also had a markedly different attitude toward her diet than other people interviewed, as she emphasized how easy it was to follow, while others focused on the difficulties they encountered following a vegetarian or vegan diet.

While Cherry exclusively studied vegan teenagers, my study found these social barriers to be pertinent for both vegetarians and vegans in multiple age groups, as interview and survey participants in all categories pointed to social situations as obstacles to maintaining their vegetarianism or veganism. For some, these social situations changed with time (teenagers and people in their young twenties might encounter these difficulties primarily among friends, while older adults might encounter difficulties with partners, children, and colleagues as well); social situations involving food, however, continued to be major barriers to maintaining both vegetarian and vegan diets.

Vegetarianism and veganism are not simply matters of personal preference. As studies continue to reveal information about the negative impacts of animal products on both the environment and our personal health, it is important that these diets be viable for all segments of society. Several other studies have exposed the issues of accessibility to fresh, healthy food in low-income communities. As the majority of the participants in this study are not members of

these low-income communities, this study does not attempt to address issues of access to vegetarian or vegan foods in these areas. This study does reveal, however, that even in communities where access to vegetarian and vegan foods is improving, many people still do not find vegetarianism or veganism feasible because of a lack of social support surrounding these diets. It is necessary, therefore, to not only improve access but also improve public perception of vegetarianism and veganism, as this will likely increase the number of people able to maintain these diets and therefore lead to more social support for these diets. While this study did not specifically aim to determine how to change this public perception, preliminary efforts can be made by showing more positive portrayals of vegetarians and vegans in the media, shifting food advertisements' focus away from meat and dairy products to include more plant-based products, implementing policy changes that bring about less meat and dairy consumption, and changing gender norms so that expectations of masculinity are less rigid.

Changing culture is a slow process, but this is what is required for vegetarian and vegan diets to become more viable and prevalent. Providing more vegetarian or vegan options is an important step, but it is not enough; in order to more effectively dismantle the barriers to maintaining diets free of animal products—and diets more beneficial for Earth and our own health—there must be a change in society's expectations surrounding meat and dairy consumption and the social perceptions of vegetarianism and veganism.

References

Adorno, Theodore W., Max Horkheimer, Juliet Schor, and Douglas B. Holt. 2000. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." Pp. 3–19 in *The Consumer Society Reader*. New York, NY: New Press.

Aguilar, Jade. 2015. "Food Choices and Voluntary Simplicity in Intentional Communities:" *Utopian Studies* 26(1):79–100.

Berger, Peter L. 1963. *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Penny Van Esterik. 2013. "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste." Pp. 31–39 in *Food and Culture*, edited by C. Counihan. New York, NY: Routledge.

Cherry, Elizabeth. 2015. "I Was a Teenage Vegan: Motivation and Maintenance of Lifestyle Movements." *Sociological Inquiry* 85(1):55–74.

Douglas, Mary. 1972. "Deciphering a Meal." *Daedalus* 101(1):61–81.

Gray, Paul S. 2007. *The Research Imagination: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Joy, Melanie. n.d. "Carnism." *Beyond Carnism*. Retrieved October 15, 2016 (http://www.carnism.org/carnism).

Macdiarmid, Jennie I., Flora Douglas, and Jonina Campbell. 2016. "Eating like There's No Tomorrow: Public Awareness of the Environmental Impact of Food and Reluctance to Eat Less Meat as Part of a Sustainable Diet." *Appetite* 96:487–93.

Ocejo, Richard E. 2014. "Show the Animal: Constructing and Communicating New Elite Food Tastes at Upscale Butcher Shops." *Poetics* (47):106–21.

Sage, Colin. 2012. *Environment and Food*. London: Routledge.

Taylor, Chloë. 2013. “Foucault and Critical Animal Studies: Genealogies of Agricultural Power.” *Philosophy Compass* 8(6):539–51.

Twigg, Julia. 1983. “Vegetarianism and the Meanings of Meat.” Pp. 18–30 in *The Sociology of Food and Eating*, edited by A. Murcott. Aldershot, England: Gower Publishing Company Limited.

Wrenn, Corey Lee. 2011. “Resisting the Globalization of Speciesism: Vegan Abolitionism as a Site for Consumer-Based Social Change.” *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* 9(3):9–27.

APPENDIX A

Consent - Boston College, Department of Sociology
Informed Consent for Taking Part in a Research Study
"Barriers to Adopting Vegetarian/Vegan Diets"

You are invited to participate in a web-based online survey on barriers to adopting vegetarian/vegan diets. This is a research project being conducted by Emily Franko, a student at Boston College. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

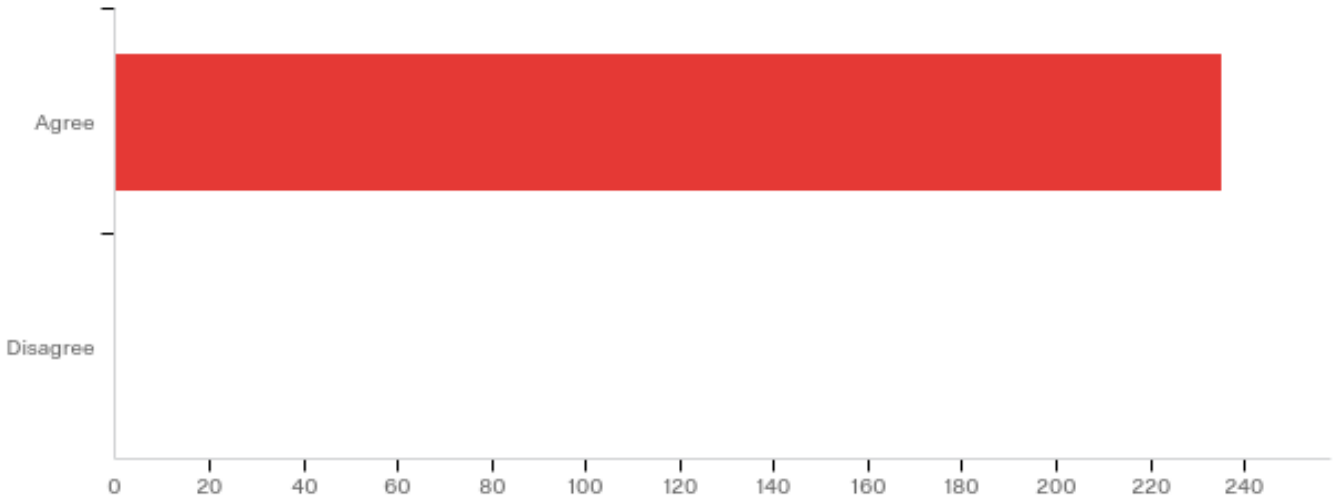
BENEFITS
You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about difficulties people encounter when trying to adopt vegetarian and vegan diets.

RISKS
The possible risks or discomforts of the study are minimal. You may feel a little uncomfortable answering personal survey questions. There may be unknown risks.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Your responses will remain anonymous. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study.

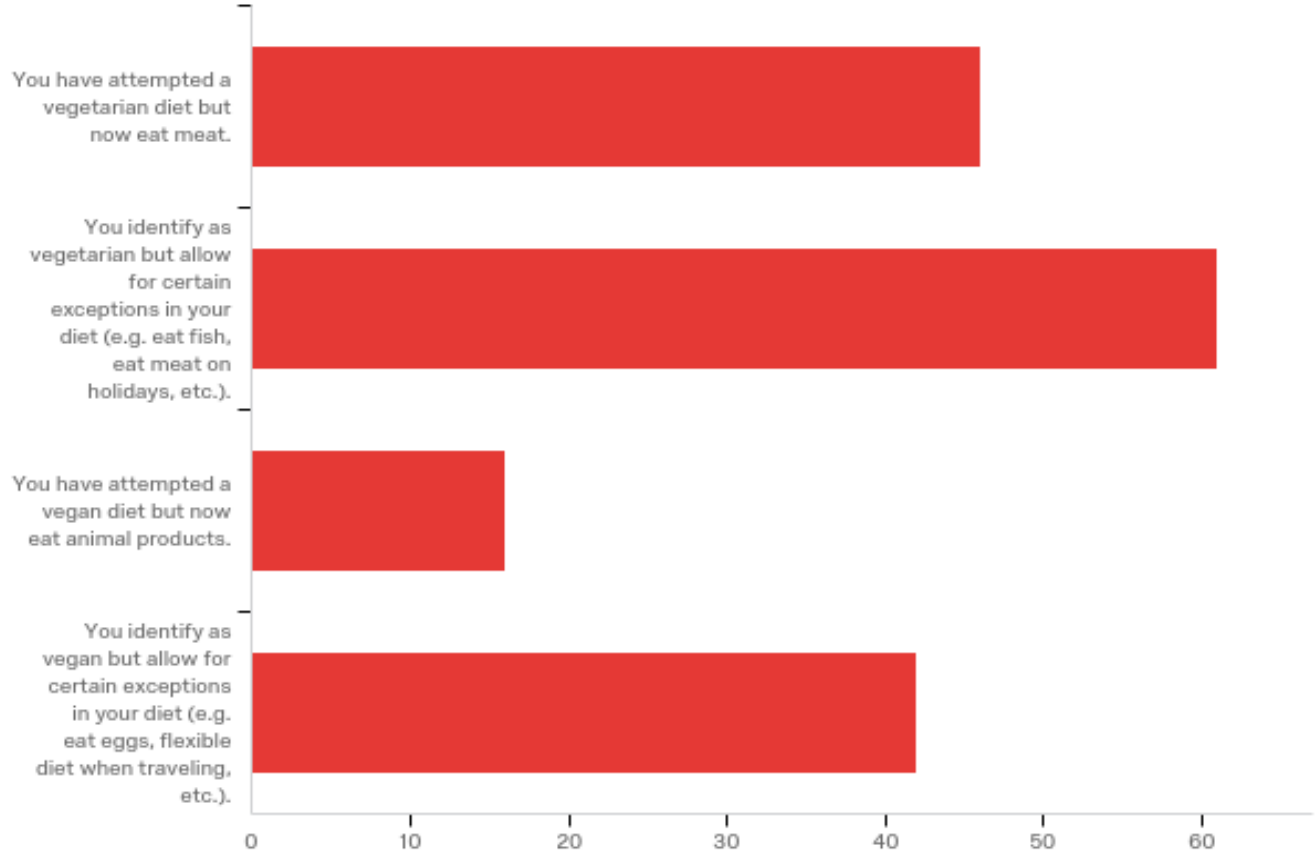
CONTACT
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact my research supervisor, Professor Juliet Schor via phone at (617) 552-4056 or via email at Juliet.schor@bc.edu. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or that your rights as a participant in research have not been honored during the course of this project, or you have any questions, concerns, or complaints that you wish to address to someone other than the investigator, you may contact the Office for Research Protections, BC at (617) 552-4778, or you can send an email to irb@bc.edu.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below. You may print a copy of this consent form for your records. Clicking on the "Agree" button indicates that
You have read the above information.
You voluntarily agree to participate.
You are 18 years of age or older.



