

FRAMING THE EVERYDAY RESISTANCE IN VEGAN LIFESTYLE

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**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **FRAMING THE EVERYDAY RESISTANCE IN VEGAN LIFESTYLE**

**TURGAY, Tutku**

M.S., Social Anthropology Graduate Program

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Activism is an ever-changing phenomena, adapting its shape to overcome whatever changes surrounding it challenges its existence. Academic studies on social movements and activism have been developed mostly in relation with pertinent changes in the structure, both in Turkish and foreign literature. Relatively new interpretations of activism, such as lifestyle movements, tend to take place in one's everyday life, actualizes the movement through seemingly mundane acts and choices. Veganism, categorized among lifestyle movements, is actualized through everyday choices made in line of an ethical concern towards non-human animals. In this regard, this thesis frames the everyday nature of resistance that is embodied and actualized by vegan individuals, and its place in contemporary Turkish civil society. To this end, individuals' own accounts has been considered as source, through semi-structured interviews. With this research, ways in which their everyday life dynamics have been affected and even sometimes shaped by their decision to become vegan, consequently revealing the quality of resistance taking place in the everyday, has been examined.

**Keywords:** vegan lifestyle, everyday resistance, lifestyle movements

## ÖZ

### VEGAN HAYAT TARZINDAKİ GÜNDELİK DİRENİŞİ ÇERÇEVELEMEK

TURGAY, Tutku

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Aktivizm, şeklini, varlığını çevreleyen her türlü değişikliğin üstesinden gelmek için uyarlayan, sürekli değişen bir fenomendir. Hem Türk hem de yabancı literatürde toplumsal hareketler ve aktivizm üzerine yapılmış akademik çalışmalar, çoğunlukla yapıdaki ilgili değişikliklerle bağlantılı olarak geliştirilmiştir. Kişinin günlük yaşamında yer alma eğilimindeki yaşam tarzı hareketleri gibi nispeten yeni aktivizm yorumları, sosyal hareketi sıradan eylemler ve seçimler yoluyla gerçekleştirir. Yaşam tarzı hareketleri arasında kategorize edilen veganlık, insan olmayan hayvanlara yönelik etik bir ilgi doğrultusunda yapılan günlük seçimlerle hayata geçirilir. Bu bağlamda bu tez, vegan bireyler tarafından somutlaştırılan ve hayata geçirilen direnişin gündelik doğasını ve çağdaş Türk sivil toplumundaki yerini çerçeveleyecektir. Bu amaçla, vegan bireylerin kendi ifadeleri, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler aracılığıyla kaynak olarak toplanmıştır. Bu araştırma ile kişilerin vegan olma kararı ile gündelik yaşam dinamiklerinin nasıl etkilendiği ve hatta bazen de şekillendiği, sonuç olarak da gündelik hayatlarındaki direniş niteliğini ortaya ne şekilde çıktığı incelendi.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** vegan hayat tarzı, gündelik direniş, yaşam tarzı hareketleri

*To my mother...*



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
ÖZ.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	viii
LIST OF TABLES .....	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	xii
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 The Backdrop .....	1
1.2 Research Question .....	4
1.3 Methodology .....	6
1.3.1 Social Media as ‘the Streets’ .....	10
1.4 Organization of the Study.....	13
2. HERE AND NOW: BEING AN ACTIVIST IN TURKEY.....	16
2.1 State of the Space for Activism in Turkey: the “Shrinking Space” Phenomenon .....	16
2.2 #BenceAktivizm.....	21
3. THEORIES ON ANIMAL ADVOCACY AND DISTINGUISHING VEGANISM.....	23

3.1	Animal Advocacy: From Welfare to Rights .....	23
3.1.1	“Can they suffer?”: The Utilitarian Approach .....	25
3.1.2	“The most basic right we need to give to animals that can feel, is to not see them as goods and resources”: The Abolitionist Approach.....	27
3.2	“Vegetarianism is a diet, veganism is a lifestyle” .....	29
4.	LOCATING VEGANISM IN SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORIES .....	32
4.1	Collective Behaviour Theory .....	34
4.2	Resource Mobilization Theory .....	35
4.2.1	The “Free-rider” Problem .....	37
4.3	Political Process Theory .....	37
4.4	New Social Movements Theory.....	40
4.4.1	Critiques Towards NSM and the Call for “Meaning” .....	41
4.5	Lifestyle Movements and Veganism .....	46
5.	EVERYDAY RESISTANCE AND HAVING A MEAL.....	49
5.1	Power and Resistance .....	50
5.2	Everyday Resistance .....	55
5.2.1	Dimensions of Everyday Resistance: the Case of Veganism .....	57
5.3	The Body as a Space for Everyday Resistance .....	60
5.4	The Meaning of Animals on Plates.....	65
5.4.1	Staple or Luxury?.....	73
6.	NARRATIVES OF EVERYDAY RESISTANCE .....	76
6.1	Handling the Everyday Friction.....	76
6.2	Personal Relationships and Socialization .....	77
6.3	Handling the Stereotype.....	81
6.3.1	“We have been lied to” .....	81

6.3.2	“Animals are at the bottom of the priority list” .....	82
6.3.3	Killing the Stereotype: Solidarity and Self Education .....	84
6.4	Tactics and Practices .....	88
6.4.1	“Thank God for Twitter” .....	88
6.4.2	Encounter and Visibility.....	90
6.4.3	“I don’t think I am an activist” .....	93
6.4.4	Reconstructing the Meaning of Food .....	96
6.5	The Issue with Consistency: Vegans of the Future or Free-riders? .....	98
6.5.1	The Consistency Debate .....	100
6.5.2	Vegans of the Future or Free-riders?.....	103
7.	CONCLUSION .....	107
	REFERENCES .....	113
	APPENDICES	
A.	INTERVIEW DIRECTORY .....	117
B.	APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE .....	119
C.	TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET .....	120
D.	THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU .....	129

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1: Profile of Respondents</b> .....	9
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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**CSO:** Civil Society Organization

**EU:** European Union

**NSM:** New Social Movements

**RMT:** Resource Mobilization Theory

**PPT:** Political Process Theory

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Activism in Turkey is an ever-changing phenomena, adapting its shape to overcome whatever changes surrounding it challenges its existence. This becoming of acts of resistance aiming social change, effects each field differently, creating multiple understandings and forms of activism. Some causes call for actively engaging activism, while others develop new forms, methods, identities where resistance becomes visible. Veganism, categorized among lifestyle movements, mostly takes place in one's everyday life. It is actualized through everyday choices made in line of an ethical concern towards non-human animals. Even if one does not consider themselves to be an activist, in their own definitions, vegan ethics requires one to engage with acts of everyday resistance, by definition against the status quo. Although the environmental changes or changes in self might nudge one into different interpretations on engaging with active activism, or developing alternative forms of activism, the baseline requirements of veganism consist of acts that are of resistance quality.

### 1.1 The Backdrop

The year I graduated from sociology undergraduate program here in METU, I simultaneously started working and my graduate studies, also here at METU. Going into the graduate program, I had a vague idea of what to study further, fully coming

from the mostly theoretical desktop studies I have gotten to be familiar with during my undergraduate years. To state the obvious, although having some “real life questions” formed outside of the classroom and based on my participant observation as a female human in Turkey, they were heavily relying on my academic background, what I have learned from lectures and books. Looking back, it is easy for me to see that if I were to keep on relying on what I already know how to do and have gotten comfortable doing, I would have been one of those grad people who *sounds* very much able to analyze what is going on (as is expected from sociology graduates at any family gathering) but is actually heavily detached from locating certain patterns or changes in said society, or doing so in a way that alienates folks, due to never leaving the academia bubble.

Questions which then turned into a research have been shaped by influx of this new type of knowledge and experience I started to accumulate outside of the classroom. At the inception level, my experience on my first workplace and the content of my work as an intern, which coincidentally became a draft where I asked some of the questions I also pose in this thesis, made me aware of the state of civil society in Turkey and the transformative nature of activism. Observing ways through which activists themselves create spaces to demand their rights, makes them active agents navigating social forces and larger structures. Being around activists during incalculable periods, largely dependent on the fast-paced political developments of the times, spending time in a space that allows and helps individuals who want to effect change and come up with new methods of doing so according to said political climates, made me question how could one kindles and re-kindles the fire in them that makes them keep going on. This curiosity lead me to my “what’s happening here?” (Glaser, 1978) moment.

This questioning, grounded in the sense of aiming to derive theories from research grounded in data, rather than deducing hypotheses from already existing theories (Charmaz, 2006), lead me turn a critical eye towards the work I conducted in Sivil Düşün, which is a technical assistance office for Delegation of the European Union to Turkey. The colorful website of the program defines the program as follows:



Sivil Düşün was designed to strengthen the structures and values of participatory democracy. The programme supports are open to all the activities that strive to contribute to the strengthening of democratic values, and are based on stringent principles of fair competition, equal opportunity and transparency.<sup>1</sup>

As an intern, I was given the duty of conducting a qualitative desktop research on the social impact Sivil Düşün had on the Turkish civil society, based on all the applications they have received from all types of civil society actors between November 2012 and March 2016. Some compliant, some not, I went through around a thousand applications, half of which submitted by activists and the other half by legal entities such as civil society organizations, foundations and unions as well as city councils, networks and loosely organized platforms, all combined. For the whole programme is aimed to increase civil society participation to democratic processes, especially by actors without legal entity status, the application process has been made as simple as possible. The form people needed to submit was very simple and they provided a help-desk assistance two days a week (in addition to a vast amount of emails filled with questions they received every day) to those who are having trouble filling out the form. They were even caring enough to answer the phones on off-duty days.

In Turkey, claim for rights and active participation to democratic processes have been mapped out and regulated by laws and legislations regarding legal entities such as civil society organizations, political parties, foundations and unions, leaving non-legal entities such as activists who want to pursue participation to democratic processes unclaimed. What Sivil Düşün did was, for the first time in Turkey, to open up spaces for such unincorporated or under-incorporated actors to benefit from European Union funds allocated to civil society. Having access to such a unique set of data and being part of such a research in such a formative period of time in Turkish civil society, acted as a crash-course on how Turkish civil society came to this point and what are the needs arising from the field, moving forward. As a result of this, two patterns were visualized in the becoming of activism in Turkey: individual activists that are not part

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved December 20, 2019, from <http://sivildusun.net/hakkimizda/>

of any formal organizations are increasing in numbers and activists' methods of acting out activism are taking more and more informal and mundane shapes. Since then, although a lot has changed in the Turkish civil society and the discussion around activism in Turkey in general, realizing these two main patterns made me question the roots of the drive that activists have in them, what shapes they can take and how to interpret them in a way that makes sense in today's Turkey.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Witnessing activists responding positively to having a simplified tool to practicing one's want to act on creating change, made me question the characteristics of activism, and how it can shift its shape depending on the state of affairs, including different state administrations, largely determining the level of freedom one has under changing circumstances. Although formal and informal organizations and activists have been traditionally given the role to increase government accountability and to advance democracy through increased participation of citizens to democratic processes in general, state plays a major role in shaping said roles (Doyle, 2017). Explicitly or implicitly implemented state power plays a significant role in shaping the civil society and the way people consider acts that constitute activism. The interrelation between more incursive control and oppression from the state and the rise in more implicit and informal methods and forms of activism in order to avoid said oppression, will be a part of the research.

Collectiveness of collective action that has been taken as the baseline of social movements, might seem mostly consisting of actions taken solitarily by individuals on a day-to-day basis, especially considering contemporary contextualization of lifestyle movements. When analyzing lifestyle movements, previously open and public acts of protest and resistance can increasingly start to manifest itself in one's everyday life, in the ethical choices one makes on a day-to-day basis, and coincidentally, one's way of identifying. As a result of these choices, one's own physical body where ideally one has the most control over in terms of making alterations, can become the primary space of activism.

In this sense, this study will be looking at contemporary veganism in Turkey, as a means of reading everyday resistance through embodied and routinely reproduced vegan lifestyles. Although vegan activism has been discussed under the umbrella of environmental movements or the animal rights movement, and by all means includes characteristics from both movements, this study will be addressing veganism as a prominent example of lifestyle movements, as one that challenges embodied habits of consumption and social order around said consumption. Veganism, especially when discussed within the context of shrinking space for civil society and activism in post-Gezi<sup>2</sup> Turkey, can be read as embodiment of resistance and advocacy for equality that seeps through both micro and macro decisions of the individual. Often understated in the mainstream Turkish media and popular culture as a marginalized group of radical people taking ‘extreme measures’<sup>3</sup> over something rather redundant, or remembered notoriously in relation to certain animal rights groups’ unconventional protest methods, it could be relatively easy to miss the movement’s effect on the dominant status quo surrounding speciesism and the dominant culture of consumption of animal and animal byproducts.

Recognizing that veganism involves both carefully made everyday choices which then generate one’s lifestyle in a way that goes against the grain of deeply rooted rituals and habits wrapped tightly around said choices, as well as a movement that is increasingly becoming widespread both globally and nationally, is highly necessary for social movement literature, if not only for vegan studies literature. By addressing veganism meanwhile taking into account its twofold nature, where individuals’ mundane choices taken mostly in private spheres, which are never visible for some vegans in the public sphere, ending up constituting most of the social movement itself, the concept of everyday resistance almost comes naturally to be included? in the

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<sup>2</sup> Gezi Parkı protests are a series of protests that took place in the early summer of 2013, where thousands of people were mobilized for a variety of reasons.

<sup>3</sup>“Canan Karatay: Vegan demek tahıl beyinli demek, veganlık hastalıktır” (2018) *Sputnik News*. Retrieved August 20, 2020 from <https://tr.sputniknews.com/yasam/201810251035826813-canan-karatay-vegan-tahil-beyin-vegan-hastalik/>

movement's analysis. Veganism is primarily actualized through individuals' own lives, by those living through certain codes and absorbing them to their identities, making it a lifestyle movement. For this reason, it might be difficult to see beyond the seemingly individual-lead exterior, which often brings the dietary and health aspect of the lifestyle more into mainstream discussion. Likewise, the activist-lead exterior of animal rights protests can also be difficult to be seen beyond the surface level of stereotypical "angry mob", which can be hyper fixated on by the public or the media, mostly benefiting from the explosive and easy-to-get-behind nature of single-issue campaigns. Such a research is especially crucial in order to see the point of intersection this movement is located at in this moment in time, between advocacy, embodiment of everyday resistance and shrinking space for activism in Turkey.

### **1.3 Methodology**

During this research, online spaces proved to be very crucial for community formation. Social media sites as well as websites of organizations and initiatives have been utilized both as a means to getting in contact with vegan individuals and for the textual analysis portion of this research. Certain Facebook groups and Instagram pages<sup>4</sup>, also proved to be convenient spaces for people to gather and form communities. That is why, in addition to utilizing websites that Turkish speaking vegans refer often, such as 'Vegan Oluyorum' and 'Abolisyonist Vegan Hareket' I have spent time in vegan spaces both physical and virtual.

For the purposes of this research, first I went through Turkish vegan Instagram accounts that are mostly dedicated to sharing vegan recipes, by utilizing from

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<sup>4</sup> Among the myriad of Turkish speaking vegan groups on Facebook, I have gathered resources and often read discussions in Çalışan Vegan, Vegan Sofra and Veganistanbul, due to simply have been consuming the contents of these pages for a while, prior to this research. Similarly, in addition to be a visual resource hub, Instagram allowed me to reach almost half of my informants for this research.

keywords such as ‘*vegan tarif*’, ‘*veganizm*’ and ‘*vegan İstanbul*’<sup>6</sup>. All the Instagram accounts that will be mentioned in this research are ‘vegan accounts’, shaped around vegan lifestyle, all having ‘vegan’ in the name of the account. Some run by individuals and some run as an initiative, some run anonymously and some openly, all accounts are sharing their journeys through social media. Although there are many accounts visibly dedicated to sharing recipes, some are run professionally and some not, I took the route of finding a physical space solely dedicated to vegan goods. I have visited some of the well-known vegan cafe and restaurants in İstanbul, such as VegaNarsist, Healin’, Rulo, Community Kitchen and shops dedicated to vegan goods, such as Vegan Bakkal and Vegan Dükkan. By getting in contact with the owner of a vegan cafe in İstanbul called *Community Kitchen* through Instagram, I visited the cafe a number of times and spent time there, had vegan *döner* and had an interview with the owner, Hatice<sup>7</sup>. The reason why I chose this cafe to visit was partially for practical reasons and partially because I have been following the cafe’s Instagram account for some time, and observing the owner’s journey through making vegan products such as vegan meat, cheese and yoghurt through trial and error. Spending time in this cafe was insightful in the sense of observing the daily discussions held between fellow vegans.

Through somewhat snowballing from the Community Kitchen account, I have gotten in contact with a vegan group called *Vegan Piknik*, also through Instagram. Vegan Piknik is a collective that goes back to around 2016, that holds picnics that are open to anyone and everyone, where they provide a space where ‘*everyone is welcome, the events are organized by volunteers and are held for free*’ according to their Instagram description. For the purposes of this research, I had the chance to conduct participant observation in one of the vegan picnic events they hold every week. I had the chance

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<sup>5</sup> Vegan recipes.

<sup>6</sup> When looking up anything related to veganism online, in order to reach Turkish speaking communities, it is convenient to use other keywords in tandem with ‘vegan’.

<sup>7</sup> All the names of the interviewees and participants have been replaced with pseudonyms throughout this study.

to discuss with them both everyday routines of vegan lifestyle and different theoretical approaches towards veganism. During the picnic topics of discussion varied, but they mainly revolved around ethically guiding their decisions according to their lifestyles.

In addition to participating to their picnic events, I have also circulated a qualitative survey among this collective. I also shared this survey with a vegan friend of mine, who is a member of the WhatsApp group chat of *Ankara Vegan Platformu*. This survey consisted predominantly of open-ended and semi-structured questions and prompts, where all participants provided detailed answers to. Questions spanned from their personal experiences regarding transitioning to a vegan lifestyle to their interpretations regarding vegan activism, which the directory can be found annexed to this thesis. My main goal was to reach those who are interested in sharing their experiences, and be as inclusive as possible. Below table illustrates the profiles of 20 respondents to this survey. Snowballing from the 20 people who took time to finish this survey, I conducted semi-structured, open-ended and in-depth interviews with 4 of the participants (Melodi, Merve, Ceren and Eren) in addition to Hatice, owner of a vegan café aforementioned, each taking up to two and a half hours, between September 2019 and October 2019. Other than Hatice's interview, they all took place on Zoom, which all participants were very comfortable with. Built on top of the surveys they already completed, these interviews helped establish and visualize the meanings individuals attribute to resistive acts of everyday life, bringing agency to the center of the analysis.

**Table 1: Profile of Respondents**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Profession / Occupation field</b>	<b>Have been vegan for</b>	<b>Activist</b>	<b>Affiliation with an organization</b>
Necmi	30	Marketing and Sale	3,5 years	Yes	No
Melodi	25	Nurse	2 years	Yes	Yes
Merve	23	Pharmacy Student	3 years	Yes	No
Sevgi	47	Environmental engineer	3 months (currently vegetarian)	Yes	No
Eren	35	Unemployed	4,5 years	Partially	No
Türkü	27	Geology Engineer	1 year	Yes	No
İlgi	22	Student	6 months	Partially	No
Ozan	25	Unemployed	4,5 years	Yes	No
İdil	24	Student	2 years	No	Yes
Nil	59	Translator	3 years	Yes	Yes
Özcan	27	Student	3,5 years	Yes	Yes
Fatih	35	Teacher	9 months	Yes	No
Onur	34	Tourism	1 year	Yes	Yes
Cansel	32	Analyst	2,5 years	Yes	Yes
Ceren	31	Unemployed	3 years	No	No
Bade	26	Student	6 years	Yes	Yes
Gizem	27	Biologist	6 years	No	No
Hakan	29	Electrical electronics engineer, meditation coach	4 years	Yes	No
Sencer	26	Vegan baker	2 years	Yes	Yes
Sergül	38	Designer, art coordinator	4 years	Yes	Yes

### 1.3.1 Social Media as ‘the Streets’

Utilizing Instagram, which is a social media application very popular among vegan people (or people with any type of specific lifestyle or interest, basically) who want to connect with likeminded people, as a virtual ‘field’ proved to be very fruitful for this research. Prior to this research, I have been following a myriad of vegan profiles on Instagram for a while, after stumbling upon a few of them while looking up vegan recipes for my own consumption. Among these Instagram profiles, some of which were dedicated solely to sharing vegan recipes and were using the platform as a food diary, seemingly with no purpose of moving others, while others were sharing openly activist messages and inviting people to vegan events and to ‘go vegan’<sup>8</sup>. Spending a lot of time observing and sometimes participating the discussions on the posts being shared, provided a lot of insight regarding what is important for people to share and what is not.

The snowball sampling that all sociology students have been taught in their first year research method classes, is often imagined taking place physically, akin to word-of-mouth. This sampling method finds somewhat of a virtual reflection when one goes on to the field online. When I entered certain keywords and hashtags on Instagram and on Youtube, former to get in contact with vegan individuals for the purposes of this research, latter to educate myself by listening their own narratives, all social media tools referred me with more of such people and content, similar to what I have been clicking on. This feature being very basic and typical among social media sites and applications, aimed at increasing time spent on the respective app/site through promoting similar material that you have been engaging with, provided what ‘in-real-life’ snowball sampling essentially does in principle, only in an online space; *“get cases using referrals from one or a few cases, then referrals from those cases, and so forth”* (Neuman, 2014). Furthermore, such ease at finding people and organizations

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<sup>8</sup> All of these accounts that I am referring to, that were sharing vegan events were also open to non-vegans and some were specifying *“if you are not vegan and want to join our event, make sure you definitely check this event out”*.



related to veganism, further highlights the interconnectedness of the whole network of people and groups that come together around a common cause, which is rather abstract on the ‘physical field’ unless you go to certain vegan spaces like Hatice's cafe, where the researcher gets in contact with people primarily through word-of-mouth type of referral. Although it is much easier to build trust through that way, online vegan accounts are often used to forming online networks through reaching out by messaging each other without knowing anybody common, so someone reaching out to them in general is not considered to be out of the ordinary.

Although being a form of everyday entertainment made majorly accessible, such social media accounts that we come face to face everyday comprise a form of everyday life interaction. Apart from the real life people using the app as just another personal social media page, there are accounts that are open to public and are not necessarily for personal use only, which typically aim for follower maximization. These accounts require people who run them to come up with very to-the-point ways of defining themselves, something to differentiate them from the masses and give their audience a reason to follow them in almost under a minute. This type of mentality is even more visible now, considering the “Instagram VS reality” trend that has been going on for a while now, raising awareness regarding the gap between what we are being presented online versus the reality. This realization regarding content posted online highlights the lengths these accounts go to idealize their highly unattainable and constructed content that is straying further and further from reality, while convincing people that this is *the* reality. Constructedness of this window shop, leaves minimum space for ‘giving off’ impressions, while maximizing the ‘given’ ones. In Goffman’s conceptualization of ‘body idioms’, ‘given off’ impressions are considered to be what people evaluate in order to understand whether a performance is valid or not (Jacobsen et al., 2015). In online encounters, it is relatively easy to construct a performance where nothing is given off, which leaves us with all the intentional attributions of an online performance. Although this quality deems it a phenomenon that would require the analysis of multilayered social relations, vegan Instagram pages are positively affected by the straightforwardness of the platform. If one wants to reach a fellow vegan or get some information regarding an aspect of this lifestyle, it is at the tip of their fingers at

all time, and in great excess. On Instagram accounts solely dedicated to promote and connect through vegan lifestyle, people put photos and videos, caption and hashtag them in a way that gives out this particular aspect of their identity, which they want to be highlighted. On a superficial level, it would not be too far fetched to say that an Instagram page is the curated space where one manages the impressions they 'give'. As a researcher, intentionally curated vegan accounts certainly provided me some ease in terms of approaching people, visualizing that they are their lifestyle as a topic they would be likely comfortable to talk about.

Through this research, I came to realize that such online spaces as well as all the media that is easily accessible online, has become crucial tools and spaces during the transformation that takes place while one is changing their lifestyle, in addition to providing means to sustain said lifestyle in the future. For the dominant tendency to socialize around food in many communities in Turkey, could isolate one as a result of eliminating majority of said foods, dedicated spaces such as vegan Instagram, Youtube, Twitter and Facebook pages provide people somewhere to turn to when one needs a recipe, health tips or any other advice regarding sustaining their newly found lifestyle. These pages allow people to form online networks, through which they can feel the solidarity to sustain vegan lifestyle, even though going through difficult times on real life relationships.

In addition to much needed information coming from fellow vegans, such online spaces provides a certain degree of control on one's anonymity, which is precious for those who have suffered in social aspects when it comes to being out with their decision to go vegan. In an interview with Melodi, who is among the admins of the Vegan Piknik Instagram account, she explained the influence of this platform as follows:

Instagram is very important to vegan activism. Now we receive a lot of our information from social media. For example, an incident happens, everyone shares it on social media, then you see that the criminal has been punished. I think it is particularly effective for people who are interested, open to information, and innovative. For example, those people who have

heard the word "vegan" for the first time on social media, they can send me a message saying "what does vegan mean". They can see for the first time that vegan köfte can be made, that such a thing is possible. In practical terms, I think it is very useful to people, because we as a nation, are very fond of palate; when I explain people they first ask me "well, what are we going to eat then?". On Instagram, you can answer those questions completely with a single account. I do not leave any questions they ask unanswered, sometimes I discuss the same topic for a week. <sup>9</sup> (Melodi, 25, vegan for 2 years)

In her narrative, we can see that online spaces provide a level of comfort both for those who take to social media to catalyse social change through sharing their own experiences, which could even be a recipe, and those who are curious to learn about this topic. How online spaces come to function for construction of alternative communities, will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

#### 1.4 Organization of the Study

This study is comprised of 7 chapters. The first chapter introduces the research question while providing a backdrop regarding how this topic of everyday resistance and vegan lifestyle came to be a topic of importance. It also includes the methodology of the research, providing the participant profile. Online spaces were also discussed here with a specific focus on Instagram as a space where constructed identities are at play.

The second chapter provides the necessary contextual explanations to locate vegan lifestyle and activism in contemporary Turkey. To this end, the 'shrinking space' phenomenon was explained and discussed in relation with the civil society in Turkey.

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<sup>9</sup> "Instagram vegan aktivizm için çok önemli. Artık birçok bilgiyi sosyal medyadan alıyoruz. Bir olay oluyor, herkes sosyal medyada paylaşıyor, sonra bir bakmışsın o kişi ceza almış mesela. Özellikle ilgisi olan, bilgiye açık, yenilikçi olan kişiler için çok etkili olduğunu düşünüyorum. Sosyal medyada kişiler mesela "vegan" kelimesini ilk kez duyabiliyorlar, bana mesaj atabiliyorlar "vegan ne demek" diye. Vegan köftenin yapılabileceğini ilk kez görebiliyorlar, böyle bir şeyin mümkün olduğunu. Pratik anlamda bence çok faydalı oluyor insanlara, çünkü biz damak zevkine çok düşkün bir millet olduğumuz için, insanlara veganlık anlattığım zaman bana ilk "iyi de biz ne yiyeceğiz?" diye soruyorlar. İşte o soruları tamamen tek bir hesapla cevaplamış oluyorsun Instagram'da. Sordukları soruları da cevapsız bırakmıyorum, bir hafta aynı konuyu tartıştığım oluyor bazen."

To further illustrate the transformative state of activism, an example of how activism is constructed by the activists themselves have been provided to reflect on the aforementioned phenomenon. This chapter provides the necessary backdrop to comprehend why everyday resistance is important in contemporary Turkish civil society.

The third chapter presents the main approaches in animal rights theory, along with the explanation regarding how different schools of thought developed in tandem with one another. This chapter also includes the definitional framework of vegetarianism and veganism, laying out how veganism developed in close connection with ethical philosophy on animal rights.

The fourth chapter presents the main social movement theories in social sciences. Namely collective behaviour theory, resource mobilization theory, political process theory, new social movements theory and lifestyle movements were detailed in this chapter, in order to locate how veganism falls into the lifestyle movements category, by providing a necessary critique towards aforementioned theories. Certain concepts from these theories were discussed in this chapter in tandem with vegan activism.

The fifth chapter presents the conceptual framework of resistance and further, everyday resistance. Explaining resistance after going in detail with prominent social theories of social movements provides a conceptual baseline that will be utilized throughout the thesis. Dimensions of everyday resistance will further assist in the analysis of acts of resistance. This chapter also discusses bodies and food in relation with resistance and power, detailing how the meaning around bodies and food are constructed in a way that further supports the everyday resistance quality in veganism.

