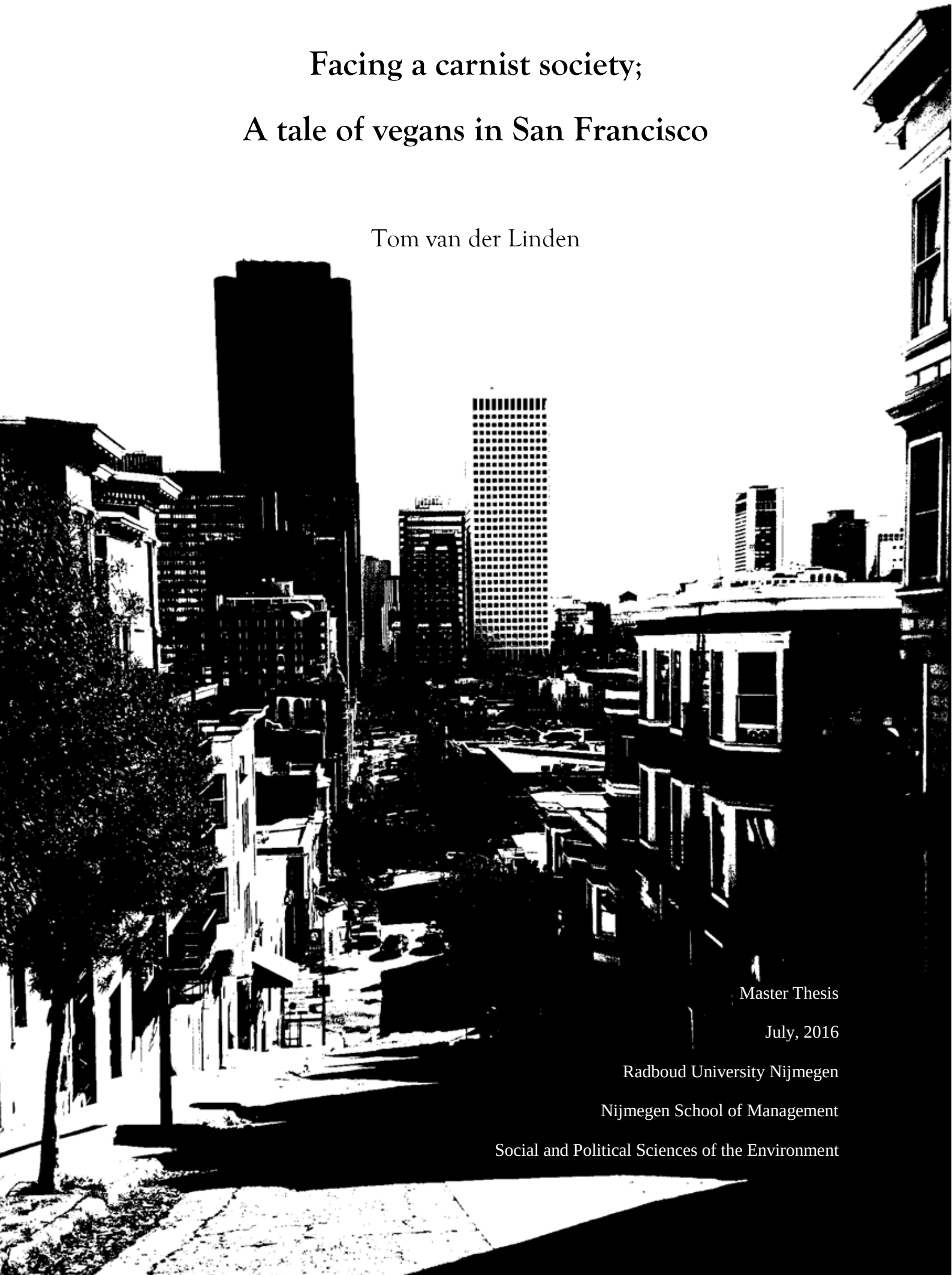
Facing a carnist society;

A tale of vegans in San Francisco

Tom van der Linden



Master Thesis

July, 2016

Radboud University Nijmegen

Nijmegen School of Management

Social and Political Sciences of the Environment

Facing a carnist society;

A tale of vegans in San Francisco

Exploring veganism as a subpolitical movement through an ethnographic study of vegans living in San Francisco

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Preface

When I travelled to San Francisco in September 2015 to conduct my independent research on veganism I wasn't a vegan myself, but I had toyed around with it a few years earlier after struggling through the documentary *Earthlings*. Unfortunately, the diet did not stick at the time, but the interest in animal consumption related issues remained as I started my master's program in Social and Political Sciences of the Environment at the Radboud University of Nijmegen.

Over the course of this program, I learned more about the link between environmental problems and the consumption of animal products and noticed that even though these problems are becoming more pressing, they are hardly ever talked about in the context of animal consumption with the exception of small, more easily acceptable suggested measures such as maybe going meatless on Mondays. A significant lifestyle change towards a (mostly) vegan diet however is deemed as too extreme or too difficult for most people. Exploring this issue made me realize that the nature of what is holding us back from really engaging in animal consumption related problems is not only political or economic, but also cultural as people attach different meanings to food which aren't easily changed. Yet, vegans do exactly that by adopting a new way of looking at animal consumption and changing their diets accordingly. I wanted to learn more on how some people, unlike many others, make this change to veganism and explore its potential as a sustainable social movement that goes against our common preconceptions about animal products, which led to me writing this thesis.

San Francisco became the backdrop for this research as it provided an interesting site of study with its abundance of vegan organizations, vegan restaurants and of course; vegan people. Without them, this thesis would not exist and my gratitude goes out to all who were kind enough to give me their time by participating in this research. I also want to thank Greg Rohrbach for his friendliness and help when I was planning my trip and for welcoming me into the San Francisco Vegetarian Society, the people of Direct Action Everywhere for letting me tag along on one of their protests and welcoming me into their house, the people at Chateau Ubuntu for giving me a home away from home and of course my supervisor Sietske Veenman for guiding me during this whole process and challenging me to make sure this thesis was made to the best of my potential.

I hope you will enjoy reading this thesis as much as I did writing it, and that it may provoke some reflection on things that you perhaps may have been taking for granted.

Tom van der Linden
Nijmegen, July 2016

Summary

The animal industry has grown tremendously in the latter half of the 20th century and has become one of the most significant contributors to the world's most pressing environmental issues. The impact of these issues is expected to increase in the near future as the global population grows, making addressing these issues ever more urgent. Calls for a dietary shift away from animal products however face resistance as the consumption of animals is not only an issue of nutrition, but also of culture as animal consumption is driven by an invisible, hegemonic belief system called carnism that makes culturally-based distinctions between animals based on their edibility.

Vegans reject this by seeing all animals as equally inedible and abstaining from all animal products. As a growing social movement, veganism provides an interesting potential solution strategy to the environmental issues related with the animal industry by practicing their ideology on the subpolitical level; the expression of ideological beliefs outside traditional institutional channels in everyday practices. The potential of veganism is therefore determined by the ability of vegans to successfully maintain their practices and encapsulate veganism as a sustainable part of their identity within a society in which carnism is hegemonic.

This research aimed to produce new insights in veganism as a subpolitical movement by exploring the role of subpolitics in the encapsulation of veganism by vegans in San Francisco. The treadmill of production and world risk society were used as grand social theories to provide a context for the ideologies of carnism and veganism. Furthermore, an ethnographic approach was adopted as the best fitting methodological approach to capture the experiences of vegans. The fieldwork in San Francisco was then conducted over a period of three months, during which unstructured observations were made and nine vegans were interviewed.

The results revealed how respondents viewed veganism as a non-violent way of life that is valued for being healthy, animal-friendly, better for the environment and capable of bringing about positive societal change. When practicing veganism, vegans generally employed two sources of subpolitical power: exercising sanctions and uncertainty absorption. Sanctions can be negative or positive, respectively referring to the boycotting of certain products, companies, organizations…etc. or rewarding them. During the interviews, the obvious negatively sanctioning of animal products in favor of plant-based products came up, but also the positively sanctioning of veganism-related organizations by donating time and money to them. Uncertainty absorption means finding confidence and security in one's actions by drawing on external sources, most importantly; expert knowledge (from books, documentaries…etc.) and supportive social connections. Organizations played an important role in this as they, among other things, supplied respondents with both.

Challenges were experienced by some respondents who did not have sufficient access to sources for uncertainty absorption and were subsequently exposed to more external negative associations with veganism, in some cases leading to the discontinuation of vegan practices. This led to a deeper exploration of the role of this source of subpolitical power in maintaining vegan practices and encapsulating veganism as a sustainable part of one's identity. The importance of uncertainty was revealed as threefold; first, uncertainty absorption facilitated the deepening of vegan values, meaning that vegans who started out with one reason to value veganism, got more motivation from other reasons found through uncertainty absorption. Second, by making new friends and joining organizations that were supportive of veganism, uncertainty absorption gave vegans a sense of

community, providing them with comfort. Third, uncertainty absorption allowed vegans to be part of a larger narrative that is supportive of veganism while practicing veganism in a carnist society. Being part of a supportive narrative helps to maintain veganism in a myriad of ways; it provides a shared language and a way of constructing meaning and arguments, which can be utilized in an ongoing process of uncertainty absorption that allows vegans to face the challenges of veganism, maintain their practices and encapsulate veganism as a sustainable part of their identity within a carnist society.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In 1995, Emily the cow escaped from a Massachusetts slaughterhouse by charging out of line and leaping her over 1500 pounds weighing body (worth about 500 dollars in hamburger meat) over the fence. She was at large for 40 days and 40 nights, during which she was aided by locals who fed her and helped her evade the authorities. The story became front-page news and after she was recaptured, Emily was sold for one dollar to a nearby foundation where she lived out her days in peace until her death in 2003 (Giaimo, 2015). The statue that was erected after her death now stands as a reminder to the billions of other animals in the animal industry that remain nameless (Joy, 2010, p. 137).

The story of Emily illustrates a temporary moment of compassion that sparks an important question about how people obviously cared about the plight of this one cow, but generally remain silent about the system that structurally keeps on slaughtering countless others. In 2010, Joy coined the term 'carnism' to address the apparent paradox of our compassionate feelings for animals and our consumption of them. She explains it as the hegemonic and therefore invisible (because it is simply seen as the normal state of things) belief system that lets us make distinctions between animals based on their edibility. These distinctions are predominately based on cultural influences and have little to do with the animals themselves; which is why we for example see pigs as food and dogs as pets even though they are of similar intelligence and sentience (Joy, 2010, p. 14-15).

Joy stresses the urgency of addressing our dietary behavior because of the growing environmental issues related with the animal industry (2010, p. 86). This urgency is echoed by numerous sources pointing out how the animal industry has indeed become one of the most significant contributors to the world's most pressing environmental problems by impacting land, water, biodiversity and climate change through among many other things pollution, deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions and overfishing (Steinfeld et al., 2006, p. xx; 4; Gjerris, 2015, p. 523; Koneswaran & Nierenberg, 2008, p. 581). With this in mind, it doesn't come as a surprise that the series editor of the book *Why we eat, how we eat; contemporary encounters between foods and bodies* prefaces with the firm statement: "*The study of food has seldom been more pressing or prescient*'' (Abbits & Lavis, 2013, p. ii). A 2010 UNEP report furthermore warns that the impact of these issues is expected to increase due to population growth and emphasizes the difficulties of finding alternatives to these issues as "*people have to eat*" (Hertwich et al., 2010, p. 82). They conclude that "*a substantial reduction of impacts would only be possible with a substantial worldwide diet change, away from animal products*" (Hertwich et al., 2010, p. 82).

Veganism provides such a change away from animal products. In the general definition; vegans abstain from all animal products in favor of plant-based sources and can thus be seen as the polar opposite of carnism (Larsson, Rönnlund, Johansson & Dahlgren, 2003, p. 61; Beyond Carnism, n.d.). It is seen as a new social movement in the sense that it is not based on legislation, but on individual lifestyle changes (Cherry, 2006, p. 156). In doing so, vegans engage in what Beck calls subpolitics; the expression of ideological beliefs outside traditional institutional channels in everyday practices (Holzer & Sorensen, 2003, p. 80; Beck, 1996, p. 18). This comes with various challenges as they still live within a society in which carnism is the status quo, which is why the few existing academic sources on veganism not only focus on dietary habits, but also on issues of identity-building

within a society confronting them with contradictory values (Larsson et al., 2003; Cherry, 2006; Sneijder & Te Molder, 2009).

This research aims to contribute to this body of work by studying veganism as a subpolitical movement that in theory has the potential to become a promising solution strategy to the animal industry's related environmental issues by upholding a different ideology that abstains from the consumption of animal products. To add to the better understanding of the subpolitics of veganism; three months of ethnographic fieldwork were conducted in San Francisco, The United States, during which nine vegans from different ages, genders and backgrounds were observed and interviewed to capture their experiences with veganism and study the extent to which they were able to encapsulate it as a sustainable part of their identity within a carnist society.

1.2. Practical and theoretical relevance

The introduction pointed out how the consumption of animal products has become an increasingly urgent issue due to its destructive consequences for our environment. Especially in the face of an expected growth of animal consumption in the near future, this research aims to contribute to possible solution strategies for this practical issue by exploring veganism as a subpolitical movement that provides a possible change away from animal consumption. As it stands now, veganism generally receives little serious attention beyond promotions to eat more vegetables or vegetarian meals and go meatless on Mondays (Pulkinnen, 2014, p. 622). The latter of which was however pulled from USDA policy for being deemed an animal rights extremist campaign (Torrez, 2013, p. 516). A better understanding of what veganism is and how it is practiced within the context of a society geared towards animal consumption is therefore highly relevant if we are to really engage these growing issues and can be of practical use to organizations concerned with promoting veganism, environmental organizations, governments concerned with environmental or food policies, and people interested in adopting veganism for themselves.

Schnaiberg's treadmill of production theory, Beck's world risk society thesis and Joy's concept of carnism were applied to get new insights in the economic and societal mechanics of animal production and the cultural and psychological influences on animal consumption that form the context for understanding veganism as a subpolitical movement. Because the concept of carnism wasn't coined until 2010, it is still a relatively new concept that benefits from better understanding because, besides providing more insights in the issue of animal consumption, it also puts veganism in a more prominent place on the other side of the what then would be a carnist-vegan spectrum, instead of incorporating veganism as an afterthought to vegetarianism, which is how it tends to happen in existing studies that do not include carnism (Hoek et al., 2004; Fox & Ward, 2008; Povey et al., 2001; Barr & Chapman, 2002). Furthermore, studying the concept of carnism through the lens of the grand social theories by Schnaiberg and Beck, to my knowledge, has not been done before which in addition provides a larger theoretical context to the existing concept of carnism.

There is quite a body of work on vegetarianism, but specific literature on veganism is not as abundant (Larsson et al., 2003, p. 61). This research uses Beck's world risk society thesis, which includes his concept of subpolitics, to frame veganism as a subpolitical movement outside traditional political channels. Although veganism has been recognized as a new social movement that focusses on personal lifestyle in similar interpretations (Cherry, 2006; Sneijder & Te Molder, 2009), it has not yet been explored specifically as a subpolitical movement. The concept of subpolitics has been applied before on green, political and ethical consumers (Holzer & Sorensen, 2003), but again, it has not yet been specifically linked to vegans or used to deepen our understanding of veganism and therefore increases the theoretical relevance of this approach.

1.3. Research purpose and questions

To get a better understanding of veganism as a subpolitical movement it is important to discover more about the role of subpolitics in encapsulating veganism as a sustainable part of one's identity and maintain vegan practices within a carnist society. To gather this knowledge, the research goal is as follows:

> *This research aims to get more insight in veganism as a subpolitical movement by exploring the role of subpolitics in encapsulating veganism as a sustainable part of a vegan's identity within a carnist society.*

This research goal is followed by the main question:

> *What is the role of subpolitics in encapsulating veganism as a sustainable part of a vegan's identity within a carnist society?*

To operationalize the main question, four sub-questions are derived from it for this research:

> *How do vegans view veganism and its place in a carnist society?*
>
> *Why do vegans value veganism?*
>
> *How do vegans engage in subpolitics when practicing veganism?*
>
> *What is the importance of subpolitics in engaging the challenges of maintaining vegan practices within a carnist society?*

The "vegans" in this context refer to the self-identified vegans in San Francisco who participated in this research. This research therefore doesn't aim to make generalized conclusions about a larger population of vegans, but rather hopes to add to the existing body of knowledge on veganism. The first research sub-question capture how vegans view their ideology and how they perceive veganism in the context of a carnist society. The second research sub-questions asks why vegans value veganism; why they wish to encapsulate it. These questions serve to establish the right context for how vegans bring veganism into practice and engage in subpolitics, which is the topic of the third research sub-question. The final research sub-question delves deeper into the role of this subpolitical engagement in the encapsulation of veganism by exploring the importance of subpolitics in engaging the challenges of maintaining the vegan values in everyday practices. Together, these question suffice to answer the main question about the role of subpolitics in encapsulating veganism as a sustainable part of the vegan's identity within a carnist society.

1.4. Reading guide

This research is structured as follows; chapter 2 contains the theoretical framework in which the theoretical concepts and the existing literature on the research subject are discussed. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological approach and methods and presents an overall research design. In chapter 4, the collected data is presented in the form of portraits of veganism; the stories of each of the respondents of this research. Chapter 5 analyses these stories in the light of the in chapter 2 presented theoretical framework and the in chapter 3 established methodological approach. Lastly, chapter 6 concludes the research by answering the research questions and reflecting back on the research itself.

Chapter 2.

Theoretical framework

This chapter will the review the existing literature on the research subject in order to create a theoretical framework for this research. This framework rests on two ideological explorations; carnism and veganism, respectively approached from the perspective of two grand theories; Schnaiberg's treadmill of production and Beck's world risk society. Section 2.1. will discuss carnism as the ideology behind animal consumption and the treadmill of production. The treadmill of production theory was chosen because it provides adequate insight into the workings of the animal industry and explains why it is problematic. Section 2.2. addresses veganism as the ideology that challenges carnism and the world risk society, which approaches the problems of the animal industry from a perspective that brings more attention to alternative lines of action on the subpolitical level.

2.1. A carnist society

This first section delves into the ideology of carnism and the animal industry it is related to. It not only serves to explain how the animal industry and its underlying belief system is a contemporary problem, but it also reveals how consumers of animal products are just as much driven by an ideology as vegans. Veganism would then be perceived more as an ideology that is different to another ideology and not so much as a strange deviation from a normal situation. Although the ideological basis of our relation to the animal world is not a new subject, it hasn't really been specified in the context of contemporary environmental issues as well as by Joy with her concept of carnism (2010).

2.1.1. What is carnism?

In 2010, Joy published her book *Why we love dogs, eat pigs and wear cows* which opens with a hypothetical scenario in which you, the reader, are invited to a dinner party where you are served a stew of delicious meat. After asking what is in it you then come to learn it is made with the meat of a golden retriever. With the possibility of you being an exception, Joy assumes that your initial pleasure will turn into a certain degree of revulsion and invites you to analyze your feelings and think about why a stew of dog meat is worse than a stew made with the meat of chickens or cows (2010, p. 11-12). You might say it is because it is normal to consume chickens and cows but not normal to eat dogs. You might have a dog as a pet and hence cannot imagine ever eating one. Joy wants to draw attention to the strangeness of focusing on the repulsiveness of eating a dog instead of the normality of eating chickens or cows; seeing as chickens and cows are among the only dozen or so species we consume out of the millions of species on this planet, is it not more interesting to look at the normality of eating these unlucky few, while all the others aren't considered right for consumption? It is to address this issue, that Joy coined the term 'carnism'.

Carnism can be viewed as an ideology in which we make distinctions between different kinds of animals that are suitable for consumption (Gilbert & Desaulniers, 2014, p. 292), it answers why we are "*petting the dog while eating the hog*" (Joy, 2012a). Joy suggests this is because we have different sets of beliefs about animals and how we relate to them. For example; we tend to associate dogs with pets or even members of the family, while pigs are generally perceived as food. Considering the fact that dogs are edible just like pigs and that pigs have feelings and intelligence just like dogs (if not more so), carnism thus points out that our choice for animals that we consume has little to do with the actual animals, but rather with our own perception and the normative beliefs we attach to it (Gilbert &

Desaulniers, 2014, p. 292; Joy, 2010, p. 14-15). These beliefs vary from culture to culture, which is why Koreans for example are okay with eating dogs, whereas most Westerners are not. Carnism sheds light on these cultural perceptions of the edibility of animals and uses it to invoke a normative discussion about the practices that reflect them (Gilbert & Desaulniers, 2014, p. 292). It shows that eating meat is just as much an expression of an ethical orientation as vegetarianism or veganism.

Unlike vegetarianism and veganism which are more commonly perceived as an ideology, carnism is an invisible ideology as Joy explains (2010, p. 29, original emphasis);

> *"We don't see meat eating as we do vegetarianism – as a choice, based on a set of assumptions about animals, our world, and ourselves. Rather we see it as a given, the "natural" thing to do, the way things have always been and the way things will always be. We eat animals without thinking about what we are doing and why because the belief system that underlies this behavior is invisible. The invisible belief system is what I call carnism."*

This invisibility can be explained by the institutionalization of carnism, which legitimized it through different formal and informal institutions (Ostrom, 2007, p. 23). The media for example mostly reflects the hegemonic ideology, in this case carnism. Because of this, we receive little news about the meat industry and its practices and the occasional controversy is usually treated as an aberration and not as the norm. It is also more difficult for challenging ideologies to get their voices heard as channels tend to refrain from what they label 'advocacy advertisements', even though promotions of animal products are no issue (Joy, 2010, p. 104). Looking at the legal system, carnism is institutionalized by making its practices legally legitimate and practices from challenging ideologies illegitimate. Joy points out that it is perfectly legal to raise and slaughter billions of animals, whereas it is illegitimate for vegans to press charges against the meat industry for doing so, thereby showing how the legal system assumes carnism as the legitimate ideology which secures the basis of a carnist society (Joy, 2005, p. 103; 107).

To further illustrate the invisibility of carnism, Joy draws a parallel between carnism and patriarchy (the ideology in which the masculine is valued higher than the feminine) and veganism and feminism (2010, p. 30-32). Both carnism and patriarchy are so entrenched in our society that it took years to even point out their existence. This is because they are both institutionalized, they are considered as the status quo, as the normal state of things. Subsequently, veganism and feminism have a much higher visibility because they are out of the ordinary and challenge their respective ideological counterparts. A great achievement of the challenging ideologies is then to raise awareness about the existence of invisible ideologies and the effects they have (Gilbert & Desaulniers, 2014, p. 293). For Joy, this exposure is of vital importance because besides visibility there is another distinctness about carnism when compared to veganism and that is that carnism is an inherently violent ideology, meaning that without the violence that it is organized around it cannot sustain itself (Joy, 2010, p. 32-33; Gilbert & Desaulniers, 2014, p. 293).

2.1.2. Carnism as a contemporary problem

Animal consumption has been a part of human diets ever since our primitive beginnings as hunters and gatherers (Kasper, 2013). A 2012 discovery of an ancient skull even suggests that our ancestors have been eating meat for at least 1.5 million years (Dailymail, 2012). The analysis of the skull was presented in a Plos One article by experts who concluded that their findings strongly supported the hypothesis that animal consumption was already a fundamental, rather than marginal, aspect of some hominid diets (Dominiguez-Rodrigo et al. 2012, p. 5). So if carnism has been around for so long, why is it a problem now? By using Schnaiberg's treadmill of production theory, this research argues that it

wasn't until the post-World War II era that animal production skyrocketed at the cost of the environment; the consequences of which we are facing today, pointing out the unsustainable nature of the now global animal industry and the carnist ideology that drives it.

Two pioneers of the contemporary animal industry were brothers Richard and Maurice McDonald, who opened a Bar-B-Q restaurant in 1940 with a drive-in, car-hop service and a large menu, as was common at the time. However, in 1948 they shut down to re-envision their operation. The result was McDonalds; a self-service drive-in restaurant with a limited menu, the staple of which: a 15 cent hamburger (McDonalds, 2014). It was the start of a revolution that would ignite the rise of fast food restaurants all over the United States. McDonalds was able to offer cheap meat by bringing the factory system to the back of the kitchen. In comparison to other restaurants at that time; McDonalds' menus were produced like products at an assembly line and were therefore quick, easy and tasted the same nationwide (Kenner, 2008).

As the factory system utilized by McDonalds and other fast food chains became more ubiquitous, production became more efficient, but this came at the cost of environmental quality. Among other things; using corn and soy instead of grass as animal feed resulted in animals no longer needing large grazing lands so that they could be contained in the unnatural and unhealthy concentrated animal-feeding operations, or; CAFOs (Gurian-Sherman, 2008, p. 1-2; Hribar & Schultz, 2010, p. 1). Corn and soy are generally preferred for being cheap, despite being an unnatural diet that can cause a range of illnesses and increased methane emissions (Koneswaran & Nierenberg, 2008, p. 578; Van den Bogaard & Stobberingh, 2000, p. 327; Hribar & Schultz, 2010, p. 2). The low prices for corn and soy are partially thanks to the government that subsidizes it to guarantee a price floor for farmers while providing cheap animal feed to the meat industry (Grace, 2014). In the years of globalization in the latter half of the 20th century, many developing countries experienced a growing demand for meat as a result of increasing wealth; thereby turning the animal industry into a global one (Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2014, p. 10-11). In this neo-liberal environment where large corporations and their lobbies where key players in international policies (Walter, 2001, p. 56), animal production also moved towards other continents, thereby exporting its negative consequences. The production of soy for example expanded into South America where the destruction of large parts of rainforest in favor of soy fields heavily impacted the natural environment by contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and decreasing biodiversity (USDA, 2012; Bailey, Froggatt & Wellesley, 2014, p. 14).