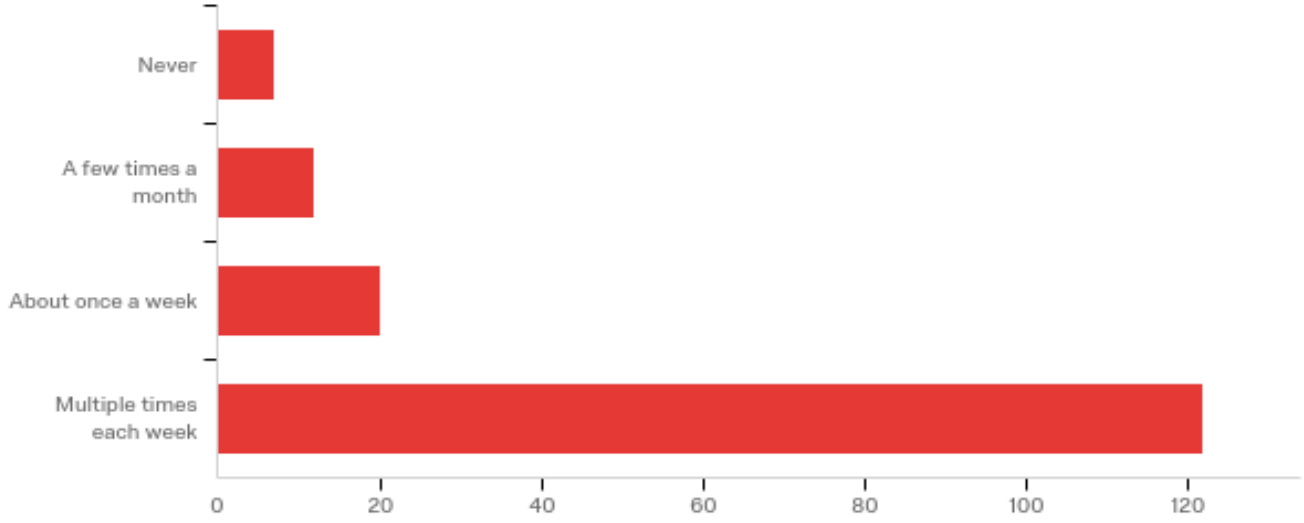
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Agree	100.00%	235
2	Disagree	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	235

Which of the following categories best describes you?



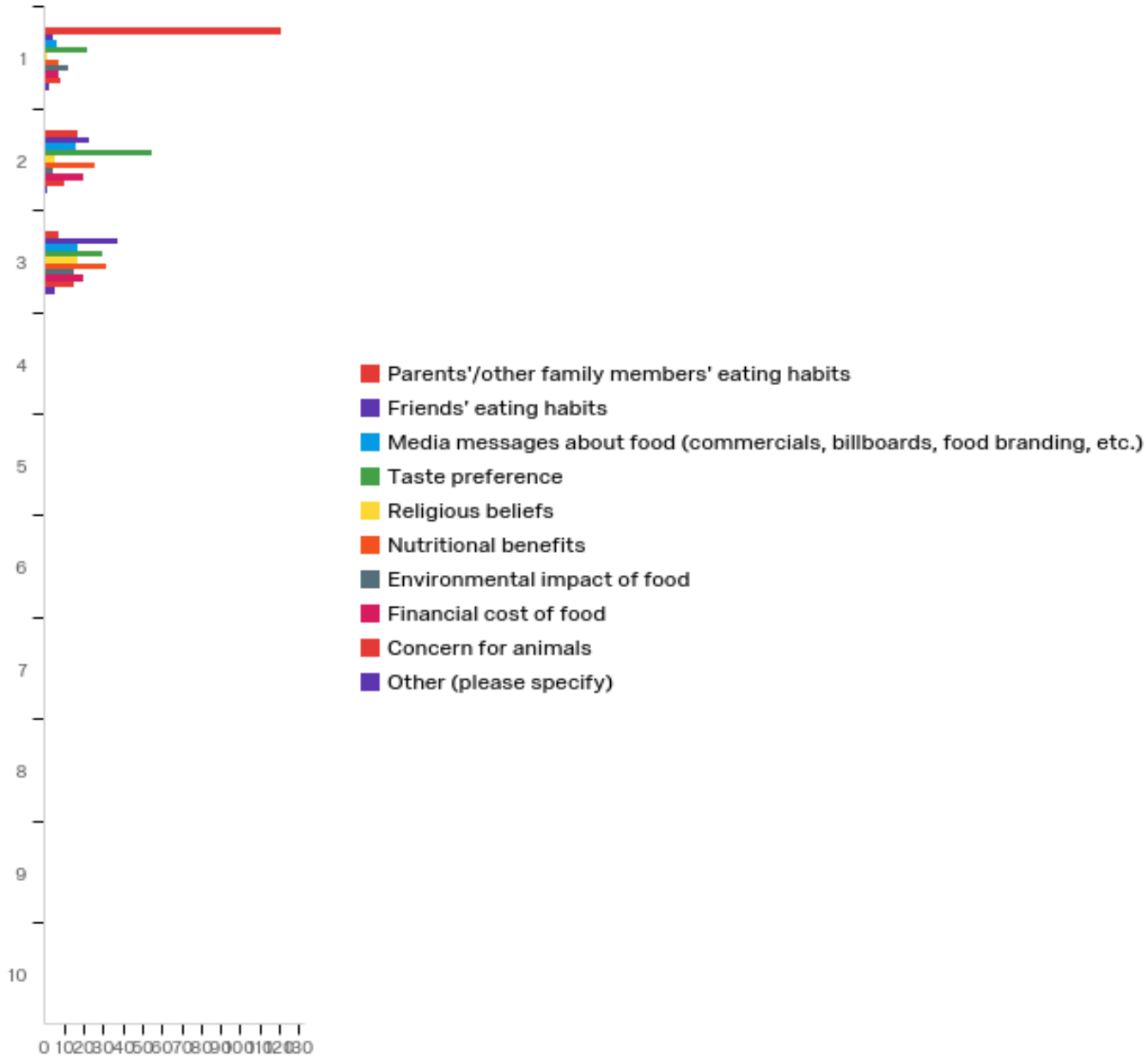
#	Answer	%	Count
1	You have attempted a vegetarian diet but now eat meat.	27.88%	46
2	You identify as vegetarian but allow for certain exceptions in your diet (e.g. eat fish, eat meat on holidays, etc.).	36.97%	61
3	You have attempted a vegan diet but now eat animal products.	9.70%	16
4	You identify as vegan but allow for certain exceptions in your diet (e.g. eat eggs, flexible diet when traveling, etc.).	25.45%	42
	Total	100%	165

How often did you eat meat when you were growing up?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Never	4.35%	7
2	A few times a month	7.45%	12
3	About once a week	12.42%	20
4	Multiple times each week	75.78%	122
	Total	100%	161

Please identify the top three influences on your diet growing up, from the largest influence to the smallest influence (1 = largest influence, 3 = smallest influence). Please only rank three choices, and leave the rest of the options blank.



#	Question	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		Total
1	Parents'/other	83.45%	121	11.72%	17	4.83%	7	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	145

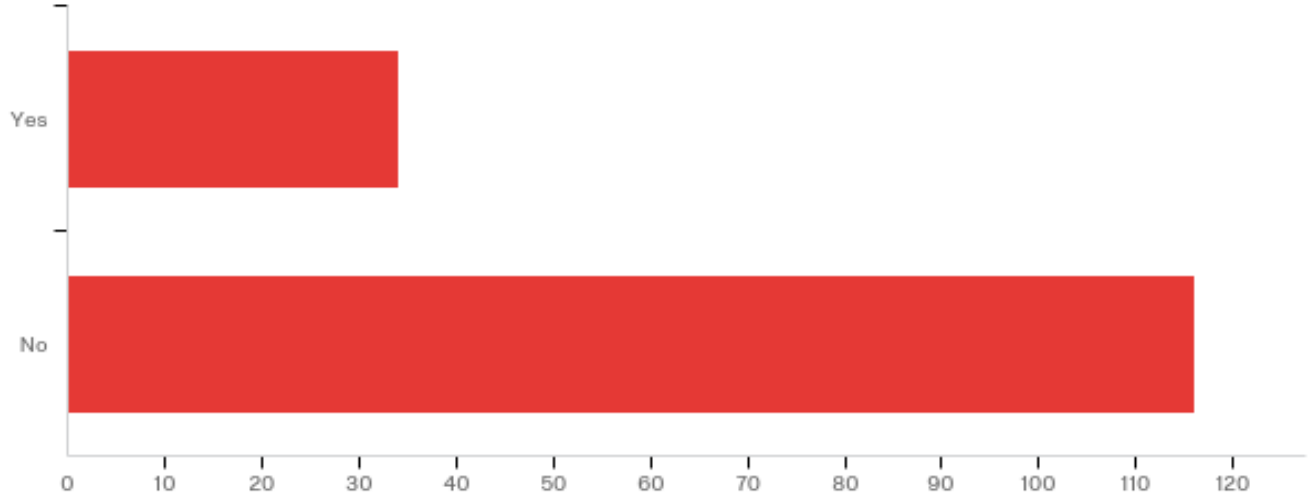
	family members' eating habits																				
2	Friends’ eating habits	6.25%	4	35.94%	23	57.81%	37	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	64
3	Media messages about food (commercials, billboards, food brandi ng, etc.)	15.38%	6	41.03%	16	43.59%	17	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	39
4	Taste preference	20.56%	22	51.40%	55	28.04%	30	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	107
5	Religious beliefs	4.35%	1	21.74%	5	73.91%	17	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	23
6	Nutritional benefits	10.77%	7	40.00%	26	49.23%	32	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	65
7	Environmental impact of food	38.71%	12	12.90%	4	48.39%	15	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	31
8	Financial cost of food	14.89%	7	42.55%	20	42.55%	20	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	47

9	Concern for animals	24.24%	8	30.30%	10	45.45%	15	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	33
10	Other (please specify)	25.00%	2	12.50%	1	62.50%	5	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	8

Other (please specify)

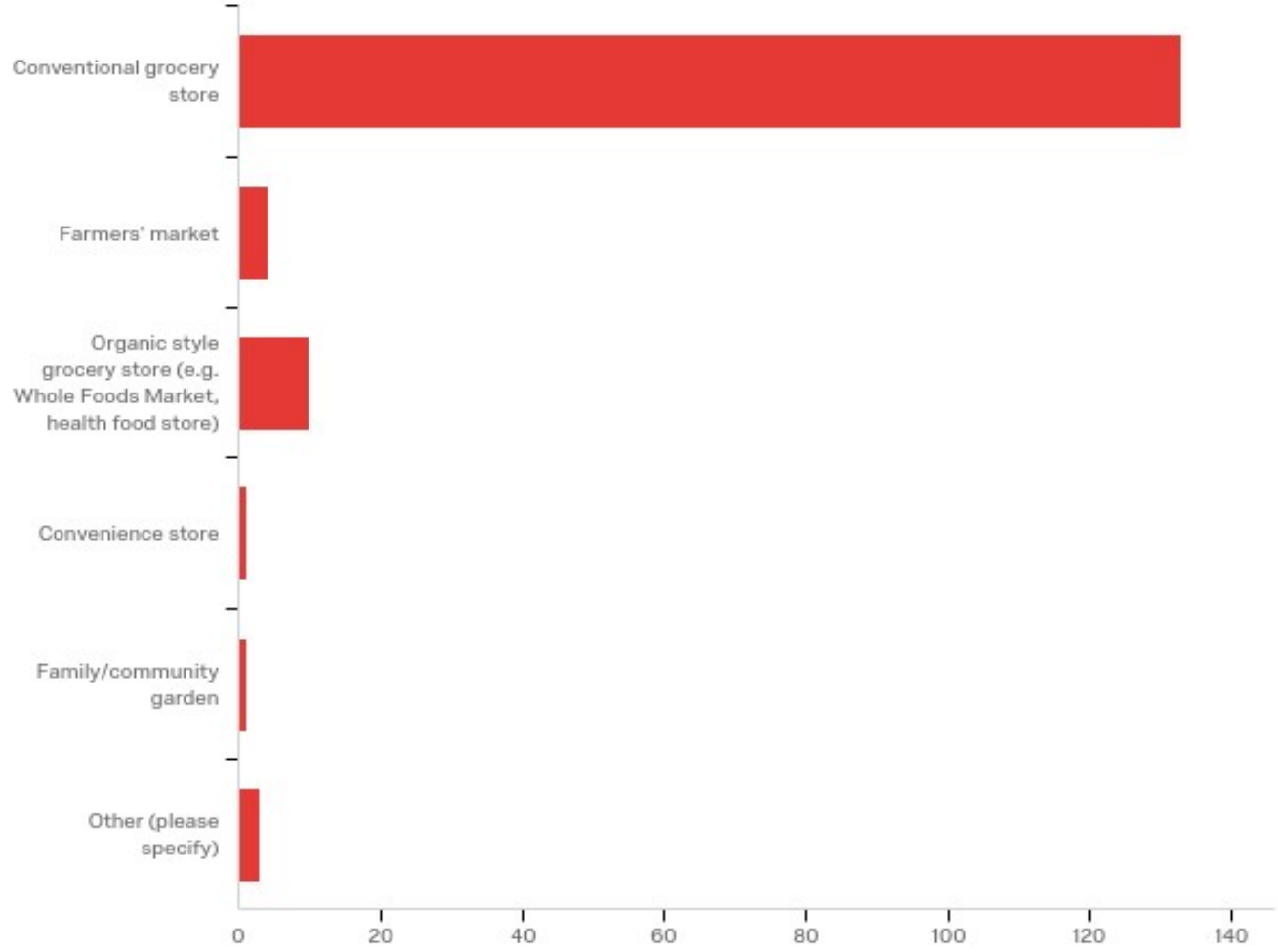
Other (please specify)
Feeling grossed out by meat
school lunch
My father owned a small supermarket, specializing in meats, and had a huge variety of fresh fruits and vegetables...he brought home best quality meats 3-4 nights weekly.
Health
parents prepared meat, had to eat meat
lose wieght

