

SUSTAINED EFFORTS AND COLLECTIVE CLAIMS: THE SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF THE  
VEGAN MOVEMENT FROM 1944 TO PRESENT

by

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## **Abstract**

Following a strict form of vegetarianism, vegans adopt a philosophy and practice a lifestyle that seeks to eliminate the use of all animal products and by-products in any form. Although vegetarian diets have been popular in many cultures for centuries, a more organized and defined version of veganism as we know it today did not emerge until the mid-1940s. Although the origins and nature of vegetarianism and veganism have been researched in depth for decades, this lifestyle has scarcely been evaluated as a social movement. Therefore, I seek to fill this gap in knowledge and describe veganism as a social movement and evaluate its social effects.

I have gathered historical and sociological data and theories from a variety of sources. I combine this data in order to thoroughly illustrate the history, nature, and future of vegans as a social movement and show how it has contributed to social change. The sociological definitions of what constitutes a social movement as described by Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow will illustrate the many ways vegans can be viewed as a social movement. A synthesis of these two social scientists' definitions in the analysis of vegans as a social movement will show that vegans meet both Tilly and Tarrow's criteria for a social movement. I will use these criteria as a framework to show how vegans' activity and growth fit into Tilly and Tarrow's theoretical outline for what constitutes a social movement. Further, I use other evidence such as polls and news articles in order to support this idea, showing the movement behaviors of vegans in Western culture.

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## **CHAPTER 1 - Introduction**

Following a strict form of vegetarianism, vegans adopt a philosophy and practice a lifestyle that seeks to eliminate the use of all animal products and by-products in any form. Although vegetarian diets have been popular in many cultures for centuries, a more organized and defined version of veganism as we know it today did not emerge until the mid-1940s. Those who practice vegetarianism and veganism have splintered off into other sub-groups that are more specific in their goals and values in relation to the use of animal products and by-products.

Many people worldwide have adopted the vegan lifestyle for a variety of reasons, including animal rights, health concerns, spiritual beliefs and political opinions. The strong beliefs and convictions associated with veganism have had a significant influence on society, particularly as the majority of vegans seek to promote animal rights and environmental awareness. Although vegans are not generally located in a centralized place and are scattered throughout the world, many of them seek to achieve the same goals through their conscious decisions to reject the use of products sourced from animals and efforts to change laws that pertain to animal-related issues. As a result, vegans can be seen, in many ways, as part of a social movement. This thesis will seek to answer the following questions: Is veganism a social movement according to the theoretical definitions, and, if so, what are the effects of this movement?

### **Defining the Problem**

Although the origins and nature of vegetarianism and veganism have been researched in depth for decades, this lifestyle has scarcely been evaluated as a social movement. The works of Elizabeth Cherry and Donna Maurer reflect the majority of the social scientific research dedicated to analyzing vegans.

Elizabeth Cherry of the University of Georgia at Athens has performed a study of veganism in the context of the punk subculture. She described vegans as a cultural movement and examined the prevalence of vegetarianism and veganism within this subculture. Cherry emphasized the importance of social networks within the punk subculture. She stated that these social networks are essential to the success of cultural movements like veganism and cited the

social networks within the punk subculture as a primary reason that vegetarianism and veganism are influential among these individuals (2006:155). Many punk rock bands use their lyrics as a way to communicate vegan ideas and, through this, influence others, creating networks of individuals who agree upon many of these vegan ideas. Although Cherry did state that veganism can be described as a social movement, she did not clearly and theoretically analyze how vegans qualified as a movement. Cherry placed her focus more on the social structure within the punk subculture and how this structure related to veganism rather than an analysis of the nature of the vegan movement itself.

Donna Maurer's *Vegetarianism: Movement or Moment?* focuses on vegetarians and vegans in North America. Maurer states that, while vegetarianism has the characteristics of a social movement, she does not see it as having made sufficient progress. Many vegetarians view the goal of the vegetarian and vegan movements to be to attract and persuade omnivores to adopt the vegetarian lifestyle. Maurer wrote that the movement had failed to produce this desired result in large numbers and had, therefore, been unsuccessful (2002:142). According to Maurer, with the increased availability of vegetarian/vegan food options and resources, it was easier than ever to follow a vegan diet. However, she stated that there had not been a significant enough increase in the number of individuals adopting vegan or vegetarian lifestyles and diets to support the success of the movement.

Aside from the works of Cherry and Maurer, veganism has not been evaluated as a social movement in depth. Although these scholars do believe that vegans can be evaluated as a social movement, they do not thoroughly describe how or why vegans are a social movement. The existing literature related to this movement is not detailed or theoretically-based and, therefore, provides a weak argument. This reflects a gap in current research and suggests a need for further exploration. If vegans have not been clearly described as a successful social movement, is it, in fact, a social movement?

Moreover, vegetarians have been studied more closely than vegans. Although vegan diets have existed for centuries for a variety of reasons, the word "vegan" was not formally introduced until the 1940s (Preece 16). Defining this lifestyle marks an important distinction between vegetarians and vegans and reflects an increased effort to eliminate *all* uses of animal products, rather than simply eliminating meat from one's diet. Because this distinction was made somewhat recently, discussion and research related to vegans is still relatively new and,

therefore, lacking in many areas. Although vegans have been described as a social movement by some social scientists, there is a need for further description of vegans' practices, politics, and philosophies.

Although Maurer's argument that the vegetarian movement has been unsuccessful is well-formed, I find it to be incomplete. The success or failure of a movement is not a criterion that determines whether or not a movement has occurred. Despite the fact that one of the primary goals of the vegan movement is to lead others to adopting this lifestyle and philosophy, legislative change and social awareness are also very important goals. Since the early days of the movement, there have been gradual changes in the number and stringency of laws passed to protect animals, including stricter punishments for animal abuse and greater regulation of farming methods. Additionally, the availability and prevalence of vegetarian and vegan food options in stores and restaurants has increased significantly. I think that the legislative changes, increased knowledge and awareness of vegetarianism and veganism, and the greater availability of vegetarian and vegan options all reflect social changes that can be attributed to the vegan and vegetarian movements.

### **What is a Social Movement?**

Social scientists have developed many differing definitions of what constitutes a social movement. In order to describe vegans as a social movement, it is important to establish what a social movement is. The two theorists that I will be focusing on in order to establish the characteristics of social movements are Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow.

Charles Tilly's *Social Movements, 1768-2004* provides a very clear outline of his definition of a social movement. According to Tilly, social movements must possess three key elements. First, a movement must be what Tilly refers to as a "campaign," a "sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authority" (Tilly 2004:3). Rather than a single event or declaration, a campaign is a series of sustained efforts to make a set of defined claims on an individual or group "whose actions...significantly affect the welfare of many people" (Tilly 2004:4).

Tilly's second element of a social movement is a "social movement repertoire." A social movement repertoire can include combinations of the following: "creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations,

petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering” (Tilly 2004:3). The final and most complex element of Tilly’s definition of a social movement is what he refers to as “WUNC displays.” WUNC stands for worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment and describes the general way a social movement displays itself to others. Worthiness essentially means that the social movement reflects a respectable and credible presence. Unity is the outward representation of cohesiveness among the members of a movement. According to Tilly, this can be displayed with banners, clothing, chants, and so on. “Numbers” refers to the amount of people involved with and participating in the movement. Finally, “commitment” is shown through the members’ willingness to participate in the movement despite circumstances that may make participation difficult (Tilly 2004:4).

Tilly emphasizes that it is not one or two of these elements that makes an action a social movement, but it is essential for there to be a synthesis of all three. Tilly states that social movements are

“a distinctive form of contentious politics—contentious in the sense that social movements involve collective making of claims that, if realized, would conflict with someone else’s interests, politics in the sense that governments of one sort or another figure somehow in the claim making, whether as claimants, objects of claims, allies of the objects, or monitors of the contention” (Tilly 2004:3).

Tilly’s clear outline of what elements compose a social movement will be important to the analysis of the nature of the vegan movement and describing how vegans fit into this model.

Sidney Tarrow, like Charles Tilly, also provides a clear summary of the characteristics that define a social movement. Tarrow states,

“Movements...are...defined as collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities. This definition has four empirical properties: collective challenge, common purpose, solidarity and sustained interaction” (Tarrow 1994:4).

Collective challenge is a disruption of the activities of others, particularly the elite or authority figures. A common purpose must be shared by all members of a social movement. In other words, all participants must hold similar interests which tie them to the movement. Tarrow defines solidarity as “participants’ *recognition* of their common interests that translates the potential for movement by collective action” (Tarrow 1994:5). Finally, sustaining collective

action is an essential component of Tarrow's definition because it asserts that a movement is not simply a single event or protest, but a continuous effort by the participants against opposition.

Although Tilly and Tarrow present similar definitions of social movements, each provides a unique perspective with distinct characteristics that will be useful in the analysis of veganism as a social movement.

## CHAPTER 2 - Historical Background

### History of Veganism

In order to discuss veganism as a social movement, it is important to understand the roots of this movement. Vegetarian diets have existed for centuries. Many anthropologists believe that primitive, hunter-gatherer societies survived primarily on plant food sources and merely hunted to supplement these plant foods. Studies have shown that these individuals' caloric intake was most likely composed of seventy-five percent plant-based foods with only twenty-five percent from animal sources (Amato and Partridge 1989: 2). While these early societies were not completely vegetarian, evidence shows a very heavy reliance on fruits, nuts, seeds, and vegetables for nourishment, rather than a primarily meat-based diet that the term "hunter-gatherer" implies (Amato and Partridge 1989: 2). According to Jeffery Moussaieff Masson, author of *The Face on Your Plate: The Truth About Food*, "Gathering plants required less energy than going after mobile animals, the food provided a more stable diet, and it was less dangerous to acquire" (Masson 2009:18). For these reasons, most hunter-gatherer societies depended on plants in order to sustain themselves.

The Ancient Greeks are credited for developing and practicing vegetarianism. Paul R. Amato and Sonia A. Partridge, authors of *The New Vegetarians* cite Pythagoras, Plato, and Epicurus among some of the most well-known Ancient Greek vegetarians (Amato and Partridge 1989: 2). The Greeks had a variety of reasons for practicing this diet. Amato and Partridge write, Pythagoras and his followers believed that animals as well as humans have souls, and that after death, an animal may be reincarnated as human and vice versa. According to this view, animals should not be killed and eaten because all souls have equal worth (Amato and Partridge 1989: 2).

Plato, however, saw vegetarianism as an essential part of his ideal society. He viewed vegetarianism as healthier than the omnivorous diet and preferred plant food sources because production of these foods requires less land and resources than the production of animal food sources (Amato and Partridge 1989:2). The Romans subsequently adopted many of the beliefs and practices of these Ancient Greeks, including the Greeks' favorable philosophical opinions of vegetarianism.

Both Eastern and Western religions played a significant role in the motivation for an organization of early vegetarianism. In India, Hinduism has long been associated with vegetarianism. Hinduism is made up of a complex caste system. Each Hindu is born into a specific caste and this caste often determines the diet that he or she will practice. Some of the castes associated with vegetarianism are the Brahmins and the Banias. Women, in particular, are more likely to practice vegetarianism within these castes. Perhaps surprisingly, vegetarianism is valued by many Indian Hindus, even those who consume meat themselves. According to Rod Preece, author of *Sins of the Flesh: A History of Ethical Vegetarianism*,

[In India], even the flesh eaters have great respect for vegetarianism and regard its practice as in principle worthier than their own less commendable omnivorous habits...[Vegetarianism] is seen as an intrinsic part of the appropriate human condition, as a part of earthly renunciation, not because our moral responsibilities to our fellow animals warrant it. Vegetarians are admired because they are seen to be releasing themselves from the shackles of the mundane sphere (Preece 2008: 58).

Preece states that vegetarianism among certain castes has been prevalent since around the 7th or 8th Century BC. He emphasizes that these Hindus adhered to vegetarianism, not because they were morally opposed to consuming flesh, but because of cultural and religious motives (Preece 2008: 59).

Vegetarianism is also very common among Buddhists. Buddhist monks adhere to a vegetarian diet unless meat is served to them and they believe that it would be a greater sin to refuse the meal than consume the meat. In China, where Buddhism is commonly practiced, Buddhists were primarily vegetarian by the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC. However, according to Preece, as Buddhism declined by the 13th Century, so did vegetarianism. In Western countries, Buddhists are very frequently vegetarian and have an “animal-respectful belief system” (Preece 2008: 71).

Practitioners of Jainism (Jaina) generally adhere to vegan diets and have done so since approximately the 10<sup>th</sup> Century BC. As a part of religious ritual, many Jaina refrain from consuming or causing any harm to animals, including insects, in order to preserve their personal purity. Preece writes,

[Jaina go] to extraordinary lengths to protect even the tiniest of animals. The Jaina are known to wear a cloth over their mouths so as not to ingest tiny air-borne insects. As Heinrich Zimmer explains in *Philosophies of India*, “wherever the Jaina ascetic walks, he

has to sweep the way before his feet with a little broom, so that no living thing may be crushed by his heel” (Preece 2008:74-75).

This practice reflects a distinction from other previously mentioned forms of vegetarianism in that it focuses on avoiding the harm of animals rather than only the consumption of flesh. This shows the emergence of a *vegan lifestyle* as opposed to simply a vegetarian *diet*.

It is clear that vegetarianism and veganism have been an important part of the history of these Eastern religions. Some Western religions have also adopted vegetarianism as a part of their belief systems as well. While the Bible does not clearly state that the consumption of flesh should be avoided, some Christian groups have chosen to follow and promote vegetarianism for various reasons. Monastic orders including Benedictine, Trappist, Cistercian, and others have all practiced vegetarianism for centuries. These monks believe that abstaining from consuming meat “suppress[es] their animal passions” that could hinder their spiritual growth (Amato and Partridge 3). Many Seventh-Day Adventists also often practice vegetarianism. According to Amato and Partridge, “In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Ellen White (Harmon), the sect’s founder, taught that the body is God’s temple, and as such, should not be abused through the use of alcohol, tobacco, or meat” (Amato and Partridge 1989: 18) .

Like Christianity, Judaism does not generally hold an official stance in regards to vegetarianism. Many Jews interpret the scriptural idea that humans have “dominion over all living things” to mean that animals are to be used by humans for whatever purpose they decide. However, other Jews find scriptural basis for a vegetarian lifestyle. The Hebrew bible indicates that meat was not consumed in the Garden of Eden, which many Jews have interpreted to mean that meat should not be consumed. In addition, there are passages in the scriptures that encourage kindness toward animals and state that animals possess souls, leading many Jews to lean toward adopting vegetarian diets (Amato and Partridge 1989: 16).

As stated previously, the fall of the Roman Empire began what Amato and Partridge refer to as “a dark ages in vegetarian thought” (Amato and Partridge 1989: 3). However, the 15<sup>th</sup> Century brought a period of growth to the movement as Europeans began to rediscover philosophy, art, and scientific thought. This rediscovery slowly led to resurgence in the vegetarian movement during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, as philosophers and thinkers began to form new ideas that supported vegetarianism. Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution contributed to the movement in that it contradicted the idea that animals were fundamentally

different from humans. The suggestion that animals and humans are similar influenced many people to become vegetarians because it challenged the Christian idea that humans have “dominion” over animals and, instead, put humans and animals on a somewhat even field. In addition to these new thoughts that influenced the resurgence of vegetarianism, many prominent writers including Percy and Shelley began advocating vegetarianism, which also contributed to this renaissance (Amato and Partridge 1989: 4).

During this time period, vegetarians were referred to as following the “Pythagorean diet,” since Pythagoras is often associated with the foundation of vegetarian ideas in Ancient Greece. Amato and Partridge state, “Later, the term ‘vegetarian’ was coined from the Latin word ‘vegetus,’ meaning active or vigorous. (The term has misled many into thinking that vegetarians survive only on vegetables- an inaccurate view of vegetarian cuisine.)” (Amato and Partridge 1989: 4).

The greatest period of growth for the vegetarian and vegan movement took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like the prominent vegetarian writers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ghandi influenced many in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle. Ghandi emphasized the importance of ethical reasons for rejecting the consumption of animal flesh as well as a need to persuade others to convert to vegetarianism. He advocated veganism, yet claimed that he was unable to refrain from consuming dairy products himself due to health reasons. Ghandi stressed moral motivations for vegetarianism and often spoke on this subject (Preece 2008:294).