This brings us to the global animal industry of today, which is, according to an extensive report from 2006; "*one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global*" (Steinfeld et al., 2006, p. xx). Some of these effects mentioned in the report have been summarized in a 2015 study by Gjerris (p. 523):

> "*Extensive use of arable land to feed production, deforestation to provide grazing lands, overgrazing, compaction, erosion and desertification of pastures leading to degradation of arable land, depletion of scarce water resources, eutrophication, degeneration of coral reefs and general pollution of water, air and soil caused by animal waste, hormones, antibiotics, fertilizers and pesticides spent in feed production etc. To all this can be added an extensive contribution to anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change and the enhanced stress on ecosystems globally and locally*."

The gravity of these effects have been the subject of much heated debate (Gjerris, 2015, p. 523), but all of them are nonetheless linked to animal production and have sparked calls for urgent action by various actors such as scientists and political leaders (Koneswaran & Nierenberg, 2008, p. 581).

2.1.3. Schnaiberg's treadmill of production

To understand this historical turning point towards environmental degradation and with that, the contemporary animal industry, we can briefly turn to one of the most important sociological concepts in North American environmental sociology (Buttel, 2004, p. 323); the treadmill of production, which was introduced by Schnaiberg in 1980 to address the question of why environmental degradation in the United States had increased so rapidly after the Second World War.

The treadmill of production is accurately explained in Gould, Pellow and Schnaiberg (2004, p. 296-297), they point out that the treadmill of production was in essence an economic change theory about the accumulation of capital in Western economies to replace production labor with technology and increase profits. This of course had social and environmental consequences as more resources were extracted to meet higher levels of demand, toxic output was released into the environment and more workers became replaced by new technologies. Schnaiberg painted the picture of a society running in a treadmill without really moving forward; with each round of investments, profits were increased but the position of workers weakened and environmental conditions worsened. At the time, little attention was paid to these downsides of economic development and the general post-World War II consensus was that economic progress was the only path to social progress (Gould et al., 2004, 297-298). Even after the destructive consequences came into light in the 1960s and 1970s, politics continued to endorse production with neoliberal policies that allowed the treadmill to reach a global scale as production shifted towards the global South where production factors were cheaper and higher profits could be realized (Gould et al., 2004, 299).

With this brief description of the treadmill of production, we can draw some interesting parallels between Schnaiberg's theory and the birth and growth of the animal industry; we've seen the examples of the industrialization of the production process, the politicians' endorsement of the development of the animal industry by subsidizing corn and soy, the expansion of soy production into the global South and the worsening environmental conditions as a result of the now global animal industry. In short; the animal industry is a great example of a post-World War II industry that rapidly accumulated a lot of capital at the cost of the environment and illustrates how the long existing ideology of carnism became problematic by being intrinsically linked to this rapidly growing industry.

2.1.4. Escaping the treadmill

The treadmill of production asserts that the relation between (capitalist) economic development and the environment will remain conflictual (York, 2004, p. 355). External constraints are thus needed to keep the continuous expansion of the treadmill from further deteriorating the environment. The state has the most potential to apply this needed pressure and influence the speed of the treadmill, albeit driven by demands from the public, but so far this hasn't been realized (Stretesky, Long & Lynch, 2013, p. 236). York argues that measures that have been taken to slow the treadmill might appear to be a trend towards environmental reform, but they are more likely consequences of, rather than a serious counterforce to, the general trend of environmental decline (2004, p. 358). The United States government arguably even endorses the treadmill of animal production with its earlier mentioned substantial subsidies on corn and soy production. The government has (especially in more recent years) taken some measures to make the animal industry more sustainable, but these have been mostly reactive after disease or disaster and heavy public pressure; take for example the infamous 1993 Jack in the Box E.coli outbreak (USDA, 2004, p. 10).

When it comes to the role of the consumer, there is an interesting dynamic between Schnaiberg's theory and Joy's concept of carnism. Schnaiberg's strong emphasis on production generally leaves the consumer with little power at the tail end of the system as the production side

largely dictates, albeit by limited supply of information, what consumption alternatives people have to choose from (Gould, Pellow and Schnaiberg, 2004, p. 303). This also appears to be the case for the animal industry; Kenner (2008) talks to various families in his documentary film *Food, Inc*. and reveals how especially the lower class society can not afford better quality food and instead opts for fast food. A study by Block, Scribner and DeSalvo (2004) furthermore analyzed the distribution of fast food restaurants in relation with neighborhood characteristics, arguing that a high exposure to fast food restaurants is likely to lead to unhealthy consumption behavior.

What Joy contributes are insights in the psychological factors related with carnism that show how consumers are not just a passive victims at the tail end of production but also have a role in allowing the treadmill of production to continue even though most of them are to some extent aware of and opposed to its negative consequences. She explains how the average American consumes about 120 kg of meat per year (about two and a half times the global average), for which the United States slaughters an annual 10 billion land animals (Time, 2014; Loughnan, Bastian & Haslam, 2014, p. 104), an amount twice the size of the global human population, leaving her with the question; "*so where are all the animals?*'' (2010, p. 38). The simple answer to this is that the violence of the production process is generally hidden from the public. This physical invisibility in turn leads to psychological invisibility, or in other words; an excuse for the consumer to pretend it doesn't exist. Hiding the production process furthermore separates the animal product from its animal source, making it even easier for consumers to not worry about where their products come from. "*Violent ideologies are structured so that it is not only possible, but inevitable, that we are aware of an unpleasant truth on one level while being oblivious to it on another*" (Joy, 2010, p. 71).

Other sources also speak of a meat paradox: the conflicting feelings about on the one hand the caring for animals and displeasure of seeing them suffer and on the other hand the desire to consume meat (Berndsen & Van der Pligt, 2004, p. 72; Bratanova, Loughnan & Bastian, 2011, p. 193; Loughnan, Bastian & Haslam, 2014, p. 104). Gjerris refers to this as 'willed blindness' and claims that an important factor in this is that we generally think of ourselves as good, moral human beings and that when our actions do not align to this self-image, we tend to look for justifications that allow us to maintain our self-image without altering our actions (2015, p. 518). Later he points out that these justifications are different for every person, some examples are a lack of certainty about how to change one's diet, avoiding a feeling a shame and simple convenience (Gjerris, 2015, p. 525). Hiding the production process thus allows consumers to uphold carnism by playing into psychological factors that provide consumers with reasons not to reflect too much on their dietary habits. This in turn removes external pressure on the treadmill of production, allowing it to continue without scrutiny.

2.1.5. Summarizing carnism

This section served to lay out the most important points regarding carnism; these create the context that veganism exists in, which is at the center of this research. In summation, the two main characteristics of carnism are; first, it is intrinsically linked to violence against animals which, after becoming industrialized after the Second World War, is now sustaining an unsustainable global animal industry that, following the treadmill of production theory, will continue to expand at the cost of the environment. Second, carnism is institutionalized which means it is made legitimate by the legal system and made ordinary by the media and everyday life.

Veganism challenges both these points; it rejects the violence of the animal industry by abstaining from its products and sheds light on carnism as an institutionalized ideology by going against the status quo. In doing so, veganism counters the somewhat bleak image of an industry going rampant with people not caring as long as they get their desired products or part of the profits, and

deserves more attention. For besides the growth of the animal industry and environmental issues (Middleton, 2008, p. 36), the latter half of the 20th century has also seen a growth of vegetarianism (Povey, Wellens & Conner, 2001; Jabs, Devine & Sobal, 1998; Worsley & Skrzypiec, 1998, p. 152), veganism (Trauth, 2014), meat substitutes (Hoek, Luning, Stafleu & De Graaf, 2004), research on vegetarianism (Kenyon & Barker, 1998, p. 185) and attention towards more healthy lifestyles with balanced diets (Forestell, Spaeth & Kane, 2012, p. 319). Treadmill of production theorists might argue that this is but a consequence of an ongoing trend of environmental decline, but unlike for example the growth of low-fat, low-carbohydrate and low-calorie foods that York mentions as misinterpreted signs of environmental reform (2004, p. 358), veganism does provide a structural transition away from the animal industry by not consuming any animal products at all and might prove an interesting solution strategy to get out of the treadmill. This is why the next section proposes another theoretical perspective that has a slightly different approach and pays more attention to the role and potential of alternative ideologies.

2.2. Challenging carnism

The second part of this chapter takes a closer look at veganism as an ideology that counters carnism by deliberately changing everyday dietary habits. Beck's world risk society will be applied here to present veganism as a subpolitical movement framed within the larger context of Beck's grand social theory. Because of the various different interpretations of and confusions between vegetarianism and veganism (Barr and Chapman, 2002, p. 359), the different perceptions of veganism will be addressed first to determine the way this research interprets it.

2.2.1. Defining veganism

Veganism challenges carnism by rejecting one of its core notions; that some animals are to be considered as edible whereas most others are not. Hereby the assumption is made that most vegans in a carnist society aren't raised as such, but at some point made the conscious decision to adopt the vegan ideology (Ruby, 2012, p. 142). The rejection of carnism expresses itself by abstaining from any animal products (Larsson et al., 2003, p. 61). In this sense, it is the polar opposite of carnism (Beyond Carnism, n.d.). It is however not always perceived as such as even scholarly works tend to view veganism as a strict or extreme variation of vegetarianism, take for example Hoek et al. (2004), Fox and Ward (2008), Povey et al. (2001) or Barr and Chapman (2002). A possible reason for this is that they place veganism on a spectrum with vegetarianism, as put forward by Beardsworth and Keil (1991), rather than juxtaposing it with carnism.

Beardsworth and Keil (1991, p. 20) put vegetarianism on a spectrum, generating 6 types of vegetarianism from the least strict type 1 in which meat is still consumed on occasion to the most strict type 6 in which only vegetable-derived products are eaten (i.e. veganism). The spectrum is problematic as it excludes a number of diets. For example; type 3 excludes eggs but includes dairy, while type 4 excludes both eggs and dairy (the assumption is made that including eggs is less strict than including dairy). This leaves no room for the so-called ovo-vegetarians; vegetarians that exclude dairy but do include eggs. Most importantly; it excludes carnists (or the meat-eater, seeing as the term 'carnist' was not yet coined at the time). Beardsworth and Keil seem to make the subtle presumption that carnism is not based on ideological beliefs like vegetarianism and veganism, which is especially likely because they label diets as 'more strict' the further they move away from the normal, carnist diet; a carnist bias as specific studies on veganism will suggest later in this section.

Because this research embeds veganism into the context of a carnist society, I want to move away from this carnist bias towards veganism and explore a new way to place it into perspective. On her website, Joy suggests an ideological spectrum with carnism on one end and veganism on the other

(Beyond Carnism, n.d.). By taking the violence of carnism (which is its problematic aspect) as a starting point, we can then move away towards ideologies of lesser violence. Veganism in this sense is the least violent and interpreted in its broad definition of excluding all animal products from one's life; opposing all forms of carnist violence. The various types of vegetarianism then become dots along the carnist-vegan continuum as 'less violent' than carnism but 'more violent' than veganism.

The interesting thing about veganism as the polar opposite of carnism is that it challenges carnism on what Beck calls the subpolitical level as vegans act on their values and make deliberate dietary choices every day that go against the status quo. It is a new movement in the sense that is not based on legislation or politics, but rather on personal lifestyle (Cherry, 2006, p. 156). There are of course vegans who, with or without affiliation to an organization, challenge carnism through the traditional institutional channels but this can differ from person to person. What they all have in common though is that their everyday being as a vegan already has political consequences and veganism can therefore be seen as a subpolitical movement. The next section will explore in more detail the works of Beck to provide more theoretical context to subpolitics and how this relates to vegans living in a carnist society.

2.2.2. Beck's world risk society

Subpolitics is part of Beck's individualization thesis, which in turn is one of two theses that make up his world risk society theory (Lash, in Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. vii). The other thesis; his risk thesis, similarly to the treadmill of production, addresses the predicament our society has found itself in by expanding at the cost of the environment, but focusses more on the growing risks caused by modernization which have to be addressed in what Beck calls a second stage of modernity. The individualization thesis adds what the treadmill of production (by downplaying the potential of the individual consumer) doesn't really explore in a fitting way for this research; the impact on and subsequent role of the individual, which includes subpolitics and its potential for societal change.

The value of Beck's world risk society for this research lies in its connecting of the two processes of risk and individualization; the concerns with the animal industry and the political system that endorses it, and acting on those concerns on an individual level, by explaining the loss of control over growing risks through accelerated modernization and the consequent need for personal identity construction that can open up space for alternative ideologies on the subpolitical level. The risk thesis will be addressed first to provide the societal context to Beck's individualization thesis, followed by a more in-depth discussion on veganism as a subpolitical movement.

2.2.3. Into a second modernity

Beck argues that we have entered a second stage of modernity, which he also refers to as reflexive modernity. The first modernity is characterized by a simple, linear, industrial modernization based on nation-state societies (Beck, 1999, p. 2; Beck, 2012). There was a strong consensus about the territorial political community and the ability for humans to control and exploit nature within a grand narrative of human progression towards modernity (Lacy, 2002, p. 43). What is interesting here is that Beck includes an ideological factor, which he refers to as narratives, as part of the issue. The first modernity is placed within a narrative of humanity progressing towards modernization and mastering nature, which corresponds with the growth of the animal industry driven by carnism as a narrative that makes it moral to consume certain animals (which are seen as part of nature).

In the second modernity however, five interlinked processes have challenged this consensus of modernization which must simultaneously be responded to: globalization, individualization, gender revolution, underemployment and global risks (Beck, 1999, p. 2). "*A new kind of capitalism, a new*

kind of economy, a new kind of global order, a new kind of society and a new kind of personal life are coming into being" (Beck, 1999, p. 2). What these processes have in common is that they are all unforeseen consequences of the first modernity, or rather; consequences of the success of modernity. To illustrate; the 'success' of modern animal farms that are more efficient and effective than traditional farms have the unforeseen consequences of among other things contributing to risks by polluting groundwater and emitting massive amounts of greenhouse gasses. These consequences are breaking down the narrative of the first modernity and are leaving us in a world "*that has to make decisions concerning its future under the conditions of manufactured, self-inflicted insecurity*" (Beck, 2009, p. 8). The risks that we are facing in the second modernity are thus risks that we ourselves have produced (Irwin, 2001, p. 55).

As a result of the second modernity in which modernization has exceeded the capacity of the current institutions to oversee and control its consequences, we are witnessing a loss of confidence in these institutions; among which are the national government and the scientific community (Beck, 1999, p. 14; Beck, 2002, p. 40-11; Beck, 2009, p. 11-12; Renn, 2008, p. 1). Not only do people feel insecure in the face of new and uncertain dangers, but they are also questioning the very beliefs that modernization and the institutions of the first modernity are built upon. Here we can take a leap that Schnaiberg doesn't take; a leap towards the consumers that recognize the growing risks of the animal industry and take it upon themselves to abstain from animal products and challenge the animal industry on a personal level, which brings us to the second part of Beck's world risk society; his individualization thesis.

2.2.4. Individualization

The word 'individualization' can be interpreted in many ways, so in order to prevent misunderstandings, Beck's approach will first be clarified. Beck makes the distinction between the *neoliberal idea of the free-market individual* and *institutionalized individualism*, the latter he develops in his book *Individualization* (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxi). Neoliberal ideas of individualization see the human self as autarkic. *"It assumes that individuals alone can master the whole of their lives, that they derive and renew their capacity for action from within themselves. Talk of the 'self-entrepreneur' makes this clear.*" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxi). Beck criticizes this view for being conflicting with everyday experience in which individuals are unmistakably tied to others through work, family and other relations.

Nevertheless, during the first modernity, society has increasingly geared its institutions towards the neoliberal idea of the individual and not the collective (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxi-xxii; 23-24). The consequence of institutionalizing neoliberal individualization that sees the individual as autarkic is that in the second modernity people are constantly forced to take action and come up with new and creative ways to author a life of their own. Individualization in Beck's sense is therefore not a choice, it is a fate (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. xxvi). Being an individual in the second modernity thus means having insight in the fundamental incompleteness of the self, always being on the move whilst enduring a constant feeling of being disembedded. It is not so much about being as it is about becoming (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. vii; xvi; xxi). Here we can reintroduce risk on the personal level as people's biographies are turned into do-it-yourself-biographies or risk biographies; pointing out a constant state of endangerment to which people have to react quickly (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 3). Global environmental risks for example are not only relevant to industries and politicians, but they are also the problem of individuals as they are exposed to its effects by consuming products, driving a car, breathing air… etc. and it's up to them to react to that. It then also comes as no surprise that solution strategies are more and more explored on the side of the consumer, rather than the producer (Bailey, Froggatt & Wellesley, 2014, p. 12), and

that we witness more individuals taking up politicized issues outside of formal politics; in the realm of subpolitics (Holzer & Sorensen, 2003, p. 79).

2.2.5. The subpolitical realm

Although the process of individualization may have a pessimistic tone to it, it also births freedom and a chance to escape from grand narratives of the first modernity, such as carnism, and their subduing collective values. Beck draws attention to the politicization of society and, at the same time, the depoliticization of national politics (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 28). These two processes are expressed by what Beck dubbed *freedom's children*: a generation born after the collapse of the Berlin Wall that is shaped by a world of self-inflicted risks and institutionalized individualism (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 157). They generally resent established political institutions for their formalism and dishonesty, they are less inclined to vote and rather stay at home. This doesn't mean they are careless or self-absorbed, on the contrary; they are moved by a wide array of both local and global issues, maybe even more so than previous generations (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 158). "*Freedom's children practise a seeking, experimenting morality that ties together things that seem mutually exclusive: egoism and altruism, self-realization and active compassion, self-realization as active compassion*" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 159). In short, in spite of their dismay for political institutions, they live a highly politicized life.

Freedom's children express these beliefs on what Beck calls the subpolitical level. Subpolitics can be defined as: "*politics outside and beyond the representative institutions of the political system of nation-states*" (Beck, 1996, p. 18). In another definition: "*[subpolitics are] small-scale, often individual decisions that either have a direct political frame of reference or achieve political significance by way of their aggregation*" (Holzer & Sorensen, 2003, p. 80). To put it simply; people's everyday lives and activities, albeit intentionally or unintentionally, become expressions of political beliefs without necessarily requiring politically activity in the traditional or institutional sense. What this means for alternative lines of action and social movements is that they have the potential to break down existing social systems by becoming professional, profitable and by opening new markets (Beck, 1997, p. 53; Beck, 1999, p. 92).

2.2.6. Veganism as a subpolitical movement

To illustrate how veganism operates as a subpolitical movement; Holzer and Sorensen apply Beck's concept of subpolitics to green, ethical and political consumers; defined as consumers who, just like vegans, look beyond the price-quality relation in their consumer behavior and include moral considerations as well (Holzer & Sorensen, 2003, p. 80). They distinguish three sources of subpolitical power: positive sanctions, negative sanctions and uncertainty absorption (Holzer & Sorensen, 2003, p. 92-94). Negative sanctions are the most well-known and refer to the boycotting of certain products, companies, political parties, organizations…etc. by taking away money, membership or other ways of support. By boycotting something, let's say a product, its producer misses out on potential income and the consumer misses out on the boycotted product. Positive sanctions are given through the rewarding of certain products, companies, political parties, organizations…etc., to stick with a product as an example; vegans are likely to positively sanction meat substitutes and vegetable-derived products. Unlike negative sanctions, which are essentially punishments, positive sanctions can be perceived as opportunities by the provider and can therefore result in win-win situations.

Uncertainty absorption is less obvious and has to do with the influence of authorities that provide elaborated knowledge for certain courses of action or impose definitions of reality. "*Generally speaking, if one has 'influence' over another person in a social situation this means that one is able to transfer one's own selective choice among a range of alternatives to the other person*" (Holzer &

Sorensen, 2003, p. 93). Holzer and Sorensen underline that this can happen willingly as developing and applying one's own criteria for every decision is extremely costly and practically impossible, hence the reliance on other people and experts (2003, p. 93). For vegans, this can refer to sources like studies, books, documentaries, organizations, social networks or particular people that serve as authorities to guide or assist vegans in their ideology and provide some sense of knowledge, confidence and security.

Vegans can thus be considered to be among Beck's freedom's children; people who escaped from the grand narratives that have dominated the first modernity and are finding new ways to author their lives in reaction to a world of self-inflicted risks, be they risks of animal cruelty, environmental damage or risks to one's own health. Even if they're not politically active in the traditional sense, vegans still live a highly politicalized life. This is important to remember when the literature makes distinctions between vegans that are affiliated with an organization or take active part in traditional political channels. Beck's concept of subpolitics reminds us how it is also the everyday actions of more individualistic, unorganized vegans that have a political echo and are therefore still part of veganism as a subpolitical movement.

2.2.7. Why veganism?

With veganism defined for this research and established as a subpolitical movement, this subsection will examine more closely what is already known about why people value veganism to see if it is indeed with the motivation to abandon carnism and its increasingly visible violence. Existing research tends to focus on vegetarianism when it comes to people's motivations for adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet, but this is most likely because they adopt the previously discussed vegetarian spectrum that includes veganism but places vegetarianism at the center. I will address these sources in order to get a general idea about why people reject carnism and examine sources that specifically focus on veganism in a later section to highlight possible peculiarities.

The existing literature on motivations for adopting a vegetarian diet makes a broad distinction between two (not necessarily exclusive) types of vegetarians; ethical and health vegetarians, both respectively valuing moral considerations and health benefits as the main reason for following a vegetarian diet (Jabs et al., 1998, p. 200; Hoek et al., 2004, p. 266; Worsley & Skrzypiec, 1997, p. 400). Ethical vegetarians have various morally motivated reasons; among other things, they reject the killing of animals for food (Kenyon & Barker, 1998, p. 197), are concerned with animal welfare (Worsley & Skrzypiec, 1998, p. 167-168) and are troubled by environmental issues (Lindeman & Sirelius, 2001, p. 179). Health vegetarians also have a range of reasons to adopt a vegetarian diet such as the prevention of diseases (Fox & Ward, 2008, p. 427), weight loss (Worsley & Skrzypiec, 1997, p. 401) and concerns about the risks of meat (Beardsworth & Keil, 1992, p. 273). Fox and Ward furthermore found that even though some respondents listed certain reasons as initial motivations for their change in diet, they would come to value other reasons as well later on. To illustrate; among their respondents, environmental concern wasn't generally mentioned as an initial motivator. Environmental concern was found to be more of a convenient side-effect that became a more prominent factor in the later experiences of the respondents with vegetarianism; possibly as a way to re-enforce their ideology or expand on it (2008, p. 427-428).

Another interesting motivator that Jabs et al. found was that some respondents took up vegetarianism during difficult or significant periods of their lives as a way of maintaining some form of control during otherwise chaotic times (1998, p. 199). Kenyon and Barker found a similar response among teenagers that became vegetarians to break away from traditional family values and express their non-compliance through dietary choices (1998, p. 197). The association of meat consumption and

power is also reflected by some feminists who perceive meat-eating as a form of patriarchal domination and choose to adopt a vegetarian diet instead (Gaard, 2002, p. 125). Virtually all studies eventually acknowledge the complexity of driving forces behind ideological food choices and by no means attempt to generalize their findings. They do however provide a starting point into the reasons people have for challenging carnism.

2.2.8. Practicing veganism

For veganism to work as a subpolitical movement, the previously discussed subpolitical practices (driven by personal reasons to value veganism) have to be practiced and maintained in everyday life (Cherry, 2006, p. 167). Specific literature on veganism is however not as abundant as it is on vegetarianism (Larsson et al., 2003, p. 61). Luckily, the studies that do centralize veganism examine in more depth what it means to be a vegan and go beyond just analyzing the motivations for taking up the diet, which provides the needed insight into the practicing and maintaining veganism in a carnist society that is at the center of this research.

Larsson et al. explain; "*becoming a vegan can be illustrated as a continuous process stimulated and inhibited by positive and negative reasons and perceived consequences*" (2003, p. 66). They associate the process of becoming vegan with Glaser and Strauss' concept of status passages, or; important processes in a person's life. Just like for example the transition between adolescence and adulthood, the adoption of veganism also changes the life of a person significantly and can be viewed as a real turning point (2003, p. 66).

The process of becoming vegan and practicing veganism in everyday life is different for each person, but Larsson et al. do distinguish between three rough categories of vegans that give an idea of to what extent the subpolitical practices of veganism are practiced and maintained: conformed vegans, organized vegans and individualistic vegans. Conformed vegans are the least convinced in their diet and mainly conform to the ideas of others; they are therefore most likely to drop off. Organized vegans are convinced in their diet and anchored in the vegan ideology. They associate with likeminded people to bring their ideology to the public in various ways such as protests and, in a few cases, illegal actions. Individualistic vegans are also convinced in their diet, but do not necessarily identify themselves with the organizing types of vegans. They also do not feel the need to legitimize their diet, nor do they seek conflict with non-vegans. (2003, p. 64). Cherry also recognizes veganism as a major lifestyle change, but only differentiates two types of vegans; those that are affiliated with a vegan organization and adhere to collective guidelines and those that are unaffiliated and have a more subjective interpretation of veganism that sometimes still includes animal products (2006, p. 159).

2.2.9. Maintaining veganism

The downside of being a vegan in a society where carnism is institutionalized is that it is out of the ordinary and its values are challenged by the status quo. These arguments against veganism are not to be taken lightly as, in accordance with Beck's second modernity in which we are confronted with self-inflicted risks; the growing visibility of the carnist violence and ideologies challenging carnism have created somewhat of a carnist backlash; a defensive response from carnists to the destabilization of carnism (Joy, 2012b). Joy argues that the primary defense of carnism; its invisibility that allows for denial of the violence, has been weakening due to the violent practices coming to light. Instead, carnists rely on a secondary defense, which is the justification of eating meat (Joy, 2010, p. 96-97). Ciocchetti has also studied what he refers to as "meaningful omnivores" (2012, p. 406-407), but which can be interpreted the same as neocarnists. Although Ciocchetti concludes that the arguments for carnism aren't strong enough to support the need for animal consumption (2012, p. 413-414), it does suggest that carnists also have to put more effort into sustaining their dietary practices and associated

identity which brings attention to the reasonable and often underestimated resistance that vegans face from people that have justified the killing of animals for consumption (Ciocchetti, 2012, p. 406).