The sixth chapter presents the discussion of multiple patterns that have come to surface during the surveys and interviews. Everyday resistance and how it is handled on a day-to-day basis; the strain it puts on social relations and how it manifests itself in those processes; the resistance that is put forward to deal with the ‘angry vegan’ stereotype;

tactics and practices utilized as part of the resistance and activism; and the issue with consistency and veganism will be discussed in this chapter.

The seventh chapter closes the study with a conclusion of the discussion, summarizing the main points of the study and discussing the findings in accordance with the theoretical and conceptual framework put forward at the start of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **HERE AND NOW: BEING AN ACTIVIST IN TURKEY**

As will be further discussed in detail in Chapter 4, exploration of the lifestyle movements theory and how this distinct model has come about in the theoretical landscape of social movements research, is an imperative part of this discussion, for it refers to the exact intersection where vegan lifestyles take place: right in the intersection of lifestyle and social movements. In this chapter, development of civil society in light of European Union stipulations will be touched on briefly, before detailing the state of activism in contemporary Turkey with particular reference to the conceptual tool provided by European Parliament reports on countries where civil society becomes increasingly limited. In order to properly acknowledge the weight everyday acts of resistance carry in vegan individuals' lives, we must take a look at the state of political action and civic ability in the Turkish context.

#### **2.1 State of the Space for Activism in Turkey: the “Shrinking Space”**

##### **Phenomenon**

Civil society in late 1990s and early 2000s Turkey is considered to have developed in relation with the grassroots activism and demand for change at large, often in close proximity to various international and local actors (Ergun, 2010). Civil society organizations at the time, have been playing the crucial role of looking out for the political interests of underrepresented voices and ideologies in the landscape of policy development, often seen fit as one of civil society's responsibilities. However, in times where civil society organizations' effectiveness or even existence is almost being

gatekept by the state, civil society cannot be thought as fully effective in keeping the state and its' agencies accountable, let alone make sure underrepresented voices are being heard in policies developed. Participatory democracy relies on the state being the same distance apart from each and every entity and agency of civil society, in addition to developing an atmosphere where proximity to state or its agencies do not determine any favoritism.

In light of the responses made to European Union stipulations in early 2000s in the form of legislative reforms, the democratic space was considered to be opened up for civil society organizations, at least on paper (Doyle, 2017). As any step in the form of legislation or reform taken in the name of democracy that is not originated from grassroots political action, it operated somewhat as a top down step which have not developed organically by the people. However, the activism taking place locally prior to this reform should not be overlooked. Following the 1982 Constitution largely restricting and prohibiting for civil society to build itself from the ground up, there always been those who tried, whether it be fragmented or relatively little in numbers (Ergun, 2010). The EU stipulation having state to take such a step towards democratization was not taken in response to this demand from the people, and hearing people out. Even so, it was considered as a step in the right direction, leading civil society to become a prominent topic of discussion. Meanwhile, the most important aspect of such development was further critiqued: is it implemented by the state and people, thoroughly? Although legislative changes have been made on paper, properly carrying out of these reforms were revealed to vary on the field according to civil society organizations themselves (Doyle, 2017). Also to keep in mind, a lot has transpired since early 2000s in terms of European Union-Turkey relations, to say the least. On top of that, EU efforts of Western interpretations and implementations of democracy and related concepts to Turkish context should be criticized, for top down reforms not always fit the way they are intended to fit. With all being said, in the current Turkish Constitution, it is stated that *“everyone has the freedom to form associations and to become a member or withdraw from it without prior*

*permission*”<sup>10</sup>, making it a constitutional right to organize with like minded people in the eyes of the state to effect change.

In the discussion regarding the current state of space for civil society development across the globe, the “shrinking space” phenomenon, widely accepted by the European Parliament, is proven to be a beneficial concept especially in discussing “developing” countries. According to CIVICUS, an internationally operating non-profit organization that collects data all year long through CIVICUS Monitor, which illustrates trends regarding the conditions for civil society by looking at multiple factors, only 3% of the world’s population lives in countries with “open” civic space, which shows a decrease from 4% last year<sup>11</sup>. Employing a wide spectrum of responses depending on the potential threat and its reasons behind, which also varies hugely, EU seems to be responsive when it comes to providing protection to “human rights defenders from regimes’ increasingly draconian attempts to quash civil society” (European Parliament, 2017). According to a 2017 paper by the European Parliament’s Subcommittee on Human Rights, where this phenomenon of “shrinking space” is being described, analyzed and different methods to deal with it is being drawn out, it is described that regimes globally adapted a range of tactics to attempt this crack down:

(...) increasingly strict approval and licensing procedures for CSOs; attaching the ‘foreign agent’ stigma to CSOs; placing limits or caps on the amount of money that CSOs can receive from donors; requiring funds to be channeled through government-controlled intermediaries; punitive taxes; and placing on CSOs a whole series of onerous administrative requirements. (European Parliament, 2017, p. 9)

The report goes on to address different characteristics of the phenomenon across the globe, also stating that flexibility is the name of the game when it comes to finding methods to still aid civil societies in different countries, under different conditions. In

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<sup>10</sup> See The Constitution of Republic of Turkey, Law no: 2709 for the entirety of the law, as well as The Law on Associations, Law no: 5253.

<sup>11</sup> CIVICUS Monitor (2020) National Civic Space Ratings: 44 rated as Open, 41 rating as Narrowed, 49 rated as Obstructed, 38 rated as Repressed & 24 rated as Closed. Available at: [www.monitor.civicus.org](http://www.monitor.civicus.org) (Accessed: 2020-07-20).



order to successfully address this shrinking space issue in civil society, the report states that mechanisms and instruments which have been already in place, are needed to be reevaluated and adjusted accordingly, which is said to be welcomed by civil society actors on the field in many countries (European Parliament, 2017).

In an attempt to provide resources and funds to activists who are in such shrunk spaces, the report then divides EU policy tools to be provided related to tackling this issue into three main:

- Funded initiatives aimed specifically at countering the shrinking space or dealing with its effects, such as European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights' (EIDHR) Emergency Fund directly channeling funds to human rights defenders when they are at immediate risk,
- More general funding mechanisms that have some indirect bearing on civil society conditions, such as research and papers funded to bolster the effectiveness of already provided civil society support locally and to observe the environment,
- The wider toolbox of foreign policy instruments, structurally shaped by the research from the field.

What becomes visible here, is that there is a clear need for EU to consider flexible funding both in terms of programs to be developed and for aiding civil society actors. Although flexible funding has been on EU agenda for quite some time, the report highlights that it has to come with a deeper assessment of new kinds of activism and contemporary identification of civil society actors. Acknowledging the restrictions on traditional understanding of formal organizations that have been defined and regulated accordingly with laws and regulations, is quite crucial in order to empower different kinds of activism. The report further states that such restrictions on formal civil society organizations constitute one reason why activists increasingly search for more fluid and off-the-radar forms of activism, or rather leaning more towards lifestyle activism forms. As an example for a mechanism that funds and provides technical support to such fluid and non-formal acts of activism, the report refers to Sivil Düşün as an

example of good practice, for the programme's efforts in funding seemingly everyday or informal acts towards change, such as providing an activist with resources to systematically feed and house stray animals Kınalıada, which becomes especially difficult in winters<sup>12</sup>.

One example of best practice is found in Turkey. In a context where well over a thousand CSOs have been closed down since the July 2016 attempted coup, the EU delegation has modified its Sivil Düşün (Think Civil) programme. (...) The EU has expressly oriented the initiative towards small, quick and short-term grants because the unpredictable and fraught political situation increasingly militates against large, high profile and multi-annual grants. Almost half of the applications have come from individual activists – a figure that diplomats see as a testimony to the success of the programme, as the aim is to ensure that funds reach those individuals whose CSOs have been banned and can no longer apply as part of a formally registered association. (European Parliament, 2017, p. 26)

The analysis I conducted while working at Sivil Düşün, was regarding the patterns regarding new demands, new methods and new forms of activism that become visible in the field after analyzing over a thousand application the office received. These patterns certainly did not appear out of nowhere, they are points of aggregation in the becoming of Turkish civil society. Above quote from the European Parliament report, fully corroborates with one of these points that became visible after reviewing all the applications Sivil Düşün has received up until then, mainly about how individual activists have been empowered by Sivil Düşün's Activist Programme, with 45% of the applicants applied as individual activists and found Sivil Düşün as one of the unique programs that provide flexible answers to their acts of advocacy. Whether it be people getting sick of being tied down by inner politics of CSOs; fast-paced postmodern urban lifestyles not going well with getting together once a month for a formal meeting; red tape around formation of a CSO or simply the rise of individualism, less formal forms of activism that do not necessarily need leaders or organizations, provided people with

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<sup>12</sup> This particular project called "Kitlesele Mamalama" (Mass Feeding) includes Sivil Düşün directly providing resources towards food for animals and establishing a website where people can remotely "adopt" stray animals in Kınalıada, by providing activists with resources to buy food, thus making it a sustainable project. Retrieved August 20, 2020, from <http://www.beslebeni.org/>

certain means to effect change during the shrinking space phenomenon is holding down civil society. This demonstrated that those who are active in the field are interpreting activism and taking action for the sake of change, and are demanding unprecedented and informal forms and methods of activism, while engaging with those mechanisms that are responding and meeting this demand. In light of this shift, what can be said regarding this interpretation of activism that is integrated in everyday acts and everyday life, then? What does this say regarding the state of activism that takes place in one's everyday life in Turkey at this point in time? Following example provides us with this transforming nature of activism and what constitutes an activist.

## 2.2 #BenceAktivizm<sup>13</sup>

To raise awareness on the rising trend on activism, Sivil Düşün held a campaign called “#BenceAktivizm” to give voice to activists' perception of activism. In order to reflect the multi-layered perceptions and pluralist definitions of the concept, they asked what does activism means to activists during events and forums Sivil Düşün held, as well as diversifying the perception by popularizing “#BenceAktivizm” hashtag online, making sure those who are not involved with any organizations can also adapt their own way of participating to democratic processes. By nature, this campaign argues that there can be multiple characteristics that pertain to “activism” and what constitutes an activist. Although constituting a small minority of activists who used the hashtag to define their interpretations, most quotes posted as example in Sivil Düşün website refers to certain verbs such as “to change”, “to act”, “to hope”, “to advocate” and “to work”<sup>14</sup>. Robust turnout for this campaign shows that once the definitions and concepts have the space to be less rigid, people participate more by customizing the concept and making it "their own". Activism, it turns out, could be something that one fills the blanks on their own, in terms of "why" and "how" to do something. People are

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<sup>13</sup> #ActivismMeans (*for me*)

<sup>14</sup> Retrieved January 20, 2020, from <http://sivildusun.net/benceaktivizm/>

increasingly encouraged to define it themselves and make their own, making it easy to put into effect in their everyday lives.

With such interpretation of activism as “something that one can make their own”, it could be observed that activism is becoming more accessible, informal and everyday, for one reason or the other, considering the ‘shrinking space phenomenon’ discussed at length previously. This shift in shape can be witnessed on the convergence of characteristics referred in relation with lifestyles, such as individuality and self-expression, and acts of activism attributing as resistance taking place on an everyday basis. In addition to this, the fact that this campaign predominantly took place online, hence the hashtag, and targeted users who are active in social media websites, constitutes an example for one of many ways online spaces can and are being utilized by activists. As also discussed in Chapter 1, online activism, mostly taking place in social media apps and websites, increases the visibility for any social movement or any social justice cause whether it be posted or shared by a self-proclaimed activist or not. Increasing normalization of such posts on everyday social media pages plays a significant part in what Sonja Vivienne (2016) calls ‘erosive social change’ in online activism: “*changes in attitude that take place slowly over extended time frames, profoundly reshaping social norms as they diffuse among networked publics*”. The definition of erosive social change, further proves to be in line with everyday resistance of vegan lifestyle. This point will be further discussed in Chapter 6, as part of vegan individuals’ experiences being visibly activist on online spaces.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORIES ON ANIMAL ADVOCACY AND DISTINGUISHING VEGANISM**

This chapter is divided into two main sections, former going into how animal advocacy has developed and two main routes that were influential in the ethical backdrop of veganism. After providing the theoretical reasoning behind practices that are considered to be vegetarianism and veganism, the latter section will be providing an in depth explanation of vegetarian diet and vegan lifestyle. In the first section, I will be providing the theoretical contradictions between animal welfare and animal rights, encapsulated in two schools of thought. This will act as the context for practical differences between veganism and vegetarianis, which can be seemingly considered as similar movements for the unsuspected.

In order to understand how veganism comes to be considered as a prominent lifestyle movement in social movement theory, mostly considered in close relation with animal rights discussion, it would be beneficial to provide a backdrop to comprehend the route that it took in contemporary social theory.

#### **3.1 Animal Advocacy: From Welfare to Rights**

In modern Western animal advocacy, veganism is often referred as the ultimate, or sometimes the first and only necessary step that one should take in order to take action against animal exploitation. It can be said that vegan lifestyle is the implementation of complete rejection and writing off of animal exploitation from one's life, from an

ethical standpoint. Although treatment of animals by humans might relatively seem like a recent topic of discussion in Turkey, considering the long list of violation of rights taking place in any news program before it comes to violation of animal rights, it has been theoritized largely. On a legal standpoint, animal rights in Turkey is regulated by a 2004 regulation "Animal Protection Law", which has been largely criticized for its low power of sanction due to failing to acknowledge animals as living beings, and rather basing the law off of "animals as things"<sup>15</sup>. Animals have been used as things by humans in a number of ways: they get eaten, they get hunted down for entertainment purposes or also to be eaten, they get experimented on and they get owned as pets. Essentially, in most cases, their bodies and body parts are treated to be under human ownership.

Since animal rights first came to be discussed, until the 1970s, the topic was largely argued within the bounds of animal *welfare* view, defending humans' treatment toward and ultimate exploitation of animals as long as it is "humane" or within certain determined regulations (Francione, 1996). Animal *rights*, however arrived in 1980s, shaping this demand as a rights issue, thus demanding abolition of animal exploitation to make sure animals' rights to live and not be unnecessarily enslaved and exploited by humans, are being protected. This revamping that came into discussion with the word "rights", was pivotal for the movement, because it rejected the "humane" treatment regarding animals as an option to be considered. It defended the inherent value animals have as living and sentient beings, and this fact alone must be enough for humans to respect them (ibid.)

What all contemporary Western animal rights' advocacy includes in its manifesto is moral and legal termination of animals being considered as property, and demolishing the widely presumed hierarchical distinction drawn between animals and humans. Employing different theories and approaches, two main schools of thought are

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<sup>15</sup> "Hayvanı 'can' kabul eden yasa çıkacak mı?" (2020). DW. Retrieved August 20, 2020 from <https://www.dw.com/tr/hayvan%C4%B1-can-kabul-eden-yasa-%C3%A7%C4%B1kacak-m%C4%B1/a-52107029>

accepted to be dominant in the Western animal rights theory, namely the utilitarian approach and the abolitionist approach.

### 3.1.1 “Can they suffer?”: The Utilitarian Approach

Aiming to frame animals in a moral perspective, Jeremy Bentham’s (1789) utilitarianism deems a right act as an act that gives the most pleasure or the least amount of displeasure. Bentham’s utilization of this philosophy brought upon the line of thought, “... *the question is not, ‘can they reason?’ , nor ‘can they talk?’ , bu ‘can they suffer?’ ’* ”. By defining pain and pleasure as the ethical and moral way of living for all sentient beings, by definition Bentham accepts that animals can feel suffering, pain and pleasure, therefore framing animal suffering as similar to human suffering, accepting it as a moral issue. Hugely challenged in the coming decades, looking at the animal advocacy through a utilitarian lens has been very fruitful in terms of development of theory in this particular field of study.

Peter Singer, renowned animal welfare theorist and an admitted utilitarian in the path of Bentham, interprets utilitarianism by bringing in the interest of involved parties, in line with two principles derived from philosophy of utilitarianism, which also touches on certain ideals of speciesism (Regan, 1983). First is the principle of *equality*, which accepts that interests of different beings, humans and animals in this case, are to be considered as equals if they are of equal value to the beings themselves. Among human beings, this principle averts racism and sexism; among humans and animals, speciesism. Second is the principle of *utility itself*, which deems that humans are to act considerate to the balance between interests of everyone involved. Accepting the first principle, this means that acting in a way to bring equality and balance to satisfaction of interests over the frustration of interests among involved parties, means that animals’ interests are to be taken into account just as humans’ are. Because animals’ interests are of equal value to them like it is for humans, their interests hold the same weight when considering the utility of it. Therefore, Singer’s utilitarian perspective deems we morally should not do something that we would not do to humans (Regan, 1983).

Considering Singer's call to action from utilitarian perspective as important and necessary, one of the first animal rights theorists among Western scholars Tom Regan criticizes the lack of light being shed to exemplifying the violation of these principles of utilitarianism towards animals, stating that different treatment towards beings with equal interests does not necessarily prove the violation of said principles:

(the principle of equality) tells us to count equal interests equally, no matter whose interests they are. Now, this is a requirement we can respect and still treat the individuals whose interests are involved quite differently. For example, I might correctly regard my son's and my neighbor's son's interests in receiving a medical education as being equal and yet help my son and not help my neighbor's. Thus, I do treat them differently, but I do not necessarily count their equal interests differently, and neither do I thereby do anything that is in any obvious sense morally reprehensible. (Regan, 1983, p. 31)

Similarly to Singer's principle of utility, Regan calls out Singer's lack of detail and explanation regarding being considerate towards the interests of everyone included. He says that this is a much more nuanced issue than simply putting two objects on scales and measuring their weights, thus calling out the over-abstraction and the harm it can cause to the animal rights theory overall. Accordingly, when arguing that animal liberation as having the potential to give rise to better consequences for everyone involved, there needs to be more in depth analysis regarding why it would be better than the consequences of current systems in place, relying on animal exploitation. Although Regan states that although Singer illustrates the animal exploitation in a contextualizing manner, his explanation regarding the interests of other parties than animals involved, such as the global market and economy as well as individuals relying on this robust industry, is lacking for a fully painted picture. Absence of empirical data which would be effective in trust building for any type of movement, according to Regan, is the biggest downfall of Singer's application of utilitarianism in animal advocacy theory, and also for animal liberation studies in general (ibid.)



Regan's critique also could be argued in line with the free-rider problem that will be discussed as part of the resource mobilization theory in the following chapter. Just because a group of people say that they hold the interest of animals and humans in an equal stance in theory, hence following the principle of equality, they can very well not take any action that might put their interests at risk, in order to provide a balance among involved parties' interests in the meantime, and thus, could act in a way that their own interests are valued higher than other parties. Especially, this over-abstraction that Regan critiques could also lead to vegetarianism, which will be one of the critiques coming from abolitionist camp. In the following discussion regarding the not-so-fine line between vegetarianism and veganism, such critique is handled as a way of thinking that most vegan activists urge people to avoid. This line of thought also can take one to speciesism that Singer holds as core to his animal liberation theory, with people holding for example, pets and barn animals' interest at an equal value meanwhile treating them differently and being a part of those industries that are benefiting from exploiting a certain group of animals.

### **3.1.2 “The most basic right we need to give to animals that can feel, is to not see them as goods and resources”: The Abolitionist Approach**

In critique of Tom Regan's interpretation of utilitarianism in animal advocacy theory and to distinguish animal *welfare* from animal *rights*, which will be majorly changing the course of discussion, department of philosophy graduate and property law professor Gary L. Francione wrote *Rain Without Thunder: The Ideology of the Animal Rights Movement* in 1996. In this book, in addition to addressing Regan's critique of Singer, he also brings in an abolitionist point of view to the animals rights theory, through arguing that animal welfare that have been popularized up until 1980s, normalizing animal suffering and exploitation. Although emphasizing that he understands employing animal *welfare* as a short-term strategy, he criticizes the defenders stating these short-term *welfare* strategies will lead to long-term animal *rights*. Thus, he criticizes long-term strategies of national animal welfare

organizations, saying that the current welfarist strategy promoted nationally and globally is counterproductive both in theory and in practice. With the current state of events pointing in the direction of increasing animal exploitation taking place in many different industries, practice does not match the desired “humane” state as utilitarians will have you to believe, let alone abolition of exploitation all together. More specifically, he considers Singer’s utilitarian approach as contradictory, stating that his rendition regarding many nonhuman animals that are not capable of “having desires for their futures” or “a continuous mental existence” as something that affects their assessments of pain and suffering (Francione, 1996). For this reason, he argues that animal rights theory, by adopting “rights” in its name, should strive for “*abolition of institutionalized exploitation*” and consequently for “*incremental eradication of the property status of animals*” (ibid.).

In this particular work, he covers the essential theoretical ground for establishing an abolitionist approach to animal rights and explains why aligning the movement with the “rights” terminology is important for future prospects of the entire discussion surrounding animal advocacy. This perspective aimed to shift the theory surrounding animal advocacy away from animal welfare and closer to animal rights, which was thought to, ideally, “*determine whether efforts on behalf of animals will effectively chip away at the property status of animals and move in the direction of establishing their personhood, or merely continue the status quo*” (p. 6). Abolition calls for humans to reject the ongoing ownership status on animals, thus rejecting their property status and acknowledging their sentience, as living beings. If we morally believe that animals matter, then the only logical next step is to abolish their exploitation. If they morally matter, then there is no “humane” way of exploiting them, as long as exploitation is what you are doing at the end of the day. Living in a luxurious prison behind golden bars does not matter much, then, if one is still a prisoner. Melodi encapsulated this stance with the following example:

The most basic right we need to give to animals that can feel, is the right to not be seen as goods and resources. I think that if they were to ask you, for example, "you will live in a big house, under great conditions, but the

catch is, your entire life you have to get pregnant and give us your milk, or grow your hair out, cut it and give it to us" what would you say? I think 99% of people would prefer to die rather than to live in captivity.<sup>16</sup> (Melodi, 25, vegan for 2 years)

This abolitionist stance, along with the above quote from and interview with Melodi, provides us the perfect backdrop to segue into illustrating what vegetarian diet and vegan lifestyles refers to, and the vegan critiques towards vegetarianism, for it tends to call out the welfarist arguments often.

### 3.2 “Vegetarianism is a diet, veganism is a lifestyle”

Although it might be considered as similar schools of thought by those who are not too involved in the heated debates, vegetarianism and veganism differ in terms of what they limit for consumption. Vegetarianism, largely defined as the dietary abstinence from any animal meat, poultry or fish<sup>17</sup>, dates back in Ancient India, and later observed in Ancient Greece. In both cases, vegetarianism was mostly developed as a part of religious and/or spiritual beliefs forbidding consumption of animal flesh, primarily by dietary ways, of some or all animals (Spencer, 2008). Although divided into different sub-branches with increasing number of people employing different approaches, such as ovo vegetarianism and lacto vegetarianism<sup>18</sup>, all these varieties have one characteristic in common: it includes abstaining from consuming any and all animal flesh.

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<sup>16</sup> “Mal ve kaynak olarak görülmeme hakkı aslında hissedebilir canlılara vermemiz gereken en temel hak. Sana sorsalar, mesela “kocaman bir evde yaşayacaksın, çok iyi şartların olacak ama ömür boyu hamile kalıp süt vereceksin, veya saçların uzayacak onları vereceksin” deseler, böyle bir hayat sunsalar, ne dersin? Bence insanların %99’u esaret altında yaşamaktansa ölmeyi tercih eder diye düşünüyorum.”

<sup>17</sup> Definition retrieved from The Vegetarian Society, formed in 1847 in Britain, and known as one of the first organizations promoting vegetarianism. Retrieved July 25, 2020, from <https://vegsoc.org/about-us/history-of-the-vegetarian-society-early-history/>

<sup>18</sup> Ovo-vegetarianism allows dietary consumption of eggs but restricts dairy products. Lacto vegetarianism on the other hand, allows consumption of all dairy products but restricts consumption of eggs.

Veganism, departing from but also including this basic characteristic of vegetarianism, is defined by the *Vegan Society*, which is considered the first organization with “vegan” on its official name, as:

A philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude—as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of animals, humans and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals.<sup>19</sup>

A widely referred Turkish website *Vegan Oluyor* similarly characterizes vegan individuals as follows, right after providing visitors of the website with details regarding the reasoning and practices behind the ideal:

(...) briefly, it is those who avoids the use of animals as much as possible. Since we live in a society where 99% of the people treats animals as if they are objects, we use it (the word vegan) because we need a practical word to briefly describe our own thoughts and practices<sup>20</sup>

These definitions illustrate that veganism is a lifestyle sprawled in almost all spheres of life that requires any type of consumption, requiring one to actively participate and make decisions regarding more than what to eat and what not to eat. Including but not limited to dietary choices one makes on a daily basis, veganism calls to be attentive in any type of consumption decision taken on a day-to-day basis. This includes but of course is not limited to: researching where your clothes come from and how they are made, making sure the soup you ordered at a restaurant is not made with butter, looking up whether the makeup, skin care or hair care product you are debating purchasing do

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<sup>19</sup> Retrieved July 25, 2020, from <https://www.vegansociety.com/go-vegan/definition-veganism>

<sup>20</sup> Retrieved July 25, 2020, from <https://www.veganoluyor.com/neden>

not have any carmine<sup>21</sup> in it, making sure the medicine you need to take for your treatment does not include any animal-derivatives. It is a level of constant consciousness, beyond simply not eating meat. Therefore, with abolitionist approach getting more and more widespread and accessible with Francione's books and articles being translated in different languages, as well as the discourse shifting closer to animal *rights*, it has been getting increasingly visible that veganism and vegetarianism are two separate planes of existence, experience and ethical standpoint.

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<sup>21</sup> Carmine is the red dye derived from crushed female cochineal scale insects. More than 150,000 insects are required for 1 kg of the dye. This dye is used widely as a colorant in cosmetics and foods.

## CHAPTER 4

### LOCATING VEGANISM IN SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORIES

This chapter will be exploring the prominent theories in social movements studies, laying out how lifestyle movements developed in relation to prior theories. As is the case in any type of theoretical progress, lifestyle movements were laid out in an attempt to address certain prior shortcomings by representing the convergence of “private action and movement participation, personal and social change, and personal and collective identity” (Haenfler et al., 2012). Although certain concepts from these social movement theories will be expanded on in relation with veganism, such as the case of free-riders, lifestyle movements theory will be the one providing a solid grasp in discussing veganism as a part of social movement studies. Certain concepts and theories that will be mentioned in this section will also be cross-referenced thereafter, especially in Chapter 6, the data analysis section of the research.

Such diverse and multifaceted rendition of activism is evident from the high level of participation to ‘#BenceAktivizm’ campaign, provided as an example in Chapter 2. Opening up certain definitions for discussion strengthens the accessibility of social movements, thus leading to more people joining in on the cause, as well as reflecting contemporary discussions on social movement studies. It also poses a conceptual challenge for the academic study of social movements. Before moving onto veganism in today’s Turkey and how it lands itself on the crossroads of everyday acts of resistance that mostly takes part in individuals’ everyday lives, it is necessary to see the progression through critique and how multiplicity of discussions have benefited the points raised in this thesis. My aim in doing so, is to acknowledge the resistance

quality that is innate in everyday acts of Turkish vegans and vegan activists in general, and to illustrate how these very characteristics of vegan lifestyle plays a part in shaping contemporary activism in today's Turkey, while also being framed according to these very circumstances.

To set a broad starting point, social movements question, resist and challenge the dominant codes and value systems of everyday life, for they consist of people and groups submerged in everyday life (Melucci, 1989). It is safe to say that those people in question are activists and certain sets of practices they come up with to tackle said dominant codes of everyday life, as well as any type of action that they take towards this aim, is activism. In conjunction with dominant value systems at different points in time, changes in both the subjects and the content, as well as the questions being asked by those who are unsatisfied with said value systems, it is necessary for academia to adjust itself accordingly. Thus, due to being a field of study that adapts accordingly through different approaches and theoretizations, concepts that are being referred to constantly and constitute the cornerstone of the social movements studies itself are subject to academic discussion and have been for a while, much like any field of study in academia.