In order to narrow the scope of this project, I will be focusing on vegans and vegetarians within Western societies from the 1940s to present. Although vegan diets and lifestyles have existed since approximately the 8<sup>th</sup> Century, an organized, politically-focused vegan movement with clear goals did not emerge until the 1940s.

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, vegetarians began to more formally organize. The International Vegetarian Union was formed in 1908 (Amato and Partridge 1989:5). While the majority of the members of the Vegetarian Union were vegetarian and not completely vegan, many members of the Union were beginning to identify the cruelty related to the production of animal-based foods like milk and eggs, and several members did adopt vegan lifestyles (Lehman 1999: 220). The Union organized conferences that gave vegetarians opportunities to meet others who shared their lifestyle and to exchange information related to vegetarianism (Amato and

Partridge 1989: 5). This step in the movement was significant in that it was the first time vegetarians began to come together as a group.

In 1944, the Vegan Society was founded in England by Donald Watson and Elsie Shrigley. Watson was the first to use the term “vegan.” Watson stated that he chose this term, which is composed of the first and last letters of “vegetarian” because, “veganism starts with vegetarianism and carries it through to its logical conclusion” (Preece 2008: 298). Watson and Shrigley published the aims of the Vegan Society, which were to advocate the consumption of only plant-based food and encourage the manufacture and consumption of alternatives to animal products. This marked a very significant turning point in the history of the vegan movement because, for the first time, veganism was defined as a distinct lifestyle from vegetarianism and emphasized many other aspects of life aside from one’s diet. For this reason, I will focus my research on formally defined veganism since the mid-1940s.

After the formation of the Vegan Society and the conception of a defined form of veganism in the 1940s, vegetarianism and veganism began to increase in popularity in Western cultures. The 1960s brought several other social movements which had a profound impact on the growing number of new vegetarians and vegans. In particular, the animal rights and environmental movements began to intensify. Both of these movements offered many compelling reasons for members to reject the consumption of animal flesh in support of their own movement ideologies.

## CHAPTER 3 - Review of Existing Literature

Although vegan diets have existed for hundreds of years, information about veganism and its social context is limited and incomplete. Elizabeth Cherry and Donna Maurer have written the only scholarly works dedicated to vegetarianism and veganism in the context of social movements. However, I have found that while these works contribute to the general knowledge of the vegan movement, they are inadequate for a number of reasons.

### Elizabeth Cherry

Elizabeth Cherry of the University of Georgia, Athens has written about veganism in the context of a social movement with her article *Veganism as a Cultural Movement: A Relational Approach*. She describes the activist behavior of the vegan movement as a cultural movement. Particularly, Cherry focuses her work on vegans within punk subculture. She utilizes ethnographic data to analyze members of the vegan movement in two categories- those who are also part of the punk subculture and those who are not. Through this analysis, she discusses the ways these two categories of vegans practice veganism differently. Cherry is primarily concerned with the social support networks within the punk subculture and states that these networks are one of the most important factors for participation in the vegan movement for vegans who are also punks. Cherry found that many punks are also vegans because numerous punk and straight-edge bands incorporate vegan ideas in their music. The straight-edge movement is a sub-group within the punk rock subculture in which individuals refrain from many behaviors. Ross Haenfler, author of *Straight Edge* describes this movement, “The basic tenets of [straightedge] are quite simple: members abstain, completely, from drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and usually reserve sexual activity for caring relationships, rejecting casual sex” (Haenfler 2006: 10). Many members of the straightedge movement apply this philosophy to food as well, rejecting animal products and any animal-based food as a part of their commitment to purity. The straightedge movement provided part of the social networking Cherry described as important to the vegan movement (Cherry 2006).

Cherry writes that veganism is a cultural movement. She utilizes Melucci’s analytic definition of post-industrial movements or the New Social Movement. According to Melucci’s

definition, ““a social movement [is] a form of collective action, (a) based on solidarity, (b) carrying on a conflict, [and] (c) breaking the limits of the system in which action occurs’ (Melucci 1984:825).” While this definition has some similarities to the theories of Tilly and Tarrow, it is distinct. Cherry states that the primary goal of veganism is not legislative or political change, but that the focus of the vegan movement is lifestyle and cultural changes on a more personal level.

Cherry states, “Many recent social movements, especially cultural movements, are more loosely defined than preceding movements and do not have conventionally identified adversaries or goals” (Cherry 2006: 155). She goes on to say that vegans often have conflicting definitions of what behaviors and practices are and are not acceptable for vegans. About half of the vegans in Cherry’s study adhered to the Vegan Society definition of veganism- consumption of *only* plant-based food. However, Cherry found that the other half of the vegans she studied practiced looser, “personal, idiosyncratic definitions of veganism, which were considerably less strict and often included dairy products or honey” (Cherry 2006:156). Cherry found that those who adhered to the strict, traditional definition of veganism were members of the punk subculture while those who had more lenient definitions of veganism were not punks.

### *Critique*

Although I find Cherry’s arguments to be compelling, I disagree with many of her points. Chiefly and most importantly, her idea that the success of the vegan movement is measured in personal lifestyle and cultural changes is incomplete. While these aspects of the vegan movement are important, I think that the vegan movement, like many other movements, is, on a fundamental level, concerned with legislative changes that support and advance vegan principles. Evidence of this can be seen through the review of the many vegan organizations that seek to promote the vegan movement across the world. All of these organizations utilize much of their time and many of their resources to pursue legislative change. For example, Farm Sanctuary, one of the largest vegan movement groups, divides their work into three categories: education, rescue, and advocacy. Although the “education” category is primarily focused on educating the public about the lifestyle and cultural changes Cherry finds to be the main focus of the vegan movement, the advocacy category marks a commitment to pursuing governmental action that protects farm animals. According to Farm Sanctuary,

Since incorporating in 1986, Farm Sanctuary has campaigned relentlessly to prevent cruelty, and to encourage legal and policy reforms that promote respect and compassion for farm animals. We have initiated groundbreaking prosecutions and precedent-setting litigation, and we have urged passage of the first U.S. laws to prohibit inhumane factory farming practices (Farm Sanctuary 2009).

This shows that vegans not only pursue lifestyle changes but legal changes as well.

Another of Cherry's arguments that I find to be problematic is that she states that half of the self-identified "vegans" that she interviewed often consumed animal products like dairy products and/or honey. Cherry stated that these differing definitions of veganism account for the somewhat unstable status of veganism as a true social movement

Cherry states,

I attempt to explain these variations by taking a relational approach to the data and arguing that these differences in definitions and practices can be attributed to differences in the punks' and non-punks' social networks. Three main aspects of their social networks – discourse, support, and network embeddedness – will demonstrate that maintaining a vegan lifestyle is not dependent on individual willpower, epiphanies, or simple norm following; it is more dependent on having social networks that are supportive of veganism (Cherry 2006:157).

Although I agree that supportive social networks encourage collective action and successful movements, the differences Cherry describes suggest, in my opinion, the existence of a distinct group of individuals (vegetarians) that helps support and further the goals of the vegan movement in many ways, but can also be considered a separate group in themselves. Self-identified vegans that still consume animal products can create confusion regarding the goals and definition of veganism, yet they do play a part in drawing attention to veganism in general. They practice vegetarian diets while supporting vegan ideas, contributing to the movement in a vital way, yet simultaneously remaining a somewhat separate group and portion of the movement. Additionally, all movements are often divided in ideological terms of what the purest form of the movement is. The strict definition of veganism is important in establishing the values and goals of the movement, but the individuals that support the movement while not necessarily adhering to this pure definition of "vegan" still play an important role in movement activity.

Although Cherry states that these differing definitions of veganism show that the vegan movement lacks clearly defined goals, I argue that vegans- those who do follow the strict definition that does not allow for any consumption of any animal products- have reached a consensus as to their description of what veganism is. Furthermore, the goals of the vegan movement are clearly defined in that the principle goal of veganism is to protect animals and

reject the consumption of animals and animal products. Although vegans carry out these goals in a number of ways- through education and advocacy to name a few, the core principle of the movement holds constant regardless of the methods used to accomplish this common goal. As well, self-identified vegans that do not practice a strict vegan lifestyle still contribute to the goals of the movement, even if in less “pure” ways than those who adhere to the strict definition of veganism.

Further, Cherry describes the social networks of both punks and non-punks and how this contributes to their adherence to their differently-defined forms of veganism. The members of the punk subculture were more likely to adhere to the Vegan Society definition of veganism and many of them attribute this to the support of the social networks within the punk subculture. Those who did not adhere to the traditional definition of veganism were those not affiliated with the punk subculture. Those who practice strict vegan diets and participate in other movement activities represent the most commonly accepted definition of veganism and, in this way, demonstrate the clearest idea of the movement’s goals. However, regardless of their adherence to the strict definition of veganism, all of these individuals contribute to the movement in some sense.

### **Donna Maurer**

Although her principle focus is on vegetarianism and not veganism, Donna Maurer has written the most comprehensive description of veganism as a social movement to date with her book, *Vegetarianism: Movement or Moment?* Maurer gives a thorough examination of what vegetarianism is, why people choose vegetarianism, what types of people make this choice, and estimates of how many people are vegetarians. Maurer gives a clear history of the vegetarian movement, providing a great deal of background information illustrating the nature and goals of vegetarianism.

While establishing the foundations of vegetarianism, Maurer also describes vegetarianism in the context of a social movement. Maurer states that vegetarianism can be viewed as a social movement through the collective goals and actions of vegetarians. However, she clearly states that she does not believe that the vegetarian movement has been very successful. Maurer gives several reasons for what she believes is a lack of progress. First, Maurer states that the number

and accomplishments of vegetarian organizations have not been as effective as they could be.

She writes,

The vegetarian movement's primary concerns are to motivate individuals to become vegetarians, increase the cultural acceptance of vegetarianism, and make vegetarian foods more readily available. Although relatively few vegetarians belong to formal organizations, these groups play an important role in (1) articulating the meanings associated with the vegetarian way of life, and (2) spreading these meanings to local groups and grassroots activists and by sponsoring conferences and other activities (Maurer 2002: 67).

Maurer believes that these vegetarian groups have been unsuccessful for a variety of reasons.

First, the majority of these groups does not have collaborative participation with each other and rarely hold combined events or campaigns, which Maurer states, causes ideological differences and some opposition between groups. As well, she believes that a lack of "both human and monetary" resources is mostly to blame for these organizations' lack of success (Maurer 2002: 68). Low membership and lack of funding hinder the organizations' ability to organize campaigns and activities to promote the goals of the movement.

Maurer compares the success of the animal rights movement with the relative lack of success of the vegetarian movement. She states that the animal rights movement utilizes intense and shocking imagery to communicate issues like animal abuse, which elicit an emotion response in potential members. The vegetarian movement does not use persuasive information that "inspires...ethical urgency" (2002: 69). This particular aspect of the vegetarian movement does not necessarily translate to the vegan movement since many of the animal rights causes that elicit intense, emotional responses are the same issues that vegans are also concerned with.

Maurer's primary reason for viewing the vegetarian movement as unsuccessful is the relatively low number of new vegetarians over the past several decades. According to Maurer, this is a key indicator of movement success since one of the movement's main goals is the recruitment of new vegetarians. She states that, although vegetarian food products are more accessible than ever, there have not been enough new vegetarians to signify sufficient movement progress. Maurer writes, "...[Why] aren't more people becoming vegetarians? I suggest two intertwined reasons. The vegetarian movement has proven to the public neither (1) that meat eating is imminently *dangerous* nor (2) that meat eating is *immoral*" (Maurer 2002:143).

## *Critique*

Although it has been estimated that between one third and one half of all vegetarians in the United States are vegans, veganism is distinct from vegetarianism. For this reason, Maurer's evaluation of vegetarianism as a social movement, while useful to some degree, cannot be taken as synonymous with the vegan movement. These two movements are clearly intertwined, but the goals and motivations of the vegan and vegetarian movements differ in several key ways. First, many vegetarians consume dairy products, eggs, and other animal by-products. Moreover, vegetarians generally do not reject the use of animal ingredients used in other products such as personal hygiene products and leather. Although this distinction may seem insignificant on the surface, it is an important one in that it indicates the differing motivations and goals of these two overlapping but distinct movements. Veganism consists of a complete *lifestyle* change and commitment that exceeds the limited *dietary* changes of vegetarianism. Vegans' rejection of animal products like dairy and eggs reflect the idea that even using animals for these types of products is unacceptable and inhumane. Due to this important difference, I believe that the vegetarian and vegan movements should be viewed as closely related but separate movements. Therefore, Maurer's work can contribute to our knowledge about veganism as a social movement, yet it cannot completely explain vegans' behavior and progress. Keeping in mind the fact that one half to one third of vegetarians are vegans, I will evaluate Maurer's work as a partial evaluation of the vegan movement while paying close attention to the important differences.

Although Maurer commends the animal rights movement for its ability to attract new members through shocking, influential images and ideas regarding the treatment of animals, she criticizes the vegetarian movement's relative lack of new members. Because many vegans commit to this lifestyle in order to protect the welfare of animals, the vegan movement also focuses on the unsettling images of animal abuse, neglect, and mistreatment. Therefore, this critique of the vegetarian movement does not apply to the vegan movement.

As well, I will show that the number of vegans *has* increased, contrary to Maurer's view that veganism has not undergone any significant growth. Although the percentage of the population that is committed to veganism is small, it has grown over time and these numbers have gradually increased over the past few decades. Maurer states that that a lack of "significant" increase in the number of vegetarians marks a lack of success. However, I argue

that the success of the vegan movement is demonstrated not only through a growth in membership, but in a number of other ways such as legislative change and campaigns based on advancing vegan ideas and awareness. In my opinion, this increased social awareness of veganism and vegan issues as well as the legislative change resulting from vegan movement behavior are more important than the actual numbers of vegans increasing. As well, movement success or failure have little to do with the actual existence of a movement.

Maurer's main reason for believing that the vegetarian movement is unsuccessful is that the movement has failed to convince potential members that eating meat is dangerous or immoral. This critique is difficult to apply to the vegan movement because, as mentioned, many of the animal-welfare related reasons for choosing a vegan lifestyle can be very convincing to non-vegans. Alternatively, I suggest that the primary reasons for vegans accounting for such a low percentage of the population is due to (1) a lack of knowledge about all of the various aspects of veganism and its benefits, (2) an unwillingness to accept the burdensome implications of committing to a vegan lifestyle.

## CHAPTER 4 - Methodology

For this thesis, I will describe the historical origins of veganism. I will show that this movement has grown from various groups of people with many diverse motivations for adopting the vegan lifestyle into a group that shares many common goals while still retaining distinct values and beliefs. I will be focusing on vegans in the United Kingdom and the United States because veganism began in the UK in the 1940s with the foundation of the Vegan Society and has picked up much of its steam in the US over the past several years.

For the purpose of this thesis, I have gathered historical and sociological data and theories from a variety of sources. I combine this data in order to thoroughly illustrate the history, nature, and future of vegans as a social movement and show how it has contributed to social change. There are many theories within the field of sociology that define what a social movement is. However, these theories are not all entirely consistent in the criteria used to define a movement. The sociological definitions of what constitutes a social movement as described by Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow will illustrate the many ways vegans can be viewed as a social movement. A synthesis of these two social scientists' definitions in the analysis of vegans as a social movement will show that vegans meet both Tilly and Tarrow's criteria for a social movement. I will use these criteria as a framework to show how vegans' activity and growth fit into Tilly and Tarrow's theoretical outline for what constitutes a social movement.

By utilizing polls conducted by the Vegetarian Resource Group as well as other polls, I will analyze the progression of the movement in regards to the gradual increase of individuals adhering to vegan lifestyles as a representation of the success of the vegan movement. Although these polls can be useful as an example or tool to give clues about the movement, the data is a bit shaky and should be read as such. However, these numbers are useful as a general evaluation of the vegan movement and give some insight as to the overall change in membership of the vegan movement over the past several years.

Additionally, I will analyze articles from reputable news sources including the *BBC News* and *The New York Times*, to illustrate the increasing awareness of vegetarianism and veganism and the public actions taken to advance the vegan movement and its ideals. I think that there is substantial evidence that the vegan and vegetarian movements have produced significant

social change in Western societies since its formal inception in the 1940s. These news articles show examples of vegan movement behavior but my analysis of these articles is in no way a complete content analysis. Instead, these articles can be seen as evidence of vegan movement behavior and show examples of Tilly and Tarrow's criteria for describing activity as a social movement.