There are various explanations for the differences in how vegans maintain veganism and why some are more successful at it than others. Earlier studies on veganism use a substantialist approach which focusses on individuals independently acting under their own powers (Cherry, 2006, p. 156; Emirbayer, 1997, p. 283). These studies would define vegans as rational actors whose success in maintaining veganism is determined by one's individual willpower (Cherry, 2006, p. 161). Although Cherry found that even vegans would name individual willpower to explain how vegans maintain their practices, she found that willpower alone is an inadequate argument to explain the differences between vegans' practices (2006, p. 161).

Instead, she argues for a relational approach that brings attention to supportive social networks; "*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, p. 157). Her findings reveal that vegans embedded in social networks that are unsupportive of veganism are more likely to be lenient in their diets than vegans that do have support for their diet in their everyday lives (Cherry, 2006, p. 165). This can be related back to Beck's interpretation of individualization that rejects the neo-liberal idea of the autarkic individual for being in conflict with everyday experiences in which individuals are tied to and reliant upon others. It also links back to uncertainty absorption as a source of subpolitical power as supportive social networks provide vegans with the confidence and security to maintain their practices. Vegans without this source of subpolitical power, who dealt with unsupportive social networks were mostly the ones unaffiliated with vegan organizations and were confronted with stronger arguments against veganism which are prevalent in the carnist society (Cherry, 2006, p. 168).

In the face of this resistance, supportive social networks are also important because they create discursive frameworks that help frame a vegan's social world in a way that is supportive of veganism (Cherry, 2006, p. 161-162). This is also found by a study by Sneijder and Te Molder that specifically focusses on the discursive tools vegans use to construct an identity in order to normalize their dietary practices and counter the common (or rather; carnist) perceptions of veganism (2009, p. 621). They explain the need for this as; "*being a health freak is treated as just as condemnable as leading a careless life*" (2009, p. 627). The sustainability of vegan practices, according to Sneijder and Te Molder, is thus partially dependent on the capabilities of vegans to counter the association of veganism with strict rules and extremism and instead identify veganism as just as easy and ordinary as a carnist diet (2009, p. 627-628). Here again vegans draw on uncertainty absorption as a source of subpolitical power to ensure veganism is the right course of action by relying on discursive tools in supportive social networks.

2.2.10. Conclusion

The main point of this chapter was to approach our society from an ideological unbiased perspective in order to portray all people as driven by different ideologies, whether consciously or not, when it comes to their food choice practices. It was discussed how the hegemonic discourse of carnism is institutionalized to such an extent that its followers are hardly aware that it exists. This wouldn't be an issue except that carnism can be considered as a violent ideology linked to the animal industry's treadmill of production which has increasingly deteriorated the environment over the last few decades. These growing risks for our global environment and therefore our being have led to what Beck named a second, reflexive phase of modernity and a dislocation of the carnist hegemony which subsequently opened up a space for subpolitical movements such as veganism to gain more ground. Vegans

however still live in a carnist society that is continuously finding new ways to justify itself. Luckily, subpolitics provide vegans with various sources of power to exercise and maintain their dietary practices in a carnist society and encapsulate veganism as a sustainable part of their identity.

Chapter 3.

Research design

To answer the research question of how the concept of subpolitics helps vegans to deepen the encapsulation of veganism as a sustainable part of their identity within a carnist society, this research aims to get more insight in what it means to be a vegan in a carnist society and to get it from their perspective. This follows some of the authors who have already studied veganism and similar social movements call for a more qualitative, relational approach to deepen our understanding of how these movements operate (Cherry, 2006, p. 158). This research attempts to do so by approaching veganism from the vegans' point of view and focusing on how they experience and maintain their practices. This chapter will first explore the best fitting methodological approach in section 3.1., after which the conceptual model will be presented in section 3.2. that operationalizes the theoretical and methodological concepts into more tangible elements and links them with the research questions. Based on this model and the methodological approach, the chapter ends with section 3.3., which discusses the methods used to conduct the fieldwork in San Francisco.

3.1. Methodological approach

A discussion on research methodologies is highly important, because "*beneath any given research design and choice of methods lies a researcher's (often implicit) understanding of the nature of the world and how it should be studied*" (Moses & Knutsen, 2007, p. 1). This section is therefore devoted to reflect on the nature of the subject under study and explore the best way to approach it for the purposes of this research. The first sub-section (3.1.1.) addresses the issue of identity and argues for the importance of narratives in this research. Sub-section 3.1.2. delves deeper into the ontological nature of narratives and, again, relates this back to this research. The final sub-section (3.1.3.) then explores the best way to study narratives.

3.1.1. The self-identity

The first and perhaps most important question when it comes to adopting a methodological approach to researching veganism as part of an identity is about what it means to be a person; to have a self-identity, and how this relates to the external world. The answer to this ontological question in turn determines what can be known and what this entails for me as the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). The debate on what constitutes an identity is strongly reflected in gender studies. One specific characteristic of this is the identifying and debating of the culture-nature divide (Dhamoon, 2013, p. 2). Hawkesworth points out that many feminist researchers found that gender identities are actually social constructs that vary among cultures and historical era's and not biologically determined categorizations as is often presumed (2013, p. 2). This research approaches veganism, or in better words; the vegan identity, in a similar, constructivist way by focusing more on how people choose to encapsulate one reality over another regardless of the supposed truthfulness in order to avoid making claims about the healthiness of the discussed diets, advocating a certain way of eating or getting mixed up in the debate about whether humans are biologically built to be carnivores, herbivores or omnivores. A second reason, which follows from the first one, is that carnism and veganism are put on an equal level, meaning that both of them are ideologies that can be dropped or adopted, there is no 'one' ideology that would correspond with the 'true' self of a person. In this interpretation, being either a vegan or carnist has nothing to do with what would be the natural thing to do or what our body is physically built for, but more with what a person choses to do.

As became clear in the discussion on carnism; what a person choses to do is not always a conscious act. Even when it is, a person is always situated in a certain context that both enables and limits the space in which self-identities are formed. The self-identity in turn re-produces the context in which it was formed as the individual views and expresses reality in the language adopted from that reality. Foucault used the term discourses when talking about this routine use of everyday language to re-present society and thereby maintain it (Moses & Knutsen, 2007, p. 192). A discourse is defined by Hajer as "*a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorizations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities*" (1997, p. 44). Bruner argues that this constructing of reality is predominantly done in the form of a narrative (2004, p. 692), with the individual as the central agent; the author of existence who selects and organizes in order to construct reality (Schafer, 1992, p. 23). It should be noted that not all talk and text is narrative; "*storytelling is only one genre, which humans employ to accomplish certain effects*" (Riessman & Quinney, 2005, p. 393). Nevertheless, this research adopts the concept of narratives because of its relevance to post-modern individualization and subsequent need for identity construction (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p. 3), as discussed in chapter 2.2. from the perspective of Beck and his individualization thesis. The vegan and carnist ideologies can then be interpreted as different narratives; different stories about how to view the world with different values attached to them that lead to different ways of acting in everyday life.

3.1.2. Struggling with multiple narratives

Schafer points out how a person can include multiple narratives at the same time, some more dominating than others (1992, p. 26). This would for example explain the in chapter 2.1. mentioned meat-paradox; or the mixed feelings people have towards the consumption of meat. Schafer would probably argue that there are two different narratives struggling with each other within a person: the carnist narrative and a challenging narrative. For someone who continues to consume meat, the carnist narrative would then eventually be the dominant one. Vegans most likely have the same struggle, but for them, the vegan narrative comes out on top. Schafer furthermore elaborates why we are inclined to attach our identity to one dominating narrative regarding certain issues (1992, p. 28):

> "*Our common language authorizes us to think and speak in terms of single, stable self-entities. And so we want to protest that the self is not a matter of language, theory and narrative mediation at all: The self is something we know firsthand; it is (in that marvelously vague phrase) the sense of self, a self we feel in our bones. I submit that it is correct to reply that "to feel it in your bones" is to resort to yet another good old storyline of the knowing body or the body as mind; the "sense of self" does not escape the web of narration."*

The likelihood of one narrative dominating over another also depends on the accessibility of the various narratives; although the narrator is seen as the agent that forms a narrative, this person never does so within a vacuum, but instead draws from existing constructions and formulations provided by history. The available language to talk about or give meaning to events and objects is a vital part of a narrative. Discursive psychology acknowledges the importance of this and places it center stage. Edley points out that there are multitudes of ways to formulate meaning, some of which are more available then others. The result of this is that certain ways of understanding the world can become hegemonic, they can become so common, so ordinary, that they are taken for granted as facts about the world (2001, p. 190).

In his analysis of masculinity, Edley also observes how men have become so familiar with and attached to the practices of the masculine narrative that they mistake history for nature. They fail to see that their natural masculine identity is actually a socially constructed reality (2001, p. 195). This

conclusion seems to apply for most people in the Western world, as Edley continues (2001, p. 195, original emphasis):

> "*Westerners are very keen to be seen, by themselves as well as others, as someone in particular. This explains why, when people are encouraged or forced to see the contradictions in their own identity 'projects', they often feel defensive or embarrassed*".

Here we can again make the connection with the carnist narrative and how its institutionalization leads people to mistake it for natural instead of constructed (Joy, 2010, p. 29). It also explains why people bring up neocarnist justifications to consume animal products, even if the arguments aren't considered strong enough to support it (Ciocchetti, 2012, p. 413-414). Lastly, it echoes Cherry's emphasis on organizations and social networks that provide access to constructions and formulations that are supportive of veganism which can help the absorption of uncertainty about veganism and the maintaining of veganism in everyday practices (2006, p. 158).

The approach of identities as the encapsulation of narratives corresponds with the goal for this research to answer the question of what the role of subpolitics is in the encapsulation of veganism while living in carnist society; it focusses on human beings as agents of their own reality who long for an identity of the self for which history has provided them with language and ways of thinking, which is similar to Beck's individualization thesis and the interpretation of veganism as a subpolitical movement; a movement that is strongly focused on individual lifestyle changes. It also recognizes the power relations resulting from some narratives being more hegemonic than others. As discussed in the theoretical framework, this is especially relevant now that the hegemony of the carnist narrative is losing its foothold because of its increasingly visible negative side-effects (Webb & Casey, 2010, p. 34; Gjerris, 2015, p. 523), opening more space for the challenging vegan narrative (Povey, Wellens & Conner, 2001; Jabs, Devine & Sobal, 1998; Worsley & Skrzypiec, 1998, p. 152; Trauth, 2014; Hoek, Luning, Stafleu & De Graaf, 2004).

3.1.3. Studying narratives

Having established the foundations of the methodological approach, it must be determined what can be known and how. This research wants to examine how the vegan narrative can be encapsulated by vegans living within a carnist society and what the role of subpolitics is in this encapsulation. To do so, it is important to get an idea of how the vegan narrative is constructed by vegans themselves as they are, as previously established, the authors of their reality. Collecting personal narratives has become a popular way of doing such qualitative research, but it comes with some warnings (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 164).

Atkinson and Delamont underline how the study of narratives is not confined to narration itself, but also contains the interactional and organizational contexts in which it is situated (2006, p. 165). Bruner makes a similar statement and explains how social realities are constructed in negotiation with others and distributed between them (1990, p. 105). Bruner continues; "*to overlook the situated-distributed nature of knowledge and knowing is to lose sight not only of the cultural nature of knowledge but of the correspondingly cultural nature of knowledge acquisition*" (1990, p. 106). A particular warning is given against the recuperative role of narratives when using them to give a voice to otherwise muted groups (Atkinson, 1997, p. 327); Atkinson warns how an emphasis on empowerment or celebration can compromise what is first and foremost a methodological issue by turning it into an ethical or a political one (1997, p. 334). Based on these warnings, it is then suggested to treat narratives as 'accounts' and 'performances', rather than direct authentic sources of self-identity or representations of social realities (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 166).

Riessman and Quinney also observe how narratives often seem to speak for themselves in popular culture and list some guiding analytical questions to invoke deeper interpretation (2005, p. 393, original emphasis):

> *"Missing for the narrative scholar is analytic attention to how the facts got assembled that way. For whom was this story constructed, how was it made, and for what purpose? What cultural resources does it draw on — take for granted? What does it accomplish? Are there gaps and inconsistencies that might suggest alternative counter-narratives?"*

For Riessman and Quinney then, a good narrative study contains (2004, p. 398):

> *"Reliance on detailed transcripts; focus on language and contexts of production; some attention to the structural features of discourse; acknowledgement of the dialogic nature of narrative; and (where appropriate) a comparative approach — interpretation of similarities and differences among participants' stories."*

Given this approach, the importance of personal narratives is acknowledged, but not overvalued and subjected to analytical scrutiny the same as other modes of representation (Atkinson, 1997, p. 343; Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 169).

3.2. Research model

This section presents the conceptual model for this research in which the previously discussed theoretical (chapter 2) and methodological (chapter 3.2.) elements are operationalized to find the best fitting methods and answer the research questions. The main model is presented first in sub-section 3.2.1., followed by individual models in sub-section 3.2.2. in which each of the elements of the main model are further operationalized according to each of the research sub-questions.

3.2.1. Main research model

Figure 1: Process of encapsulating the vegan narrative and practicing it in the subpolitical realm.

The main research model resembles the process of forming a narrative by drawing from the situated context and then reproducing the narrative into this context. It also draws from Beck's notion of personal biographies; the constant state of becoming and having to author a life of one's own. In short; vegans start with a certain view towards different dietary habits; how are these defined and what is their perceived impact? Vegans then have a choice of various values to attach to their view. Moving down another level; vegans bring their values into practice and engage in the subpolitics of veganism. The easier it is to practice veganism and maintain these subpolitical practices, the more positive the feedback is on the vegans' values. Veganism as a sustainable part of one's identity is therefore a positive feedback loop of ongoing vegan practices based on vegan values, indicating the encapsulation of veganism within a carnist society.

3.2.2. Operationalizations

Having established a conceptual model, each of its aspects will be elaborated on and expanded with the elements found in existing literature (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006; Bruner, 1990, Ciocchetti, 2012; Kenyon & Barker, 1998; Gilbert & Desaulniers, 2014; Sneijder & Te Molder, 2009; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Jabs et al., 1998; Hoek et al., 2004; Worsley & Skrzypiec, 1997; Worsley &

Skrzypiec, 1998; Lindeman & Sirelius, 2001; Gaard, 2002; Davy, 1997; Holzer & Sorensen, 2003; Cherry, 2006; Joy, 2010; Beardsworth & Keil, 1992; Fox & Ward, 2008; Larsson, Rönnlund, Johansson & Dahlgren, 2003).

3.2.2.1. Views on veganism

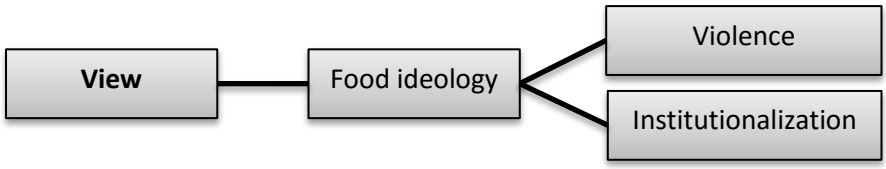

Figure 2: Operationalization of the respondent's view.

The first operationalization is of the 'view' category and is related to the first sub-question; how do vegans view veganism and its place in a carnist society? Respondents are likely to have different attitudes towards different food ideologies. In the model, the element 'food ideology' can thus be interchanged with a specific food ideology about which the respondent has a certain view. This operationalization presumes that this view of a particular food ideology, be it carnism or veganism, is characterized by a certain degree of violence and institutionalization. These categories are derived from what are deemed the for this research most important characteristics of carnism that are challenged by veganism: violence and institutionalization (Joy, 2010, p. 33; 103). Violence reflects the perceived impact a food ideology has on the natural world, which mostly concerns the exploitation of animals and the degradation of environmental values. Institutionalization reflects the extent to which a food ideology is embedded in our society through formal and informal institutions; highly embedded ideologies, or hegemonic ideologies are often perceived as the status quo, which turns them into invisible ideologies (Joy, 2010, p. 103). Ideologies that challenge a hegemonic ideology often have a higher visibility exactly because they are out of the ordinary (Gilbert & Desaulniers, 2014, p. 293). The degree of institutionalization of a food ideology is this concerned with questions like; is there a strongly perceived hegemony of one food ideology over another? And what are the perceived consequences of this? Is the food ideology out there and tangible, or is it obscured?

Examining the views on different food ideologies is important to establish the world in which values are formed. Most of the knowledge about the degree of violence and institutionalization of the for this research relevant food ideologies is already covered in the theoretical framework, where the violent impact of institutionalized carnism (Joy, 2010, p. 33) and how veganism opposes that violence as a challenging ideology through the exclusion of animal products in dietary habits (Larsson et al., 2003, p. 61) was discussed through the lens of the treadmill of production and the world risk society. Nevertheless, it is important to also examine the view of respondents and not solely base it on the literature. This way, the extent to which the view of respondents corresponds with the existing literature can be determined and perhaps supplemented. It also ensures that their stories are not placed in the wrong context; thereby avoiding some methodological pitfalls (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 165; Bruner, 1990, p. 105-106) that were discussed earlier in this chapter (3.1.3.).

3.2.2.2. Valuing veganism

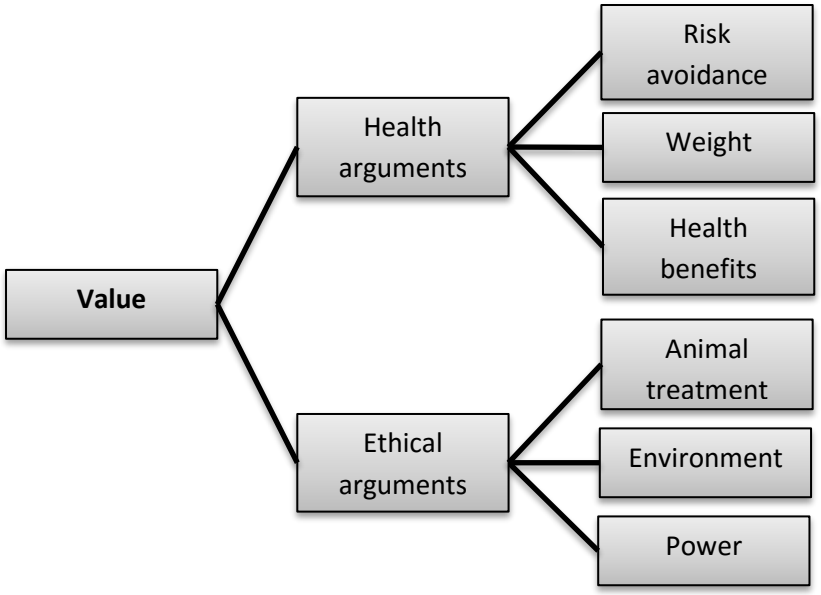

Figure 3: Operationalization of the respondent's values.

Now that the context of veganism within a carnist society has been established, we can go a little deeper into the values that are attached to the views of vegans and address the second sub-question; why do vegans value veganism? In the theoretical framework (chapter 2.2.7), arguments for veganism were usually divided in health and ethical arguments (Jabs et al., 1998, p. 200; Hoek et al., 2004, p. 266; Worsley & Skrzypiec, 1997, p. 400). Vegans naming health arguments were concerned with the risks of meat consumption (Beardsworth & Keil, 1992, p. 273), weight loss (Worsley & Skrzypiec, 1997, p. 401) and health benefits from a plant-based diet (Fox & Ward, 2008, p. 427). Ethical arguments involved the revulsion towards the industrial treatment and killing of animals (Kenyon & Barker, 1998, p. 197; Worsley & Skrzypiec, 1998, p. 167-168), concerns about the environmental damages done by the animal industry (Lindeman & Sirelius, 2001, p. 179) and the revolt against certain power relations (Jabs et al., 1998, p. 199; Kenyon & Barker, 1998, p. 197; Gaard, 2002, p. 125). It should also be noted that these are not static categories; the values of vegans can evolve over time as the process of encapsulating veganism furthers and new reasons are discovered (Fox & War, 2008, p. 427-428).

There may be noticeable similarities between the perceived characteristics of a food ideology in the previous model and the ethical arguments in this one. The main distinction is that this model focusses on the moral judgements attached to more ontological perceptions from the previous model. In practice, this distinction will probably not be as clear as presented here because people do not tend to reveal their view without the attached values; talking about right and wrong does indeed seem more innate to our nature than just stating how it is, making it almost inevitable to apply a certain concept of justice (Davy, 1997, p. 255). Taken together, an elaborate enough illustration of the personal values of vegans as embedded within larger contextual views can be created.

3.2.2.3. Practicing subpolitics

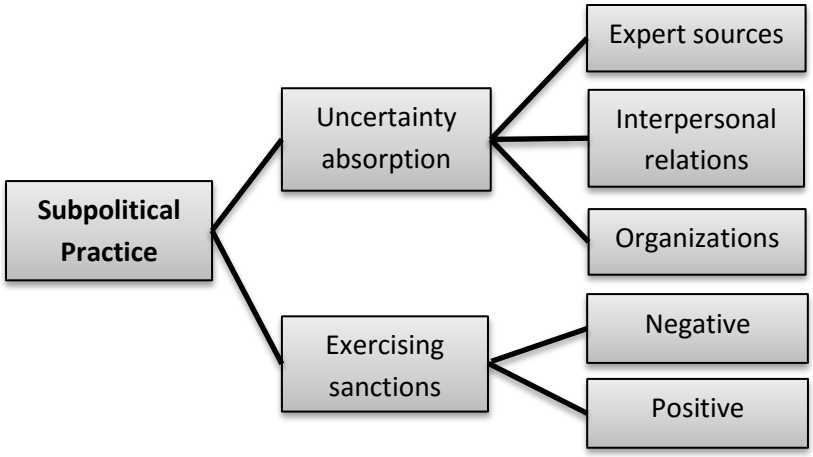

Figure 4: Operationalization of subpolitical practices.

The third category involves the respondents' engagement in the subpolitics of veganism by practicing veganism in everyday life based on the previously determined view and values. The third sub-question about the ways vegans engage in subpolitics when practicing veganism is addressed here. The first category; 'view', provided the context. The second category; 'value', the moral guidance for action and now with the third category; 'subpolitical practice', we see how the vegan fares within that context and practices his or her values within the subpolitical realm.

Just like with the other models, here again categories were derived from the theoretical framework. The subpolitical practices of veganism consisted of exercising sanctions and uncertainty absorption (Holzer & Sorensen, 2003, p .92-94). Uncertainty absorption had to do with drawing on external sources to find assurance and confidence that one's course of action (and the view and values driving it) is the right one. To operationalize this, a distinction was made between expert sources, interpersonal relations and organizations. Expert sources are the most obvious as it involves absorbing uncertainty through representations of knowledge (books, documentaries…etc.) of experts. Interpersonal relations help to absorb uncertainty by providing vegans with support, role models and knowledge from people who are not necessarily experts. Lastly, organizations, following Cherry's findings on affiliated versus unaffiliated vegans (2006), contribute by offering an organized collective for vegans to be part of. The second source of subpolitical power; exercising sanctions, entailed the rewarding (a positive sanction) and boycotting (a negative sanction) of certain products, companies, organizations…etc. based on vegan values.

3.2.2.4. Maintaining vegan practices

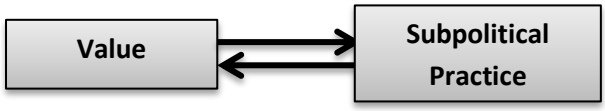

Figure 5: Feedback loop between value and subpolitical practice.

The final operationalization addresses the interrelation between the operationalized categories of the conceptual model and discusses the final sub-question; what is the importance of subpolitics in engaging the challenges of maintaining vegan practices within a carnist society? The suggested causality between having a view towards food ideologies, attaching meaning to them and acting

accordingly has been explained, but the relation between ‘subpolitical practice’ and ‘value’, has yet to be discussed.

For a subpolitical movement to be successful, its practices; which in the previous model were established as the absorption of uncertainty and exercising of sanctions, have to be maintained (Cherry, 2006, p. 167). Because veganism is practiced within a carnist society, vegans are likely to encounter challenges in maintaining their practices. The feedback loop between ‘subpolitical practice’ and ‘value’ represents this struggle of upholding vegan values while encountering challenges in practicing veganism. The question then is how vegans utilize the subpolitical practices of veganism in a way that ensures a positive feedback on their values, and therefore their practices, in order to successfully engage the challenges of being vegan in a carnist society. The discussed literature on maintaining veganism (chapter 2.2.9) drew attention to the benefits of uncertainty absorption by finding supportive social networks and sharing in discursive frameworks; which this research refers to as narratives (chapter 3.1.1.), for maintaining vegan practices (Larsson et al., 2006, p. 66; Sneijder & Te Molder, 2009, p. 627-628; Cherry, 2006, p. 157). So when vegans can utilize these while acting out the subpolitical practices of veganism, they are more likely to keep a sustainable relation between the two which decreases the likelihood of vegans to drop off as Larsson et al. found with their category of conformed vegans (2003, p. 64), and suggests the possibility of a sustainable encapsulation of veganism while living in a carnist society.

3.3. Methods

In the previous sections, the methodological approach was clarified and the conceptual models were presented. Knowing what the methodological approach is and what information needs to be collected to answer the research questions, the only thing that remains is a discussion on the best way to conduct the research, collect the required data and perform an analysis. This research adopted an ethnographic research design, the motivation for which is addressed in the first sub-section (3.3.1.). Sub-section 3.3.2. then discusses the methods that were used during fieldwork in San Francisco.

3.3.1. Adopting an ethnographic design

Although ethnography was once associated with the exploration of native tribes and immersive fieldwork that lasted years (Adler, P. & Adler, O., 1987, p. 9), today; it has become more of an umbrella term for various types of qualitative research that study culture-sharing groups via immersion and extensive fieldwork in order to describe and interpret their behavior, language, beliefs…etc. (Gans, 1999, p. 541; Creswell, 2013, p. 90-93; Macgilchrist & Van Hout, 2011, p. 2). It is known for generating knowledge of high validity; which refers to the degree of truthfulness of the results and whether researchers have actually found what they claim to have discovered (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p. 217; Davies, 2008, p. 96). This thanks to the high involvement of the researcher with the research subjects, which increases the chance the researcher makes correct interpretations of their subjective worlds (Davies, 2008, p. 96).