Were any members of your family (immediate or extended) a vegetarian or vegan while you were growing up?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	22.67%	34
2	No	77.33%	116
	Total	100%	150

Where did your family primarily get food when you were growing up?

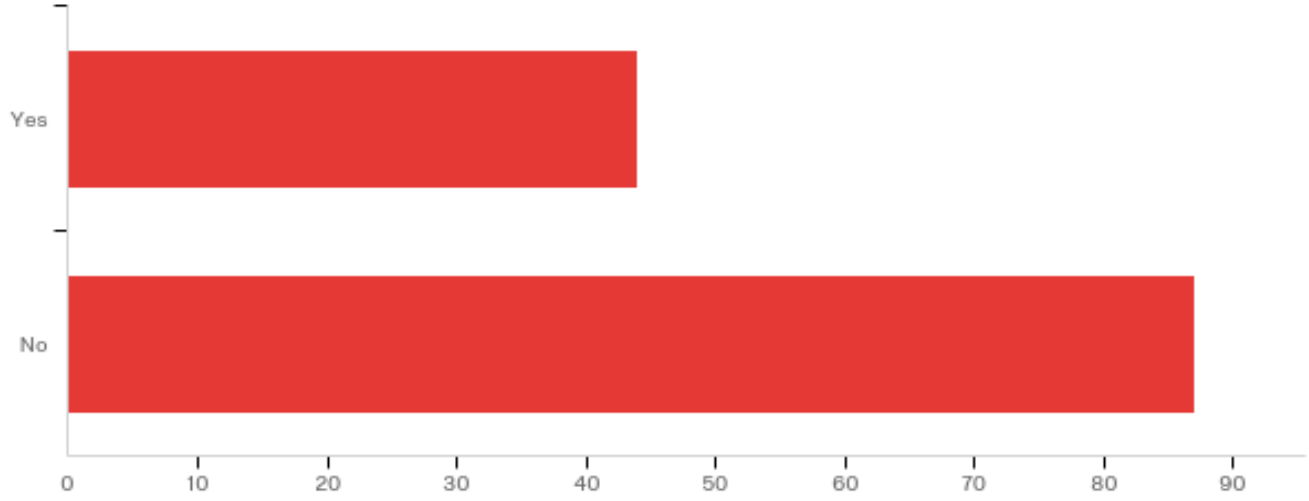


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Conventional grocery store	87.50%	133
2	Farmers' market	2.63%	4
3	Organic style grocery store (e.g. Whole Foods Market, health food store)	6.58%	10
4	Convenience store	0.66%	1
5	Family/community garden	0.66%	1
6	Other (please specify)	1.97%	3
	Total	100%	152

Other (please specify)

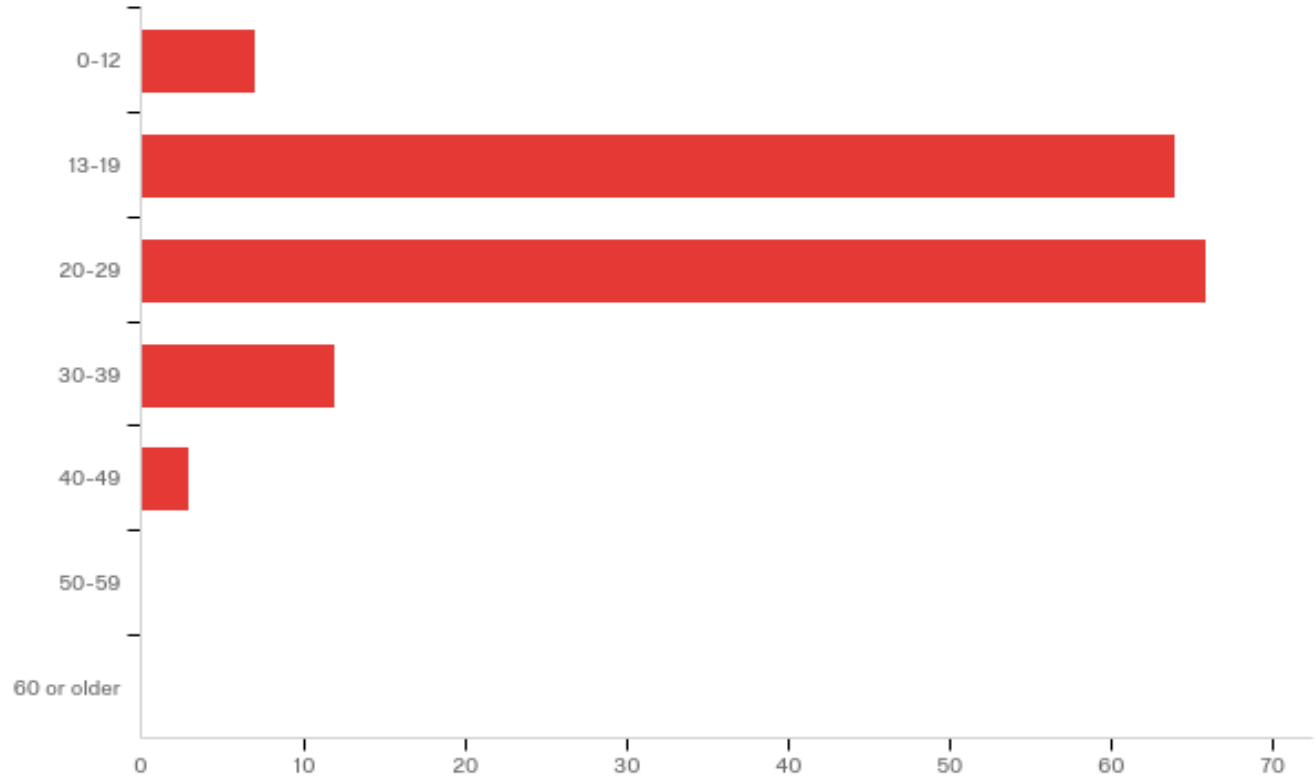
Other (please specify)
Fathers food store
Restaurant/fast food
Costco

Did prices frequently deter your family from buying certain food items when you were growing up?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	33.59%	44
2	No	66.41%	87
	Total	100%	131

In what age range did you adopt a vegetarian or vegan diet?

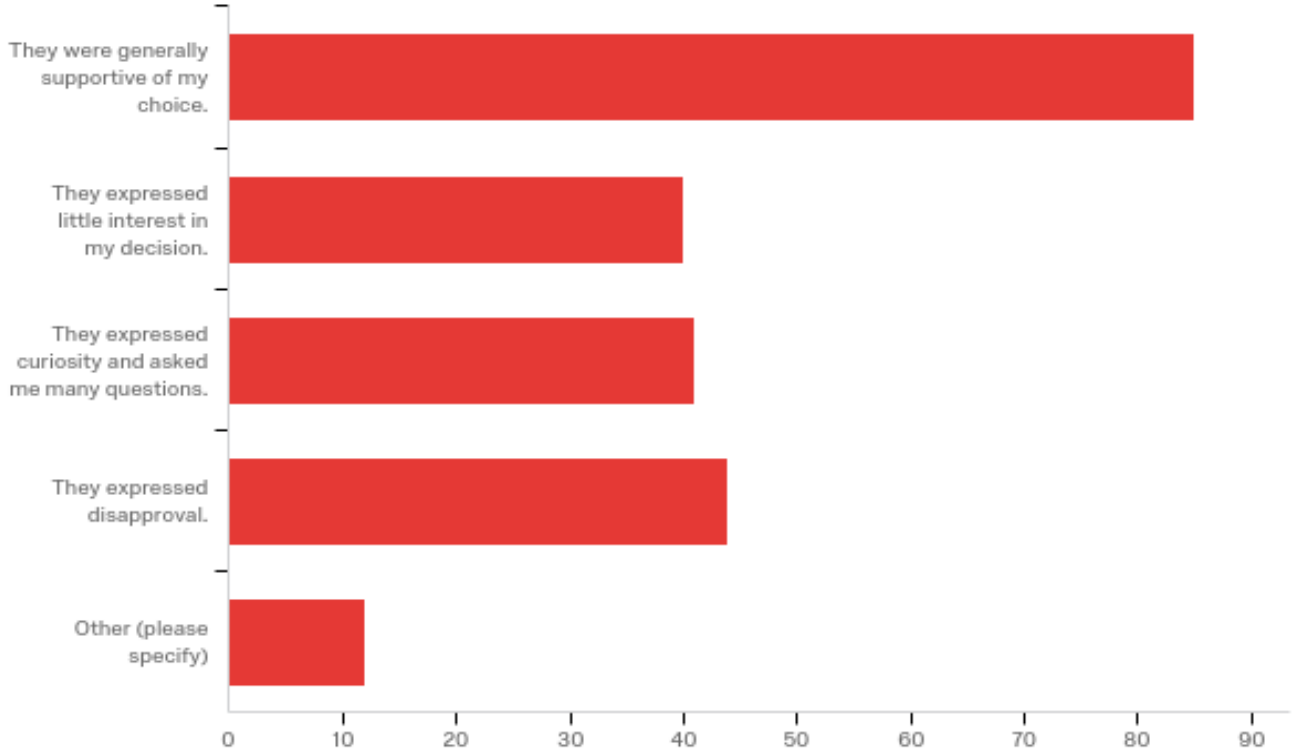


#	Answer	%	Count
1	0-12	4.61%	7
2	13-19	42.11%	64
3	20-29	43.42%	66
4	30-39	7.89%	12
5	40-49	1.97%	3
6	50-59	0.00%	0
7	60 or older	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	152

Please indicate the degree to which these statements apply to you on a scale of 0-10. Please answer based on your thoughts and opinions when you first adopted a vegetarian or vegan diet.

Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
I became a vegetarian or vegan because I wanted to be healthier.	0.00	10.00	6.72	2.69	7.25	143
I became a vegetarian or vegan out of a concern for animals.	1.00	10.00	7.26	2.66	7.07	141
I became a vegetarian or vegan to reduce the negative impact I had on the environment.	1.00	10.00	7.67	2.63	6.93	139

What were the reactions of your family when you adopted this diet? Please select all that apply.