I will give an overview of the efforts of and actions taken by the vegan movements, including work toward political legislative change, protests, petitions, the formation of vegan and animal rights activist groups to show how vegans exhibit movement behaviors. I will show how the vegan movement is closely tied to other similar social movements and how these associations have contributed to the evolution of the vegan movement and contribute to this growth.

Finally, I will describe evidence contrary to my opinion that the vegan movement has been successful. I will show that, although veganism can be described as a social movement through the application of Tilly and Tarrow's theoretical frameworks, there is some evidence that opposes these ideas.

### **Vegetarian Resource Group Adult Polls**

In order to evaluate the progression of the vegan movement, I reviewed polls conducted by the Vegetarian Resource Group, a non-profit organization dedicated to vegetarianism and veganism. The Vegetarian Resource Group works with Harris Interactive, a market research group, and has also worked with other polling organizations including Roper and Zogby. The VRG conducts online polls evaluating the dietary practices of Americans and uses these results to estimate information about the United States as a whole, including how many vegetarians and vegans there are, patterns among vegetarians and vegans, and the number of people who order meatless meals in restaurants. The Vegetarian Resource Group polls are particularly useful because they specifically asked respondents which foods they chose *never* to consume. This is unique in that it assesses true vegetarianism and veganism in a standardized way rather than assessing whether or not people *consider* themselves to be vegetarian or vegan, even though they may consume animal products on occasion. These polls illustrate how these numbers have changed over time and give insight into the vegan movement and its affects (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### ***1994 and 1997***

In 1994 the VRG poll, Roper surveyed 1,974 adults and in 1997, Roper surveyed 1,960 adults. All of the respondents were interviewed in their homes. They used a representative sample of people “exclusive of institutionalized segments of the population (Army camps, nursing homes, prisons, etc.). Validations were conducted by telephone on all interviewers' work”. In 1994, the respondents were asked "Please call off the items on this list, if any, that you never eat. Meat. Poultry. Fish/Seafood. Dairy Products. Eggs. Honey. Eat Them All. Don't Know." In 1997, the question was worded, ““Please call off the items on this list, if any, that you never eat: Meat (beef, pork, veal, lamb, etc.). Poultry. Fish/Seafood. Dairy Products. Eggs. Honey. Eat Them All. Don't Know” (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### ***2000***

The 2000 poll was conducted by Zogby and 968 adults were interviewed. The sample was collected from a randomly selected telephone list that included all types of listed numbers, including Army barracks and nursing homes. The respondents were asked, “Please tell me which of the following foods, if any, you never eat? Meat, Poultry, Fish/Seafood, Dairy Products, Eggs, Honey" (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### ***2003, 2006 and 2009***

The VRG polls in 2003 and 2006 were sponsored by Harris Interactive. Via telephone Harris interviewed 1,031 adults from February 6-9, 2003, 1,000 adults on April 14 and 17, 2006, and 2,379 adults on May 1-5, 2009. In 2003 and 2006, the respondents were asked, “Please tell me which of the following foods, if any, you NEVER EAT: Meat, Poultry, Fish/Seafood, Dairy Products, Eggs, Honey.” The 2009 poll asked, “Which of the following foods, if any, do you never eat? Please select all that apply. I never eat...: Meat, poultry, fish/seafood, dairy products, eggs, honey, I sometimes eat all of these foods, Don't know” (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

## **Vegetarian Resource Group Youth Polls**

The Vegetarian Resource Group also administered surveys directed toward youths in order to assess the same thing assessed by their adult polls: How many vegetarians are there? The same question used in the adult surveys was used in the youth surveys as well.

### ***1995 and 2000***

The 1995 and 2000 Vegan Resource Group Youth polls were sponsored by Roper. One thousand twenty-three youths were interviewed in 1995 and in 2000, 1,240 were interviewed. The respondents were ages 8-17 and were interviewed in their homes. The respondents were asked, “Please call off the items on this list, if any, that you never eat: Meat. Poultry. Fish/Seafood. Dairy Products. Eggs. Honey” (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### ***2005 and 2010***

The 2005 and 2010 polls were sponsored by Harris Interactive. Respondents were interviewed in their homes from April 14- 18, 2005. In 2005, Harris utilized a nationwide sample of 1,264 U.S. youth aged 8- to 18-years-old. Of these youth, 650 were male and 614 were female. In 2010, 1,258 youths were surveyed from January 13-19, 2010. The survey was conducted using Harris’s YouthQuery<sup>SM</sup> online omnibus service.

In both 2005 and 2010, the respondents were asked, “Which of the following foods, if any, do you never eat? Please select all that apply. I never eat...: Meat, poultry, fish/seafood, dairy products, eggs, honey, I sometimes eat all of these foods, Don't know” (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

## **Vegetarian Resource Group Dining-Out Polls**

The Vegetarian Resource Group, in addition to conducting polls to determine the number of vegetarians there are in the United States, performed a survey to determine how often individuals ordered dishes not containing animal ingredients. In 1999, Zogby sponsored a survey of 1,181 adults. The respondents were asked to answer the question, “When you eat out, do you...sometimes/often/always/never order a dish without meat, fish, or fowl?” The respondents then selected the term that described the frequency with which they ordered vegetarian dishes. This poll was repeated in 2008 by Zogby with 1,201 adults from April 10-12, 2008 via telephone (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

## **Additional Polls**

In addition to the polls conducted by the Vegetarian Resource Group, I have also used polls from other sources to show trends in animal product and meat consumption. In order to collect data about the numbers of vegans living in the United Kingdom, I have used the survey

entitled “Consumer Attitudes to Food Standards” administered by the Food Standards Agency. I have used the results of this yearly survey for the years 2001-2007.

Also, I have utilized the RealEat survey conducted by Gallup Polls for the years 1984-1999. This poll measured how many people in the UK self-identified as vegetarians. Finally, I have used statistical evidence collected by the Humane Society showing the meat consumption of Americans since 1950.

### **News Articles as Evidence**

In order to explore the frequency of articles regarding veganism and vegan-related subjects, I have analyzed the online archived articles on these subjects from two major news sources, the *New York Times* and *BBC News*. I chose these two sources because they both have reputedly reported news on a variety of topics for many decades and provide credible, recognizable names to match to the data. I searched both news sites’ online databases using a variety of keywords. I initially searched using the following keywords: vegan, veganism, vegetarian, vegan movement, vegetarian movement. After reviewing the results on both news sites using all of these terms, I decided to use the keyword “vegan” for both the *New York Times* and *BBC News*. *New York Times* archives its past articles according to categories referred to as “Times Topics.” For this research, I analyzed the articles listed under “Times topics: veganism.” Similarly, I searched the term “vegan” on *BBC News*’s webpage and analyzed all of the archived articles that were written on this topic.

## **CHAPTER 5 - Results**

### **Theoretical Evidence**

Research has shown that veganism can, indeed, be described as a social movement by utilizing the theories of both Tilly and Tarrow. Evidence of the activity of the vegan movement follows the criteria set by both of these theorists.

Tilly stated that a movement must be a “sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authority” (Tilly 2004:3). Similarly, Tarrow specified that social movements must be “sustained action” (Tarrow 1994:4). Vegans demonstrate these characteristics in a number of ways. First, the vegan movement has been “sustained” over many decades with steady, gradual progress. A survey performed by the Vegetarian Resource Group estimates that as of 2008, 3.4% of adults in the United States identified as vegetarian or vegan. This is a significant increase from their survey in 1994, which showed that only 0.3-1% of the U.S. adult population was vegetarian or vegan (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009). This evidence shows that vegetarian/vegan diets have been adopted by a significant portion of the population and that this number has increased over time, showing a sustained movement.

The main “collective claim” of veganism is that the consumption of animal products is undesirable for a number of reasons. This claim is clearly stated in the goals that were laid out by the Vegan Society when it was founded in 1944. Vegan Society founders Watson and Shrigley published the aims of the Vegan Society, which were: (1) to advocate the consumption of only plant-based food; and (2) to encourage the manufacture and consumption of alternatives to animal products (Preece 2008:299). These goals are shared by vegans worldwide and have continued to remain the primary “collective claims” of veganism for the past six decades. Tarrow also stressed the importance of a common purpose among the members of a movement.

According to Tilly, members of a movement must make this collective claim on individuals or groups “whose actions...significantly affect the welfare of many people” (Tilly 2004:4). This is very much like what Tarrow described as “collective challenges” against authorities (Tarrow 1994:5). For vegans, their aim is to protect the welfare of many animals rather than people, yet the same principles still apply. Vegans are making and have made their collective claims on individuals (non-vegans) and the government to encourage social change.

Primarily, many vegan groups have worked toward legislative change and changes in business practices. According to Tarrow, movement members' solidarity through the recognition of their common purpose drives movements toward action and change, which is apparent in the vegan movement through their efforts to change policies and practices in order to protect animals (Tarrow 1994:4).

Although it is impossible to truly pinpoint the true beginning of veganism as a movement since vegan ideas, diets, and lifestyles have existed for centuries, we can estimate the beginning of modern veganism. Since the word "vegan" was created and defined in 1944 by the Vegan Society, this is a logical point to recognize as the time period when the modern vegan movement began to coalesce. The fact that the movement began several decades (or, arguably, centuries) ago and continues to progress and grow indicates a "sustained interaction" (Tarrow 1994:4) or "sustained effort" (Tilly 2004:3) which Tilly and Tarrow identified as key factors in determining whether or not some activity is a social movement. Even though the growth of the movement has been gradual, the fact that it has not died off or slowed down suggests that it meets the criteria of a sustained social movement.

The vegan movement also reflects what Tilly refers to as "social movement repertoires." Vegans have formed several groups, coalitions, and societies devoted to advancing veganism and vegan ideas. Examples of these groups include, as mentioned before, PETA and the Vegan Society, as well as the Vegetarian Resource Group, the Vegan World Network, and Vegan Outreach. These groups all focus on promoting veganism, yet do so using different methods ranging from protests and petitions, to distributing pamphlets and a variety of other means. These are all part of the vegan movement's social movement repertoire as described by Tilly.

These groups dedicated to veganism also perform what Tilly refers to as "WUNC displays." They show worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment through their participation in these organized groups. One vegan group that provides a good example of WUNC displays is Vegan Outreach. This organization seeks to promote veganism through the distribution of pamphlets, booklets, and other literature that contains information on veganism and animal rights. This literature is primarily given out on college campuses and the organization provides individuals with booklets for free or with a donation upon request. Vegan Outreach has

distributed information about veganism in all 50 states and in many countries across the world. The founders of this organization promote veganism and animal rights through peaceful protests, education, and marches. Vegan Outreach clearly exhibits WUNC behavior as described by Tilly (Vegan Outreach).

### **Other Movements' Contributions to the Vegan Movement**

Veganism is a unique social movement. The movement is centered on the philosophy that all animals should be protected and not consumed in any way. Consequences of this philosophy are a specific diet and lifestyle that reflect this idea. Although members of the vegan movement generally subscribe to the vegan diet and lifestyle, those who seek to advance the philosophy of the movement contribute to its progress as well. For instance, vegetarians and/or animal rights activists do not necessarily abstain from consuming all animal products. However, these individuals promote ideas that fall under the over-arching goals of veganism and, thus, contribute to the growth of the movement. In this section I will describe the activity of two social movements that are related to the vegan movement, particularly focusing on how their activity, while not specifically focused on veganism, adds to the vegan movement's success and draws attention to many aspects of the vegan philosophy and goals.

#### ***Animal Rights Movement***

The vegan movement experienced more growth in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as the animal rights and environmental movements became popular, particularly beginning in the 1960s. Although the animal rights movement is similar in some respects to the vegetarian and vegan movements, all animal rights activists are not necessarily vegans or even vegetarians, especially in the beginning stages of the animal rights movement. However, many of the members of the animal rights movement are also vegetarian or vegan.

This movement, like the vegan movement, first began in Great Britain. In 19<sup>th</sup> Century England, anti-animal cruelty bills began to be introduced and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (later the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) was founded by Colonel Richard Martin. A very similar version of the SPCA was then established by Henry Bergh in the United States in 1866. The SPCA primarily focused on animal shelters and then later branched out into other areas of animal rights advocacy. After World War II, the

number of companion animals increased in the United States. Therefore, support for animal shelters and animal welfare grew as well (Walls 2008).

In 1955, the Society for Animal Protection Legislation was founded and worked to pass laws to enforce animal rights.

The Society for Animal Protective Legislation (SAPL) was established...lobby for the first federal Humane Slaughter Act (passed in 1958); together with the Animal Welfare Institute also under the direction of Christine Stevens, SAPL has lobbied for every important piece of animal legislation since, including the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act (1966), the Endangered Species Act (1969), the Horse Protection Act (1970), the Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972) and their various subsequent extensions and strengthening amendments (Walls 2008).

The animal rights movement, which is often also referred to as the animal liberation movement, is often credited to being established by philosopher Peter Singer. The animal rights movement focuses primarily on the inhumane treatment of animals in factory farms and laboratories (Amato and Partridge 1989:21). Members of this movement believe that animals and humans are equal and, therefore, should possess equal rights (Preece 2008:303). The growth of the animal rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s brought attention to vegetarianism and veganism, contributing to these movements as well. According to David Walls, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Sonoma State University,

In the 1970s the humane movement began to find its first respectable intellectual and ethical underpinning in the work of philosophers Peter Singer and Tom Regan. Singer revived utilitarian thinking..., popularizing the concept of "speciesism" as a parallel to racism and sexism. Regan moved beyond the idea of animal welfare to argue the case for animal rights, not from utilitarianism, but in the natural rights tradition (Walls 2008).

Other than Singer and Regan, several other individuals were very influential in the surge in the animal rights movement in the 1960s. Quaker vegetarian Ruth Harrison began to combine the ideas of vegetarianism and animal rights. She wrote a book entitled *Animal Machines* in 1964 that exposed the inhumane nature of animal husbandry techniques. Many of Harrison's ideas pointed to a rejection of the consumption of animal flesh. In 1965, another English woman, Brigid Brophy, wrote an article entitled "The Rights of Animals." The title of her article brought the concept that animals were endowed with natural rights into public consciousness. Brophy helped establish the consumption of animal flesh as a moral issue (Preece 2008:299).

In 1969, a group of philosophers and other academic intellectuals (including Peter Singer) began to organize in Britain to promote animal rights. They began to discuss the

connection between animal rights and a vegetarian diet and came to the conclusion that “it was not possible truly to claim to care for animals with one breath and to consume them with the next” (Preece 2008:300). This marked a turning point in the British animal rights movement.

According to Preece,

Slowly, beginning with Harrison, animal rights advocacy and vegetarianism became almost synonymous in Britain, spreading rapidly to mainland and Nordic Europe and to Australasia, whence Singer came, and a little more slowly but no less effectively to North America (300).

Just as other aspects of the British animal rights movement were eventually repeated in the United States, vegetarianism became an important part of protecting animal rights in all Western cultures.

### ***Animal Liberation Front***

The two most well-known animal rights organizations, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) have taken action as part of the animal rights movement and have, therefore, greatly affected the vegan movement. The Animal Liberation Front began its work in England in the 1960s. The goal of this group is to “liberate” animals from exploitative situations such as laboratories and factory farms and draw attention to practices that they believed harmed animals. According to the ALF’s website,

Members of the Animal Liberation Front act directly to stop animal suffering, at the risk of losing their own freedom. Direct action refers to illegal actions performed to bring about animal liberation. These are usually one of two things: rescuing animals from laboratories or other places of abuse, or inflicting economic damage on animal abusers. Due to the illegal nature of ALF activities, activists work anonymously and there is no formal organization to the ALF.

There is no organized form of membership with the ALF; anyone who participates in these illegal “liberating” actions is considered a member (Animal Liberation Front). However, in order to be considered a part of the ALF, members must be either vegetarian or vegan (Discover the Networks). This is an important part of the ALF’s connection to the vegan movement. As well, the idea that all members of the ALF must agree on this goal suggests “common purposes and solidarity” (Tarrow 1994:4) and “collective claims on target authority” (Tilly 2004:3). The illegal nature of the ALF’s action is, in itself, action against authority. This also communicates commitment to the cause in that members are willing to risk arrest and

prosecution in order to further the goals of the movement. Commitment, one of Tilly's WUNC displays, is an important aspect of social movement behavior.

