

“IT’S NOT JUST A DIET”:

IDENTITY, COMMITMENT, AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IN VEGANS

by

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(Under the Direction of David Smilde)

ABSTRACT

Using interviews with twenty-four self-defined vegans, this project analyzes the differing practices of punk and nonpunk vegans. Vegans are strict vegetarians who exclude all animal products from their diet. Punk vegans have strong vegan identities and are highly committed to veganism, but nonpunk vegans exhibit weaker vegan identities and are less committed to veganism. The different practices are shown to be dependent upon social networks and embeddedness in those networks. Punk vegans have strong social networks that are supportive of veganism, whereas nonpunks do not have such support from their social networks. This work contributes to sociological literature on subcultures and social movements, by focusing on an action-oriented subculture that is also a culture-oriented social movement. It also contributes to the literature on social networks, by showing the enduring effects of such networks on identity and commitment.

INDEX WORDS: Vegans, Vegetarians, Punks, Subcultures, Social Movements, Diet, Identity, Commitment, Social Networks, Network Embeddedness

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I feel compelled to tell people that express an interest in why I'm vegan, or people who express interest in veganism as a topic of conversation. When I first went vegan, I felt the need to tell everyone about veganism. I started a vegan lunch line in my school. I would kick and scream and get as many people's attention that I could...I think it's necessary to have militant vegans—what I call militant is people that go out and scream and shout and kick, yell, and chain themselves up to things. (JD)

I think also your individual lifestyle is a political statement, too. You don't necessarily just have to be calling people, or rallying, or calling centers, or rallying, whatever, to be politically involved. I think that just by your making choices at the supermarket or whatever, you're effecting political change. (Sam)

The opening quotes, from two vegans, present a compelling problem for contemporary subcultural and social movement studies—how to account for divergent views within one subculture that is, at the same time, a social movement. Both JD and Sam are vegans, but they have drastically different ideas on what being vegan means.¹ JD describes himself as a “militant vegan” and contends that such direct action is necessary to win others over to veganism. Sam, in contrast, espouses the opposite approach—instead of telling others about veganism, he believes that his personal life, in itself, is effecting change.

Even more intriguing than the difference in these two vegans' quotes is the fact that JD is in the punk subculture, and Sam is not.² Furthermore, the responses of each punk interviewed for this project mirror those of JD, and the responses of the nonpunks are similar to Sam's. The responses seem to be split by subcultural affiliation, but further analysis reveals that subcultures do not account for all of the drastic differences in the responses between punk vegans and nonpunk vegans.

¹ Vegans are strict vegetarians who, in addition to not eating meat, fowl, fish, or seafood, also do not consume any animal products, such as dairy or eggs.

² For an explanation of my use of the terms vegan, punk, and nonpunk, refer to Appendix B.

Not only do the quotes from JD and Sam indicate the diversity of the vegan subculture, they address a major deficiency in subcultural studies. Since the revitalization of subcultural studies in the late 1970s, most contemporary subcultural theorists focus on the style and form of subcultures, while ignoring what subcultures actually do. This overemphasis of style over substance even exists in studies of subcultures that are described as political, such as punks. The generative book that sociologists reference when studying punks makes no qualms about the sartorial focus: *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Hebdige 1979). Even more recent sociologists who take part in the punk subculture continue to favor style over substance (Fox 1987, Leblanc 1999, Muggleton 2000). However, not all punks are style-focused. The contemporary punk subculture is much more diverse than it was in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and it is certainly more heterogeneous than these works imply. In this project I will show that the vegan subculture and the punk subculture are more than just a lifestyle or a clothing style, but are a social movement as well.

Returning to the two opening quotes, JD, a punk, takes a militant approach to veganism while Sam, a nonpunk, seems more introverted in his lifestyle. Although both define veganism in a politicized way by saying they are vegans for animal rights or environmental purposes, they practice veganism in two radically different ways. What accounts for these differences? I mentioned above that the responses from the punks mirror JD's and that the nonpunks respond similarly to Sam, but that subcultural affiliation does not fully account for those differences. To approach this research problem, I analyze the strength and breadth of the social networks of punk and nonpunk vegans.

The differences in responses between punk and nonpunk vegans covers much more than the aggressiveness of their practices—punk and nonpunk vegans are two completely different types of vegans. They construct their vegan identities differently, and they have different levels of commitment to veganism. As opposed to simply saying that being punk or not accounts for these differences, it seems that the differences have more to do with two different types of network embeddedness.

To construct this argument, I sketch a portrait of the vegan lifestyle for self-defined punk and nonpunk vegans, using data from in-depth interviews and participant observation. The project is framed in subcultural studies, relational sociology and its impact on social movements, and social psychological literature on identity and commitment. I present my findings in inductive form, addressing research questions in the order in which they arose.

Since I do not have any interviews with non-vegans, I cannot show the causality of who becomes and stays vegan. What I can do, however, is show how strong and supportive social networks can affect identity and commitment within subcultures and social movements. In this project I do analyze embeddedness in social networks, but I move beyond typical network studies that only attempt to explain mobilization (Tilly 1978, Snow et al. 1980). Here I look at more enduring effects of social networks: identity and commitment. In doing so, I hope to provide a theoretical basis for further studies of vegans, since no sociological studies of vegans exist.

Finally, vegans represent a new type of subculture—one that is a subculture as well as a social movement. Existing theories on social movements and on subcultures are too narrow for such a group. Social movement theories focus on mobilization, retention, and goals, while subcultural studies highlight the form and style of subcultures. Perhaps vegans, who are in both categories, could provide a basis for studies of other action-oriented subcultures or culture-oriented social movements.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Subcultural Studies

The basis of modern subcultural studies comes from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University (CCCS) in England. The CCCS focused on spectacular youth subcultures, particularly their “form” or “look.” Their primary aim, however, was to locate them in a neo-Marxian relation to three broader cultural structures: the working class or “parent culture,” the “dominant” culture, and mass culture (Gelder and Thornton 1997, p. 84). Not only did the CCCS narrow the field of subcultures to youths, but they focused on class distinctions as well. Subcultures, to the CCCS, were always working-class, male, youth subcultures.

The CCCS put forth the idea that subcultures are cultural solutions to structural problems (Hazlehurst and Hazlehurst 1998: 40). Subcultures are the specific forms through which the subordinate group resists the dominant culture (41). However, within this view of working-class youth subcultures, Clarke et al. (1978) argue that subcultural strategies are not enough to change structural disadvantages in education and employment. These “cultural solutions,” they state, are imaginary and merely serve to reproduce the class inequalities against which they are revolting (47). These authors do not provide a solution to such structural inequality, though.

In addition to a class-based view of youth subcultures, many sociologists in the CCCS focused on spectacular youth subcultures. Noting that post-war working class youths enjoyed more leisure time than their parents, these sociologists argued that these youths employed their leisure time for the construction of distinctive subcultural styles (Clarke 1978). Of the numerous works out from the CCCS, one of the better known is Hebdige’s (1978) *Subculture: The*

Meaning of Style. Hebdige took a semiotic approach to subcultural style, by arguing that style is discourse.

Although style may be the most easily readable feature of a subculture, the focus on style is overemphasized at the expense of behavior (Gelder and Thornton 1997, p. 378). Even contemporary sociologists, many of whom acknowledge this critique, continue to focus on subcultural styles instead of what the subculture actually does (Fox 1987, Kotarba 1987, Lowney 1995, Leblanc 1999, Muggleton 2000). When Muggleton (2000) says, on reading Hebdige (1978) as a former punk, that he “was left feeling that it had absolutely nothing to say about my life as I had once experienced it” (2), it seems that he might be moving to a more action-oriented analysis of punk. Despite his critique of Hebdige, however, Muggleton continues in the tradition of semiotic analysis, as do most subcultural theorists.

The sociology of food is a burgeoning field within cultural studies, but only a few sociologists have begun to study vegetarianism as a cultural practice. These sociologists do not explicitly call vegetarians or vegans a subculture, nor do any of them focus exclusively on vegans. Recognizing vegetarianism as one practice among many, such studies include the history of vegetarianism (Maurer 1995), the different levels of taboo meat-eating, vegetarianism, and veganism (Twigg 1983), and the reasons to be vegetarian (Beardsworth and Keil 1992, 1997).

In the only study that mentions vegans as a specific type of vegetarian, Willetts (1997) focused on vegetarians and the construction of identity by food choices. Within her study, she found that 66 percent of the self-defined vegetarians (including four vegans) incorporated meat into their diet. The most recent work is a review of organizational strategies of vegetarian movement leaders, by Donna Maurer (2002). Although the author herself is vegan, she gives little attention to vegans in the book. These sociologists are attempting to open the burgeoning field of the sociology of food to vegetarians, but they are essentialist in not acknowledging the diversity of vegetarians.

Identity

Identity construction, salience, maintenance, and presentation of self all have their theoretical underpinnings in the works of Mead and the Chicago school of symbolic interactionism. Since the 1970s, however, the trend in identity studies has shifted to study collective identities and their construction.

Mead's (1934) theory of the "Me" is one of the first works on individual identity construction. The "Me" is the object of self-scrutiny, the self of which one is aware. It is also an organization of the community in one's attitude. If the social actor does not agree with the community beliefs, and does not include that belief in her self, she must reconstruct the "Me," including the community attitudes that are a basis for the "Me." However, vegans are not only constructing an individual identity—other people are vegans, and there must be a collective aspect to this identity construction.

Melucci's (1995) theory of collective identity construction in the field of social movements provides a more meso-level approach to identity theory. Collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals, which is concerned with

orientations of action and fields of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place. This definition has three parts: first, the formation of a “we” by individuals is made by making three things common: ends, means, and the environment/field in which it takes place. Second, collective identity as a process refers to a network of active relations between actors who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate, and make decisions. Third, a certain degree of emotional investment is required for the definition of a collective identity, which allows individuals to feel like part of a collective unity.

Melucci’s delineation of collective identity construction also allows for agency, both individual and collective. It enables social actors to act in unified ways and to be in control of their own actions. This agency is manifested in three main presumptions: first, it assumes the self-reflective ability of social actors. Second, it entails a notion of intention and belonging and allows actors to attribute the effects of actions to themselves. Finally, it involves an ability to perceive duration in order to establish a relationship between the past and the future, and then to connect that with action.

Finally, McAdam’s (1982) idea of cognitive liberation within his political process theory can help illustrate how vegans define themselves and their cause. A significant part of McAdam’s political process theory is key to understanding how vegans and other social movement participants define themselves and their cause. McAdam argues that in order for a social movement to emerge, a process of cognitive liberation must take place. With cognitive liberation, people collectively define their situations as unjust and subject to change through group action (51). It consists of a transformation of consciousness in which people attach subjective meanings to their situations. Not only does McAdam believe cognitive liberation to be key to the emergence of a political movement, but he states that the process of cognitive

liberation is more likely to occur and will have greater consequence with stronger social integration. Cognitive liberation is most likely to come about within established interpersonal networks.

Teske (1997) describes this cognitive liberation as more than simply learning new factual information. The process involves a “shift of worldview” and a new way of seeing the world and one’s role in it (55). These theories of epiphanic moments, however, actually ignore the emotional component of such lifestyle changes, a critique leveled by some social movement theorists (Jasper 1997).

After reconstructing their identities to include veganism as opposed to the cultural norm of meat-eating, vegans must negotiate how to present themselves to others. Either by initiating the conversation themselves or by being asked what they are eating for lunch, vegans often have to explain their dietary preference and lifestyle. Goffman’s (1967) work on impression management, as well as his work on presentation of self as performance (1959) addresses these social encounters. This “presentation of self” includes identity maintenance and identity salience.

Identity salience, which is the importance of an identity in different situations, is measured by Stryker’s (1980) identity theory. This social structural version of symbolic interactionism includes twelve hypotheses of identity salience, commitment, and role theory. Identity maintenance, though, is linked back to presentation of self. In ideal veganism, according to Goffman’s (1959) use of the term ideal, there is no difference in the front and backstage presentation of self as vegan. In any face-to-face encounter, a person acts out a line, or “a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself” (Goffman 1967, p. 5). Furthermore,

other participants will interpret that person's acts as taking a stand on the situation, whether the line was intentional or not. A requisite of credibly presenting one's identity, and thus maintaining that identity, is belief in the part one is playing. If a social actor does not believe she really is the identity she is presenting, the people to whom she is presenting herself will not believe the act, either.

Commitment

The concept of commitment is important to consider when discussing vegans. It takes a high level of commitment to adhere to a lifestyle that eschews many readily available food, clothing, and household products that contain animal ingredients. Unfortunately, few sociologists study commitment in a way applicable to such a daily practice. Kanter's (1968) exhaustive study of commitment mechanisms does, however, provide a strong basis for a study of commitment to a lifestyle. In her work on utopian communities, she describes three main types of commitment mechanisms: continuance, cohesion, and control. Each type of commitment links individual behaviors to areas of social systems.

Continuance commitment links cognitive orientations to roles in a social system, group, or organization. This involves the social actor's believing that participation in a social system is positive and useful. Sacrifice to and investment in the group result in higher continuance commitment. Cohesion commitment links emotions to social relationships. Renunciation, communion, and persecution support this group cohesion and commitment to social relationships. Finally, control commitment links evaluative orientations to norms. The acts of mortification and surrender support control commitment. Mortification is a negative process and involves having an identity that is provided and controlled by an organization.

Surrender is a positive process, during which the social actor experiences great power and meaning in the organization.

Becker (1960) has a related theory on commitment that he calls “making a side bet” (36). His theory describes the unanticipated involvement of other sources of reward once a line of action has been chosen, and the side bet is that the chosen line of action will be rewarding. Finally, a more modern theory of commitment links relational cohesion and emotions (Lawler and Yoon 1996, Lawler et al 2000). Lawler and Yoon state that two processes lead to commitment: social bonding (emotions from social interactions) and boundary defining (shared group identity).

Social Networks

Since the 1970s, social networks and relational sociology have been frequently used to explain mobilization and social activism (Tilly 1978, Snow et al. 1980). However, simply making this connection explains nothing. As Gould pithily remarks, “It is a bit like noticing that people who are stricken with the plague have had contact with other plague victims, but failing to relate this fact to their having breathed the air into which the latter have coughed, or to connect either of these facts to a broader germ theory that accounts for both” (2003, p. 237). Falling victim to not finding that “broader germ theory” leads to such critiques as networks are one resource among many (Jasper 1997) and that network theory is tautological (Piven and Cloward 1992). Even such critics, however, would agree that social ties and activism are linked. What is important to sociological theory and relational sociology is to show how networks work, which I attempt to accomplish in this analysis.