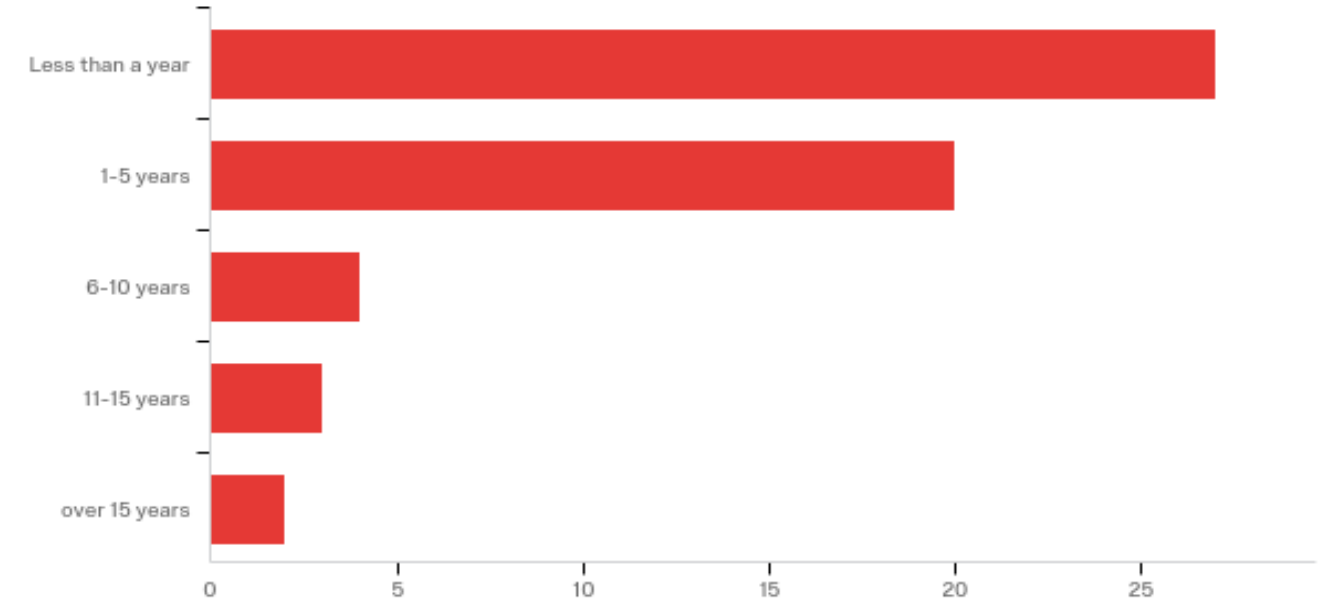
#	Answer	%	Count
1	They were generally supportive of my choice.	55.56%	85
2	They expressed little interest in my decision.	26.14%	40
3	They expressed curiosity and asked me many questions.	26.80%	41
4	They expressed disapproval.	28.76%	44
5	Other (please specify)	7.84%	12
	Total	100%	153

Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)
Supportive but concerned for my health and developing body
Concerned with getting proper nutrition
Acceptance and support as they were familiar with the regimen.

The expressed concern
They expressed concern for my health, but were supportive.
They didn't think I could do it
Medical concerns (anemic)
They referred to it as a "phase."
Mocked my choice
They were kind of annoyed to have to cater to my diet when I went home for break but otherwise didn't care
They began preparing less meat, in turn changing their own eating habita
teased me, jokingly

1/3 - How long were you a vegetarian or vegan?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than a year	48.21%	27
2	1-5 years	35.71%	20
3	6-10 years	7.14%	4
4	11-15 years	5.36%	3
5	over 15 years	3.57%	2
	Total	100%	56

1/3 - Please indicate on a scale from 0-10 the degree to which these statements applied to you in your decision to stop following a vegetarian or vegan diet.

Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
It was hurting my health.	0.00	10.00	4.68	3.34	11.14	37
I was concerned that continuing this diet would hurt my health in the future.	0.00	10.00	4.20	3.02	9.13	35
It was too expensive to buy vegetarian or vegan food.	0.00	9.00	4.16	2.52	6.35	37
I did not have consistent access to vegetarian or vegan food.	0.00	10.00	5.70	3.14	9.84	43
Being a vegetarian or vegan made social situations involving food too difficult.	0.00	10.00	5.27	2.91	8.46	45
There are few vegetarian or vegan options at restaurants.	0.00	10.00	4.58	2.68	7.19	40
I felt like my food choices were too limited.	1.00	10.00	6.50	2.23	4.96	48
My friends/family disapproved of my decision.	0.00	10.00	3.14	2.81	7.89	35
I was tired of having to explain my choice to be a vegetarian or vegan to others.	0.00	8.00	3.32	2.48	6.16	34
I felt rude not eating certain foods when others had prepared them for me.	0.00	10.00	5.69	3.26	10.66	36
Other (please specify)	0.00	10.00	7.00	3.29	10.83	12

1/3 - What was the hardest part about being a vegetarian or vegan? Please respond in one sentence.

What was the hardest part about being a vegetarian or vegan? Please respond...
Not getting enough protein; the effort
Cheese is addictive.
Health, I became very anemic
Access to vegan food
I felt like I wasn't getting nutritional value from my food and I gained a lot of weight.
On occasion I missed the taste of meat especially when I cooked meals for my dogs
Keeping my teeth healthy and having energy during the day
Social stigma of it in high school.
Too many vegan vegetarian options are starch/wheat based. Seitan and vital wheat gluten
The hardest part about being vegan is always second guessing every food choice, feeling like labels were dishonest and I grew up on meat so it was hard to stop eating it.
Living with my parents who were not understanding/accepting of my diet change.
Not getting enough complete protein and having too many carbs in diet
Limited food choices in my household since others prepared meals.
finding foods i liked
Worrying about my overall health and nutrition needs being met
bringing alternatives to parties
social situations
Cooking different meals for myself and those in my family that wanted meat.
I was eating too many carbs and not enough veggies as a result of not having enough time/money to consistently buy fresh produce.
Finding a variety of options
I found it difficult to provide enough sufficient protein in my diet. When you compare the amount of protein in meat to plant based sources, the differences are huge.
Too much effort to prepare meals
Finding a range of options in the dining hall at BC.
Being surrounded by meat eaters - temptation

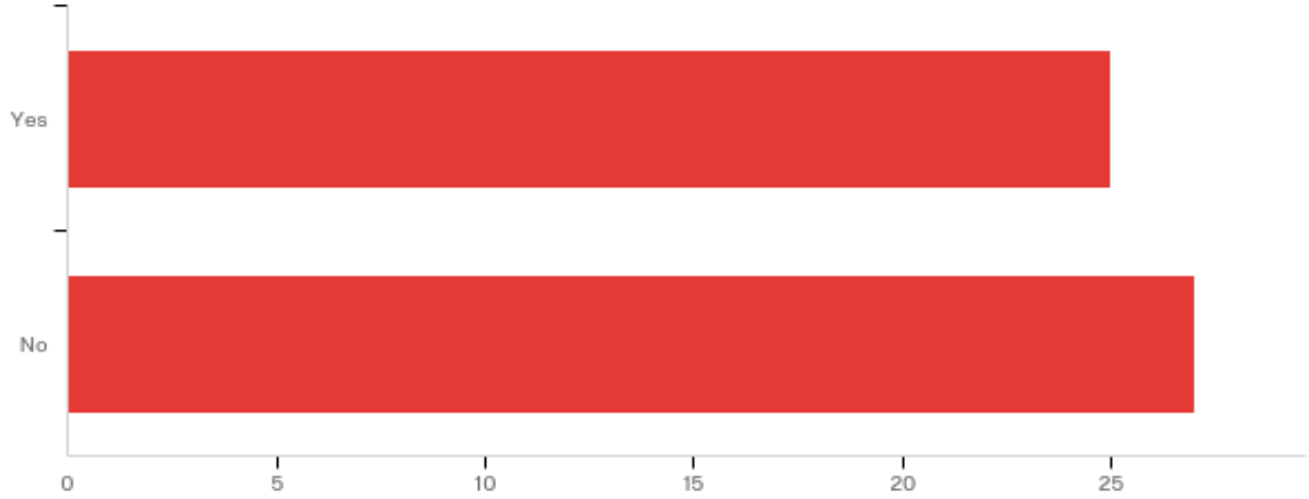
I felt like I had to compensate by eating more carbs which made my stomach uncomfortable. I was more hungry all the time.
A combination of personal negative health benefits for me.
There were very few options on my campus, so I had to eat the same foods over and over again.
limitted dining hall options
Food prep was much more involved and took a lot more planning and time
When other people prepare food with meat
Feeling excluded in certain social events revolving around food
Feeling like I had limited options on campus
The hardest part was consistently feeling tired from lack of meat protein.
Perhaps this is because I was not attempting a vegan diet well, but I was always hungry.
Especially during college, it was hard to find healthy variety in what I was eating.
Feeling like its a burden on others i.e. when they cook for you or when deciding on a restaurant
Having limited choices and feeling more awkward in social situations by having to explain my choices.
Feeling that I was always inconveniencing people and feeling rude when I was unable to accept others' hospitality because of my vegetarianism.
I am a vegetarian and tried veganism for a semester; the hardest part of being a vegan was all the "hidden" animal (particularly dairy) products that are in so many things that we eat
Other people's perceptions and disapproval. They think you are doing it be needlessly difficult or because you are overly sensitive. As a male, other men definitely belittled and made jokes about me not eating meat because meat is "manly". People also go out of there way sometimes in really just cruel ways to eat non-vegan things in front of me or try to offer them to me.
BC's vegetarian options were very limited
Limited food choices when eating out/at school cafeteria
I was already a picky eater when I ate meat and becoming a vegetarian just made it harder to consistently find something to eat.
I constantly felt tired and it was a pain for my family to have to buy separate food for me
very easy to eat a lot of unhealthy foods for the sake of being vegetarian
The inconvenience of having to avoid meat when it was readily available was what made me stop being vegetarian.
Not knowing how to get a proper nutrition.
Finding healthy options in a social setting.
The hardest part was for my family members to take me seriously. I would continuously come home to family dinners that revolved around meat.