According to Discover the Networks,

ALF has its historical roots in the Hunt Saboteurs Association (HSA), an organization whose members try to save animals from hunters by laying false scents and blowing hunting horns to send hunters' hounds running in the wrong direction; disabling animal traps; setting off smoke bombs to disrupt hunting activities; and in some cases becoming human shields, placing themselves between hunters and the animals they are tracking. (Discover the Networks)

It is unclear exactly when the first organized action of the ALF took place, but it is estimated that an incident in 1979 in which five animals that were to be used in medical experimentation were released by vandals from New York University Medical School. In the years following, many similar acts took place and hundreds of animals were "liberated" by this group (Discover the Networks).

The ALF is classified as a terrorist group by the FBI and has used a variety of methods in order to carry out their goals, including arson, theft, and vandalism. "Between 1997 and 2003, ALF caused, in conjunction with the Earth Liberation Front, \$43 million in property damage" (Discover the Networks). The ALF is mainly based in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, but they operate in countries all over the world. In order to educate its members, the ALF has published *The ALF Primer*, a detailed list of instructions on how to carry out the liberation of animals from what they view as harmful situations. The primer clearly states that the animals that are liberated must be placed in homes where they may live out their natural lives safely. Additionally, the *ALF Primer* instructs members to "inflict damage to those who profit from the misery and exploitation of animals" (Animal Liberation Front). While they do not encourage violence, the ALF does encourage the destruction of property as a part of their liberating direct action (Animal Liberation Front).

In order to keep track of the ALF's activity, supporters of the ALF founded the North American Animal Liberation Press Office (NAALPO). NAALPO receives "anonymous communiqués" from ALF members informing them of ALF activities around North America. NAALPO then publishes news of these activities online. According to the NAALPO website, "[NAALPO] was founded to communicate the actions, strategies, and philosophy of the animal liberation movement to the media and the public" (North American Animal Liberation Press

Office). The NAALPO believes that the public media misrepresents the ALF as violent “terrorists,” so they seek to present the facts of the ALF’s activities to the public. In addition, the NAALPO posts links to conventional news sources’ articles on ALF action on their webpage. The NAALPO also tracks the status of ALF members’ incarceration and other legal and police action taken against them as a result of their ALF activities.

The actions of the ALF cover a wide variety of different locations and situations. Recently, seventy-two hens were “liberated” by ALF members from a Utah egg farm and placed in safe homes. In response to the threat of police action taken against the ALF members responsible for releasing the hens, a press officer for NAALPO stated, “There's no concern whatsoever, because when the law is wrong, it needs to be broken” (Peterson 2010). The release of the hens and the press officer’s reaction are typical of the ALF’s actions and clearly illustrate their philosophy. Again, this attitude that laws should be broken if they are deemed inhumane or unfair is against authority in general and those who participate in law-breaking behavior express commitment to the goals of the group. Although the ALF is not formally a vegan organization, they are associated with the vegan movement through their shared goals and, therefore, contribute to the overall progress of the vegan movement.

### ***PETA***

PETA is one of the most well known animal rights organizations in the world. Founded in 1980 by Alex Pacheco and Ingrid Newkirk, this organization’s goals are to educate and inform the public about animal rights and animal abuse and to promote vegetarianism and veganism. PETA’s main principle is that “animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, or use for entertainment” (PETA Media Center). PETA has performed many investigations of factory farms, laboratories, and other locations in order to expose cases of animal abuse and exploitation.

PETA’s first major investigation began in 1981 and sought to expose the cruel experimentation on monkeys in a Silver Springs Maryland laboratory. The experimenter in this case was convicted of animal cruelty and this case brought animal experimentation to the attention of the general public. This case was the first Supreme Court case protecting laboratory animals and its effects were wide-spread. In response to the Silver Springs Monkeys case, General Motors stopped using animals in crash tests, another milestone in animal protection (PETA Media Center).

One of PETA's most well-known methods of exposing animal cruelty is through undercover investigations. The organization sends representatives to work for companies they suspect of animal cruelty and these representatives record cruelty evidence through photographs, videos, and first-hand accounts. According to PETA's Media Center Factsheet,

PETA released investigators' photographs and videotaped footage taken inside Carolina Biological Supply Company, the nation's largest biological supply house. PETA documented that animals were removed from gas chambers and injected with formaldehyde without being checked for vital signs, as well as cats' and rats' struggling during embalming and employees' spitting on animals. The company was charged by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

Among their most well-known undercover campaigns are PETA's investigations of meatpacking plants. These investigations showed shocking forms of animal abuse including pigs being skinned alive, violent force-feeding of geese used in foie gras production, and other forms of violence against animals. By exposing these behaviors, PETA helped toughen regulations in the meatpacking industry in order to protect animals. (PETA Media Center).

One undercover investigation performed by PETA in 2008 revealed inhumane treatment of turkeys in a turkey slaughterhouse in West Virginia run by Aviagen, one of the nation's largest turkey suppliers. PETA obtained undercover video showing the mistreatment of many turkeys. An article in the New York Times about this case described the incidents,

The scenes show stomach-turning brutality. Workers are seen smashing birds into loading cages like basketballs, stomping heads and breaking necks, apparently for fun, even pretending to rape one. On the tape, one worker describes losing his temper at a tom who pecked him, marking its head with a pen so he could find it again, fetching a broomstick, ramming it down the bird's gullet and holding it up in the air while shouting "Let this be a lesson to y'all" at the rest of the flock. His supervisor later excuses such behavior by saying, "Every once and a while, everybody gets agitated and has to kill a bird...As long as they don't do it a lot, I don't really say too much about it. (McNeal 2008)

By undertaking undercover investigations, PETA's goals and methods of achieving these goals are "collective claims on target authority...whose actions...significantly affect the welfare of many..."(Tilly 2004:4). This is a significant component of Tilly's criteria for defining social movements. Even though PETA is an animal rights organization and not specifically a vegan organization, they, like the ALF, share many of the goals of the vegan movement and, by attempting to meet these goals, are contributing to the vegan movement.

In addition to their investigations, PETA has also participated in numerous campaigns encouraging manufacturers, corporations, and restaurant chains to adopt more animal-friendly

practices. In particular, they have organized many campaigns against the fur industry and the often painful and cruel methods used to produce furs.

In [a] precedent-setting case, a California furrier was charged with cruelty to animals after a PETA investigator filmed him electrocuting chinchillas by clipping wires to the animals' genitals. The American Veterinary Medical Association denounced the killing method, saying that it causes animals to experience the pain of a heart attack while they are still conscious. In another undercover exposé, PETA videotaped a fur rancher's causing minks to die in agony by injecting them with weed-killer. Both farms agreed to stop these cruel killing methods (PETA Media Center).

Another important accomplishment of PETA's campaigns came in the form of persuading many popular restaurant and grocery chains to commit to raising their standards of treatment for animals used for food. PETA accomplished this through two years of over 400 demonstrations and was able to convince several companies to agree to these standards including McDonalds, Burger King, Wendy's, Kroger, Safeway, and Albertsons (PETA Media Center).

PETA has encouraged many corporations, companies, and governments to change policies to benefit animals and further vegan goals. For example, PETA has persuaded many popular national retailers such as JC Penney, Forever21, and Urban Outfitters to adopt fur-free policies, committing to refrain from selling products that contain fur in their stores or online (PETA). This action that was urged by those with vegan motives reflects vegans' claims on a target authority in order to protect the welfare of animals.

In addition to these more formal methods of pursuing these goals, PETA is also known for many public, more informal demonstrations. They have painted nude or partially nude people to look like animals and placed them in cages as a statement against caging animals in zoos. They have rushed the stage at fashion shows for designers who use animal products in their clothing and splashed red paint on the designers' clothing as a representation of the blood shed to make them. These demonstrations are classic examples of what Tilly referred to as "social movement repertoires," or public actions taken specifically to draw attention to the ideas and goals of a social movement.

PETA utilizes many different strategies for accomplishing its goals. They have recruited many celebrities to work with them as representatives of the animal welfare cause. They use these celebrities in various forms of media to advertise PETA's message. For example, one method they use is print ads. These ads have been both popular and controversial, because PETA often utilizes shocking imagery in order to communicate a point. One of these ad

campaigns seeks to increase anti-fur awareness and includes nude celebrities-usually women-along with the phrase, “I’d rather go naked than wear fur.” Similarly, they have utilized several tattooed celebrities-also nude or partially nude- with the phrase, “Ink not mink.” These ads are eye-catching and provocative and have created some controversy while bringing attention to PETA’s message (PETA Media Center).

While these methods may make a powerful statement, they have also given PETA a negative reputation in the popular media and among many people worldwide. Many feminists oppose PETA’s use of scantily-clad women in their ads, believing that the organization exploits women for the sake of drawing attention to their campaigns. As well, PETA’s unusual methods draw negative attention to the group. Their interruptions of fashion shows, destruction of property, and other disruptive methods have made them unpopular among many, including some vegans, due to the negative connotations these very visible and well-known campaigns generate.

PETA’s work has been influential in stopping the illegal and/or inhumane treatment of animals on many situations. Despite their controversial reputation, PETA has a longstanding history of promoting animal welfare and vegetarian and vegan diets and lifestyles (PETA Media Center). According to Preece,

[PETA’s] outrageous but effective propaganda was (and still is) disparaged by many, including many vegetarians themselves. But no one could doubt the success in bringing animal ethics constantly to public attention. Moreover, PETA’s educational work had an extensive and direct impact on all who were willing to inquire. Animal rights activism and vegetarian, even vegan, promotion were now seen as one and the same. From now on, those who did not know the plight of food animals had chosen not to know, or not to care, about the cruelties they were inflicting, even if vicariously (2008:327).

Although the ALF and PETA are considered to primarily be parts of the animal rights movement, these organizations have also contributed to the vegan movement by drawing attention to the fact that animals experience pain and suffering. This idea relates to a central philosophy of the vegan movement: that animals are sentient beings that should not be exploited or consumed. As well, the behaviors exhibited by the ALF and PETA are excellent examples of the social movement criteria as defined by Tilly and Tarrow.

### ***Environmental Movement***

Similar to the influence of the influence of the animal rights movement, the environmental and vegan movements are closely related. Although the environmental movement

has recently increased in popularity over the past two decades, the movement's roots began as early as the mid-1800s. In response to the popular writings of Henry David Thoreau, many people began to become more concerned with and interested in nature and the environment. Particularly of interest was nature conservation (Walls 2008).

The formation of the Sierra Club by John Muir in 1892 marked a major milestone in the environmental movement. The Sierra Club is committed to protecting "communities, wild places, and the planet itself" (Sierra Club 2010). The Sierra Club's most influential work has been protecting national parks. Their first major action was a campaign in 1892 to stop plans to reduce the size of Yosemite National Park. The Sierra Club steadily grew in membership throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and still remains active and successful today (Sierra Club 2010).

In a similar vein of the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society was formed in 1896. The Audubon Society focuses on the protection of wildlife, particularly birds. According to Audubon,

Audubon's mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Our national network of community-based nature centers and chapters, scientific and educational programs, and advocacy on behalf of areas sustaining important bird populations, engage millions of people of all ages and backgrounds in positive conservation experiences (Audubon Society 2010).

As early as the 1900s, the Audubon Society was successful in pushing forward legislation to protect bird species from being threatened by plume hunting (Audubon Society 2010).

Generally speaking, the members of the movement have predominantly focused on preservation of natural resources and wildlife. After World War II, there was an increase in participation in the environmental movement. David Walls attributes this to overall income increase, prosperity, and leisure time as well as increased ownership of automobiles and higher education levels. These effects of post-war life made it possible for more people to participate in and appreciate outdoor recreation. Preserving the parks and other areas that made it possible for people to participate in these activities, then, became a priority for many.

There was a surge in action of the environmental movement in the 1960s when many legislative victories were made for the cause of environmental preservation. Several important Acts were passed in the 1960s including the Clean Air Act, the Water Quality Act, and the

Wilderness Act (Walls). The 1970s brought what have often been referred to as “new environmentalists.” These individuals’ focus in regards to the environment shifted away from simple preservationism. New information about pollution, toxic waste, and pesticides brought different concerns and created a different attitude within the environmental movement. Environmentalism became a public health concern as people realized that their actions negatively affected the environment, which, in turn, negatively affected their health. World events like the Persian Gulf War, oil spills, and the discovery of the Greenhouse Effect all contributed to these concerns as well (Walls 2008). The legislative acts passed with the help of the environmental movement show the movement’s commitment to making claims against authority in order to reach the movement’s goals (Tilly 2004:3).

As knowledge and awareness of the environment increased in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many people became concerned about how modern society negatively affects the Earth. The effects of meat, dairy, and egg production on the environment are also important aspects of the environmental movement that relate to the vegan movement. Amato and Partridge write,

As Frances Moore Lappé pointed out in *Diet for a Small Planet*, there have been two population explosions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: people in Third World countries and livestock in Western countries. This increase in the number of livestock has been accompanied by a trend for livestock to spend all or part of their lives in feedlots where they eat large quantities of grain and soybeans...Feeding large numbers of animals in this fashion requires an enormous agricultural output. In fact, one half of the agricultural output of the United States every year goes to feed livestock (Amato and Partridge 1989:19).

In addition, feedlot agriculture also demands a vast amount of water in order to sustain the animals being raised for meat as well as the crops grown to feed them. The amount of water needed to produce a pound of protein from meat is about fifteen times as much water needed to produce a pound of protein from soybeans (Amato and Partridge 1989:19). Clearly, this is an inefficient process and detrimental to US water supplies.

In addition to these concerns, overgrazing of livestock for meat production also erodes topsoil. As well, soil is damaged by the vast amount of plants grown to feed livestock, which decreases the fertility of the land. The enormous amounts of waste produced by livestock and the waste created by the by-products of meat production contaminate groundwater and kill aquatic life (Amato and Partridge 1989:20).

The affect of meat, dairy, and egg production on global warming and air quality is also a concern for environmentalists. Animal agriculture results in a vast amount of air pollution due to

the gasses released by the livestock and their manure. Research has shown that the greenhouse gasses emitted by the animal agriculture sector exceed those emitted by the transportation sector.

Although transportation and the burning of fossil fuels have typically been regarded as the chief contributors to GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions and climate change, a 2006 report, *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*...highlighted the substantial role of the farm animal production sector. Identifying it as "a major threat to the environment" (FAO 2006), the FAO found that the animal agriculture sector emits 18%, or nearly one-fifth, of human-induced GHG emissions, more than the transportation sector. (Steinfeld et al. 2006).

This is an even greater concern among many environmentalists due to the fact that the animal agriculture industry is rapidly growing. In fact, livestock inventories are expected to double by 2050 (Steinfeld et al. 2006), which would greatly increase the amount of greenhouse gas emissions as well.

The environmental impact of meat, dairy, and egg production is a significant concern for the environmental movement. As the environmental movement gained more members in the 1970s, more attention was drawn to negative effects of meat production on the environment. This is related to the vegan movement in that many individuals adopt a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle for environmental reasons. Like the animal rights movement, the environmental movement also reflects the criteria used by Tilly and Tarrow to define what a social movement is. Although the goals of the environmental and vegan movements are vastly different, they have some overlapping aspects of their purposes which benefit both movements as they progress and mutually affect each other. As more people become members of the environmental movement, it could increase awareness about vegan issues and, in turn, bring more members to the vegan movement as well.

Both the animal rights movement and the environmental movement are related to the vegan movement in that there is some overlap of these ideas. However, it is important to note that these are distinct movements. Not all animal rights activists or environmentalists are vegan or even vegetarian. The action of both of these movements contributes to overall social awareness of many important vegan-related issues, yet the goals of these three movements remain separate.

## **News Articles as Evidence**

In order to show evidence of vegan movement behavior in Western culture, I have evaluated several articles from both the *New York Times* and *BBC News*. Although these articles can give an idea of how the vegan movement has progressed and been perceived in the popular media in recent times, this is by no means a complete content analysis. Rather, these articles can give a general idea of several examples of how vegans exemplify the criteria set by Tilly and Tarrow in their theoretical descriptions of social movements.