Two main frameworks exist for network analyses within the structural determinist model: relational analysis, which studies the direct and indirect connections among social actors, and positional analysis, which focuses on actors' ties to third parties (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). Although network analysis is typically described as a theoretical framework for analyzing the interrelations between social structure, culture, and human agency, many network analysts ignore the significance of culture (White, Boorman, and Brieger 1976; Rosenthal et al 1985; Gould 1991). While some contend that networks and culture are inextricably linked (White 1992; McLean 1998; Smilde 2003), other theorists more explicitly state that networks influence culture (Erickson 1996) or that culture influences networks (Padgett and Ansell 1993; Ansell 1997).

More generalizable network analyses examine recruitment into social networks and the content of such networks. For example, network analyses of social movements have shown that recruitment into the movement is most successful through friends, acquaintances, and kin (Tilly 1978, Snow et al 1980). Theorists in the same field also link embeddedness in such social networks to identity construction (Somers 1992, Passy 2003), identity salience (McAdam and Paulsen 1993, Melucci 1996, Passy 2003), and higher intensity and commitment in participation (Passy 2001, 2003). These works rely primarily on quantitative data, but certain network theorists have called for more qualitative data to help assess the temporality of these social interactions and to give a clearer view of how networks provide structures of meaning for individual social actors (Passy 2003).

The literature used as a base for this project began at the foundations of microsociological theory, using influential works on identity construction and presentation of self to describe individual meaning making. It then moved to a more structural perspective, with a focus on social networks used to explain the social world surrounding vegans. In applying these works to

the analysis of the varying practices of punk and nonpunk vegans, I will begin with identity literature to show how punk and nonpunk vegans have differing ways of constructing their vegan identities, different ways of presenting themselves as vegans, and varying saliences of their respective vegan identities. Continuing with a microsociological focus, I will use the commitment literature to show that punks have a stronger commitment to veganism, while nonpunks have a weaker commitment.

Moving to the macrosociological theories of relational sociology and social networks, I will use network theory to show how the larger social world provided by the punks' and nonpunks' social networks influences their vegan practices. I will show that punks have social networks that are supportive of veganism, but nonpunks do not have such support from their social networks. The support derived from the punks' social networks, and the punks' embeddedness in such social networks, provides the basis for their stronger vegan identities and higher commitments to veganism.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS/PARTICIPANTS/RESEARCHER BACKGROUND

Methods

The data for this project come from twenty-four in-depth interviews with self-defined vegans in two Southeastern college towns. I conducted each interview in person, and the interviews lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. Afterwards, I transcribed each interview and erased the audio tapes upon transcription. I then analyzed the interviews using grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Charmaz 1983, Glaser 1994). Through a constant comparative method (Glaser 1968), I began with only one category of respondents (vegans) and ended with two categories (punk and nonpunk vegans). I also found smaller groups and codes, such as identity and commitment, which I could compare between the categories of punk and nonpunk.

Participants

I recruited participants in two main ways: first, I began with convenience sampling by posting recruitment fliers in three local health food stores. This method garnered six interviews. The majority of the respondents were located through snowball sampling and my own networks. I asked friends and people I met at work (at a local, independent video store) to introduce me to vegans, and eighteen of the interviews came from these sampling techniques. Finally, portions of the background of the punk subculture were studied by participant observation. Punk shows (concerts) are major venues for vegan recruitment, and my observations are from numerous shows in America and about ten shows in France. I also include observations from daily interactions with punk vegans, as well as observations at protests.

For the purposes of this study, I divide my sample into two groups: punks and nonpunks. The two groups have distinctive patterns of recruitment into the vegan lifestyle, and different

social worlds. I will show their differing vegan identities and commitments to veganism, and propose that social networks could be the reason for such disparities. The sample includes eleven punks and thirteen nonpunks. Most of the punks are male (eight of the eleven are male) and there are more nonpunk females (seven) than nonpunk males (six), so the sample is almost equally divided, with a total of ten female respondents and fourteen male respondents. The ages of the respondents range from 18 to 52. A table of participants is located in the appendix, along with a glossary of terms and a comprehensive explanation of the terms vegan, punk, and nonpunk.

Punks and nonpunks: An explanation

At the beginning stages of this project, I did not plan on comparing punk and nonpunk vegans. I first wanted to confine my sample to punk vegans, as the project would fit well with subcultural studies. However, with the beginning stages of analysis, patterns began to emerge that clearly differed between punks and nonpunks, so I chose to focus on a comparison within the sample of vegans.

To distinguish between punks and nonpunks was simple—I asked about music in my interviews, and I placed any respondents who listen to punk and hardcore music, who attend punk/hardcore shows, and who self-identified as members of the punk subculture within the punk category. Some of the nonpunk respondents said they were affiliated with other music-related subcultures, such as hippie or indie rock, but they were not as strongly represented as the punk subculture. A detailed description of the punk subculture will be at the beginning of the networks section, but I outline the differences in the two groups at the beginning of the findings section.

Researcher Background

Finally, one idea lurks behind every aspect of these methods: my role as researcher. As a vegan myself, I was worried about my veganism affecting my respondents. I found that I had two main selves during interviews, a research-based self (that of researcher) and a brought self (that of vegan) (Reinharz 1997). I found myself jumping from one to another, sometimes consciously and sometimes not. Depending upon the subject, I would use one self to put him or her at ease, and then use the other self when necessary. Some subjects seemed to enjoy a more structured interview, so I used my research-based self more than my brought self. Other subjects seemed more casual during the interviews, so I relied on my brought self of vegan when recounting anecdotes, and on my research-based self when asking more serious questions.

I did worry most that my brought self of vegan would cause reactivity in my subjects' responses, by having them merely answer what they thought I wanted to hear. I honestly think that reactivity is less of a problem in this research, since I do not personally know many of the subjects. They would have no need to "save face" as a vegan in my eyes, because I likely would never see many of them again. To highlight another positive aspect of my role as vegan researcher, I doubt that many of these respondents would have criticized meat-eaters as often as they did if I were a meat eater. For example, I hesitate to believe that a non-vegan interviewer would have elicited such responses as the following from Seymour:

I hate all people unless they're vegetarians or vegans. It's kind of hard to hate everybody, even the people you know, but I try to as much as I can.

Are you serious?

Yeah! I used to be really big on human rights, but then I developed this philosophy of why would I help people out if they're just going to turn around and eat meat? Why would I want to help them? I'm just contributing to them eating meat.

Or maybe a non-vegan would have garnered such a response, but in a way that likely would have ended the interview. One can liken my researcher role to the practice of having a graduate student interviewing other graduate students on student-professor relations. The subjects are probably more willing to broach more and different topics with a researcher with the same status. My achieved status of vegan was the same as theirs.

In opposition, my role as vegan researcher could not have been entirely problem-free. Although some postmodern ethnographers argue that “objectivity” is not possible in the study of human behavior (Tedlock 1991), I recognize that my vegan status could have both positive and negative effects on my respondents. While I might be able to effectively “speak their language,” I might also inhibit some of their responses. They might be critical of the vegan subculture but hesitant to tell me. Furthermore, I might be too well-acquainted with the subculture, leading me to notice the spectacular over the mundane. My only response is that I did attempt to be reflexive in my interviews and analysis, and I tried to use my personal experiences and observations to enhance my findings but not lead the path of my research.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This project explores the different experiences of punk and nonpunk vegans with regards to their vegan identities and commitment to veganism. Answering the research questions as they arose, I will begin with a brief description of the two groups, a comparison of the two groups' identities and commitment, and conclude with an analysis of the breadth and strength of the two groups' social networks, including their embeddedness in those networks. I will demonstrate how social networks work in these two groups and propose that they may be the cause for the different practices between the groups.

Two Different Groups of Vegans: Punk and Nonpunk

At the beginning of the project, the first ten interviews I conducted were of punk vegans. Having only been exposed to veganism through the punk subculture, I thought all vegans were punks. However, upon my first attempts to continue the study in a new town, I soon learned that not all vegans were punks. Furthermore, the nonpunks' responses differed so greatly from my first ten interviews that my first response to the new informants was that "these people aren't even vegan!" Upon an initial analysis of the nonpunk interviews, I found that the nonpunk respondents had the same reaction that I did when learning about other groups of vegans. Just as I was surprised to learn that not all vegans were punks, many nonpunks were surprised to learn that veganism is a large part of the contemporary punk subculture.

It was the different answers, however, and not simply subcultural affiliation that led to my dividing the sample into two groups of punks and nonpunks (with 11 and 13 members respectively). The appendix contains a comprehensive description of the link between punk and

veganism and the non-confrontational reasons behind the groupings of punk and nonpunk. Here I will describe the demographics of the two groups.

The punk group, with eleven members, includes three females and eight males. This gender disparity could be attributed to the preponderance of males in the punk subculture, as described by McRobbie (1991) and LeBlanc (1999). In the punk group, the ages range from 18 to 24. The mean age is 20.9, and the median age is 20.5. The nonpunk group is slightly larger but much older. It includes seven females and six males. The ages range from 20 to 51, with a mean age of 27.0 and a median age of 25.0.

These basic demographics are not the only differences between the two groups. As I said, the nonpunks' answers differed so greatly that, at first, I did not even consider them to be vegan. Nonetheless, they had responded to my call for interviewing vegans, so they must consider their lifestyle and practices to be vegan. I thus made a conscious effort to remove my personal preference for a more pure lifestyle in order to concentrate on the different lifestyles among my respondents.

The major differences between the respondents' answers will be compared in the following sections of the analysis. Here I will simply give a short outline of those differences. The two groups learned about veganism differently, with punks learning from friends and nonpunks learning from reading. Many of the punk vegans said most of their friends were vegan, while many nonpunks said I was one of the few vegans they had ever met. They defined veganism differently, with punks citing the Vegan Society definition and nonpunks giving more personalized definitions.³ The punks seemed to be more confrontational about their veganism,

³ Vegan Society definition: "Vegans, like other vegetarians, do not eat the bodies of animals. In addition, vegans do not consume milk, eggs or honey. More broadly, veganism is a way of life which seeks to avoid exploitation of or cruelty to animals for food, clothing or any other purpose. Most vegans do not wear leather, wool or silk." See Appendix B for a lengthier description of the Vegan Society.

while nonpunks said they did not often tell others about veganism. Punks associated veganism with many bands they listened to, while nonpunks said they did not know such personal details about the bands they liked. When asked about eating non-vegan food, all the punks said they would never eat it on purpose, whereas some nonpunks incorporated non-vegan food into their diet for various reasons.

These are but a few variations between the two groups, but they are the major differences that struck me and made me want to explore the two groups in more detail. In the following sections, I will answer the second research question by showing the differences and the implications of such differences in the two groups' vegan identities and commitment to veganism. The final section provides a possible answer for such differences (and the final research question), as I conduct an analysis of the breadth and strength of the social networks of punks and nonpunks.

Identity

Identity Construction—Punks

For those people raised in a society whose basic sustenance is primarily based on meat and other animal products (i.e. every participant in this study), redefining oneself as vegan requires constructing a new identity. As one respondent succinctly put it, "It's not just a diet to me, it's like my entire sense of morality." Taking the idea that food is a part of culture and that a person's values and beliefs can be represented by the food that that person eats, diet can represent an idea as strong as a person's "entire sense of morality."

The discussion of punk vegans' identity construction will begin with an account of their cognitive liberation (McAdam 1982), as it is the beginning of the larger process of identity construction. Six of the eleven punk vegans experienced a specific "moment of enlightenment,"

or “epiphany”, during which they decided they would go vegetarian or vegan.⁴ Each moment of cognitive liberation centered on animal rights—realizing the meat they were eating came from an animal, learning what goes into a hamburger, or learning how animals die from being used by the meat and dairy industry. For most of these punks, they experienced more than just a cognitive liberation—they experienced a transformation of consciousness in which they understood the concept of animal rights for the first time. Josh describes the moment he understood animal rights, which occurred after listening to a punk album:

I listened to one band called Shelter and they were all Hare Krishna devotees, and at the end of their CDs they would have their spiritual masters giving speeches on subjects related to Krishna consciousness, and on one of their CDs they were talking about the reasons why they were vegetarian. Even though I don’t have any religious beliefs, just the interconnectedness of equating animal life with human life, the basic value of life really clicked.

Three of the punks described their cognitive liberation by telling a story—the story of the moment they understood animal rights, the story of the last time they ate meat, the story of how they went vegan. This activity of storytelling is important to veganism, in that it is one way in which people access emotional resources to mobilize collective action (Ganz 2001). Storytelling also provides the interanimation of talk and ties necessary for others to have cognitive liberation (Mische and White 1998). These stories allow for shared understandings with the people to whom they tell their stories. Each punk vegan described the interanimation of discourse and ties as influential to their decision to go vegan. They learned about animal rights and veganism from friends, music, books, zines, and the punk subculture. They were linked to the storyteller through strong or weak ties, and they internalized the message through cognitive liberation.

⁴ Smith (1996) noted “epiphanal turning points” in social movement leaders in Central America, and questioned their frequency and authenticity. He also noted that no sociologist has studied these epiphanic episodes, which could simply be the result of the reconstruction of events by social actors. He could not answer his questions, nor am I equipped to in the scope of this project.

After experiencing cognitive liberation and becoming vegan, punk vegans construct a vegan identity first as an individual. Using Mead's (1934) concept of forming the "Me," punk vegans must change the community attitudes that are the basis for the "Me" in order to change the self of which they are aware. For punk vegans, social networks are key to making this change. As will be discussed in the networks section, punk vegans have support for their veganism in the culture of punk, in their ties to veganism through friends and the punk subculture, and through their embeddedness in the vegan-friendly punk subculture.

After these punks have become enmeshed in the punk community, they begin to have very strong reactions to the old "Me" that is based on meat-eating. JD, a 21-year-old punk, illustrates his changing identity after attending an animal rights protest:

I felt like a jackass. I was like, damn, I don't cook my puppy. I had two dogs at home, and I didn't want to carve them up and eat them for dinner. So I thought it was kind of wrong for me to want to carve up a cow and eat it for dinner.

The new vegans take examples from their daily life and apply them to their new vegan identity. Not killing and eating his puppy, because puppies are animals just like cows, is an example of a reconstruction of values for vegans. Other examples given by punk vegans were job changes: Katie got a job in a movie theatre because she didn't want to work in a restaurant that served meat, and Lucian quit his job as a grocery store bagger when he got too disgusted at bagging meat every day.