The most difficult part was my overall lack of energy.
Missing steak, my favorite food growing up
Eating out at restuaruants

1/3 - On a scale of 0-10, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements based on your experience when you were a vegetarian or vegan. It would have been easier to maintain a vegetarian or vegan diet:

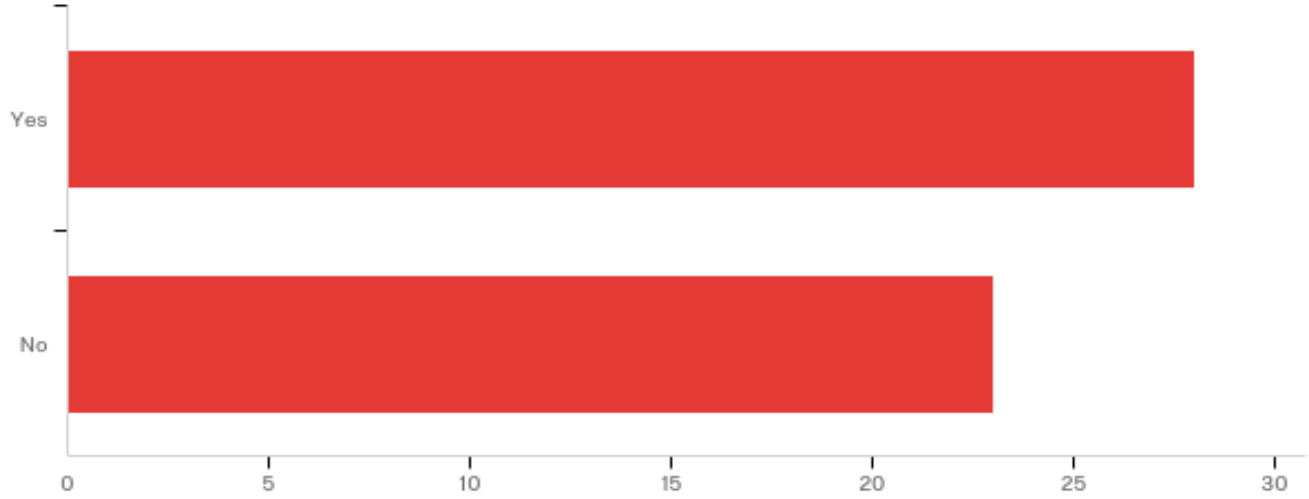
Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
If I had had access to more grocery stores with vegetarian or vegan foods.	0.00	10.00	5.60	2.61	6.80	43
If more members of my social network were also vegetarians or vegans.	0.00	10.00	6.67	2.60	6.76	48
If vegetarian or vegan foods were less expensive.	0.00	10.00	6.20	2.80	7.86	40
If I did not like the taste of non-vegetarian or non-vegan foods.	1.00	10.00	5.92	3.16	9.97	38
If there were not a negative stigma associated with vegetarianism or veganism in society.	0.00	10.00	3.68	2.97	8.80	38
If I were responsible for buying/preparing the food I eat more frequently.	0.00	10.00	5.59	3.38	11.41	41
If I did not have to regularly buy/prepare food for/with others.	0.00	10.00	5.67	3.39	11.52	40
If there were more vegetarian or vegan options at restaurants.	0.00	10.00	5.67	3.02	9.11	45
If I liked the taste of vegetarian or vegan food more.	0.00	10.00	4.79	3.33	11.11	38

1/3 - Did you consider being a vegetarian or vegan an important part of your identity when you followed this diet?



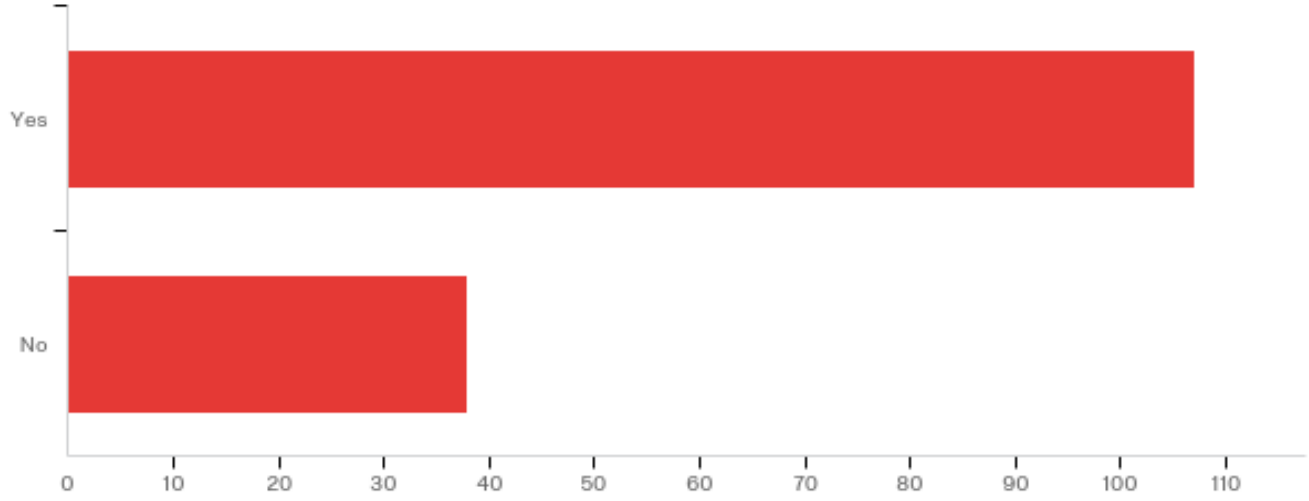
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	48.08%	25
2	No	51.92%	27
	Total	100%	52

1/3 - Was anyone in your family or close circle of friends also a vegetarian or vegan when you were following a vegetarian or vegan diet?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	54.90%	28
2	No	45.10%	23
	Total	100%	51

1/3 - Is anyone in your family or close circle of friends currently a vegetarian or vegan?

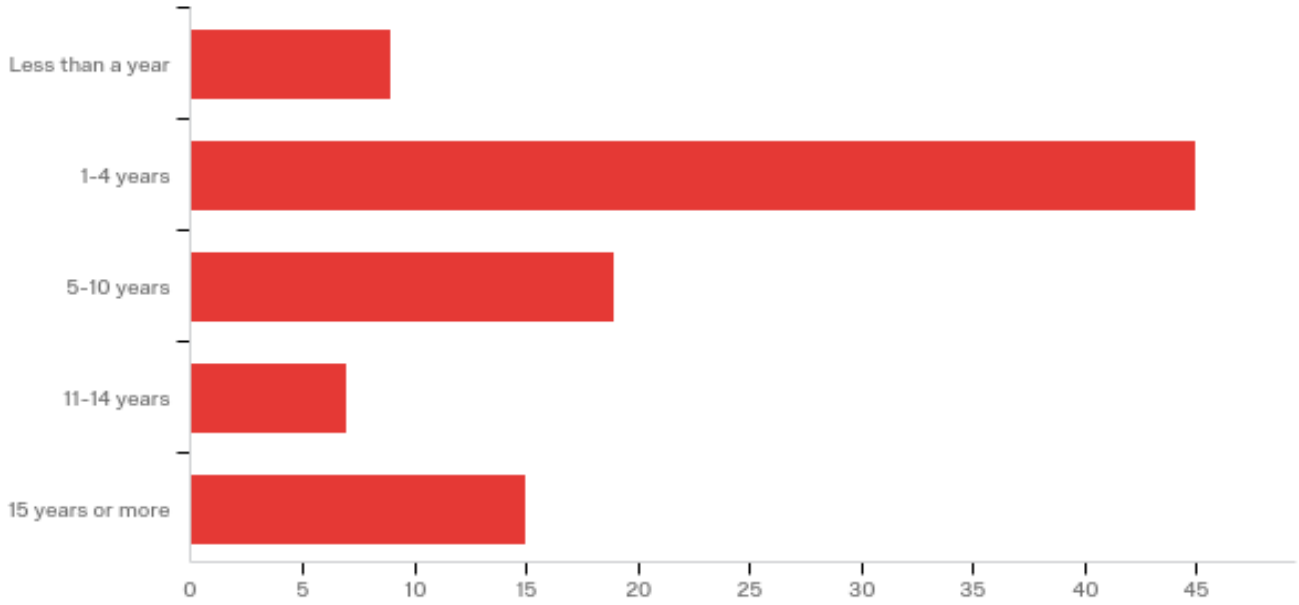


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	73.79%	107
2	No	26.21%	38
	Total	100%	145

1/3 - On a scale of 0-10, please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements based on your current eating habits.

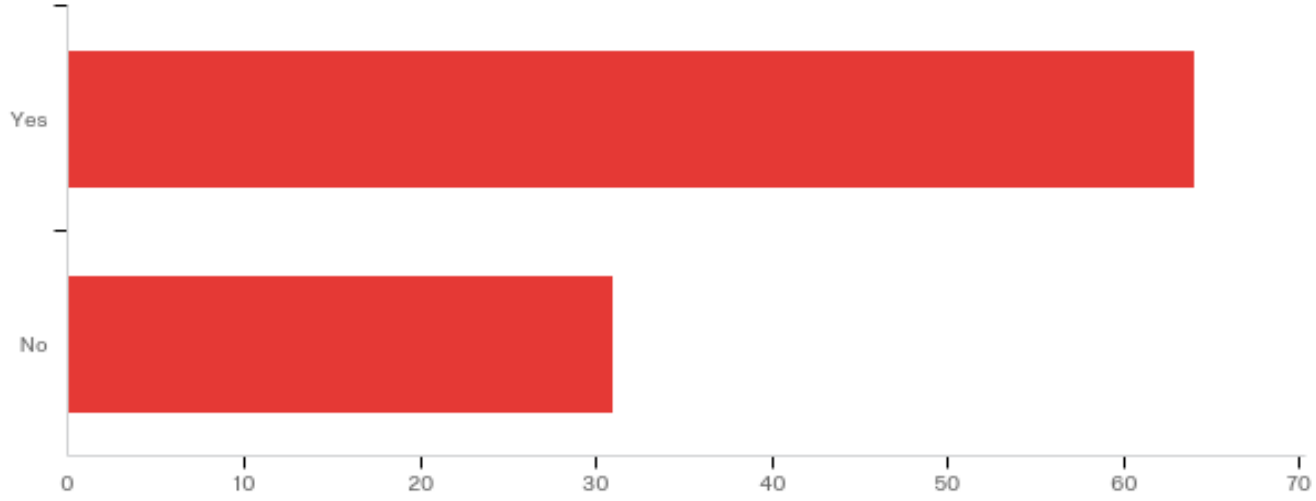
Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
I eat meat (vegans: and/or dairy products) in order to be healthier.	0.00	10.00	6.31	3.15	9.90	45
I feel in control of my food choices.	0.00	10.00	7.44	2.36	5.57	50
My socioeconomic status prevents me from buying foods I would like to eat.	0.00	8.00	3.47	2.28	5.19	34
Messages I see about food in the media influence what foods I eat.	0.00	10.00	3.94	2.88	8.29	34

2/4 - How long have you been a vegetarian or vegan?