To ensure ethnography is the best design for this research, Creswell gives two reasons to determine whether or not ethnography is the appropriate design for a research (2013, p. 94). First, ethnography is appropriate when one seeks to research how a cultural group works and what issues, such as power, resistance and dominance, they face. This is in line with the goal for this research of getting insights in the experiences of vegans and the role of subpolitics in deepening the encapsulation of veganism while living in a carnist society. A second reason is that there is insufficient literature on the cultural group because the group is not in the mainstream. This too appears to be the case with veganism as most research focusses on vegetarianism. Based on these reasons, an ethnographic design is thus deemed appropriate for this research.

Adopting an ethnographic design comes with a warning from Thomas who criticizes how ethnographic researchers sometimes adopt a subjective epistemological stance, but implicitly assume that the researcher is an infallible interpreter, thereby creating a contradiction when their findings are presented as a complete picture of the whole, rather than a partial indication of the whole (1983, p. 481-482). This issue of generalizability, just like the issue of reliability; the ability to repeat a research with the same results (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 271), is rather problematic for a field of study that tends to consist of idiographic research (Davies, 2008, p. 101). To remedy this issue, Davies distinguishes empirical generalizability and theoretical inference. The first refers to the more traditional interpretation of generalizing results from a study to a larger population, which she argues is a difficult endeavor in an ethnographic study (2008, p. 102-103). Davies therefore suggests adopting theoretical inference; generalizing the results in the context of a particular theoretical debate by comparing it to other studies to search for differences that can strengthen or refine developing explanations of social phenomena (2008, p. 103). This research followed this suggestion which complements the intention to contribute to the existing body of work on veganism and vegan identity-building, rather than making generalized, duplicable claims about a larger population of vegans.

3.3.2. Fieldwork in San Francisco

The fieldwork for this research was conducted over a period of three months in San Francisco, The United States. The city of San Francisco was chosen because of its progressive image that increased the likelihood of encountering vegans and because of the diversity of vegan organizations that are located there. The period of the fieldwork was limited to three months due to visa restrictions. Because of the relatively short time in the field, special attention was paid to finding ways to ensure that the available time in the field would yield the best results, which subsection 3.3.2.1. briefly addresses. With these improvements included, the fieldwork for this research was conducted from September until November in 2015. A triangulation of interviews and observations was employed to gather the necessary data. First, McCracken's long interview will be addressed as the best suited approach to conduct interviews for this research (3.3.2.2.), followed by the questionnaire that was subsequently created for the interviews (3.3.2.3.). Subsection 3.3.2.4. addresses the process of selecting the respondents. Subsection 3.3.2.5. discusses observations as the second method for gathering data and lastly; subsection 3.3.2.6. presents the used method for data analysis.

3.3.2.1. Preliminary actions

To ensure the fieldwork gets the best results, Emerson suggested ways to improve ethnographic fieldwork. His first observation was that researchers are less inclined to conduct long periods of fieldwork when they already are (somewhat) familiar with the culture they seek to study; they might even already be part of it (Emerson, 1987, p. 71). Although I was not a vegan while conducting the fieldwork, I already had a basic familiarity with it which decreased the amount of time needed to get familiar with the research subject. Emerson did argue for more immersion into the field by among other ways becoming a participating member and paying attention to historical development, if needed via periodic revisits (1987, p. 71-72). Fine agrees and stated that one needs to become an expected participant and not just an ethnographic tourist (2003, p. 53). He furthermore added that immersion should happen in the places where the culture group acts, rather than focusing on anonymous places where they might happen to meet, such as public areas. If possible, the researcher should also visit multiple sites because of the local distinctiveness of every group (2003, p. 52-53). This suggestion too was implemented by visiting different vegan organizations and their activities as much as possible and, when possible, visit respondents at their houses.

Another way to improve ethnographic fieldwork was to specify theoretical issues and rely on existing work as opposed to discovering theory in the field (Emerson, 1987, p. 72-73; Fine, 2003, p. 52). This stemmed from what Fine believes is our obligation to provide conceptual understanding beyond the mere describing of culture groups (2003, p. 52). McCracken also adds that a good literature review can create a set of expectations that limit the capacity for surprise while conducting the research (1988, p. 31). This way to improve the ethnographic fieldwork was of course implemented by creating an extensive theoretical framework (chapter 2) and research model (chapter 3.2.) prior to the fieldwork.

3.3.2.2. The long interview

The long interview is a method to get a glimpse of the mental world of an individual and allows the researcher to capture how respondents see and experience the world themselves (McCracken, 1988, p. 9). It differs from other ways of interviewing in that the researcher takes a less active stance and gives more space to respondents to share their experiences in their own terms and structure (McCracken, 1988, p. 21-22). The long interview is a fitting method to remedy two practical difficulties when it comes to collecting qualitative data in ethnographic studies; time scarcity and privacy concerns. McCracken explains how respondents live busy lives and may not have much time and attention for the researcher, who may also not have time for an extensive study (1988, p. 10). The second issue is that respondents value their privacy and probably have little interest in the constant presence of a researcher for long periods of time (1988, p. 11). Using the long interview, the researcher can overcome these issues and collect an abundance of data without the intrusive, prolonged contact as can be the case in traditional ethnographic studies.

To best conduct a long interview, McCracken suggests using a semi-structured interview approach with a set of 'grand-tour' questions; open, nondirective question that allow the respondent to tell their story while the researcher maintains a low profile (1988, p. 34-35; Davies, 2008, p. 106). These questions then come with a set of associated prompts (Robson, 2002, p. 278). One of these is the contrast prompt; providing respondents with a contrasting term or phenomenon, preferably from the respondent's own vocabulary, to push off against to provoke further discussion. Another planned prompt is the 'category question'; these allow the researcher to cover all the aspects of the topic of discussion. A last one is to ask respondents about an exceptional incident in which the research topic was implicated (McCracken, 1988, p. 35-36). 'Floating prompts' or 'probes', such as raising the eyebrow or repeating a key term of the respondent in an interrogative tone can also be used to collect expansions on a story or guide the interview in an unobtrusive way (McCracken, 1988, p. 35; Robson, 2002, p. 276).

3.3.2.3. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed following the conceptual model to ensure the gathered data would provide sufficient knowledge to address the research questions. It was particularly challenging to find a balance between determining distinctive categories of questions that need to be covered and giving respondents enough room to share their experiences without too much predetermined limitations. McCracken's method of the long interview was used to find that balance. The categories of the conceptual model were applied, but instead of seeing them as separate categories, they were visualized as follows:

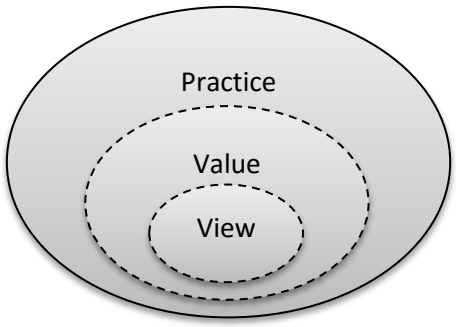

Figure 5: Questionnaire design

As was suggested in the conceptual model, the view of the respondents presumably has a smaller, more implicit presence in their stories and is therefore the smallest circle in the above figure. Questions about the respondents' values come second and by the time specific questions about how respondents practice veganism in everyday life are asked, this will already include their values and view (hence; 'practice' as the biggest circle). The dotted lines indicate the soft borders between categories; the likeliness of respondents to include aspects of multiple categories in their stories, even though a question may only aim at one. This design kept me aware of that by envisioning the categories as a whole only separated by analytical borders, not narrative borders. The questionnaire (appendix 1) then consists of a few open, or in McCracken's terms; grand-tour questions, each with a set of prompts or possible directions for further questioning.

After a small set of introduction questions to establish that the respondent indeed identifies as a vegan and how long this has been so, the first analytical category addressed the view of the respondent. This section contained general questions about the respondent's thoughts towards food ideologies, the answers of which mainly served for juxtaposition with the existing literature and to set the context for the rest of the interview. The first question asked the respondent to explain what veganism entails. If the avoidance of animal products is mentioned, questions were asked about the respondent's thoughts on that issue; why are animal products avoided? What are the problems with the consumption of animal products? How is this different with veganism? How does society address these problems? To what extent do you think this is successful? When it came to the subject of carnism, or the respondent's thoughts about the ideology behind meat consumption, the respondents were asked why they think people consume meat. Follow-up questions went in several directions based on the answers; if the answer contained an element of ignorance or 'they do not know any better/think it is normal', respondents were asked why they think this is so; do the respondents think that meat consumption is normal in this society? How then is veganism perceived? With these questions answered, the respondents had provided enough information to answer the first sub-question of this research about how vegans view veganism and carnism, asked in a way that preserved the respondent's space for storytelling as much as possible by anticipating possible answers and letting follow-up questions arise naturally from them.

The second analytical category was aimed at getting insight in the values of the respondents. They were meant to collect the data needed for the second sub-question; why do vegans value veganism? For this, the first question asked the respondents to tell the story of how they became a vegan; what reasons/motivations were important (this might be related back to the motivations such as health or ethics found in the literature)? Were there people that influenced them (friends/family… etc.)? In addition to the previous question about the respondents' views on veganism and the carnist society, these questions provided more explicit insight into their personal reasons to value veganism.

The last two sub-questions about how vegans practice veganism within a carnist society and how vegans engage the challenges of being a vegan were combined because the separation is useful for the analysis, but not so much for conducting the interviews if I wanted to let the respondent talk with as little interference as possible. This part started with another grand-tour question; how did your everyday life change since becoming a vegan? Again, depending on the story that follows there were several follow-up questions in order to cover what needed to be known; how did the dietary change affect shopping behavior? Does the respondent go to different stores? Has the social circle of the respondent changed? How did people react when the respondent became vegan? What were the challenges of becoming a vegan? And how does the respondent experience these now? A next grand-tour question provoked a more specific response about the feedback of the respondents' everyday experience on their values and asked about the respondents' experience with interacting with people who have a different diet. Was this confrontational or did the respondent feel confident about their values? Have the vegan values ever been compromised? If so, how does the respondent feel about it? If not, how was the situation handled? The last question asked about the respondents' affiliation with an organization. If they were affiliated; why so? If it is to pursue political goals in a more activist way; what does this entail? What is hoped to achieve and in what ways is it to be done? If they were not affiliated; why not? Do they feel confident enough about being a vegan to not need the support of an organization? Do they not believe in organizational activism? Why not? Do respondents take part in personal activism? How? Although these questions do not follow the exact order of the related operationalizations, they do cover all the elements within them and sufficed to answer the final two sub-questions.

3.3.2.4. Selection of respondents

For the selection of respondents, McCracken states that the respondents should be total strangers to both the researcher and each other, and few in number: no more than eight (1988, p. 37). This 'less is more' approach is because of the qualitative nature of ethnographic research; it's not meant to collect a sample of a larger population, but rather to get in-depth access to a cultural group (McCracken, 1988, p. 17). There are of course ethnographic studies that include more respondents, but these are also conducted over longer periods of time (Evans & Abrahamse, 2009, p. 488). Creswell doesn't mention a specific number of respondents for ethnographic studies, but suggest to keep doing interviews (and other forms of data collection) "*until the workings of the cultural group are clear*" (2013, p. 157). Looking at my research questions; the first two questions about the nature of veganism and the motivations for people to adopt such a diet have already been explored in the literature to some extent and do not require a lot of different respondents to be answered. The last two questions however delve deeper into the lesser studied vegan identity and deal with vegans' subpolitical activities in a carnist society and the subsequent challenges of upholding their vegan values. These questions are more exploratory than the previous two and will therefore benefit from larger amount of respondents.

Based on the questions and the amount of time in the field, I included nine respondents into my research. The first few were complete strangers selected by using a big net approach where the researcher mingles with everyone in the studied group and selects respondents based on the research questions (Creswell, 2013, p. 155). From there, other respondents were found via the snowball effect and connections within a built-up social network, and strategically selected to ensure a variety of ages and genders. This strategically selecting of respondents is also referred to as maximum variation sampling (Davies, 2008, p. 110; Creswell, 2013, p. 156). McCracken suggests this contrast helps to manufacture critical distance from the material (1988, p. 37). Differences in age were interesting for this research because veganism has only recently been growing in popularity and might have been experienced differently a couple of years ago. Gender was also interesting as food ideologies have

been linked to ideas of masculinity or femininity; take for example the suggested relation between vegetarianism and femininity (Curtis & Comer, 2006) and meat consumption and masculinity (Ruby & Heine, 2011; Rozin, Hormes, Faith & Wansink, 2012; Rothgerber, 2013). Although the relation between gender and food ideology is not the focus of this research, the contrast between genders might still be relevant to get more specific insight in the process of encapsulating veganism as a sustainable part of one's identity.

3.3.2.5. Observations

Related with the ethnographic approach is unstructured observation (Thomas, 2013, p. 220). Unstructured observation is often called participant observation because of the researcher's immersion and participation in a social situation (Thomas, 2013, p. 220). Based on Gold's often used scheme to classify the role of the observer, a continuum can be drawn with on one end the observer as complete participant; fully participating in the situation that is being observed, and on the other end the observer as complete observer; trying to be as unobtrusive as possible (University of Strathclyde, 2012a). Thomas addresses the same classification scheme but finds it hard to pinpoint where one type ends and another begins and suggests to keep the research goal and questions upfront and start from there to find to best fitting way to act (2013, p. 221). Because this research is looking for the subjective meanings and experiences constructed by vegans in a carnist society, it can be argued that a degree of participation is needed to interpret these meanings and experiences trough the experiences of the observer with the subjective world of those that are being observed (Robson, 2002, p. 314).

Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte note that observation begins rather exploratory and becomes more selective when the researcher gets familiar with the new surroundings (1999, p. 96). This is a relevant remark as this research was conducted in a foreign country. It was therefore important to write down observations as accurately as possible without imposing the analytical categories on them until meanings, patterns, relations and so on became clear (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 96). Robson also speaks of descriptive observation to explain this first stage of observation (2002, p. 320). During the fieldwork, observations were written down based on lists by Schensul et al. (1999, p. 97-111) and Robson (2002, p. 320) with observational activities that can help the researcher orientate in the field:

- Observing settings; the identification of locations in which the behavior that is being studied may occur.
- Observing events; repeated activities that involve more than one person and take place in a specific place with a specific purpose.
- Counting and census-taking; identifying the number of people and their characteristics.
- Observing social differences; differences among individuals in education, employment and income.
- Observing acts; specific individual actions.
- Observing goals; what the participants are trying to accomplish.
- Observing feelings; emotions in particular contexts.

The observations were written down to create field notes consisting of detailed descriptions that are free of judgement and observed as "*if through the lens of a camera*" (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 115). Writing down happened as quickly as possible after an observation was made, these quick accounts were then expanded with additional notes during private time. Personal responses and comments were also added at times in a separate section which began the interpretative process by making the first analytical impressions of the observations (University of Strathclyde, 2012b). The practical solution

was to keep a journal in which all these different types of observations were written down and commented upon (appendix 2). Together with the long interviews, this completed the data collection.

3.3.2.6. Data analysis

When collected, the long interviews were transcribed to prepare them for analysis. In accordance with the constructivist approach, a thick description is included to help understand the respondents' behavior within its observed context (Thomas, 2013, p. 109). Thomas notes that including a thick description is already a form of analyzing itself: *"you are doing this by intelligently reflecting on the scene, imagining, putting yourself in another's shoes, 'seeing' what the other person is doing"*(2013, p. 241). For a more detailed process of analyzing data, we again turn to McCracken who presents a process for analyzing the long interviews that moves from the particular to the general (1988, p. 42), which is essentially a constant comparison method as described in Thomas (2013, p. 235). It furthermore includes elements from grounded theory analysis which, although criticized by Thomas (2013, p. 239) and Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.339) for essentially referring to the constant comparative method, does emphasize the possibility of letting theory emerge from the collected data without being too fixated on previously established categories (Creswell, 2013, p. 85).

Coding program Atlas.ti was used for the analysis of the collected data. This began with the study of the story of a respondent without concern for its larger significance; "*at this this stage, the investigator acts much like an archaeologist, sorting out important material from unimportant material with no attention to how important material will eventually be assembled*" (McCracken, 1988, p. 43). McCracken explains how the researcher uses the self as an instrument with help from the existing literature; operationalized in the conceptual model, as a template to search out relevant data (1988, p. 44-45). In this stage, codes were created and attached to the respondents' stories. This resulted in around 150 codes that were compared to each other for similarities, reviewed and eventually brought down to 136 codes (Appendix 3).

Based on this list of codes and the frequency with which they appeared throughout the respondents' stories, themes emerged that captured the contents of the data (Thomas, 2013, p. 235), these themes were organized in nine code families (Appendix 4) through construct mapping, or theme mapping as Thomas calls it; which visualizes the findings and their interrelations (2013, p. 237-238). The code families roughly resembled the elements from the conceptual models and were used as the basis for the final of stage of analysis (McCracken, 1988, p. 46). In this last stage, I moved away from the respondents' point of view and developed my own perspective on the group under study as is presented in chapter 5.

Chapter 4.

Portraits of veganism

During the fieldwork in San Francisco, nine people of variating ages, genders and ethnicities were interviewed about their experiences with the vegan diet. This chapter presents their stories in the form of individual portraits, as much as possible in their own words (even when it is not presented in a direct quotation), to ensure the equal inclusiveness of all respondents and to show how a variety of different people came into contact with veganism in a variety of different ways. When deemed necessary, personal observations will be added to create more context. For the sake of privacy, all respondents have been given a different name. Paragraph 4.1. will start with Matt, respectively followed by Julie (4.2.), Godfrey (4.3.), Petra (4.4.), Diane (4.5.), Jaleesa (4.6.), Joanna (4.7.), Wes (4.8.) and Achmed (4.9.).

4.1. Matt

Matt, 55 years old, lived with a vegan partner for 11 years, but wasn't a vegan himself during that time. It wasn't until his church suggested people to abstain from eating meat for the period of Lent that he first tried it out for himself. When the period ended, he decided to continue;

> "*So, I decided to stick with it until a week after Lent, and the next thing you know it led to two weeks. Anyway, long story short; it's now been six years and I'm perfectly happy now being vegan.*''

When asked about veganism, Matt mentions the dietary guidelines, but also says he's an exception because he eats honey. Later in the interview however, he adds that he doesn't eat much honey, in his words; probably about once every three months. His motivations coincide with the ones found in the literature; animal health, personal health and climate change. About the dietary change itself;

> "*Two of my favorite foods, which I didn't even think about until after I decided to become vegan: pizza and quesadillas, and both, of course, are predominately filled with cheese and then I though; ''ooh no! What have I done?''. So that was number one challenge.*''

The challenge however, seemed short-lived;

> "*I did discover a place that makes vegan pizza, I actually had a slice of pizza and it was delicious, so I thought; ''good! If I ever want pizza I can go here''. So that's great. And the Mexican restaurant here in San Francisco called 'Gracias Madre' is vegan and, when they first opened, they actually opened, funny thing, five years ago, so about a year after I became vegan. And when I heard the vegan Mexican restaurant was opening I thought ''well they gotta have quesadillas''. So I went into the restaurant and said ''do you guys have quesadillas?'' and they said ''yes we do'', I said ''one right here please!''. And they brought it out and it was delicious. I thought: ''great!'', so those challenges have actually been breached. I mean, I feel like I succeeded.*''

Although he doesn't consider social situations to be very challenging as a vegan, Matt did join a lunch group called *Vegans and Vegetarians over 40*, in which he's formed new friendships with people. He also joined the San Francisco Vegetarian Society, which he got into because of their weekly vegan

dinners. He enjoys his membership because it provides him with knowledge of upcoming events, some financial benefits in the form of discounts for vegan restaurants and friends.

In his closing comments, Matt again confirms not only the easiness of veganism, but also the sense of pride he gets from it;

> "*I think I feel a certain sense of pride in being a vegan, it seems so funny, pride, but I'm proud because not everyone thinks it's easy, but it's become easy for me, because it's become such a routine.*''

The interview ends with a story about Matt running the San Francisco marathon twice, before and after he became a vegan, and not noticing any difference in his athletic ability; suggesting that veganism doesn't make you weaker and you still get all the nutrients you need.

4.2. Julie

Julie is a 22 year old nutrition student. She mentions how some people abstain from buying clothes made from animals, but for her, it's more about the diet and abstaining from consuming dietary animal products.

> "*[I became a vegan] about two years ago. And I just started doing research and it wasn't like an overnight thing, I read The China Study and I watched that documentary Forks over Knives and then I read my entire nutrition book and I just decided to make the change and I felt a lot better after I did it. I just wanted to eat healthier, that's all it was initially, because I never thought about the ethical.. and I didn't know about the environmental problems either. I was able to stick with it because after I became vegan I realized about the environmental issues and ethical issues as well.*''

Although feeling good about her dietary change, which she says was never a challenge, she did experience some awkwardness when eating with her family. To avoid this, she tries to go to restaurants a lot, which she feels is easy in San Francisco (especially compared to Tucson, where she used to live) as there are a lot of vegan restaurants and restaurants that have vegan options. She also gets fresh produce delivered to her house every Friday. When asked how her friends and family reacted to her becoming a vegan;

> "*At first they kind of teased me, I don't think they thought I would kind of stick through it. Other than that, they don't have an issue with it*.''

Luckily, she says she is not teased anymore. She did however make an effort to connect with other vegans;

> "*I joined this vegan meet-up group here in San Francisco and that, I really liked doing that because the guy that started it was like, tired of eating with his co-workers because every time they would go out, they were like ''where do you get your protein?'' and he's like ''ugh, can't I just eat in peace?'' you know.*''

She also does a lot with Greenpeace, where a lot of people are vegan. Among other activities she mentions hosting a documentary showing and protesting against drilling in the artic. These aren't specifically related to veganism, but she does say;

> *"Being a vegan connected kind of the dots for me to become and environmentalist, because I was completely oblivious to all the environmental issues, like even like fossil fuels and stuff like that."*

4.3. Godfrey

Organic gardener Godfrey, 61 years old, abstains from all animal products and has done so for the last 20 years. In the 70s, he briefly was a vegetarian but met a partner who influenced him back towards eating meat for 12 years until that relationship broke up and he made the decision to go vegan. He initially became a vegetarian for health reasons, which was the same reason for becoming vegan later; but by this time, he had learned about the health issues with eggs and learned about leather and wanted to find a more peaceful way to live. After making the change to veganism, Godfrey eventually lost 30 pounds and now only weighs about five pounds more than he did in high school.

> "*Dropped all that stuff off which felt wonderful, I felt lighter, more energy. I actually felt like I was, even though I'm aging and people, you know it's always a youth-oriented society that we all live in no matter where in the world we are, that I actually felt more attractive as well, without all that blubber hanging all over me and stuff. Yeah, it just felt really good. So physically, mentally and even spiritually because of that… much, much better*.''

One challenge after being vegan for so long is that he can longer handle the smell of meat and fish counters, which he says makes him nauseous. Luckily, there's the farmers market and Rainbow Grocery stores that only offer vegetarian products. Socially, his life also changed after becoming a vegan, which came with its own challenges…

> "*…because we're a minority, unfortunately still.. here in San Francisco I'm a gay man and I'm a vegan, so there is a gay group called Happy Herbivores, they're mostly gay women, I'm usually one of maybe two or three max gay men that go to this group, there's usually 25 that come and there's two or three of us that are gay men, the rest are all gay women. I have no idea why, I think women are allowed in our society to be more sensitive and to be more compassionate and men are supposed to be tough and strong and all that kind of stuff I think it's.. I definitely don't think we are but I think we're supposed to be, we're supposed to act like that. One of the gifts of being a gay person, especially gay men, is that I don't have to fit in, because I'm not in a mainstream, I don't have to fit into those roles, I can be as masculine or feminine as I want to be because I'm gay. That's actually a really nice thing, a nice gift of it, so I like that*."

Throughout the interview, Godfrey emphasizes this importance of having different communities for the different things in his life. His family and friends were initially challenged by his veganism, mostly because they did not fully understand what it was about, but they're better now. In general, as both a vegan and a gay man, he feels being a minority has become easier over time;

> "*Because the community is there to support me … they never make me feel different or less than, they just treat me like everybody else and I think part of that is that society in general is getting better, but San Francisco in particular is a very special place to live, not only because of the weather.. it's just a more open-minded, peaceful and loving place to live. I feel very fortunate to live here, especially since it is so expensive these days too*.''

4.4. Petra

The oldest of the respondents, at 85 years old, Petra, despite only living on a completely plant-based diet since 2008, has been a vegetarian her whole life and has always been interested in veganism. Her father was also a vegetarian and is the main reason she was raised as such.

> "*I grew up in various places. I was born in Hamburg, my father transferred in 1932 to Berlin so I grew up, 10-11 years in Berlin and then with the war events, my father came with us to Süssen, Germany, which was actually closer to the family, because my great grandfather had immigrated from Holland to Pforzheim, which is the gold city and he had the profession of engraving and, so actually for us it was beneficial that we were transplanted to the southern part of Germany because we were closer to relatives. But none of these relatives did understand my father who had sworn off meat.*''

She became a vegan after her children had moved out, it was pressure of the family and their concerns about raising children vegan that kept her from doing it earlier. The eventual change to a vegan diet wasn't particularly challenging because she only had the cheese to discard. She did not have to change her shopping habits, as she mentions she's been shopping at the same place she's always been to. After asking what makes veganism more important for her than vegetarianism;

> "*Well, it is to me that I feel with veganism there's a lot more to it than the stomach question and the tongue question, it's a lot more because you are not.. you really don't want any more leather goods, you don't want any more feather goods, you don't want any silk, any wool, really. So you better be a cotton girl! I mean, I still have some things that I knitted 20-30 years ago I'm not going to throw it away because I cannot bring those sheep back to live, but I will not acquire new things that are made from these materials*.''