Since the beliefs of the punk community are supportive of veganism, punk vegans must then work to change their "Me," the object of self-scrutiny. After they learn of veganism, they change their individual behaviors to reflect their vegan values. They reject the old "Me," as JD did, and construct a new "Me." In the following quotes, Lucian and David describe how they came to see themselves as vegans and their actions as representative of veganism:

Almost any kind of decision, like, especially if I'm going shopping. But if I feel sick, and I want to go to the medicine cabinet, I know I'd feel bad if I take any of that, because it's been tested on animals. I guess the main thing is that I can't keep my mind off of it, but before, when I was vegetarian, I only thought about it when I ate. And that's it. (Lucian, 19)

When I saw that it was something that I could definitely do, I thought, "This is something I should do." ...I actually tried veganism for a month, said I was going to do it for a month, even if I hated it. So I did it for a month and it was really hard. And so I switched back to just being vegetarian for about three months, and I couldn't justify eating dairy anymore to myself. I just couldn't bring myself to do it anymore. It wasn't a guilt thing, it was just a feeling of responsibility. (David, 23)

Once punks become vegan, or try veganism, they begin to construct their individual identity as a vegan. They construct the "Me" around a supportive community of beliefs in the punk subculture, and they scrutinize their own behavior. David could not stay vegetarian after he tried veganism; he felt responsible to act as he thought he should.

In addition to constructing a new individual identity as vegan, punk vegans construct a collective identity as vegans. By being in the punk subculture, punk vegans have already fulfilled the three main parts of the definition of collective identity. They first form a "we" by making three things in common: ends (animal liberation), means (veganism), and field of action (punk subculture). Second, they are enmeshed in an active network that interacts, communicates, and influences each other. Third, they are emotionally invested after they have their cognitive liberation into a belief in animal rights.

The most significant part of Melucci's theory on collective identity is his discussion of networks and agency. Punk vegans enact the first two of the three ways in which Melucci allows for agency in a collective identity. First, his theory calls for actors who are self-reflective. The previous examples of punks scrutinizing their own behavior show they are self-reflective. In the

following two examples, punk vegans exemplify the second part of Melucci's theory when they have a notion of causality and belonging and attribute the effects of actions to themselves:

At that point, I really didn't care what anybody thought about it. My beliefs, my whole belief system as a person was just changing so dramatically, and I was getting so confident in the way I was seeing the world, I knew that I was making the right choice for myself. (Jason, 24)

I think it was coincidental (*becoming less conventionally religious as he got more into veganism*). I think what was really happening was that I started thinking for myself more. What really makes sense to me, what's logical, and what decisions I was making for myself versus what I was just brought up to believe, that I've never really questioned before. (Ralph, 24)

Jason also says that seeing vegan punk bands made him feel stronger about his veganism, in the culture section of the upcoming networks section. It is impossible to say if the punk music or his own actions have more influence on his identity and feeling of belonging. However, one can see that both Jason and Ralph attribute their new identities to their own actions. I will posit later that social networks could have an even stronger effect on their identity construction. But their collective identity allows for agency in that they think they are the cause of their change in lifestyle.

Identity Construction—Nonpunks

Since nonpunk vegans have drastically different social worlds than do punk vegans, it follows that they construct their vegan identities in different ways. As with the punk vegans, I will begin with the cognitive liberation that opens an actor's mind to a belief in veganism.⁵ Only three of the thirteen nonpunk vegans described a "moment of enlightenment" when they decided to go vegetarian and vegan. While two of the nonpunks did tell the story of their cognitive liberation, more respondents told stories of times they ate non-vegan food after going vegan.

⁵ For nonpunks, cognitive liberation only refers to veganism and not animal rights. Not all nonpunks were vegan for animal rights purposes. Refer to the chart of respondents in Appendix D.

Such narratives do not represent the call to action that storytelling serves in many social movements (Ganz 2001).

After becoming vegan, even if that process does not involve cognitive liberation, nonpunk vegans must construct their new vegan identity. As the culture they consume does not support veganism, their friends are not vegan, and they are not embedded in vegan-friendly social networks, nonpunk vegans must innovate to find new bases for Mead's (1934) "Me." Nonpunk vegans do not have an immediate community upon which to base their new "Me." They often reconstruct their identity around more distant figures, such as authors or religious and moral leaders. They sometimes apply more general ethics to animal rights to find a community basis for their new "Me." Meredith, a 25 year old nonpunk vegan, describes a lecture she attended the night she decided to go vegan:

We went and saw this Tibetan monk who spoke at the university, and just by understanding his example of how to be peaceful, and how he achieved peace after enduring terrible cruelty for decades, I don't know, I just came home that night after hearing him speak and just decided that that would be my role in terms of being a peaceful person...So after that, I just never ate any animal products again.

Through an Eastern religious philosophy, Meredith found a community of morality upon which she based her new identity. Roger said that he "got into [veganism] full force" when he purchased a book called *The Yoga Cookbook* (Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centers 1987), which explains how vegetarianism, and with the advent of factory farming, veganism is part of a yogic lifestyle. Other nonpunk vegans cited books such as *Diet for a New America* (Robbins 1999) as primary influences in their health-based veganism.

In addition to authors and religious leaders, many nonpunks construct their own morality and use it as a universal law.⁶ They want to find a common basis for their morality as regards animal rights, so they construct their own:

I'm vegan because I think it's the only way to be a peaceful person, and to not subject yourself to cruelty. Because my major revolves around human rights, and I hope to have a career in human rights education, and human rights work, and to me it's impossible to be a human rights educator and still eat meat, which I think is rife with cruelty. So to me, it's just about living in a moral sense. It's my version of spirituality and religion, and just taking part in peaceful activities in your everyday life. So I just try to not involve myself in something that I think is really violent. It just helps me, I think, to be a better person, and to just be more compassionate in the way that I do things. So that's why I'm vegan. Because it makes me feel like I'm doing something morally appropriate. (Meredith, 25)

Once nonpunks have created the community basis for their “Me,” whether it is through books, spiritual leaders, or the construction of their own moral laws, they have to redefine the part of their “Me” that is subject to self-scrutiny. When redefining their “Me,” nonpunk vegans avoided the more visceral reactions to the old “Me” than those the punk vegans had. They instead describe a more gradual change in habits and identities:

Well, I began the study of nutrition just for personal reasons last January, I started just studying up on what a healthy diet was really all about. And the more I learned, the more I started to alter my diet. That eventually led me to a point where I found that I wasn't eating any meat, at which point I was considered a vegetarian. I continued to study, and removed more and more things from my diet, at which point I was considered a vegan. So, there aren't definite times, so to speak, there's just general...like a general progression, and the vegetarian and the vegan were just kind of little landmarks that I passed. (Roger, 21)

Roger avoids claiming the identity of vegan outright; he slowly removed items from his diet until he “was considered a vegan.” He even uses the passive voice to describe the changes in his diet and lifestyle—it is as if he did not make the changes, but they merely happened to him. Further, his dietary changes were based on nutrition, as opposed to animal rights, which drives most punk

⁶ These nonpunks use Kant's third formulation of the Categorical Imperative: “the idea of the will of every rational being as making universal laws” (p. 164, in Kolenda 1974). Kant claimed that the secular basis of morality is found in the rational minds of humans, who construct moral laws themselves.

vegans. Food is still an integral part of identity construction to these vegans, even if they are eating non-vegan food. The following quote shows how nonpunk vegans, even if their actions are not in alignment with a vegan identity, still use food to construct their identity:

I was in a really, really, emotionally abusive relationship at the time, so to distance myself from this relationship—because I stayed in it—but to deal with it, I became a different person. So the doctor's saying, "You need to eat fish because you're really sick," and I'm saying, "Well, I don't like who I am anymore, so I'll eat it." That had a lot to do with it. The mental aspects of what was going on, because I never would've done it. I just became a new person. Because I knew better! (Mandy, 22)

It seems that Mandy still wanted to identify herself as a vegan, because she "knew better" when she ate fish. However, since she did not like who she was at the time, she did not feel that her actions were indicative of her vegan identity. Therefore, it was acceptable that she eat food that was not part of her vegan identity.

Nonpunk vegans, not being part of a distinct subculture, do not construct a collective identity in the same way punk vegans do. Since nonpunk vegans are all but devoid of a supportive social network of veganism, they do not form a "we" as punk vegans do. Only nonpunk vegans who are active in the animal rights movement have a "we" that has a common ends (animal rights), means (veganism), and field in which the action takes place (depends upon the action). They are not in a network of relations that discuss veganism, and they are not always invested emotionally. Bronwyn, who is a member of several national animal rights organizations, is the only nonpunk vegan who would qualify as having a collective identity according to Melucci's requisites. She sees veganism as an imperative to being an animal rights activist:

For me, because I was involved in the animal rights movement. For me, [being vegan is] a necessity. If I'm going to be representing animals in a credible way, I cannot be eating them, killing them, or supporting factory farming. So I always knew that, even when I went vegetarian, that veganism was going to be the ultimate goal.

Both punk and nonpunk vegans must construct new vegan identities after going vegan. For punks, who are embedded in supportive social and cultural networks, finding a community basis for a new individual or collective identity is facile. Nonpunks, however, do not enjoy such a ready-made community. They cannot construct a collective vegan identity unless they are members of an animal rights organization, and they must base their individual vegan identities on distant authors and spiritual leaders or on their own rational basis of morality.

Presentation of Self

Since a strong and coherent vegan movement does not exist in the same way that the animal rights movement exists, promoting veganism largely rests in the hands of individual vegans. They have to present themselves, as vegans, to others, who might be “potential vegans.” Thus presentation of self is important for recruiting more vegans. However, recruitment is not the main goal of all vegans. This section will explore the myriad ways punk and nonpunk vegans present themselves, and present veganism, to others.

Presentation of Self—Punks

I asked each respondent if there was such a thing as “ideal” veganism, and almost every person said that ideal veganism would be avoiding all animal products in every aspect of your life. However, each respondent noted that there was no way to accomplish this feat in the world today. To apply punk vegans' presentation of self to ideal veganism, using Goffman's (1959) use of the term “ideal,” I compared their subjective definitions of vegan to the Vegan Society's

definition.⁷ The Vegan Society definition is a common definition, and similar variations appear in most vegan organizations. Each punk respondent avoided meat, fish, and fowl. Some punks did consume honey, and some continued to wear leather or wool. But for the most part, they acted in ways similar to the Vegan Society definition. Thus punk vegans' backstage performance (what they do) is the same as their front stage performance (presenting themselves as vegan).

In actual face-to-face encounters, punk vegans present themselves as vegan and present veganism as a lifestyle to other social actors. Many of the punks had a militant, forceful presentation of self as vegan. They believe that veganism is a morally correct choice and they are correct in their decision to be vegan. Ralph describes how he presents himself as vegan to his family and friends:

When I decided, that same day I told my best friend, I told my parents I'm just not going to eat meat anymore. I was pretty straightforward with everybody. I didn't like to talk about it, because it seemed to make them upset. But I was like, this is what I'm going to do. Just accept it, basically.

Not all punk vegans are forceful in their everyday presentation of selves. But even punk vegans who said they were not militant in their everyday presentation would become forceful if their values or lifestyle was attacked. Jason describes how he went from tolerating attacks to meeting them head on:

People in my family or people in friends' families, there's always someone who's going to be a smart aleck and who will want to challenge you and make fun of it, and I don't really...I used to just tolerate it with my head down and say whatever, but now it's such a strong thing, I'm like no, that's not the way it is, and I'm not going to let you belittle the choice that I made just because it's something that I feel strongly about.

⁷ See Footnote 3 on p. 20 and Appendix B for more clarification.

Another aspect to consider of this sometimes militant presentation of self is the specific times and circumstances surrounding when punks present themselves as vegans. Most of the respondents said they would talk about veganism with someone who asked, but they would not approach strangers and tell them they should be vegan. They said they discuss veganism more with their vegetarian or meat-eating friends who are curious about veganism. Of course, there is one discrepant case among the punks—Andrea says she tells people about veganism even when they do not ask:

I always tell people things they don't want to know. That's the thing I'm pretty well known for at my school. Confronting people, breaking out weird facts, and making people feel really guilty and stuff.

In addition to presenting themselves as vegan, punk vegans must present veganism to other people who may not know what veganism is. Presentation of veganism is different from presentation of self in that many punks do not seem to care if the person to whom they are explaining veganism likes them, but they want them to like the idea of veganism. With this strategy in mind, punk vegans stated that they attempt to gauge what line of reasoning will be best received by the other person. Although every punk said they were vegan for animal rights reasons, none of them present veganism as being directly linked to animal rights. They all said they try to appeal to logic through facts about health and the environment, and then some punks might try to open the discussion to animal rights.

The arguments I use...it's more ethical, it's conserving the environment, and if we use the same amount of land, we could feed so many more people. If we didn't feed animals we could feed people in other countries who are starving or people in our own country who are starving who don't have enough money to buy food all the time. For health, if someone talks about being healthy because they eat lean meat or bake their meat. (Katie)

When defending it I would use more of the environmental and health arguments than just moral things, because it's a lot easier for most people to appeal to logic than to emotion. Emotional appeals can be effective, but not when the person's going to have an equally emotional appeal for eating meat. If you break down some of the more logical issues then it makes it easier to segway into the more moral issues. (Josh)

To bring the idea of collective consciousness into their argument, many punks use collective terms when describing veganism. In the above quote, Katie describes veganism in terms of "we." This technique is reminiscent of the collective identity punk vegans construct as part of the punk subculture. The only discrepant case is that of Mary, who was vegan before she was punk. Mary presents veganism as an individual choice that some people might not understand:

I just tell people that it's my decision, I don't feel that it's right to eat animals and use them. People argue to me that god says it's okay to eat animals and stuff like that, but I don't...I'm not religious at all, so that's not a...I don't know. Sometimes you just can't explain it to people, because if they don't have the compassion, I guess, I don't know, they maybe don't understand why somebody would do that.

Mary's reluctance to describe her veganism in collective terms could stem from her having formed her vegan identity before her punk one. In general, though, most of the punks had a strong presentation of themselves as vegans.

Mary described her reluctance to explain veganism to specific people, such as Christians, who argue from a religious point of view in favor of eating animals. Although Mary shies away from such encounters, other punk vegans do not. I was witness to one such example when attending an anti-McDonald's protest with many punk vegans. As we stood outside the McDonald's with our signs, several people rode past after visiting the drive-through and threw food at us. When one person finally stopped, we thought he might be interested in some of the educational literature we had brought with us. Lucian, one of the vegans in this study, approached the car with literature in hand. The driver asked Lucian what we were doing, and

Lucian then described McDonald's corporate greed and disregard for animal welfare, their own workers, the environment, and people's health. The driver of the car then asked why we were vegetarian, and Lucian explained that we believed that animals have the right to live peacefully and not be tortured by humans. The driver proceeded to tell Lucian that "God put animals on this for humans to use. I'll pray for you." When Lucian tried to counter, the man drove off. But Lucian, like all of the punk vegans except for Mary, stood up for his beliefs.