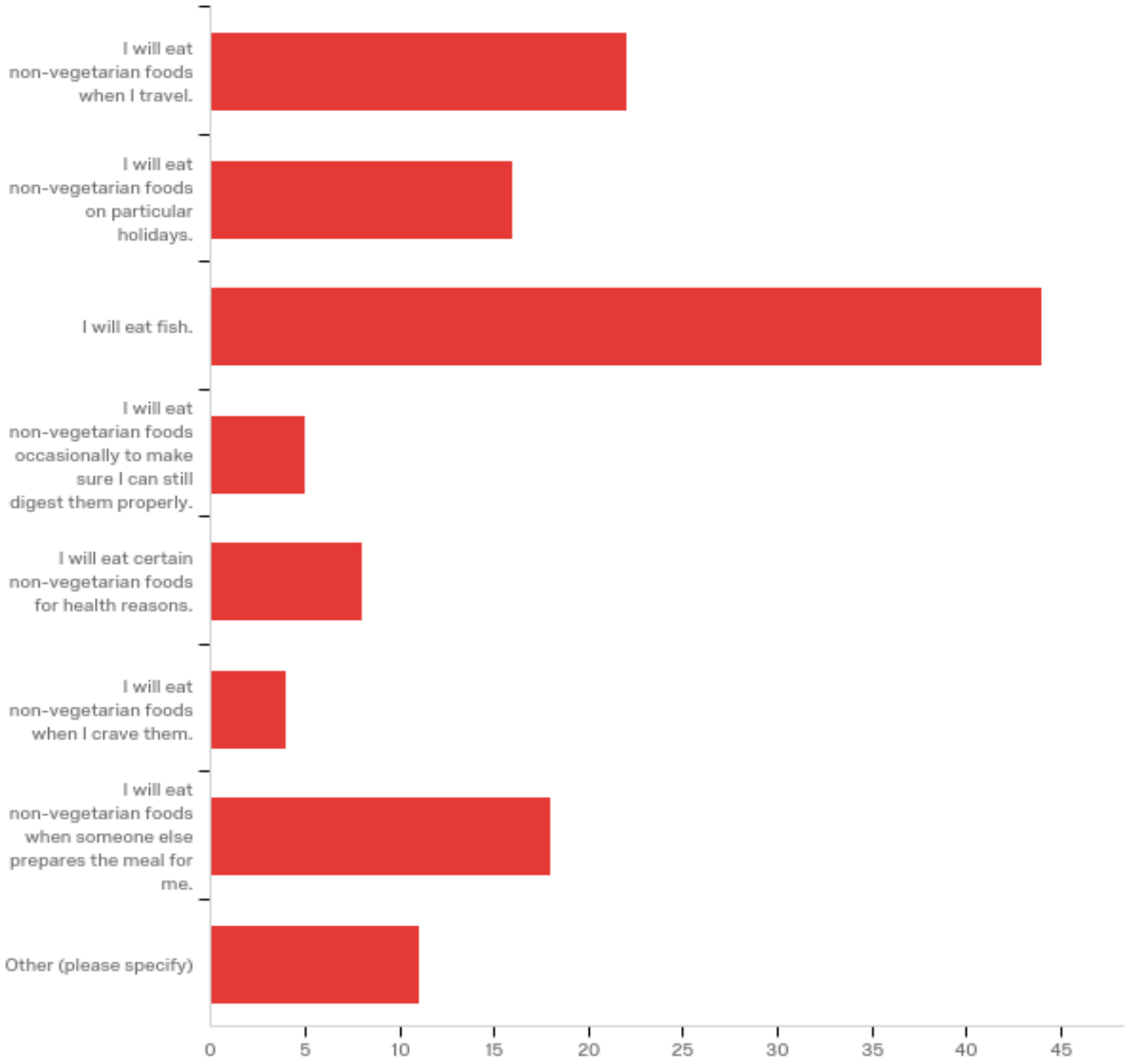
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than a year	9.47%	9
2	1-4 years	47.37%	45
3	5-10 years	20.00%	19
4	11-14 years	7.37%	7
5	15 years or more	15.79%	15
	Total	100%	95

2/4 - Do you consider being a vegetarian or vegan an important part of your identity?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	67.37%	64
2	No	32.63%	31
	Total	100%	95

2 - What kind of allowances do you make within your diet? Please select all that apply.



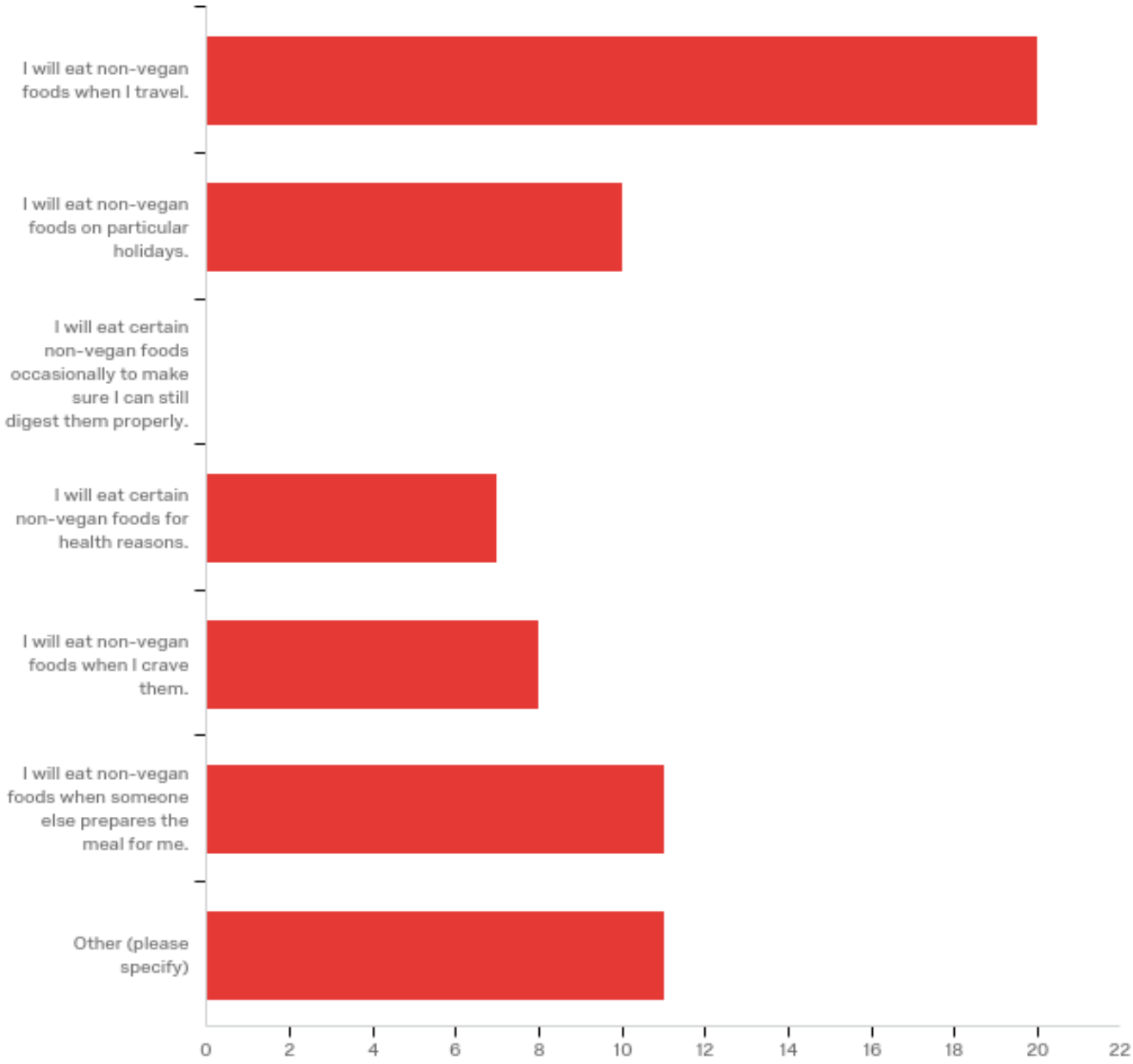
#	Answer	%	Count
1	I will eat non-vegetarian foods when I travel.	37.93%	22
2	I will eat non-vegetarian foods on particular holidays.	27.59%	16
3	I will eat fish.	75.86%	44
4	I will eat non-vegetarian foods occasionally to make sure I can still digest them properly.	8.62%	5

5	I will eat certain non-vegetarian foods for health reasons.	13.79%	8
6	I will eat non-vegetarian foods when I crave them.	6.90%	4
7	I will eat non-vegetarian foods when someone else prepares the meal for me.	31.03%	18
8	Other (please specify)	18.97%	11
	Total	100%	58

Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)
I will eat meat if killed by hunter friends
I follow a self-imposed modified vegetarian diet.
no longer vegetarian
I also will eat eggs, until recently I was unaware they weren't considered part of a vegetarian diet
I make an exception for In n' Out burger
I will eat non-vegetarian foods when they are free/the food might be wasted.
When nothing else is available or when it would otherwise go to waste
For two years I was very strict and then to be less of a hassle I decided to eat meat when it's been prepared for me, or at least pick around it. And more recently I've ended up randomly eating meat a couple times a year sometimes just when I crave it (usually drunkenly lol)
I only eat vegetarian foods
I limit myself to non-vegetarian and non-fish foods once a month. When I do eat them, it is because of craving.
I will eat fish only in the summer when it is locally and sustainably caught

4 - What kind of allowances do you make within your diet? Please select all that apply.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	I will eat non-vegan foods when I travel.	58.82%	20
2	I will eat non-vegan foods on particular holidays.	29.41%	10
3	I will eat certain non-vegan foods occasionally to make sure I can still digest them properly.	0.00%	0
4	I will eat certain non-vegan foods for health reasons.	20.59%	7

5	I will eat non-vegan foods when I crave them.	23.53%	8
6	I will eat non-vegan foods when someone else prepares the meal for me.	32.35%	11
7	Other (please specify)	32.35%	11
	Total	100%	34

Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)
I will eat honey now as a vegan. I used to allow for local farm eggs but became vegan 6 months ago and stopped.
I try to stick to my vegan lifestyle as best i can.
Never meat. Occasionally slip up with non-vegan desserts.
I will eat some dairy when travelling for work and eating at work events
My family is omnivorous and so I will occasionally eat fish and eggs with them and eat things with egg baked in
I have accidentally consumed non vegan food when it was told to me that there was no animal products. Due to the lack of knowledge of waitstaff or friends who don't realize that milk and eggs are nonvegan even if the animal is still alive after retrieving the product.
I will eat non-vegan foods when it's free (on campus) - I still don't eat meat, but I'll have cheese pizza or something. As long as I have not personally paid for the item.
I will sometimes eat non-vegan foods when under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
I will eat some dairy-cheese and plain yogurt
I cheat for chocolate:/
when i have no other option

2/4 - What is the hardest part about being a vegetarian or vegan? Please respond in one sentence.

What is the hardest part about being a vegetarian or vegan? Please respond...
Access outside of the home
Finding things to eat when going to a restaurant.
The verbal disapproval from family in supporting my decision to be a vegetarian is difficult to deal with.
Having to prepare food for yourself in social settings or researching what you can have when out to eat.
The hardest part of being vegan is how difficult it is to find a wide variety of food that is vegan approved. Theres plenty of substitutions most people just don't think or care.
Limited options for eating out on the South Shore
Knowing the extremely horrible treatment and conditions that animals suffer for food industries, clothing industries, etc., and guilt for not going vegan sooner.
I follow a modified veg' diet, therefore it is not difficult, but being in this business for many years, 'availability' has seemed to be the most difficult aspect.
Protein
Lack of options at some restaurants
Finding ways to get enough protein. I felt exhausted all the time.
Work events in other countries
Healthy vegan foods can be expensive.
Traveling
Awkward social situations
Food options outside of the home (restaurants, etc.)
Variety of foods when eating out/traveling
Finding good vegetarian options in restaurants, especially when traveling.
Travel- I think food is an important part of culture
The hardest part is finding tasty vegan meals other than salad when eating out.
Raising my children vegan.
I'm allergic to tree nuts, and many vegan products/recipes includes using tree nuts.
I still crave cheese
To try not eating so much processed vegan foods.