As is evident from the straightforward title, *The Concept of Social Movement*, it is necessary to come to an agreement on the concept, according to Mario Diani. This pivotal article discusses the need to locate convergences between prominent approaches in social movement studies through sharpening the concept of 'social movement', namely collective behaviour perspective, resource mobilization theory, political process perspective and the new social movements approach, which has been considered as important trends within social movement analysis since the 1960s (Diani, 1992, p. 3). Although the social movement discussions have been further challenged and critiqued within the discipline since then, Diani's method in approaching conceptualizing would be providing a necessary starting point how lifestyle movements such as vegan activism came about in social movements theory.

#### 4.1 Collective Behaviour Theory

Collective behaviour theory, usually considered to give meaning to actions driving to social change for the first time, defines social movements as “*a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the society or organisation of which it is part*” (Turner & Killian, 1987, p. 223; Diani, 1992, p. 4). Such behaviour occurs when under strain, which according to this perspective, reveals itself in times of social change, which causes ambiguity, disruption of everyday life and overall stress for individuals. The type of movement that collective behaviorist generally have in mind, is an ‘angry mob’, who could not contain its frustration anymore and resulted to taking the street, with a specific focus on ‘spontaneity’ and individuals being ‘fed up’ with the current situation (Edwards, 2014; McAdam, 1982).

Being considered as a field of research interest, more than a united approach, this perspective definitely attracted scholars with different theoretical courses. One of such theorists is Herbert Blumer, who looks at the social movement research through a symbolic interactionist lens. Together with his teacher Robert E. Park, Blumer interprets collective behaviour in a more inclusive manner, arguing that all aspects of social life consist of some sorts of collective behaviour one way or the other, for it consists social groups, where people interact with each other and through which establish social norms, hence, social order (Edwards, 2014). He particularly attributes collective behaviour to social change, saying that although social order created by certain forms of collective behaviour pushes individuals to conformism and overall obedience, there are other forms of collective behaviour that challenges all that is established in a society. Such behavior, also acted out by groups of people in a collective manner, are easy to be seen as ‘angry’ or ‘irrational’ by those who conform to social order, for such collective behaviour “*does not adhere to established notions of self-interest, cost, or reward in society*” and “*(...) goes against everything that everybody else in society has agreed is acceptable, normal, and sane*” (Edwards, 2014, p. 13). Symbolic interactionism here helps make sense how social problems turn into social movements, and rise as a collective reaction to unjust situations, interpreted by Blumer as an emotionally triggered reactive phenomena.



Going against the grain and acting out behaviour that is conventionally considered against the rules in one way or the other, which can be observed in the case of vegans embodying resistance, constitutes a necessary step towards any type of social change, regardless of which lane of social movement theory one is taking. However, as a critique towards the psychologically and emotionally charged interpretation of social movements, resource mobilization theory developed in the US academia, in light of struggle over means of political power. McCarthy and Zald (1973) points out that the collective behaviorist assumption of strain causing social movements is lackluster and not every disgruntled group of people is going to take the streets. They argue that the variable that is crucial here and make or break the existence of any movement is the amount of resources available to such groups (McAdam, 1982; Jenkins and Perrow, 1977). At the end of the day, although being dissatisfied with certain social rules and norms, there are material resources that one has to access in order to do something about it. Social change takes some tangible or intangible resources, as much as it takes heart and soul.

## **4.2 Resource Mobilization Theory**

To overhaul the perspective provided previously by the collective behaviour perspective through the lens of social developments, resource mobility theorists argue that the matter of discussion should be how resources are successfully mobilized towards social change, rather than why people are strained, which is the matter of discussion according to collective behaviorists (Edwards, 2014; Jenkins and Perrow, 1977). In all actuality, resource mobilization theory (which will be referred to as ‘RMT’ in the remainder of the thesis) argues that strain and conflict is an innate part of all parts of our lives, so it would not yield a fruitful discussion to see social movements as sporadic and disjunctive unit of actions, and ask “why is this particular conflict is happening?” to the structures built and rely on conflict in the first place. A productive question that one should ask, according to resource mobilization theory, would be towards these ‘resources’ that one needs to mobilize in order to be successful

in taking collective action, and whether correlation means causation in the case of successful collective action.

Attaching great importance to organizational factors while considering the success of a social movement, RMT argues that tangible (e.g. money, leaders) and intangible resources (e.g. know-how, public support) of any movement needs to be mobilized as rational as possible, considering costs and benefits to attain maximum success. The underlying assumption here is that participants involved are rational actors that need to be making rational decisions throughout the movement, rather than what collective behaviorist argument of individuals behaving irrationally, like going into strikes, when under strain. Although there have been discussions on the meaning of ‘rational’ in and of itself, what is necessary to pick up for the sake of social movement studies is that, this argument considers actors as evaluators of their own self-interest and deciding accordingly, as well as evaluator of their surroundings, in order to adapt accordingly, again to maximize their benefits (Edwards, 2014). When considering groups of people in similar socio-economic positions in social structures, their interests would be similar and their ways of attaining any power that would mean political success, would be through collective action. Following along with the ‘rational actors’ argument in RMT, as well as the state of political affairs that were transpiring at the time of inception of RMT in the first place (which will be the focus of political opportunity structure theory), it would make sense to see that for the act of people coming together and forming pressure over the dominant group to make sure their political interests are being heard, as the ideal understanding of social movements. After all, the more the merrier when it comes to seizing the attention of those who benefit from ignoring your interests. For this reason, RMT highlights the importance of social movement organizations for successful facilitation of social movements (McCarthy and Zald, 1973). This emphasis on social movement organizations solidifies the ‘collectiveness’ of the action, however, the ‘self-interest’ and ‘rationality’ part of the discussion have been problematized further in the literature, by the ‘free-rider problem’ brought in the social movements discussion (Olson, 1965).

### **4.2.1 The “Free-rider” Problem**

According to Olson’s (1965) problematization of ‘free-riders’ in social movements, rational individuals prioritizing self-interest over achieving the interests of the collective group they are affiliated with or sharing the same interests with, would act primarily in a way that would not endanger themselves in any major way. As someone who has a hard time shaking off the thought of police brutality watching any type of news including protests, I can make a subjective inference and state that I can understand the essence of someone saying “if physically participating to a protest for something I believe in, would endanger my well-being, and there are people already on the streets fighting the good fight, why would I put myself in danger?”. Problematized free-riders here are those who although are keeping a safe distance from collective actions that might put them in a position where they are putting themselves or their benefits on the line, in the case of that fought battle is won, would still reap the benefits of being affiliated with the movement. Posing a problem for vegan activism, just like other movements, free-riders not only lead to less individuals participating, leaving those who participate with higher costs in terms of time and resources volunteered, but it also dilutes a social movement’s identity and its demand for change by stating proximity to demand for change without taking any actual action towards achieving said change (Wrenn, 2018). This complication becomes especially damaging for lifestyle movements, where individuals’ sense of belonging and identity is highly at play. Free-rider issue will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

### **4.3 Political Process Theory**

In most cases, social movement theories observe movements as a group of people gathering around a cause and demanding change, which is within the reach of the nation state, deeming the state at an absolute position of power. Power relations between the state and classes where interests clash, as well as struggles between classes and the consequent tension, have brought social change throughout history, which have had multiple underlying contextual reasonings and shifting variables, resulting in one overpowering the other. The name ‘political process’ comes from the

theorization of political surroundings and happenings as the primary variable shaping social movements. Shifting the focus away from resources and inner dynamics of movements, political process perspective highlights the broader historical process and surroundings of groups with ignored interests demanding social change, as an attempt to gain access to the very polity that excludes them (Diani, 1992). In light of this perspective, Charles Tilly's definition of social movements is as follows:

Sustained series of interaction between power holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which those persons make publicly visible demands for changes in the distribution or exercise of power, and back those demands with public demonstrations of support. (Tilly, 1984, p. 306)

Structurally approaching social movements, political process theory (which will be referred to as "PPT" in the remainder of the thesis) puts the emphasis on the political context and conjuncture surrounding any given social movement. As those who has been observing rising authoritarian tendencies all over the world especially in the last decade<sup>22</sup>, we can also see how this state of oppression has been visualized in relation with acts and consequences of civil society organizations and activists with similar demands in democracy and accountability. In some countries and in some instances, CSOs and activists mobilizing to hold the government accountable, have been successful in their pursuits and have pressured the state into being considerate towards human rights, while in some other cases the political pursuits of the government aligned with certain breaches in human rights, making crackdown against activists so harsh that it pushed them to back down. Reasons behind why similar collective actions result in one way in one case and differently in another one, can be figured out with the utilization of historical contextualization of the political state. This perspective adds the following essential point to the academic discussion around social movements:

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<sup>22</sup> CIVICUS, *State of Civil Society Report*, 2019; CIVICUS Monitor (2020) National Civic Space Ratings: 44 rated as Open, 41 rating as Narrowed, 49 rated as Obstructed, 38 rated as Repressed & 24 rated as Closed. Available at: [www.monitor.civicus.org](http://www.monitor.civicus.org) (Accessed: 2020-07-20).

Their main claim is that activists can be as angry and aggrieved, as well-organized, tactically astute, and brilliantly led as they like, but without a favourable political context they will get nowhere. (Edwards, 2014, p. 80)

This definition leaves room for some discussion. ‘Favourable’ political context according to whom? Certainly, someone who has the means to polity, someone who is close to decision-making processes. If that is the case, would this mean that for a social movement to develop in the first place, it has to be *allowed* to exist by and within the very structure that the movement has been formed as a reaction to? So, for a social movement to be ‘successful’, does it have to be in close proximity to those who are politically dominant or to be allowed by them? How would movements such as vegan movement find themselves within this theory, which can (but not necessarily always do) fly under most political favor related radars due to the majority of it manifesting itself in one’s everyday life choices, but still challenge deeply rooted dominant political contexts?

By all means, there are some ‘glass half full’ approaches in PPT. Although being ‘favoured’ by the ‘context’, not all challenging actions lead to collective action, so this context provides certain openings for potential for action, which may or may not be fulfilled. Gamson (1980) considers these potentials as ‘opportunities’ considering them strategic responses constructed by activists who are ‘seizing chances’ (Edwards, 2014). According to this argument, it is the activists who makes the necessary rational decision to act on the right action at the right time. The chance occurs outside of the activist, and it occurs even if they seize it or not. If not seized, does that opportunity still count? Can activists increase their chances of seizing opportunities, say, by *mobilizing* their *resources*, and develop tactics to navigate the political climate, even though odds are stacked against them?

Does this notion of ‘seizing the opportunity’ from a point of view centered around political context, means one is consciously seizing the political opportunities when forming collective action? According to political process theory, that is the case. Does this mean activists’ motivations are being shaped by the political context that is

considered as a fixed and single thing at times and is up to their ability and tendency to read said political context? It can be argued that political context effects opportunities in reading social movements but political conjuncture is not the only variable in explaining their occurrences and successes. The generalization of the concept not only damages social movement studies in terms of over-simplifying the multifaceted nature of different type of movements and how they come about, by not only creating direct causation between politics and movements, but also deeming it the only relevant causation. Thus, political process becomes the subject matter of the study, overpowering the individuals who actually took action, the action itself as well as the distance covered. Moreover, certain movements that aims for all societies to completely dismantle rather deeply rooted aspects of consumption habits and culture of consumption shaped around them, regardless of the particular state politics, such as veganism in this case, is difficult to read through the lens of political process theory.

#### **4.4 New Social Movements Theory**

Moving away from the discussions around how constraints surrounding social movements occur and how they relate to times of their occurrence, and closer to why they occur in the first place (Melucci, 1989; Diani, 1992), new social movement theory has been developed in close proximity with analysis of labour movements. With the observation of declining mobilization around labour movements and increase in social movements that are not lead by the working class, new social movement theory (which will be referred to as ‘NSM theory’ in the remainder of the thesis) looked at this shift towards claims regarding human rights, identities, ways of being and living, as well as their recognition (Edwards, 2014). In addition to new concerns and new actors, NSM theory argues that it takes into account new ways of protesting, new forms of collective action, new demands and new realms that conflict takes place that are now being addressed. It is considered to be less formal, less hierarchical and decentralized, and more diffused in actors’ everyday lives, making it a part of their private spheres and appeared less to those who are not a part of this sphere, or those who do not know what they are looking for, when they are looking for these new forms of collective action. Movements in the 1970s and 1980s, such as feminism, environmentalism, peace and

anti-nuclear movements are among those that have gained notoriety as examples. Gemma Edwards' (2014) key dimensions in summarizing the 'newness' of NSM theory is quite incisive and inclusive:

**1. New Politics**

- Post-material concerns
- Defend identities or gain recognition for new ones
- Challenge dominant definitions of who we are and how we live

**2. New Site of Struggle**

- Culture and everyday life rather than the workplace
- Seek to create cultural alternatives, i. e. new values, identities, and ways of living

**3. New Composition**

- Cut across classes and include groups previously marginal to the labour movement, like women, young people, ethnic minorities
- Not based in the working class, but led by middle class radicals (higher educated middle class)

**4. New Organizational Form**

- Decentralized, participatory and democratic networks rather than formal bureaucratic social movement organizations
- 'Submerged' in everyday life, less publicly visible

(2014, p. 119)

According to Melucci (1996), this summarized approach to social movements aims for analytical discussion, rather than focusing primarily on empirical events that takes place, and he proposes that social movements “(...) *designates that form of collective action which invokes solidarity, makes manifest a conflict, and entails a breach of the limits of compatibility of the system within which the action takes place*” (Melucci, 1996, p. 28).

**4.4.1 Critiques Towards NSM and the Call for “Meaning”**

Although having ‘new’ right in its name, the newness of NSM theory has been a topic of discussion in social movement studies (Melucci, 1989). One of the main concerns around this discussion was the lack of analytical discussion on the definition of ‘social movements’, prior to going into what is new and changed in it (Diani, 2000). Another critique was towards the historical claim embedded in NSM, addressing that NSM is not necessarily the result of mere linear historical change, and that its characteristics can be very well observed in movements in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Calhoun, 1993). In an attempt to widen the definition of social movements, as well as to illustrate the diversity and interrelationships among different social movements, Calhoun (1993) rationalizes the need to free NSM theory from its historical claim, and provides justification under three points. He begins his argument by referencing Tarrow (1989), arguing that characteristics attributed to the novelty of new social movements might be stemming from the newness of each movement. The second point he raises is the need to consider the constitutional plurality in social movements’ *“forms, contents, social bases, and meaning to participants and do not attempt to grasp them in terms of a single model defined by labor or revolutionary movements, or a single set of instrumental questions about mobilization”* (1993, p. 386). By considering the inherent plurality embedded in social movements, the assumption is that it would be simpler and much more fruitful to ask questions regarding issues handled by the new social movements theory. The third point he raises points out the need to set loose the historical claim of NSM theory is that, once the ideas that social movements in the early nineteenth century being the reason or else a sidetrack to later unification of socialism, as well as the tendency to refuse considering macrohistorical patterns and their interrelations, are both dissolved, then social movements’ characteristics that are affecting certain periods would be able to be determined. He puts his criticism towards all the theories and approaches that have been summarized so far in this chapter, including the new social movements theory, as follows:

Part of the problem is that much of the traditional analysis of social movements (and collective action more generally) has ignored or explicitly set aside questions of culture or the interpretation of meaning.



This tends to deflect attention away from those movements concerned largely with values, norms, language, identities, and collective understandings -including those of movement participants themselves- and toward those that focus instrumentally on changing political or economic institutions. (...) For present purposes, it is better to see social movements as including all attempts to influence patterns of culture, social action, and relationships in ways that depend on the participation of large numbers of people in concerted and self-organized (as distinct from state-directed or institutionally mandated) collective action. (Calhoun, 1993, p. 388)

Calhoun's call to pay attention to meaning and its interpretation on an individual level has been crucial later on for Mayer N. Zald (1996) in his argument regarding the usage of ideology and culture in development of meaning in social movements. Criticizing the vagueness surrounding utilization of culture, ideology and framing in social movement studies, he argues that activists and movements are part of both developing and utilizing meanings that are being attached to social movements and to the larger culture. Frames, in this context, are defined as "*specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues used to render or cast behavior and events in an evaluative mode and to suggest alternative modes of action*" (p. 262). Zald's analysis highlights the need for utilization of strategic frame analysis into social movement studies.

Frame analysis, (...) becomes an entry point for how socially defined markers (from subtle physical changes such as desks and curtains, to symbols and ideologies) make sense of the world and provide alternative pathways for behavior. Frame and script are connected, since elaborated scripts are organized around core schemas, which serve as central frames (p. 265)

The emphasis on connectedness of frame and script, which can be interpreted as consisting a part of the culture when abstracted, signals that the way injustices are framed in a society, is significantly related to that particular society's definitions of what is right and wrong, what is just and unjust. The analysis regarding mobilization of any movement, therefore, has to analyze frames in that society, as well as tactics

utilized towards change, which are also developed in reference to said frames. Not only what becomes of something that calls for change is connected to frames, but also practical tactics and repertoires of action to be taken to actualize it, can be interpreted through frame analysis. Accordingly, changes in culture, such as changes in what is prioritized in the eyes of the public opinion over time can lead to changes in frames, leading to shifts in mobilization towards movements with different goals and routes taken by them to increase mobilization. Frame is indeed connected to script, and likewise script to frame.

According to the vegan individuals I have talked to for the purposes of this research, as well as the testimonies of activists' own social media accounts, changing tactics to match the contemporary framing of the perception of veganism and animal rights in order to increase mobilization, is only one of the reasons of doing so. The other reason, which was illustrated in the distinct animal rights approaches pointed out in the Chapter 3, is changing tactics to meet the changing framing of ethics in veganism, born as a result of negating already established definitions and meanings among vegans. Vegans' interpretation of established meanings of vegan ethics through the lens of 'everyday reality' of Turkish activism and politics in general, which became evident during the interviews, will also be visualized as a source of tension in the data analysis portion of this research.

Albeit the emphasis on newness, creativity and ability to make decisions in different spheres of life, Melucci argues that expectedly, society forces individuals to conform to dominant cultural codes, making people to derive meanings identified by and benefiting from those very values (Melucci, 1996; Edwards, 2014). In other words, it is expected for us to behave according to a level determined by dominant codes, also determining the meaning we attach to our surroundings, constituting our value systems that we judge one another and therefore socialize. The NSM theory enclosing around individualizing our identities based on our choices and the freedom to do so, makes these ideas perceived as an indispensable part of what post-industrial identities are supposed to be. Collective action shaped with such apprehension can be perceived as reactive to conformism and in defence of one's identity, leading one to invent

themselves in the course of their everyday lives (Edwards, 2014). Making the decision to choose something ‘abnormal’ over what has been strongly coded as the ‘normal’ over and over in our everyday lives, holds strong meanings in many ways.

Although not as visible as a protest taking place in the streets, the act of simply and sometimes quietly choosing to go against the grain of cultural meaning itself is an act of everyday resistance and a form of protest, which holds great power on an individual level and can be argued to be even more influential on an identity formation level. According to Haenfler’s (2012) pivotal work theorizing a certain group of social movements that are not fully reflected in any of the theories summarized in this chapter, NSM was criticized in reference to this exact point. Although bringing in a wide variety of concerns, sites of struggle, new groups of people and new organizational forms, the emphasis is still on organizations and their attempts in changing government policy (ibid.). Veganism, as highlighted throughout this research, does not require one to be a part of any type of group, let alone do anything other than regulate one’s own lifestyle according to the core principles of veganism. Although some seek vegan groups and become active activists working towards mobilizing non-vegans, it is not employed by all. In addition, this thesis focuses rather on the activist quality of everyday resistance these individual acts contain, especially in the contemporary state of social change and claim of rights in Turkey.

As is evident from the theories that were referred to in this chapter, the progression of social movement studies have branched out in close proximity with the causes that masses were mobilized towards. Protest that takes place in streets, in workplaces and in peoples everyday lives, have shift shapes with changing circumstances. Veganism, taking place through people's behaviours and choices, mostly on a daily basis, tend to target certain cultural practices and codes, that manifests itself in various forms of animal exploitation. Although progression of social movement studies have been crucial for the theorization of lifestyle movements theory, for it was developed in part as a reaction to already existing theory, none of them fully reflect the social change aspect of veganism. For this reason, in order to highlight the resistive nature that is by nature embedded to vegan lifestyle, it would be best to consider lifestyle movements

as a roadmap for this analysis. What, then, is crucial to point out regarding these acts of everyday resistance is that they “*operate at the level of personal choices made by individuals about what to buy, how to talk, what to eat, how to treat people, what to wear, and so on*” (Fuist et al., 2018).

#### **4.5 Lifestyle Movements and Veganism**

Vegan lifestyle is often considered among lifestyle movements, which “*actively promotes a lifestyle, or a way of life, as a primary means to foster social change*” (Haenfler et al., 2012; Miller, 2005). Lifestyle movements were theorized in order to analyze a space where a number of concepts and forms of activism falls into, including some concepts and points discussed in previous theories, but fail to reflect the nuanced position these acts of resistance occupy. Two particular tendencies of lifestyle movements (which will be referred to as ‘LM’ in the remainder of the thesis) are pointed out, distancing them from already developed theories regarding social movements: “*LMs tend to be structurally diffuse (vs. centrally organized), yet have a degree of coherence and continuity that contrasts them with fads or trends. LMs tend to target cultural practices and codes (vs. formal/political institutions)*” (Haenfler et al., 2012). Looking into veganism through the lens of these two tendencies observed in LMs, it becomes clear that both can be observed in veganism.

First of all, vegan lifestyle is considered to be built on an ethical decision that one makes that will be effecting a wide variety of one’s own life choices for the remainder of their life, with no need to organize in any shape or form. To illustrate further, out of the 20 vegans that have participated in the survey, 11 of them said they are not a part of any collective, yet 10 of them considered themselves to be activists. Further, half of the participants stated that it is not necessary or even relevant for vegans to be a part of any collective or a civil society organization to consider themselves as activists. This also indicates that, in line with the hypothesis of this research, the resistance quality of veganism includes but not solely consists of diffused decisions one makes throughout one’s life every single day, that challenges structural codes and norms. The

everyday nature of taking seemingly minor yet continuous actions, deems it a coherent movement.

Secondly, as specified in a number of instances throughout this research, veganism includes one to reject the deeply rooted and mostly taken-for-granted state of animal exploitation that takes place in many cultures and enables a robust industry built on the shoulders of it, and rearrange all related consumption habits and everyday practices accordingly. As further explained in the section detailing differences between veganism and vegetarianism, unlike vegetarianism, veganism is not considered as a dietary path, but a lifestyle that challenges the predominant cultural norms through certain decisions that take place in everyday life. It does not particularly aim to challenge a certain political disposition over the other, and its tactics regarding taking action does not have to take place in the eyes of public, or in the form of a protest event. Nevertheless, it is a movement with an ambitious aim of changing how we think regarding this taken-for-granted hierarchy between humans, non-human animals and nature in general, coincidentally changing our habits accordingly. It promotes a certain way of being and navigating through life, which happens to go against truly deep patterns in culture, social norms and structures entrenched in the way humans think of themselves in relation to other beings. What this movement confronts is not the state itself per se, but the whole structure, culture and the meanings surrounding animal exploitation. Thus, significantly fitting into Melucci's following characterization of social movements:

Among my criteria for defining a social movement is the extent to which its actions challenge or break the limits of a system of social relations. Defined in this way, the study of social movements raises a significant question for sociological theory: are there forms of conflict which are being directed against the intrinsic logic of complex systems? (Melucci, 1989, p. 38)

Consequently, explanation of what is being resisted against, especially on a daily basis, calls for the construction of meaning on the battlefield, the place where power that resistance clashes against. Veganism is representative of such everyday level

formation of identity, where one of the essential ways of participating is through practicing something very personal and individual: choosing what not to eat. This resistance is primarily embodied; it takes place in one's physical body, a space where one is assumed to have the ultimate control over under natural circumstances, and also convey immediate meaning by literally wearing and embodying it. With that being said, what makes such a mundane act taking place in a veiled yet ever present place a 'battlefield', to convey such quality of resistance?

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **EVERYDAY RESISTANCE AND HAVING A MEAL**

Undoubtedly, any attempt at social change is done so by creating friction to a certain level and in some form, whether it be visible to outsiders or not. Although social movement research has been traditionally focused more on the visible forms of activism and social protest, which often stems from the visibility of empirical data analyzed, there is a wide variety of resistance on the field. This research aims to frame the everyday quality of resistance embodied by those who live their lives according to vegan ideals, so it is crucial to address the concept of ‘resistance’ and its’ characteristics in certain contexts, prior to discussing everyday form of it and how it would be beneficial for discussing the everyday actions of vegans. To this end, first of all, this chapter will be exploring the discourse that eventually lead to the theoretical distillment of the characteristics of ‘resistance’ as a well-rounded concept to be used in sociological theory. With that point being raised, the concept of ‘everyday resistance’ will be argued in reference to its particular attributions, which will provide a conceptual roadmap while analyzing the data collected throughout this research. After establishing these two important concepts, bodies will be discussed as spaces where everyday resistance is actualized in the case of vegan lifestyle. The most mundane embodiment of this resistance is actualized through food, which ascribes multifaceted social meanings to food consumption.

## 5.1 Power and Resistance

“Where there is power, there is resistance...” (Foucault, 1978)

“(...) where there is resistance, there is power (...)” (Abu-Lughod, 1990)

While exploring power, social sciences have been lacking on resistance studies, which concurrently effects the way power is being understood and defined. As discussed in depth by Hollander and Einwohner (2004), resistance is a concept that many scholars have benefited from while explaining a variety of phenomena, referring to whether it is physical or symbolic, political or identity based, the scale of the resistance, direction of the resistance, and so on. In such research aiming to expose what is buried at the core of the empirical and theoretical discussions made benefiting from the concept of resistance, they have identified that there are two core elements common to most of the diverse academic discussion around the concept. First of all, although its areas of utilization being seemingly diverse, almost all uses of ‘resistance’ includes a sense of *action*, whether it be verbal, cognitive or physical. Secondly, most of the discussions benefit from a sense of *opposition* while utilising the concept. They argue this sense appears in the use of words such as ‘challenge’, ‘reject’ and ‘social change’, which are all easy to come across in social movement studies (ibid.).

Looking at the widely accepted definition of veganism, which considers it as a way of living with the aim of excluding all forms of exploitation of and cruelty to animals in any shape or form, it is possible to dissect this definition in light of Hollander and Einwohner’s (2004) emphasis on action and opposition. Applying the first core element laid out, it is evident that vegans do *take action* in a number of ways: physically by not consuming any product that would require for an animal to be killed or exploited; cognitively by consciously facing the reality that then leads them to make the ethical decision towards not consuming such products; and verbally, by vocalizing the normalization of animal exploitation and animal rights, whether it be through traditional forms of collective activism or simply answering questions regarding it



when asked about. Although not every vegan considers themselves to be an activist<sup>23</sup> in the traditional sense, in the vegan circles I have observed, the general consensus is that vegans should at least be knowledgeable enough to answer certain basic questions regarding their lifestyle and everyday practices, even if their primary reason of self-education is to strengthen their own ties with the cause or simply to be ready for inevitable questions. Besides, multiple participants and resources have stated that learning more about veganism even after fully adapting into the lifestyle without a doubt in mind, helped them with remaining calm and logical in the face of questions and sometimes uncalled for comments. One way or the other, aside from the genuine questions from curious individuals, most vegans will have to engage with ‘trolling’ questions and comments, in line with the infamous ‘rebuttal’ employed by such non-vegans: *“but vegetables are living creatures too”*.

Whether one considers themselves to be an activist or not, sharing a meal is a common form of socializing, where one can likely be put in the spot of asking “does this soup have butter in it?” to the waiter, immediately giving away being vegan, thus opening oneself to a certain degree of questioning, uncalled for or not. The following quote from one of the most mentioned website among the Turkish-speaking online vegan communities, considered as a good starting point for Turkish-speaking vegans, highlights the importance of spreading the word as well as to be ready to respond when asked:

From the moment you declare that you are vegan, people around you who continue using animals will start asking you questions. You may find this somewhat disturbing in the first place, but if you want to create a transformation, you should see these questions as an opportunity for activism.<sup>24</sup> (Vegan Aktivizm, n.d.)

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<sup>23</sup> It is necessary to note that the definition of ‘activism’ varies from one participant to another. In the survey conducted for the purposes of this research, 3 out of 20 participants stated ‘no’ when asked whether they consider themselves to be an activist or not. However, in another question all 3 of them stated that they consider answering people’s questions and giving information regarding veganism in general as activism, and all 3 stated they do talk to people and give information regarding veganism.