Presentation of Self—Nonpunks

Nonpunk vegans exemplify an innovative way to avoid losing their credibility as an ideal vegan or, in Goffman's (1959) terms, a way to reconcile their backstage and frontstage performances. Instead of making certain their actions follow the Vegan Society definition of veganism, nonpunk vegans create subjective definitions of veganism. Some nonpunk vegans say that, although they drink milk, they believe in animal rights, so they are still vegan. In redefining veganism for themselves, nonpunks can still believe in their presentation of self as vegan, and they are exercising agency by innovating upon the cultural category of vegan in accordance to their personal interests.

As opposed to punk vegans who are forceful and militant in their presentation of self as vegan, nonpunks are less forceful. They said they would discuss veganism if asked, but would never approach a stranger. The nonpunks who said they would become more forceful if someone attacked their veganism were also members of PETA or other animal rights organizations. Again, it seems that having a collective identity influences a militant presentation of self.

Also, while punks presented veganism in collective terms, nonpunks present veganism in individual terms. Even Bronwyn, who is a member of many animal rights organizations, does

not use “we” statements or universal truths that vegans used. In the following quote, Bronwyn explains her use of “I” messages to present veganism to others:

What can be very compelling is “I” messages. Like for me to talk to people about things that I feel, it’s better received. So I would say “I feel in this way I’m causing less harm to my body, to the animals, and to the environment.” Mostly I say it’s for ethical reasons because I don’t want to support factory farming. I think people would rather I say, oh, I don’t like meat, or I don’t like the taste of it, or I’m just trying to be healthy. Because then that wouldn’t be very controversial. But when they hear what I’m saying, there’s also that aspect of guilt. And I also know that. But I also know that if I’m going to argue with someone, I need to find out what’s important to them. So my argument differs.

Bronwyn’s explanation also includes what many punk vegans did, which is base the argument on what will be best received by the person. The only nonpunk vegan who did not describe such a strategy was Andrea. Andrea said that she always tells people she is vegan for animal rights reasons, and many of her friends are punk vegans. It could be that her social networks influenced her to present veganism as a moral imperative instead of a personal choice. For the most part, the nonpunks presented themselves as vegan in a meeker fashion than the punks.

Identity Salience

A concept related to presentation of self is identity salience, a concept that refers to the strength of one’s identity in different situations. To explore identity salience in punk and nonpunk vegans, I use Stryker’s (1980) hypotheses of identity salience in his symbolic interactionist identity theory.

The first hypothesis of Stryker's that directly relates to vegans states that the larger the number of persons included in a network of commitment premised on a given identity, and for whom that identity is high in their own salience hierarchies, the higher that identity will be in the salience hierarchies (83). Punk vegans are a prime example of this hypothesis, as they are in a social network (the punk subculture) largely premised on the ideal of veganism. While I cannot say whether their punk identity or their vegan identity is higher in their salience hierarchies, both seem to be highly salient in all situations.

The second hypothesis that deals with salience states that the higher an identity in the salience hierarchy, the greater the probability that a person will perceive a given situation as an opportunity to perform in terms of that identity (83). This hypothesis can be exemplified in a statement from Lucian (19, punk), who compares the salience of his vegan identity to that of his former vegetarian one:

[Veganism is] something I constantly think about. It's hard to keep my mind off of it.

In what way?

Almost any kind of decision, like, especially if I'm going shopping. But if I feel sick, and I want to go to the medicine cabinet, I know I'd feel bad if I take any of that, because it's been tested on animals. I guess the main thing is that I can't keep my mind off of it, but before, when I was vegetarian, I only thought about it when I ate. And that's it.

For nonpunk vegans, however, the opportunities to perform in terms of a vegan identity were slightly fewer. Nonpunk vegans did not describe thinking about veganism "all the time," as Lucian did. Their opportunities to "be vegan" primarily occurred when food was involved, which is what Lucian stated as being a central difference between vegetarianism and veganism.

Meredith (25, nonpunk) said that she talks about veganism the most often while at work:

Whenever I start a new job, it always comes up. People love talking about food, I've noticed. People talk about food 24 hours a day! So I always have to say, "Yeah, that's nice, but I don't eat meat." Or stuff like that. I try to bring it up, just sort of like, hey, this is what I do, and it's fine, whatever you do.

Even more telling of the position of their vegan identity in a salience hierarchy is the fact that many nonpunk vegans stated that they would consume non-vegan food if someone offered it to them. In these cases, being polite was higher in the salience hierarchy than being vegan.

Roger (21, nonpunk) describes such a situation:

I don't have any rules. You know what I mean? I know that I am reciprocally connected to my environment in such a way that I have to, just as my actions affect the environment, the environment affects me. And so I'm always trying to listen, not only to what my body is telling me, but also what my surroundings are telling me. And sometimes it tells me I need some fish or something, or I need to go do that, or it's usually if someone offers me some food. And it tells me that I just need to accept this offering for some higher purpose that's a lot more important than my petty diet or something.

A surprising addition to this discussion of salience is the timeline associated with being vegan and being a militant vegan. Telling others about veganism in an attempt to get them to become vegan can be construed as making the personal identity of vegan very high in the salience hierarchy. Many punks were quite militant in their actions when they first became vegan. With time, the strongly militant actions of protesting and acts of non-civil disobedience gave way to more conventional forms of support for veganism, such as cooking vegan food for non-vegans or providing information for those interested. Josh describes his ascent into and decline from serious activism in the following way:

I used to really be into activism, and going out, distributing flyers, talking to people, and we were in a band, and we did it through music, and we tried to bring up a lot of those issues. Now I don't like to think of it on a crusading basis. It's more of people you come in contact with, people you're comfortable talking to anyway. You might bring up something about it, but if they don't care, they don't care.

Other punks described approaching people who were eating meat and telling them about the horrors of slaughterhouses and factory farms. With time, however, their confrontational

tactics lessened and the vegans spent more time talking about veganism only with friends or people who were interested. The salience of their identity as vegan moved from being very strong at the beginning of their lifestyle change to a less salient characteristic in other situations.

Nonpunks, alternatively, described spending less time crusading for veganism and more time trying to promote veganism as a viable lifestyle option. Sam, a health- and environmental-based nonpunk vegan, used this quote from Gandhi as inspiration: “You must become the change you wish to see.” This quote is particularly poignant for many nonpunk vegans, as they described being afraid to try veganism until they saw other people who were living “normal lives” as vegans. By setting an example as a “normal person” who is vegan, many nonpunks hoped to garner support from animal lovers and environmentalists for whom a punk aesthetic did not appeal.

The salience of their newfound identity as vegan was not always on the forefront as it was with many punks. Some nonpunks shied away from using the term vegan, even if they practiced all the habits of a vegan. They preferred to be known for other aspects of their lifestyle, not just for veganism. The problematic application of the term vegan is described by two respondents in the following ways:

For me, veganism is just a label. And so...a person is much more than a word. And a word can never really encompass a person. (Roger, 21)

If you consider yourself a vegan, you’re making the differentiation philosophically. You’re making the differentiation because you want to be different, I suppose, than the rest who are non-vegans. Because you think that what you do, I think most people feel that it’s important, and that’s why they’re doing it, that’s why they...like I don’t say, “Hey, I’m a vegan!” but it’s a convenient label that we now have. (Charles, 26)

Being a member of the punk subculture, which promotes veganism and animal rights, seems to have an initially strong effect on the salience of a vegan identity. Although the punks’

high-salience vegan identity diminishes somewhat, it is still higher than nonpunks' identity salience. For nonpunks, their vegan identity is only salient in specific situations, such as those including food.

Commitment

Commitment is an important concept to consider when studying vegans, for a number of reasons. Not only does it simply take a high level of commitment to maintain a vegan lifestyle in a society whose basic foods include meat and animal products, the entire vegan movement is premised upon people making a permanent lifestyle change. To examine commitment in punk and nonpunk vegans, I will use Kanter's (1968) study of commitment mechanisms. The three main mechanisms she describes are continuance, cohesion, and control commitment.

Commitment—Punks

In Kanter's description of continuance commitment, sacrifice to and investment in the group results in a higher commitment to the group.⁸ For punk vegans, continuance commitment involved a sacrifice that led to social solidarity among other punk vegans, as evidenced in the following quote from Andrea:

I think that if you're vegan and if you meet somebody else who's vegan there's a connection and a personal respect because it's something you're doing, and that person is doing, and most of the world isn't.

Not only did punk vegans feel that they were in a unique social group because of their sacrifice for veganism, they felt their sacrifice affected them in a positive way.⁹ In the following quote, Jason describes the positive effects of abstinence from animal products:

⁸ Continuance commitment is similar to Durkheim's description of the negative cult (1995). In the negative cult, prohibitions and taboos constitute the negative cult, which is a precondition of access to the positive cult as well as a form of social solidarity.

⁹ Durkheim's negative cult is again echoed here, when he says that an unexpected reaction to the inhibiting effect of the negative cult is its positive and highly important influence upon the religious and moral nature of the individual (313). The negative cult is a means to an end, because humans can only approach the sacred by distancing themselves from the profane. It is a precondition of access to the positive cult.

When you make a decision to abstain from something, it adds that much more strength to your willpower. So that's good. And it allows you to have that much more willpower when other situations arrive. So it's like, if I can not do this, something I was raised to do my whole life, then I can do some other thing.

When asked what the positive aspects of veganism were, many punk vegans responded in somewhat similar ways to Jason. They said they felt they were doing the right thing for animals and the environment, or that they were doing their duty. In Kanter's terms, they had a positive cognitive orientation to their veganism.

Becker (1960) has a similar theory on commitment that he calls "making a side bet" (36). His theory describes the unanticipated involvement of other sources of reward once a line of action has been chosen, and the side bet is that the chosen line of action will be rewarding. With punk vegans, they have already chosen a line of action: veganism. Many respondents said that they went vegan with no regard for how it would affect other aspects of their lives as in the following quote from JD:

I was punk rock, I didn't give a shit about anything.
You weren't worried, like, before, I got all my protein from hamburgers, and now...?
I did not give a shit. I still skateboarded at this point in time so I didn't give a shit about my body.

Many punk vegans said they originally went vegan after learning about animal rights, and later learned how to be a healthy vegan. They dove into veganism headfirst, such as JD, who went vegan in one day. Once they learned how to eat a balanced vegan diet, they began to reap the unexpected benefits, as in Becker's side bet. Not only were they helping animals with their lifestyle, they also became healthier. To put this example into a larger perspective, every punk vegan listed animal rights as a reason to go vegan, and none listed health. However, eight of the eleven punk vegans cited improved health as an unexpected perk.

Cohesion commitment, Kanter's second of three types of commitment, links emotional attachments to relationships. Renunciation, communion, and persecution support cohesion. Lawler (1996, 2000) developed a similar theory called relational cohesion theory. Lawler states that two processes lead to commitment: social bonding (emotions from social interactions) and boundary defining (shared group identity).

Punk vegans definitely share a group identity, as they form a collective identity of "we" as described in the identity construction section. They feel positively about interactions with other group members, which will be seen in the social networks section as an affinity or a mutual respect. But what Kanter contends is necessary for cohesion to occur is persecution. Many punk vegans went punk in high school, and some went vegan in high school as well. At a time when most teenagers are trying to fit into a social crowd (Youniss and Smollar 1985), these teenagers had two strikes against their chances of fitting in. In the following quote, Jason describes the atmosphere of his small town when he and his friends were becoming interested in punk rock and animal rights:

There was a small group of us that was getting into the whole punk thing and punk music together, so we were there for each other, but we were the only ones. All of our other friends just ate whatever all the time. And like I said, they all thought we were weird anyway, so they just thought it was some kind of weird thing we were doing to protest or stand against something. And they asked us why and they would make pointing, judgmental questions like "You're still wearing a leather belt, you're still wearing shoes with leather on them."

Control commitment is the final type of commitment as described by Kanter. This type of commitment links evaluative orientations to norms, and shows commitment to social control and norms. Mortification and surrender support control commitment. Mortification is a negative process and involves exchanging one's private identity for one provided and controlled by the organization. This facet of commitment is rarely seen in punk vegans, unless they are part of an

organized social movement. Only one punk vegan experienced such mortification, when he became deeply embedded in the animal liberation movement. In the following quote, Josh describes his experience in the movement and its ramifications on his individual identity:

It was just one of those things where you get sucked into a movement, and the inherent flaw with movements is that they begin to homogenize people. I felt like I wasn't growing as a person and you get to the point where you only do things for the movement and you kind of have tunnel vision and you only see things in terms of the movement and you don't see the broader issues. I realized that friendships based on social and political goals were really weak, and I guess I got disillusioned with the fact that I felt like the people I was surrounded with weren't really enriching my life. Everything was so functional and impersonal. The whole movement aspect of it that I just wanted to get away from.

The punk subculture is a more broad-based group, and one can be a member without having to lose one's individual identity. Kanter says, however, that a social actor can surrender her identity to a larger system of authority that gives meaning and direction to her life. Surrender is a positive process in control commitment. For surrender to occur, the social actor must experience great power and meaning in the social organization, or in this case, in veganism.

Many punk vegans experience great power and meaning in veganism to the extent that they have more respect for other vegans who practice veganism the same way they do. Some of the punk vegans look down on people who say they support "vegan" causes, such as animal rights or the environment, but who eat meat.¹⁰ Commitment to such an ideology, to some punk vegans, can only be legitimate if the social actor "walks the walk" as well as "talks the talk." The following quote from Katie echoes what many other punk vegan said: "I'll kind of look at them as a hypocrite if they say, 'I care about animals,' or 'I care about the environment, but...' It's always the 'but.'"

¹⁰ Surrendering one's identity is similar to Weber's thoughts on charisma (1978). Weber says that a charismatic leader and his disciples must turn away from the world in order to live up to their mission (1113). Their "charismatic education" includes isolation and asceticism. Weber also says that legitimacy comes from personal strength, or proving one's powers in practice (1114).

Another part of the process of surrender takes place when the personal identity is fused with the social identity, “so that the carrying out of system demands becomes a moral necessity for the maintenance of the self” (514). This statement echoes Goffman’s theory that was applied in the presentation of self section. In order to fully believe the role they are playing, punk vegans maintain the same identity for their front and backstage performances. They are vegans around their friends and when they are alone.