Watching your loved ones do exactly what you fight against
Finding vegan options at restaurants w non vegan friends.
Cravings
Nothing
traveling
getting sufficient protein
Usually there are vegetarian options. But if someone prepares a meal where the only option has meat, I will not refuse to eat it (though I feel slightly bad about it).
Missing certain dishes and sometimes feeling left out of a particular eating experience.
Options for quick meals, eating out, and avoiding making two meals for my husband and in(my husband eats meat.)
The hardest part was making the transition and the additional level of consciousness about food choice that I had to make; these choices are now instinctual.
Getting enough protein
Eating differently than my community
Other family members who are not vegetarian
The fear of going to someone's house and telling them you won't eat the meal they prepared for you.
nothing. It's pretty easy.
convenience
People have too many ignorant assumptions about my diet.
My stomach becoming more sensitive to consuming animal products.
not eating the same food over and over
Finding options at popular (ie chain) restaurants or when traveling (ie airport) that are nutritional (ie not just pasta or house salad).
Explaining to other people why I am vegetarian.
The hardest part is dining in the school dining halls because the options are very limited.
Lack of options and people getting defensive.
people not understanding meatless food doesn't just have to be sides when preparing meals for me (in cafeteria for example)
Choosing a place that has good vegetarian options when I go out to eat.
Limited filling restaurant options

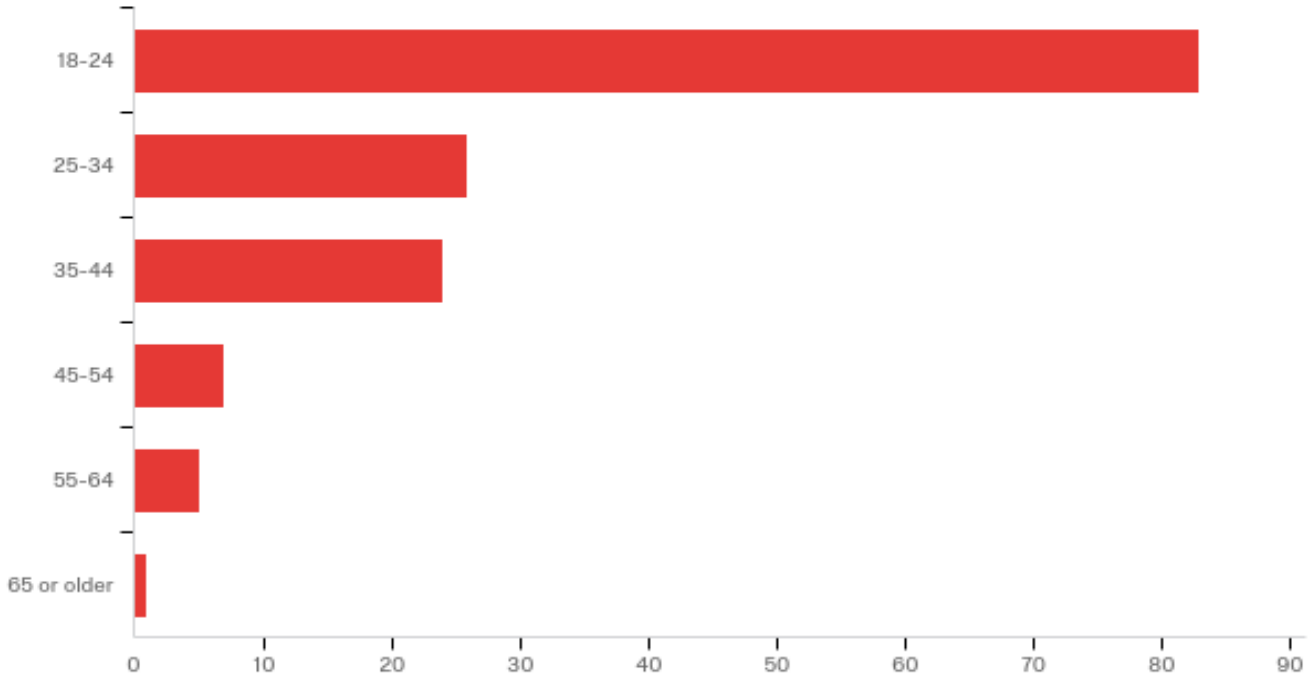
I need to supplement with B12. Being a vegetarian is not at all difficult for me.
Options at restaurants my friends want to go to
Getting enough protein and the high cost.
Finding options at the dining hall that have enough protein
Having limited eating options when buying food out.
I've gotten used to all of the 'conventional' hardships by now, but one thing I try to do is buy ethically, and that is difficult to do on a college budget or because nothing is ENTIRELY ethical.
Lack of healthy options that aren't just carbs
Having difficult conversations
Pressure from friends to eat meat, which is frustrating because they never question other friends who are vegetarian for religious reasons
Being an inconvenience to people, and lack of variety from dining halls
Getting enough protein
Preparing proteins that I find flavorful and really enjoy
The hardest part is managing my nutrition when I am traveling.
Sharing meals with others becomes complicated, and I love to connect with others through food.
Limited options at restaurants and living in an area that thrives on the meat industry (NC and BBQ).
As a naturally thin person, I have trouble planning meals that are high in calories/protein and not repetitive or too complex.
Concern about protein and vitamin B-12 deficiency.
Finding different recipes to make.
The only time it may be difficult is when traveling.
eating out! and eating with others when they have prepared a meal etc
Restaurant options
Having to cook a separate meal for myself and then another meal for everyone else.
People not understanding why I am vegan and then not making an effort to learn
The hardest part of being vegan is probably being aware of the dangers, horrors, nutritional deficiencies, etc. and not being "that vegan girl" with friends and family who aren't vegan / vegetarian, simply because I want what's best for them, and I think being vegetarian or vegan is what's best for a lot of people.
Living in a place where there aren't a lot of vegan options available.

Traveling to other countries that don't offer a lot of vegetable dishes
Making others have to go out of their way to find food options that work for you
The hardest part of being a vegitarian is explaining to people why it is important and having them disregard this.
There are little options in BC Dining.
When I travel or go over to a friend's place for dinner and there is meat served and I don't want to eat it but don't want to make it awkward so I just eat it.
Having people think that it is hard to eat out or cook with you
Cooking with others who are not vegetarian or vegan
Getting adequate protein (I'm a highly active athlete who doesn't want to lose muscle mass)
BC has almost no options. Literally at dinner sometimes they only have salad or pasta. Its not really acceptable.
I have an eating disorder, so I struggle to keep my vegetarian diet that I believe is better for the environment, without allowing it to become just another part of my unhealthy restrictive eating behaviors.
Going out to eat
Making sure I maintain a healthy balance of protein and nutrients so I don't feel weak.
Finding healthy options
making sure i am eating healthfully and getting all my nutrients (protein, iron, etc)
The hardest part about being vegan is getting fresh food on a budget, especially in college.
Finding health food in small towns
The hardest part for me is having to cook more, and to generally eat more to get enough calories.

2/4 - On a scale of 0-10, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements. It would be easier to maintain a vegetarian or vegan diet:

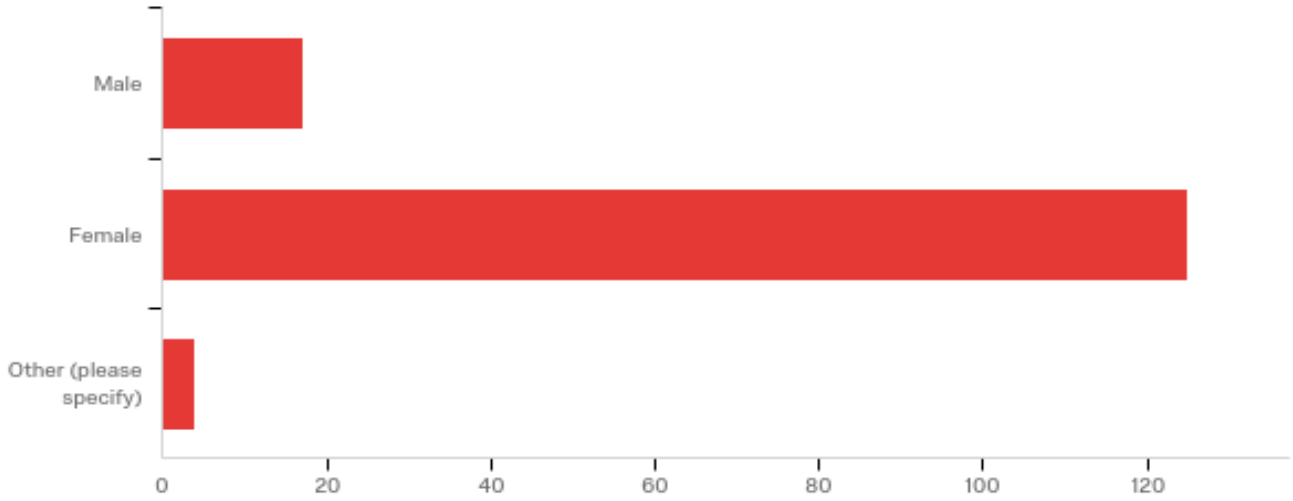
Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
If I had access to more grocery stores with vegetarian or vegan foods.	0.00	10.00	5.69	2.93	8.57	84
If more members of my social network were also vegetarians or vegans.	0.00	10.00	5.45	2.82	7.93	89
If vegetarian or vegan foods were less expensive.	0.00	10.00	6.52	2.71	7.37	84
If I did not like the taste of non-vegetarian or non-vegan foods.	0.00	10.00	3.86	3.07	9.40	69
If there were not a negative stigma associated with vegetarianism or veganism in society.	0.00	10.00	3.52	3.06	9.35	69
If I were responsible for buying/preparing the food I eat more frequently.	0.00	10.00	4.43	3.54	12.56	70
If I did not have to regularly buy/prepare food for others.	0.00	10.00	3.55	3.28	10.74	65
If there were more vegetarian or vegan options at restaurants.	0.00	10.00	7.41	2.45	6.02	83
If I liked the taste of vegetarian or vegan food more.	0.00	10.00	2.87	2.56	6.57	53

How old are you?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	18-24	56.85%	83
2	25-34	17.81%	26
3	35-44	16.44%	24
4	45-54	4.79%	7
5	55-64	3.42%	5
6	65 or older	0.68%	1
	Total	100%	146

What is your gender?

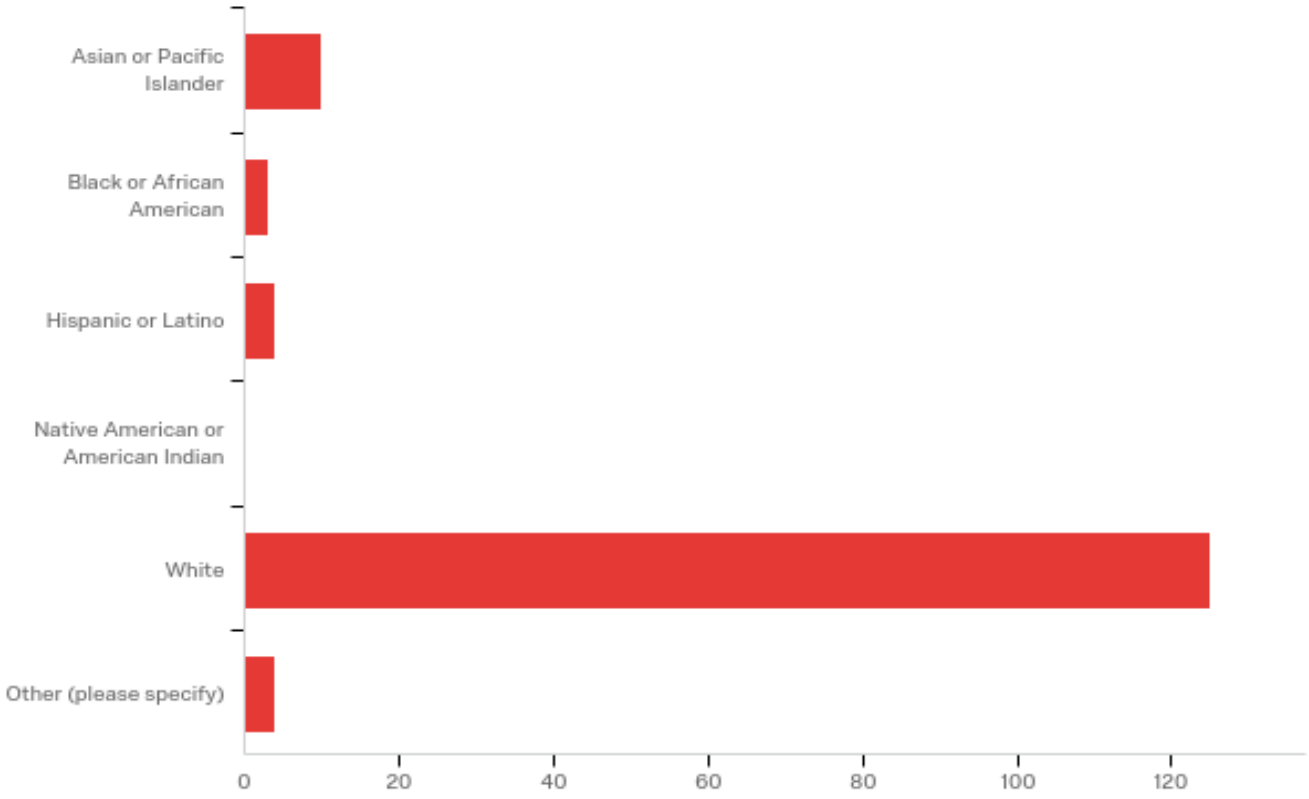


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	11.64%	17
2	Female	85.62%	125
3	Other (please specify)	2.74%	4
	Total	100%	146

Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)
genderqueer
Woman
Gender queer/ nonconforming
Non-binary

What is your ethnicity?