<sup>24</sup> *“Vegan olduğunuzu ilan ettiğiniz andan itibaren etrafınızdaki hayvan kullanımına devam eden kişiler size sorular sormaya başlayacaktır. İlk etapta bu durumu bir miktar rahatsız edici*

In line with the somewhat “bound to happen” fact of getting asked information to regarding this new lifestyle, Merve said:

(when I first went vegan) Those who were saying ‘you’ll get over it’ started to ask me ‘ok, but do you also not eat this’ like everybody else. I found myself doing activism all of a sudden. I found myself being capable of answering things I never really looked up before<sup>25</sup> (Merve, 23, vegan for 3 years)

In the above quote Merve states that she was capable of answering questions without looking up those precise topics with the aim of ‘activism’ per se. As also will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, this indicates that there is not much difference between the base one builds while educating oneself to be more knowledgeable for the sake of a stronger ethical stance for oneself, and learning for the purposes of mobilizing people. They seem to act as different levels of activism, different levels of engagement with the same goal of making people go vegan.

Applying the second core element in Hollander and Einwohner’s (2004) analysis on resistance, sense of opposition is self-evidently at the heart of any social movement and any individual or group wanting to effect change at any capacity with any purpose that is challenging the status quo. In the case of veganism, opposition is embodied by individuals through diagnosing a social problem and an injustice that non-human animals face and aiming towards structural social change, first through regulating one’s own lifestyle according to this stance. Starting from opposing the value and meaning culturally attributed to animal meat and products, the lifestyle opposes to a number of different social relations and processes, which have been discussed throughout this research.

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*bulabilirsiniz, ancak eğer bir dönüşüm yaratmak istiyorsanız bu soruları aktivizm için bir fırsat olarak görmelisiniz.”*

<sup>25</sup> “(ilk vegan olduğumda) ‘Tamam, geçer’ falan diyen insanlar, herkesin sorduğu “ama şunu da mı yemiyorsun, bunu da mı yemiyorsun” diye sorular sormaya başladılar. Kendimi bir anda aktivizmin içinde buldum. Daha önce hiç araştırmadığım şeyleri aslında tak tak cevaplıyordum kendimi.”

After characterizing these two rather straightforward elements at the core of the conceptualization of ‘resistance’, Hollander and Einwohner further continue their analysis with two central issues that tend to drive disagreements about the concept, thus the diversity of discourse around it. First point of discussion is as regards to the *intent* behind the act, questioning “*must the actor be aware that she or he is resisting some exercise of power -and intending to do so- for an action to qualify as resistance?*” (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). Second point, which will be acting as a focal point for the discussion that will be analyzed for the majority of this chapter, is the *recognition* of the act, which poses the question “*must oppositional action be readily apparent to others, and must it in fact be recognized as resistance?*” (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). This concern over the visibility of resistance has come to be an important point in social movement studies with the rise of new social movement theory, developed as a critique towards Marxist understanding of what a social movement is, which remarks that “the labour movement is *the* social movement of capitalist society” (Edwards, 2014), which was discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Through neo-Marxist critiques relocating the focus of discussion on the cultural domination and furthermore on ideology, by the 1970s, new social movements theorists were able to argue in favor of a shift in the nature of social movements. This shift was observed not only in the nature and contents of the political struggle, but also towards ways and methods masses utilize to pursue change. With new social movements theory, new concerns, new sites of struggle, new compositions and new organizational forms have come to be regarded as the object of issue of social movement studies going forward (ibid.). Further down the line, lifestyle movements took the intersection between private action and movement participation as where a certain group of social movements takes place, further justifying the question asked by Hollander and Einwohner, regarding the visibility and recognition of the act of resistance, which would concurrently effect the definition of ‘resistance’ altogether.

With all this shift in political, economic and social understanding of world life and everyday struggle, acts of resistance and protest, consequently their perception were bound to change in conjunction with. Of course, visibility is a tricky topic to discuss

within the scope of resistance, for all is visible to someone who has the necessary know-how in place (the ability to interpret the meaning behind certain actions, to put simply) while looking at certain acts in certain contexts. However, it would not be a stretch of the imagination if one were to say that the image one has in mind when thinking of a movement or a protest, would probably be including protesters in a public space, chanting and carrying banners and signs. Although this is also a part of the protest repertoire of vegan movement and animal rights movement at large, this ‘visible’ demand in change in the style of a street protest, consist of a relatively smaller portion of committed activism, and ethicacy of such protests are criticized among different fractions of the movement itself. To provide an example, due to the highly explosive and shocking nature of protests in the style of Cube of Truth<sup>26</sup>, where footages from slaughterhouses are screened in public places, if one were to only focus on what is ‘visible’ to the average eye, vegan activism might be mischaracterised. In addition to the ethicality of this form of activism in and of itself being controversial and polarizing within vegan communities, measuring its reach is also rather difficult. Not only their effectiveness is tough to measure, how to define effectiveness remains as a point of contention too. In an interview, Melodi explained in detail why and how this particular form of protest as well as other street-style protests can be interpreted as counterproductive to the vegan cause, which will be included in Chapter 6.

As explained throughout this chapter, even discussion on the recognition of more ‘visible’ acts of resistance is rather contested when it comes to forms of protest and social action taken by those who are a part of a social movement. If this is the case, what about the recognition of ‘invisible’ forms of activism, that does not take place on the streets? Do acts that are not readily apparent to others from the outside, do not have an effect on people? How would the social movements studies categorize those acts of

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<sup>26</sup> Cube of Truth protests are originated by an Australian not-for-profit animal rights organization called Anonymous for the Voiceless. A Cube of Truth demonstration is often structured with two groups, where members of one group holds screens with slaughterhouse footages screened on a loop, while the members of the other group interacts with the public who are reacting and are seemingly interested in what is going on in the screens. The demonstration aims to open up a dialogue with the public by taking place in busy streets and squares, in order to mobilize masses towards veganism. For further information, see: <https://www.anonymousforthevoiceless.org/>, retrieved September 6, 2020.

resistance that are embodied and adopted through routine everyday acts and choices, and constitute the backbone of a recognized social movement? If being recognized is that much of a core element of social change and veganism mostly do not take place in a ‘recognizable’ way, why is the plant-based food industry directly aiming to replace animal products have grown 31% in the past two years as of July 2019, just in the U.S.? (The Good Food Institute, 2020) The answer is the ‘invisible’ resistance, the everyday resistance.

## **5.2 Everyday Resistance**

James C. Scott’s (1985) conceptualization of ‘everyday resistance’ challenges the issue with visibility raised prior in Hollander and Einwohner’s discussion on resistance. In his conceptualization, Scott observes certain acts that implicitly undermine power among the peasants of a Malaysian village he conducted ethnographic research for two years. He characterizes these acts as not as dramatic and visible as demonstrations; those that would be considered mundane in nature by most, such as foot dragging and feigning ignorance, are considered to be examples of these everyday forms of resistance, so long as they “deny or mitigate claims made by appropriating classes” (Scott, 1985). Scott argues that this form of collective action is considered to be an important manifestation of political interest by the relatively powerless groups, which cannot usually afford open defiance in fear of consequences. According to Scott, the form of resistance depends on the form of power, thus providing an opening to directly bring lifestyle movements into discussion. The form of power that vegans are resisting to, is mostly implicit yet takes place in multiple dimensions of social life, is all-pervasive and is considered to signify deeply rooted values and meanings that effect multiple spheres of life. Thus, the corresponding resistance should take place in a similar vein.

The peculiarity of this form of resistance lies in the ‘everydayness’ of these acts, characterized as such due to their commonplace and ordinary nature (Hollander and Einwohner, 2004). In order to avoid detection, everyday forms of resistance employ methods that fly under the radar with little to no formal organization. A seemingly

mundane act that one is acting on or embodying, when framed in consideration with the power dynamic that puts that person in a suppressed position, can be read as containing a resistance quality that can go unnoticed by those who are not *looking for*, per se. Those people or their actions are ‘invisible’, in this sense.

Everyday forms of resistance rarely make headlines. But just as millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef, thousands upon thousands of petty acts of insubordination and evasion create a political and economic barrier reef of their own. And whenever, to pursue the simile, the ship of state runs aground on such a reef, attention is typically directed to the shipwreck itself and not the vast aggregation of actions which make it possible. (Scott, 1989, p. 49)

Little by little, most of the actions taken by vegan individuals build such a coral reef similar to what Scott refers to in above quote. Although vegan movement measures success by the mobilization rate much like any other social movement, the everyday changes made in one’s lifestyle are what takes place when one is being mobilized. Generally speaking, there is no single petition to be signed, no particular policy to be passed or no revolution with a capital ‘R’ to be made in veganism. Robust reforms taken towards ending animal exploitation are of course considered to be the end goal of veganism, but the activism mostly consists converting individuals to make them decide on not to choose animal products. It is an individual revolution made by the individual and affecting primarily and sometimes only that individual. In other words, day-to-day choices that people tend to make after the ethical rejection of animal exploitation, *is* the resistance. Therefore, the aggregation of small actions and decisions one routinely makes day in and day out, replacing old habits, makes veganism a peculiar social movement where everyday resistance is embodied by agents. Replacing egg yolk in a cake recipe that acts as a thickener with cornstarch, because one is living by vegan ideals, integrates the resistance deeper into one’s life, normalizing choosing cornstarch over egg in all future baking endeavours.

### 5.2.1 Dimensions of Everyday Resistance: the Case of Veganism

A comprehensive exploration of the concept ‘everyday resistance’ can be found in Johansson and Vinthagen’s (2014) research entitled *Dimensions of Everyday Resistance: An Analytical Framework*, where already suggested theoretical and definitional framework regarding everyday resistance have been gathered in one place for analysis. Their research come to provide a major development to the resistance studies in general by contributing a comprehensive and systematic exploration of ‘everyday resistance’ beyond Scott’s conceptualization. In their formulation of the concept, they start out by laying out the assumption that everyday resistance is “*a practice; it is historically entangled with (everyday) power; it needs to be understood as intersectional with the powers that it engages with; and it is heterogeneous and contingent due to changing contexts and situations*” (Johansson and Vinthagen, 2014). After locating this baseline, they specify four pivotal dimensions that are used in everyday resistance research to base their framework, and to ask “*who is carrying out the practice, in relation to whom, where and when, and how*”.

First dimension is *repertoires of everyday resistance*, referring to the diversity and multiplicity of concepts used when actions and forms of everyday resistance are being analyzed, with the proposition to gather them all under the concept of ‘repertoire’, inspired by Charles Tilly. In the case of vegans in Turkey, this would be all the forms and techniques of resistance, whether it be avoidance of the topic towards non-vegans, choosing who to open up to or to mobilize, changing tactics in line with changing politics, ‘softening’ or ‘hardening’ of the ethical stance, adapting cooking as a way to show people the implementation of the lifestyle, taking breaks from ‘explaining’ and even choosing not to give off vegan side of the self to avoid all these forms mentioned.

The second dimension is *relationships of agents*, focusing on the question of ‘who’ regarding the action and relationships of agents included with the action of resistance, namely those who carry out the act of resistance, those who are the target and the observers. Clearly in veganism, those who carry out the acts of resistance are vegan individuals, and when their relationship with power holders are analyzed, it becomes

visible that their targets and observers are neither fixed and nor singular. Veganism aims to abolish animal exploitation, which becomes a dragon with many heads when the complexity and normalization of animal exploitation is considered. On the one hand, state power is a target of this resistance, with animal rights activists' demands regarding structural reforms and regulations. An example is the ban on coaches in Büyükkada by İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality, which has been especially controversial in mainstream media after the mass killing of 81 horse following an outbreak<sup>27</sup>. Although such protests called 'single-issue campaigns' that focus on particular uses of animals or on particular species are also criticized within vegan community, it still can be categorized as a demand being seen and heard by the power holder in this case. The relationships among different agencies in such a protest is also not fixed; such single-issue campaigns for animal rights tend to gather a wide group of people, some non-vegan, some vegetarian and some vegan. In this setting, non-vegan individual and a vegan individual are both in the same side of the demand, targeting the municipality, while in another setting non-vegan would be the target of the act of resistance. Veganism aims for the absolute abolition of animal exploitation, which is mostly taught to be carried out by gaining power in numbers, by mobilizing masses to going vegan. Any type of daily encounter with a non-vegan, is a potential catalyst for mobilization towards veganism. Getting in contact and socializing with a vegan was also specified by half of my informants as the primary reason they went vegan. Therefore, the target of most acts of everyday resistance, becomes non-vegan individuals. However, as evident from the example, the multilayered nature of these agencies should be considered while analysis.

The third dimension mentioned by Johansson and Vinthagen is the *temporalization of everyday resistance*, thinking everyday resistance as “temporally organized, and as practised in and through time as a central social dimension” (ibid.). They refer to power/time dimension by exemplifying workers' everyday resistance tactic 'foot

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<sup>27</sup> Retrieved August 24, 2020, from <http://www.diken.com.tr/imamoglu-faytonlar-kalkiyor-ulasim-elektrikli-araclarla-yapilacak/>



dragging’, where workers intentionally lower the pace of work in a way to lower the boss’s profits made from the workers’ labour.

In relation with time, space is also theorized as the final dimension. The fourth dimension Johansson and Vinthagen refers to is the *spatialization of everyday resistance*, referring beyond physical sites of resistance. In addition to physical spaces like the workplace or the streets, where power encounters resistance in a social context, they argue that ‘social construction of the spatial’ should be analyzed.

Rob Shields (1991) goes further and defines the social construction of the spatial as ‘social spatialization’. This is an ongoing social construction of the spatial at the level of social imagery (collective mythologies, discourses) as well as at the level of interventions in the landscape (for example, the built environment). He sees social spatialization as a fundamental system of spatial division; for example, processes of inclusion or exclusion. Space is here political and ideological, which implies that certain social groups have a higher degree of access to or power over space, while others have more limited access to space. (Johansson and Vinthagen, 2014, p. 9)

The perfect example of social spatialization occurs at the supermarket for vegans. When one goes vegan, the first apprehension they feel is “what am I going to eat now?”. Going to a supermarket with this thought in mind, could be rather simple for a vegetarian: all they have to do is to avoid the butcher aisle and cold cut charcuterie sections. Due to the taken for granted nature of animal exploitation in production of any type of packaged goods, the resistance becomes something more prominent and diffused, even at an everyday place like a supermarket, running chores. On top of the all meat-related aisles, vegans also avoid eggs, milk, cheese aisles, leaving whole food aisles such as fresh produce, grains and legume families. When it comes to any kind of packaged goods, it gets a little tricky. Although labels printed on packaged goods legally have to be accurate in terms of contents, producers can find legal grey areas to exploit fully disclosing certain information with customers, if they feel like this information would sway their opinion towards not purchasing the product. In order to build trust with their target audience and to signify a certain standard of quality to their

vegan and vegetarian customers, some brands apply for the “V-Label Certificate” which indicates that a product is fully qualified as vegan or vegetarian. Although some brands go the extra mile to provide this ethical standard, coordinator of V-Label Turkey stated in an interview with Turkish Vegan Association, that there is no regulation restricting brands with no V-Label to claim to be vegan or vegetarian on the packaging, without going through any audit<sup>28</sup>. Consumer might believe this statement at their own risk, but there would be no way of knowing for sure other than looking at the label of contents. On top of this, even when the consumer has the time and energy to dive into the contents on the label, the technical words used could be complicating to figure out what exactly is in the package. With no regulations at place prohibiting such false and misleading claims and no obligation to provide a standardized and transparent vegan/vegetarian label that is accessible and easy for consumers to understand, the grain that vegans go against becomes easier to see in an everyday situation.

Although being one of many examples of usual everyday occurrences for vegans, the above supermarket example visualizes two important concepts that will assist us in understanding the power of resistance that takes place in everyday lives, food and body.

### **5.3 The Body as a Space for Everyday Resistance**

The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays; it is poisoned by food or valves, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances. (Rabinow & Foucault, 1985, p. 87)

When analyzing social construction of spaces, bodies become a site of power and resistance, where control and ethical decision is embodied. The ‘invisible’ everyday resistance vital to veganism, is primarily materialized through embodiment. Vegans embody resistance through their own bodies and the foods they consume, through

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<sup>28</sup> Retrieved August 20, 2020, from [https://tvd.org.tr/2016/05/v-label\\_roportaj/](https://tvd.org.tr/2016/05/v-label_roportaj/)

disciplining out already established and taught ways of nourishing our bodies. Seemingly mundane, the ordinary everyday act of having a meal turns into an act that undermines power. Following definition of Johansson and Vinthagen (2013) further supports the presence of bodies in everyday resistance, giving a picture where vegan lifestyle can interpreted to be a part of:

We, consequently, propose a definition that reserves everyday resistance to such resistance that is *done routinely*, but which is *not politically articulated or formally organized* (yet or in that situation). It is a form of activity that often avoids being detected as resistance. But it might also be *made* invisible by society, by not being recognized as resistance. Acts that deviate from hegemonic understandings of resistance tend to achieve non-recognition. Sometimes we have a kind of “life-style” or “way of life” of people, like that of explicit vegans for example, that make visible everyday resistance to certain norms and discourses. Despite being a visible “counter-hegemonic embodiment” (Kwan & Roth 2011: 194) it is largely *politically* invisible, as it does not conform to conventional understandings of politics. (Johansson and Vinthagen, 2013, p. 10)

Although veganism demands one to adapt to a lifestyle that requires transformation on more than just one’s eating habits and choices made around it, it is essential to highlight this very core part of the phenomenon in and of itself. When boiled down to, this lifestyle, essentially starts and ends, in a sense, within the bounds of one’s physical body and the action of choosing what nutrition to put inside that body. If this were merely a matter of nutrition that provides our bodies with energy and sustain them, veganism and other ways of food consumption that explicitly or implicitly challenges dominant food consumption rituals and rules as well as codes surrounding them, would not be subject to varying degrees of discussion. Before going into the need to discuss the importance of what we put in our bodies and how infraction of certain rules around it further visualizes the spatialization of resistance, we must first address how our bodies have come to be a matter of discussion in sociological theory.

Our bodies, our vessels we are charged with taking care of for up until we physically or mentally cannot, have been a subject matter in sociological thought as well as

subject to theoretical critiques which brought change throughout the years. In addition to being a topic which can be the habitat of multiple schools of thought, it is also a topic that can take up space in people's minds outside of the academia. We as humans not only feed our bodies in certain ways in certain times, but we decorate them in certain ways in certain times and abstain from decorating them in other ways, due to the meanings we create around this very act. Although it varies from culture to culture, there is a right way and a wrong way of doing things when it comes to our bodies and mostly we know what this means in one way or another, without going to school for it. This notion of being taught what is right from wrong when it comes to our bodies, through the way we were raised to media and culture, shows that our bodies have been a site of discipline, power and resistance in multiple ways and forms.

Although Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic* and *Discipline and Punish* published in 1973 and 1975 respectively, provides a blueprint for many of the following discourse regarding body as a site of power and resistance, consideration of bodies as a subject matter of sociology seems to have emerged rather recently as a distinct area of sociological study. Chris Shilling considers this tendency for social theorists to consider the body more as a subject matter of other disciplines or as a prerequisite of simply being a human being, rather than as a topic of social studies until about 1980s, as bodies being historically 'absent present' in sociology.

The study of social mobility, of racism, the formation of the 'underclass' (...) are all concerned implicitly with the movement, location, care and education of bodies. In different ways, all these areas of study are interested in how and why the social opportunities and life expectancies of people are shaped by the classification and treatment of their bodies as belonging to a particular 'race', sex, class or nationality. In the study of health and illness, for example, inequalities in morbidity and mortality rates have prompted sociologists to ask what it is about the social existence of people that affects their bodies in such dramatic ways. Clearly bodies matter, and they matter enough to form the 'hidden' base of many sociological studies. (Shilling, 1993, p. 18)

The increasing interest regarding the body since 1980s does not only pertain to social sciences. As a matter of fact, it opened up a field of discussion among multiple fields of science, with reference to multiple phenomenon that goes along with human bodies during their life cycles, such as emotions, pain, health, sleep, ageing and death. The academic interest in the body brought multiple theoretical interpretations of it, in addition to retrospective reading of already existing theories and deliberations through this novel lens, going as far back as Plato's *Phaedo* and Descartes' '*Cogito ergo sum*' (Williams & Bendelow, 1998). In relation with above quote by Shilling, Williams and Bendelow (1998) gives an example from Marx and Engels while retracing bodies in classical sociological thought:

In a bold statement Engels likens *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* to 'social murder' by the bourgeoisie. The combination of poor sanitary and environmental conditions, together with poor nutrition and long, arduous, health-risking forms of labour, resulted in a general 'enfeeblement' of the working-class body, which aged prematurely and died early. (Williams & Bendelow, 1998, p. 12)

They further amplify their discussion with analyzing Weber, again clarifying that bodies have always been there in sociological theory (again, as absent referent), but were never really talked about:

*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, for example, is predicated upon the notion of the ascetic body in which the pleasures of the flesh are denied through thrift and hard work in one's 'calling' as a sign of God's grace. Certainly, as Weber shows, Protestant writings at this time were dominated by the continual, passionately preached virtues of hard work and unrelenting mental and physical labour. (Williams & Bendelow, 1998, p. 14)

In light of this stream of retrospective 'discovery' of body in classical sociological theory, new theories have started to be developed in the name of this growing field of study. The novel theories that are taking body as a core issue, have on the one hand aimed to step away from the reductionist and dualist tendencies that have been

introduced to sociological theory with biological explanations, and on the other hand, tried to avoid the post-structuralist (over)emphasis of body as an entity that is so fluid and fragmented that it made one lose the entire point of the study. In *The Lived Body*, Williams and Bendelow (1998) raise this as a point that could possibly lead to unfruitful discourse that would not lead to anywhere in the long run. Their reasoning is that the more academic work on bodies are being developed and bodies are researched, the more 'body' as we know it, becomes an elusive entity, shifting the focus away from what the body *is*, towards what it may *become* (Williams & Bendelow, 1998).

All Deleuzian critique aside, sociology of body provides a link between veganism and everyday resistance, precisely because bodies are where the resistance occurs in veganism. Veganism essentially starts with the act of regulating the food you are consuming on a daily basis, which then trickles into other decisions one makes that requires animal exploitation. It could be considered an act of choice, an act of control, an act that questions and challenges the social order around feeding our bodies. Vegans quite literally embody the resistance to eat what they have been taught to eat and what is conventional for them to eat, let alone coping with the social implications of doing so.

When it comes to read the power relations that are affecting bodies, in *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault historically traces the discourse on how bodies come to be seen as 'docile' entities around eighteenth century through 'clinical gaze' developed in light of advancements in medicine, come to consider bodies as mere 'political anatomies'.

It is political because the changing ways in which the body has been viewed and described are not simply the product of some 'random effects' or 'progressive enlightenment', rather, they are based upon certain forms of knowledge and mechanisms of power which, since the eighteenth century, have served increasingly to penetrate and inscribe the body. (Foucault, 1973)

The power in Foucault's interpretation here that has been inflicted upon and 'disciplined' our bodies, is one that is infused in people's everyday behaviour and identities; one that is exercised in more of an underlying manner; one that operates through a number of apparatuses; and a power which turns its subjects (bodies) into objects of power/knowledge, deeming them manipulative and docile (ibid.). It is crucial to see bodies ontologically as a field of power and consequently, as a field of resistance in an everyday manner, in order to acknowledge the activist nature of transforming oneself in such a way to choose leading a vegan lifestyle, rather than considering veganism as just another dietary preference, one might adopt only because they feel like doing so. In a similar fashion, interpretation of the meanings, rituals and values coded around eating and meals themselves should also be made in order to get the full picture of this act. In the case of veganism, not only bodies become spaces where power and resistance is at play at all times, but the choice of eliminating animal and animal byproducts itself challenges a deeply coded system of social relations related to meals.

#### **5.4 The Meaning of Animals on Plates**

Ideally, everybody eats every single day, but not everybody thinks about it every single time they do it. For some meals, it becomes something we do just to get it over with it, and other meals it becomes a big production with the time and effort we put into, changing what the meal means for us. One thing for sure is that it is not merely a biological process that goes into it. It is hunger, but not just hunger; it has an entire web of meanings surrounding it, deeming challenging it as critical.

Bringing food into the conceptual dance between body/power/resistance, the easy tendency to look over food in our everyday lives should be emphasized. There are strict rituals between our bodies and the food we consume, which will help visualize the resistant nature of veganism analyzed throughout this research. Not only we divide our days around times we eat and repeat this habitually every single day for the majority of our lives, we consequently structure our entire time in the world around this schedule. This ritual includes some foods at certain times of the day, while

deeming those same foods unacceptable to consume some other times of the day. First comes breakfast time with breakfast food, then rolls around lunch time with lunch food, concluded by dinner time with dinner food. The contents of ‘breakfast’, ‘lunch’ and ‘dinner’ depends on socio-cultural variables, which can differ from context to context. However, largely globalized sense of time wrapped around eating certain food in certain times is prevalently ritualized yet so covert that perhaps best way to measure its force on us is to change contents of what one eats daily.

From a subjective point of view, the ritualistic aspect of gathering around a table and having a meal has been quite clear in my family. Generally speaking, in line with the cultural gender roles in Turkish context, the food has always been imagined, thought out and prepared by my mother, which we express our appreciation and gratitude every time. It has been something that is binding the family around a table, literally making members of my family spend time with each other under the disguise of a biological obligation, at least once a day during dinner. Even if you did not feel like eating, you had to sit there until everyone is done and chat about everyday goings-on. From the outside, it may look like the entire point is the biological component of the act, which may be the primary reason behind it, but there is more social components that goes into it. It establishes the habit of making sure everyone asks each other “how was your day” at least once a day. It is something my parents have always valued deeply, which sometimes felt like an irrelevant obligation that did not make sense to me as a teenager. Now that I am older, I come to see the meaning that they have build surrounding our dinners, and it is thrilling to see the same understanding being built with my teen brother as well. Actually, the meaning of gathering around a table is not really related to what we consume, per se, but the quality time we spend with each other while doing so. However, this mostly mellow subjective experience stems from not being ethically challenging towards the food being put on the table. When one rejects and criticizes the food itself from an ethical standpoint, thus punching down the very core of the constructed meaning, then its power becomes more visible. In just a number of small steps taken in the form of critiques or comments, rejecting animal exploitation turns into criticizing the meanings constructed regarding traditional family along with the values attached to socializing around food.



Food related social theory has been admittedly overlooked in sociology due to the mundane nature of its subject of interest, similar to the treatment of bodies laid out in a previous section. In Deborah Lupton's (1996) argument, the neglect of this important topic can be traced back to the separation of mind and body in philosophy, particularly claiming that what is worthy of contemplating upon is the matters of mind, for thought is considered to be more valuable over embodiment. In this interpretation of Plato's dualism, bodily leisure such as fulfilling of hunger is considered not only unworthy of thinking upon and analysis, but is also deemed a distraction from devoting all contemplation on what is truly worthy of philosophical study. In that sense, body is nothing but a machine of disruption and urges that we are slaves of, and it is best to pay as little attention to its 'follies' as possible so that we can focus our true purpose in life, which is seeking truth and searching reality (Lupton, 1996). Similar sentiments can also be observed towards bodies and embodiment, causing the related field of sociological research being developed rather late and in a retrospective manner.

For the majority of people living in cities, food preparation is an act of everyday life, not much attention devoted to the transformation of raw materials through the sieve, that is culture. Meanings we build with food, the act of preparing the food and eating it, are one of the most fundamental parts of our subjectivity and sense of self, and are mediated by culture (Lupton, 1996; Beardsworth & Keil, 1997). It is a matter of ultimate self control that one acts on and reproduces in a certain routine day in and day out. Although what is edible and what is not is laid out culturally and passed on to new generations, what one chooses to eat as well as ways of preparing it, symbolizes different meanings regarding one's sense of self and identity. Rejecting meat and other animal byproducts from an ethical standpoint, then, calls for identifying the inherent power it takes to not choose a category of food that has been engraved as a staple in most cultures' cuisines in varying shapes and forms, and frame it in a social movement lens.