Punk vegans maintain their vegan identity through premeditated choices to not work at restaurants that serve meat or to only buy products that are not tested on animals. They travel with the book *Animal Ingredients A to Z* (Smith Collective 1997) to ensure they are always eating vegan food. They even prefer to date other vegans to avoid potential problems from clashing ideologies. Depending upon the level of surrender, however, this maintenance is a “moral necessity.” Many punk vegans describe veganism as a moral imperative, and they think that if a person wants to lead a morally just lifestyle, they would be vegan.

Punk vegans do commit to norms when defining their veganism, however. Most punk vegans adhere to the Vegan Society definition and they are frustrated when other people do not. Many punk vegans described knowing people who call themselves vegan but who eat fish, dairy products, or eggs. While they said they understand that not everyone can be as strictly vegan as they might be, loose definitions only harm other vegans. In the following quote, Ralph depicts the value of strict definitions of veganism:

I have friends who call themselves vegetarian, but they eat fish, too. And it frustrates me a little bit, because people go to a restaurant and say, “I’m a vegetarian.” “Oh, you eat chicken.” “No, I’m a vegetarian.” “Oh, you eat fish.” “No, I’m a vegetarian, I don’t eat any meat.” “Okay, so you don’t eat flesh, but it’s okay if you have chicken stock or beef stock.” You know? And I think people who call themselves vegetarian and eat these certain things, or people who call themselves vegan and eat these certain things, it makes it hard for those people who are actually really strict about the definitions to try to go out.

The beginning of this section explored the three main ways in which punk vegans maintain commitment to the vegan lifestyle and their vegan identity. While being highly committed, especially with the aid of a vegan-friendly subculture, no one is a perfect vegan. Now I will investigate the circumstances surrounding times when punk vegans eat non-vegan food, or backslide.

Eight of the eleven respondents described a situation in which they ate non-vegan food, by accident or on purpose. Some of them provided justifications such as being new to veganism or being poor. Four of the respondents called their backsliding “freeganing.”¹¹ Two of the respondents said that they ate honey in other items, but had no explanation for eating what was, in their terms, “without a doubt, that’s an animal product.”

The explanations for backsliding are not as sociologically interesting as the circumstances surrounding their backsliding. Six of the eight respondents who admitted to backsliding did so away from their vegan friends, who act as a support group. This link was not a part of the punk vegans’ explanations; for them, it was merely part of their story. Only sometimes this separation from their support group was permanent—two of the respondents had moved to different states. Most of the time, however, the backsliding occurred while the respondents were on tour with their band, at a conference in another city, or on vacation with their family. These circumstances surrounding backsliding will be further explored in the social networks section.

¹¹ Freegan is a term specific to the punk vegan subculture, which means eating vegetarian (but not vegan) food if it is free and if it is going to be thrown away. I did not ask respondents their opinion on freeganing, but from my observations, it is accepted in certain social networks. I do not recall any punk vegans critiquing the practice of freeganing in the interviews or in informal social situations.

Commitment—Nonpunks

In this section I will explore the three forms of commitment as relates to the behavior of nonpunk vegans. Continuance commitment is the first type of commitment, that which links cognitive orientations to roles. Kanter contends that sacrifice to the group enhances this type of commitment. In the punk section we looked at punk vegans' sacrifice as having positive results and as being linked to social solidarity. For nonpunk vegans, however, their sacrifice is not linked to a group. It is more often explained by individual propensities for being austere, such as when Bronwyn says that some people are "predisposed" to being vegan. Meredith echoes Bronwyn's sentiments in the following quote, where she explains the sacrifices that vegans make:

I don't think that everyone could be vegan, just because the things that it entails does require a certain amount of sacrifice, if you want to call it that. Most people that I know are really concerned with convenience, and that's why they eat meat to begin with. So I think that would make it really difficult. Because I don't know most people that would go to a restaurant and just not eat if there wasn't anything...people would just eat whatever they could. So I obviously don't think that everyone was meant to be vegan.

Neither Meredith nor any other nonpunk vegans described their sacrifices as being linked to a social network nor to anything resembling positive ends. Their sacrifices were part of what makes veganism veganism.

In his article on commitment, Becker (1960) described making a side bet as receiving unexpected positive outcomes from commitment to a different cause. For punk vegans, that side bet was improved health. For nonpunk vegans, however, such a side bet is not as easily discernable. Since nonpunk vegans were not all part of the same subculture nor even of the same social network, they did not have a common definition of veganism to which they adhered.

Moreover, they did not all have the same reasons for going vegan in the first place. Since all the punks went vegan for animal rights purposes, health was an unexpected perk.

All of the nonpunk vegans went vegan for different (yet overlapping) reasons, such as animal rights, the environment, health, sustainable living, and ethics, to name a few. Since many of the nonpunk vegans listed health as one of the primary reasons for going vegan, they could not again list it as an unexpected perk. A few of the side bets resembled punk vegans' responses in other categories of why they are vegan, such as the community that surrounds veganism and the consciousness-raising of which they are a part in their everyday lives. An explanation could be that, since nonpunk vegans did more research into veganism before changing their lifestyles, they were aware of the myriad benefits that veganism had, and thus none of the benefits would qualify as "unexpected."

Cohesion is the second type of commitment, which links emotions to relationships. In addition to Kanter's description of cohesion, I also used Lawler's theory of relational cohesion, which states that emotions from social interaction and shared group identity lead to commitment. Both theories rely on emotions to create commitment to an action or a group. While many nonpunks did have strong emotional attachments to their vegan lifestyle, they also showed how a lack of attachment can lead to backsliding. Mandy was an on-again, off-again vegan and vegetarian for a number of years. She said that she supported animal rights as a teenager long before she thought about going vegetarian, but she did not do much research into going vegan. In the following quote, Mandy describes how her lack of knowledge of veganism aided her backsliding:

[My roommate] got a lot of food free from her work, and you couldn't say, "No, well, that's not vegan." I had been landscaping for twelve hours and I said, "I think I'll eat that." I don't think I had enough going on in my head about it, because I'm sure I would have found an alternative if I knew more about the actual politics behind it. But for some reason I didn't.

Mandy ascribes her backsliding to a lack of knowledge of the politics behind the practice of veganism. However, not all nonpunks showed that knowledge leads to practice. Stuart is another on-again, off-again vegan whose practices do not always reflect his beliefs. Not only does he have the requisite cognitive liberation to become vegan, his main life philosophy supports veganism. In the following quote, Stuart shows how a knowledge of the politics behind the practice of veganism is not enough to maintain a vegan lifestyle:

I've been a vegetarian since 1993. And I sometimes go without drinking milk for a while, and sometimes I drink milk and eat cheese, so I've been off and on as far as drinking milk or cattle or cow products is concerned. And I understand that the vegan, the true vegan vegetarian, they do not even partake in any animal products, not even bees' honey. So from time to time, I can call myself a true vegan vegetarian. But milk is my only deviation from a true vegan. I consider myself vegan because their philosophy is that they don't believe in cruelty to animals. And my main philosophy is that I don't believe that we should be in any way bothering God's creatures. Of course, drinking milk deviates from that a little bit.

Stuart realizes his behavior deviates from what he and others consider to be a true vegan. He does not rely on his behavior to define himself as vegan, though. He uses his religious philosophy as the backbone of his vegan identity, even if his practices do not always reflect that philosophy. Thus for nonpunks, an emotional attachment is often there, but it is not sufficient to maintain a vegan lifestyle.

This downfall of Kanter's and Lawler's theories leads to Stryker's identity theory again. As applied in the previous section, the theory states that the higher the salience of an identity and the more embedded a social actor is in a network, the higher the commitment to an identity. Nonpunk vegans are not embedded in social networks that are supportive of veganism, except for Bronwyn, who is a member of many national animal rights organizations. Also, as shown in the identity salience section, nonpunks' vegan identity is not always highly salient. Therefore, if

nonpunks have the requisite emotional attachment for Kanter's and Lawler's theories but are not always committed to veganism, the reason for their backsliding could be found in their lack of supportive social networks and their low salience of their vegan identity.

The third type of commitment in Kanter's theory is control commitment, which links evaluative orientations to one's commitment to social control and norms. The processes of mortification and surrender support control cohesion. Mortification is a negative process that is not seen in nonpunk vegans, even those who are part of animal rights organizations. Surrender is the positive process that occurs when a social actor experiences great power and meaning in the social organization, or in this case, in veganism. Just as punk vegans replied, some of the nonpunk vegans also look down on people who say they support "vegan" causes, such as animal rights or the environment, but who eat meat. Not only do nonpunks sanction those who do not "walk the walk" even though they "talk the talk," they sanction themselves for any lapses from veganism. They may do so as an internal maintenance or to prevent others from questioning their legitimacy as a vegan. Bronwyn describes one reason she maintains a strict vegan lifestyle in the following quote:

I just feel to be more credible as an animal rights activist, as a source of information, even to carnivorous people or people who don't even care about animals, they expect that you're walking the walk. And so if you are eating animals, you're kind of discrediting your ability. You have less ability to be influential or helpful, because people will call you a hypocrite and discount what you say.

This type of preventative maintenance fits with the other aspect of control commitment, which states that in surrender the personal identity is fused with the social identity, "so that the carrying out of system demands becomes a moral necessity for the maintenance of the self" (514). As described in the punk section of control commitment, this idea echoes Goffman's theory on presentation of self. In order to appear legitimate to others, a social actor must believe in the role

she is playing. Belief in that role comes from reconciling her front and backstage performances, so that a vegan is vegan in public as well as at home.

Not all nonpunk vegans fit the theory in this section of surrender. While I have shown that many nonpunk vegans are emotionally attached to their veganism, they do not all see it as a “moral necessity.” This statement is especially true since not all nonpunk vegans gave moral or ethical reasons for their veganism. As Samuel explains in the following quote, his veganism is not a moral imperative:

Well, I mean, I think that the main thing again is for the reasons that I’m doing it, if it’s for environmental sustainability and health reasons, then small amounts occasionally isn’t really going to have that detrimental an effect.

The idea of veganism not being a moral imperative leads to the discussion of backsliding in nonpunk vegans. I explained punk vegans’ backsliding by their absence from their supportive subculture and social networks. Collective explanations for backsliding work well for punk vegans, since they have a collective approach to being and staying vegan. Since nonpunk vegans have a more individual approach to veganism, I must find another explanation for their backsliding. To do so, I use Mead’s theory of the “I”, which will complement the “Me” as discussed in the identity construction section.

While the “Me” is the self of which one is aware, the object of self-action, the “I” is the active aspect of the self. It is the self doing action, and its actions are uncertain. Taking into account even the subjective definitions of veganism, which allow for minor breaches such as eating honey, some nonpunk vegans go so far as to eat meat. The following statement is an example of Mead’s “I” in action:

But then now and again, especially when I came back to the States, my family would order hot wings. And I'm really a big fan of hot wings. There's just something really very intoxicating about the loads of cayenne pepper. And so I would break my vegetarianism often for these hot wings. And there was no rhyme or reason to it, it was just to maximize my enjoyment in life. (Para, 25)

If nonpunk vegans do not have external factors to keep them from backsliding, their behaviour might be explained by internal factors such as the "I." They have no social control from their friends, so the uncertain actions of their "I" might be to blame for their backsliding.

Social Networks

The two preceding sections have outlined major differences between punks' and nonpunks' vegan identities and commitments to veganism. What accounts for such differences? One possibility is that veganism has become a norm in the contemporary punk subculture, and that punk vegans' strong vegan identities and commitments are reflections of their subcultural identity. Since punk is a spectacular subculture, with aggressive expressions of subcultural identity, the brashness they exhibit as vegans could be accounted for by their membership in a confrontational subculture. On the other hand, one could argue that nonpunk vegans, by virtue of their solitary conversions to veganism, have a stronger commitment. Nonpunks do not have a ready-made support group to help them become vegans, so they might have stronger motivations to be vegan. In this section I will show that the difference does not lie in subcultural affiliation, but that the social networks provided by the punk subculture are a more likely basis for the difference in identity and commitment between punk and nonpunk vegans. This section includes an analysis of the breadth and strength of punks' and nonpunks' social networks, and in this analysis I will link social networks to identity and commitment.

Since social networks were quite far from my mind when constructing my interview schedule, I do not have data rich enough to qualify as a true network analysis. Nonetheless, I

have conducted an analysis of certain aspects of punk and nonpunk vegans' social networks, using the data I do have. As a result I have depictions of how friends and other ties provide impetus to go and stay vegan, and how culture and networks intermingle and work towards the same purpose. Finally, I will discuss the implications of using network theory as the link between mobilization, identity, and commitment.

Networks and Culture

In the following analysis I will demonstrate that punk and nonpunk vegans have contrasting social networks. According to Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994), a social network is one of many possible sets of social relations of a specific content that link actors within a larger social structure (1417). Many differing social relations exist between punk and nonpunk vegans; the two most directly relevant to their veganism being the culture they consume and their embeddedness in a social network.

Using a relational analysis or "social cohesion" framework, one of two main conceptual strategies in explaining networks (Burt 1980), I will focus on the direct and indirect connections among social actors to explain the two aforementioned relations. At the macro level, I agree with the structural determinist model of relational sociology in arguing that social structure influences behavior. To begin on the micro-level, however, I will attempt to link ideas to humans and not humans to organizations, as many in the field do.

I do believe that social actors make meaning on a microlevel, through symbolic interaction, but I also see the influence of larger structures on social behavior. To describe the following analysis, I will borrow from Goffman's (1959) stage analogy: social actors have front and backstage performances, as Goffman has amply illustrated. In enlarging the analysis to include performances in different social networks, it is similar to analyzing social actors'

performances, but comparing their performances in different theaters. Do the performances differ, and in what ways? The analyses of identity and commitment show how the performances differ, and the analysis of punk and nonpunks' differing social networks should shed light on reasons for such differences.

The analysis that follows will compare punks and nonpunks across two major aspects of social networks—culture and network embeddedness. While contrasting the differing social networks of punks and nonpunks, I will allude back to the identity and commitment sections to show the links between the three concepts.

Social Networks—Punks

Punk Culture

Having defined punk for the purposes of this analysis, I now attempt to answer the following question: what aspects of the punk subculture influence social networks and veganism? Of the eleven punks in this sample, ten of them were punk before they were vegan. Only one respondent said that she went vegan first and then started listening to punk music. The ten were already immersed in the punk subculture, which contains such anti-hegemonic values as anti-globalization, pro-animal rights, pro-human rights, and DIY.¹² From this statistic alone, one would wonder what aspect of the punk subculture influences its members to become vegan? From the interviews of this sample of punk vegans, recruitment, friends, and support from the subculture are key elements that aid punks in going vegan.