### *New York Times*

Upon review of the *New York Times*'s Times Topic: Veganism, it is clear that the topic of veganism has become increasingly of interest over the past three years. The first article in this archive is from 2007 and describes an increased popularity of vegan diets. This article partially attributes this to the bestselling book *Skinny Bitch*, which promotes veganism in a “profanity-laced” manner and targets young, trendy women. According to this article in *The New York Times*, the fact that Victoria Beckham, pop star and wife of professional soccer player David Beckham, was seen carrying a copy of *Skinny Bitch* has contributed to its popularity and, subsequently, increased interest in veganism. The author of this article writes,

The cheeky tone and the authors’ runway pedigrees — Ms. Barnouin is a former model, and Ms. Freedman is a former modeling agent — belie the book’s message, which turns out to be hard-core vegan, with a good helping of animal rights rhetoric that might be more familiar to the Birkenstock brigade than your average diet-seeking book buyer. (Rich 2007)

In other words, *Skinny Bitch* has helped bring the idea of veganism to a new audience and made it more of a mainstream, trendy idea rather than something practiced by members of a subculture. The publishing of books like *Skinny Bitch* could be considered what Tilly described as “social movement repertoires” (Tilly 2004:3). Communicating the movement’s goals and philosophies through repertoires such as publications is an important part of advancing a movement.

In the years following 2007, there are a few sporadic articles in the Veganism archives of the *New York Times*. *Skinny Bitch* is mentioned again in 2008 when the authors released a vegan cookbook. This article describes the book’s philosophy behind adopting a vegan diet for both animal welfare and health reasons and also illustrates several recipes found in the new cookbook. The article closes with a quote from one of the authors,

Laboring heroically to make a vegan diet seem like the simplest thing in the world, Ms. Freedman said: “We are normal girls. We like reality TV and purses, all the fun stuff. But we just happen to know that most of what normal girls put in their bodies on a daily basis is barely even food.”(Moskin 2008).

Again, a vegan diet is portrayed as trendy and “normal” rather than deviant or “weird.”

There is a New York Times article in 2008 about the difficulty that many vegans face when attempting to find vegan food in airports and/or while traveling. It is told from the perspective of the president of the Humane Society of the United States, Wayne Pacelle. Pacelle explains the challenge he faces every time he flies. He describes one occasion in which he is unable to find an airport restaurant with a vegan meal option and states, “I wound up scavenging the newspaper shops and paid a king’s ransom for some mixed nuts” (Pacelle 2008). Although this article calls attention to a part of veganism that most non-vegans would not be likely to consider, it portrays veganism as burdensome and difficult, which is in stark contrast to the previous *New York Times* articles that cast veganism in a more trendy light.

There is an article also in 2008 about a vegan restaurant in New York City. This article describes the vegan fare from an omnivore’s perspective. The author is skeptical and, at times, surprised that vegan food can be tasty, and is quick to point out all of the downfalls and shortcomings of the restaurant and its offerings. He writes, “I’m also here to tell you that all of [the vegan food] — well, all except the burger — is pleasurable and largely satisfying, leaving an omnivorous interloper with a sense not of deprivation but of relief. Can an experience this meatless really be this painless?” (Bruni 2008) Despite the somewhat negative tone, these articles in 2008 show that veganism was slowly becoming part of the mainstream.

In 2009 and 2010, the New York Times Veganism archive shows an increased number of articles on this subject. There are several more reviews of vegan restaurants books on vegan subjects. One article from November 2009 that stands out among these reviews is an op-ed piece about the ethics of raising animals for human consumption, with a particular focus on the amount of turkeys raised for consumption on Thanksgiving. Author Gary Steiner criticizes the increased popularity of “free-range” meats, stating that “ethically-raised” animals are still being exploited and inhumanely and unnecessarily slaughtered for human use. Steiner writes,

Many people soothe their consciences by purchasing only free-range fowl and eggs, blissfully ignorant that “free range” has very little if any practical significance. Chickens may be labeled free-range even if they’ve never been outside or seen a speck of daylight

in their entire lives. And that Thanksgiving turkey? Even if it is raised “free range,” it still lives a life of pain and confinement that ends with the butcher’s knife (2009).

This article marks a shift in those listed in the *New York Times* veganism archive.

Whereas the articles written before late 2009 discussed veganism in an abstract way- as something that is unfamiliar and rare- those articles written after Steiner’s piece speak about veganism as realistic, practical option and an ethical issue to be wrestled with. Writer Natalie Angier, in her late-2009 article “Sorry, Vegans: Brussels Sprouts Like to Live, Too” points out the human-like qualities exhibited by plants. Angier uses this evidence to illustrate that there may be no such thing as a completely humane diet or lifestyle. Again, this shows an increased willingness to debate the validity, usefulness, and legitimacy of adopting a vegan lifestyle.

(Angier 2009)

A recent article from early 2010 depicts a glamorous scene- actress Alicia Silverstone, most well-known for her role in the 1995 film *Clueless*, is accompanied by two girlfriends, enjoying a feast of vegan fare and sangria. The article is about Silverstone’s recently-published, best-selling vegan cookbook, *The Kind Diet* and how Silverstone’s change to a vegan lifestyle has affected her life. She states,

The karma of turning vegan is amazing. And then to get this sudden weight loss, and my skin is glowing and my nails are strong and my eyes are white — it was wonderful...I have so much energy these days, so much more than I did when I was 19 and had bags under my eyes,” she said. “Once the sludge was removed from me, I felt my body soften and open, and I felt awake and alert and inspired and turned on. The way I live and eat now, it’s changed me as an actress — totally. (Healey 2010)

Like the 2007 article citing Victoria Beckham being seen with *Skinny Bitch*, this article portrays veganism as desirable, glamorous, and enviable. In the same way many people look to celebrities, especially women like Beckham and Silverstone, as examples of the most current fashion trends, the *New York Times* may be presenting veganism as a diet and/or lifestyle trend to be emulated.

## ***BBC News***

### ***1999-2007***

While the first mention of veganism in the *New York Times*’ archives did not appear until 2007, BBC News first mentioned veganism in 1999. This may not come as a big surprise

considering the Vegan Society was founded in Britain and the term “vegan” and formally defined concept of veganism were established by this group. Beginning in 1999, articles about veganism and vegan-related topics emerged. In 1999, one article described a company dedicated to manufacturing vegan condoms that are made without using any animal-derived ingredients. According to the article, these condoms do not use casein, a milk protein, in their production and were “awarded the Vegan Society’s seal of approval” (BBC News 1999).

One article from 2000 explains how a vegan man’s un-supplemented diet played a key role in his deteriorating vision and eventual blindness. While the man’s choice to eat a vegan diet was found to be a cause of his medical problems, the article is very clear that vegan diets in general do not cause blindness, but that vegans who consume insufficient amounts of essential vitamins are at risk for many health problems. BBC cites a spokesperson from the Vegetarian Society:

The problem with the man in question was that his diet was not balanced at all. Most vegetarians will normally take in cheese, dairy products and eggs and most vegans supplement their diets with soya milk and other foods, so they are getting vitamins and minerals. The essence of the situation is that if you are not having a balanced diet you are going to have problems. You need to take in as many different food sources as possible. (BBC News 2000)

In contrast, other early vegan-related BBC News articles identify the benefits of veganism. One article from June 2000 stated that research has shown that a vegan diet could reduce the risk of prostate cancer. (BBC News 2000) An article from 2001 debated the best sources of calcium for teenage girls and addressed the fact that vegan diets are not necessarily deficient in calcium. (BBC News 2001) A 2003 article entitled “Less meat ‘means longer life’” cites a German study that showed many health benefits of vegetarian and vegan diets. The article states,

It has been suggested that eating a balanced vegetarian diet could reduce the risk of developing certain cancers and heart disease, cut cholesterol levels and the chances of suffering from kidney and gall stones, diet-related diabetes and high blood pressure.

An article from 2004 describes a landlord in Wales who only rents to vegetarian or vegan tenants (BBC News 2004).

An article from October 2004 entitled “Vegetarian group backs McDonalds” shows vegetarian and vegan options entering one of the most mainstream restaurants in the world. The article describes McDonalds’ inclusion of vegetarian and vegan foods including Quorn (faux meat) burgers, fruit toast, and bagels to their previously omnivorous menu. These additions sparked some controversy; a spokesman from The Vegan Society stated that he thought many vegans would be opposed to the McDonalds vegetarian and vegan products because they would not want to support a corporation like McDonalds that is responsible for the slaughter of thousands of animals (BBC News 2004).

### ***2007-present***

Between the years of 1999, the first time veganism is mentioned in the BBC News archives, and 2007, the first time it was mentioned in the New York Times’ archives, many of the articles in the BBC News were similar. Many of them debated the pros and cons of following a vegan lifestyle and diet, how veganism influences health, and various ways veganism slowly emerged into the mainstream. Article frequency is somewhat sporadic, with an article about veganism about once a month and slowly increasing in frequency in 2007, when articles about veganism began to appear multiple times each month.

In January 2007, the first veganism-related article of the year described an experimental diet known as the “ape diet” or the “Evo diet.”

The regime was devised by nutritionist and registered dietician Lynne Garton and King's College Hospital. It was based on research showing such a diet could have health benefits for cholesterol levels and blood pressure, because it is made up of the types of foods our bodies evolved to eat over thousands of years. (Heald: 2007)

This diet is based on the eating habits of primates, our closest genetic relatives, and consists of fruits, vegetables, nuts, and honey. The nine volunteers who participated in this experiment consumed up to five kilograms of produce a day and ate a strict vegan diet for the first week. During the second week of the experiment, they were allowed to eat small amounts of certain types of fish. Upon completion of the experiment, all of the participants experienced weight loss as well as decreased blood pressure and cholesterol levels. This article highlights many of the positive aspects of adopting a vegan lifestyle.

Similarly, a 2008 article states that a study found that a gluten-free, vegan diet could help reduce two common affects of arthritis- heart attack and stroke. The fact that vegan diets do not

include high amounts of cholesterol lowers patients' "bad" cholesterol levels, which helps reduce blood pressure. Additionally, many of the patients studied in this study decreased their overall body mass, which improved their health in general. Again, BBC News points out the clear benefits of a vegan diet (BBC News: 2008).

Perhaps surprisingly, while there are many veganism-related articles in the BBC News archives from 2007 and 2008, the frequency of these articles begins to taper off noticeably in 2009 and 2010. This could show a lack of interest and enthusiasm for vegan topics, or it could signify that vegan topics are becoming more mainstream and, therefore, less newsworthy.

### *Discussion*

The news articles in the *New York Times* and *BBC News* that I have discussed give an overview of the way in which veganism has been discussed in the popular media over the past several years. By evaluating the archives in which these news articles are stored, it is clear that veganism has become important enough to the general public in order for it to be newsworthy. The *New York Times* focused much of their coverage of veganism on the trendiness of vegan diets as well as trendy ways to experience veganism (such as posh restaurant dining experiences à la Alicia Silverstone). This suggests that veganism is becoming a part of the mainstream and, in some ways, fashionable. These articles can be seen as evidence of Tilly's "social movement repertoires." Vegans like Alicia Silverstone, the authors of *Skinny Bitch*, and the president of the Humane Society have created a public discourse through the media that expresses the ideas of veganism and increases awareness of its goals and purposes. As well, the statements made by and about vegans in the *New York Times* and *BBC News* reflect a philosophy that is, as Tilly stated, "contentious." This is much like what Tarrow called "collective challenges." The discussion of vegan ideas and goals challenges the views of their opponents, showing that veganism is a plausible and increasingly popular option for a variety of reasons ranging from health to animal protection. The ideas of veganism are controversial in the sense that they oppose the most popularly held ideas of the general public. This opposition to the authority of the majority is evidence of social movement activity.

The articles in the *BBC News* archive focus primarily on the health aspects of veganism, both positive and negative. As well, the archive of veganism-related articles from *BBC News* shows awareness of and attention to veganism and vegan ideas much earlier than in the *New*

*York Times* archives. At the same time, the frequency of veganism-related articles from BBC News has begun to taper off over the past two years. Since veganism began in the United Kingdom and has historically been more popular in the UK than in the United States, the reduced frequency of veganism-related articles since 2008 could be a reflection of a diminishing enthusiasm for and/or interest in veganism due to the fact that it has been a more commonly-known idea and practice for a longer period of time in the UK than in the U.S.

### **Legislative Activity**

The history and progression of legislative change protecting animals, particularly animals raised for food, can be viewed as another form of evidence showing the progress of the vegan movement. This activity strongly represents the theories of Tilly and Tarrow in that legislative change shows members of the vegan movement in direct opposition to authority with a common goal of changing laws in order to protect animals. This is what Tilly referred to as “contentious politics” (Tilly 2004:3). The politics of vegans conflict with the interests of those in power. This idea is described by Tarrow as “collective challenges...in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” (Tarrow 1994:4). There have been laws in place protecting animals since the 1600s. The number of animal protection laws has increased and the severity of punishments has also risen since this time period. Although animal protection legislation has been occurring since before the formal organization of the vegan movement, this historical foundation of vegan movement activity is important in that contemporary vegans have built and expanded upon it and continued what was started by early animal rights and welfare activists while applying their own agenda and goals in the process. The original goals of animal protection legislation were focused more on animal welfare than veganism itself, yet the connection between these two ideas is essential to the vegan movement. One of the primary goals of veganism is to avoid the consumption of animal products, largely in order to protect animals. By encouraging the passage of legislation that helps decrease the amount of animal suffering and death, vegans act toward this goal.

#### ***Early Animal Protection Law***

The first known animal protection law was passed in Ireland in 1635. This act prohibited pulling wool from living sheep rather than clipping or shearing it. It also prohibited “plowing and working horses by the tail” (Animal Rights History). The penalty for breaking this law was

fine and imprisonment. This act marked the beginning of animal protection law and many other laws followed. Cockfights were deemed unlawful in England as early as 1654. In 1774, legislation was passed to prevent cattle from being inhumanely driven through cities in England in “an improper and cruel manner.” Violation of this act was punishable by public whipping.

In 1835, an important act was passed in England protecting animal welfare. The Cruelty to Animals Act of 1835 amended previous legislation regarding cattle and added new provisions “to prevent as far as possible the cruel and improper Treatment of Cattle and other Animals, and to make divers Provisions in regard thereto” (Animal Rights History 2010). The 1849 Cruelty to Animals Prevention Act in England addressed many animal cruelty issues: providing proper food and water to animals, prohibition of bear-baiting and dog-fighting, provisions for the proper methods of transporting animals for slaughter, and a general statement prohibiting all cruelty to animals. For the purpose of this Act, animals were defined as: “any horse, mare, gelding, bull, ox, cow, heifer, steer, calf, mule, ass, sheep, lamb, hog, pig, sow, goat, dog, cat, or any other domestic animal (Animal Rights History 2010).

In 1900, an Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Wild Animals in Captivity was passed. This was an expansion upon the previous animal cruelty acts and includes “birds, beasts, fish, or reptiles” that had not been included in previous acts. According to this legislation,

Any person shall be guilty of an offence who, whilst an animal is in captivity or close confinement, or is maimed, pinioned, or subjected to any appliance or contrivance for the purpose of hindering or preventing its escape from such captivity or confinement, shall, by wantonly or unreasonably doing or omitting any act,... cause or permit to be caused any unnecessary suffering to such animal; or cruelly abuse, infuriate, tease, or terrify it, or permit it to be so treated (Animal Rights History 2010).

This is distinct from other provisions in that it not only prohibits actions that physically harm animals, but also addresses cruelty that could cause psychological distress (i.e., infuriate, tease, terrify). The violation of these and other acts results in penalties such as imprisonment, fines, and hard labor.

It is important to note in that not only are companion animals such as dogs and cats protected by these acts, but livestock animals that are being raised for food or other forms of human consumption are also protected. This reflects the idea that all animals have some rights and should be treated a certain way based on this. This kind of consideration is the motivating factor for many individuals who adopt a vegan lifestyle.

Several other laws and provisions similar to these were made in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, particular in the United Kingdom. These acts helped establish the rights of animals and reinforced the idea that animals should not be subjected to cruelty. Additionally, animal cruelty was criminalized and individuals found guilty of causing harm to animals began to face consequences for these actions.