Her change to veganism did not lead to much reactions, as she says her parents are gone now and her son is a vegetarian living with his wife and children. About her friends;

> "*Most of my friends are not vegetarians but these are long term friendships lasting 35 to 50 years you know, I'm 55 years in this country so I have the same friends still and we're friends despite our differences. I mean, there are religious differences, there are food differences, there's lots of differences, but you can get along anyhow, you need a bit goodwill.*''

Petra's vegan diet doesn't seem to pose as much of an issue. She brings her own meals if needed or she can prepare some food herself whenever she's staying at a friend's house. Petra is furthermore a member of the San Francisco Vegetarian Society. When it comes to promoting veganism, she believes in leading by example and has sampled vegan food to the people in her building. She noticed the growth of animal activism among younger people, and thinks today more people become interested in veganism for ethical reasons.

4.5. Diane

Diane, 47 years old, lived in Hawaii and Idaho before moving to San Francisco, where she sells jewelry and is the property manager of her apartment. She has always loved animals and stopped eating meat in her 20s and has never missed it since. Seafood she gave up shortly after, after seeing some kids jabbing sticks into crabs at the beach which made her realize there is no difference between meat and seafood.

> "*So I stopped eating seafood and so, for 20 years I thought of myself.. as I was doing a lot of things for the animals, I was helping the pigeons and there was a lot of stuff in Hawaii that*

was going on that I was trying to get the media involved in and.. I thought of myself as a hardcore vegetarian, I thought that I was, you know, the best you could be in life, you know, for 20 years of my life when I was doing as much as I could with you know, with the time I had to help animals and in Idaho it was just suffocating. I'd even wear earplugs to the gym, headphones, so I didn't have to see all the people around me, all the guys, with their.. they'd be bragging about their last kill and showing pictures of their dead animal you know, and I just.. and high-fiving.. and I just was in my own world there, I felt like my soul was rotting there it was hard to help anything there, so I had to figure out how to get in a more forward way, like a city, where people were more forward and I wanted to get more active in animal activism and learn more and so I moved here and I started Facebook-friending all of the organizations; vegetarian, vegan, everything, and I started seeing these livestreams on Facebook of male chicks getting grinded up in the egg industry and the dairy cows; what's going on with them and how they, you know, they have to be pregnant and the whole story of it you know, what's going on and how dairy becomes dairy and how the cow's life actually is and the male cows that are just sold for veal or sold to the beef industry and the female cows that get to live their mom's life of horrible, horrible pain and.. I had no idea, and that was an epiphany and that was a re-birth and almost, like the next day, from learning all this, I went vegan immediately."

In general, Diane tries to surround herself with people that do not eat meat as she is uncomfortable with being around meat consumption because it reminds her too much of the animal it came from and how it must have suffered. When going out, she tends to go to either vegetarian or vegan places, which are plentiful in San Francisco.

In her spare time, Diane leaflets to give out as much information as she can, which she feels is an effective way to touch other people's life's and promote veganism through kindness. She also volunteers for the San Francisco Vegetarian Society and two organizations that feed homeless people vegan food.

4.6. Jaleesa

Jaleesa, 26 years old, lives in an intentional community called *Chateau Ubuntu* that houses 38 people in the heart of San Francisco. She recognizes veganism as a lifestyle that extends beyond food but is mainly a dietary vegan at this point in her life. She was raised a vegetarian, but is a vegan now for ethical reasons after having tried and failed a couple times over the past years. It is very important for her to have vegan friends in order to not have to defend herself for her diet and therefore actively sought out vegans whenever she moved to be able to stick with her diet.

"Food is such an important part of life, for anybody, and to be able to share food with people is really important and have people to share recipes with or who are excited to eat things you make and who share in that with you is really, really important. So, the reason I stopped being a vegan that time was that I moved back to San Francisco and I was vegan for a while but I didn't have any vegan friends here and it just got really hard because I still had dinner parties and stuff but like having friends make little comments about.. people don't even realize they're doing it but people will complain about it; about having vegan food and it gets really hard when you're doing stuff for someone, you're doing so much for a dinner party for people, like cooking all that food and have people like complain, like even in the slightest, in a joking way, it's just very disheartening and hurtful and so I stopped being a vegan because it just didn't feel very positive anymore, I just didn't really feel it. I stopped being a vegan at the end of December of, I guess like 2013 and all of 2014 I wasn't a vegan, I was just a regular

vegetarian and that was the first time since I was in college that I was a full, full vegetarian because I was like buying and cooking dairy and eggs. And I felt pretty fine about it, I like only once thought about being a vegan again and didn't really follow through at all. And then I moved into the house [Chateau Ubuntu], our wonderful co-op house and I felt like it was just so much easier here and at that time there was only one other vegan, but it just felt really easy because there's so much food, like beautiful food and produce around and like having people, like anybody around who have dietary restrictions it's just easier to make things for everybody and so, yeah, I became vegan again and now it's been like two and a half months and I haven't thought about it once and it's really easy and it's great and I feel morally better about myself. The end."

The actual change of dietary habits were seen as unchallenging by her. The same goes for going out to eat, especially in San Francisco, where there's a ton of vegan food options available. Lastly, although she believes it's a good thing to promote veganism, she is reluctant to do so herself (especially more confrontational activism) as she already dislikes having to defend herself to others. Instead, she rather interacts with people one on one in a more friendly way and believes in just being a positive example in general to show how easy it can be.

4.7. Joanna

Joanna, 71 years old, is a retired teacher who once read an article about a woman who did a seven day fast after which she had no more desire for meat or any other things that are not good for your body.

"*I said ''I don't believe this'' so I went on a fast, just to see… I was 32, 32 I think, and so I felt the same way actually and I decided, this was August of '76 and in January '77 I decided I don't want to eat meat anymore. At the time I didn't have any bases for reference because I didn't know what vegetarianism was to tell you the truth, I'd never heard of the word 'vegan' and it was interesting I had a boyfriend who said he was a vegetarian and one day he was eating a fish sandwich and I'm thinking ''when did that happen? How do you categorize fish as vegetarian?''. Anyhow, but I'm the kind of person, I'm a Libra, I don't do anything, I overdo everything so my sister, at the time when I stopped eating meat, was still eating dairy and eggs, so my sister said ''well if you eat eggs, it's a potential chicken'' and I said ''you know, that makes sense'' so I said ''okay'' and that day I give up eggs and then a few months later a friend of mine said ''why are you eating dairy?'', I thought ''I don't know why, it doesn't make sense'', so that's why I.. so it was a situation of one thing leading to another and the more I learned the more I realized I didn't want to eat that way and then I discovered the [San Francisco] Vegetarian Society. There was an article in the paper saying that they were going to have a meeting and the topic was going to be 'what is vegetarianism?' and I thought ''oh, let me go find out'' and from that day on I was a member of the SFVS and I went to their lectures and just felt like that was a good way to eat. And also, I felt right away the results of not eating meat, I had all this energy, I couldn't believe I had all this energy so that's how basically I became a believer*."

Back in the day, being a vegan was a little more challenging for her in public situations as there was little awareness about what veganism was. Nowadays, she says being a vegan is easier because there is greater access and awareness. There were multiple situations where Joanna had to explain her dietary restrictions while going out, she doesn't mind it too much however, for every time she explains what veganism is to someone, that person will have some familiarity when the next vegan comes along. At the end of the interview, she briefly talked about living with her non-vegan partner, who passed away not too long ago;

> "*September 16th my partner of 36 years died, we shared this place together and we shared it.. he was not a vegan, but he was very respectful of my diet, in fact, we had separate dished even, separate cooking utensils and I think that people can live side by side that way and I know a lot of my friends feel that could never happen with them but I don't know, I just.. I'm very egalitarian about it because if you love somebody, and they're not doing what you're doing you can come together and respect each other's choices. I think that's a good way to live*."

4.8. Wes

Wes, 24 years old, is an activist and part of an animal rights organization called *Direct Action Everywhere*. He first heard about veganism in high school, but did not really reflect on it again until he got to university and was confronted with the inconsistency between animals we love as pets and animals we raise for their products. He went vegetarian overnight, and became vegan some time later after learning about the cruelty that comes with the egg and dairy industry. With animal rights as the primary motivation, and environmental arguments as secondary reason, Wes doesn't really care so much about the health reasons and would still be vegan even if it was unhealthy for him. The actual change to veganism wasn't really challenging to him;

> "*I always tended to live by myself, I didn't have any brothers or sisters and when I changed I was living by myself and feeding myself already so I wasn't dependent on anyone so in a sense it was a lot easier for me because I understand for other people who are living in a family and depending on other people it's harder, but I was feeding myself so it was easy and I was also used to being by myself so a lot of my friends tell me they feel very isolated because you know food is a very common thing that people share, but I grew up by myself so I was very used to being alone so I thought I was a lot better at figuring this out by myself. So the main changes are like trying to figure out what's vegetarian, what's vegan; you have to read ingredients a lot more and also the social interactions with people, saying ''I'm sorry I don't eat animals'' which, at first you're nervous because you don't want to offend people and you want to appreciate their hospitality but you also want to stand by your values so that's the main thing; learning the social.. how to be socially gracious I guess*."

> "*Some of my closest friends, they reacted, they thought it was like a temporary thing, they thought it was just a phase, but then I stuck to it for like years and they told me they were surprised which is strange because I'm not the kind of person who would like do things for a phase or because it's like a fashion trend, but yeah, I definitely remember some people thought it was this crazy silly thing that I was going through and I remembered that was kind of like.. not hurtful but kind of offensive*."

Like many of the other respondents, Wes also consciously decided to surround himself with other vegans, and in his case; he surrounded himself with activists;

> "*I cared about this a lot, I cared about animal rights a lot and I believed strongly in the power of surrounding yourself with people who you want to be more like. So I consciously became an activist, I consciously surrounded myself with people who believed a lot in animal rights and believed a lot in justice and activism. So yes, now my social circle is almost entirely people who have roughly the same kind of views as me, we still disagree every once in a while, but yeah*."

As an activist he participates in at times pretty confrontational activism, which he personally doesn't like that much, but he does see the value of it and believes it to be more effective than promoting veganism by converting people one by one.

4.9. Achmed

Achmed, 31 years old, owns his own San Francisco based vegan falafel restaurant is also a member of the animal rights organization *Direct Action Everywhere.* When he was 23, he was shown a PETA video on factory farming which he found horrifying, however;

> "*I didn't go vegan, I tried to go more humane, organic, fair-trade, free-range, cage-free… I went organic and stuff, what I called the middle ground and I started sharing that at Berkeley when I went to Berkeley, sharing that understanding of buying more humane products. I condoned and advocated a label called Certified Humane, that was the highest standard of the humane treatment of animals and it took me another six or seven months to do a little bit more research and actually go to their website and find what they actually allow and one of the things they allow is debeaking, or beak-trimming, as a euphemism and I called them and asked them why and they told me "oh it's to safe the animals, to reduce their violence towards each other, because they peck each other'' and I thought that was completely absurd because they didn't have to be in those conditions in the first place, or they didn't have to be exploited and dominated in the first place so that's when I realized this whole thing is a joke, this whole thing is a scam, it's just more excuses to exploit, to dominate … That's when I decided I was going to be a vegan*.''

Members of Achmed's family are (almost) vegan now as well and have been very receptive of Achmed's transition, for which he feels very thankful. Besides his family, Direct Action Everywhere has also been a great support for him, especially after a long period of trying to do activism on his own at his university. His individual efforts did spark the idea of his now successful falafel restaurant;

> "*I decided ''hey, what if I sneak vegan food through the back door? Every vegan meal I serve means one less non-vegan meal served'' and I thought ''what would everyone like that is vegan? Falafel!''. Then, I started doing that, hilarious phase of my life because I did everything, I would make falafel and would keep it in a plastic shoebox in my kitchen in my house, ''let's just do it!'' like cut all the veggies up, drive hard to campus and set up a booth and just, with nobody else's help, it was ridiculous. All this while having like a full-time education at Berkeley, it was extremely challenging. Someday I was selling those and enjoying it and it was great and then I thought ''I'm going to try this, I'm going to see if I can make a career out of this''. And it took a few months, the first six I lost 10.000 dollars, I made a million mistakes. Kept going and kept going, I was crazy about it, you have to be a little.. your vision has to be so clear, you have to be so determined*."

With his falafel restaurant, Achmed supports vegans and also hopes to normalize the diet. The restaurant is however just one way for Achmed to promote veganism and he emphasizes that it is important that everyone finds their own, because it all helps.

Chapter 5.

Encapsulating veganism

In the previous chapter, a variety of stories were presented about people's personal experiences with veganism. They showed the myriad ways in which people got into contact with veganism and how their lives were affected after adopting it. This chapter will examine their stories through the lens of the theoretical framework and the established methodological approach of this research in order to answer the research questions. To make sense of the stories that obviously weren't told in the neat order of the conceptual models and research questions of this research, coding program Atlas.ti was used to search for patterns, commonalities and exceptions. The full list of codes and their frequencies, as well as additional information on how coding was approach, can be found in appendix 3. Section 5.1. addresses the vegans' views on veganism, which corresponds with the first research sub-question. Section 5.2. follows the second research sub-question and discusses why vegans value veganism. The third research sub-question on how vegans engage in subpolitics when practicing veganism is discussed in section 5.3.. Lastly, section 5.4. is linked to the final research sub-question on the importance of subpolitics in engaging the challenges of practicing veganism within a carnist society.

5.1. Views on veganism

The theoretical framework started with an illustration of a carnist society; a society in which carnism is institutionalized and thus perceived as the status quo. This narrative was however problematized because of the rapid expanse of the animal industry at the cost of environmental values that, when analyzed through the lens of Schnaiberg's treadmill of production theory, is likely to continue its quest for profit with no escape in sight. Yet, those who have adopted veganism do seem to have found a viable solution strategy by not consuming any animal products at all. This focus on individual lifestyle changes mostly happens outside of traditional institutions in the realm of subpolitics, which Beck explained as a result of individualization in a second phase of modernity, in which the consequences of the industrial development in the first modernity are faced and aspects of life that were once taken for granted are problematized on the individual level.

In the context of the theoretical framework, the first research sub-question; "how do vegans view veganism and its place in a carnist society?" can be engaged. The conceptual model related with this question (chapter 3.2.2.1.) distinguished two for this research important characteristics of a food ideology; its degree of violence and institutionalization. The first sub-section addresses veganism in the context of carnist violence and how it seeks to move away from it. This is followed by a second sub-questions which discusses institutionalization and the place of veganism in a carnist society.

5.1.1. Striving for non-violence

The theoretical framework (chapter 2.2.1.) explained how veganism can be interpreted as the polar opposite of carnism. Joy's concept of carnism was only specifically mentioned by two of the respondents but came up implicitly several times ("Equal value to all animals", frequency: 5). Remembering that the ideology of carnism states that carnists make arbitrary distinctions between different species of animals based on cultural influences, leading them to see some as food and some as pets, it makes sense that vegans do not make these distinctions and instead see all animals as equally inedible. This became evident in the comments about the arbitrariness of attaching different values to different animals ("Meat-eating is a cultural thing", frequency: 6);

"*We have this huge like circle of all the animals and then there's this little tiny dot with animals that are acceptable to eat in the world. But there's no difference between all of them in what they feel, they all have senses, they all want to live, but yet we're.. it's because we learn this from birth; that it's okay to eat a cow, but not a cat. But then there's other cultures you know that'll eat the cat and then people in other cultures are like ''oh my gosh, I can't believe they're eating dogs there'' as they're saying that, eating a hamburger. You know, so it's just connecting it and erasing the divide-line*." – Diane

"*I've heard stories that pigs are smarter than dogs, so that means when you kill a pig they're going through more or as much pain as your dog would. So that makes me think also, why would someone eat an animal?*" – Matt

"*I think animals are sensitive to things, like people, you can tell when people have dogs and cats that the dogs and cats react.. they have emotions, so I'm sure that cows and pigs and fish and other creatures that have eyes and breathe and all that are experiencing pain and anxiety and emotional stress from people trying to kill them or electrocuting them or you know, when you see all the videos; what they do to slaughter animals, it's just horrifying. So I'm sure that it's creating unrest and pain and suffering so it's really nice to not be part of that at all*." – Godfrey

"*Most people would strongly be outraged at the thought of killing dogs or cats, at least here in the west, especially even it were used to our survival, for like fur or food, we strongly are outraged at that sort of idea, but it's not very different when you use cows or pigs. They might look different, they might have different DNA, they might have a different biology, but in all the ways that matter they are the same; they feel the same emotions, they feel the same pain and they can feel the same joy, just like us and the dogs and cats we love. So that's why I think there's a problem with consuming animal products because it causes these kinds of suffering and this kind of death.*" – Wes

In addition, chapter 2.1.2. explained how carnism is as a contemporary problem (even though it's been around for thousands of years) because of the animal industry's quest for profit at the growing expense of environmental values in the latter half of the 20th century. The novelty of the consumption of animal products as a problematic, contemporary issue also came up several times among the respondents ("Meat consumption is a contemporary problem", frequency: 5);

"*I know that my ancestors, three generations back, didn't eat much meat if any at all and then all of a sudden by the time my grandparents came around and my parents came around they were eating lots of meat and lots of fish as well and dairy products. Where my ancestors, at least on my mother's side, that I grew up with were farmers, and agricultural farmers; they didn't raise animals they just had crops and they ate the crops they produced*." – Godfrey

"*Never before have we tortured and killed so many animals and never before have so many animals suffered at our hands*." – Wes

"*Now it's just too much. I can't really like pinpoint on the time, but it definitely got really bad after the fast food stores opened, well, fast food restaurants.*" – Julie

"*It's very political charged nowadays that people in upper places also agree that animals should not be treated the way they are treated, I mean this whole factory farm business is so ugly and so.. it's filth you know*." – Petra

Veganism seeks to counter this violence by abstaining from all animal products as other sources have already pointed out (Hoek et al., 2004; Fox & Ward, 2008; Povey et al., 2001; Barr & Chapman, 2002; Beardsworth & Keil, 1991). These sources however mostly focus on dietary guidelines while placing vegetarianism at the center. In the respondents' stories, this focus on dietary guidelines was also prominent, but it did not always end there as one of the recurring codes ("Veganism as a lifestyle", frequency: 6) specifically points out how respondents see veganism more as a lifestyle than as a diet;

> "*For me, veganism, and from what I think the common definition is, the commonly accepted definition is that it's a way of life that aims to abstain from all products of violence and in real terms it means abstaining from the consumption of all animal products, be it for our food, for the products we use and clothing we wear. So it's very much sort of consumerist focus, even like lifestyle focus, you know, buying these products over the other products all with the intention of hopefully helping animals*." – Wes

> "*Veganism is the way of life where you're trying to reduce suffering of other beings by abstaining from consuming.. well, abstaining from supporting a system that exploits them*." – Achmed

> "*It's a non-violent way of life, which I prefer*." – Petra

> "*To me, it's about living kind and not harming others, to be alive*." – Diane

> "*It is not eating any animal products, so no dairy or eggs, obviously no meat. I guess that would be like a vegan diet but I think a lot of people.. for a lot of people veganism is more than that, it's more like a lifestyle. There's like going into all the parts you use in your life like shampoo and conditioner and shoes and clothes and stuff*." – Jaleesa

An interesting point that can be deduced from these quotes is that veganism is not an all-or-nothing type of deal and is more often seen as a continuous learning process that keeps striving for a more non-violent way of life ("Veganism requires constant learning/awareness, is not the end stage", frequency: 4). Beck's concept of individualization in a second phase of modernity and the subpolitical realm clearly come to life here as respondents, regardless of how they chose to act on it, problematize basically all aspects of consumption; everything comes with a possible risk and actions (or in subpolitical terms; positive or negative sanctions) are determined based on these risks (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 3; Holzer & Sorensen, 2003, p. 92-94). The nature of these risks vary from health to ethical concerns as will be further discussed in the section on vegan values (5.2.), and depending on the respondents, are accepted or not; a topic addressed in the section on practicing subpolitics (5.3).

Veganism as a learning process also showed itself through some respondents who simply did not know about all the (in their view) unacceptable things that are going on in the world. Especially those who had one initial motivation to explore veganism said they did not know about a lot of the other reasons to go vegan and are aware that they still have to learn a lot more. Respondents like Wes or Diane, who were strongly motivated by animal rights issues, at first did not know about the potential health benefits or the environmental benefits of a vegan diet.

> "*I'm sure there's still stuff I need to learn about cosmetics and you know common day, the staples and stuff like that of life. I'm learning, everyone's learning every day, that's the beauty of life*." – Diane

Diane here recognizes that there's still a lot she can learn, but she also accepts and appreciates this constant process of learning as a part of life. The perception of veganism as constant learning process and is also further discussed in the section on vegan values (5.2.), where respondents talk about how their learning process has led to them discovering new reasons to value veganism over time.

For now, it suffices to conclude that veganism is viewed as a way of life that seeks to abstain from supporting the violence of the animal industry driven by carnism, especially when the animal industry is recognized as a contemporary issue. As a way of life, veganism extends beyond a person's diet into all products of everyday life and it thus requires a constant state of awareness to learn about these products. Referring back to the conceptual model (chapter 3.2.2.1.), this suffices to answer the first element, 'violence', of the views on veganism. The next sub-section will address the second element, which involves the issue of institutionalization.

5.1.2. Veganism in a carnist society

To explore the issue of institutionalization of carnism and veganism, discursive psychology was used in chapter 3.2.2. to explain how certain narratives become more dominant because of the available language and culture; the more prevalent a way of thinking becomes, the more accessible it will be; and with more access, the more likely it will be that it grows even further until it is institutionalized through formal and informal institutions and becomes a hegemonic narrative; taken for granted, taken for fact. Joy explained how carnism is institutionalized in our society to such an extent that its existence is obscured by the normality and ubiquity of it (2010, p. 29). Some respondents indeed talked about the institutionalized nature of carnism by talking about how they were raised with the idea that eating animals is the normal state of things and believe this to be one reason why people rarely question it ("Meat consumption is taught", frequency: 6);

> "*I was introduced [to meat] at an early age, from my family; my mom would prepare a meal and put it on the table and she would say "yeah this is chicken'' and I'd think ''Oh good, chicken!'' because in my mind chicken did not mean "quack quack quack"; it did not mean feathers, no it meant that food with the drumsticks that sits on the table that mom makes*." – Matt

> "*We've been indoctrinated into it since we were very, very small, we're taught that it's okay and often times we're not even taught directly that it's okay, simply things that are around us are already consuming animals. For example, when I grew up, when I was in sixth grade, chocolate milk was already part of a diet, school cafeteria is very normalized so I wasn't taught to question it, nor was anyone else around me taught to question it*" – Achmed

> "*I think it's just that [eating animal products] is what they were taught and they were, you know, since they were little.. because it's what their parents knew and they don't know other things*." – Diane

Another aspect of this hegemony of carnism, according to some comments, is that the industry uses money and advertisements to keep carnism formally institutionalized and the consumption of animal products ubiquitous and normalized among people ("Factory farming/meat industry as a perceived problem", frequency: 4; "Money as source for industry's power", frequency: 6; "Industry relies on invisibility of violence", frequency: 3):

> "*I've learned that one of the main causes for [society not addressing meat-related issues] is that the food industry is making a lot of profit of selling all of the meat and cheese and as a result they sort of hush hush; keep it quiet. If people started talking about it and stop buying*

> *their products they're not going to be making all that money. So… and they're keeping everyone quiet, like for example; politicians, you know… "last year I gave you this much and it's not going to happen again, don't say anything about this". As a result, politicians also are hush hush*." – Matt

> "*The meat industry gets so many subsidies! That's why meat's so cheap it shouldn't be so cheap. It is really profitable for the meat industry companies and like all those people are mixed up in government and like people get paid off and get money, it's because of money*." – Jaleesa

> "*They operate by advertising their foods as things that promote health, like, have you seen the commercial 'everybody needs milk'? They had the milk moustache and.. famous people just die to be on that advertisement, that means that you're coming of age, that you're really something. So everybody needs milk and people believe that*." – Joanna

> "*There's a lot of advertisements for drinking milk, especially in this country.. and it seems to be a cultural thing, it seems to be that for many generations now*." – Godfrey

Of course, the respondents of this research at some point made the decision to abandon the hegemonic carnist narrative in favor of veganism, which brings us back to Beck and his world risk society thesis suggesting the shift towards a second phase of modernity in which the consequences of the industrial development of the first modernity are faced, grand narratives are dislocated and the faith in security providing institutions is lost, which opens up space for new narratives to grow, especially in the subpolitical realm. This helps us to understand among other things the distrust in politicians to address the violence and institutionalization of the animal industry ("Politics/governments fall short", frequency: 5) and the break from childhood traditions and upbringing as became evident in the above quotations.

Despite the dislocation of carnism, it is still hegemonic and institutionalized in our society which became clear when respondents were asked how they feel people in general view veganism ("Meat-eaters see vegans as weird", frequency: 3);

> "*I think now it's more widely accepted, but it's still like kind of taboo, like people.. think we're weird or something*" – Julie

> "*In the west here, it's perceived as the opposite [of the normal situation of carnism]; as unnatural, unsustainable in the sense of you can't live healthily off that and it's also, again the opposite, it tends to be perceived as a feminine activity and unfortunately that to most people means it's a bad thing. People tend to perceive vegans as extreme, weird and, you know, powerless and generally negative ideas. That's my take on it*." – Wes

> "*I think a lot of people that it's a cult and that you're.. not brainwashed, but just something that those people over there do that we don't understand and we don't want to do that*." – Joanna

On the upside, most respondents did observe a positive trend when it came to veganism being more accepted or at least more acknowledged now than it used to be, which suggests that veganism is a growing movement that is slowly gaining ground as a challenging narrative to the hegemonic narrative of carnism ("Veganism is growing, more widely accepted", frequency: 7);

> "*I used to be afraid of putting the word 'vegan' on my business, now it's pretty prominent, you can clearly see that this is a 100% vegan restaurant, because it normalizes it.*" – Achmed

> "*Plant-based milks are really taking hold.. I've been doing this 39 years in January and I used to have to make my own tofu, you know, 39 years is not that long, but it's just.. there were no restaurants and products did just not have vegan things. I would eat vegetables and all but you didn't have prepared foods or restaurants that would have those kinds of foods like vegannaise, that didn't even exist.*" – Joanna

> "*I see more young people embracing [veganism] and I see more young people at the vegan potlucks. To me that encouraging because it means they're being open to it, to new ideas." –* Joanna

> "*I feel that most of my friends now have either an adult daughter or son who are vegetarian or vegan so it has shifted, there's more awareness because of that*." – Petra

These quotes reveal how veganism is, in the respondents' perception, being normalized to some degree and attracting more (young) people. So even though carnism is still perceived as the hegemonic, institutionalized narrative, there is an observed sense of progress when it comes to veganism as a movement that aims to counter the institutionalization and violence of carnism. Joanna's comment is especially interesting because it hints at the success veganism has booked as a subpolitical movement; Beck explained how subpolitics work outside of traditional channels and can bring about societal change as these alternative lines of action become profitable and institutionalized. Joanna's observation of the growth of vegan food products is then a great example of veganism slowly becoming more profitable and institutionalized.