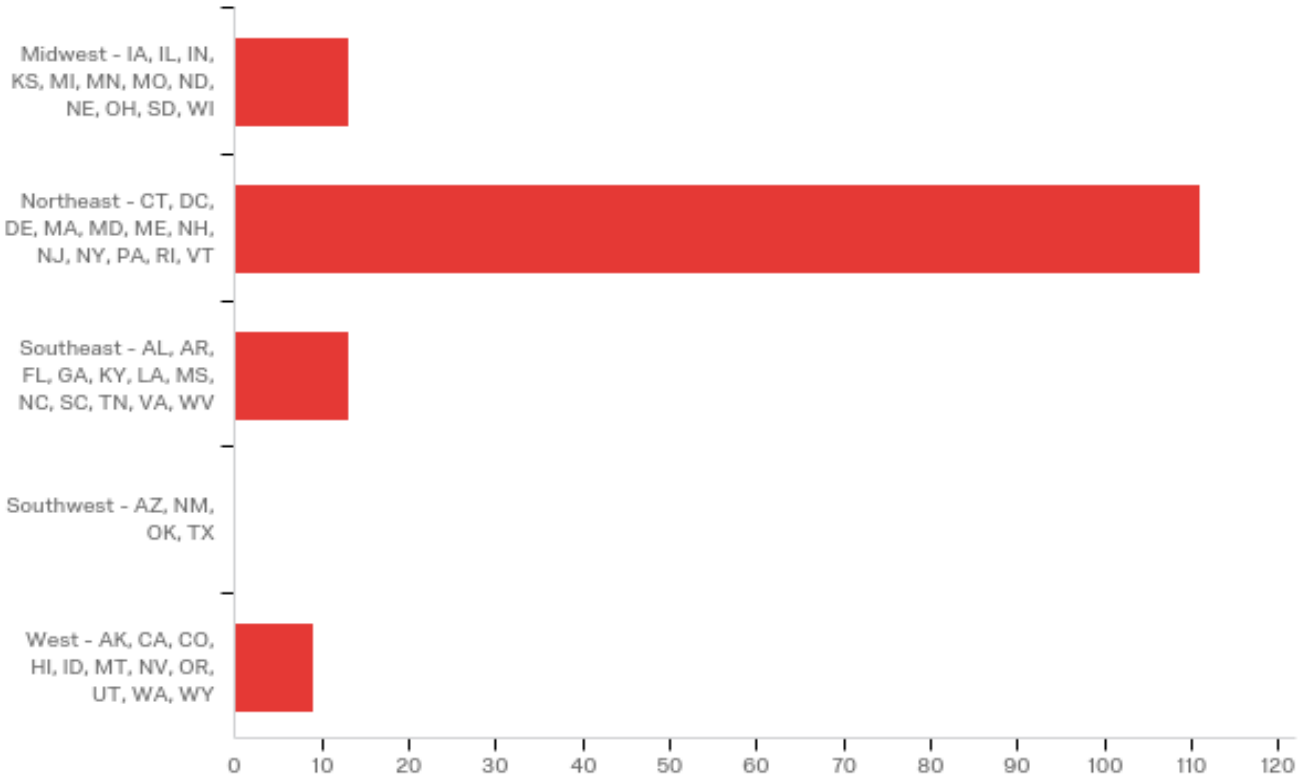
#	Answer	%	Count
2	Asian or Pacific Islander	6.85%	10
1	Black or African American	2.05%	3
3	Hispanic or Latino	2.74%	4
6	Native American or American Indian	0.00%	0
5	White	85.62%	125
4	Other (please specify)	2.74%	4
	Total	100%	146

Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)
Biracial
Middle Eastern

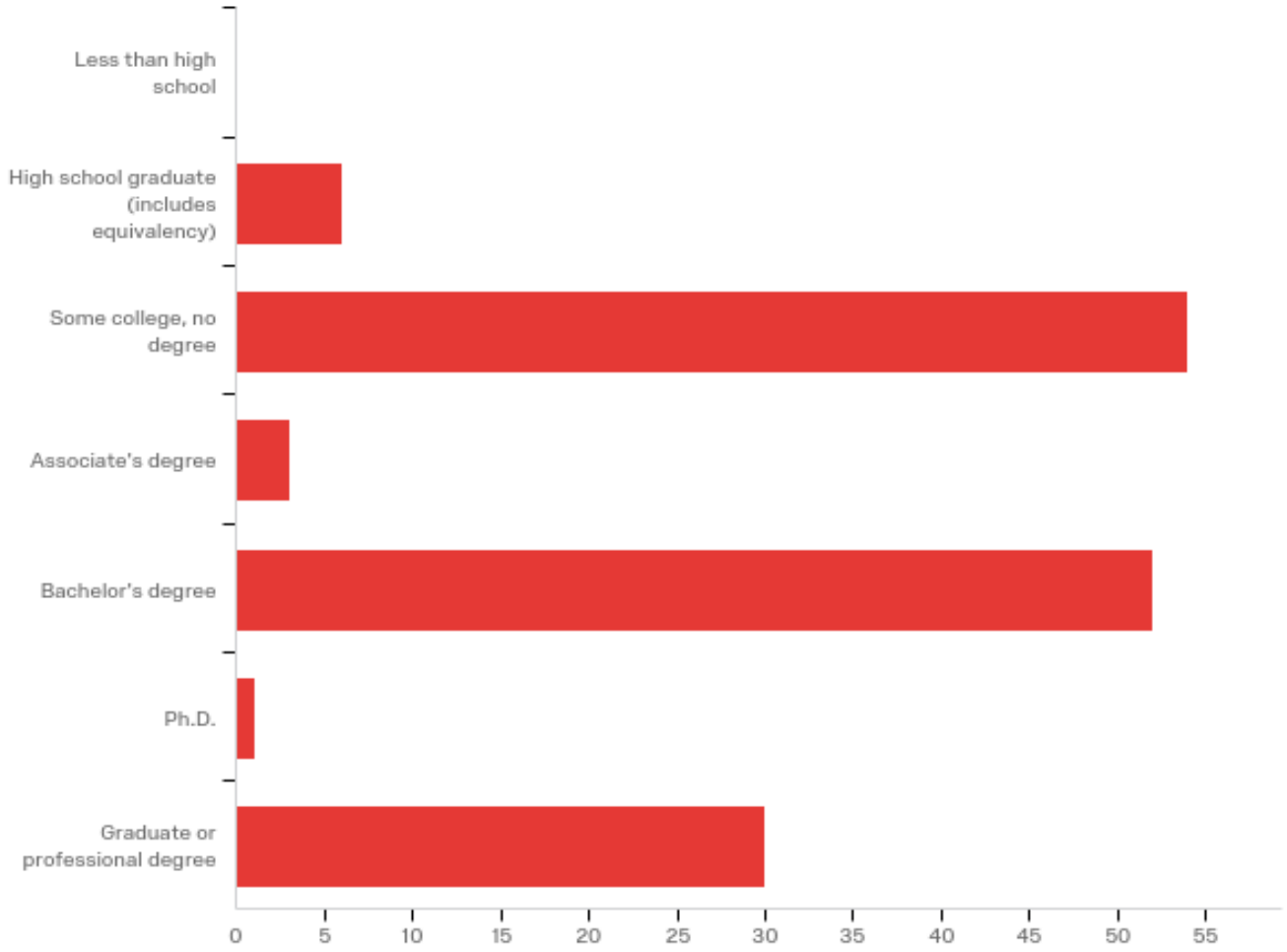
Multi
Asian/White

Which region of the country do you live in?



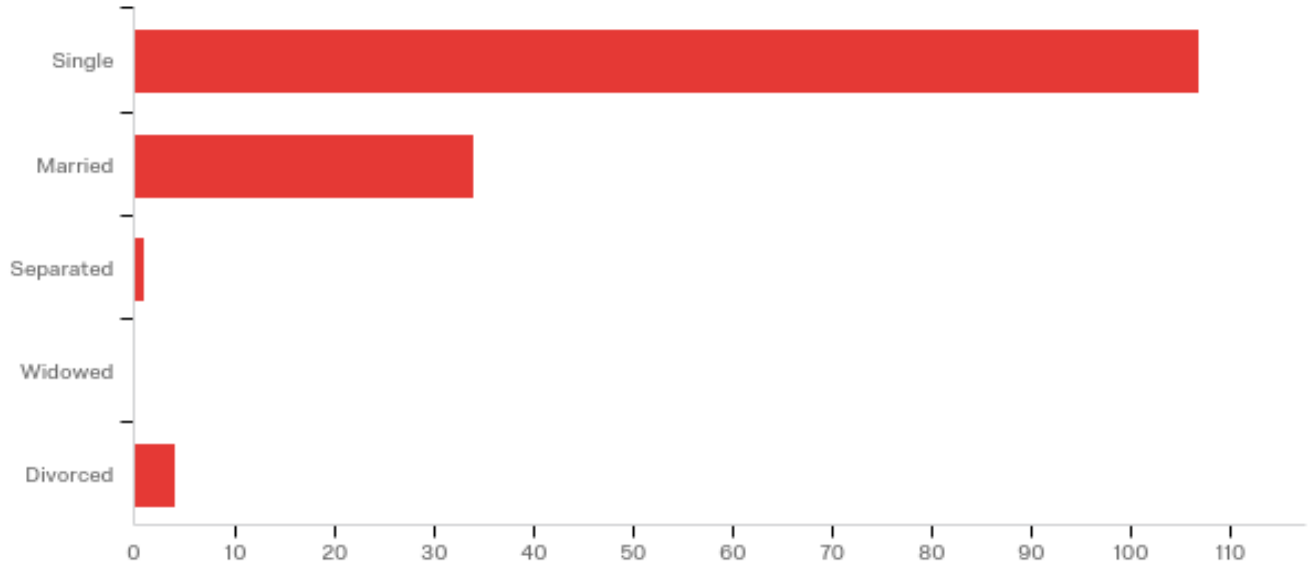
#	Answer	%	Count
4	Midwest - IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI	8.90%	13
3	Northeast - CT, DC, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT	76.03%	111
2	Southeast - AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV	8.90%	13
1	Southwest - AZ, NM, OK, TX	0.00%	0
5	West - AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY	6.16%	9
	Total	100%	146

What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than high school	0.00%	0
2	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	4.11%	6
3	Some college, no degree	36.99%	54
4	Associate's degree	2.05%	3
5	Bachelor's degree	35.62%	52
6	Ph.D.	0.68%	1
7	Graduate or professional degree	20.55%	30
	Total	100%	146

What is your marital status?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Single	73.29%	107
2	Married	23.29%	34
3	Separated	0.68%	1
4	Widowed	0.00%	0
5	Divorced	2.74%	4
	Total	100%	146