Resisting the normative ways of food consumption, which has been coded in our lives deeply and heavily in very inconspicuous ways since childhood, proves to be an

everyday struggle, especially when one first starts out as a vegan. Having a meal, being an act one tends to do with family or loved ones, if not alone, becomes one of the first places where one's veganism becomes visible and a topic of discussion. On top of taking out meat from meals, excluding all animal products from consumption is tend to be considered as an extreme measure in the eyes of some or 'just a phase' for others, which was expressed by a handful of my informants. Below exemplifies Ceren's experience when she first shared this transformation with her mother:

At first, when I first went vegan, my mom said 'oh, so this is what you borrowed from your friends this time'. I was 25 at the time, and this made me feel like a kid, like my will has been erased. But when they turned around with time, it made me so happy. They were accepting me the way I am, what more could one ask for<sup>29</sup> (Ceren, 31, vegan for 3 years)

In the quote Ceren provided, her mom's comment illustrates that this decision was interpreted as a fleeting and childish ideal, rather than an ethical stance taken with intent. Of course, this could be read in light of the media coverage in Turkey regarding veganism being more focused on the health aspect of the lifestyle, mostly packaged as a debate between 'normal carnivores' and 'radical vegans' abstaining from nutrition for some unimportant reason. Being exposed to the mainstream controversy, this comment can be seen as just a mother's first reaction towards her daughter's health, who was 25 at the time, but the way it was put into words and the way it was taken by Ceren leaves room for interpretation that this decision (that she has not yet changed her mind about at the age of 31) was recognized as more than a dietary preference. It had a level of social meaning, above a mere biological one. Similarly, below quote from an interview with Merve also reveals a reaction that has multiple layers to it:

I went vegan, the next day was the first day of the school. I told my friends that I've gone vegan, they all said 'you'll quit soon'. I started to explain to that small circle (of friends) at first. When I didn't quit, I started to bother

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<sup>29</sup> "En başta annem bana 'bu arkadaşlarından da bunu aldın' dediğinde ben 25 yaşındaydım. Çocuk gibi hissettim, iradem yok sayıldığımı hissettim. Ama sonra baktım ki yola geliyorlar, çok hoşuma gitti. Olduğum gibi kabul ediyorlar yani daha ne olsun."

their conscience. Those who were saying ‘you’ll get over it’ started to ask me ‘ok, but do you also not eat this’ like everybody else<sup>30</sup> (Merve, 23, vegan for 3 years)

Similar to Ceren's experience, Merve also expresses a similar sentiment regarding her friends’ reactions to her going vegan. Thinking of this transformation as ‘just a phase’ at first, and as something that she will get sick of and eventually quit, could have revealed itself to be true. At the end of the day, not everybody who tries going vegan successfully sustain this lifestyle to the fullest until the day they die. To live according to its requirements and the extend of doing so, as well as the initiative to quit it is always up to the individual. However, once it became obvious that this will be her lifestyle from then on, Merve figuring out that her friends’ conscience are being challenged by her decisions, reveals that guilt can be traced to the absent referent animals, now called ‘meat’ for that same conscience’s sake. If it were merely consuming food for biological reasons, such heavy feelings like guilt would be irrelevant even if felt, because we would have been doing it for survival with no questions asked. Merve's existence in their lives, even if she is not actively trying to mobilize them to go vegan, challenges her friends’ comfort zone that they have come to feel at home, thus making them also question their decisions that support animal exploitation. She further shares:

For example, people started to not inviting me to places because they were annoyed with me. I am sure she did not do it consciously, but I have a hunch that my best friend skips me in her mind, thinking "I cannot invite Merve here" and decide to meet with another friend. This is such an ugly thing, isn't what's important is to meet up and chat, of course I'll find something to eat, even if it is just fries<sup>31</sup> (Merve, 23, vegan for 3 years)

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<sup>30</sup> “İlk vegan oldum, ertesi gün okul başladı, herkese ben vegan oldum dedim. Herkes ‘bırakırsın’ falan dedi. İlk o küçük çevreme konuşmaya başladım. Sonra ben bırakmayınca insanların vicdanını rahatsız etmeye başladım. ‘Tamam, geçer’ falan diyen insanlar, herkesin sorduğu ‘ama şunu da mı yemiyorsun, bunu da mı yemiyorsun’ diye sorular sormaya başladılar.”

<sup>31</sup> “İnsanlar bana gıcık olduklarından bir yerlere çağırılmaya başladılar mesela. Bilinçli yapmadığına eminim ama en yakın arkadaşımın kafasında ‘ben buraya Merve’yi çağırمام’ diye düşünüp kafasında beni eleyip başka arkadaşıyla buluşmaya karar verdiğini seziyorum. Çirkin bir şey bu, önemli olan buluşup konuşmak değil mi, yiyecek bir şey bulurum ben yine de bir şekilde, patates kızartması bile olsa.”

Similar to bodies, this perspective in line with Merve's example shows sharing a meal in a different light altogether. When a vegan individual is with a non-vegan person, even if there is nothing verbal about veganism, they feel threatened, maybe because they feel guilty for hearing what they know to be true. The relationship between agents in this setting, going back to the dimensions of everyday resistance, is visibly between someone who is carrying out the actions of everyday resistance, and one who makes themselves the target. In the case Merve explained, her best friend knows she is vegan and has been for quite some time, so it is not a daily topic they talk about often. There is no intention and action towards mobilizing someone in the 'activist' sense. However, going out together to eat, without any input from Merve, creates a reaction in her best friend, providing a degree of overlapping with Hollander and Einwohner's characterization of resistance: "*Resistance is defined not only by resisters' perception of their own behavior, but also by targets and/or others' recognition of and reaction to this behaviour*" (Hollander and Einwohner, 2004).

In her article *Deciphering a Meal*, Mary Douglas explains that meals carry meanings, thus treating food as code, which needs to be analyzed and decoded in order to be comprehended.

If food is treated as a code, the messages it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed. (...) Like sex, the taking of food has a social component, as well as a biological one. Food categories therefore encode social events. (Douglas, 1972, p. 68)

Food categories encoding social events such as sharing meals and gathering around tables, are the ones we are used to and have normalized. Social events mentioned here refers to every table that has been shared with family and loved ones. Although according to both Merve and Ceren, family and friends come to respect their decisions and support them over time, it does not take away that the food is not merely just food. It signifies comfort and at the same time, ideals and resistance on a plate. There is a 'normal' order in dinners, which changes in contents but brings upon a certain imagery when thought about. Even the consumption of food regulated by supermarkets enforce

the encoded food categories. The modern hunting and gathering (almost solely gathering for the most) for consumption purposes occurs at the supermarket, the bodega or the farmer's market for the majority of people in most societies. This modern food system provides us a place to get food without questioning how the food got there in the first place or whether the food will be restocked the following day. Not finding fresh fruits and vegetables that are currently out-of-season is becoming more of an anomaly and a lack on the part of the supermarket, rather than something natural and to be expected. It is assumed that as long as the structure that is keeping this food system roughly consisting of production-distribution-consumption of goods is intact, there will be food no matter what. Prices can go up and sometimes go low depending on multiple variables sustaining this system, and the variety of food can change over time, but the question "will there be food in the store tomorrow?" does not cross the minds of middle class citizens of Turkey under everyday circumstances.

Beardsworth and Keil (1997) interprets this normalization of humans' control over their natural environment as a consequence of what started off as a need to sustain a constant guarantee of food supplies. The reason why there is food available at all times (for those who can afford it) is unsurprisingly, because we have a capitalist food system. The current food system in the global West feeds a good majority of people and also provide employment in multiple sectors of economy, such as dairy, meat and agriculture. In agriculture, production of food tends to turn into overproduction, as farmers tend to produce a surplus out of uncertainty in the prices in the market when the time comes for them to sell their produce six months from planting the seeds. However, more food does not equate more people going to sleep with a full stomach; it leads to unsold products and a drop in demand, causing waste of 30% to 50% of food from field to supermarket. For this reason, although food supply per capita soars every year, global hunger do so too (Mbow et al., 2019; Holt-Giménez, 2019). Thus, there is no point in asking "why is there people who go hungry?", while the question should be "why some people cannot afford food?".

Still, the call for acknowledging the decades of damage in the environment in the name of 'feeding the people', is being shut down and justified similarly. With the rise of

industrialization and development of cities with dense population, agriculture had to take place elsewhere. Dividing places where food is being produced and consumed, created a metabolic rift: “nutrients used to produce food are not returned to the farm to be recycled through the food chain. Instead, these nutrients are consumed in cities, and dumped into rivers and oceans as waste” (Holt-Giménez, 2019). Metabolic rift can be traced to a good majority of environmental crises being discussed, such as soil and water loss, decrease in biodiversity, bodies of water being stripped from necessary nutrients due to pollution and changing water temperatures. Current food system overlooks all the irreversible damage in nonrenewable resources and fixable world hunger crisis for the sake of capital surplus.

All this discussion on myth of scarcity and the fact of injustice showcases how humans take Earth for granted. Justification regarding nature and everything around humans are for humans to dominate is not a foreign concept to many Western cultures. The taken-for-granted hierarchy where humans are at the top of the food chain can even be visible in religious scripts. In addition to Qur’an verses related to Eid, such as “We have appointed a rite for every nation, that they may commemorate God’s name over the livestock He has provided for them”<sup>32</sup>, the Bible also offers verses for those who are looking for justification regarding the ‘inherent-ness’ of the hierarchy between humans and nature. In verses from the Bible such as “*God said, see, I have given you every plant producing seed, on the face of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit producing seed, they will be for your food*”<sup>33</sup>, it is explicit that the nature in all its bountifulness has been intended for humans to benefit from. Considering that holy books have been highly effective in shaping major social, economic and political structures that have been developed, in addition to power dynamics they contain, “God’s word” definitely have been shaping how we see food since quite literally the beginning of the time. Such sacred scripts, in that sense, have been providing quite a convincing explanation to the masses when questions regarding unethical production

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<sup>32</sup> “Her ümmet için, Allah'ın kendilerine rızık olarak verdiği hayvanlar üzerine ismini ansınlar diye kurban kesmeyi meşru kıldık” (Qur’an, 22:34)

<sup>33</sup> The Bible, Genesis 1:29.

of animal products or morally (and/or legally) corrupt cultivation of lands have been posed. Religion aside, this taken for granted approach to nature as subordinate to humans have been increasingly considered to be as an unethical issue, with increasing awareness to environmentalism and animal rights. Veganism is one of the byproducts of this questioning of ethics, aiming to bring justice towards nature's consumption by humans.

Similar justification regarding consumption of animal meat is also rooted in Turkish culture, just like it is in the global West. For many Turkish middle class families, meat is the standard of protein that is aimed to be achieved and often considered to be the most nutritious food on any meal, thus often the star of the table. It should be underlined that this is a broad generalization on what meat *means* traditionally, and do not necessarily reflect the reality of meat consumption in Turkey. However, following research is very telling regarding the contradicting reality of animal consumption.

#### **5.4.1 Staple or Luxury?**

As a result of traditionally attached value to meat and animal products as the cornerstone of human nutrition, when this standard has been compromised greatly, it becomes a crisis to be averted. Turkey has (and still is to a certain extent), experienced one such crisis in meat and thus, the value and meaning coded in it. In the last decade, the percentage of protein people receive by consuming meat, poultry and animal products have been dropped in Turkey, due to a drastic markup in prices. According to a research conducted on empirical data collected between 2004-2015, although the prices have doubled in the meantime, while the per capita consumption of red meat and poultry was 20,8 kilograms in 2005, it has scaled up to 37 kilograms in 2015 (Karacan, 2017). Additionally, the price of red meat in the supermarket have increased from 28,43 Turkish Lira per kilogram in 2015, to 45,64 Turkish Lira per kilogram in 2019, signifying that consuming (more like affording) meat definitely shows a certain level of wealth and justifiably so (TEPGE, 2020). Meanwhile, between years 2005-2015, consumption of fish, fruits and vegetables have only increased 0,3 kilogram, 9 kilograms and 7 kilograms respectively (ibid.).

This interesting phenomena where increase in both demand and price of a product is observed, have generally considered to be connected to two points: either the product in question is in the category of essential goods, providing no flexibility in demand, or the income level of consumers are accordingly high, deeming meat as still affordable. Output from the research concludes that both are valid in this case; while high income groups are able to sustain their red meat purchases and increase at will, those who can no longer afford red meat regularly have replaced it with poultry, decreasing the exploitation of one species while increasing the other.

One point that needs to be further underlined, is the importance to fully build the relation between the first and second outcomes of the abovementioned output, namely the high income groups still being able to sustain their red meat purchases even though prices growing year by year, and the rest of the population downgrading their meat consumption to poultry, if they can. When quantitative data is presented without nuance, the increase in demand simultaneous with rising prices would have been interpreted as the entire population also being financially still able to afford red meat. When the rising consumption in generally cheaper types of meat, such as chicken, is thought in relation with the speciesism principle in veganism, it becomes visible how crucial it is for not differentiating cows from chicken from turkey, for animal rights movement. If the fact that, all animals that can feel pain are not accepted to be at the same ethical level of importance, there is no way of abolition for all species. Above example clearly shows that the abolitionist vegan perspective that advocates for animal rights movements to thrive for ending all animal exploitation and not making exploitation more humane or limited to a certain species.

What makes meat and animal exploitation so indispensable, even when it becomes a luxury and with increasing research criticizing the 'staple' perspective regarding it, it is still high in demand? As stated in the Douglas quote above, this particular food category encodes social events, relations and sociability. Therefore, denying the animal exploitation on which houses of social relations are built, where meanings and



values are layered upon, living inside those houses, manifests itself as a number of different kinds of friction in vegans' everyday lives.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **NARRATIVES OF EVERYDAY RESISTANCE**

Rituals and codes governing meanings we attach to nature-as-food are implicitly developed and entrenched to our everyday lives, which is why when one stops contributing to this culture of hierarchy between nature and humans, this decision alters multiple spheres of everyday life and takes different meanings, manifesting itself in different ways in our relations. That is one of the reasons why vegan lifestyles do not only consist of abstaining from certain foods, it also includes developing a sense of rejection towards inequality between humans and nature, as well as all the cultural meanings and symbols feeding into this inequality. This rejection that seems simple in essence is actually the rejection of fundamental structures of hierarchy that most universal value systems are built upon. As discussed throughout this research, this transformation manifests itself in one's daily life and relations formed on a daily basis, even if one is not actively engaging in the discourse surrounding it.

To this end, this chapter will be discussing different patterns that become visible in vegan individuals' everyday lives and social relations, where power they are resisting against starts fading in the moment they start resisting it.

#### **6.1 Handling the Everyday Friction**

Such strong alteration of identity and meaning around what one has been taught their entire time growing up by the society, the media and through socialization, consumption of meat and other animal products in this case, includes major lifestyle

change that manifests in a lot of everyday life choices that one does not necessarily think much of prior to this transformation. Although mostly being seen as a branch of animal rights' activism and environmentalism, when you boil it down to its essence, vegan lifestyle starts at one's home. First and foremost, power and correspondingly, resistance reveals itself in mundane spaces and under regular conditions.

## 6.2 Personal Relationships and Socialization

When one first becomes vegan, they are filled with rage. I became vegan but I was still focused on the pain. I was focused on "animals are being exploited, industrially produced and used". I have just become vegan, I hadn't yet educated myself much. I was attacking those around me saying "you are a murderer, you are a butcher, animals are killed because of you". I had serious arguments with a lot of people for this reason. Also had arguments with my fellow feminist friends, saying "you are a so-called feminist but you are exploiting female bodies"<sup>34</sup> (Melodi, 25, vegan for 2 years)

As is evident from the quote above from Melodi, rage surfaces as a very common denominator when it comes to recalling the time when one first became vegan. This lifestyle change effects one to reflect on everything they consume on a daily basis, may it be food, clothes or any other products they use. With this initial chaos that sweeps one's known rituals, habits and identity both materially and spiritually, person may feel alone, alienated and nowhere to turn to regarding these feelings and changes. Although this well justified rage may not die down for some, some actively start to educate themselves to gain certain tools to effectively channel it towards activism or just for their own peace of mind.

In addition to the feeling of alienation, this anger may be resulting from the stereotyped image of and 'angry snowflake vegan' on the media, often portrayed as people who

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<sup>34</sup> "İlk vegan olduğunda insan öfke dolu oluyor. Ben vegan oldum ama yine acı odaklıydım. 'Hayvanlar sömürülüyor, endüstride üretiliyor ve kullanılıyor' odaklıydım. Yeni vegandım, kendimi çok geliştirmemişim. Çevremdekilere saldırıyordum 'sen katilsin, canisin, senin yüzünden hayvanlar öldürülüyor' diye. Bu yüzden birçok kişiyle aramda ciddi tartışmalar da oldu. Benim gibi birkaç feminist arkadaşım da 'sen sözde feministsin ama bak dişi bedenini sömürüyorsun' diye tartışmışım"

are crazy and delusional for being worried about something irrelevant (animal rights) while there are worse things going on in the world (human rights). In addition to this image being very damaging for the entire cause of animal rights movement as well as vegan movements, it also proves to cause further alienation for new vegans due to damaging social relations. The damage done could be seen below quote from Melodi:

I had a lot of trouble when I first became vegan. I am not having problems right now, because I can answer all the questions I receive clearly. At first, because I was focused on the pain inflicted upon animals, when I talked to some of my friends and relatives who told me that the animals in the village were happy and they didn't suffer, I could not tell them that the rights of those animals were violated because I myself did not know that their rights were being violated. Yes, we should not use animals but what is the reason of not using them? Because I own and use the animal like a milk automat. At the time, I could not tell them this. That is why now the topic of veganism does not come up with them, and even if it does, they run away, they don't talk with me about it; because at the time I was aggressive to them, told inconsistent and accused them of things. A few of my friends unfollowed me on Instagram, we are friends on Facebook, because I don't post much there, but they unfollowed me on Instagram. Because I used to always post images of slaughterhouses, slaughtered cow heads with the caption 'you are all murderers'<sup>35</sup> (Melodi, 25, vegan for 2 years)

As it is put by Eren, transformation in one's identity not only affects one's social circles, but it also challenges any type of relationship because it strongly demands change in already learned and established meanings around acts of socialization in general, such as going out for eating with friends:

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<sup>35</sup> "İlk vegan olduğumda çok sorun yaşadım. Şu an sorun yaşamıyorum çünkü her sorunun cevabını net bir şekilde verebiliyorum. En başta ben acı odaklı düşündüğüm için, bazı arkadaşlarım ve akrabalarım ile konuştuğumda bana köydeki hayvanların mutlu olduklarını acı çekmediklerini söylediklerinde ben o hayvanların haklarının ihlal edildiğini onlara anlatamadım çünkü haklarının ihlal edildiğini ben de bilmiyordum. Tamam, hayvanlar kullanılmamalı ama neden kullanılmamalı? Çünkü ben hayvanı süt otomatı gibi sahip olup kullanıyorum. O zaman ben onlara anlatamadım bunu. O yüzden şimdi onlarla veganlık konusu açılmıyor, açılrsa da kaçıyorlar, konuşmuyorlar; çünkü zamanında o insanlara saldırgan davrandım, tutarlı olmayan ve suçlayıcı şeyler anlattım. Birkaç arkadaşım beni instagramda takipten çıkardı. Facebook'ta ekliler orada çok paylaşım yapmadığım için, ama Instagram'da çıkardılar. Çünkü hep mezbaha görüntüleri, kesilen inek kafaları paylaşıp 'katilsiniz' yazıyordum."

Becoming vegan affected my personal life, especially my relationships with other people. Socializing can be difficult in situations where you sit down for a bite to eat. The perception/understanding of those around you can make a lot of difference. As with other approaches regarding discrimination, it can act as a filter from time to time, and can be a shortcut in determining who to socialize or establish relationships with.<sup>36</sup> (Eren, 35, vegan for 4.5 years)

Throughout this research, I have come across a myriad of blog posts and Youtube videos normalizing and rationalizing the anger and rage one may feel during the process of transformation, comparing it to stages of loss in some cases. An example would be from the Youtube channel of a vegan activist, *Earthling Ed*, where he states in a video:

(...) but there is one thing that is hard about going vegan; it is coming to terms with the fact that we have been lied to throughout most of our lives; it is coming to terms with the fact that we have been responsible and culpable in the mutilation, torture and murder of billions of animals for no necessary reason. This can feel very overwhelming and the initial reaction a lot of us would feel is anger. (Earthling Ed, 2017)

Considering that any life altering paradigm shift one can go through in their lifetime that will effect the course of their lives through changes in meaning and social relations wrapped around said meanings, this sentiment indeed resonates with most of my informants. Although coming and going at waves throughout this journey, one thing that is often thought to be necessary is to channel the destructive tendency of this rage in productive ways. Some channel their rage through finding like minded people, thus shaping their social life according to their new lifestyle. Regarding this, Sencer stated:

I guess I started eliminating people after I became vegan. This is not in the sense of cutting my ties with non-vegan people; at the end of the day, I wasn't vegan at some point back then. I do not socialize with people who

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<sup>36</sup> “Vegan olmak kişisel hayatımı, özellikle başka insanlarla ilişkilerimden yana etkiledi. Sosyalleşmek, bir yerlerde oturup yeme/içme durumunda zor olabiliyor. Çevrendekilerin bu konudaki algısı/anlayışı çok şeyi fark ettirebiliyor. Yine başka ayrımcılığı dert edinen yaklaşımlarda olduğu gibi, yer yer bir nevi filtre işlevi görüp, kimlerle sosyalleşebileceğini ya da ilişki kurulabileceğini belirlemede bir kısıyol olabiliyor.”

thinks that my rights-based choices that I lie my back on science as the funniest thing in the world. I am mentally very relieved. I realized that we were never really seeing eye to eye about any area of resistance.<sup>37</sup> (Sencer, 26, vegan for 2 years)

In some cases, families may start to ‘come around’ regarding veganism, and even try the lifestyle out themselves. Such anecdotes visualize that even talking about one’s lifestyle towards family and friend with no intention of mobilization, might end up mobilizing them towards veganism, which shows how spontaneous the effectiveness of acts of everyday resistance is in real life. Unsurprisingly, social support plays a part in continuation of this lifestyle, at least provide some morale to individuals, with the feeling of one’s family and close ones are supporting them in this decision (Christopher et al., 2018). Ceren stated that after receiving some discouraging comments from her families when she first went vegetarian and then vegan, even her social media posts started to have some impression on those who are close to her:

My family became okay with vegetarianism over time, but they never heard of veganism from me. However, while we were trying to order something with no animal in it at a fish restaurant, probably after seeing some stuff from my social media posts, my uncle said "we'd like to order sautéed mushrooms but make sure it is vegan". And my uncle is more traditional than my mom and dad. He probably heard the word "vegan" from me, but not directly from my mouth.<sup>38</sup> (Ceren, 31, vegan for 3 years)

Even if one becomes vegan with no particular intention of telling people around them, or become an activist in addition to it, everyday social relations one usually has with family, close friends and loved ones, often leads to disclosing this transformation.

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<sup>37</sup> “Vegan olduktan sonra insan elemeye başladım sanırım. Vegan olmayan insanlarla bağımı kesmek değil bu, bir dönem ben de vegan değildim zaten. Benim bilime sırtımı yasayarak yaptığım hak temelli seçimlerime dünyanın en komik şeyi gibi yaklaşan insanlarla görüşmüyorum. Kafam çok rahatladı. Onlarla hiçbir mücadele alanı hakkında konuşamıyormuşuz ki zaten, görmüş oldum.”

<sup>38</sup> “Vejetaryenliğe ailem zamanla okey oldular, ama veganlığı benden hiç duymadılar. Muhtemelen benim sosyal medya paylaşımlarımdan falan görüp, dayım bile birlikte balıkçıya gittiğimizde ortaya hayvansız bir şeyler söylerken ‘biz mantar sote istiyoruz ama vegan olsun’ dedi. Ve dayım annem ve babamdan daha gelenekseldir. Vegan kelimesini muhtemelen benden duydu ama benim ağzımdan da duymadı.”

Even if not disclosed as can be seen from the above quote, family is often the ones who first pickup these changes, thus where social relations are tested first.

### **6.3 Handling the Stereotype**

Feelings of anger and rage that is often felt in phases, also mentioned in the previous chapter, are widespread phenomenon among new vegans. In addition to the us/them dynamic that is felt by individuals while a part of any movement, in the case of veganism, two main reasons seem to be crucial in understanding where this rage comes from, forming the ‘angry vegan’ stereotype:

#### **6.3.1 “We have been lied to”**

Becoming vegan has deeply and completely affected my personal life. Over time, my view of myself and the world has changed radically. It's one of my best decisions.<sup>39</sup> (Ozan, 25, vegan for 4.5 years)

Although referring to how catastrophic this transformation has been for him, Ozan considers this decision to go vegan as one of the best decisions he has made. After learning about it and resonating with the basics of veganism, realizing how deeply animal exploitation is rooted to our lives may have the effect of “we have been lied to our entire lives” to some. This feeling of losing the control over known world, meanings and values built upon, is one of the reasons why rage becomes a commonality among vegans, especially for new ones. In his work reevaluating the emotions involved in those who are part of social movements, Jasper states “Not only are emotions part of our responses to events, but they also -in the form of deep affective attachments- shape the goals of our actions.” (Jasper, 1998). The anger expressed by some, then may shape the goal of actions, motivating them to mobilize those around them. As discussed above, this may lead to aggressive measures, driving a wedge between loved ones and family.

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<sup>39</sup> “*Vegan olmak kişisel hayatımı derinden ve tamamen etkiledi. Zaman içinde kendime ve dünyaya bakışım radikal bir şekilde değişti. En iyi kararlarımdan birisi.*”

### 6.3.2 “Animals are at the bottom of the priority list”

There is a hierarchy among the different fields of claim of rights in Turkey. I think one is not superior to the other. And we are only a handful of people who are already defending animal rights, so let us just defend them. There are a lot of people defending human rights, if you find that cause more important you can defend it. Do you think I'm not defending it? Am I not defending because I am not shouting regarding it? I still think like this, and I also think, "Is my defense of animal rights preventing you from defending human rights?". Also, all of these issues are so interconnected. The one who harms an animal harms the animal because he cannot harm a human being. In fact, it is so intertwined that it is very difficult to separate one from the other. All these demand for rights and rights are rights. I think animal freedom and human freedom are very intertwined topics.<sup>40 41</sup>  
(Merve, 23, vegan for 3 years)

Another rage inducing issue is mostly pointed towards vegans from people who are engaged with other social movements, or from the general public who are not activists in any form. This sentiment, almost causing a level of resentment towards those around them for not understanding that all claims to rights regarding freedom of living things are essentially one, is summarized perfectly by Merve in above quote. Similarly, when asked about what is the difference between vegan activism and other forms of activism, Eren explained difference in treatment as follows:

Veganism seems like a fake cause to outsiders. It is always at the bottom of the hierarchy for everyone. People are like "dude, look what you're dealing with while children are being raped here". Everybody hates on vegans, they are like a punching bag. Politically, when the problematic

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<sup>40</sup> *Türkiye'de hak alanları arasında bir hiyerarşi var. Bence biri diğerinden üstün değil. Bir de zaten hayvan haklarını savunan bir avuç insanız, biraz durun da savunalım ya. İnsan haklarını savunan bir sürü insan var, onu daha önemli görüyorsan onu sen savunabilirsin. Ben sanki savunmuyorum mu? İlla bağırmıyorum diye savunmuyorum mu? Hala böyle düşünüyorum, bi de üstüne "benim hayvan haklarını savunmam senin insan haklarını savunmanı mı engelliyor" diye düşünüyorum. Bir de bu konuların hepsi o kadar birbirine bağlı ki. Hayvana zarar veren zaten insana zarar veremediği için hayvana zarar veriyor. Aslında o kadar iç içe geçiyor ki, birini diğerinden ayırmak çok zor. Hak davasıysa hak davası. Hayvan özgürlüğüyle insan özgürlüğünün çok birbirine kenetli olduğunu düşünüyorum.*

<sup>41</sup> *"(ilk vegan olduğumda) 'Tamam, geçer' falan diyen insanlar, herkesin sorduğu "ama şunu da mı yemiyorsun, bunu da mı yemiyorsun" diye sorular sormaya başladılar. Kendimi bir anda aktivizmin içinde buldum. Daha önce hiç araştırmadığım şeyleri aslında tak tak cevaplıyor buldum kendimi."*



areas in the country are considered, people think like "have we solved all our problems, is this the only one left?"<sup>42</sup> (Eren, 35, vegan for 4.5 years)

In addition to often discussing the existence of a certain pyramid of hierarchy when it comes to the 'priority of issues to be solved in the society', this idea especially comes to existence when it is compared with other 'more important' causes. As also evident from the quote above, different fields of advocacy does not indicate mutual exclusivity and further, some may be inclined to widen their advocacy practices and thoughts regarding other rights issues after being 'woken up' by one of the rights issues. Regarding this, Nil (59, vegan for 3 years) stated "Becoming vegan helped me with looking at the worlds through a holistic lens, it required me to stand against all discrimination"<sup>43</sup>. Similarly, when asked about his thoughts regarding veganism and other forms of activism in framed in reference to a possibility of interrelation between them, Eren states:

I think there is clearly a link between. It is not possible to separate rights from each other. The link between human slavery and racism also exists between animal slavery and speciesism. Or, when we reach a certain depth about gender-based violence, this again brings the issue to veganism and gender and reproductive practices in relationships with animals.<sup>44</sup> (Eren, 35, vegan for 4.5 years)

Coincidentally, when this strong bond between seemingly different claims to rights go unnoticed by activists active in other fields of rights claiming, who ideally should be more understanding towards animal rights advocates, this creates some kind of a

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<sup>42</sup> "Veganlık dışarıdan bakanlar için çakma bir dava gibi görünüyor. Her zaman, herkes için hiyerarşinin en altında. 'Arkadaş burada çocuklara tecavüz ediliyor, senin derdine bak' durumu var. Gelenin vurduğu gidenin vurduğu, kimseye yaranılamayan bir tarafı var. Politik olarak ülkedeki sorunlu alanlar düşünülünce 'tüm sorunları çözdük bir bu mu kaldı' tavrı var."