### ***United States Animal Protection***

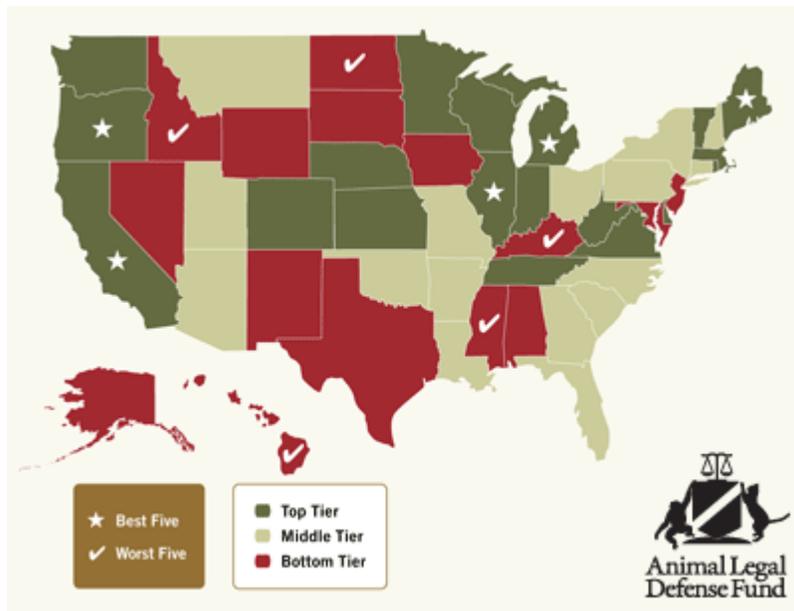
Much of the animal protection legislation that has been passed in the United States has been pushed forward by animal rights organizations such as the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA 1996). The ASPCA was formed in the United States by aristocrat Henry Bergh. According to the ASPCA,

Bergh brought a charter for a proposed society to protect animals to the New York State Legislature. With his flair for drama he convinced politicians and committees of his purpose, and the charter incorporating the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was passed on April 10, 1866. Nine days later, an anti-cruelty law was passed, and the ASPCA granted the right to enforce it (Dracker 1996).

The ASPCA continued and still continues to promote animal welfare legislation in the U.S. “By the time of Bergh’s death in 1888... 37 of 38 states in the union had enacted anti-cruelty laws. Working for legislation continues to be one of [the ASPCA’s] guiding principles (Dracker 1996)”

The legislative actions taken in order protect animals in the United States have occurred mainly on the state level. All of the states in the country as well as all of the provinces of Canada have passed laws protecting animals. While each state has some laws protecting animals, particularly from cruelty and abuse, exact provisions vary from state to state. All states prohibit animal cruelty, but the definitions and wording of what “cruelty” entails are not consistent among all states. Generally speaking, states prohibit intentionally causing physical harm to animals, failure to provide adequate living conditions including food and water, poisoning, and abandonment. In addition to these general animal cruelty provisions, most states have more specific laws protecting animals from a variety of other potentially harmful situations, such as fighting and bestiality. Penalties for breaking animal cruelty laws vary from state to state but generally include fines and jail time, depending on the offense (Otto 2010). Almost all

states in the U.S. have felony provisions for animal cruelty. The following states are the only ones that do not have felony provisions: Idaho, Mississippi, North Dakota, and South Dakota (Animal Legal Defense Fund 2010). The Animal Defense Fund has created a ranking system in order to illustrate which states have the most stringent and least stringent penalties for animal cruelty. They have rated states from best to worst in order of the extent to which they protect animals through legislation. The following map from the Animal Defense Fund illustrates the ranking of states' animal cruelty penalty stringency.



**Figure 1- Animal Legal Defense Fund Map**

### *Vegan Organizations and Campaigns*

There have been many campaigns within the vegan movement that specifically encourage animal protection legislation that relates to vegan goals, such as protecting farm animals that are raised for food. This is an important part of the vegan movement because this action focuses on the “common purposes” of veganism (Tarrow 1994:4). Tarrow stated that organizing around a common purpose is a key element of establishing whether or not action can be described as a movement. As well, the promotion of animal protection law accomplishes what Tarrow described as collective challenges against authorities (Tarrow 1994:4). The passage of laws directly relates to this aspect of Tarrow’s theory.

### *Farm Sanctuary*

Many vegetarian and vegan organizations focus much of their work on campaigns that promote the passage of animal protection legislation. Farm Sanctuary is an animal protection and pro-vegan organization whose main goal is to promote the welfare of farm animals. According to Farm Sanctuary, animals are “our friends, not our food” (Farm Sanctuary 2009). In general, Farm Sanctuary is a vegan movement organization that exemplifies all of the criteria described by both Tilly and Tarrow regarding what a movement is. In particular, Farm Sanctuary provides an excellent example of Tilly’s WUNC displays. They show worthiness through their professionalism and organization. They are unified in their goals, which are well-defined as “prevent[ing] suffering and promot[ing] compassion” (Farm Sanctuary 2009), ideas that closely match with the overall goals of veganism. Farm Sanctuary has a significant number of involved individuals, including many volunteers across the country that further the goals and spread awareness about the organization and Farm Sanctuary’s vegan philosophy. Finally, Farm Sanctuary clearly shows commitment to the cause of veganism through their many activities and programs that seek to promote their goals (Farm Sanctuary 2009).

While their main activities are rescuing animals from factory farms or other compromising situations, as well as educating the public about farm animal welfare, Farm Sanctuary also focuses much of their work on promoting animal protection legislation. Farm Sanctuary has had many successful campaigns in the past that helped push animal protection legislation into action. All of these laws are directed toward farm animals and farming practices, working to make farming more humane and prevent animal suffering. Since farm animals are usually viewed as food sources and rarely the subject of conservation efforts, Farm Sanctuary provides a unique perspective that truly communicates the vegan philosophy that all animals are capable of experiencing pain and suffering and should be protected.

In 1995, Farm Sanctuary promoted a campaign that eventually helped pass “a law in California, which prevents dragging, pushing, holding, or selling downed animals at stockyards and slaughterhouses. Other states follow[ed] California, passing similar laws” (Farm Sanctuary 2009). One important milestone occurred in 2004 when Farm Sanctuary urged governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to sign SB1520 into law. This law prevented the force feeding of geese for foie gras production and the sale of foie gras in California.

In 2006, Farm Sanctuary helped support a proposition in Arizona that banned the use of gestation crates for breeding pigs as well as veal crates. Gestation crates are small pens that

pregnant sows are confined in during the duration of their gestation period. These crates are often too small for the sows to move or turn, which causes the animals a great deal of stress. Veal crates are used to prevent veal calves from moving around or turning, similar to the restrictions of gestation crates. Veal crates also cause the animals stress due to the restricted movement as well as the separation from the rest of the herd. Proposition 204 in Arizona, which was backed by Farm Sanctuary, was passed in 2006 and banned both of these inhumane breeding practices (Farm Sanctuary 2009).

Farm Sanctuary supported a 2008 victory in California in which Proposition 2 passed. This proposition banned three inhumane farming practices: battery cages, gestation crates, and veal crates. Battery cages are similar to gestation and veal crates in that they restrict the animal's movement. Hens in factory farms have traditionally been put in battery cages, which are often so small that the birds are unable to spread their wings. Additionally, battery cages cause the hens' feet to become deformed and cause them a great deal of stress (Farm Sanctuary 2009).

Farm Sanctuary has an ongoing anti-confinement campaign through which they are attempting to encourage legislation across the United States that bans these forms of confinement: battery cages, gestation crates, and veal crates. Farm Sanctuary focuses on educating the public about these confinement issues, creating awareness and drawing public attention to this issue that many people may be unfamiliar with. Additionally, Farm Sanctuary encourages the public to contact lawmakers and other legislators, urging them to pass anti-confinement legislation (Farm Sanctuary 2009).

The No Downer's Campaign is Farm Sanctuary's campaign that "seeks to prevent suffering, marketing, and slaughter of all downed animals (animals too sick even to stand or walk) through legislation and policy change" (Farm Sanctuary 2009). Not only is the practice of slaughtering and selling downed animals as food inhumane, it also comes with many health concerns. By preventing this practice, animals will be treated more humanely and these health concerns, such as disease, can be prevented as well (Farm Sanctuary 2009).

In addition to their legislative campaigns, Farm Sanctuary has several ongoing campaigns that support various aspects of the vegan movement and continue to exemplify the social movement criteria as explained by Tilly and Tarrow. Their Truth Behind Labeling Campaign educates the public about labeling practices. While many people may believe that they are purchasing humanely produced meat, dairy, and eggs based on terms like "free-range" or "grass

fed”, this is not always the case. Farm Sanctuary’s campaign clarifies what these labeling terms mean and pushes toward more regulation and higher standards on which to base these terms so that they are more descriptive and accurate rather than misleading (Farm Sanctuary 2009).

Farm Sanctuary’s Veg for Life campaign encourages individuals to adopt vegetarian and, ultimately, vegan diets and lifestyles. The Veg for Life campaign provides people with information needed to make the transition to a vegan lifestyle. As well, this campaign encourages restaurants to include more vegan options on their menus.

Finally, Farm Sanctuary’s Green Food campaign encourages cities to pass “Green Foods Resolutions.” These resolutions are commitments to encouraging members of the community to reduce the city’s carbon footprint by eating lower on the food chain via vegan diets (Farm Sanctuary 2009). All of these campaigns are examples of Tilly’s “social movement repertoires” and publicly express the vegan ideas of Farm Sanctuary while providing information to the public about the goals of the movement. This is evidence of Farm Sanctuary’s contributions to the vegan movement and how this aspect of the vegan movement provides an excellent example of Tilly and Tarrow’s theoretical criteria.

In addition to their formal campaigns, Farm Sanctuary promotes the ideas of veganism through several other means. The three categories of outreach that Farm Sanctuary is committed to are: rescue, education, and advocacy. Rescue entails the rescue of animals from a variety of compromising situations and atmospheres, such as from factory farms, abusive owners, or following natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina. Education through Farm Sanctuary includes several forms of education. There are tours of the farm that individuals may take to learn more about Farm Sanctuary’s mission and purpose. There are also outreach education programs such as the Walk for Farm Sanctuary, a fundraising walk that is held in cities all over the United States that brings attention to Farm Sanctuary, veganism, and animal welfare. The advocacy category of Farm Sanctuary’s practices includes the promotion of animal welfare legislation (Farm Sanctuary 2009). All of Farm Sanctuary’s many actions show all of the aspects of social movement theory and provide a good example of a vegan organization that plays a significant role in the movement.

### ***Vegan Outreach***

Vegan Outreach is another vegan organization that works to spread their vegan philosophy and mission through various means. The primary goal is to use education to increase

the number of vegans in the world. The main method utilized by Vegan Outreach is education through the distribution of literature to the public. Vegan Outreach provides volunteers with millions of illustrated booklets that have been distributed in all 50 states as well as many other countries around the world. The booklets describe many of the reasons for and benefits of becoming vegan, facts about animal cruelty, how to make the transition to veganism easily, and cooking tips and recipes for vegans. One portion of Vegan Outreach is dedicated to distributing vegan literature on college campuses. Some of Vegan Outreach's literature is also available online in digital form, which increases its ease and range of distribution to an even larger audience. The online version of Vegan Outreach's literature has also been translated into several other languages, making it accessible to a wide range of people all over the world (Vegan Outreach). Vegan Outreach is an excellent example of Tilly's social movement repertoires. The distribution of literature and education of the public through these means is one of the examples specifically given by Tilly of what a social movement repertoire is. Vegan Outreach's activity helps spread the ideas and goals of veganism to a large group of people in a simple but public way, drawing attention to the movement through their literature as well as their general presence in communities worldwide.

### ***Vegan Action***

Vegan Action is another organization dedicated to educating the public in order to persuade non-vegans to transition to a vegan lifestyle. According to Vegan Action, their motivation for educating and persuading non-vegans is to protect the environment, animals, and human health. This declaration of their purposes and goals shows Vegan Action's "common purpose" as described by Tarrow and "collective claims" as described by Tilly.

Vegan Action utilizes four major campaigns to accomplish their goals: the Vegan Certification Campaign, the Humane Outreach Campaign, the DormFood Campaign, and the McVegan Campaign.

The Vegan Certification Campaign is a unique but valuable campaign for the vegan movement. Vegan Action created a "Certified Vegan Logo" to be placed on the packaging of products that fit into a vegan diet and lifestyle. According to the organization, "Vegan Action administers the Certified Vegan Logo, an easy-to-recognize symbol applied to foods, clothing, cosmetics and other items that contain no animal products and are not tested on animals" (Vegan Action 2010).

This logo is important for a number of reasons. It makes it easier for vegans to shop without having to guess whether or not certain products have been tested on animals or without having to meticulously check product ingredients that can be confusing. In addition, having the logo on many different products draws attention to the word “vegan” and what it stands for. And, seeing this logo on a variety of products, many of which non-vegans may be using without realizing they are vegan products, gives consumers a better idea of what veganism means and entails. The Certified Vegan Logo brings veganism into the mainstream. Vegan Action states,

We are working to end cruelty to animals by showing the non-vegan food industry that there is a market for vegan products. Once there are more vegan products available, more people will want to become vegan. As more people become vegan, more companies will be able to afford dedicated machinery. As it stands now, most people think veganism is too hard, restrictive, and expensive. When more vegan food is available it will be easier to find cheaper vegan "substitutions" so people won't feel it is hard, restrictive, or expensive. Making veganism appeal to all is the only way veganism will grow and therefore cruelty to animals will lessen (2010).

Another unique campaign organized by Vegan Action is the Vegan Dorm Food campaign. This campaign seeks to help bring vegan food options to dormitory dining halls all over the country. According to Vegan Action, “Since college is most often the place where people first experiment with vegetarianism, dorm food campaigns are one of the most effective strategies in vegan advocacy” (Vegan Action 2010). Vegan Action works with a number of companies that produce vegan food items and help bring these foods to college campuses in hopes of increasing vegan awareness and showing that vegan food can be appealing to vegans and non-vegans alike. This, in turn, could help increase the number of vegans in general.

Another campaign organized by Vegan Action is known as the McVegan campaign. This campaign is a worldwide event in which volunteers distribute vegan food samples and information about vegan diets to the public. The McVegan campaign seeks to educate individuals about veganism as well as draw attention to the vegan cause. The fourth and final formal campaign of Vegan Action is Humane Outreach. The purpose of this campaign is to educate animal advocacy groups across the U.S. about vegan, cruelty-free diets. Through distribution of printed brochures to groups that have already shown an interest in protecting animal rights, Vegan Action hopes to reach a segment of society who is likely to be persuaded to live a vegan lifestyle if they are sufficiently educated about the consequences of their actions.

All of Vegan Actions campaigns are examples of Tilly’s social movement repertoires. In addition, the actions of Vegan Action represent many other aspects of both Tilly and Tarrow’s

criteria including solidarity, unity, commitment, and organized public effort. All of these are key aspects of the vegan movement represented by Vegan Action's work.

## CHAPTER 6 - Polls

I have utilized several polls in order to illustrate several important part of the vegan movement. First, I will show through the Vegetarian Resource Group's adult and youth polls that veganism has grown gradually over time. This growth reflects the success and progress of the vegan movement. As well, I will use another poll conducted by the Vegetarian Resource Group that illustrates the number of individuals that order vegan and vegetarian meals while dining out. The results show how often vegetarian meals are ordered and by whom. Although the VRG polls can give a general sense of the progress of the vegan movement, it is important to note that the data presented here is not necessarily completely valid or accurate and should be viewed as such. Overall, these polls show progress in the vegan movement through increased numbers, which is one of Tilly's WUNC displays. Similar polls conducted in the United Kingdom reflect very comparable results.

### Vegetarian Resource Group Adult Poll Results

The polls conducted by the Vegetarian Resource Group showed an increase in the overall number of adult vegetarians and vegans in the United States from 1994 to 2009.