In their survey of network literature, Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994) cite two major shortcomings of the structural determinist model. First, they state that the assumption that social

¹² DIY: do-it-yourself; most commonly exhibited in supporting the punk subculture in ways that do not rely on corporations, such as producing and distributing their own records, playing or organizing house shows instead of convening at large clubs, making their own t-shirts and stickers, or making fliers to promote punk shows or political causes. See the glossary in Appendix C for other definitions.

networks can best be conceptualized as “linking together ‘concrete’ ideas such as persons or organizations” is a common misconception. Rather, sociologists should think of social networks as also embodying ideals, discursive frameworks, and “cognitive maps” (1427). They also contend that structural determinism neglects the potential causal significance of symbolic and discursive foundations (1436). I propose that punk vegans provide an example to remedy these shortcomings. The punk subculture embodies many progressive ideals, and the symbolism and discourse of punk music are linked to many punk vegans’ decisions to go vegan. The punk subculture also provides a framework that punk vegans use to make sense of the world and how it relates to animal rights.

Recruitment to Veganism—Punks

Network analyses of social movements have shown that recruitment into the movement is most successful through friends, acquaintances, and kin (Tilly 1978, Snow et al. 1980). Such an analysis is too simplistic for describing punk vegans, who learn of veganism in myriad ways. Punk vegans had their first encounters with veganism and primarily learned about veganism through the punk subculture and from punk friends. At punk and hardcore shows in Europe and in the United States, it is a common occurrence to see a table filled with literature on veganism and animal rights next to the table where the band sells their records and t-shirts.

I, too, learned about veganism through attending hardcore shows. I was a vegetarian for over two years, and one of my college roommates was vegan. However, even after knowing her for two years I did not have a clear idea of the reasons to be vegan. When I attended university in France for one year, I attended local punk and hardcore shows and became friends with the punks who organized the shows. They set up tables of information at each show, and I took many fliers and zines on animal rights and veganism. After reading the fliers and discussing

veganism with these punks over the year, I decided I would become vegan upon my return to the States. It is noteworthy that two years of close friendship would not change my lifestyle, but immersion in the punk and hardcore subculture would lead to making that change.

Many punk vegans said they had never heard of veganism until they started listening to punk music, and through frequent interaction in the punk subculture, they met vegans who taught them about the lifestyle. In a way similar to many punks I interviewed, Jason describes how he learned of veganism through listening to records and learning about the bands:

The biggest one, the one that had the most impact was the band Crass. That was one of the big, they were one of the first punk bands ever, and a lot of their stuff is about vegetarianism. (...) They were one of the first bands that we got into, and we started realizing the more records we bought, it was a big thing that the punk movement was a largely vegetarian movement, at the very least. We actually had no idea. The love of the music and the sound of the music came first, but just being conscious people and reading the lyrics, we were just like “wow.” These people were talking about changing things, and this is one of the things they’re talking about. It just seemed like, it seemed to make sense. And it came across in a way that it’s not some hippie politics. It’s something that anybody could and should do.

Other ways in which punks learned about veganism were by reading the liner notes of punk records, contacting animal rights groups that were mentioned by punk bands, or reading articles about veganism in zines.

Simply learning about veganism is not always enough impetus for punks to become vegan. A couple of respondents said they knew about veganism when they began listening to punk and subsequently became vegetarian. They said that, while veganism was their ultimate goal, they did not immediately become vegan.

And I had said from the beginning, the moment I went vegetarian, I said, “I’d like to go vegan, but I don’t think I can.” But I never made the effort for two years. So I guess the first time it occurred to me, well, immediately after going vegetarian I knew that I’d like to, and that according to my moral...my beliefs I should be vegan, but I just didn’t have any faith in myself. I didn’t try for two years. (David, 24)

David's dilemma leads to the second aspect of the punk subculture that helps punks go vegan, which is friends. David had no vegan friends at the time, which impeded his going vegan. The next section explores the importance of vegan friends in the punk subculture.

Friends—Punks

Most of the punks in this sample, seven of the eleven, said they learned of veganism from the punk subculture in some way. Citing more than one influence, seven again stated that they also learned about veganism from their friends. All of the friends from whom they learned about veganism were punks as well. Anecdotal estimates of the number of vegan friends ranged from one fifth to one half, and the implications of these friendships will be discussed in the network embeddedness section.

Support—Punks

Friends, and even organizations, can act as support groups for vegans. Donna Maurer (2000), in her book on the vegetarian movement, contends that local and national vegetarian organizations provide the necessary social support for vegans, who lead a deviant dietary lifestyle: "Vegetarian organizations, despite their lack of public visibility, are the backbone of the vegetarian way of life" (2). My findings are quite the contrary. Only one of the twenty-four vegans I interviewed had ever attended a national conference, only two are members of a national organization, and none of the respondents are members of a local vegetarian group. If they do not find support in such organizations, they must find it somewhere else.

Punk vegans had ample support from their friends and the punk subculture. This support included becoming vegan together, helping backsliding friends become stricter vegans again, listening to vegan bands and buying their records specifically because they are vegan, and having

vegan potlucks with the band before a punk show. Josh describes the importance of a supportive network when becoming vegan and helping backsliding vegans in the following quote:

When I finally decided I was going to be vegan I talked to one of my friends and he was vegetarian at the time and we were like, “We should be vegan, we really need to do it.” We kindof made a pact to go vegan, like “Let’s do it! We’re going to do it.” So we did it, and a couple of our friends that were kindof being slack on being vegan, we were like, “Come on, you have to do it.” And they followed a little bit later. So it was a personal decision, but I guess it probably wasn’t at first. I mean, it helps to do it in a group. Not letting other people think for you, but it’s easier if you have kindof like a support system.

The actual music also acts as a support system for punk vegans. Hearing pro-vegan lyrics and seeing a vegan band reinforces belief in veganism. Jason describes his reaction to seeing vegan bands:

But to see a band and to hear a band openly and verbally and actively defy what everyone else is doing, it just makes you feel like, “Yeah, I’m doing the right thing. I’m doing what I need to be doing.” It just makes you have more faith in yourself.

Jason’s statement acknowledges what many networks analysts ignore: the power of culture. The following section explores punk vegans’ participation in and consumption of the punk subculture.

Participation and Consumption—Punks

In the appendix on definitions of vegan, punk, and nonpunk, David provides an eloquent definition of punk that I use for this analysis. When David describes what punk means to him, he describes punk rock in terms of ideas, such as social movement, social awareness, and social activism, not in concrete terms of punks being in a group, or a club, or a clique. To David, and to many other punks, punk rock and the punk subculture mean many things—a set of ideals to live by, a way of life, or a perspective on humanity. Being a member of the punk subculture provides one with information on veganism, and possibly the impetus to go vegan. The

connection of punks to the subculture is not only with the music or the membership, but it is also with the more abstract ideals the subculture promotes. Lucian describes his decision to go vegan after many years in the punk subculture:

I was listening to some of those bands before I was vegetarian, like Youth of Today. But when I got more into the music scene, it became easier to become vegetarian. It was almost like you felt obligated to do it. But I think the music came first, but then (being vegetarian) definitely fed the music thing, like I'd read about some vegan band in a zine or something. So I'd read about bands like that and I'd definitely get into them because I felt like...I definitely felt like it helped that I had something in common with those bands.

The ideals espoused by many in the punk community not only imbue the spirit of the punk subculture, they often provide information that could be a specific catalyst for going vegan. The discourse of the punk bands in their songs, in their liner notes, and in the zines that describe the music, can all influence punks to go vegan. The direct influence of culture has previously been ignored by network theorists, but the following emic testimony attests to the possibility of the influence of punk discourse:

I was listening to a speech at the end of this Hare Krishna CD, and he said something and it immediately just clicked. I said to myself I would never eat meat again. I think I had even eaten it that day, and I said I would never eat it again. (Josh, 22)

While not every punk vegan has such a catalytic experience while listening to the music, it is nonetheless important to note the strength of the vegan discourse in punk music, which is so strong it could make Josh go vegetarian the moment he heard it. When describing how he decided to go vegan, he never cited reference books, fliers, or the like. He only described listening to that album and seeing other punk bands.

The punk vegans in this sample, in addition to consuming vegan-friendly music, also participate in the punk music subculture. Five of the eleven punk vegans support the punk subculture in at least one way: four of them are in political/vegan punk bands, two organize

house shows, and one has a distro and a zine. Three of the respondents participate in Food Not Bombs, which does not explicitly call itself punk, but is often linked to the punk subculture.

Punk shows are excellent venues for supporting veganism. The evening often begins with a vegan potluck, after which the bands play, and then they sell merchandise and distribute vegan and animal rights literature. David describes his experiences with punk shows and veganism:

A lot of the punk scene is vegan. I don't know if that is as widespread in the world punk scene as it is here in Athens, but in Athens there are a lot of vegans and freegans. For a lot of the shows we'll have a vegan potluck.

Jason can answer David's question about the world punk subculture with experiences from his band's tour in Europe, which coincide with my experiences in the punk subculture in the United States and in Europe:

Our band, two falls ago, we went on tour to Europe. A lot of places we played at, especially in Germany, we played at a lot of squats and a lot of punk-run places. And they were really big on feeding bands from far away. It's just understood that you're going to get fed, and all the meals are vegan. Every meal in the squat was vegan. There wasn't even a question.

Other ways in which the punk subculture and my respondents are linked to veganism include distros, zines, and Food Not Bombs. Andrea runs a distro, through which she buys and sells music, t-shirts, buttons, patches, fliers, and books about punk rock and veganism. She also writes her own zine, which she describes as "completely political and about animal rights and there's always something about veganism in every single issue."

Finally, three of the punks participate in Food Not Bombs, a world-wide group with local chapters that distributes vegetarian food to the homeless and needy.¹³ While not specifically a punk organization, many participants are punk and when a benefit album was recorded for Food Not Bombs, all of the bands were punk or hardcore.

Symbol—Punks

Another way in which the punk subculture is linked to veganism is through symbols. When asked if there were any symbols that would define a person as vegan, four of the respondents said that t-shirts or patches of vegan bands would prompt them to think that the wearer was vegan. Ralph replied, “Certain band shirts, if I see somebody wearing a Propagandhi shirt, I think that maybe that guy is into some of the same stuff that I’m into. Definitely band shirts.” This infusion of veganism in the punk subculture will be contrasted with the complete lack thereof in the culture consumed by the nonpunk respondents.

Social Networks—Nonpunks

Nonpunk Culture

As opposed to the punk vegans, who participated in the punk subculture, nonpunk vegans had no subcultural affiliation. Two of the respondents might call themselves hippies, and two others said they listened to indie rock, but there was no overarching subculture in which they participated. How did dominant culture or their social worlds influence social networks and veganism in the nonpunk respondents? I begin with the three aspects that were first discussed in the punk subculture section: recruitment, friends, and support.

¹³ Internet Site www.foodnotbombs.net

Recruitment to Veganism—Nonpunks

Only a couple of nonpunk vegans said they learned about veganism from vegan friends. Most nonpunk vegans said they learned about veganism through personal research into vegetarianism. As opposed to certain punk vegans who went vegan immediately from a meat-based diet, all of the nonpunk respondents were vegetarian before becoming vegan. Through internet research and reading vegetarian resource books, they learned about the diet and the diverse reasons supporting it.

Other nonpunks still described learning about veganism from fliers distributed by vegan or animal rights activist groups, which they received at information tables, restaurants, and health food stores. Sam, a 31-year-old nonpunk vegan, describes his indoctrination into the vegan lifestyle with a mixture of influences:

I was dating somebody who was vegan. And so that was really the main influence that started it, and then after that, I read more about it. I read *Diet for a New America*, by John Robbins, oh—and that was also another, reading a book *Diet for a Small Planet* was one of the main reasons I became vegetarian. And then *Diet for a New America* influenced me to become vegan.

Books such as those cited by Sam, as well as cookbooks such as *The Yoga Cookbook* and other resource books, were referred to as influential by many nonpunk vegans. Instead of using restricted codes of punk music, nonpunk vegans use elaborated codes found in books that can be purchased at any major corporate bookstore.

Friends—Nonpunks

Again, only a couple of nonpunk vegans said that they had any vegan friends at all. And, as opposed to many of the punks who went vegan with another friend, only two of the nonpunk respondents, a couple, went vegan together. Other aspects of friendship will be discussed in the network embeddedness section.

Support—Nonpunks

As evidenced in the punk section above, the vegans in this sample do not find support from national or local organizations, and not all have the support of vegan friends. Among the nonpunk vegans, one respondent said that she did find support from active membership in animal rights organizations, and another said that he found an understanding community at the local health foods co-op, which sponsors potlucks from time to time.

The one nonpunk who was a member of several national animal rights organizations did say that she found her source of support from attending animal rights conferences. As opposed to punk vegans who find support in the everyday culture they consume as members of a supportive subculture, she only finds support in the culture of the annual animal rights conferences:

And I like going to those conferences because for once I feel like I'm surrounded by people...I'm more relaxed and I feel I can say exactly what I'm thinking and not worry that I'm offending someone. And just surrounded by like-minded people. And I always found it so difficult to go back to work after these conferences and be among regular society and have them bring me down off cloud nine. (Bronwyn, 30)

Another nonpunk said that he found a supportive culture at the local health food store. Knowing that other people were vegan seemed to help his decision to go and stay vegan.

And then I started going to the natural food store, I felt kindof like, I don't know, I felt like I was home or something, like I think back on it now, very nostalgically. Because when I first discovered that place and started going there, it was really cool, because I didn't feel so alone, and it made it easier. It gave me a lot of motivation to keep it up and to learn more. (Roger, 21)

Cultural Consumption—Nonpunks

While arguably the majority of material culture consumed and produced by the punk vegan respondents dealt directly with veganism, was there any material culture that nonpunks consumed that was associated with veganism? Some of the punks stated that they listen to some bands specifically because they are vegan, but the nonpunks said almost the exact opposite. When asked if any of his favorite authors or bands were associated with veganism or vegetarianism, Sam replied, “I guess, I mean, Tolstoy, but I don’t necessarily look for groups or whatever that are vegan or vegetarian.” When the same question was posed to Charles, he replied in a manner that made the question almost sound laughable: “I don’t know, specifically, that’s not important to me. God, wouldn’t that be a far extent of veganism, you can’t listen to music that’s produced by a meat-eater.”

Some nonmaterial culture in which nonpunks participate is supportive of veganism, even if not directly associated with it. Two of the nonpunk respondents described “potluck culture” as being supportive of veganism.

Like when the co-op has potlucks, because so many people around there are vegan, or most of the food that people bring to the co-op, whether they’re vegan or not, is vegan, just so that other people can eat it. And you know, if it’s not vegan, there’s always a little ceremony, like “Okay, everyone gather around. Who brought what and is it vegan?” You know, so everyone knows what’s vegan and what’s not vegan. (Roger, 21)

Charles, the other nonpunk who described attending potlucks, said that “the etiquette is to bring something vegan.”