To summarize how vegans view veganism and its place within a carnist society; the gist of the respondents' views on veganism give the impression of veganism as a movement that strives for a more non-violent way of life within a society in which the institutionalized narrative is perceived as problematic and, especially now, as excessively violent. Although most respondents recognize that veganism is still associated with negative things like being unnatural, weird or extreme, optimism is found in the progress veganism has made as a movement in recent years, as shown by a growing interest in veganism and the growth of available vegan food products. The next section will look more specifically at the different values the respondents attach to their views on veganism to bridge to gap towards their taking action in the subpolitical realm, and provide deeper insight into the process of encapsulating veganism and the role of subpolitics in it.

5.2. Valuing veganism

In the previous section, the views on veganism and its place in a carnist society were discussed. It became apparent that, in general, the respondents view veganism as a way of life that counters the violence and institutionalization of carnism. This section will address the second research sub-question; "why do vegans value veganism?", to explore in more detail the values that are attached to veganism in the sense of more specific motivators for subpolitical action, which is addressed in the section after this one. The conceptual model of chapter 3.2.2.2. will be followed to explore the reasons the respondents had to adopt veganism. The first sub-section will examine the reasons veganism is mentioned, the second how respondents value some reasons more strongly than others and are more likely to be motivators for subpolitical action.

5.2.1. Vegan values

In the research model, motivations for people to go vegan were categorized as health or ethical arguments. These categorizations and their specific values were adopted from existing literature (Jabs et al., 1998, p. 200; Hoek et al., 2004, p. 266; Worsley & Skrzypiec, 1997, p. 400). When talking about reasons to value veganism, the respondents generally distinguished three reasons; under the category 'health'; personal health, and under the 'ethical' category; the treatment of animals in the animal production process and the unintended damaging consequences of this production process for the environment ("Health as reason for veganism", frequency; 8; "Animal treatment as reason for veganism", frequency; 7; "Environmental reasons for veganism", frequency; 7), all of which were thoroughly summarized by Matt;

> "*The three reasons are animal health; because I realize any time, even dairy, even to make cheese, or to get eggs, we torment those poor animals to get those products because we are just cramping them together and making them produce so I just feel like when you learn… once you begin to learn what really goes on in their pens, which are tiny by the way, that gave me incentive, just for the animals. That's number one. Number two: my own personal diet, my own personal health, because I learned what they put into these animals to be able to produce them as quickly as possible and to keep them healthy and that all comes back to me if I eat them. So that's number two and number three: climate change, and I've seen a movie called Cowspiracy and in that movie they actually make the statement which I've heard from several other sources but I like that they hit the nail on the head in this one and they said that the primary cause for carbon being released for climate change, the primary cause is not transportation, it's actually animal-based products. To produce all that releases far more carbon into the atmosphere than the entire transportation sector combined, including airplanes, boats, trains, all the cars, if you add them all up I think that's like 42% of all the carbon, that's the transportation sector. It's 51% that comes from animal-based foods. Anyway I can't remember all the statistics but I remember when I watched the movie I was like "wow''. So, third reason being climate change, is another reason for me*." – Matt

Aside from these three major reasons, another reason to value veganism that wasn't mentioned as explicitly as the others but often implied, was its perceived ability to bring about positive change that starts with the individual but has the potential for large-scale structural change ("Optimistic about potential for change", frequency: 4);

> "*I think people that care enough they change their personal life because in capitalism the way to change things is ultimately consumerism. I mean, that's what I tell people all the time; in order for things to change, like for us to get off of fossil fuels, everyone needs to change their ways. It's not only about putting pressure on politicians and just electing certain politicians, we have to take that first step ourselves before we try to change other people.*" – Julie

> "*Change happens extremely fast even if you talk to your grandparents or even my parents about what life was like back when they were my age. People's views on morality were drastically different. I mean, you don't even have to go back in time, just go to like certain parts of the world where if you talk about homosexuality openly for example you could like get in jail for that. But change happens quickly, over the course of decades for example and I think the other big bias we have, even as vegans and vegetarians and people who care about animals is that we think that this tradition of eating animals is so big and so massive that it wouldn't even be possible to change, but we have changed far larger institutions in a far quicker amount of time. I mean, you know, with slavery, with women's rights, with our views*

> *of people of color, with our views of homosexuality and the LBGTQ movement. You know, things have changed so fast and if you look at the data behind it.. I don't have it off of the top of my mind, but it seems like social change is increasing, the rate also changes, it's increasing too, possibly because we're more connected in this time and age. So I definitely think in my lifetime, definitely, we will drastically change our view of animals and we will start to look at them as our equals you know and possibly even recognizing them legally too as deserving of legal person status, I mean we give legal person status to like corporations and all this, it is a lot less ridiculous for animals to have it too. So I definitely think change is on the horizon if we work hard. That's all I have to say*." – Wes

This sense of optimism about veganism's potential for positive change was also present on a more deeper level, also only explicitly stated by a few respondents but often observed in the background before, during and after the interviews, as a feeling of gratitude ("Grateful", frequency: 3);

> "*I'm meeting all these great people and I'm getting this friend-network of people that are just kind and compassionate, it's just love and the best people I think on Earth, I think I'm just so fortunate to have this knowledge, I am so grateful to know what I know and to be in this group of people that are going to be the future. We have to be the future, because the world is not going to last doing what we're doing anyway, so eventually everyone is going to have to get it or no one is going to be around so the world has to go this way but yeah, I'm just really grateful that I'm in the know and I'm meeting amazing people and getting to do what I'm able to do, I'm glad I'm able to wake up every day and be a voice for the animals*." – Diane

In her expression of gratitude, Diane also implies valuing veganism because it is 'going to be the future' and bring about positive change. This value can be placed in the 'power' sub-category of the 'ethics' category in the conceptual model; which entails the valuing of veganism for its ability to escape certain power relations. Combined with the other two ethical values; the treatment of animals in the animal production process and the unintended damaging consequences of this production process for the environment, and the value for personal health, this sums up the vegan values that were named and observed during the interviews.

5.2.2. Hierarchy of reasons

Although the respondents mentioned these general ethical and health motivations, they did not always resonate which each one as strongly. Two of the respondents even connected so strongly to the issue of animal welfare, that they did not care if it was unhealthy for them or not ("Would be vegan even if it was unhealthy", frequency; 2):

> "*I would this if it wasn't healthy for you because I would do it for the animals, because it's a 100% wrong what we're doing*." - Diane

> "*I care about environmental but for health, I don't really care that much about. If I was less healthy because of it I would still do it, it's the amount of suffering the animals go through that's the number one priority by far*." – Wes

None of the respondents mentioned environmental concerns as their main motivation for going vegan. They are mostly put in a secondary position or are seen as an added benefit, similar to Fox and Ward's findings on motivations for people to go vegetarian (2008, p. 427-428). Even those respondents who have ethical reasons as their strongest motivators tend to see environmental concerns not as necessarily unimportant, but also not as their main concern. One explanation for this might be

Jaleesa's explanation of why she doesn't connect with environmental concerns as strongly as concerns with the treatment of animals;

> "*The environmental stuff is more of a side benefit of being vegan but just because I don't connect with it as directly is not that I don't think it's important, but like killing something to me, and then eating it, feels much more harsh than like, killing it and eating it and all the resources it took to killing and eating my animal that's just harder for me to connect with.*" – Jaleesa

Although environmental concerns are not the main concern of the respondents, they are not completely rejected either like the two respondents who very strongly resonated with animal welfare issues did with health concerns. Remembering that veganism is perceived as a continuous learning process, it makes sense that the initial motivators to go vegan are those of which the result is more direct and tangible such as non-participation in the mistreating and killing of animals by abstaining from animal products or the perceived health benefits from consuming plant-based foods.

Building on the previous section and the views on veganism as a way of life that seeks to move away from the violence and institutionalization of carnism, this section revealed in more detail the reasons respondents have value veganism and what motivates them to take action. In short, these are either health or ethical reasons, with the treatment and killing of animals as a primary reason in the category of ethics and environmental issues as secondary. The potential to bring about change was already less explicitly brought up, therefore it is more difficult to state a conclusion as to its relative importance for the respondents. Yet, as discussed, the values mentioned as being primary are likely the strongest because they can be related to the individual in the most direct way and are thus the most tangible reasons to take subpolitical action as an individual. In the next section, the vegan values are brought into practice and the subpolitics of veganism are further explored.

5.3. Practicing subpolitics

The main conceptual consisted of three major elements; view, value and practice, referring to the process of having a view, attaching value to it and acting accordingly. In this section, the third element; acting according to one's values, will be discussed to engage the third research sub-question: "how do vegans engage in subpolitics when practicing veganism?". Veganism was viewed as a lifestyle that rejects the violence and institutionalization of carnism in favor of a more healthy and ethical way of living. As explained, these changes happen outside traditional institutions and politics in the realm of subpolitics; changes in everyday practices based on moral considerations. This section will examine this engagement of vegans in subpolitical practices by following the corresponding conceptual model (chapter 3.2.2.3.), which distinguishes uncertainty absorption, addressed in the first sub-section, and exercising sanctions, addressed in the second sub-section.

5.3.1. Uncertainty absorption

Compared to the exercising of sanctions, uncertainty absorption was a less obvious concept according to Holzer & Sorensen (2003, p. 93). It had to do with finding security and confidence in one's actions by drawing on external authoritative sources when one is unable or unwilling to do so for oneself. Among these sources is both knowledge generated by experts, presented in the form of books, reports or documentaries, as well as knowledge generated by people who aren't necessarily experts, such as supportive friends or role models. To give a veganism-related illustration of uncertainty absorption by turning to an expert; it is impossible for the average vegan to personally measure and study the effects of a vegan diet on the environment and he or she therefore relies on the research of others by reading

books, watching documentaries or listening to experts to absorb the uncertainty about the effects of a vegan diet on the environment.

In the light of this research's methodological approach, absorbing uncertainty about veganism can also be interpreted as establishing the vegan narrative: chapter 3.1. discussed how a multitude of discursive tools and ways to form meaning leads to an internal struggle of narratives with one narrative usually ending out on top. The concept of uncertainty absorption can then be seen as the efforts one undertakes to feel secure and confident in one narrative over others. For carnists, this process is presumably easier because carnism is institutionalized to such an extent that people's identification with that narrative is hardly contested in everyday life. For vegans however, it is much harder to identify with veganism, which they feel is still perceived as weird or extreme by general society (and thus not institutionalized like carnism) as became clear in the first section on views on veganism (chapter 5.1.2.). Yet, by absorbing the uncertainty about veganism and identifying with the vegan narrative, they manifest a narrative that challenges the status quo which is why uncertainty absorption is included as a source of subpolitical power. This sub-section will examine the efforts respondents made to absorb the uncertainty of being a vegan in a carnist society and bring their values into practice, and is split into expert sources, interpersonal relations and organizations as operationalized in the conceptual model (chapter 3.2.2.3.).

5.3.1.1. Expert sources

Expert sources referred to knowledge generated by experts and presented in the public domain in the form of books, documentaries, websites and other representations of knowledge. These experts have done the work that most vegans are incapable to do because of the impossible effort it would be for them to personally study everything for themselves. Turning to expert sources is perhaps the most obvious example of uncertainty absorption as these are clear examples of external sources of research that give vegans access to knowledge that helps them find confidence and security in vegan practices.

Two expert sources for uncertainty absorption were repeatedly referred to during the interviews, these were books and documentaries ("Reading books for inspiration/knowledge", frequency: 5; "Watching documentaries for inspiration/knowledge", frequency: 4):

> "*I read a book and saw two movies and all three sort of summed up my knowledge and feelings/experiences about being vegan. The movie that I saw, one was called Forks over Knives, and the other is called Earthlings. So I saw these two movies and read a book called The China Study, which is really too heavy duty because it's written by two doctors and it got lots of medical terms. But, by the time I just got halfway through that book I though "Wow, I gotta stick with this" because it also talks about health and the health of what you eat and vegan health being really good*." – Matt

> "*[learning about the environmental and health benefits of veganism] took a few years. I mean, I kind of knew about it but I didn't emphasize at all.. a few years later I read the book The World Peace Diet, by Will Tuttle, have you heard of it? I highly suggest that, of all the books I've ever read regarding this issue, The World Peace Diet is so thorough. Every single person I've given that book to, about 95% of them, went vegan overnight*." – Achmed

> "*The first time I became a vegan I read a nutrition book and just learned about nutrition a lot more so it gave me a lot of knowledge*." – Jaleesa

> "*I know that this is a good documentary that's been out there; Cowspiracy, I recommend it all the time, I didn't know all that either and it opened my eyes up to the environment; what's*

> *going on with factory farming and meat consumption and dairy consumption and how it's not sustainable to make this world keep going, it's not going to keep going at the rate we're going*." – Diane

> "*I read The China Study and I watched that documentary Forks over Knives and then I read my entire nutrition book and I just decided to make the change and I felt a lot better after I did it.*" – Julie

> "*Have you gotten the book Circles of Compassion? That book you have to read. That's by Will Tuttle. I just bought it at the fair [the 'World Veg Festival'], it's 22 in the book store, I got it for 20, no tax on it. I should have bought more to give as gifts because that's a very good.. it has about 30 essays and that veganism touches on so much more than just food, on also how we humans interact with each other*" – Petra

After reading books and watching documentaries, Matt in the first quote felt confident in continuing with a vegan diet. Other respondents, like Diane or Achmed, turned to expert sources to learn about other aspects of veganism and deepen their values as discussed in the previous section. Other expert sources that were either observed or mentioned during the interviews were; reading pamphlets, visiting conferences or presentations, reading (online) articles and watching YouTube videos. Together, they illustrate the possibility for vegans to gather expert knowledge about veganism and absorb uncertainty through a wide variety of available sources.

5.3.1.2. Interpersonal relations

Knowledge from experts is not the only way to absorb uncertainty as it can also happen in the larger context of interacting with others and receiving assurance from those who are not necessarily experts but still help to absorb uncertainty and manifest the vegan narrative. In existing vegan literature, this focus on the social networks of vegans is also deemed important to understand "*the relational mechanisms that help sustain vegan practices*" (Cherry, 2006, 156). In the conceptual model, these sources for uncertainty absorption were operationalized as interpersonal relations.

All of the respondents mentioned in some way or another that they sought out other vegans by among other things joining meet-up groups, going to conferences and events, and Facebook-friending vegan people and organizations ("Seeking out other vegans", frequency: 10);

> "*I joined a lunch group called, it's a meet-up group, called; ''vegans and vegetarians over 40''. And the wonderful thing about that group is, one; we're all a little bit older and I like that, I don't have like, feel like I'm old or these are all… we're all the same age, we're all about the same age. Everyone in the group already does not eat meat so that's really wonderful too. Because we pick lunch places where there… vegetarian restaurant or a vegan restaurant so, and that's really a good thing. I've formed friendships with these people*." – Matt

> *"In Idaho it was just suffocating. I'd even wear earplugs to the gym, headphones, so I didn't have to see all the people around me, all the guys, with their.. they'd be bragging about their last kill and showing pictures of their dead animal you know, and I just.. and high-fiving.. and I just was in my own world there, I felt like my soul was rotting there it was hard to help anything there, so I had to figure out how to get in a more forward way, like a city, where people were more forward and I wanted to get more active in animal activism and learn more and so I moved here and I started Facebook-friending all of the organizations; vegetarian, vegan, everything*." – Diane

"*Every time I've been a vegan and stayed a vegan it's always been because I had vegan friends, but I don't know if.. it's not like I became a vegan and then it changed my social life, more like, I would seek out people who had similar interests and then I would be able to stay a vegan you know*." – Jaleesa

"*I cared about this a lot, I cared about animal rights a lot and I believed strongly in the power of surrounding yourself with people who you want to be more like. So I consciously became an activist, I consciously surrounded myself with people who believed a lot in animal rights and believed a lot in justice and activism. So yes, now my social circle is almost entirely people who have roughly the same kind of views as me, we still disagree every once in a while, but yeah*." – Wes

"*I joined this vegan meet-up group here in San Francisco and that, I really liked doing that because the guy that started it was like, tired of eating with his co-workers because every time they would go out, they were like ''where do you get your protein?'' and he's like ''ugh, can't I just eat in peace'' you know*." – Julie

"*I went always to vegetarian society meetings and fairs, you know, like the one we had [World Veg Society], but maybe a little bit different in the black forest, there was, called; Kongress der ideale, of the ideals and there I think I was first exposed to people who were more than vegetarian [referring to vegans]*." – Petra

"*I discovered the [San Francisco] Vegetarian Society (SFVS). There was an article in the paper saying that they were going to have a meeting and the topic was going to be 'what is vegetarianism?' and I thought ''oh, let me go find out'' and from that day on I was a member of the SFVS and I went to their lectures and just felt like that was a good way to eat*." – Joanna

By seeking out other vegans, respondents did not only have expert knowledge as a source for uncertainty absorption, but other people as well who helped to provide security and confidence in veganism by normalizing and supporting vegan practices and manifesting the vegan narrative. In the second quote for example, Diane spoke out her desire to be among other vegans in order to learn more about veganism and, in more general, to be around more forward people. To elaborate on another example; Wes talked about being around people who you want to be more like, which is great example of uncertainty absorption by drawing on the knowledge and views of people who are not necessarily experts but are still deemed valuable as role models for the absorption of uncertainty. Of course, another benefit of being around likeminded, supportive people is that they can also point out more expert sources for the respondents' uncertainty absorption.

5.3.1.3. Organizations

The last element of uncertainty absorption in the conceptual model addresses the role of veganism-related organizations in the absorption of uncertainty about veganism. This research includes two major organizations; the San Francisco Vegetarian Society (SFVS) and Direct Action Everywhere (DxE). Unstructured observations were made to get an idea of the events, members and general feel of these organizations and complement the interviews that were conducted with some of their members. Of the people interviewed for this research, only Jaleesa and Julie were unaffiliated with veganism-related organizations. Julie however mentioned being active with Greenpeace and doing volunteer work for the SFVS and Jaleesa mentioned having friends at DxE, although she herself is not a member. Matt, Godfrey, Petra, Diane and Joanna were members of the SFVS, with Godfrey and

Joanna both being board members as well. Diane furthermore told about doing a lot of volunteer work on her own and with other organizations. Lastly, Wes and Achmed were members of DxE.

One of the major events that were observed during the fieldwork was the yearly World Veg Festival, organized by the San Francisco Vegetarian Society. Over the course of a weekend, visitors had the opportunity to meet a variety of vendors and organizations, taste vegan food and get to know new products, buy books and attend lectures and cooking demonstrations. In the context of subpolitics; the festival can probably be best described as a hub towards expert sources (e.g. books and lectures) and other vegans (e.g. meeting new people). Remember for example how Petra mentioned buying a book at the World Veg Festival in the last quote in the sub-section on expert sources; which is a great example of an organized event facilitating the process of uncertainty absorption through expert sources. The SFVS also hosts weekly vegan dinners for its members as well as non-members. During these dinners, people sat together at big tables and were served a vegan meal. Afterwards, in the second half of the evening there was always some kind of informative event such as the showing and discussing of a video or (short) documentary, or a guest speaker. It was interesting to observe that aside from a group of regular visitors, almost every dinner was attended by at least one person who was there for the first time, often just wanting to see what it was about but also to meet new people, have a nice meal or learn something. Like the World Veg Festival, these weekly dinners thus also appear to be a way to facilitate uncertainty absorption; with an even clearer distinction between the first half of the evening where people eat together and get to know each other, and the second half of the evening during which an expert source is presented and discussed.

For additional insight into the role of organizations, the conducted interviews revealed more specific reasons respondents had to join an organization. General reasons for joining an organization mentioned by respondents were; to make friends, to learn, to do volunteer work, to have support and to stay updated about current events ("Join organization to learn", frequency: 3; "Join organization to make friends", frequency: 3; "Volunteer work", frequency: 4; "Join organization for support", frequency: 3; "Join organization to stay updated", frequency: 3);

> "*Everybody was so welcoming and they were talking about how their lives had changed when they stopped eating meat. Like I said, I always liked their potlucks, their lectures and their cooking demonstrations I liked a lot so there was a lot of information that helped me to order my life in that way*" – Joanna

> "*I've met people because of SFVS and also you get emails every so often that announce events going on in the city that you can attend*." – Matt

> "*I joined it because I feel we need kind of an organization that has a head to speak for all of us, they can sometimes get better prices for things. For example we can get ten percent in vegan restaurants and stuff, and also other businesses. And.. just to keep in the loop and hear new things. And you make friends*." – Petra

> "*They keep me on the forefront of what's happening with nutrition, with the environment, with animal cruelty things, if things have gotten better, if things have gotten worse, if there are propositions on the ballad that I need to look at, they help me keep current with all those things. They also provide, you know, people often think of spiritual things when they think of religion, but it's not necessarily the case. Spiritual things can be just a hug from a vegan friend or a tail wagging from a dog or a potbelly pig*." – Godfrey

> "*There are a lot of really smart people and also people that are very, very passionate and dedicated, that is probably the biggest reason I was attracted to it and still in it, because to be honest, when I first started doing activism I was not a fan of doing it. I still dislike protests, I was more into like leafletting, tabling and to holding movie screenings, you know, things that are very friendly and very easy to do and very non-confrontational and DxE is.. I mean we have a lot of community events too, we're most famous for our disruptive protests, which is more confrontational. I dislike that a lot, I came along anyways because the people who were running it, who were organizing it are extremely smart, extremely passionate and extremely dedicated and more would they give good reasons for explaining why these sort of disruptive tactics are helpful in the long term*." – Wes

These quotes again seem to confirm the role of organizations as hubs or facilitators for uncertainty absorption by connecting vegans with other vegans and information. Joanna in the first quote for example expresses her enjoyment of the SFVS because of the welcoming people showing her the positive effects of not eating meat and the information she received to help her order her life towards veganism, which of course are two good examples of finding uncertainty absorption through, respectively, interpersonal relations and expert sources. In another example, Wes talks about joining disruptive protests with DxE even though he's not a fan of them. Still, he sees the merit in them because of the passion and knowledge of his fellow members.

Besides being another example of uncertainty absorption facilitated by an organization, Wes' quote also shows that the narrative that is built through uncertainty absorption varies between different organizations and therefore different groups of people. To elaborate; Wes and Achmed, who are both members of DxE, believe and partake in more disruptive protests, whereas the interviewed members of the SFVS, which in general is a non-confrontational organization and more focused on community events, are more reluctant about disruptive protests. This is not to say that the affiliated respondents conform to the general narrative of these organizations, but it rather shows, as was also suggested in the previous sub-section on interpersonal relations, that respondents seek out organizations and people that best correspond with who they are and, maybe more importantly; who they want to be and what narrative they want to encapsulate. Based on these choices, and with the successful absorption of uncertainty, sanctions can then be exercised.

5.3.2. Exercising sanctions

The second, and more obvious source of practicing subpolitics is the exercising of positive and negative sanctions according to vegan values (Holzer & Sorensen, 2003, p. 92). Simply put; this means the boycotting of products, organizations, companies…etc. that conflict with vegan values by abstaining from them and rewarding products, organizations, companies…etc. that correspond with vegan values by supporting them. In reality, this did not result in a clear list of products or producers marked 'yay' or 'nay' as one might expect, rather, in line with the previous sections, exercising sanctions was found to be a highly personal endeavor with the sanctioning of products and organizations being the most prevalent among the respondents.

5.3.2.1. Sanctioning products

To begin with the sanctioning of products; the obvious place to begin is of course the negative sanctioning of animal products in favor of plant-based food options. Among the respondents however, differences were observed in the products that received negative sanctions. For example, some respondents, in addition to dietary products, also negatively sanctioned animal-based clothing in favor of a positive sanction for cotton and canvas;

> "*You really don't want any more leather goods, you don't want any more feather goods, you don't want any silk, any wool, really. So you better be a cotton girl! I mean, I still have some things that I knitted 20-30 years ago I'm not going to throw it away because I cannot bring those sheep back to live, but I will not acquire new things that are made from these materials*." – Petra

> "*I was educated about leather and all the things that were in my life, leather shoes and belts and things that come from killing animals to do this and I thought ''there must be a better way'' and so I found canvas belts and got rid of my leather belts and replaced them with canvas belts because they're not coming from animal carcasses, to destroy an animal to get its skin to make leather you know, so I thought ''there's gotta be a better way'' so I started thinking about it more. I thought ''I don't wanna contribute to these things''*." – Godfrey

Other respondents explicitly said they were mainly dietary vegans;

> "*Some people also don't buy clothes that are made from animals, but you can go either way I think, I think it's more about the diet for me.*" – Julie

> "*I'm not as strict with [non-dietary animal products] but I'm more the dietary vegan at this point in my life*." – Jaleesa

One respondent, Matt, made an exception for honey and in doing so chooses not to negatively sanction this dietary animal product;

> "*I'm an exception because I do eat honey, I'm a vegan who eats honey. But a true vegan, or a hardcore vegan does not eat any animal products so that includes honey*." – Matt

Later however, Matt added he doesn't eat a lot of honey and also talked about the choice to make exceptions on occasions without any vegan food options available, showing that compromises can sometimes be made for things that would otherwise be given a negative sanction;

> "*Well, and then what happens in that situation I think the individual; the vegetarian or the vegan, needs to make up their mind if they're going to make an exception for that one meal and I myself have made and exception once in a while but I would say it's more like once in a blue moon. Like I said, I eat honey. I don't eat that much honey, I probably have honey about once every three months so it's almost funny that I eat honey*." – Matt

The reason for these differences in the range of animal products that receive negative or positive sanctions can be approached from multiple angels. They can be linked back to the view of veganism as a learning process instead of an all-or-nothing ideology; Jaleesa mentions being a dietary vegan at this point in her life, suggesting the possibility of a later point in her life in which she might be more than that and negatively sanction non-dietary animal products as well. It is also interesting that the respondents who specifically mentioned being dietary vegans were among the younger respondents, relatively new to veganism, whereas Petra and Godfrey for example, who both negatively sanction all animal products, were among the older respondents and more experienced with veganism. The differences can also imply that Petra and Godfrey had more sources of uncertainty absorption that made them feel confident in negatively sanctioning non-dietary animal products while Jaleesa and Julie had not yet been able or wanting to seek these out.