#### 1994

In 1994, the Vegetarian Resource Group surveyed 1,978 adults. The researchers asked the respondents, "Please call off the items on this list, if any, that you *never* eat. Meat. Poultry. Fish/Seafood. Dairy Products. Eggs. Honey. Eat Them All. Don't Know." The results were as follows:

**Table 1- 1994 VRG Adult Survey**

Never Eat	Total	Male	Female
Meat	6%	5%	7%
Poultry	3%	3%	3%
Fish/Seafood	4%	3%	5%
Eggs	4%	4%	5%
Honey	15%	15%	15%

Eat Them All	75%	77%	74%
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These results show that 0.3% to 1% of adults in the United States were vegetarian in 1994, which would equate to about one half million to two million people. About six percent of the adult population never eats red meat; 3% never eat poultry; 3% never eat dairy products; 4% never eat eggs; and 4% never eat fish/seafood. The percentages of adult women who refrain from eating animal products is slightly higher than adult men. The 1994 poll also showed that only 4% of the population in the South did not consume red meat, while 10% of the population in the West did not eat red meat. The consumption of red meat also varied significantly according to political beliefs; 5% of Conservatives did not eat red meat while 9% of Liberals did not eat red meat (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### **1997**

The 1997 Vegetarian Resource Group Survey produced similar results. The same question was asked of the respondents and nearly identical responses were recorded. In both 1994 and 1997, around 1% of the adult population was vegetarian or vegan. There were slight changes (about 1%) in many of the categories. Sample results are as follows:

**Table 2- 1997 VRG Adult Survey**

Never eat	Total	Male	Female
Red meat	5%	4%	6%
Poultry	2%	2%	3%
Fish/seafood	4%	3%	5%
None of the above	1%	1%	1%

As in the 1994 poll, women were more likely to abstain from eating meat than men. These results produce an estimate of about 2 million vegetarians in the U.S. population in 1997 (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### **2000**

The 2000 adult poll showed that about 2.5% of the statistical population was vegetarian. This would equal about 4.8 million adult vegetarians in the United States in 2000. The VRG poll

in 2000 produced more detailed information than those conducted in 1994 and 1997. According to the VRG, “For the full statistical population (total of those surveyed results), you may assume a margin of error of +/- 3%. The margin of error grows as the subgroup size shrinks, changing to +/- 9% for subgroups of 100...What we can be sure of is a 95% confidence level in the survey.” (Vegetarian Resource Group). The VRG continued to ask “Please tell me which of the following foods, if any, you never eat?” The following results were produced:

**Table 3- 2000 VRG Adult Survey**

Never Eat	Totals	Males	Females
Meat, poultry, and fish	2.5%	1.7%	3.2%
Meat	4.5%	2.3%	6.6%
Poultry	4.5%		
Fish/Seafood	9.0%		
Dairy products	3.7%		
Eggs	6.7%		
Honey	15.4%		
None of these	0.9%		

In addition to the numbers shown, the 2000 poll gathered more information about what types of people choose to refrain from consuming animal flesh. They found that the majority of the adult vegetarians surveyed were under the age of 29 and the fewest vegetarians were found in the 50-64 age group (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

**Table 4- 2000 VRG Adult Survey Age Variation**

	Age 18-29	Age 30-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+
Vegetarians	6%	2.3%	0.7%	1.6%

The 2000 poll also collected information about the sizes of the cities vegetarians polled lived in. The greatest number of adult vegetarians was located in large cities, the lowest number in small cities, with suburbs and rural areas in between. This could raise questions about the availability of vegetarian food options, the popularity of vegetarian ideas, and other factors that could influence individuals to adopt a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle.

**Table 5- 2000 VRG Adult Survey City Sizes**

	Large City	Small City	Suburb	Rural
Vegetarians	5.4%	0.4%	2.0%	2.2%

**2003**

The results of the 2003 poll supported the patterns found in the past VRG polls. The Vegetarian Resource Group pointed out that a relatively high percentage- ten percent- of 25-35 year-olds were vegetarian. This corresponds to the 2000 poll in which ten percent of 18-29 year-olds were vegetarian. This shows that these individuals are likely to be committed to this lifestyle and will be likely to continue to eat a vegetarian or vegan diet in the future (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

**Table 6- 2003 VRG Adult Survey**

Never Eats	Percentage
Honey	21%
Fish/Seafood	13%
Eggs	7%
Meat	6%
Poultry	6%
Dairy Products	6%
Meat and Poultry	4%
Meat, Fish, Seafood, Poultry	2.8%
None of the Above	1.8%

**Table 7- 2003 VRG Adult Survey- Other Variables**

Vegetarians	Percentage
Male	3%
Female	2.6%
Age 18-24	2%
Age 25-34	5%
Age 35-44	2%

Age 45-54	3%
Northeastern U. S.	2%
Western U.S.	4%
White	3%
Black	4%
College Graduate	4%

**2006**

The Vegetarian Resource Group’s poll from 2006 found that 2.3 percent of those surveyed were vegetarians. In 2006, this percentage translated to about 4.7 million adult vegetarians. As in previous surveys, the numbers of male and female vegetarians are very similar, although the 2006 poll found that women were much more likely to *claim* to never eat meat (and not necessarily all animal flesh). The same is true for vegans- both men and women are about equally likely to be vegan (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

**Table 8- 2006 VRG Adult Survey**

Never Eats	Percentage
Meat	6.7%
Poultry	6.4%
Fish/Seafood	14.6%
Dairy Products	7.6%
Eggs	8.8%
Honey	23.4%
Meat, Poultry, Fish/Seafood (vegetarian)	2.3%
None of these (vegan)	1.4%

Judging from the results of their polls up to this point, the VRG stated that they believed that vegetarians were a group that was not going away. While the percentage of adult vegetarians was higher in 2006 than in previous polls, the VRG stated that due to the margin of error, this shift could not be viewed as a statistical shift unless it were a change of at least three

percentage points. Therefore, the number of adult vegetarians in the U.S. more or less remained stable with slight growth up to this point (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### **2009**

The 2009 VRG poll results showed that about three percent of adults were vegetarian. This would equal 6-8 million vegetarians. Between one third and one fourth of these individuals were vegans (one percent of the population).

**Table 9- 2009 VRG Adult Survey**

Vegetarians	Percentage
Male	3.3%
Female	3.4%
Northeast	3.3%
Midwest	1.3%
South	3.5%
West	5.4%
Vegan	0.8%

These results show that adults in the West are more likely than adults in other regions to be vegetarian. The 2009 results also, as in other years, show that males and females are equally frequently vegetarians (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### **Vegetarian Resource Group Youth Poll Results**

In addition to the polls conducted by the Vegetarian Resource Group among adults, they have also surveyed youths in order to measure the number of youth vegetarians in the United States. For these polls, the VRG asked youths aged 8-17 which food items they never eat. The question was worded exactly the same as the question used in the adult surveys: "Please call off the items on this list, if any, that you never eat: Meat. Poultry. Fish/Seafood. Dairy Products. Eggs. Honey." Again, they used this more specific question rather than asking which of the respondents consider themselves to be vegetarian in order to collect the most accurate results.

The VRG conducted these polls in 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010. While these years do not exactly match those in which the VRG conducted their adult polls, the time periods do overlap.

Therefore, these polls can be compared in order to determine the relationship between adult and youth vegetarians in the United States (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### **1995**

The VRG polled 1023 youths in 1995. The margin of sampling error for this poll is +/- 4%.

**Table 10- 1995 VRG Youth Survey**

Never Eat	8-12 year olds	13-17 year olds	13-17 year old females	Adults
Meat	8%	8%	11%	6%
Poultry	8%	6%	6%	4%
Fish/Seafood	19%	17%	18%	3%
None of the above	1.9%	1.4%	1.6%	1%
Dairy products	4%	3%	3%	3%
Eggs	9%	8%	9%	4%

There are several points of interest within this data. First, the numbers of children and teens that abstain from eating animal products are higher than the adult numbers in all categories. In particular, the number of youths that do not consume fish and seafood is much greater than adults that do not eat seafood. According to the VRG, this could be because some youths may not realize that what they are eating is seafood. Teenaged females were the most likely to not consume animal products. The results of this poll showed that about one half to one third of the vegetarian youths polled were vegans (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### **2000**

For the 2000 poll, 1,240 youths participated. The wording for this poll was more specific than in previous years. Youths were asked, "Please call off the items on this list, if any, that you never eat. Meat (beef, pork, veal, lamb, etc.); Poultry (chicken, turkey, duck, etc.); Fish; Dairy Products (milk, cheese); Eggs; Honey." The results were very similar to the 1995 poll results and the relationship between youth vegetarian rates matched closely with adult vegetarian rates. This amounts to about 0.5% of the U.S. youth population. The confidence rate for this poll was, again, +/- 4% with a confidence level of 95%.

**Table 11- 2000 VRG Youth Survey**

Never Eat	6-7 Year Olds	8-12 Year Olds	13-17 Year Olds
Meat	8%	7%	5%
Poultry	3%	6%	2%
Fish/Seafood	14%	19%	16%
None of These	1%	2%	2%

The VRG estimated that there were approximately one million youth vegetarians in the United States in 2000. Of these vegetarians, one half to one third of them was vegan (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

**2005**

In 2005, the VRG polled 1,254 youths about their eating habits using the same methods as in other polls. They state that there is a sampling error of about +/- 3% and a confidence level of 95%. The youths polled were asked which animal products they never ate. The VRG youth poll in 2005 showed that 3% of American youths at this time were vegetarian. This is equal to about 1.4 million individuals. As shown in previous surveys, teenage females were most likely to refrain from eating meat (while still consuming some other animal products); in 2005 11% of 11-15 year old females did not eat meat (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

**Table 12- 2005 VRG Youth Survey**

Never Eat	Percentage
Meat	6%
Poultry	6%
Fish/Seafood	24%
Dairy	3%
Eggs	8%
Honey	22%
Meat/Seafood/Poultry (vegetarian)	3%
None of the above (vegan)	1%

Again, there was a relatively high percentage of youths that did not consume seafood, which was in contrast to the results of the VRG’s adult polls. The results of the 2005 youth poll continue to support the patterns found in previous polls (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

**2010**

The 2010 youth poll, which is the most recent of the VRG polls, surveyed 1,258 youth. The sampling error was, again +/- 3% and the confidence level is 95%. Three percent of youth in 2010 were vegetarian and 1% of youth are vegan. Vegans account for about one third of youth vegetarians. The VRG estimates that this equals about 1.4 million youth vegetarians in 2010.

**Table 13- VRG 2010 Youth Survey**

Never Eat	Percentage
Meat	7%
Poultry	7%
Fish/Seafood	22%
Dairy Products	6%
Eggs	11%
Honey	21%

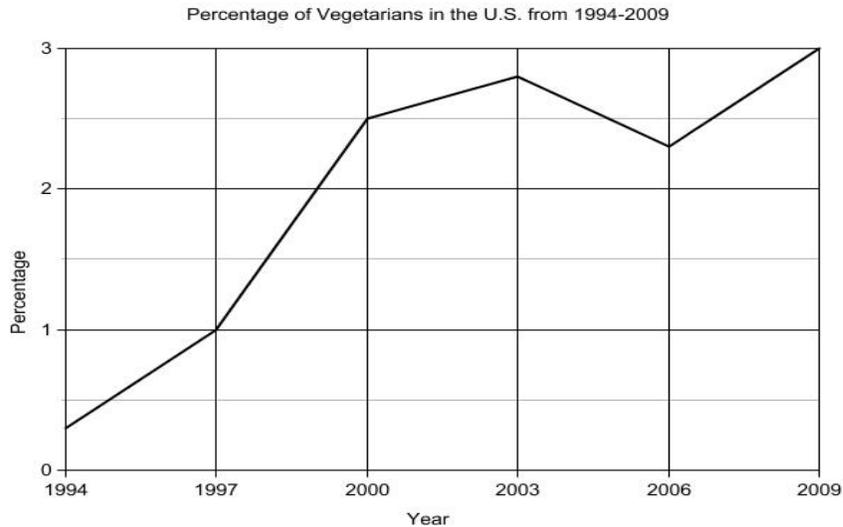
As in previous youth polls conducted by the VRG, seafood is the animal product that is least likely to be consumed by youth in the United States.

**Table 14- 2010 VRG Youth Survey- Other Variables**

Vegetarians	Percentage
Age 8-12	4%
Age 13-17	3%
East	4%
South	4%
Midwest	2%
West	2%
Male	3%
Female	3%

These results show that youths in the Eastern and Southern United States are more likely than youths in other regions to be vegetarians. Also, there are as many male youth vegetarians as there are female youth vegetarians.

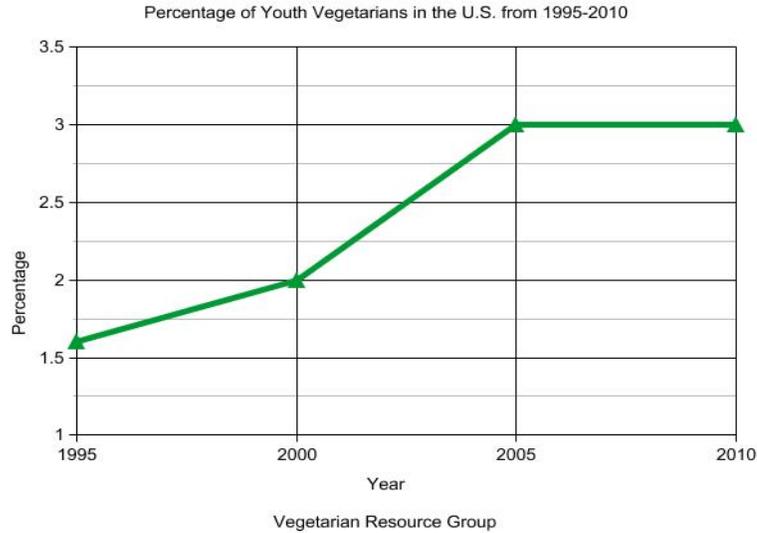
Generally speaking, the percentage of the United States adult population that practices a vegetarian diet has gradually risen over the period of time in which the VRG conducted this research, as illustrated in the following graph:



**Figure 2- Adult Vegetarians in the U.S. from 1994-2000**

These polls have shown that the percentage of the total population that never consumes animal flesh has risen from less than one percent to about three percent from 1994 to 2009. The Vegetarian Resource Group estimates that around between one third and one half of these vegetarians practice a vegan diet (Vegetarian Resource Group 2003). As the percentage of vegetarians has risen, the proportion of vegetarians that are also vegan has remained the same, yet the number itself has gone up. Males and females were found to be about equally likely to follow vegetarian and vegan diets (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

The VRG's surveys evaluating patterns in youth vegetarian diets showed results that were generally similar to the adult surveys, as illustrated in this graph.



**Figure 3- Vegetarian Youths in the U.S. from 1995-2010**

### **Vegetarians and Vegans in the UK**

While there is not a poll in the UK like the Vegetarian Resource Group polls that measure the numbers of vegetarians over a period of time based on the types of foods they *never eat*, BBC News and some other sources have put out some estimated figures as to what percentage of the UK population considers themselves vegetarian or vegan. BBC News writes,

About five per cent of the UK population consider themselves to be vegetarian, according to the National Diet and Nutrition Survey. That's about 3 million people, with women more likely to call themselves vegetarian than men. The figure for vegans is smaller - consumer surveys suggest they make up about one per cent of the UK population (BBC 2010).

The Food Standards Agency Consumer Attitudes to Food Standards surveys have estimated the number of vegans in the United Kingdom. These surveys show estimated numbers of vegans in the UK from 2001 to 2007. The results are as follows:

**Table 15- FSA Consumer Attitudes to Food Standards Surveys**

Year	Percent of UK Population	Number of Vegans
2007	0.3%	162,000
2006	0.1%	86,000
2005	0.5%	279,000

2004	0.6%	363,000
2003	0.4%	235,000
2002	0.1%	71,000
2001	0.3%	176,000

The results of these surveys are somewhat inconsistent, making it unclear whether the trend in the United Kingdom has been an increase or a decrease in the number of vegans in the population. This could be due to the fact that self-described “vegans” may not necessarily reject all animal products. The wording of these types of surveys may not produce results that are as precise as the results of the Vegetarian Resource Group polls in which the questions posed were more specific regarding actual consumption of animal products. Regardless, we can estimate that vegans account for less than 1% of the United Kingdom’s population (Imaner Consultants).

Gallup Polls conducted the RealEat surveys in the UK to determine what percentage of the UK population identified as vegetarian from 1984-1999. These surveys polled adults aged 16 and over and the following figures express the percentage of the UK population that identified as vegetarian (Gallup Polls 2010).

**Table 16- RealEat Surveys**

Year	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1990	1993	1995	1997	1999
Number of People Surveyed	3061	3181	3881	3027	2481	3027	4299	4237	4020	4257
Vegetarians	2.1	2.6	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.7	4.3	4.5	5.4	5.0
Males	1.6	2.0	2.1	--	1.8	2.9	3.2	3.2	4.1	3.2
Females	2.6	3.2	3.4	--	4.1	4.5	5.4	5.8	6.5	6.7

The results of the RealEat polls show that the percentage of individuals identifying themselves as vegetarians steadily rose from 1984-1999. Although the VRG surveys showed that, in the United States, men and women are equally likely to be vegetarians, the RealEat polls show that women are more likely than men to be vegetarians in the UK (Gallup Polls 2010). As stated before, these results cannot be taken as absolutely accurate because the respondents were not asked which animal products they specifically did not consume. Therefore, these results are based solely on self-identification and may be skewed since not all respondents would have the same definition of what constitutes a vegetarian.