Symbol—Nonpunks

If there is no material culture that nonpunk vegans consume that is also associated with veganism, is there a symbol of veganism for nonpunk vegans? When asked if there were any symbols of veganism, almost every nonpunk replied in the negative. Only one nonpunk vegan

said she knew of vegan symbols, and she used punk symbols, since many of her friends were punks: “Usually patches. Political patches or punk patches” (Amanda, 20).

From the previous description, it seems that the punk subculture is a source of information and support for veganism. Dominant or mass culture, largely consumed by the nonpunk respondents, is not supportive of veganism. Only when nonpunks are in special settings, such as natural food stores, potlucks, or animal rights conferences, do they find other vegans and support for their veganism.

Network Embeddedness

In their critique of network analyses of the recent past, Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994) cite many studies of recruitment to social movements as remedies to the overemphasis of individual motivation by social psychologists and cultural sociologists. The authors describe how Snow et al (1980) and a series of studies by McAdam (1986, 1988) and Fernandez and McAdam (1988, 1989) show how actors’ patterns of embeddedness in networks of social ties is a more telling cause of recruitment to social movements.

Continuing with this line of relational analysis, I will demonstrate here how embeddedness in social networks affects punks and nonpunks differentially. As McAdam demonstrated in his studies of dropouts from the 1964 Freedom Summer projects (1986, 1988), it is not the “push” variables such as individual motivation that drive actors to continue to participate in social movements, it is the “pull” factors found in social network embeddedness that determine continual action. Here I will compare punks and nonpunks across their individual motivations and their embeddedness in social networks to see how actors in the two groups enter into and maintain a vegan lifestyle and how their network embeddedness affects their social world.

Network Embeddedness—Punks

Both groups gave very few individual reasons for going vegan. Lucian said that he always liked animals, and Seymour simply said that he thought veganism was a good idea. Ralph and David said they knew they wanted to be vegan when they first learned about it, but they were not ready to change their lifestyle. James said he was a bit more stubborn when he learned about it, and he did not immediately change his lifestyle because he wanted it to be a decision he made for himself. In the previous sections, I demonstrated that it took more than just knowledge to make the change to veganism. This section will show another facet of the importance of supportive networks to vegans.

To measure punks' embeddedness in social networks, I analyzed their descriptions of their friends and the punk subculture, their interactions with other vegans, as well as any instances of the punk vegans replacing conventional dietary norms with vegan-friendly norms.¹⁴

The strongest example of punk vegans' embeddedness in a social network supportive of veganism is that nine of the eleven said that most of their friends were vegan or, as many said, "at least vegetarian." Josh even said that at one point all of his friends were vegan. Knowing vegan friends was important to these respondents, but knowing vegetarians was not as essential to them. As Andrea stated, when asked if any of her friends were vegan or vegetarian, "I know who's vegan, but I don't know who's vegetarian. But I think most of my friends probably are vegetarian, at least."

Punk vegans in social networks that include other vegans derive support for veganism from their friends. Seymour, a 20-year-old punk, moved to California after he became vegan.

¹⁴ This practice has also been explored in criminology. Sutherland (1939) developed the concept of differential association, which says that deviance is learned, normative behavior. In the process of differential association, the individual replaces one set of norms with others, in which the deviant behavior is acceptable.

He had no vegan friends in California, and he describes his different social networks in each state: “Here they’re really supportive. I know a lot more vegans here than I did there. Which is odd, seeing as how there are more vegans and vegetarians there than there are here.”

If punk vegans do not have many vegan friends, it seems relatively easy to make new vegan friends. Seven of the eleven punk respondents described having more in common with other vegans, or feeling a certain affinity or connection with other vegans, even if meeting them for the first time. “It’s funny whenever I meet somebody vegan, there’s always a really close connection and you get close to them really fast just because of the vegan thing” (Andrea).

David works in a restaurant, and he describes unexpected interactions with other vegans in this way:

Affinity? I’m stoked whenever I meet another vegan, definitely. There’s an affinity, I’m more likely to just talk to someone if I find out. It happens more in restaurants, at least with strangers. Restaurants and punk shows. But especially restaurants, because I’ll ask, “Is this vegan?” and they’ll often go, “I’m vegan too!” I get asked all the time at [the restaurant where I work], “Is this vegan?” So I feel an affinity and again, just being glad that awesome, there’s one more person out there trying to make a difference.

Having a majority of vegan friends or having a perceived or actual connection with other vegans can shape punk vegans’ social world to the point where they create a new set of norms. When these subcultural norms surrounding animal rights and food replace those norms held by dominant American society, they manifest themselves in assumptions. Six of the eleven punks made at least one assumption of other people based on their immersion in the vegan-friendly punk subculture.

Lucian and Katie assume that people who support animal rights and who are punk are vegan. Ralph gets frustrated when he eats at a restaurant where the wait staff cannot recommend vegan items: “You just assume they’re in tune with this stuff.” David works at a vegetarian

restaurant, and was surprised to learn that some of the workers eat meat: “Working at a vegetarian restaurant, probably a third of the people there eat meat. Who knew? I just assumed when I started that they would be vegetarian.” David and Jason also make assumptions on the town in which they live, thinking that most people know they’re vegan and that most people in the town have either heard of veganism or are vegan themselves.

As a researcher who has spent the better part of the last two years attempting to interview vegans, I can state that most of the people in this town are not vegan, in fact, and many people do not know what veganism is. Their statements are based on their subcultural norms and their social networks. Within the punk subculture, many people do know what veganism is or are vegan. But those norms do not extend to this entire town.

Finally, JD makes an assumption of vegans instead of an assumption of nonvegans. When describing how he changed his lifestyle to become vegan, he cites a book he used as a reference. He states: “Somebody lent me a book called *Animal Ingredients A to Z*, which I’m sure that everybody that’s vegan has seen at some point in their life.” It is highly unlikely that everybody who is vegan has seen this book. It is published by AK Press, which is an anarchist publishing collective that publishes books on the punk subculture, animal rights, and other social movements associated with punk and anarchist movements. This book cannot be bought at conventional corporate bookstores; it is most commonly sold at punk shows or through distros. These examples of assumptions of animal rights activists, punks, and vegans are examples of how these punk vegans have internalized the norms of their subculture, which includes punk vegans who are animal rights activists.

Network Embeddedness—Nonpunks

As shown in the previous two sections, nonpunks do not have many vegan friends and do not have a vegan-friendly social network. If they do not have the necessary pull factors to stay vegan, do they have adequate push factors to go vegan? This section compares nonpunk vegans' individual motivation and network embeddedness to those of punks.

Nine of the eleven nonpunks said most of their friends and acquaintances were not vegan or vegetarian. This is in direct contrast to the punk vegans, most of whom said most of their friends were vegan. The one discrepant case is that of Amanda—many of her friends are punk, although she is not. Amanda was subject to the replacement of conventional dietary norms with vegan-friendly norms before she was vegan:

They pretty much told me (*they were vegetarian*). We would go out to eat together, and I wouldn't get meat usually, but I would get a grilled cheese sandwich, and they would ask why, because I was eating dairy and they weren't. (Amanda, 20)

Some of the nonpunks were involved in social groups that are associated with veganism or vegetarianism—Bronwyn is a member of several animal rights organizations, Roger attends potlucks at the local natural foods co-op, Para lived in a vegetarian monastery and a yoga village, and Charles worked with Food Not Bombs. While these organizations provide a temporary social world that is supportive of veganism, they are no substitute for the everyday support provided by a group of vegan friends. We will see how these differences are manifested in the identity and commitment sections to follow.

Although nonpunk vegans do not have many vegan or vegetarian friends, some of them do feel the same “special bond” with other vegans of which the punk vegans spoke. Roger describes his feelings when he meets another vegan in a way strikingly similar to Andrea's response:

I mean, I've met a lot of people that are vegan, and that's an instant conversation starter, or ice-breaker, if you're vegan, if you meet someone that's a vegan, um, you kind of form an unspoken alliance with people, so to speak. (Roger, 21)

However, not all nonpunks feel this way. In fact, some eschew special relationships with other vegans. They pride themselves on having friends not based on diet and on not knowing their friends' dietary preferences:

Um, I certainly have friends who are vegan...but who are they? It's interesting that I can't really pick them out. For me, it's not really important to know. (Charles, 26)

In direct contrast to Andrea, who knows only which of her friends are vegan but not who is vegetarian, Charles does not know and does not think it important to know which of his friends are vegan.

If nonpunk vegans do not have supportive social networks in which they are embedded, do they show any signs of replacing conventional dietary norms with vegan-friendly norms? The answer is no. The only nonpunk vegan who made any assumptions was Bronwyn. She said that she thought that most people who are animal rights activists are vegetarian and that the general public does not know what veganism is. Her assumptions could be based on her affiliation with several national animal rights organizations, through which she campaigns for animal rights and veganism with other animal rights activists who are vegan. In this sense, she alone supports Maurer's (2000) analysis, who called vegetarian organizations "the backbone of the vegetarian way of life" (2). But again, her membership only physically shows itself in conferences once a year, and she herself described the strict demarcation of the "normal world" to the conferences she attends.

Social Networks, Identity, and Commitment

Having demonstrated how social networks work to mobilize some vegans to become and stay vegan, I will provide some empirical and theoretical links to identity and commitment. White (1992) contends that social networks are “networks of meanings.” Taking this perspective into account, when social actors share these meanings, networks play an important role in identity construction (Passy 2003). Social networks help build and solidify the identity that brought them to the political/social/cultural issue in the first place (Somers 1992, Passy 2003). Not only do social networks help movement participants to construct their identities, they help make those identities more salient (McAdam and Paulsen 1993, Melucci 1996, Passy 2003). Further, individuals embedded in a supportive social network who have highly salient identities participate with higher intensity and commitment (Passy 2001, 2003).

The sections on identity and commitment already showed that punk vegans had a stronger vegan identity and a higher commitment to veganism than the nonpunks, and this social networks section showed that punk vegans had a stronger and more supportive social network than did nonpunks.

What is important to note here is that social networks do seem to provide the theoretical link between identity and commitment in punk vegans, but they do not for nonpunks. Even if their vegan identities were not as strong as the punks, and even though they had lower levels of commitment to veganism than the punks did, what explains their becoming and staying vegan? In this project, I have shown that social networks do work, but not for everyone. Here I am trying to provide possible answers for the difference in identity and commitment between punks and nonpunks. While social networks might be the answer to this question, they do not

accomplish what they usually do—explain mobilization. This dilemma is another project entirely. Here I can only show two different ways of being vegan and explain those differences.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

During the revitalization of subcultural studies in the 1970s, British scholars began to study subcultural styles and forms (Hebdige 1978, Clarke et al. 1978). This focus on style came from studying the increased leisure time of postwar British working class youths. In their newfound leisure time, these youths formed subcultures as cultural solutions to such structural problems as unemployment and a poor educational system. Although this sartorial focus was temporally specific, subcultural theorists continue to examine style and form, while ignoring what subcultures actually do (Fox 1987, Muggleton 2000). This work takes a crucial new direction and studies members of the vegan subculture, examining their construction of a vegan identity, their commitment to veganism, and how social networks and culture combine to reinforce that identity and commitment.

Within the vegan subculture, there are two main types of vegans: punk vegans and nonpunk vegans. These are not two antagonistic groups; the punk vegans are a coherent group that participates in the punk subculture as well as the vegan subculture, and the nonpunks include anyone who does not identify as punk. The importance of separating these two groups comes from the fact that the punks and nonpunks responded to the interview questions in opposite ways. More importantly, within each group, the punks' answers mirrored those of other punks, and the nonpunks' answers were similar to other nonpunks. Those differences involved identity and commitment.

Punk and nonpunk vegans constructed their vegan identities differently on three levels. Punk vegans had a moment of enlightenment during which time they understood animal rights and veganism. After this cognitive shift, punk vegans reconstructed their "Me" around the music

and norms of the punk subculture. They also constructed a collective identity by creating common ends and means for their veganism. Nonpunk vegans, on the other hand, reconstructed their “Me” around authors and moral leaders. They did not have a moment of enlightenment, and they did not construct a collective identity with other vegans. Moreover, punk vegans presented themselves as vegans more often and in more situations than did nonpunk vegans. Their vegan identity was more salient than the nonpunks, who shied away from the label “vegan.”

Punk vegans were also more committed to veganism, in that they did not deviate from the Vegan Society definition of veganism. They were vegans at home and in public, which helps maintain their vegan identity. Nonpunk vegans, on the other hand, created subjective definitions of veganism. In this way they could still identify as vegan, even if they did not always eat vegan food.

The reason for these differences was not merely an affiliation with the punk subculture. Both punk and nonpunk vegans created, on an individual level, what veganism means for them. However, I believe that the resources from which they drew their influences to create such meaning are different. Whereas nonpunk vegans relied on books, fliers, and internet resources for information on veganism, punk vegans had those same resources, as well as friends, music, and subcultural norms. Such social networks provided a structure within which punk vegans practiced their more strict form of veganism.

To explain the differences in identity and commitment I conducted an analysis of the breadth and strength of the social networks of punk and nonpunk vegans. I attempted to show how social networks can work to influence identity and commitment. Punk vegans count other vegans as a significant portion of their friends, and the punk subculture supports veganism

through music, zines, and concerts. Many nonpunk vegans, conversely, often did not know any other vegans, nor did their cultural consumption support veganism. This lack of social support, however, did not stop them from practicing veganism. Contemporary network theorists have found that supportive social networks influence identity construction (Passy 2003), identity salience (McAdam and Paulsen 1993, Melucci 1996), and commitment (Passy 2001, 2003). In this study, it seems that social networks do account for the difference in intensity of participation, but they obviously do not account for mobilization and recruitment to veganism.

The abstract sociological issue that is at work here is the construction of a politicized identity and a commitment to that identity and practice. The success of such identity construction and commitment largely depends upon having supportive social networks. One could generalize this work to other types of subcultures, social movements, or identity movements, especially those that require behavior modification for participation.

This work should contribute to sociological literature on subcultures, social movements, and networks. By focusing on substance over style, this work should create new avenues for studying contemporary subcultures. In highlighting the neglected political side of the punk subculture, it also demonstrates the heterogeneity of punk, which is ignored by most subcultural theorists. Within social movement literature, theorists are focusing more often on movement culture, but vegans represent a new area for social movement theorists, since they are a subculture as well as an emergent social movement.