<sup>43</sup> "Vegan olmak dünyaya daha bütüncül bakmamı sağladı, ayrımcılıkların tamamının karşısında olmamı gerektirdi."

<sup>44</sup> "Bence çok net alakası var. Hakları birbirinden ayırmak çok mümkün olmuyor. İnsan köleliğiyle ırkçılık arasındaki bağlantı, hayvan köleliğiyle türçülük arasında da var. Ya da cinsiyete dayalı şiddet konusunda belli bir derinliğe ulaşınca bu da yine veganlığa ve hayvanlarla kurulan ilişkilerde cinsiyet ve üreme pratiklerine getiriyor konuyu."

resentment and breaking of spirits. Thus, leading to alienation not only from the general public, but also from fellow rights advocates.

### **6.3.3 Killing the Stereotype: Solidarity and Self Education**

Despite the fact that some of the people I have interviewed and observed online, debate the need to be a part of a collective or an organization regarding veganism, it is definitely not an obligation to be a part of the vegan movement, as long as one lives their life according to certain non-negotiable ‘rules’, per se. If you are vegan, you are part of the movement. Steps you take further than regulating your own life to spread veganism is going further in the spectrum of taking action. Veganism mostly consists of individual acts embodied by a collectivity of people, regardless of their ‘level’ of action-taking.

Although I have gotten in contact with all informants that have assisted me in my fieldwork for this research through loosely organized informal ‘vegan groups’, 11 of those 20 people stated that they are not a part of any social movement organization. One explanation behind this contradiction can be the strong image etched to peoples’ minds regarding the membership based civil society organizations being the only form of organization that technically ‘counts’. Another reason can be the decreasing participation to formal forms of organization and the rise of informal groups of like minded people gathering around a cause and becoming friendly with each other, deeming being a member of any organization as rather irrelevant, as long as one does the necessary work. Although participating in certain events and even playing a part in the organization of some, some might still not consider themselves a member in the traditional sense of the word. However, the lack of participation in the traditional sense does not necessarily mean lack of solidarity and collective action.

Collective action can be important for some as a safe place where one can turn to and ask for advice, without the feeling of alienation which can be the case due to close personal relationships, as explained previously. Consideration of collectives as somewhere to turn to at a personal level is explained by Türkü as “simplifying one’s

life with having somewhere vegans can gather and talk about the common problems they all go through”<sup>45</sup>. Along with the lines of “there is power in numbers” kind of mentality, collective action is also considered to be more prone to affect change at a structural basis. Not particularly referring to formally established association style collectives, collective action of any type is still valued in and shape and form, evident from below quote from Merve:

I think collectives are very important, first to raise awareness o veganism, and then to put the demands requested for animals into action. Especially the professional work done by the platforms that have become associations is more valuable in my eyes. It is also very valuable, for example, for vegan clubs formed in universities to inform people interested in veganism, for example, by organizing forums and by demanding vegan food in the cafeterias.<sup>46 47</sup> (Merve, 23, vegan for 3 years)

One last benefit of collective action for vegans, is providing a space for vegans to better strategize according to the nation’s current agenda. With a group of people from different backgrounds and different levels of participation and action taking, collectives provide a place for them to brainstorm to push the cause further. Hakan explained this point:

In my opinion, the most important contribution of collectives is to advance the development of vegans as a group. There are usually more than one methodology and ideas when engaging with activism, but I find collectives to be crucial to see with what emotions they act, to ensure that activists have that resting space they sometimes need and they can take a breath among themselves, to observe themselves and, above all, to quickly share

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<sup>45</sup> “*Vegan yaşam süren insanların bir araya gelerek, yaşadıkları ortak sorunları konuşmak hayatlarını kolaylaştırıyor.*”

<sup>46</sup> “*Öncelikle veganizm farkındalığı yaratmak için, daha sonra hayvanlar için talep edilen isteklerin eyleme geçirilebilmesi için kolektiflerin çok önemli olduğunu düşünüyorum. Özellikle dernekleşmiş platformların profesyonelce yaptıkları işler benim gözümde daha çok değerli. Üniversitelerde kurulan vegan kulüplerin yemekhanelerinde vegan yemek talep edilmesinden tutun söyleşiler düzenleyerek veganlığa ilgi duyan insanları bilgilendirmesi de çok değerli.*”

<sup>47</sup> “*(ilk vegan olduğumda) ‘Tamam, geçer’ falan diyen insanlar, herkesin sorduğu "ama şunu da mı yemiyorsun, bunu da mı yemiyorsun" diye sorular sormaya başladılar. Kendimi bir anda aktivizmin içinde buldum. Daha önce hiç araştırmadığım şeyleri aslında tak tak cevaphyor buldum kendimi.*”

information. But I also witnessed that these formations sometimes accumulate serious anger and rage in them, as I think they cause ego problems.<sup>48</sup> (Hakan, 29, vegan for 4 years)

The final bit of Hakan's quote, exemplifies and leads us to why some consider collectives to be not as necessary. Being a lifestyle movement, veganism is embodied by those who chooses the ethical stance which then leads them to not consume anything that requires animal exploitation. Interpersonal relations within a formal establishment and a certain level of hierarchy it may bring, may be a discouraging point for forming collectives, as mentioned by Hakan. In addition to this, Haenfler's definition of lifestyle movements interprets individual acts as where "participants subjectively understand their individual actions as having an impact beyond their personal lives, believing in both the power of their individual action and the power of non-coordinated collective action" (Haenfler et al., 2012). In line with this, 12 out of 20 people stated that being a part of a collective or civil society organization is not essential and as Özcan (27, vegan for 3.5 years) also stated, "collective action is important for brainstorming and solidarity, but the will for individual activism is more important".<sup>49</sup> Participating in acts of resistance that takes on daily lives in private, is deemed more important than episodic cycles of protest on public.

For those who do not prefer being a part of collectives, researching and self educating regarding the lifestyle proves to be an important outlet that releases the anger that occasionally comes back. In all interviews, the rage at first was linked to the lack of knowledge regarding the theory of animal rights, lifestyle itself and the tactics on how to talk to people regarding it.

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<sup>48</sup> "Kolektifin bence sağladığı en önemli katkı veganların kendi içlerindeki gelişimlerini ileriye taşımak oluyor. Aktivizm yapılırken genelde birden fazla metodoloji ve fikir oluyor, fakat bunların hangi duygularla hareket ettiğini, aktivistlerin bazen kendi aralarında dinlenme alanına ve nefes almaya ihtiyaç duymalarını, kendilerini gözlemlemelerini ve her şeyden önemlisi hızlı bir şekilde bilgi paylaşımını sağlamak için önemli buluyorum. Fakat belli bir ego krizi yarattığını düşündüğüm için bu oluşumların bazen kendi içlerinde ciddi öfke ve sinir biriktirdiğine de tanık oldum."

<sup>49</sup> "Kolektif olmak yardımlaşmak, fikir alışverişi yapmak önemli ancak bireysel aktivizm isteği daha önemli."

There was also a time when I was an "angry vegan". Actually, I was angry when I watched videos with violence. Because I was watching and watching, I was getting angry then taking my anger out of everyone around me, especially the non-vegans. When I realized this, I stopped watching violent videos. Later I learned that they even call this "secondary PTSD" in psychology. When I stopped watching violence videos, I realized that angry veganism didn't help anyone.<sup>50 51</sup> (Merve, 23, vegan for 3 years)

Although being a pharmacy student, Merve mentioned the psychology of vegans quite often during our interview, referring to certain concepts that she resonates with. She noted when she read about certain phenomena, that explains her experiences as a vegan, helping her deal with those emotions and experiences. In her experience, when she start spending time with the Vegan Piknik group, she learned more about how to handle discussing veganism with non-vegans, even if it is not for the sake of activism. Criticizing culturally accumulated 'knowledge' that we have normalized through media, culture and school, calls for educating oneself while questioning them. Also due to veganism being a relatively new area of research, information pollution and misleading opinions resulting from them also calls for keeping up with the latest research. The consensus among my informants is, to make sure this lifestyle is sustainable and to unlearn the deeply coded animal exploitation in our culture, one should do the proper research. As Eren noted:

I think doing research or being 'exposed' to vegan content is an important part of veganism. It takes serious effort to reverse the many common wrongs that have been learned from birth. This in a sense resembles the extreme effort made by those people who turn into racist/discriminatory monsters after the primary school curriculum in Turkey, through reading a lot and unlearning.<sup>52</sup> (Eren, 35, vegan for 4.5 years)

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<sup>50</sup> "‘Sinirli vegan’ olduğum bi dönem de oldu. Aslında şiddet videoları izlediğim dönem sinirliydim. Çünkü izliyordum izliyordum, sinir doluyordum, bu sefer sinirimi etrafımdaki herkese, özellikle naveganlara çıkarıyordum. Bunu fark edince şiddet videoları izlemeyi bıraktım. Sonra öğrendim psikolojide secondary PTSD diyorlarmış buna hatta. Şiddet videoları izlemeyi bırakınca sinirli veganlığın hiç kimseye yararı olmadığını fark ettim."

<sup>51</sup> "(ilk vegan olduğumda) ‘Tamam, geçer’ falan diyen insanlar, herkesin sorduğu "ama şunu da mı yemiyorsun, bunu da mı yemiyorsun" diye sorular sormaya başladılar. Kendimi bir anda aktivizmin içinde buldum. Daha önce hiç araştırmadığım şeyleri aslında tak tak cevaplıyordum kendimi."

<sup>52</sup> "Araştırma yapmak veya vegan içeriğe 'maruz kalmak' bence veganlığın önemli bir kısmı. Doğuştan beri öğrenilemeyen ve çok yaygın olarak bulunan bir dolu yanlış tersine çevirmek çok ciddi efor istiyor."

As mentioned in the above quote, “exposing oneself to vegan content” takes the form of social media for most nowadays, which prove to effect veganism and vegan activism in multiple different ways.

## 6.4 Tactics and Practices

Self education, as discussed in previous section, may take multiple forms. It could be through forming organizations and learning the ropes from fellow vegans, or it could be through reading personal blog posts, watching Youtube videos with testimonies of vegans all over the world and reading new research regarding the health aspect or the ethical discourse. Whatever one chooses as a source, it can be found online, including the solidarity similar in collectives.

### 6.4.1 “Thank God for Twitter”

When asked about his thoughts on online visibility of animal rights advocacy, Eren exclaimed “Thank God for Twitter”, then continued:

Anything that is being interfered on the agenda in Turkey, goes through Twitter unfortunately. The news and discussion of femicides and attacks on transgender people are spread through there. Therefore, in the case of animals, for example, the news of animal rape, the resistance against coaches in Büyükkada were carried out from there. Of course, the people who go in front of the municipality and protest are very important in such a situation, but I am not sure which one is more effective. In general, I think social media is very effective in terms of mobilizing people.<sup>53</sup> (Eren, 35, vegan for 4.5 years)

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*Bu bir bakıma, Türkiye’de ilköğretim müfredatından geçtikten sonra ırkçı/ayırıcı canavarlara dönüşen insanların düzgün insanlara dönüşebilmesi için çok daha fazla okuması ve öğrendiklerini tersine çevirmek için aşırı çaba sarf etmesi gerekmesine benziyor.”*

<sup>53</sup> “Türkiye gündemiyle ilgili herhangi bir şeye müdahale edilebiliyorsa twitter sayesinde oluyor malesef. Kadın cinayetleri, trans bireylere yapılan saldırıların haberleri de, tartışılması da oradan yürüyor. Dolayısıyla hayvanlara karşı da, mesela hayvan tecavüzü haberleri, Büyükkada’daki fayton direnişi falan oralardan yürütüldü. Tabii ki fiziksel olarak belediyenin önüne gidip eylem yapan kişiler

Online sphere has definitely become important for communities to be built, going one step further than formal organizations. The loose, informal and if wanted, anonymous nature of online spheres deems community building convenient and preferable. Digital platforms such as Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and Twitter have been providing spaces for people to voice their opinions and build an audience, that would ideally be interested in what that person's content. Social media also acts as an important tool when it comes to accessing news and voicing opinions regarding it, becoming more powerful than traditional media in the recent decade (Alejandro, 2010; Carlson, 2017). In line with Eren's example of Twitter, messages and news shared on social media can spread out rapidly and reach a very large number of users in a matter of hours.

While looking for vegan communities online, I experienced the simplicity and straightforwardness of social media sites firsthand. For example, on Instagram, where I got in contact with the Vegan Piknik group, when I wrote “vegan tarifler<sup>54</sup> on the search bar, I immediately reached 17.8 posts using this hashtag. The convenience factor of social media, deems it an ideal tool to educate people on matters and directly engage in discussions on the comments sections. Not only one can learn from these highly digestible and simple visual posts on Instagram, one can also contribute to the community by producing same kind of content to reach like minded people. Although almost all the information provided in these kinds of posts talking about what veganism is and what the lifestyle pertains to, Instagram provides a tool where one can sieve all these information through their personal experiences and personality, which simplifies digesting the information while enforcing the feeling of solidarity, even through a screen. It provides a very necessary portal of “contact” crucial for starting to question, where people can see and witness things they would not have witnessed under normal (or normalized) circumstances. Whether it be slaughterhouse footages

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*de çok önemlidir öyle bir durumda, ama hangisi hangisinden daha etkili emin değilim. Genel olarak harekete geçirme açısından sosyal medyanın çok etkili olduğunu düşünüyorum. “*

<sup>54</sup> While looking up vegan resources online, I tried to avoid using only “vegan” as a keyword, to reach Turkish content and accounts run by Turkish-speaking individuals. Such keywords I have used were “veganistanbul”, “veganbeslenme” and “vegantarifler”, which are also the top recommended hashtags based on the number of people using them.

shared by activist groups exposing in a confrontational manner, or vegan recipe accounts that showcases how possible it is to live a life beyond animal exploitation and still eat and cook nutritious and creative meals, online contents provided by vegans themselves adds to the creation of new meanings and values, thus a new type of culture. While recalling the exact moment leading to her choosing this lifestyle, Merve stated:

I said to myself that I will not buy any milk and eggs when I run out of the ones I already have at home. Then I started researching it thoroughly. I started following an activist account on Twitter that shares vigil protests, where I saw the eyes of a pig there. I started crying. I said "ok", "I'm vegan".<sup>55</sup> (Merve, 23, vegan for 3 years)

#### 6.4.2 Encounter and Visibility

Veganism, in essence, is a result of encountering animal exploitation and taking an ethical step to reduce the part one plays in it. It requires one to face animals, in order to see their exploitation. It requires one to see the animal beyond the meat, and the death it took to bring the animal on one's plate. Facing this is not convenient for humans, but it does not change the fact that *"Behind every meat meal is an absence, the death of the animal whose place the meat takes with the word 'meat'. The truth about this death is absent."* (Adams, 2010).

For Hatice, this encounter with animals should be done as a child, so that as adults, they would be kinder to animals and also would be more inclined to hear out veganism, ideally.

Thanks to Dombi (*her dog*), I became vegan; I became vegan two years after he came. I mean, it started to feel like I was eating him. Everyone loves animals from afar, but when it comes to your house, you realize that he has a whole character. Yesterday, for example, I had a fight with the man in the

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<sup>55</sup> "(ilk vegan olduğumda) 'Tamam, geçer' falan diyen insanlar, herkesin sorduğu 'ama şunu da mı yemiyorsun, bunu da mı yemiyorsun' diye sorular sormaya başladılar. Kendimi bir anda aktivizmin içinde buldum. Daha önce hiç araştırmadığım şeyleri aslında tak tak cevaplıyor buldum kendimi."



corner. He was saying "why are you feeding the cats, my child is scared". I said, "you should first teach your kids to love animals". If you had touched animals in your childhood, if you were not scared of getting bitten, if you did not think negatively, about how a cat can pee in your house... Children are hitting birds with slingshot, how are they going to ever see sheep and cows. They grow up to be like this because they are taught that animals are like the bogeyman. In fact, children should learn that animals are individuals from a young age.<sup>56</sup>

The encounter with animals comes as a reference point even after one transitions into vegan lifestyle. Similarly, Ceren stated “(...) *but very interestingly, after I stopped eating meat, I saw a lamb somewhere and I looked at its face so comfortably. Because I have no benefit to him, I will not be petting it now and slaughtering it afterwards.*”<sup>57</sup> Having a clean conscience after becoming vegan, relieves the guilt resulting from being aware of the contradicting behaviour of not wanting to harm an animal when it is in front of you, but still contributing to its exploitation and ultimately, death.

When one becomes an adult with no such contact with animals, it takes some form of encounter with this reality, according to vegans. Even growing up in close contact with barnyard animals or household pets, the culture deeply conditioning us to differentiate animals from meat, may result in no such awareness. With increasing content online regarding alternative lifestyles such as veganism, visibility increases and that community starts building new meanings after the paradigm shift brought upon by rejecting animal exploitation. In addition to providing an online database for those who have just transitioned into veganism or considering it, different types of online contents

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<sup>56</sup> “*Dombi sayesinde vegan oldum, o geldikten iki sene sonra falan vegan oldum. Sanki onu yiyormuşum gibi gelmeye başladı yani. Uzaktan herkes seviyor ama sonra evine gelince onun farklı bir karakteri olduğunu anlıyorsun. Dün mesela köşedeki adamla kavga ettim. ‘Neden kedi besliyorsunuz, çocuğum korkuyor’ diyor. ‘Siz’ dedim, ‘çocuğunuza hayvan sevgisi aşılalım ilk önce’. Eğer çocukluktan hayvanlara dokunmuş olsaydın, ısırır diye korkmasaydın, evine işer diye kötücül düşünmeseydin... Zaten kuşlara sapanla vuruyor çocuklar, koyun, inek kim nerede görecektir zaten. Çocuklara gördüğü hayvanları öcü gibi gösterdikleri için çocuk öyle büyüyor. Aslında çocuğun hayvanların birey olduğunu öğrenmesi lazım daha küçüklükten.*”

<sup>57</sup> “*... ama çok ilginçtir, et yemeyi bıraktıktan sonra bir yerde kuzu gördüm ve onun yüzüne o kadar rahat baktım ki. Çünkü ondan bir çıkarım yok benim; şimdi sevip sonra onun canını almayacağım.*”

act as trigger points that causes one to question the normalization of animal exploitation. Although the success of accounts and posts on Instagram is tend to be measured by the number of likes and followers in general, numbers can be inconclusive and even misleading when it comes to measuring their effect on one's transition into vegan lifestyle. However, social media's utilization for community building for alternative lifestyles opens up the discussion regarding the importance of visibility.

It is practical that the material that will make people question about veganism and animal rights is largely in the form of audiovisual media, so it can quickly spread digitally. There is usually no one who is openly vegan around people, plus you do not normally know who are doing any vegan-vegetarian questioning anyway, so it is mostly up for people encountering such information online. You can talk to 100 people in a day if you hold an event at Kuğulu Park<sup>58</sup>, but you can reach tens of thousands of people with a tweet you can send in a heartbeat. Of course, as with all forms of activism, this may not lead to actualizing (veganism), but it seems to me that this is not the case with animal rights.<sup>59</sup> (Eren, 35, vegan for 4.5 years)

As Eren stated in the quote above, the contact with people that can take the form of observing or participating in a protest, collecting signature, handing out flyers or holding events to affect change in traditional understanding of social movements, is similarly built in online spaces. Referring back to the shrinking space phenomenon explained in Chapter 2, physical spaces and forms of activism that that takes place in public is effected majorly. Under such circumstances, and also with the shifting understanding of socialization online towards its normalization, online spaces provide

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<sup>58</sup> Kuğulu Park is a public park in Ankara, Çankaya. The park is well known for its namesake, the swans living in the pond inside the park.

<sup>59</sup> “İnsanların veganlık ve hayvan haklarıyla ilgili sorgulama yapmasını sağlayacak materyalin büyük ölçüde görsel ve işitsel medya formunda olması, bu yüzden dijital ortamda hızlıca yayılması pratik bir şey. İnsanın etrafında açıkça vegan olan birileri genelde olmuyor, herhangi bir vegan-vegetaryen sorgulama yapmakta olanların da zaten kim olduğunu bilemiyorsun normalde, dolayısıyla iş büyük oranda insanların böyle bilgilerle karşılaşmasına kalıyor. Kuğulu Park'ta yaptığın etkinlikle bir günde 100 kişiyle konuşabiliyorsan, çat diye attığın bir tweet ile gerçekten on binlerce kişiye ulaşabiliyorsun. Tabii ki her aktivizmde olduğu gibi meselenin gerçeğe dökülmeme durumu olabilir, ama hayvan haklarında çok öyle olmuyor gibi geliyor bana.”

much wider area where one can come in contact with someone or some content that would challenge their viewpoint, leading to mobilization. At the end of the day, triggers for this shift can vary, as also expressed by Hatice:

Veganism can start with a vegan cheese you try, saying "oh, I wonder how it tastes", it can start with a book, it can start with something you watch, it can start with an animal on the street. You can be vegan without the great readings and philosophical background behind it. At the end of the day, there are many philosophers who are not vegan, and they should logically be vegan if you think from that point of view. It depends on the conversation between your mind and your conscience. That's why every encounter is very important.<sup>60</sup>

Encountered videos, posts or texts online can be in a number of different forms, it can be produced with educative intentions, where someone is talking about the health aspect of the lifestyle; it can be more in a casual form where someone is talking about the lifestyle, showing what they consume and not consume in line with their ethical stance; it can be showing what they eat in a day, or cooking vegan foods and developing recipes and sharing them. As Hatice also said, it can be as simple as trying out a vegan cheese just to see what the hype is about. These various forms aim to contribute to this alternative lifestyle, that has been argued throughout this research that questions deeply rooted meanings and values regarding food and our socialization around this topic. The mundaneness of these acts, when you boil it down to their essence, makes navigating life as a vegan individual who is doing what everyone else is doing, such as sharing a photo of what they are eating, even when there is no intention of mobilizing people, deems them acts of everyday resistance.

#### **6.4.3 “I don’t think I am an activist”**

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<sup>60</sup> “Veganlık ‘aa nasılmış acaba’ diye denediğin bir vegan peynirle de başlayabilir, bir kitapla da başlayabilir, seyrettiğin bir şeyle başlayabilir, sokaktaki hayvanla başlayabilir. Arkasında çok büyük okumalar ve felsefi birikim olmadan da vegan olabilirsin. Çünkü çok felsefeci var vegan beslenmeyen, e oradan bakınca onların da mantıken vegan olması lazım. Bu senin içinde senin beyninle vicdanın arasındaki konuşmana bağlı. O yüzden her kontakt çok önemli.”

Out of the 20 people who participated in this research, 15 considered themselves to be activists, 2 were partially engaging with activism, 3 of them stated they do not consider themselves to be activists. As one of the 3 people stated that they do not consider themselves to be activists, when asked about what her definition of activism was, Ceren stated “to have a great deal of motivation and to be idealistic”. Not having any active affiliation to any collective, other than being a part of the Ankara Vegan Platformu WhatsApp group, she did not think of her personal choices stemming from veganism as activism. During our interview, after I explained to her how my personal definition of activism includes the everyday acts of resistance that she mentioned casually throughout our interview, and how I position it in reference to the state of public claim of rights in Turkey, she further illustrated how she positions her level of activism according to others’ acts of activism:

I guess it's about how you define activism. When you say it like that, I find it reasonable. But I guess it's because I've always thought of activism as that image of having your fist in the air. For example, I think about the video series made by people on the Ankara Vegan Platform to spread veganism, coming face to face with people, probably doing the same things that I do and then doing such things on top of it...<sup>61</sup> (Ceren, 31, vegan for 3 years)

However, after a long winded explanation of the ways in which she tries to reduce her carbon footprint and make her own detergent to make sure they are cruelty free, she said “I consider all these and research while buying other products as well, this is making an effort too”<sup>62</sup>. Making an effort and choosing to engage in certain practices, even going out of one’s way in order to do so, can be theorized as a certain level of resisting to what is convenient, out of an ethical decision made. Referring back to the definition of everyday resistance laid out previously, it is “*a practice; it is historically*

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<sup>61</sup> “O aktivizmi nasıl tanımladığınla alakalı sanırım. Sen böyle söyleyince çok aklıma yatıyor. Ama hep aktivizmi yumruk havada dolaşmak olarak düşündüğüm için sanırım. Mesela aklıma gelen Ankara Vegan Platformu’ndaki insanların veganlığı yaymak için yaptıkları video serileri, insanlarla yüzyüze gelmeleri, benim yaptıklarımın aynılarını muhtemelen yapıp bir de üstüne böyle şeyler yapmaları...”

<sup>62</sup> “(...) başka ürünleri alırken bunları düşünüp araştırıyorum, bu da bir efor.”

*entangled with (everyday) power; it needs to be understood as intersectional with the powers that it engages with; and it is heterogeneous and contingent due to changing contexts and situations”* (Johansson and Vinthagen, 2014). With the changing space for freedom of publicly engaging with democratic processes in current climate in Turkey, practices that might have been considered as mundane, can now be read as acts of resistance. As Eren also mentioned in his definition of vegan activism in below quote, ‘being the change you want to see the world’ is still affecting change, arguably in a more sustainable way:

I cannot define myself as a vegan activist, as the people I describe as vegan activists really make an active effort. Depending on your point of view, I don't go much beyond ‘being the change you want to see in the world’. I generally answer when asked (*about veganism*) and I participate in some of the vegan events organized in Ankara.<sup>63</sup> (Eren, 35, vegan for 4.5 years)

Embodying the change in all spheres of one’s life, and explaining practices stemming from their ethical stance is considered by some vegans as activism, which can be observed in Cansel's answer when asked what her definition of vegan activism is:

(vegan activism is) All the activities that a person does to explain veganism to other people. It can be cooking, opening booths or showing a documentary or having interviews with other known vegan activists. I think Öykü Büyükdere<sup>64</sup> put it the best: the more there are vegan individuals, the more varied vegan activism there is.<sup>65</sup> (Cansel, 32, vegan for 2.5 years)

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<sup>63</sup> “*Vegan aktivist olarak tanımladığım kişiler gerçekten çok aktif bir çaba sarf ettiği için kendimi vegan aktivist olarak tanımlayamıyorum. Nereden baktığına bağlı olarak, ‘görmeyi istediğin değişikliğin kendisi olma’nın çok ötesine geçmiyorum. Genelde sorulduğunda yanıtlıyorum ve Ankara’da düzenlenen bir takım vegan etkinliklere katılımcı olarak gidiyorum”*

<sup>64</sup> A psychologist and a vegan spokesperson, who also talks about psychology and veganism publicly on her YouTube channel.

<sup>65</sup> “(Vegan aktivizm) *Kişinin veganlığı insanlara anlatmak için yaptığı tüm etkinliklerdir. Yemek yapmak da olabilir, stant açmak da, belgesel göstermek ya da tanınan vegan aktivistlerle söyleşi yapmak da. Sanırım Öykü Büyükdere söylemişti, ‘ne kadar vegan varsa o kadar çeşitli vegan aktivizm vardır’ ”*

Cansel's consideration of cooking as an act of resistance, provides us an example into contemporary practices of veganism often employed.