The results of these surveys conducted in the United Kingdom are similar to the numbers reflected in the Vegetarian Resource Group surveys about the United States vegetarian population, but it is clear that there is a higher percentage of vegetarians and vegans in the UK than in the United States.

### **Dining Out Polls**

In addition to their polls conducted to determine how many vegetarians there are in the United States, the Vegetarian Resource Group has also conducted two polls to determine how often people order vegetarian meals in restaurants. The first poll was conducted in 1999 and a second poll was conducted in 2008 that evaluated the same habits. These polls include both vegetarians and non-vegetarians and asked respondents how often they ordered a dish not containing meat, fish or fowl. Respondents had the options of selecting sometimes, often, always, or never. The polls also analyzed demographic factors that could influence individuals' decisions to order or not order animal products for food (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

#### **1999**

The VRG polled 1,181 adults for the 1999 survey. The margin of error is +/-3.12% and is higher for the sub-groups. This poll produced the following results:

**Table 17- 1999 VRG Dining Out Survey**

<b>When you eat out, how often do you order a dish without meat, fish, or fowl?</b>			
	Total	Male	Female
Sometimes	40.8%	37%	45%
Often	11.7%	10%	14%
Always	5.5%	5%	6%
Never	38.9%	45%	33%

**Table 18- 1999 VRG Dining Out Survey- Other Variables**

<b>When you dine out, do you always order a dish without meat, fish or fowl?</b>			
Characteristic	Percentage	Characteristic	Percentage
Total	5.5%	Eastern U.S.	8.0%

Full-time Student	4.6%	South	3.9%
Income below \$15,000	8.0%	Central/Great Lakes	5.9%
Income over \$75,000	4.4%	West	4.3%
White	5.5%	18-29 years old	11.7%
African-American	4.5%	30-49 years old	5.2%
Asian	26.4%		

These results show that females are more likely than males to order vegetarian meals. However, the poll shows that the percentage of those who sometimes order vegetarian meals (40.8%) is nearly identical to the percentage of those who never order vegetarian meals (38.9%). Taking into account the margin of error, we can consider these numbers to be the same. Asians were much more likely to always order vegetarian or vegan meals. Those with income below \$15,000 per year were almost twice as likely to always order vegetarian meals than those with income over \$75,000 per year. Young adults, 18-29 year olds, were far more likely to always order vegetarian meals than adults in the next age category, 30-49 year olds (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

### **2008**

The survey that was conducted in 1999 was repeated in 2008 in order to evaluate whether or not the numbers of individuals ordering vegetarian meals changed over time. The VRG surveyed 1,201 adults, the margin of error is +/- 2.9%, and there is a 95% confidence rate. The results of the 2008 poll did not show significant change in the number of individuals ordering vegetarian dishes, but the 2008 poll did, however, produce detailed results showing the breakdown of who *always* ordered vegetarian dishes while dining out.

**Table 19- 2008 VRG Dining Out Survey**

<b>When dining out, how often do you order dishes without meat, fish, or fowl?</b>	
Sometimes	40.3%
Often	8.4%
Always	6.7%

Never	41.4%
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**Table 20- 2008 VRG Dining Out Survey- Other Variables**

<b>Individuals who always order vegetarian dishes</b>			
White	6.2%	Eastern U.S.	3.9%
Hispanic	10.0%	South	10.5%
African American	3.9%	Central	4.8%
Asian	19.1%	West	8.1%
Age 18-24	9.1%	Males	8.7%
Age 25-34	5.2%	Females	4.8%
Age 35-54	8.5%	Total	6.7%
Age 55-69	2.3%		

**Table 21- 2008 VRG Dining Out Survey Totals**

<b>Habits of all respondents</b>	
Sometimes order vegetarian	40.3%
Never order vegetarian	41.1%

The results of the 2008 poll show that Asians were, again, the group most likely to always order vegetarian dishes with 19.1% of the individuals in this group choosing to do so. They are about twice as likely to always order vegetarian dishes as the next largest percentage, Hispanics, at 10%. Just as in the 1999 poll, young adults aged 18-24 were the age group most likely to order vegetarian dishes. The 55-69 year old age group was the least likely to order vegetarian dishes. Of all of the respondents, 40.3% sometimes order vegetarian dishes and 41.1% never order vegetarian dishes. This result of the poll is nearly identical to the 1999 poll; respondents were equally likely to sometimes or never order vegetarian dishes while dining out (Vegetarian Resource Group 2009).

## CHAPTER 7 - Discussion

While I agree with Maurer's assessment that two of the reasons that there are not more vegetarians are because the general public has not been convinced that consuming meat is (a) dangerous or (b) immoral, I believe these reasons only account for part of the lack of participation in the vegan movement. The main reason I believe vegans account for such a small percentage of the population is a lack of knowledge on many levels.

First, the farming practices used by the vast amount of meat and animal by-product production are not commonly known by most individuals. Western culture has made the meatpacking and farming industries into a part of society that is removed from the mainstream. Most individuals see a hamburger as a pre-made, pre-packaged item on their plate rather than the ground muscle tissue of a slaughtered animal. While most other industrialized nations display meat as whole animals hanging in shop windows, Americans purchase meat that has been butchered behind closed doors and packaged into a Styrofoam tray. The majority of the meat consumed by Americans is mass-produced on factory farms and by the time it reaches a family's dinner table, the individuals consuming it have no way of knowing where the meat came from, the conditions the animal experienced, or how it was slaughtered and processed. This cultural pattern removes the consumer from the food they eat; Americans do not see the source of their food, so they are largely unaware of the consequences.

In addition to this lack of knowledge about the source of meat and animal products, most Americans are unfamiliar with how many products contain animal by-products and how frequently they consume animal products through non-food means. Since there is no law or system requiring manufacturers to state specifically that animal by-products are in a particular consumer good, many individuals who are unfamiliar with chemical names of animal by-product ingredients may not be aware of the fact that they are consuming a product sourced from animals. According to PETA, "Animal ingredients are used not because they are better than vegetable-derived or synthetic ingredients but rather because they are generally cheaper. Today's slaughterhouses must dispose of the byproducts of the slaughter of billions of animals every year and have found an easy and profitable solution in selling them to food and cosmetics manufacturers" (Caring Consumer 2010).

Manufacturers are also not required to state whether or not they test their products on animals. Therefore, unless individuals specifically research the ingredients of a product and the animal testing practices of the manufacturer, they will not know whether or not the product was produced in a way that affected animals. On many vegan organizations' websites, there are lists of ingredients that come from animal sources as well as companies that test their products on animals. The most popular site serving this purpose is CaringConsumer.com, run by PETA.

PETA's list of animal ingredients and their alternatives helps consumers avoid animal ingredients in food, cosmetics, and other products. [However,] it is not all-inclusive.

There are thousands of technical and patented names for ingredient variations.

Furthermore, many ingredients known by one name can be of animal, vegetable, or synthetic origin. (CaringConsumer 2010)

This list gives the name of the ingredient, the animals it is sourced from, and the types of products it can often be found in. Clearly, the fact that there is a need for this type of list to exist is evidence of the extent to which consumers are separated from the products they purchase and the processes that go into producing them. Particularly, most individuals are unaware of how these processes may affect animals.

In addition to the lack of knowledge about the food they eat and products they purchase, another reason for low percentages of vegans in Western culture, particularly the United States, could be lack of knowledge about alternatives to non-vegan food and animal products. Those who are uneducated about what does or does not constitute vegan food may view a vegan diet and lifestyle as something that would require purchasing products made especially for vegans, which could be cost-prohibitive and inconvenient. However, this is not necessarily the case. Many vegans find that shopping for food is less expensive than it was before they made the transition to the vegan lifestyle. Many of the food items marketed specifically to vegans can be expensive, yet the cost of foods like vegetables, grains, nuts, beans, and fruits are already part of a healthy, balanced diet, vegan or otherwise. Items like meat, dairy products, and eggs are often more expensive than the vegan alternatives used to replace the nutrients found in these foods. For example, protein-rich vegan foods like dried beans and tofu are often less expensive than meats such as chicken. I propose that a lack of knowledge about the vegan diet and lifestyle and many stereotypes and assumptions about veganism could contribute to low percentages of vegans in the population.

Overall, I argue that the true reason for low numbers of vegans compared to the rest of the population is a lack of knowledge about a variety of aspects of veganism and Western food culture.

## **CHAPTER 8 - Limitations and Contradictory Evidence**

### **Limitations of Poll Results**

#### ***Vegetarian Resource Group Polls***

While the Vegetarian Resource Group's polls are more accurate than other polls of the same type due to more precise wording, these polls are not flawless. First, we must consider the margin of error. For most of the polls used, the margin of error is around +/-3%. When evaluating small numbers, this sampling error makes a significant difference. For this reason, it is unclear how accurate the results of the VRG's polls are.

Another limitation of the VRG's polls is the fact that the wording of the key question "Which of the following do you never eat?" is inconsistent throughout the course of the polls. For instance, in some years, the category of "meat" is specified with examples in parentheses. This is not true, however, for all of the years in which these polls were conducted. The specification of what "meat" means could have an affect on the results of these polls.

Additionally, although the rising number of vegetarians and vegans shown in these polls is compelling evidence, it does not necessarily provide proof that the vegan movement is successful. It is plausible evidence of progress but is not definitive one way or the other. Nevertheless, the results of these polls do suggest that Maurer was not necessarily correct in her statement that vegetarians have been unsuccessful in recruiting new members of the movement.

#### ***United Kingdom Polls***

As previously mentioned, the polls conducted in the United Kingdom are based on self-identification of vegans. This is somewhat unreliable due to the inconsistency of these individuals' definition of "vegan." As well, there is a need for more recent, precise, comprehensive polls measuring the number of vegetarians and vegans in the United Kingdom.

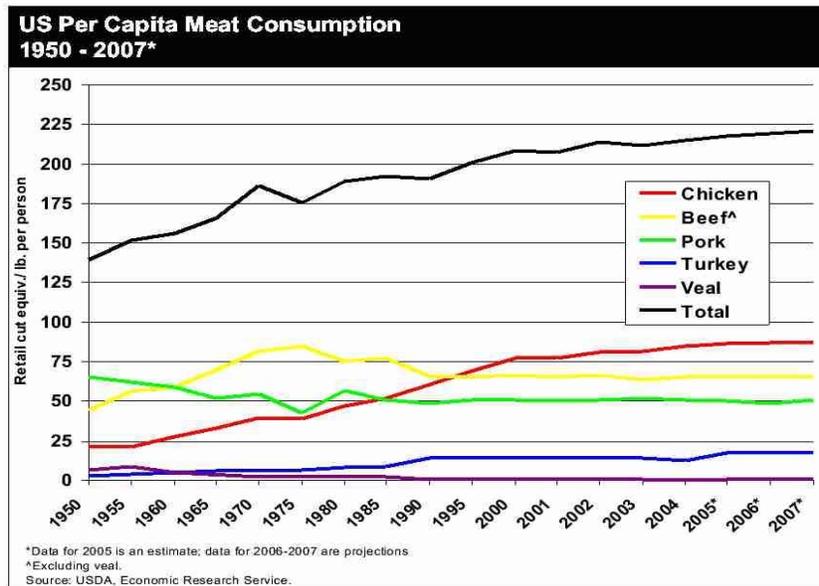
### **Limitations of News Article Evidence**

Although the news articles obtained from the *New York Times* and *BBC News* provide some interesting insight, they are incomplete. It is unclear whether or not the archives of both of these news sources go back indefinitely, time-wise. Therefore, there *could* be earlier veganism-

related articles from earlier time periods that are not included in the current archives. As well, there are most likely more articles relating to veganism, animal protection, and other vegan-related ideas that could not be located through the use of keywords alone. Even through the evaluation of the results of several searches using a variety of keywords such as “animal welfare,” “animal protection,” “vegetarian,” and others, I was unable to compile a significantly descriptive collection of articles that gave unique information that was not otherwise available. Although the analysis of these articles could give a better idea of issues related to veganism, there is no way to identify all or even most of the articles that mention vegan ideas or philosophies related to the vegan movement. It would be practically impossible to locate every article from these two news sources that was in any way applicable to the vegan movement. Finally, these two news sources, while credible and respected, do not account for all vegan-related news in Western culture. Due to these factors, the articles that we were able to assess can give some ideas and insight and show useful examples, but cannot be viewed as a thorough or complete overview of news related to the vegan movement.

### **Contradictory Evidence**

Despite the evidence that I have presented showing the progress of the vegan movement in a number of aspects, there is also evidence to suggest the contrary. The Humane Society of the United States has collected data representing the amount of meat consumed by most Americans on a yearly basis. The data, as illustrated in the graph below, spans from 1950 to 2007 and shows an overall steady increase in Americans’ meat consumption over this period of time.



**Figure 4- US Per Capita Meat Consumption 1950-2007**

The total meat consumption rose from 144 pounds per person per year in 1950 to 222 pounds of meat per person per year in 2007. This suggests that even though veganism is becoming more and more common in Western culture, the amount of meat that is consumed has steadily and significantly increased. The single exception to this is veal. In 1955, Americans consumed an average of nine pounds of veal each year. However, in 2007, this number had decreased to only one pound per year per person. This decreasing number could be attributed to increased knowledge of the practices common in veal production. According to a report by the Humane Society,

Traditional production practices include individually isolating calves in narrow wooden stalls or pens, which severely restrict movement, feeding the animals an all-liquid diet deliberately low in iron, and prematurely weaning the animals. Stressful conditions lead to a high incidence of stereotypic behavior and illness. Scientific reviews of the welfare of intensively confined calves raised for veal have concluded that the young animals suffer when reared in conventional systems. (Humane Society of the United States 2010) The methods used in veal production in many states have been changed in recent years to provide a more humane process for the calves. However, these regulations vary from state to state. Taking into account the declining consumption of veal despite the overall increased consumption of meat in general, we can question whether or not the inhumane conditions experienced by veal calves is a factor that contributes to this pattern. Although information

about the treatment of veal calves is relatively common knowledge in Western culture, information about the production of other types of meat is less prevalent. This raises the question whether or not Americans would consume less meat in general if they were more aware of what goes into producing it.

Generally speaking, the evidence of consistently growing numbers of meat consumption in the United States is in contrast to the many victories of the vegan movement. This important information raises doubts about the success of the vegan movement. If the vegan movement were successful, it would make sense that meat consumption would not continue to rise, especially to such a drastic degree. However, it is important to note that structurally, vegan options are not necessarily readily presented to individuals. For instance, when children eat in school cafeterias, they rarely have healthy vegetarian or vegan options to choose from and, therefore, may not be able to practice veganism successfully. Similarly, Western culture revolves around easily-obtained, fast, cheap food. The least expensive and most readily-available options for most people do not include vegan or vegetarian choices. This structural aspect of Western food culture is an important one and for future research, an analysis of how this structural aspect contributes to the vegan movement's lack of success would be helpful.

## CHAPTER 9 - What to Consider for Future Research

Despite the amount of information we can glean from all of these aspects of the vegan movement, it remains unclear why the number and percentage of vegans in Western culture have not increased to a greater extent than they have over time. Although vegan diets have existed for centuries, vegans remain a very small percentage of the overall population. While Maurer has offered some suggestions as to what can explain these low numbers, we still have no definitive answer.

For future research, I suggest a variety of different surveys performed in a similar fashion to those conducted by the Vegetarian Resource Group. Ideally, these surveys would poll a cross-section of the population about what they know about veganism, factory farming methods, animal by-products and by-product ingredients in both food and non-food goods, and their knowledge on animal welfare. Finally, these surveys would assess respondents' reasons for choosing to consume the food that they eat. For example, I would suggest evaluating what prevents non-vegans from adopting a more animal-friendly diet and lifestyle. In other words, why is the fact that millions of animals suffer annually as a result of non-vegan lifestyles and diets not enough to persuade more people to become vegan?

As well, it would be helpful to evaluate why most vegans choose this lifestyle. Knowing the most common reasoning behind dietary choices, both vegan and non-vegan, could provide more insight into the continually low percentages of vegans in the overall population. Similarly, an evaluation of why non-vegans choose not to practice veganism would give insight as well. As mentioned, Western food structure could have a significant effect on how and why people do or do not choose veganism as a lifestyle and diet. An analysis of how individuals are socialized to consume food and other products that could include animal by-products (such as leather) could increase our knowledge of the vegan movement and why more individuals do not choose to be vegan.

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