5.3.2.2. Sanctioning organizations

Besides giving positive or negative sanctions to products through consumption behavior, sanctions were also exercised by supporting organizations that align with the respondents' values through among other ways giving time in the form of volunteer work for organizations ("Volunteer work", frequency: 6). Diane for example, among many other things, volunteers for two organizations that feed the homeless vegan food, which is a good illustration of positively sanctioning a particular initiative;

> "*I just, just recently, found out about these two other organisations; one's been around for a long time, it's called Food not Bombs … they get together and they get donations and food donations from different, various places every week and they show up with whatever people bring or people have and we make a vegan dinner and then go out and feed the homeless vegan food, which is I think the only way if you're going to do something kind and compassionate, I don't understand why people are feeding murder and thinking it's compassionate. So… it all flows, it's wonderful. The other one is Curries not Worries … it's curry with no worry, it's another organisation and they're all vegan and they prepare and then go to the farmers market. They do it every Tuesday night, they feed the homeless there*." – Diane

In another example, Godfrey and Joanna both volunteer for the SFVS and in doing so, positively sanction that organization;

> "*I always volunteer a lot, to keep the community up and going, I'm a board member of the SFVS, I have been for several years now.*" – Godfrey

> "*I don't really know how long I've been on the board, maybe ten years, maybe longer. It helps.. because I really enjoy helping to plan for the World Veg Fest … and I do tabling too and I pass out information about the benefits of a plant-based diet*." – Joanna

Godfrey also used to be an activist and joined confrontational protests against companies that were in conflict with his values, which shows that a negative sanction not only entails refusing to support a company by not buying their products, but also actively dissuading others from doing so;

> "*I protested Kentucky Fried Chicken for a while, I protested Foie Gras, because they do horrible things to the geese; fatten their liver so they can.. it's disgusting and then the sharp fin soup; they kill sharks off the coast of Japan just for this soup they just, you know, slaughter them and leave it and.. all these atrocities.*" – Godfrey

As members of the activist organisation DxE, Wes and Achmed also volunteer their time and participate in confrontational activism for various causes. During the fieldwork, a protest at Whole Foods was observed during which they urged other people for the negative sanctioning of the Thanksgiving turkey; a product that is in conflict with their values and given a negative sanction. Wes and Achmed were both present at the protest and later talked about these kinds of demonstrations during their interviews;

> "*I decided.. this was when I was vegan but not doing any activism, I decided I probably should start doing activism because being a vegan, it's very passive you know, it's like you realize all this violence is happening systematically in this world but the only action you're doing is trying to not participate in it, it seems like a very minimal thing you can whereas if you actually care about animals you should try and stop it, you should try and jump in so I figured activism was something I had to do*." – Wes

> "*I participate in DxE demonstrations because they're very different from most demonstrations I feel. They're loud, they're disruptive, but they're not attacking an individual. I think that part is important, they don't yell at any person, they don't accuse an individual. They're disrupting the system, the place of violence, and that makes people think, whether they hate it or not, it polarizes the issue so that it's clear you have to make a stand, you can't just be complacent and vague about what you feel about any of this. You can't just say ''I love animals and eat them'', you have to decide, am I going vegan, do I care about animals or not?*" – Achmed

Additionally, Achmed also owns a vegan restaurant, which is an interesting example because by running it he is not a consumer but rather a producer, and rewards consumers looking for vegan food by providing them with vegan food options while negatively sanctioning consumers looking to eat animal products. He furthermore donates portions of his income to DxE, illustrating another example of his positive sanctioning of that organization.

What these examples show is that the exercising of sanctions is also dynamic and differs from person to person. Building on the previous sections which revealed how veganism is seen as a way of life and learning process, it is then only logical that positive and negative sanctions are exercised in the same matter and that not all vegans exercise the same positive and negative sanctions. This can be further elaborated by placing it within the larger context of Beck's individualization thesis and in particular his notion of individual biographies; the idea that each individual has to author his or her own life by drawing on sources of uncertainty absorption, and determine his or her own actions based on these individual considerations.

5.4. Maintaining vegan practices

Through uncertainty absorption and exercising sanctions, respondents brought their values into practice and engaged in the subpolitics of veganism. In this final section, the last research question; "what is the importance of subpolitics in engaging the challenges of maintaining vegan practices within a carnist society?", is addressed. It connects the subpolitical practices of veganism with the encapsulation of veganism as a sustainable part of one's identity by exploring the role of subpolitics in the engaging in the challenges of being vegan in a carnist society. First, the challenges of veganism, as experienced by the respondents, are briefly addressed followed by an exploration of the importance of subpolitics in engaging these challenges.

5.4.1. Challenges of practicing veganism

When asked if the respondents experienced any difficulties with the dietary change, or; the exercising of sanctions according to vegan values, none of the respondents saw the actual dietary change to veganism as having a major impact in itself ("Dietary change as unchallenging", frequency: 7) and they experienced no real challenges bringing veganism into practice and negatively sanctioning animal products in favor of vegan foods;

> "*Every day I had a bowl of cereal before I was vegan and so after I became vegan I still had to have a bowl of cereal. So I did, the only difference was I don't use dairy milk anymore; cow milk, I use soy milk … I've learned that actually every food I couldn't have anymore, they do make vegan versions. There is a vegan version of pizza, I've had it and it's good and I've also had a vegan quesadilla. In fact, there is a vegan restaurant here in San Francisco called Gracias Madre. It's a Mexican restaurant that's vegan and they make quesadillas, and it's delicious*." – Matt

"*I can eat like fake meat and beans and rice and stuff like that, lentils, yeah I don't know, it was just pretty easy for me*." – Julie

"*It was relatively very easy because it actually only involved, for food, the cheese to discard.. the first few days I thought ''oh it's hard, I don't have a slice of cheese to put on the bread'' but you can be inventive*." – Petra

"*I really honestly think those are the easiest parts, like.. I think for some people those things might be hard, but those are more short term things; it's just changing little habits that very quickly change and you adjust, like eating out; it's really never an issue, I mean, there's always something you can eat, absolutely always*." – Jaleesa

Furthermore, a lot of the respondents mentioned they go to different restaurants when going out to eat, which naturally is also a form of exercising sanctions for the products restaurants offer, but this was generally seen as a positive thing as some respondents mentioned a feeling of excitement that occurred while discovering new restaurants. One important factor here is the city of San Francisco itself where, according to almost all respondents, there's an abundance of places for vegans to go ("Abundance of vegan restaurants in SF", frequency: 6):

"*There's so many places here, I mean I'm lucky it's San Francisco, I'm fortunate, because it's the Mecca … so there's tons of places I can go to*." – Diane

"*There's a lot of vegan restaurants here in San Francisco and even if they're not vegan, like, almost every restaurant is vegan-friendly so it will have some kind of vegan option*." – Julie

It's especially easier nowadays with the internet and applications such as HappyCow, which was mentioned by two respondents (Matt and George), that allow you to find nearby vegan or vegetarian places wherever you happen to be. Positively sanctioning places with vegan food option thus seems to be a relatively easy thing to do in modern day San Francisco.

The exercising of sanctions according to vegan values apparently did not seem to result in any significant challenges. One explanation for this might be that the exercising of sanctions is related with uncertainty absorption that provides vegans with security and confidence in the exercising of sanctions. Without this second source of subpolitical power, challenges did occur for some respondents in their relations with carnists who caused the opposite of uncertainty absorption by not being supportive or understanding of veganism, mostly because of a lack of understanding about what veganism is and how one would be able to live healthily off it, and thus causing doubt and insecurity ("Challenge to deal with family initially", frequency: 4). One of the best examples of this is Petra, who only became a vegan in 2008 after her children had moved out even though she was already thinking about becoming vegan decades earlier;

"*In my later 20s I was thinking about it, but it was pressure from the family that you should at least eat milk, and eggs, and cheese, because when you leave already the meat and fish and so on, they told me ''what kind of kid are you going to produce?'' when they saw I was pregnant, you know*?" – Petra

It was because of this pressure that Petra stayed a vegetarian for the largest part of her life and also raised her children as such. Jaleesa also experienced some difficulties when she, as a vegan, moved to San Francisco and did not have any vegan friends. For her, veganism was devalued to such an extent that she went back to being a vegetarian for a short period of time because of the negative associations with veganism she faced;

> "*I moved back to San Francisco and I was vegan for a while but I didn't have any vegan friends here and it just got really hard because I still had dinner parties and stuff but like having friends make little comments about.. people don't even realize they're doing it but people will complain about it; about having vegan food and it gets really hard when you're doing stuff for someone, you're doing so much for a dinner party for people, like cooking all that food and have people like complain, like even in the slightest, in a joking way, it's just very disheartening and hurtful I and so I stopped being a vegan because it just didn't feel very positive anymore, I just didn't really feel it.*" – Jaleesa

Both Petra and Jaleesa in these examples lacked the security and confidence from uncertainty absorption to practice veganism and as a result did not exercise positive and negative sanctions in the way they might have wanted to. Although other respondents mentioned being challenged as well by negative feedback such as not being taken seriously or being teased ("Teased for being vegan", frequency: 3; "Not being taken seriously at first", frequency: 4), only in the case of Petra and Jaleesa this led to a discontinuation of the vegan practices. What this reveals is that the most significant challenges of being a vegan in a carnist society appear to lie not so much in the actual exercising of sanctions, but rather in the ability to draw from the second source of subpolitical power; uncertainty absorption, that comes as a prerequisite to the exercising of sanctions. Assuming this, we can then examine more closely how respondents utilized uncertainty absorption to engage this challenge, and get more insight in the role of uncertainty absorption as a source of subpolitical power.

5.4.2. The role of uncertainty absorption

When Jaleesa stopped being a vegan and went back to being a vegetarian, it is interesting how she mentioned feeling fine about it and how she did not really think about veganism again for most of that time period;

> "*I stopped being a vegan at the end of December of, I guess like 2013 and all of 2014 I wasn't a vegan, I was just a regular vegetarian and that was the first time since I was in college that I was a full, full vegetarian because I was like buying and cooking dairy and eggs. And I felt pretty fine about it, I like only once thought about being a vegan again and didn't really follow through at all.*" – Jaleesa

It shows a clear example of how negative experiences with practicing veganism can result in a feedback on one's vegan value's, which in this case were neglected, or perhaps just temporarily forgotten. At the very least, they were no longer acted upon. In the light of the in chapter 2.1. discussed hegemony of institutionalized carnism that plays into the psychological mechanics of 'out of sight, out of mind', it is understandable how it is easy, and sometimes even tempting, to fall back into a narrative that is less challenging to the status quo, especially when one doesn't have the necessary sources of uncertainty absorption to draw confidence and security from. How then can uncertainty absorption help to make the encapsulation of veganism more sustainable in a carnist society? The first suggested way is through the deepening of vegan values.

5.4.2.1. Deepening values

It was already mentioned in the theoretical framework that motivations are more dynamic than simply finding one and sticking with it as values can be dropped or adopted over time (Fox & Ward, 2008, p. 427). The respondents also have shown that their motivations evolved since first learning about veganism, most recognizably by their usage of some form of the word 'initially'. It is important to pay attention to this because it signifies that respondents distinguish between multiple phases in their

veganism and learned of new reasons to value veganism, which hints at a role of uncertainty absorption in this process of deepening one's vegan values.

Among the respondents there was a roughly equal division of people that explicitly stated either health or animal rights issues as their initial motivation ("Initial motivation: health", frequency; 3; "Initial motivation: animal treatment", frequency; 4). Julie for example started out with veganism for health reasons, but later learned about other reasons to value veganism as well because of which she was able to continue practicing veganism;

> "*I just wanted to eat healthier, that's all it was initially, because I never thought about the ethical.. and I didn't know about the environmental problems either*." – Julie

> "*I was able to stick with it because after I became vegan I realized about the environmental issues and ethical issues as well*." – Julie

After becoming vegan, she joined Greenpeace for which she organized events and has participated in some protests. When asked if she felt like her being in Greenpeace was related to her being vegan;

> "*I guess it was related because, being a vegan connected kind of the dots for me to become and environmentalist, because I was completely oblivious to all the environmental issues, like even like fossil fuels and stuff like that*." – Julie

Julie shows how the progression of motivations over time had also strongly affected her actions as she now considers herself an environmentalist in addition to being vegan, which suggests the deepening of the vegan values through uncertainty absorption. In this case; her involvement with the organization Greenpeace was likely to be a strong source of uncertainty absorption as organizations, like discussed in chapter 5.3.1.3., can also serve as a hub towards expert sources and supportive social connections.

A similar development was observed with Godfrey, who also initially became a vegan for health reasons, but then found a community in which he learned about animal rights and environmental issues as well;

> "*I was an activist for, God, probably ten years after that, along with going to dinners and potlucks and camping, vegan camping trips and all that, even before I got involved with the San Francisco Vegetarian Society*." – Godfrey

Here, Godfrey too utilized uncertainty absorption which enforced his motivation to such an extent that he became an activist and exercised sanctions accordingly.

One interesting observation was that the respondents who started out with animal welfare as their initial motivation did not seem to be affected as strongly by the discovery of health reasons to be vegan. We already saw the two examples of Wes and Diane in section 5.2.2. on the hierarchy of vegan values who said they would be vegan even if it was unhealthy. For them; it was at best an added benefit, but it did not seem to affect their devotion at all. Their motivational development and subsequent utilizing of uncertainty absorption appeared to go more in terms of deepening their morality and extending it into other aspects of life. In 5.1.1., Diane mentioned she's still learning about cosmetics and the other staples of life, but another example is Achmed, who also named the mistreatment of animals as his main reason for being vegan;

> "*Absolutely. In the beginning, yeah, that's all it was. I didn't even understand the environmental impact, the health impact, I just said ''I'm not going to participate in this, period''*." – Achmed

Later in the interview he talks about how he doesn't see veganism as the end station and still sees a myriad of ways to extend his ethical beliefs into other areas of life;

> "*There's a lot of things, a ton of things. Besides other products; fair-trade, clothing, anything you could consume, we're also still driving cars, we're also.. I mean, these things are part of a larger system right? Most of the amenities we have here are due to the fact that we are kind of on the shoulders and backs of poor countries right? Stealing their resources from their land and stuff like that. A lot of things to say that I like to begin with, but it's a… it doesn't end.*'' – Achmed

Note that this development is not exclusive to vegans who started out with the mistreatment of animals as their initial motivation for veganism. Vegans who named health as an initial motivation are just as well extending their morality to other aspects of life. The earlier discussed Julie was a good example of this as someone who started out wanting to eat healthier and is now an environmentalist and actively concerned about all sorts of issues beyond just animal welfare.

Uncertainty absorption thus plays an important role in the values of vegans as it helps to deepen them, resulting in a stronger connection to veganism; as shown by Julie who said she wouldn't have been able to stay vegan solely based on health reasons, an expansion of exercised sanctions when health values are supplemented with ethical values; as shown by Julie again and also by Godfrey, and a deepening of ethical values beyond dietary products; as shown by Diane and Achmed. One noteworthy finding on this topic of discovering new values to deepen the encapsulation of veganism is the suggestion that vegans who have health as their initial motivation find more value in ethical issues, than ethical vegans find in health issues. Ethical vegans, and initial health vegans who have come to value ethical issues, seem more likely to deepen their values by extending their ethical motivation into other realms of life. To elaborate on this, Beck points out the politicization of society and depoliticization of national politics; birthing a generation that is less interested in established political institutions, but is still concerned about a wide array of local and global issues. Because these issues are rather acted upon on the subpolitical level, Beck notes how this can lead to contradicting views of people who are seemingly disinterested and careless about traditional politics, but actually live highly politicized lives. Given this context, it makes sense that the ethical aspects of veganism, which as discussed in chapter 2.1.2. impact global issues, are a much deeper source for value than the very personal benefits on one's health and may lead to a deeper encapsulation of veganism when sources of uncertainty absorption can be utilized.

5.4.2.2. Supportive environments

To continue with the story of Jaleesa, who stopped being a vegan while being in an environment unsupportive of veganism (and felt fine about it); before she moved to San Francisco, Jaleesa was a vegan for over a year and mentioned that she was able to do that because she had a strong vegan community and was surrounded by a lot of vegan friends;

> "*In September 2012 I decided to be a vegan and actually stuck with it for over a year, a bit over a year and that was the first time I'd been a vegan for that long and it was great and I think the reason I was able to was that I had a really strong vegan community and a lot of vegan friends*." – Jaleesa

Finally, after her brief period of vegetarianism, she moved into Chateau Ubuntu, an intentional community in San Francisco that was observed during the fieldwork. Chateau Ubuntu is made up of people from all walks of life, who believe in a lifestyle grounded in sharing and common values. On a day to day basis, living in Chateau Ubuntu implied a shared household where food is bought as a group. Sundays and Wednesdays were known as family dinner nights where, as the name suggests, dinner is prepared and eaten with the entire house. Although the vegetarian and vegan people were in the minority, most of these dinners were largely vegan or at least labelled when they are not. Additionally, there were two major fridges located in the garage, with one being designated for animal products, and the other for plant-based products. Overall, it was observed as an environment highly supportive of veganism which resulted in Jaleesa becoming a vegan again;

> "*And then I moved into the house [Chateau Ubuntu], our wonderful co-op house and I felt like it was just so much easier here and at that time there was only one other vegan, but it just felt really easy because there's so much food, like beautiful food and produce around and like having people, like anybody around who have dietary restrictions it's just easier to make things for everybody*." – Jaleesa

Petra finally became a vegan after her she did not have to cook for a whole family anymore and was able to just think about her own diet without facing any pressure;

> "*Vegan I became only after I.. my son was naturally already out of the house and I didn't have to think any more about having to cook for a whole family and I began just thinking of myself you know. I had not met anybody personally, but I had read books and I thought ''yes it is possible to go vegan'' and then I was at the 100 year celebration of the German Vegetariër Bund in 2008. There we had lunch and dinner and it was all, they had made the decision that it is vegan, not vegetarian. Everything was vegan and we ate four course, five course meals and I thought ''there's nothing that's lacking, you can have anything you want'' … Then I thought ''well, there's no more reason why not to go vegan''. So it took me that long*." – Petra

Both Jaleesa's and Petra's stories show how finding a supportive environment helped them to become a vegan again and overcome what they experienced as a challenge of being a vegan in a carnist society. In Jaleesa's case; this was done by moving into a community supportive of veganism. For Petra, this was done by reading books and attending an event supportive of veganism.

So how did uncertainty absorption play a role in these two stories? Aside from Petra's obvious example of turning to expert sources by reading books, it is perhaps more interesting to pay attention to the general environments both Jaleesa and Petra surrounded themselves in. Section 5.3.1.2. showed how uncertainty absorption can also happen through interpersonal relations; finding likeminded people who are supportive, provide comfort, can point out expert sources and perhaps serve as role models. In short; interpersonal relations can provide a sense of community that absorbs uncertainty which in turn can help the encapsulation of veganism.

5.4.2.3. Building a narrative

Building on the previous sub-section; Cherry pointed out that having access to environments that are supportive of veganism are beneficial because they allow vegans to be part of what in this research is referred to as a supportive narrative (2006, p. 163), an idea that was complemented by Sneijder and Te Molder's study on discursive tools vegans use to frame veganism in a supportive way (2009). Uncertainty absorption then, in its broadest sense, allows vegans access to supportive narratives, or; vegan narratives, that provide vegans with a sense of security and confidence in a society where

carnism is the hegemonic narrative by turning to expert sources, establishing supportive relations and joining organizations.

The benefits of having access to a vegan narrative were probably the clearest in the stories of Achmed and Wes who as part of the organization DxE were actively engaged in framing and promoting veganism and in doing so, utilized the full range of ways for uncertainty absorption; supplying them with an abundance of knowledge and supportive people. For Wes, this made it easy for him to deal with carnist arguments;

> "*I realized that there are a lot of counterarguments for veganism that are all very, very bad and I know exactly how to dismantle each one so when people talk to me now they know that's what to expect; that I know my stuff and that I can argue about it pretty well. So, people pick a lot less fights with me, I feel people respect me a lot more now because this is not just a fashion thing they realize it's something I believe in very strongly, it's like a justice related issue*." – Wes

> "*It tends to be like a handful of the same arguments so a lot of the times when people argue against me my mind isn't even working anymore, it's just like on auto-play*." – Wes

Notice how he mentions his mind goes on auto-play when he dismantles carnist arguments. The easiness for Wes to access the vegan narrative really shows the high involvement of uncertainty absorption in what appears to be a successful encapsulation of veganism.

Another interesting example of how uncertainty absorption helps to provide vegans with a supportive vegan narrative that came up during the interviews was the importance of sharing food with others ("importance of sharing food", frequency: 3):

> "*People are really into food. So, if I had more time that I would love to learn more on how to cook, like a lot more meals because it's delicious, the food is amazing … I think what people are stuck on a lot is taste and they don't get that, they hear 'vegan' and think ''oh my god, I can't just eat a carrot right?'', you know, people don't know yet, I mean, some people, more and more people are knowing but I think just getting it out there and introducing people to vegan food like I've introduced my co-workers, I've taken them to vegan restaurants and they're surprised that it's good, that it's really good, they had no idea of it*." – Diane

> "*Food is such an important part of life, for anybody, and to be able to share food with people is really important and have people to share recipes with or who are excited to eat things you make and who share in that with you is really, really important*." – Jaleesa

This emphasis on sharing food as an important part of life is a good example of something that is shared when someone is part of a larger narrative. In the above quotations, the vegan narrative includes a shared set of meanings attributed to food as shown by Diane by mentioning how carnist conceptions of vegan food are different from hers as she refers to vegan food as delicious and amazing. It is therefore understandable that respondents feel offended or hurt when something they deem valuable is not appreciated by others, which was for example shown by Jaleesa who felt disheartened when her feelings about vegan food weren't reciprocated by her carnist friends who did not appreciate the food nor the effort that went into making it.

More generally, uncertainty absorption not only gives one access to a supportive vegan narrative, it can also help to maintain it over time as Achmed explains;

> "*It's good to have a support group, other people who care and remind you, seeing different things like a documentary … that remind you every once in while what the reality is*." – Achmed

This quote suggests that having other vegans around (having interpersonal relations and being part of an organization) and watching things like documentaries (expert source) every once in a while keeps one grounded in 'reality', which is another great example of the role of uncertainty absorption in building a narrative and maintaining veganism mentioned in the interviews. What is interesting here is that uncertainty absorption can serve as a reminder, suggesting that it is something that needs to be done continuously (or at least every once in a while). This makes sense when linked back to Joy and her concept of carnism which is seen as a hegemonic narrative; as the status quo. This narrative is ubiquitous and easily accessible whereas the one for veganism is not and therefore needs more effort and occasional reminders to be maintained.

In conclusion, sources of subpolitical power appear to be of vital importance in engaging the challenges of practicing veganism in a carnist society. Especially uncertainty absorption plays an important role in finding the security and comfort to uphold vegan values and exercise sanctions accordingly. Respondents without this source of subpolitical power experienced being vegan as more challenging and in the cases of Jaleesa and Petra, even led to a discontinuation of vegan practices. Uncertainty absorption not only plays a role in the respondents' efforts to gain knowledge and assurance from expert sources that deepen their values that extend their exercised sanctions, but also in the finding of organizations and supportive social connections that allow respondents to be part of and draw from a shared narrative based on vegan values that helps them encapsulate veganism within a carnist society.

Chapter 6.

Conclusion

This research studied veganism as a subpolitical movement by exploring the role of subpolitics in encapsulating veganism as a sustainable part of the identities of vegans in San Francisco. This was done with the help of an extensive theoretical framework, presented in chapter 2, and a well-considered methodological approach, as discussed in chapter 3. After spending three months collecting data in San Francisco, the results were presented in chapter 4 as individual portraits of the vegans who participated in this research. These were subsequently analyzed in chapter 5. In this concluding chapter, the analyzed results will be used to answer the research questions (6.1.) and conclude the research (6.2.), followed by a reflection on the process of conducting it (6.3.).

6.1. Summarizing results

This section revisits the in chapter 1 determined research question on what the role of subpolitics is in encapsulating veganism as a sustainable part of a vegan's identity within a carnist society, and answers it based on the findings presented in chapter 5.

The first part of the analysis examined how veganism is viewed by the respondents to get an idea of how exactly they perceive it and what it means to encapsulate it within a carnist society. In general, the respondents viewed veganism as a movement that strives for a more non-violent way of life within a carnist society in which the institutionalized carnist narrative is perceived as problematic and, especially now, as excessively violent. Although most respondents recognized that veganism is still associated with negative things like being unnatural, weird or extreme, optimism was found in the perceived progress veganism has made as a movement in recent years, as shown by a growing interest in veganism and the growth of available vegan food products.

On the reasons why respondents valued veganism and wished to encapsulate it; reasons to value veganism were categorized as health reasons; valuing veganism for the benefits it has on one's personal health, and ethical reasons; valuing veganism because it doesn't contribute to the industrial treatment and killing of animals and the consequences of this production process on the environment, and because of its potential to bring about positive societal change. Benefits for personal health and abstaining from the treatment and killing of animals were often named as a primary reason, likely because they can be related to the individual in the most direct way and are thus the most tangible reasons to take subpolitical action as an individual.