#### 6.4.4 Reconstructing the Meaning of Food

Theoretical framework behind the meaning of food, provided in Chapter 5, has often been resurfaced while talking with my informants for this research. One reason behind this topic being referred to often, can be the rather mainstream misconception “vegans cannot find anything to eat”. In a video where she showcased alternative vegan breakfast foods for the Vegan Piknik Youtube channel (Vegan Piknik, 2020), Melodi states:

With this video, we will also refute the argument "vegans go hungry during breakfasts". We often come across at the booths we set up or on every platform where we tell people about veganism, “What will we eat for breakfast? But there is no breakfast without cheese”<sup>66</sup> (Melodi, 25, vegan for 2 years)

In the video, Melodi shares the vegetables she prefers, vegan products that is available for purchase from supermarkets, as well as homemade non-dairy milk and cheese recipes, which she refers to other Youtube videos for detailed recipes. Recipe sharing and cooking is one of the most produced and most looked for contents online, also indicated from 17.8 thousand posts that comes up on Instagram with the hashtag “vegantarifler”. Considering the meaning constructed around certain categories of food discussed previously in Chapter 5, it is rather expected that this becomes one of the most referred issue in mainstream media, as well as the top most asked questions to vegans I have asked regarding it.

The value given to food itself and eating as a social event, veganism demands reconstruction of what is being cooked in a household, where one may be sharing with

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<sup>66</sup> “Bu videoyla, ‘veganlar kahvaltıda aç kalıyor’ argümanını da çürütmüş olacağız. Standlarda veya insanlara veganlık anlattığımız her platformda çok sık karşılaşıyoruz ‘kahvaltıda ne yiyeceğiz? Ama peynir olmadan kahvaltı olmaz’ sorularıyla.”

family, a spouse or a roommate. When first this decision is made, a big portion of known food categories are left out and what to do with the rest of the categories may be a process to learn. With vegan food becoming more widespread and with the rise of audiovisual platforms like Youtube and Instagram, this deeply valued part of the culture, which is often taken for granted, has been gaining a whole new sub-category with online content detailing how to sustain it.

Hatice explains how she came to open a vegan cafe and how this helps people to firsthand experience it is indeed possible to eat good and eat healthy as a vegan:

One year after becoming vegan, I felt like opening this. I opened right after Gezi. I used to have vegan dinner evenings before, so I opened it completely so that there is a gathering place, selling was not really the goal. I actually thought to impress people through eating, gathering and drinking, saying "oh, such different dishes". But over time, of course, the customer base is mixed, some eat vegan things but don't want to be vegan. But there being a venue is good for activism, I can also do events. We had free meals on Tuesday evenings, I mean I always had a mission. I was doing activism on the streets when I first opened the place, now I leave it to others. I was doing activism before opening this place; I was cooking and serving vegan food three days a week at the hotel down the street.<sup>67</sup>

Cooking and sharing vegan food is one of the most common practices used for vegan activism, that we can also interpret as a mundane act of resistance. This practice in addition to normalizing veganism as something that is actually possible, also provides a certain encounter that is very tangible and necessary. During interviews, the feeling of being lost when first transitioned into this lifestyle, or although ethically agreeing with the points raised in veganism, putting of this leap for some time, is a very common story. Vegan cafes, vegan products in supermarket, recipes available online, are all

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<sup>67</sup> "Vegan olduktan 1 yıl sonra yer açma isteği geldi. Gezi'den hemen sonra burayı açtım. Daha öncesinde vegan yemek akşamları yapıyordum. Tamamen toplanma yeri olsun diye açtım, satma amacım çok yoktu. İnsanları yemekle etkileyip, toplaşıp, birileri yesin içsin "aa çok değişik yemeklermiş" diye etkilensin diye düşünmüştüm. Ama zamanla tabii, müşteri kitlesi karışık, kimisi vegan şeyler yiyor içiyor ama vegan olmak istemiyor. Ama bir mekan olması aktivizm için de iyi, etkinlikler yapıyorum. Salı akşamları ücretsiz yemek yaptık mesela, bir misyonum vardı hep yani. İlk açtığımda sokakta aktivizm yapıyordum, şimdi başkalarına bırakıyorum. Burayı açmadan önce de yemekle aktivizm yapıyordum; haftada üç gün vegan yemek yapıp sunuyordum aşağıdaki otelde."

very crucial for people to take the plunge but also to sustain it afterwards. The urban bias tendency that becomes visible here will also be referred for further research in Chapter 7.

A mixture of everyday food sharing as activism and traditional street events can be exemplified by Ankara Vegan Platformu's soup events and Vegan Piknik meetings. The former event was mentioned by Eren while discussing what are the most effective forms of activism for veganism. He framed this event as a very effective way of forming encounters, both by providing the tangible product for non-vegans to consume, and also talk to them about veganism while they are enjoying it, experiencing firsthand that vegans do actually eat.

The latter, Vegan Piknik events, also provides both encounter with vegan individuals, as well as the vegan food they prepared. In their picnic events they hold every week in a central park in İstanbul, participants often prepare vegan dishes themselves or buy from stores. When I wanted to participate, I got in contact with the group via Instagram, where they share the dishes they are preparing the night before the event, and also during the event. This event is where participants discuss different topics regarding the vegan lifestyle, and also provide a window for non-vegans to peek behind. Although being open to whoever wants to stop by, they encourage non-vegan participation especially, showing the mobilization intention of the event through encounter and education; event flyers always have the slogan "stop by if you are vegan, if you are not vegan, make sure you stop by"<sup>68</sup>.

## **6.5 The Issue with Consistency: Vegans of the Future or Free-riders?**

Melodi, who is one of the active members of Vegan Piknik group, is a vehement supporter of providing proper information to as much people as possible regarding

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<sup>68</sup> "Vegansan gel, vegan değilsen kesin gel."



veganism. To this end, Melodi and those who have time, often sets up booths in central squares in İstanbul where they inform people about veganism, called “Vegan Stant”. She describes the work they do with Vegan Stant as such:

We hold up signs saying "I am vegan, you can ask me questions", people see that and come. They approach on their own, and this is the biggest advantage because you don't force people to communicate. That's why you can keep a certain level in between, they can't "troll" you too much. When "trolls" pass by, they say "let's go and eat lamb" and go their own way. Since people wondered about this topic at some point, that is why they approach you, they want to get some information from you. You don't send people off saying "meat is murder". You are telling people the basics of veganism. You are not describing how wrong it is to consume this animal or this animal product in particular. That is why people who come do not turn to flexitarian<sup>69</sup> diets such as "let me quit milk first, then I'll quit eggs".<sup>70</sup> (Melodi, 25, vegan for 2 years)

Coming from an abolitionist vegan school of thought, Melodi's approach to vegan activism is clear about one thing, and it is coming from Gary Francione himself, (which we have referred in the Chapter 3):

When “animal advocates” say that we cannot expect the world to go vegan overnight and, therefore, vegans must promote ‘baby steps’, we must always be clear: *veganism is the moral baseline; veganism is required*. If someone cares about animals but is not willing to go vegan immediately, *they* can choose whatever interim steps they want to choose. But animal rights advocates should never be in a position of advocating for or approving those interim steps.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Flexitarian diet is the casual vegetarianism and veganism that mainly focuses on plant consumption and casually consume animal products and meat.

<sup>70</sup> “Bizim elimizde "veganum soru sorabilirsin" dōvizi oluyor, insanlar görüp geliyorlar. Kendileri geliyorlar ve bu en büyük avantaj çünkü insanları iletişime zorlamıyorsun. O yüzden aradaki seviyeyi koruyabiliyorsun, karşıdaki sana çok fazla trollük yapamıyor. Trollük yapan yanından geçerken ‘off gideyim de kuzu yiyeyim’ deyip geçip gidiyor zaten. İnsanlar bir noktada bu konuyu merak etmiş olduklarından zaten geliyorlar, senden bilgi almak istiyorlar. Sen insanlara ‘et vahşettir’ deyip göndermiyorsun. Sen insanlara veganlığın temelini anlatıyorsun. Tek bir hayvanın ya da hayvansal ürünün yanlışlığını anlatmıyorsun. O yüzden gelen insanlar ‘önce sütü bırakayım, sonra yumurtayı bırakırım’ gibi azaltmacılığa yönelmiyorlar çok.”

<sup>71</sup> Authors own emphasis.

Above quote from Gary Francione's handbook for vegan individuals called *Advocate for Animals*, includes theoretical reflections on abolitionism accompanied by very practical tactics for activist. In this book, he also enlists advocating over food as one of the most effective forms of activism (Francione, 2017). He justifies the attitude towards mobilizing people through highlighting veganism as the moral baseline and the first thing someone who is sympathetic to the cause of animal rights activism should do, by framing this as an imperative to animal rights movement. By stating that "veganism is a justice issue", he then continues, "If ours is a movement for justice for nonhuman animals, we can never be reluctant to condemn injustice" (ibid.).

Although this line of thinking theoretically fits the ideal definition of vegan activism for abolitionist perspective, which activists of Vegan Stant also employs, I have come across in my fieldwork that its practicality is debated among vegan individuals.

### **6.5.1 The Consistency Debate**

Prior to the rise of veganism as a lifestyle, empirical research on vegetarian diet have discussed on the ethical aspect and embodied resistance that vegetarianism includes (Kwan & Roth, 2011). With increasing number in those who follow vegetarian diet, some patterns have become more visible and shaped the academic research on the movement accordingly. Veganism then becoming a topic of research and discussion, and both movements largely considered to be taking place under the umbrella of "animal rights advocacy", inevitably lead to a critical retrospective gaze being turned towards vegetarianism, and questioning its ethical consistency.

In becoming vegetarian, non-moral motives such as religion or health reasons, as well as moral motives in the line of "doing the right thing, avoiding the wrong thing" or the utilitarian pain/pleasure discussion previously touched upon, have been considered as two main patterns (Kooi, 2010). Accordingly, those who are following vegetarian diets out of non-animal rights related reasons, which can be exemplified with religious prescriptions and health concerns, do so with no reference to animals in a moral sense.

In these cases, the decision does not come from an ethical standpoint, nor it constitutes any quality of resistance in itself. Furthermore, the decision is not even a choice; it is either a rule set by a higher being, may it be a deity or a medical doctor. Matter of fact, it constitutes the opposite of resistance, conforming to a rule set out by a power holder. The reason for acting upon abstaining from eating meat for these cases, then, are only for the benefit of the person doing it.

In the academic discussions regarding ethical vegetarianism, Merle van der Kooi (2010) brings in the “consistency” concept as a way to discuss whether is it possible to be morally moved when becoming a vegetarian and remain as a vegetarian, without moving onto a vegan lifestyle. In a quote from an early research on vegetarian diet, it is stated that:

People who become motivated by ethical issues are more likely than others to become vegans, those who abandon the consumption of all animal products and by-products. In fact, the ethical orientations of most vegetarian movement leaders—which are usually related to concerns about animal suffering and the deleterious effects of meat production on the environment—have led the vast majority to follow a vegan lifestyle (Maurer, 2002)

Similarly, Kooi argues that among other points, for any decision and following acts to be consistent, there needs to be coherence: “fit between rules or judgments”. She unpacks it as such:

If judgments or beliefs differ, there must be a relevant difference between them; judgments must hang together. If there is no relevant difference between certain judgments but they differ anyway, then they are incoherent. An example of incoherence is the person who does not eat meat that comes from black and white cows but who still eats meat from red and white cows, only because of the difference in color of the coat. If it does not have any influence on the taste, price, preparation method, etc. of the meat, then color is not a relevant difference, and the judgments are thus incoherent. So the difference in judgments has in some sense to be “reasonable”; others must be able to understand why the different judgments are juxtaposed (p. 297)

Applying this argument of coherence to ethical vegetarianism, reveals that if one is against the pain and suffering brought upon animals by humans, is it enough to stop at the thought of killing animals for the sake of their flesh? In most of the animal advocacy websites, top sections often includes resources linking to the cruelty of dairy, egg production and industrial fishing (Newkey-Burden, 2017; Lorea, 2018; Animal Equality, 2020). If one becomes vegetarian because they find it morally wrong to consume animal flesh and because they believe that animals have intrinsic value, not because of what they can provide for humans but because they solely exist, then it is only reasonable for them to think that supporting an industry that causes them lifelong enslavement, pain and exploitation is also morally wrong. So, are vegetarians “inconsistent” if they are not fully vegan? As discussed above, abolitionist vegans would think that they are in theory, although when asked, those I have met were careful not to say so in a strict manner. On a similar note with Kooi’s argument, if one is vegetarian out of the uneasy thought that unnecessary animal death and the lifelong suffering leading to it is wrong, “it is not possible to live according to coherent rules if one does not choose a vegan lifestyle” (p. 300). This sentiment is prevalent among vegans and not only in regard for vegetarians; I have heard the “everybody has the potential to make the switch, we just plant the seeds” expression multiple times from different people during our talks. As Melodi put it regarding her sister and dad going vegan:

Some non-vegan people also want to support us, for example my sister wanted to come to the booth and hand out brochures. As I was just starting out, I didn't know the principles. I thought "she's gonna be doing something good, of course she can come". Then the people in the booth said "It's not ethical for her to hand out flyers about veganism and not be vegan". I felt a little sad for my sister, but then (*people on the booth*) explained to her thoroughly. They did what I had been trying to do for months (*make her sister to go vegan*) in less than a month, she went vegan. I also explained my father (*veganism*) a lot, we all watched the "Earthlings" documentary together and cried, all those violent images. But although my father watched it, the next day he went and ate kebab, ate his cheese. Then I

started taking him to Picnics, he became vegan all by himself.<sup>72</sup> (Melodi, 25, vegan for 2 years)

So, in line with the “planting the seed” sentiment, if one can turn from non-vegan to vegan after mulling in over for some time, would it be inconsistent to cut some slack to flexitarians and vegetarians, and consider them as allies that are more closer to the vegan cause than non-vegans?

### 6.5.2 Vegans of the Future or Free-riders?

Provided as a prelude in Chapter 4, free-riders are considered to be a conundrum of social movement participation (Olson, 1965; Haenfler et al, 2012). When identifying with a lifestyle movements such as veganism, free-riders become an especially personal problem, for they provide “this is who I am” without “this is what I do” (Wrenn, 2018). With the interest in veganism increasing and especially vegan diet becoming a ‘trend’ most of the Western world, (Vegan Society, n.d.) free-rider problem correspondingly increased as well. Although not contributing to the mobilization, free-riders provide an illusion of support, which can be in different forms. However, as also discussed in this chapter, even the illusion of can be considered as visibility for the cause.

When it comes to transitioning into this lifestyle, throughout this research, it was argued that multiple triggers can effect one to go vegan, while the same triggers does not cause same ethical questioning for others. Similarly, not everyone’s journey to veganism is the same; some take their time, some go from non-vegan to vegan overnight. 9 of the 20 informants that took the survey for the purposes of this research, stated that they first went vegetarian and it was a process to fully become vegan. I

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<sup>72</sup> “Bazı vegan olmayan kişiler bize destek de olmak istiyorlar, mesela kardeşim standa gelip broşür dağıtmak istiyordu. Ben de daha yeni yeni başladığım için ilkeleri bilmiyordum tam. ‘İyi bir şey yapacak, yapsın tabii’ kafasındayım. Sonra dediler ki, ‘vegan olmadan kardeşinin broşür dağıtması etik değil’. İçten içe biraz üzüldüm kardeşim için ama sonra (stanttaki veganlar) ona uzun uzun anlattılar. Benim aylardır yapmaya çalıştığımı bir ayda yaptılar, vegan oldu. Daha sonra babama uzun uzun anlattım, hepimiz Earthlings belgeselini ağlaya ağlaya izledik, o şiddet görsellerini. Ama babam onu izledi, ertesi gün gitti iskenderini peynirini yemeye başladı. Sonra babamı Piknik'lere götürmeye başladım, kendi kendine vegan oldu.”

think that while categorizing this not so-small group of people who show signs and take some level of action towards eliminating meat and animal products from their lives, possibility of them becoming vegan one day should be considered

When asked about his process of becoming vegan, Eren said that before going vegan, he has been vegetarian for two years. Regarding one of his first encounters with vegan individuals, a story stands out for him the most:

I met a vegan, and when he said he was vegan, I said "oh, I'm a vegetarian". He did something like "huh" to me, I said "what the hell?", he said "so you are fickle". Yes, I agree, veganism is more consistent in my opinion, but still, approaching how a vegetarian you just met like this is cruel, I think. People like this are the main reason why veganism is a delayed process for me. It made me think, "Damn, am I gonna be like them when I go vegan?" Even now, according to abolitionists, I'm a fickle vegan. They are right, that is the ideal of it, but the attitude they have towards those who even slightly deviate from this ideal, has been a reason why veganism was delayed for me. "Oh, this label has this ingredient in its glue", "vegans shouldn't drink wine" and stuff. Yes, they are right in theory, but in practice life does not work like that.<sup>73</sup> (Eren, 35, vegan for 4.5 years)

As is visible, while encountering with some advocates, can immediately mobilize someone or the opposite can be the case as well. If motivating participation is the main goal for a social movement, the anecdote Eren provided had the opposite effect on him, setting back his process of going vegan from vegetarian.

Another, similar sentiment, was also mentioned in the interview with Merve. Being ideologically close to abolitionist veganism at some point, she stated that this changed

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<sup>73</sup> *Bir veganla tanışmıştım, vegan olduğumu söylediğinde 'aa ben de vejetaryenim' dedim. Bana böyle 'huh' yaptı, 'ne oluyor ya' dedim, 'kaypaksın o zaman' dedi. Evet katılıyorum, bence de veganlık daha tutarlı ama yine de henüz tanıştığım vejetaryen birine böyle girişmek de ne bileyim, acımasız. Benim için veganlığın gecikmiş bir süreç olmasının önemli sebepleri bu gibi insanlar. 'Yaa ben de mi vegan olunca böyle olacağım' diye düşünüyordum. Şimdi bile aslında abolisyonistlere göre kaypak bi veganım. Haklılar kesinlikle, ideali o ama o idealinden en ufak feragat eden kişiye tutundukları tavır benim için geciktirici oldu. 'Aaa onun etiketinin yapıştırıcısında şu varmış', 'vegan şarap içmezmiş' falan. Evet, teoride haklılar ama pratikte hayat çok öyle bir şey değil."*

after she read how abolitionists criticized reductionism, which is literally reducing meat and animal products:

In theory, of course, I find abolitionism right; if only everyone could cut animal products at once. But when we say this, we can target a very small part of the society. In fact, as the ones who cut off all at once, we are such a small segment of the society. In that article, they criticized carnism and reductionism, which seemed wrong to me. I am already explaining to people saying "cut all animal products altogether", but when someone says "I haven't eaten any meat today," I also think that it is necessary to applaud it, I think at least that is something. I think you should say "you did very well, bravo" without saying "you did very well, but..." and encourage them to do research. That's why I'm not an abolitionist. It's nice and logical in theory; it is already what we're practicing, but I think it can be inadequate while conveying it to people and intimidates people.<sup>74</sup> (Merve, 23, vegan for 3 years)

Merve's frustration seems valid, when we consider Eren's story, ending up delaying his full transition to the vegan lifestyle. Putting the lifestyle up on a pedestal may prove to be something so idealistic and so radical, that 'regular folks' may consider it unrealistic and never even come close to considering it. Although it is wrong to generalize activists on the field, it is still necessary to discuss the standard that are being set to those 'regular folks', if that is who we are targeting to mobilize. Keeping in mind the ethical rejection of animal exploitation that provides a strong basis on sustaining this lifestyle, for those who are struggling to make this total and absolute change in their lives, best approach may be to encourage and provide the necessary tools for full transition. Behavioral changes that take effort and shifting the meaning around a multitude of social processes, as discussed throughout this research, like

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<sup>74</sup> " Ben teoride tabii ki abolisyonistliđi dođru buluyorum, tabii ki keşke herkes bir anda kesebilse hayvan ürünlerini. Ama bunu dediđimizde toplumun çok küçük bir yerini hedef alabiliyoruz. Aslında toplumun o kadar küçük bi kesimiyiz ki bir anda kesenler olarak. O yazıda karnizmi ve azaltmacılıđı eleştiriyordu, o yazı bana yanlış geldi. İnsanlara ben 'toptan kesin' diye anlatıyorum zaten ama, ben birisi 'bugün et yemedim' dediđinde bunu alkışlamak gerektiđini de düşünüyorum, bu da bir şeydir diye düşünüyorum. 'Çok iyi yapmışsın ama...' demeden 'çok iyi yapmışsın, helal' deyip araştırma yapmaya teşvik etmek gerektiđini düşünüyorum. Bu yüzden abolisyonist deđilim. Teoride çok güzel ve mantıklı, teoride zaten yaptığımız şey abolisyonizm, ama insanlara ulaştırmada yetersiz kalıp insanların gözünü korkutabileceđini düşünüyorum."

going vegetarian, might be small, inadequate and “fickle” in the eyes of a vegan activist of 10+ years, but it may be just the start for them.



## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to read through forms of resistance that are embodied in social processes, which could be framed in relation to different fields in social studies that discuss power. What resistance means changes depending on a variety of factors, structural and cultural. Throughout this thesis, changes in Turkish context of civil society were framed in a way that reveals the quality of resistance in many seemingly mundane acts, which depending on the context, can be framed as acts of everyday resistance. In the case of this specific research, the literature on veganism and the Turkish vegan community were examined to reveal lived experiences of resistance that take place, frequently in daily life. By doing so, patterns of experienced everyday resistance were traced through points of tension that start to run higher when mundane resistance and lifestyle, although strongly dependent on structural factors, clash with power/domination. This tension, evidently effects the individual, revealing everyday acts of resistance, to sustain their vegan lifestyle and carve a small community of likeminded people.

To trace such patterns where power and resistance encounter a further operationalized version of James C. Scott's (1985) concept "everyday resistance" was utilized in this thesis. Johansson and Vinthagen's (2014) research suggest a theoretical and definitional framework for analysis. According to this analysis, "everyday resistance" is defined as *"a practice; historically entangled with (everyday) power; that needs to be understood as intersectional with the powers that it engages with; and is heterogeneous and contingent due to changing contexts and situations"* (Johansson

and Vinthagen, 2014). In line with this emphasis on reading through the changing contexts that enable us to see such acts of resistance, this thesis focused on vegan individuals in Turkey, at this particular point in time, as a means of reading resistance through embodied and routinely reproduced vegan lifestyles.

Conducting an analysis on a form of lifestyle, which refers to one's identity and the potential to be an harbinger of social and structural change inarguably calls for consideration of different social, cultural, political and economic processes and patterns. This research can find a place in the sociological contextualization of vegan lifestyles in Turkey. The author settles the theoretical and conceptual framework broadly in the academic body of literature in the fields of social movements and more specifically lifestyle movements and (everyday) resistance studies. Moreover, existing studies on vegan identity in the Turkish context have examined the issue of vegan lifestyle through outlining a general perspective, often pertinent to vegans' online presence (Erben & Balaban-Sali, 2016; Yegen & Aydın, 2018). These studies tend to overlook the everyday quality of resistance that is imperative for the structural social change that the movement aims to accomplish. Veganism, although becoming increasingly widespread in popular culture and mainstream media, thus affecting the public opinion, is still an issue debated at large. As discussed in Chapter 3, *Vegan Society*, which is widely considered to be the first organization with “vegan” in its official name, was formed in the United Kingdom in 1944; where in Turkey, the first formal organization with the name “vegan” in it, *Vegan Derneği Türkiye*, was formed in 2012. Vegan studies have been holding a place in the international literature for several decades, but in Turkey this is still a highly understudied subject. Thus, this research opens a window into vegan studies and lives of vegan individuals in Turkey. However, the current space for activism provides a peculiar position to contextualize vegan lifestyle as a social movement, in reference to the “shrinking space” phenomenon developed by the European Parliament as a conceptual tool to refer worsening conditions under which social activism is being practiced in certain countries including Turkey, explained in detail in Chapter 2.

For the purposes of this research, first, social media sites and websites that are archived for beginner vegans use, were researched to see what individuals themselves problematize in the community. To this end, vegan cafes were visited and the owner of a vegan café in Istanbul was interviewed. Twenty vegan individuals were reached out through social media sites and applications, which yielded in open-ended questionnaires filled out by twenty individuals. Later, four of those individuals were further interviewed in-depth. The findings were analyzed and discussed in the thesis in detail. Studying everyday resistance as part of a social anthropology research revealed how fruitful qualitative data and narratives are. Due to the difficulty of locating seemingly mundane acts of resistance, which often occur with no conscious realization from the individual while acting on it, analysis of narratives provided to be highly effective and perhaps the only way to actually delve into the motives behind acting in a certain way. Veganism, being a lifestyle, further called for dissection of choices one makes on a daily basis, which would be difficult to formulate in a quantitative research, perhaps leading to the erasure of the implication everyday acts have. For this reason, discussing everyday acts of resistance taking place in a lifestyle movement revealed a unique set of data which provided a unique set of results.

The analysis for this research revealed certain patterns that can be observed in vegan individuals' everyday practices in the face of structural power that they encounter. The most immediate resistance referred takes place in the household, often in closest personal relationships with family and loved ones. Those who ask the first questions are often those who are close enough to pay attention to changes in everyday behavior and choices that one starts making after becoming vegan. In reference to the emotional state that some experience after this transformation, it was revealed through interviews that making inner peace with the choices almost everybody makes, that a vegan would consider to be unethical, takes some time, self-education and resistance. During this process, online spaces provide a database and a community for those who look for knowledge and solidarity, which both have been referred often in the interviews as crucial. Practices of everyday resistance at this point, take the shape of knowledge production through recipe development, or sharing vegan products in supermarkets. It

was also observed, again, that seemingly mundane acts of sharing information regarding consuming food, constitute solidarity in this sense.

Due to the understudied state of veganism in Turkey, these interviews revealed the need to further such anthropological studies on this topic. When discussing veganism, big issues requiring in-depth contextualization, such as environmentalism, animal rights, women's rights and LGBTQIA+ rights often come up in close relation to the road that leads one to veganism. These topics having their own area of studies, are too heavy to carry in a single thesis. Although especially environmentalist movements having close ties with animal rights movements are often considered in line with veganism. All these movements stand on their own in social movement studies and have their own histories in the context of Turkey. Due to the immediate link between avoiding animal exploitation and protecting animals' right to exist naturally in their habitats, interviews revealed this link the most, which effected the structural outline of the thesis.

In relation with the multifaceted nature of the topic at hand, these points of congestion are proposed for further research on the issue. One point of such debate that often gains national attention is the nutritional debate behind meat and animal product consumption versus vegan or vegetarian diet. Non-vegan diets and meat consumption are rather well-researched as important factors in increasing the risk of cancer (Bradbury, et al., 2020) and often find place in the mainstream media as a debate between medical professionals (Aktan, 2019a; Aktan, 2019b). According to Dr. Suat Erus, who is a vegan Turkish medical professional, meat, egg and dairy are framed in media as "necessary" for a well-rounded nutritional diet, adding to the deep cultural codification of this category of foods (Dr. Suat Erus - VSP, 2019). With research findings addressing at dangers of meat and animal product consumption, veganism and vegetarianism are then naturally framed as a solution to this health crisis. What happens then, is ironically, a similar treatment meat and dairy have received from the media; headlines sensationalizing extreme cases of vegan diets as what every vegan follows, or focusing on polarizing forms of protests by vegan collectives that have been touched upon prior in Chapter 5.

While looking into both the research that states meat can be dangerous and the research that states vegan diet can be dangerous and leads to malnutrition, it is crucial to consider potential data bias, as variables might be overlooked or skewed. Although it is possible to lead a “healthy” life as a non-vegan, which has been the norm for centuries, aforementioned research should be taken as a cautionary case of overconsumption of meat and animal products that may lead to health problems. On the other hand, although abstaining from meat and animal products can lead to malnutrition if one is not educated in the sense of relocating the vitamins and nutrients one would be taking from these categories of food prior to going vegan. To live a healthy vegan lifestyle a certain level of “literacy” is needed (World Health Organization, 2015). At the end of the day, a vegan person can eat fries and bread all day, which are all vegan, but this definitely would not be healthy, for it will be excluding a large group of nutrients.