Knowing what veganism entails and why to value it only leaves bringing it into practice. Because veganism is seen as a movement that focusses on individual lifestyle changes rather than more traditional political goals, it was interpreted as a subpolitical movement. The question that arises then is how practicing veganism means the engagement in subpolitics. Two sources of subpolitical power were distinguished. To begin, uncertainty absorption involved finding confidence and security that veganism and the reasons to value it are indeed right by turning to expert sources for knowledge such as documentaries and books, finding likeminded vegans for support, comfort and guidance and joining veganism-related organizations for a more organized sense of community that can also serve as a hub towards the previous two ways of uncertainty absorption. Secondly, exercising sanctions consisted of the boycotting and rewarding of certain products, companies, organizations…etc. according to one's vegan values. For the respondents, this was generally done by abstaining from a

individually decided range of animal products in favor of plant-based products, protesting animal product-related companies and volunteering for veganism-related organizations.

To fully answer the main question, insights were needed in how veganism is maintained within a carnist society and encapsulated as a sustainable part of one's identity, and what role the previously established subpolitical practices play in this process. It became evident that the main challenge for respondents was maintaining veganism without sufficient uncertainty absorption, meaning; maintaining veganism without sources providing security and confidence leaving respondents vulnerable to negative and demotivating external influences, especially from carnist friends or family members. The importance of uncertainty absorption (experts sources, supportive social contact and organizations) then was threefold; first, uncertainty absorption facilitated the deepening of vegan values, meaning that vegans who started out with one reason to value veganism, found more motivation in other reasons through uncertainty absorption. Values providing the most extra motivation were found to be ethical values as they were an effective motivator for vegans who started out for health reasons, but also for ethical vegans who were less interested in their personal health and found more motivation in extending their initial ethical values into other realms of life. Second, uncertainty absorption gave vegans a sense of community, a sense of comfort when vegans surrounded themselves with other vegans by making new friends and joining organizations that were supportive of veganism. Third, uncertainty absorption allowed vegans to be part of a larger narrative that is supportive of veganism while practicing veganism in a carnist society. Being part of a supportive narrative helped to maintain veganism in a myriad of ways; it provided a shared language and a way of constructing meaning and arguments, which was utilized in an ongoing process of uncertainty absorption that allowed vegans to face the challenges of veganism, maintain their practices and encapsulate veganism as a sustainable part of their identity within a carnist society.

6.2. Conclusion

This research set out to contribute to possible solution strategies to the growing environmental harm caused by animal consumption. Following the 2010 UNEP report's call for a worldwide dietary change away from animal products (Hertwich et al., 2010, p. 82), veganism was explored as an ideology that, in the general definition, abstains from animal products and could provide such a change away from animal consumption and the environmental damage it causes.

Veganism however exists in a society in which carnism, the ideological opposite of veganism, is institutionalized and seen as the status quo. As a result, veganism generally receives little serious attention beyond small measures such as promotions to eat more vegetables or vegetarian meals and go meatless on Mondays (Pulkinnen, 2014, p. 622). Yet, the urgency of this matter was established by approaching carnism and the issues with animal consumption through the treadmill of production theory. In the theoretical framework, it was found that the institutionalization of carnism and the subsequent growth of animal production is expected to continue at the expense of the environment. As Schnaiberg's theory explained; the industry is unlikely to change its ways as the quest for profit benefits from neo-liberal policies and government subsidies that are subsequently lobbied for, and the 'out of sight, out of mind' mindset of people which is exploited by hiding the violence of the production process and exporting negative side-effects by moving parts of the production process to the Global South (Gould et al., 2004). Because of the basically non-existent agency consumers (i.e. vegans) have within this theoretical framework, Beck's world risk society was added to bring more attention to them.

Although veganism has been acknowledged as a new type of social movement that is not based on legislation but on personal lifestyle (Cherry, 2006, p. 156), existing links between veganism

and Beck's concept of subpolitics were not found during the literature review. Approaching veganism as a subpolitical movement brought attention to the important elements of its workings and sources of subpolitical power; positive and negative sanctions and uncertainty absorption. This provided new insights in vegans as highly politicized consumers who, as shown by some respondents who mentioned they're continuously learning about new things related to veganism, are concerned about and engaged in a wide array of issues ranging from local to global. Most of these issues, such as the state of the animal industry, health issues and environmental issues were understood through Beck's notion of a second phase of modernity and the confrontation with uncontrollable self-inflicted risks, which provides an explanation for the shift towards subpolitics and the encapsulation of veganism. Approaching veganism in this context therefore also contributes to our understanding of veganism as part of larger societal developments, which in turn helps us to better understand veganism as a subpolitical movement that exists within these larger societal developments.

The results of this research showed the important role of subpolitics for encapsulating veganism. What this suggests for veganism as a solution strategy to the growing issues with animal consumption is that it is highly important to not view it as a traditional movement solely seeking to change legislation or policies, but rather view it within the context of subpolitics and measure its potential and successes as such. This means for one; a focus on individual lifestyle changes and how they are maintained. For this, the findings of this research emphasize the explored benefits of utilizing subpolitical sources of power, in particular uncertainty absorption, which were summarized in the previous section. Two; although striving for legislative or institutional change in more traditional ways is certainly not discouraged, this research in addition wants to emphasize the potential for change on the subpolitical level as Beck noted how subpolitical movements can become profitable and, in time, bring about societal change (Beck, 1999). This progress was already observed by some of the respondents who talked about the growing awareness about veganism and the growing availability and variety of vegan food options, and should therefore not be underestimated.

Because this research at best only provides a small contribution to the existing knowledge on the research subject, the discussed theoretical concepts and the methodological approach, there is still much to be done and discovered. The reviewed literature and the findings of this research indicate that dietary habits are social constructs and largely dictated by culture. This research tried to approach veganism and carnism in an unbiased way as distinctive ideologies rather than for example approaching veganism as an extreme, abnormal diet (which would suggest that carnism is the normal state of things). There is much more potential in understanding the social construction of food ideologies such as veganism and carnism. One suggested point for further research is the role of gender. One of the respondents mentioned for example how veganism is often associated with femininity which is, unfortunately, often perceived as a negative thing, especially by men who perceive meat consumption as part of their masculinity. Also interesting might be the experiences of LGBT people who, like Godfrey mentioned in his interview (chapter 4.3.), fall outside of traditional concepts of femininity and masculinity and might therefore have a different experience with socially constructed dietary habits.

Another interesting point for further research might be the role of the internet and online communities in encapsulating veganism. Sneijder and Te Molder researched discursive tools vegans apply by studying online vegan message boards (2009). Online communities such as these can be interpreted as potential sources for uncertainty absorption that give access to all the previously summarized benefits from uncertainty absorption, but through a virtual space. Online communities could be especially interesting for vegans or people interested in veganism without direct access to vegan organizations or other vegans.

Lastly, because the concept of carnism wasn't coined until 2010, it is understandable that is hasn't yet been taken up by the scientific community as much as older concepts that are of a similar subject like speciesism (Fjellstrom, 2002, p. 64). Yet, this research hopefully indicates that it is a concept worthy of further research as the findings revealed the relevance of this concept as an important counterweight when discussing veganism that ensures it is approached without a hidden ideological bias. In combination with Schnaiberg's treadmill of production, carnism furthermore proved to be invaluable for deepening our understanding in the contemporary issues with animal consumption by pointing out the psychological and cultural factors of animal consumption that complemented the economic focus of the treadmill of production.

6.3. Reflection

This section will briefly reflect on this research as a whole and the process of conducting it, starting with the theoretical interpretation of veganism: based on how the respondents of this research viewed veganism, it is highly recommended to move away from theoretical interpretations of veganism as an extreme end on a vegetarian spectrum and instead adopt one that juxtaposes it with carnism as proposed by Joy (Beyond Carnism, n.d.). This avoids misconceptions about veganism and vegetarianism as being the only diets based on ideological beliefs and rightly places vegetarianism somewhere in the middle of the carnist-vegan spectrum as a hybrid form instead of placing it center stage as is traditionally done. Taking veganism as the starting point furthermore pays attention to its perception as a way of life and the subsequent issues of identity construction, which were also pointed out by Larsson et al. (2003) and Cherry (2006).

Concerning Schnaiberg's treadmill of production; this theory was found to be very satisfactory in explaining the economic mechanics behind the animal industry and how these led to the animal production related issues we're facing today. However, its major downside for this research was its lack of attention to the role of consumers. Joy's theory of carnism suggested that consumers did have a role in the treadmill of animal production by upholding ideological beliefs that (inadvertently) condoned the animal industry, just like the vegans in this research showed the potential to escape from this particular treadmill, albeit on a small scale that has not yet proven itself to be capable of larger systemic change and can thus be perceived as a consequence of greenwashing (Scanlan, 2013, p. 362). Nevertheless, this research suggests to keep in mind the ideological undercurrents of otherwise seemingly economic processes to better understand larger societal developments in their fullest range.

Beck's world risk society was used as an alternative perspective next to the treadmill of production that included a stronger focus on the role of the individual. His individualization thesis indeed provided the needed insights for this and especially the concept of subpolitics proved to be very applicable to veganism as a research subject. Holzer and Sorensen already applied the concept of subpolitics to ethical, green and political consumers (2003). This research followed their line of argument and used it specifically to better understand vegans, which was found to be just as suitable. One note of reflection can be made for the interpretation of uncertainty absorption. Holzer and Sorenson mainly focus on scientists and experts as having enough authority to absorb uncertainty (2003, p. 94), which was also found in the respondents' stories as they turned to books and documentaries for knowledge. In the context of this research's methodological approach, the concept was however broadened, perhaps beyond its original scope, to the more overall sources that helped vegans find confidence and security in the vegan narrative. This fell more in line with the desired understanding of the relational mechanics of veganism as a subpolitical movement and was deemed appropriate due to the satisfying insights it provided.

Furthermore, this research made the first attempt to construct a theoretical framework in which the ideology of carnism is placed in the context of the grand social theories by Schnaiberg and Beck. The results of this were found to be satisfying as carnism provided additional insight in the role of the consumer in the treadmill of production and fitted as a part of Beck's grand narrative of the first modernity. Carnism as a theory itself also benefited from being placed within a larger societal context; the treadmill of production provided more insight in the invisibility and institutionalization of carnism and Beck's second phase of modernity and the dislocation of the grand narrative of the first modernity gave insight in neocarnism and the shift from denial as the primary carnist defense to justification.

On a more methodological note; this research was conducted in San Francisco, The United States, which for me was a foreign city in a foreign country. One advantage of this from a methodological point of view, was that the site of study; the people, the city, the organizations…etc., was completely new which automatically gave me more critical distance from the research subject. In combination with some existing knowledge and experience with veganism as a diet and ideology, I believe this provided just the right balance between familiarity and novelty for the ethnographic study that was conducted.

The duration of the fieldwork was three months, which would preferably have been a little longer but this was limited because of Visa issues. Although enough data was gathered in the form of interviews, more time in the field could have been beneficial to get more data from personal observations and participations. This wasn't an issue for the San Francisco Vegetarian Society, of which plenty events and dinners were attended over the course of a few weeks, but it was relevant for Direct Action Everywhere which I only visited once near the end of the fieldwork. I did get to join one of their protests and was able to spend the afternoon with them to observe its aftermath which allowed me to get a general feel about the organization. I was nevertheless more of an ethnographic tourist than an expected observant as Fine warned about (2003, p. 53). However, because this research did not focus on the detailed particularities of that organization and was rather focused on how respondents perceived it, I do not believe the lack of participation in DxE's activities carried major implications for this research.

Lastly, coding the interview transcripts posed some challenges as categories were to be applied to highly individual interpretations and experiences. Although the codes were reflected upon after the initial coding process was done to establish whether or not some codes were too similar and could better be combined, there is without a doubt a sense of arbitrariness left in how certain codes were determined and assigned, and there was also a chance of runaway codes getting lost in the shuffle. To make up for this, the frequency of codes was taken with a grain of salt and anytime they were applied in the analysis, the coded quotations were rechecked and compared to possibly relevant other codes and uncoded passages in the transcripts. Creating code families also helped simplify this process by providing a better overview of the codes than I would have gotten by just relying on their frequencies, making it unlikely that codes were overlooked in a way that would cause major implications for the analysis.

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Appendix 1.

Questionnaire

Interview guide used for the interviews. Grand-tour questions are underlined. **Bold** words are used to indicate aspects that are possibly mentioned in the respondent's answer, they are followed with possible prompts for further questioning. If they are also ***cursive***, this indicates that the respondent may have used a different term than I did in the questionnaire and the term must be replaced with the term the respondent used.

Introduction

1. Could you explain to me what veganism is?

   Explanation; what sources did you base that explanation on?

   ***Animal products*;** why doesn't veganism include animal products?

   Problems with meat consumption/the meat industry; what is wrong with ***meat consumption/the meat industry***?

   How are these issues different with veganism?

   How does society address these issues? To what extent do you think this has been done successfully?

2. Why do you think people consume meat?

   Habit/ordinariness; where do you think this ***habit/ordinariness*** comes from?

   How do you think ***meat consumption*** is perceived in this society? Why?

   How do you think veganism is perceived then? Why?

3. Can you tell me how you became a vegan?

   Reasons; what were the reasons/motivations for becoming vegan? Which are the most important?

   Influences; were there people that influenced you to become vegan?

   Values; what makes veganism important to you?

   Health; how do you think veganism benefits your health?

   Oppose killing/exploiting animals; why is it wrong to ***kill/exploit animals***?

   Making the world a better place; why do you think veganism is important for the ***world***?

   Benefits environment; how do you think veganism benefits the environment?

4. Did your everyday life change since becoming a vegan? How?

   Diet; do you shop at different places? Go to different restaurants?

   Social; has your social life changed since becoming vegan? How?

      How did others react to you becoming a vegan?

         How did you feel about it then? And now?

   Challenges; what were the ***challenges*** of becoming vegan?

      How do you feel about that now?

         Struggle; in what ways do you still ***struggle*** with this?

         Comfortable/easy; how did you learn from/overcome these ***challenges***?

5. How do you experience interacting with people that have a different diet?

Specific example; have there been occasions or events where you had to interact with people of a different diet without having access to vegan food options? How did you experience this?

   Confidence/success; how did you manage that?

   Confrontational/compromise; did you have to compromise your vegan values? How did you feel about that? How do you feel about that now?

   What did you learn from that situation?

6. Are you affiliated with an organisation?

   Yes; why?

      Support; how does ***the organization*** give you support?

      Political/activism; what does this entail?

         Political goals; what do you hope to achieve? How?

   No; why not?

      Need for support; you have no need for the support of an organization?

         Why not?

         Do you have other sources for support?

      Political beliefs; how do you feel about political activism by vegan organizations? Why?

      Personal activism; do you still take part in ***vegan activism/bringing veganism into the world*** outside of official organizations? Why? How?

Appendix 2.

Observation schema

In the discussion on observations (chapter 3.3.2.5.), a list of things to observe was determined based on the literature. The suggested and implemented way to note them down was through a notebook with two separate columns; one for objective, descriptive information (left), and one for personal notes/comments regarding this information (right). Observations were then made according the schema below. In addition, when deemed useful, pictures were taken for future reference.

Event: ➢ Date, place. ➢ Type of event. ➢ Number of people. ➢ General descriptions about event/people. ➢ What is supposed to happen? What is the goal? ➢ What does happen? Anything that seems out of the ordinary? ➢ General mood/atmosphere.	➢ Additional observations after the event ➢ Possible links with theory/conceptual models? ➢ What needs further elaboration? ➢ Potential sources for more data. ➢ General to-do's after the event.

Appendix 3.

Atlas.ti code list

The following codes were made using the program Atlas.ti to find common themes, subjects, motivations… etc. in the interview transcripts and are presented here according to their frequency. One important note to remember is that the frequency of codes doesn't refer to the number of respondents that the code applies to, but to the times a particular subject was brought up. The general rule that was applied here was that for a code to be assigned more than once in an interview, the subject of that code had to be brought up in separate sections or in answers to different questions. Another thing that should be mentioned is that any time a code is referred to in the analysis in chapter 5, the quotations of that code were rechecked and reflected upon (especially when the number of respondents was of importance).

Codes with frequency: 10
[Seeking out other vegans]

Codes with frequency: 8
[Health as reason for veganism]

Codes with frequency: 7
[Animal treatment as reason for veganism] [Dietary change as unchallenging] [Environmental reasons for veganism] [Feeling good about oneself] [Reluctance to force veganism on others] [Veganism is growing, more widely accepted] [Veganism requires willpower]

Codes with frequency: 6
[Abstaining from dietary animal products] [Abundance of vegan restaurants in SF] [Confrontational activism is important/needed] [Meat-eating is a cultural thing] [Meat consumption is taught] [Money as source for industry's power] [Nutrition as reason for meat consumption] [Uncomfortable with meat consumption] [Veganism as a lifestyle] [Vegetarianism is not enough] [Volunteer work]

Codes with frequency: 5
[Abstaining from all animal products] [Abstaining from animal-based clothing] [Equal value to all animals] [Feeling healthier] [Friends/family are fine/supportive with conversion to veganism] [Meat-eaters worry about protein in vegan diet] [Meat consumption is a contemporary problem] [Mistreatment of animals for animal products] [Organization: PETA] [Organization: San Francisco Vegetarian Society] [Politics/governments fall short] [Reading books for inspiration/knowledge] [Social situations as unchallenging] [Taste as reason for meat consumption]

Codes with frequency: 4
[Applications as tool to make veganism easier] [Benefits/support from vegan friends] [Brings vegan meals] [Challenge to deal with family initially] [Factory farming/meat industry as a perceived problem] [Habit as reason for meat consumption] [Influence: other people] [Initial motivation: animal treatment] [Leading by example] [Long transitional period to veganism] [Not taken seriously at first] [Optimistic about potential for change] [Promote veganism by providing information (and let others judge)] [Promote veganism by sharing vegan food] [SF is progressive and open-minded] [Showing documentaries to others] [Veganism requires constant learning/awareness, is not the end stage] [Watching documentaries for inspiration/knowledge]

Codes with frequency: 3
[Aware about unhealthy/bad vegan choices] [Book: The China Study] [Carbon emissions from animal products] [Documentary: Cowspiracy] [Documentary: Forks over Knives] [Grateful] [Importance of community] [Importance of sharing food] [Industry relies on invisibility of violence] [Influence: information/research] [Initial motivation: health] [Join

organization for support] [Join organization to learn] [Join organization to make friends] [Join organization to stay updated] [Joining a parade] [Meat-eaters perceive veganism as more extreme than vegetarianism] [Meat-eaters see vegans as weird] [Meat-eating is subconscious] [Meet-up group to find friends] [Organization: Direct Action Everywhere] [Organization: Mercy for Animals] [Teased for being vegan] [Veganism brings up guilt in meat-eaters] [Veganism confronts others with harsh truths] [Wanting to lead a kind/peaceful life]

Codes with frequency: 2

[Additives to animal products] [Application: HappyCow] [Feeling that challenges have been breached] [Finding more motivation by learning of other benefits of veganism] [Join confrontational activism] [Join organization for financial benefits] [Join organization to make a change] [Joining protests] [Living with a vegan as unproblematic] [Loss of contact with non-vegan relations] [Meat-eaters are defensive when confronted with veganism] [Meat consumption as a sign of wealth/value] [Meat consumption is no longer a necessity] [Promote veganism by leafletting] [Promote veganism when asked about it] [Religion as reason for veganism] [Respected for being vegan] [Separation of animal and final animal product] [Shopping at the same place] [Strength as a reason to consume meat] [Veganism as routine/ordinary] [Veganism is perceived as feminine] [Would be vegan even if it was unhealthy]

Codes with frequency: 1

[Advertisements for animal products as perceived problem] [Aggressiveness is beneficial to bring about change] [Arguments against veganism are easy to dismantle] [Avoiding packaged foods] [Book: Circles of Compassion] [Book: The World Peace Diet] [Challenge to feel like you have to defend yourself] [Challenge to give up some animal-based products] [Converting people one by one is not enough] [Deforestation] [Documentary: Earthlings] [Documentary: Food Inc.] [Fast food restaurants as perceived problem] [Feeling more attractive] [Growing awareness about meat-related problems] [Humane/organic/animal-friendly is a hoax] [Meat-eaters see veganism as constraining] [Meat consumption has increased in 20th century] [Meat consumption is perceived as masculine] [Meet-up group: Vegans and vegetarians over 40] [Occasional cheating on vegan diet] [Organization: Curries not Worries] [Organization: Food not Bombs] [Organization: Greenpeace] [Organization: Happy Herbivores] [Organization: The Humane League] [Pollution because of factory farming] [Shopping habits changed] [Social situations as challenging] [Trying veganism as an experiment] [Vegan food is tastier] [Veganism doesn't affect your abilities] [Veganism is passive] [Water required to produce meat] [Weight loss]

Appendix 4.

Atlas.ti code families list

List of code families that were made using coding program Atlas.ti to organize the codes presented in Appendix 2. In alphabetical order;

Code Family: Practice - Individual
Codes (22): [Abundance of vegan restaurants in SF] [Application: HappyCow] [Applications as tool to make veganism easier] [Avoiding packaged foods] [Brings vegan meals] [Challenge to give up some animal-based products] [Dietary change as unchallenging] [Feeling good about oneself] [Feeling healthier] [Feeling more attractive] [Feeling that challenges have been breached] [Finding more motivation by learning of other benefits of veganism] [Long transitional period to veganism] [Occasional cheating on vegan diet] [Reading books for inspiration/knowledge] [Shopping at the same place] [Shopping habits changed] [Vegan food is tastier] [Veganism as routine/ordinary] [Veganism requires constant learning/awareness, is not the end stage] [Watching documentaries for inspiration/knowledge] [Weight loss]

Code Family: Practice - Interpersonal
Codes (19): [Benefits/support from vegan friends] [Challenge to deal with family initially] [Challenge to feel like you have to defend yourself] [Friends/family are fine/supportive with conversion to veganism] [Importance of community] [Importance of sharing food] [Living with a vegan as unproblematic] [Loss of contact with non-vegan relations] [Meat-eaters are defensive when confronted with veganism] [Meet-up group to find friends] [Not taken seriously at first] [Respected for being vegan] [Seeking out other vegans] [SF is progressive and open-minded] [Social situations as challenging] [Social situations as unchallenging] [Teased for being vegan] [Uncomfortable with meat consumption] [Veganism brings up guilt in meat-eaters]

Code Family: Practice - Organizational
Codes (21): [Aggressiveness is beneficial to bring about change] [Arguments against veganism are easy to dismantle] [Confrontational activism is important/needed] [Converting people one by one is not enough] [Join confrontational activism] [Join organization for financial benefits] [Join organization for support] [Join organization to learn] [Join organization to make a change] [Join organization to make friends] [Join organization to stay updated] [Joining a parade] [Joining protests] [Leading by example] [Promote veganism by leafletting] [Promote veganism by providing information (and let others judge)] [Promote veganism by sharing vegan food] [Promote veganism when asked about it] [Reluctance to force veganism on others] [Showing documentaries to others] [Volunteer work]

Code Family: Books and documentaries
Codes (7): [Book: Circles of Compassion] [Book: The China Study] [Book: The World Peace Diet] [Documentary: Cowspiracy] [Documentary: Earthlings] [Documentary: Food Inc.] [Documentary: Forks over Knives]

Code Family: Organizations
Codes (9): [Organization: Curries not Worries] [Organization: Direct Action Everywhere] [Organization: Food not Bombs] [Organization: Greenpeace] [Organization: Happy Herbivores] [Organization: Mercy for Animals] [Organization: PETA] [Organization: San Francisco Vegetarian Society] [Organization: The Humane League]

Code Family: View – Impact carnism
Codes (17): [Additives to animal products] [Advertisements for animal products as perceived problem] [Carbon emissions from animal products] [Deforestation] [Factory farming/meat industry as a perceived problem] [Fast food restaurants as perceived problem] [Growing awareness about meat-related problems] [Humane/organic/animal-friendly is a hoax] [Industry relies on invisibility of violence] [Meat consumption has increased in 20th century] [Meat consumption is a contemporary problem] [Mistreatment of animals for animal products] [Money as source for industry's power] [Politics/governments fall short] [Pollution because of factory farming] [Veganism is growing, more widely accepted] [Water required to produce meat]

Code Family: What is veganism?
Codes (15): [Abstaining from all animal products] [Abstaining from animal-based clothing] [Abstaining from dietary animal products] [Aware about unhealthy/bad vegan choices] [Equal value to all animals] [Grateful] [Optimistic about potential for change] [Veganism as a lifestyle] [Veganism as routine/ordinary] [Veganism confronts others with harsh truths] [Veganism doesn't affect your abilities] [Veganism is passive] [Veganism requires constant learning/awareness, is not the end stage] [Veganism requires willpower] [Wanting to lead a kind/peaceful life]

Code Family: Why not vegan?
Codes (15): [Habit as reason for meat consumption] [Meat-eaters perceive veganism as more extreme than vegetarianism] [Meat-eaters see veganism as constraining] [Meat-eaters see vegans as weird] [Meat-eaters worry about protein in vegan diet] [Meat-eating is a cultural thing] [Meat-eating is subconscious] [Meat consumption as a sign of wealth/value] [Meat consumption is perceived as masculine] [Meat consumption is taught] [Nutrition as reason for meat consumption] [Separation of animal and final animal product] [Strength as a reason to consume meat] [Taste as reason for meat consumption] [Veganism is perceived as feminine]

Code Family: Why vegan?
Codes (15): [Animal treatment as reason for veganism] [Environmental reasons for veganism] [Health as reason for veganism] [Humane/organic/animal-friendly is a hoax] [Influence: information/research] [Influence: other people] [Initial motivation: animal treatment] [Initial motivation: health] [Meat consumption is no longer a necessity] [Religion as reason for veganism] [Trying veganism as an experiment] [Vegan food is tastier] [Vegetarianism is not enough] [Wanting to lead a kind/peaceful life] [Would be vegan even if it was unhealthy]