Another point of congestion when it comes to debating veganism is the strong upper-middle class and urban bias tendency that shape many of the "I can't go vegan" arguments which can be seen in many of the debates online. Although vegan lifestyle can be framed as an expensive one, according to the discussion that took place in Chapter 5, meat and poultry can similarly be considered as luxury items from an economic point of view. Similarly, vegan cafes and shops predominantly opening in busy urban places, also limit their customer profile, strengthening the urban bias in the movement. Although there is a clear correlation between urban areas and vegan spaces, the vegan café owner that has been interviewed for this research, Hatice, explained her decision opening up a vegan space as to simply be in a location easily accessible through public transportation. Considering her motivation while opening a vegan space where people can form physical communities, having this café in a part of the city proves to be a pragmatic decision. The urban bias discussion in vegan lifestyle persists, which needs further research, depending on the local dynamics of each city. Similarly, while acknowledging that a certain link between veganism and upper-middle class mobilization towards it exists, the informants were very open and aware regarding this image veganism has. The class discussion, similar to veganism

having intersections with advocacy of other inequalities mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, however, calls for further sociological research on each topic. The fact that a variety of concepts and issues come into mind while discussing vegan lifestyle in Turkey, again leads to the need of further research.

Throughout this thesis, the everydayness of the struggle that is innate to vegan lifestyle was stressed as indicator of the resistance that takes place on a day-to-day basis. With transforming interpretation of social change and the general ability to take action and 'move', so to speak, both globally and nationally, the space for civic action also changes accordingly. Those who resist feel these changes in the form of weariness on agency; perhaps as the most necessary indicator of the toll everyday resistance takes on a person. In a way, the weariness shows that friction exists. Whether it is visible or not from the outside, power and resistance lies in everyday encounters; encounters with people, with structures and with codes.

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## APPENDICES

### A. INTERVIEW DIRECTORY

1. Sizin veganlık tanımınız nedir?
2. Herhangi bir vegan kolektifin/STK'nın bir parçası mısınız?
3. Sizce herhangi bir vegan kolektifi/STK'nın bir parçası olmak ne kadar önem taşıyor?
4. Ne kadar süredir vegan besleniyorsunuz? Bu beslenme düzenine geçmeniz bir süreç olarak mı gelişti yoksa aniden ve tamamen mi geçtiniz?
5. Size bu kararı aldırان belirli bir olay yada gözlem yaşadınız mı? O süreçte aklınızda kalan ve alakalı olduğunu düşündüğünüz bir olay var mı?
6. Vegan olma sebepleriniz bu süreçte hiç değişikliğe uğradı mı? Mesela en başta önceliğiniz kişisel sağlık iken daha sonra başka sebepler daha önemli gelmeye başladı mı?
7. Araştırma yapmak veganlığın önemli bir kısmı mı sizce? Sizce güvenilir kaynaklar neler?
8. Vegan olmak sizce kimliğinizin önemli bir parçası mı?
9. Vegan olmak kişisel hayatınızı etkiledi mi? Aklınıza gelen alakalı bulduğunuz bir örnek ya da hikaye var mı?
10. Vegan olmak yiyecek-içecek dışında tükettiğiniz diğer ürünlere dair fikrinizi ve satın alma alışkanlıklarınızı etkiledi mi?
11. Kendinizi aktivist olarak görüyor musunuz?
12. "Vegan aktivizm" denince aklınıza ne geliyor? Kendinizi vegan aktivist olarak görüyor musunuz? Başka alanlarda kendinizi aktivist olarak görüyor musunuz?
13. Sizce vegan olmanız ve başka alanlarda kendinizi aktivist olarak görmemiz arasında bir bağ var mı?

14. Sizce insanlarla bilgi paylaşımı yapmak (size veganlıkla ilgili soru sorulması gibi) aktivizmin bir parçası mı?
15. İnsanlarla bilgi paylaşımı yapmak için ne gibi yollar izliyorsunuz? Belirli taktikleriniz var mı?
16. İnsanlara bilgi vermeyi önemli görüyorsanız, bir şeyleri deęiřtirme hissini nasıl taze tutuyorsunuz? Belirli taktikleriniz var mı?

## B. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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Sayı: 28620816 / 520

08 KASIM 2018

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Besim Can ZIRH

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### C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye’de vegan hayat tarzı yürüten kişilerin gündelik hayatlarında karşılarına çıkan ve vegan olmadan önce genelde görünür olmayan gündelik direniş pratiklerini belirlemek, takip etmek ve çerçevelelendirmektir. Bu sebeple vegan kişilerin gündelik hayatlarında sıkça karşılarına çıkan sorunlara ve bu sorunlarla nasıl başa çıktıklarına odaklanılmıştır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, somutlaştırılmış ve rutin olarak yeniden üretilmiş vegan yaşam tarzları aracılığıyla gündelik direnişi okumanın bir yolu olarak Türkiye'deki çağdaş veganlığı inceleyecektir. Vegan aktivizmi, genel olarak çevre hareketleri veya hayvan hakları hareketi şemsiyesi altında tartışılmış ve her halükarda her iki hareketin özelliklerini de yer yer içermesine rağmen, bu çalışma, somutlaşmış tüketim alışkanlıklarına ve bu alışkanlıkların etrafına konuşlanmış sosyal düzenlere meydan okuyan yaşam tarzı hareketlerinin önemli bir örneği olarak veganlığı ele alacaktır. Veganizm, özellikle Gezi sonrası Türkiye'sinde sivil toplum için görece daralan alan ve aktivizm bağlamında tartışıldığında, bireyin hem mikro hem de makro kararlarından sızan direniş ve eşitlik savunuculuğunun somutlaşmış hali olarak okunabilir. Ana akım Türk medyasında ve popüler kültürdeki örneklere odaklanıldığında, marjinalleştirilmiş radikal bir grup olarak ya da belirli hayvan hakları gruplarının alışılmadık protesto yöntemleriyle gündeme gelen radikal bir grup insan olarak genellikle yüzeysel bir konu olarak görülebilir. Bu algı da vegan kişilerin gündelik hayatlarında karşılaştıkları direniş pratiklerinin sebeplerinden biri olarak daha sonra karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Veganizmin hem dikkatle alınan gündelik seçimleri içerdiğini, bu seçimlerin derin köklü ritüellere ve söz konusu seçimlerin etrafına sıkıca sarılmış alışkanlıklara aykırı bir şekilde kendi yaşam tarzını oluşturduğunu ve hem de küresel ve ulusal olarak giderek yaygınlaşan bir hareket olduğunu kabul etmenin, sadece vegan çalışmaları

literatürü için değil, sosyal hareket literatürü için oldukça gerekli olduğu görülmektedir. Bireylerin çoğunlukla özel alanlarda aldıkları, hatta kimilerinin kamusal alanda hiçbir zaman görülür hale gelmeyen sıradan tercihlerinin toplumsal hareketin çoğunu oluşturduğu göz önüne alındığında, gündelik direniş kavramı bu araştırma kapsamında oldukça uyumlu bir şekilde analize ışık tutan bir konsept haline gelmiştir. Veganizm, öncelikle bireylerin kendi yaşamları üzerinden, belirli kodlara uygun olarak yaşayanlar kişilerce ve bu kodları kendi kimliklerinin bir parçası haline getirmeleri sonucu, bir yaşam tarzı hareketi haline getirerek hayata geçirilir. Bu nedenle, dışarıdan bakınca atılan bireysel adımların ötesini görmek zor olabilir, bu da genellikle medyada ve akademide bu yaşam tarzının beslenme ve sağlık yönünün daha çok tartışılmasından anlaşılmaktadır.

Hayat tarzı hareketleri arasında kategorize edilen veganlık, çoğunlukla kişinin günlük yaşamındaki seçimleriyle gerçekleştirilen bir etik duruştur. İnsan olmayan hayvanlara yönelik etik bir ilgi doğrultusunda yapılan günlük seçimlerle hayata geçirilir. Kişi kendisini bir aktivist olarak görmese bile, kendi tanımlarına göre, veganlık etiği tanımı gereği, statükoya karşı günlük direniş eylemlerine katılmayı ve gerçekleştirmeyi gerektirir. Çevresel değişiklikler veya kişisel değişiklikler, kişiyi aktif aktivizmle meşgul olma veya alternatif aktivizm biçimleri geliştirme konusunda farklı yorumlara itse de, veganizmin temel gereksinimleri, direniş olarak karakterize edilebilecek eylemler bütününden oluşmaktadır.

Akademide yer alan vegan çalışmalara bakıldığında, özellikle Türkiye'deki vegan topluluğunun deneyimlerini anlatan çalışmaların çok yaygın olmadığı görülmektedir. Benzer olarak sosyal hareket ve aktivizm alanındaki çalışmalarda da vegan hayat tarzı, genelde kimi zaman yenilikçi kimi zaman da eleştirel olarak görülen protesto biçimleri ile anılmaktadır. Türk vegan topluluğunun akademideki yansımaları artırma amacıyla, bu çalışmada vegan kişilerle yapılan görüşmelere başvurulmuştur. Bu görüşmelerin yanı sıra bu araştırma sürecinde, çevrimiçi alanların ve sosyal medya sitelerinin bu gibi toplulukların oluşumu için ne kadar önemli olduğu ve kişilere adeta bir toplanma alanı ve bilgi merkezi olarak işlev gördüğü de gözlemlenmiştir. Bu nedenle Türkçe

konuşan veganların sıklıkla başvurdukları ‘Vegan Oluyorum’ ve ‘Abolisyonist Vegan Hareket’ gibi web sitelerinden de yararlanılmıştır.

Veganizmin, sosyal hareket teorisinde, çoğunlukla hayvan hakları tartışmasıyla yakın ilişki içinde değerlendirilen önemli bir yaşam tarzı hareketi olarak nasıl değerlendirildiğini anlamak için, çağdaş sosyal teoride izlediği yolu kavramak için bir zemin sağlamak gerekmektedir. Bu çerçevede bu araştırmada, veganlığı bir hayat tarzı olarak ele almadan önce hayvan haklarının sınırlarını belirleyerek hayvan hakları felsefesinin gelişiminde önemli görülen iki ana düşünce biçimi ele alınmıştır. Bu yaklaşımlardan ilki, hayvanları etik bir çerçevede gören Jeremy Bentham'ın (1789) faydacılık (*utilitarianism*) teorisidir. Bentham'ın ortaya attığı haliyle faydacılık, doğru bir eylemi en çok zevk veren veya en az hoşnutsuzluk veren bir eylem olarak kabul eder. Bentham'ın bu felsefesi, hayvanlara dair sorulması gereken etik sorunun şu şekilde olması gerektiğini kabul eder: "... 'akıl yürütebilirler mi?' veya 'konuşabilirler mi?' değil, 'acı çekebilirler mi?' ". Acı ve zevk hislerini, tüm hisseden canlılar için etik ve ahlaki olan yaşam tarzı olarak tanımlayarak, bu tanım gereği Bentham, hayvanların acı, eziyet ve zevk hissedebileceğini kabul eder. Bu nedenle hayvanların ızdırabını insan ızdırabına benzer şekilde çerçeveler ve bunu ahlaki bir mesele olarak kabul eder. Takip eden yıllarda büyük bir meydan okuma ile karşılaşsa da, Bentham'ın hayvanlara dair ortaya attığı bu etik kaygı, hayvan haklarının etik teorisinin gelişimi açısından çok verimli olarak görülmektedir.

Tanınmış hayvan refahı teorisini ve Bentham yolunda olduğunu belirten bir faydacılık teorisini olan Peter Singer, türçülüğün belirli ideallerine de değinen faydacılık felsefesinden türetilen iki ilkeye uygun olarak, ilgili tarafların çıkarını göz önünde bulundurarak faydacılığı yeniden yorumlamaktadır. Birincisi, eşitlik ilkesidir; insanların ve hayvanların çıkarlarının, canlıların kendi gözünde eşit değerde olmaları halinde eşit olarak kabul edilmesi gerektiğini kabul eder. İnsanlar arasında ırkçılığın ve cinsiyetçiliğin önüne geçen bu ilke, insanlar ve hayvanlar arasında türçülüğün önüne geçmektedir. Singer'ın ikinci ilkesi, insanların dahil olan herkesin çıkarları arasındaki dengeyi düşünerek hareket etmesi gerektiğini düşünen fayda ilkesidir. Birinci ilkenin kabul edilmesi durumunda, bu, ilgili taraflar arasındaki menfaatlerin



engellenmesine karşı menfaatlerin tatminini eşitlik ve denge sağlayacak şekilde hareket edilmesi ve hayvanların menfaatlerinin tıpkı insanlar gibi dikkate alınması gerektiği anlamına gelir. Hayvanların çıkarları, insanlar için olduğu gibi onlar için de eşit değerde olarak kabul edildiğinden, yararları açısından ele alındığında çıkarlar aynı ağırlığı taşır. Bu nedenle, Singer'in faydacı bakış açısı, ahlaki olarak insanlara yapmayacağımız bir şeyi hayvanlara da yapmamamız gerektiğini düşünür (Regan, 1983).

Hayvan hakları teorisinde en önemli ikinci ana akım, abolisyonist yaklaşım olarak görülebilir. Felsefe bölümü mezunu ve mülkiyet hukuku profesörü Gary L. Francione, Tom Regan'ın hayvan savunuculuğu teorisindeki faydacılık yorumunu eleştirmekle birlikte, hayvan refahını hayvan haklarından ayırt etmek amacıyla, 1996 yılında *Rain Without Thunder: The Ideology of the Animal Rights Movement* adlı kitabı kaleme almıştır. Bu kitapla, Francione 1980'lere kadar popülerleşen hayvan refahı akımının hayvanların acı çekmesini ve sömürülmesini normalleştirdiğini öne sürerek hayvan hakları teorisine abolisyonist bir bakış açısı getirmiştir. Hayvan refahını kısa vadeli bir strateji olarak kabul edilmesini yeri geldiğinde haklı bulduğunu vurgulamakla birlikte, bu gibi kısa vadeli refah stratejilerinin uzun vadede kalıcı olarak hayvan haklarına çözüm getireceğini savunan kişileri eleştirmiştir. Bu nedenle, ulusal ve küresel olarak desteklenen mevcut refahçı stratejinin hem teoride hem de pratikte ters etki yarattığını söyleyerek, ulusal hayvan refahı organizasyonlarının uzun vadeli stratejilerini eleştirmiştir. Olayların mevcut gidişatı, birçok farklı endüstride artan hayvan sömürüsüne işaret ederken, sömürünün tamamen ve kesin olarak ortadan kaldırılması bir yana, faydacıların uygulanmasını savunduğunu "insani" yöntemlere bile uymadığının da altını çizmiştir. Francione'un eleştirileri, daha spesifik olarak Singer'in faydacı yaklaşımının çelişkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bu nedenle, hayvan hakları teorisinin, eğer adına "hak" konusunu ekleyecekse, "kurumsallaşmış sömürünün ortadan kaldırılması" ve sonuç olarak "hayvanların mülkiyet statüsünün kademeli olarak ortadan kaldırılması" için çaba göstermesi gerektiğini savunmuştur (Francione, 1996).

Hayvan hakları teorisindeki refahçılık ve abolisyonist yaklaşım, vejetaryenlik ve veganlık ayrımını yaparken de sıkça dile getirilen bir noktadır. Hararetli tartışmalara fazla dahil olmayanlar tarafından benzer düşünce ekolleri olarak kabul edilebilse de, vejetaryenlik ve veganlık tüketimini sınırladıkları şeyler açısından da, ideolojik olarak da farklılık gösteren hayat tarzları sunmaktadır. Genel olarak herhangi bir hayvan etiyle, kümes hayvanı etiyle veya balık etiyle beslenmekten uzak durma pratiği olarak tanımlanan vejetaryenlik, Antik Dönem Hindistan'a dayanır ve daha sonra Antik Yunanistan'da da gözlemlenmiştir. Her iki kültürde de vejetaryenlik, çoğunlukla hayvan eti tüketimini yasaklayan dini ve/veya manevi inançların bir parçası olarak, bazı veya tüm hayvanların beslenme yoluyla tüketiminin yasaklanmasını içermektedir (Spencer, 2008). Ovo-vejetaryenlik ve lakto-vejetaryenlik gibi farklı yaklaşımları benimseyen insan sayısının artmasıyla farklı alt dallara ayrılrsa da, tüm bu çeşitlerin ortak bir özelliği vardır: tüm hayvan etlerini tüketmekten kaçınmayı içerir.

Vejetaryenliğin bu temel özelliğini de içeren veganlık, resmi adında “vegan” olan ilk organizasyon olarak kabul edilen *Vegan Society* tarafından şu şekilde tanımlanmaktadır: “Yiyecek, giyecek veya başka herhangi bir amaç için hayvanlara yönelik her türlü sömürü ve zulmü - mümkün ve uygulanabilir olduğu ölçüde - dışlamaya çalışan bir felsefe ve yaşam tarzıdır. Bunun uzantısı olarak hayvanlar, insanlar ve çevre yararına hayvansız alternatiflerin geliştirilmesini ve kullanılmasını teşvik eder. Beslenme açısından, hayvanlardan elde edilen tüm ürünlerden tamamen veya kısmen vazgeçme uygulamasını ifade eder.”

Bu tanım, veganlığın hemen hemen tüm yaşam alanlarına yayılmış, her türlü tüketimi içeren, kişinin aktif olarak karar verme sürecine katılımda bulunduğu ve ne yiyip ne yememekten daha fazlasıyla ilgili kararlar vermesini gerektiren bir yaşam tarzı olduğunu göstermektedir. Günlük olarak yapılan beslenme seçimlerini içeren ancak bunlarla sınırlı olmayan veganizm, günlük olarak alınan her türlü tüketim kararında kişinin farkında olmasını gerektirir. En sık karşılaşılan gündelik kararlara örnek olarak giysilerinizin nereden geldiğini ve nasıl yapıldığını araştırmak, bir restoranda sipariş ettiğiniz çorbanın tereyağ ile yapılmadığından emin olmak, makyaj, cilt bakımı veya saç bakım ürünlerinin içeriğinde hayvanların sömürsü sonucu elde edilmiş

materyaller olup olmadığına bakmak, kullanacağınız ilacın herhangi bir hayvan türeği içermediğinden emin olmak gibi durumlar belirtilebilir. Bu hayat tarzı, et yememenin ötesinde, sürekli bir bilinç seviyesi gerektirmektedir. Bu nedenle, diskurun hayvan hakları konusuna yaklaşması ve Francione'nin kitap ve makalelerinin farklı dillere çevrilmesiyle birlikte abolisyonist yaklaşımın giderek daha yaygın ve erişilebilir hale gelmesi ile birlikte, veganizm ve vejeteryanlığın iki ayrı varoluş düzlemi, hayat deneyimi ve etik bakış açısı gerektirdiği giderek daha da görünür hale gelmiştir.

Veganlığın ne olduğu ve daha da önemlisi, ne olmadığını belirledikten sonra, araştırmanın temelini güçlendirmek adına veganlığın toplumsal hareket literatüründeki yeri ve teorisi araştırılmıştır. Bu bölümde, toplumsal hareketler literatüründeki önemli teoriler üzerinden geçilmekle birlikte, bu teorilere yakınlık ve uzaklığına göre veganlığın yaşam tarzı hareketi (*lifestyle movement*) olarak nasıl kategorize edildiği incelenmiştir. Her tür teorik gelişim sürecinde gözlemlenebileceği gibi, yaşam tarzı hareketleri de önceki teorilerin eksiklerini gidermek ve "kişisel eylem ve toplumsal hareket katılımı, kişisel ve sosyal değişim ve kişisel ve kolektif kimlik" yakınsamasını temsil etme amacıyla ortaya konmuştur (Haenfler et al. al., 2012). Toplumsal hareket teorilerindeki çeşitli kavramlar, tez boyunca veganizmle bağlantılı olarak genişletilmiş olsa da, yaşam tarzı hareketleri teorisi, sosyal hareket çalışmalarının bir parçası olarak veganizmi tartışırken en sağlam zemini sağlamıştır. Yaşam tarzı hareketleri teorisine ilerleyen yolda, öncelikle Melucci'nin (1989) toplumsal hareketler tanımı sağlanmıştır. Daha sonra sırasıyla kolektif davranış teorisi, kaynak mobilizasyonu teorisi, politik süreç teorisi, yeni toplumsal hareketler teorisi ve kısa bir eleştirisi, en son olarak da literatürde veganizmle en yakından ilişkilendirilen yaşam tarzı hareketleri teorisi bağlamlandırılmıştır. Vegan yaşam tarzı, genellikle "bir yaşam tarzını ya da bir yaşam biçimini aktif olarak sosyal değişimi teşvik etmenin birincil yolu olarak destekleyen" yaşam tarzı hareketleri arasında kabul edilir (Haenfler, et al., 2012; Miller, 2005).

Veganlığın toplumsal hareket literatüründeki yerinin belirlenmesi ve tezin tamamında sıkça kullanılacak bazı tanımların saptanması ve üzerinden geçilmesinden sonra, tezin konsept çerçevesinin temelini oluşturan "gündelik direniş" (*everyday resistance*)

tanımı yapılmıştır. Akademide vegan kişilerin bir topluluk olarak yaptıkları değişimin boyutuyla ilgili özellikle Kuzey Amerika ve Avrupa bağlamında çeşitli araştırmalar mevcut olsa da, Türkiye'deki vegan bireylerin gündelik direniş konseptiyle bir arada sosyolojik olarak çerçeveslendiği bir araştırma bulunmamaktadır. Bu araştırmada gündelik direniş konseptinden yararlanarak günümüz Türkiye'sinde değişen sivil toplum ve aktivizm tanımları ve pratikleri ile vegan hayat tarzının farklı bir okumasının yapılması amaçlanmıştır. Bu sebeple ilk olarak 1985 yılında James C. Scott'ın ortaya attığı ve daha sonra Johansson ve Vinthagen'in (2014) 1985'ten bu yana bu kapsamda yapılmış empirik araştırmaları baz alarak konseptin tanımını ve sınırlarını geliştirdiği, daha da kullanılabilir hale getirdiği gündelik direniş konsepti, genelde gündelik süreçlerde karşılaşılan güce karşı olarak doğan bir direniş olarak tanımlanmıştır. Gündelik alanlarda, gündelik senaryolarda, aslında bağlamdan koparılmış direniş karakterinin görülmesi mümkün olmayan bu mikro-direniş pratikleri, tam da bu yüzden fark edilmesi zor olabilen ve kimi zaman direniş eylemini yerine getiren kişinin bile fark etmesi güç bir direniş çeşididir. Vegan kişilerin edindikleri direnişleri görünür kılmak adına, gündelik direnişin dört temel boyutu ele alınmıştır. Bunlardan ilki, gündelik direnişin pratik ve biçimlerinin analizinde kullanılan kavramların çeşitliliğine ve çokluğuna atıfta bulunan "gündelik direniş repertuarları" boyutudur. Bu boyut Türkiye'deki veganlara uyarlandığında, vegan olmayanlara karşı bu konuyu açmakta kaçınmak, kime açılacağını veya kimi mobilize etmeye çalışacağını seçmek, kolektif hareket için politika değişimlerine göre taktik ve yaklaşım değiştirmek ve daha onlarca gündelik direniş biçimini içerir. İkinci boyut, direniş eylemine dahil olan faillerin, yani direniş eylemini gerçekleştirenlerin, hedef olanların ve gözlemcilerin eylemleri ve ilişkileri ile ilgili "kim" sorusuna odaklanır. Johansson ve Vinthagen tarafından bahsedilen üçüncü boyut, gündelik direnişi "geçici olarak örgütlenmiş ve merkezi bir sosyal boyut olarak, zamanın içinde uygulandığı gibi" düşünerek gündelik direnişin zamansallaştırılmasıdır. Zamanla bağlantılı olarak uzay da son boyut olarak teorize edilir. Dördüncü boyut, fiziksel direniş alanlarının ötesine atıfta bulunarak gündelik direnişin mekânsallaştırılmasını ele alır. İktidarın sosyal bağlamda direnişle karşılaştığı işyeri veya sokaklar gibi fiziksel alanlara ek olarak, "mekanın sosyal inşası"nın da analizinin bu noktada gerekliliği savunulmuştur. Bu dört boyut da vegan hayat tarzıyla örneklendirilerek gerekli bağlam sağlanmıştır.

Direnin gerekleřtirgi alanlardan biri olarak, bedenlere de deęinilmiřtir. Mekanların sosyal inřasını analiz ederken bedenler, kontrolün ve etik kararın somutlařtıęı bir gü ve direniř alanı haline gelir. Veganizm için hayati önem tařıyan “görünmez” günlük direniř, öncelikle bedenlenme yoluyla gerekleřir. Veganlar, vücutlarımızı beslemenin önceden belirlenmiř ve öğretilmiř yollarını disipline ederek, kendi vücutları ve tükettikleri yiyecekler aracılıęıyla direnci somutlařtırırlar. Bedenlere ek olarak, direniřin boyutlarını anlayabilmek için, yiyecek sosyolojisinden de yararlanılmıřtır. Bedenimiz ve tükettiğimiz yiyecekler arasında, bu arařtırma boyunca analiz edilen veganizmin direnli doęasını görselleřtirmeye yardımcı olacak katı ritüeller olduęu gözlemlenmiřtir. Yiyeceklerle inřa ettiğimiz anlamlar, yemeęi hazırlama ve yeme eylemi, öznelliğimizin ve benlik duygumuzun en temel paralarından biridir ve içinde yařadığımız kültür tarafından da yönlendirilir (Lupton, 1996; Beardsworth & Keil, 1997). Bu řartlar altında eti ve dięer hayvansal ürünleri etik olarak reddetmek, çoęu kültürün mutfaęında çeřitli řekil ve biçimlerde temel olarak kullanılan bir gıda kategorisini seçmemek ve onu çerevelemek için gereken içsel gücü tanımlamayı ve sosyal hareketler çerevesinde okuyabilmek gerektirmiřtir.

Bu tezin analiz kısmında, vegan kiřilerle yapılan yüz yüze görüşmeler sonucunda ortaya çıkan belli bařlı örüntüler belirlenip analizi yapılmıřtır. Bu amaçla vegan bireylerin günlük yařamlarında ve sosyal iliřkilerinde görünür hale gelen farklı kalıplar tartiřılmıř, direndikleri gücün, direnmeye bařladıktan sonra gözle görülür hale geldięi ortaya çıkmıřtır. Tartıřılan örüntülerden ilki, gündelik sürtüřmelerle bařa çıkma olarak belirlenmiřtir. İkinci örüntü, kiřiler iliřkiler ve sosyalleřme süreçlerinde ortaya çıkan ritüeller ve bu ritüellerin reddi ya da deęiřiklięi talep edildięinde ortaya çıkan direniř pratikleridir. Görüşmelerde ortaya çıkan üçüncü örüntü, bu direniř pratikleri sonucunda ortaya çıkan kliřelerde bařa çıkma süreci, ve bunu takip eden dördüncü nokta da tüm bu bahsedilen gündelik direniřlerle bařa çıkma taktikleri ve pratikleri tartiřılmıřtır. Bu bölümün içinde kiřilerin kendi kendini vegan hayat tarzıyla ilgili bilgilendirmesinin önemi ve bunu yaparken sosyal medyanın çok önemli bir araç olarak kullanıldıęı belirtilmiřtir. Sosyal medya siteleri, tüm arařtırma boyunca farklı řekillerde yararlanılmıř olmakla birlikte, görüşmeciler tarafından da dięer veganlarla

bir araya gelerek topluluk kurmak, onlardan direkt olarak veganlığı öğrenmek ya da vegan olan kişilerin kişisel blog gönderilerini okuyarak, Youtube videolarını izleyerek bilgi kaynağı olarak kullanılmaktadır. Kaynak olarak ne seçilirse seçilsin, çevrimiçi olarak aranan bilginin bulunması oldukça basit ve fonksiyonel olarak belirtilmiştir. Sosyal medya, yeni vegan olmuş kişiler ya da veganlığa geçmeyi düşünen kişiler için belki gerçek hayatlarında çok fazla temasları olmayan vegan kişilerle karşılaşma için ideal bir ortam sağlamaktadır. Gerçekten bu hayat tarzını başarıyla yaşayan, ve bunun ne kadar mümkün olduğunu gösteren insanlarla karşılaştıkça, kişilerin bu hayat tarzına geçişi kolaylaşmaktadır. Böylece sosyal medyanın aslında isteyerek ya da bilinçli olmasa da aktivizme de yardımcı olduğu görülmüştür. Bu noktadan hareketle aktivizm algısı ve veganlık ilişkisi de bir sonraki bölümde irdelenmiştir. Özellikle Türkiye'deki aktivizme ayrılan alanın mevcut şartlar altında yaşadığı değişimler, hem aktivizm algısının değişmesini, hem de başka şartlar altında gündelik olarak değerlendirilebilecek davranışların bu şartlar altında artık direniş eylemleri olarak okunabildiği görülmüştür.

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