Finally, this work could contribute to social network literature in the area of networks and culture. Many network theorists have ignored the significance of cultural discourse and symbols, and the influence of punk music on the decision to go vegan provides a possible solution to that deficiency. More generally, this work contributes to the debate on the influence of culture and networks, by showing that culture (or at least subcultural affiliation) does seem to affect social networks.

There exist many avenues for further research in this topic and theoretical area, as this is the first sociological study of vegans. To conduct a more robust study, interviews should include non-vegans and ex-vegans, in an attempt to determine what causes one to become and stay vegan. Punk vegans could be benefiting from a confluence of influences from their vegan-friendly social networks and their vegan-friendly subculture. More investigation into the role of veganism and animal rights in the punk subculture would add to such an analysis. Other studies could look at veganism explicitly as a social movement, as it is usually subsumed under the animal rights movement. Within that theoretical realm, one could study differing goals and accomplishments of organized and unorganized vegan groups, movement culture, or movement strategy, to name a few. The acknowledgement of vegans as a subculture that is, at the same time, a social movement, leads to the opening of a new topical area in both substantive areas: action-oriented subcultures and culture-oriented social movements.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

How long have you been vegan?

Were you vegetarian before going vegan?

If you were vegetarian before going vegan, for how long were you vegetarian?

How did you first find out about vegetarianism and veganism?

What were your first encounters with vegetarianism and veganism?

Did you learn about veganism from family and friends or from outside research?

What is your definition of veganism?

What differentiates veganism from vegetarianism or other diets?

Do you know people who call themselves vegan but have different practices than him/her?

If yes, what do you think of those people?

Is there a “normal” veganism?

Is there an “extreme” veganism?

Is there an “ideal” veganism?

What do you not eat or purchase? Why?

Why are you vegan?

What made you want to go vegetarian or vegan?

Was there any specific moment of enlightenment?

How did you make the transition from vegetarian to vegan (or from meat-eating to vegan)?

What were some concerns when going vegetarian and vegan?

Were you actively recruited by other vegans? If so, how?

Do you ever backslide (eat non-vegan food)? If so, how did it make you feel?

How do you handle...

- family dinners (xmas, thanksgiving)

- eating out

- dinner at friend's parents' house

- any other difficult situations?

Your family and friends: are they vegetarian or vegan?

How did your friends and family react to the decision to go vegetarian or vegan?

Are any of your friends vegan? Are vegans the majority of your friends?

Do you know any vegans who quit? Have you ever quit?

Do you prefer to date only vegans or vegetarians?

Do you tell others about veganism?

What authors and musical groups, etc. do you like?

Are any of them associated with veganism or animal rights?

Were any new worlds opened up to you upon going vegan?

Are there any aspects of popular culture that you associate with veganism or animal rights?

Are there any symbols that show that someone is vegan? Is there any way to tell by looking, or do you have to ask?

Are you straight edge?

Were you raised in any particular religion?

Do you practice a different religion now?

Does your current religion have any effect on your veganism?

If yes, what?

Is veganism part of a larger movement?

If so, how do you contribute to the movement?

Is it through individual actions, group actions, or both?

If not, what is veganism?

Do you think that vegans more socially and politically active than non-vegans?

What do you think about non-vegans who support vegan causes, like animal rights?

Have you ever heard of groups like PETA and the ALF?

If yes, what do you think about them?

Have you ever participated in any acts of civil (or non-civil) disobedience for the vegan or animal rights cause (or any other related cause)?

What do you think about such tactics?

Do you see any major problems in society that you would like to/try to change?
If so, what do you do about it?

Must you defend your diet, and if so, to whom?

What are the arguments you use when defending his/her diet?

Are there any drawbacks to being vegan? If so, what are they?

Are there any positive aspects of being vegan? If so, what are they?

What makes you feel good about being vegan?

What do you think about meat-eaters, vegetarians, and other vegans?

Do you feel like more of an authority when discussing animal rights or the environment with a vegetarian or a meat-eater?

How do the ethics and morals of veganism compare to vegetarianism and meat-eating?

Do you think everyone should be vegan?

If yes, why? How do you go about it?

If no, why?

Is there anything else about your relationship with non-vegans that I need to understand?

Is there anything else about veganism that is important to you that I have missed?

How old are you?

What is your current occupation?

What is your educational background?

What are your parents' occupations and educational backgrounds?

APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS OF VEGAN, PUNK, AND NONPUNK

To better understand the concepts used in this analysis, some working definitions need to be established for the benefit of my academic readers. This project deals with aspects of subcultures that have been overlooked by other sociologists, and the emic definitions I use contradict the etic definitions used by other cultural sociologists (Hebdige 1979, Fox 1987). Even more broadly, this thesis is on vegans, a dietary subculture that is even lesser known than punks. Thus I will define vegan, punk, and nonpunk.

The term vegan was coined by a splinter group of the British Vegetarian Society in 1944. The group thought the society was not responding to the increasing amounts of factory farms and deplorable conditions of farm animals. They thus formed the Vegan Society and renounced the consumption of all animal products.¹⁵ For this project I use the term “vegan” as described by the Vegan Society and other groups that promote veganism.¹⁶ The Vegan Society defines veganism in the following way: “Vegans, like other vegetarians, do not eat the bodies of animals. In addition, vegans do not consume milk, eggs or honey. More broadly, veganism is a way of life which seeks to avoid exploitation of or cruelty to animals for food, clothing or any other purpose. Most vegans do not wear leather, wool or silk.”

¹⁵ Reference from Internet page <http://www.vegansociety.com/bio/biohome.html>

¹⁶ Other groups that use the Vegan Society definition include PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) and FARM (Farm Animal Reform Movement), among others.

To explain the link between veganism and the punk subculture, a brief explanation of punk, using the emic terms of my participants, is necessary. The term punk no longer only describes the British youth Hebdige studied in 1979. While my respondents may still listen to the Sex Pistols, they do not define their oppositional lifestyle primarily through their clothes, as spectacular subcultures are wont to do. Even contemporary sociologists continue to identify punks by the clothes they wear and not what they do (Fox 1987, Leblanc 1999, Muggleton 2000).

For my respondents, and for many young punks, punk describes more of a state of mind and a willingness to change society. This is accomplished through a DIY (do it yourself) movement, characterized by independent bands, record labels, and book presses as well as a politically progressive way of living.¹⁷ While veganism is a large part of the punk subculture, it is not necessary to be vegan in order to be punk. David, a 24-year-old punk, gives an eloquent definition of the modern punk subculture, one shared by most of my punk respondents:

As I understand punk rock to mean, it means that you're going to do things your own way, on your own terms, with the goal of making things better for everybody. That's why we ride bikes, and that's why we're vegan—a lot of us. I think there's a million punk bands out there who just want to fuck shit up, or get drunk, or sing love songs...But it's not necessarily punk rock to me. To me, punk rock is a social movement. The DIY mentality is inherent in what punk rock is to me anymore...I don't feel that you have to be vegan to be punk rock, because social activism isn't strictly limited to diet...For some people, it's not worth giving up meat, but it is worth going everywhere on your bike that you humanly can. So I don't think that veganism is a necessary or inherent part of punk rock, but I do think that social awareness is, and I think that veganism is one of the easiest things to do every single day that will make this world a better place. And I think that's punk rock.

¹⁷ DIY is an acronym for “do it yourself.” The meaning of this acronym, for punks, refers to producing cultural products outside conventional ways. It does not refer to such middle-class conventions as the DIY channel, with its focus on home improvement. It is most commonly exhibited in supporting the subculture in ways that do not rely on corporations, such as producing and distributing their own records, playing or organizing house shows instead of convening at large clubs, making their own t-shirts and stickers, or making fliers to promote punk shows or political causes.

Many people who are not in the punk subculture, sociologists included, seem to have a stereotypical view of punks that includes black leather jackets and mohawks. This is a function of in-group/out-group relations. Social actors see more diversity within their in-group than they do in other groups, especially if the other group is a minority or subculture. This inability to perceive diversity among out-group members leads to stereotyping (Deschamps 1983). David does not describe punk rock in any way having to do with dress or style. Punk is a much more intelligent movement than people outside the subculture give it credit for, and David's lengthy quote is a wonderful example of how music and politics go hand in hand within the punk subculture.

On the other hand, I do not wish to lead the reader to believe that "nonpunks" are as coherent a group as the punks. I did not choose to divide the respondents into two such groups; they divided themselves. After only a few interviews it was clear that two different types of respondents were practicing two different types of veganism. One group was a coherent subculture—the punks. They self-identified as punk, they listened to punk music, and they shared a "punk rock attitude," or ideology.

The nonpunks, on the other hand, were comprised of people who would self-identify as a member of many different types of subcultures—indie rock, hippie, religious, activist, and many more. However, all the respondents who were not punk responded similarly to my questions. Therefore, although they are not of one coherent subculture, they all practice veganism in similar ways and they are all not punks. Hence "nonpunk." I also wish to clarify that punks and nonpunks are not two groups pitted against each other, like the Mods and the Rockers or the Teddy Boys in 1960s England. They are two groups with different ways of practicing veganism.

Throughout the analysis, these are the definitions I mean when I use the terms punk, nonpunk, and vegan. While in reality, such terms have multiple meanings, I wish to provide a common ground on which to base this sociological discussion.

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

Distro—distribution lists, usually of records, t-shirts, books, or fliers.

DIY—do-it-yourself; most commonly exhibited in supporting the punk subculture in ways that do not rely on corporations, such as producing and distributing one's own records, playing or organizing house shows instead of convening at large clubs, making one's own t-shirts and stickers, or making fliers to promote punk shows or political causes.

Food Not Bombs—Food Not Bombs is one of the fastest growing revolutionary movements active in North America today and is gaining momentum all over the world. There are hundreds of autonomous chapters sharing vegetarian food with hungry people and protesting war and poverty throughout the Americas, Europe and Australia. The first group was formed in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1980 by anti-nuclear activists. Food Not Bombs is an all volunteer organization dedicated to nonviolence. Food Not Bombs has no formal leaders and strives to include everyone in its decision making process. Each group recovers food that would otherwise be thrown out and makes fresh hot vegetarian meals that are served in city parks to anyone without restriction. The groups also serve free vegetarian meals at protests and other events.
(from Food Not Bombs website www.foodnotbombs.net)

Freegan—Freegan is a term specific to the punk vegan subculture, which means eating vegetarian (but not vegan) food if it is free and if it is going to be thrown away.

Hardcore—The best way to describe hardcore music would be to call it a blending of heavy metal and punk, usually with political undertones.

House show—as part of the DIY mentality espoused by many punks, instead of playing a concert at a bar or club, punk bands play at punk houses or squats. Playing house shows avoids

having to pay the club owner and, equally importantly, no one is not admitted because they are under 18.

Show—music concert.

Squat—when a building is abandoned, sometimes people will inhabit the building without paying rent to a landlord. This practice has gone on for many years in Europe, and is now part of a worldwide movement for affordable housing for all.

Vegan—Vegans are strict vegetarians who do not consume meat, fowl, fish, dairy products, eggs, nor any other animal product such as leather and fur.

Vegan Society—The Vegan Society is a British group that promotes veganism. They have defined veganism as “a way of living, at least dietary, without the consumption of animal flesh or products.” This includes no meat, fowl, or fish, no dairy products not eggs, no honey, and no animal products such as leather or wool.

Zine—The “zines” are independently published magazines which can be about a certain band or about a music scene.

APPENDIX D: TABLE OF PARTICIPANTS

Punks

| Name | Gender | Age | Length of time vegan (at time of interview) | Length of time vegetarian before vegan | Reasons for being vegan |
|---------|--------|-----|---|--|---|
| JD | Male | 21 | 4 years | None | Animal rights, conscience, environment, feels right |
| Josh | Male | 22 | 5 years | 3 months | Animal rights, morals, environment |
| Matt | Male | 22 | 1.5 years | 3 months | Animal rights, ethics, environment |
| Seymour | Male | 20 | 2 years | 2 years | Animal rights |
| Lucian | Male | 19 | 3 years | 3 years | Animal rights |
| Mary | Female | 18 | 1.5 years | 4 years | Morals, ethics, environment |
| Andrea | Female | 18 | 6 months | 6 years | Animal rights, environment, feels right |
| Katie | Female | 19 | 3 years | 3 months | Environment, animal rights |
| Ralph | Male | 24 | 3 years | 3 years | Animal rights |
| Jason | Male | 24 | 1.5 years | 5.5 years | Animal rights, human rights, environment, health |
| David | Male | 23 | 1.5 years | 3 years | Animal rights, human rights, sustainable living |

Nonpunks

| Name | Gender | Age | Length of time vegan (at time of interview) | Length of time vegetarian before vegan | Reasons for veganism |
|----------|--------|-----|---|--|--|
| Amanda | Female | 20 | 1 year | 7 months | Animal rights, ethics, environment |
| Mandy | Female | 22 | 6 months | 6.5 years | Animal rights |
| Para | Male | 25 | 1.5 years | 3.5 years | Compassion |
| Stuart | Male | 51 | 7 years | 2 years | Animal rights, religion |
| Roger | Male | 21 | 1 year | 3 months | Health, morals, animal rights, local economy |
| Meredith | Female | 25 | 4 years | 2 years | Animal rights, human rights, environment |
| Sam | Male | 31 | 8.5 years | 4 years | Health, environment, morals |
| Charles | Male | 26 | 6 years | 3 years | Health, environment, morals |
| Alicia | Female | 23 | 6 months | 11 years | Animal rights, food |
| Bronwyn | Female | 30 | 6 years | 3 years | Animal rights |
| Steph | Female | 26 | 3 years | 4 years | Animal rights, ethics, religion, environment |
| Amy | Female | 26 | 4 years | 1.5 years | Animal rights |
| Jonas | Male | 25 | 4 years | 1 year | Health, animal rights, morals |

The present research examines how the social identity perspective contributes to a better understanding of the relationships between perceived organizational support, affective commitment, and employees' performance at work. Using a sample of 253 employees from an engineering company, Study 1 found that organizational identification partially mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment. In Study 2, using a sample of 179 postal employees, the authors replicated the mediating role of organizational identification in the relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment and found that affective commitment mediates the relationship between organizational identification and performance. It's a mobile platform with an Internet link. Components included a face recognition program that could identify you if you were a member of Sarah's online "Friends" and voice recognition that could interpret simple questions. By way of conversation it would update it's (and your) status on Facebook and inform you of new postings of your online friends. The thesis was that people would relate better to AI if the programs made use of social knowledge. It was fun, interesting, and much too short! But it's no coincidence that it demonizes carbohydrates "from potatoes to lentils to grains" in a post-Atkins world. And then there's the effect that normalizing these new thought and behavior patterns are having on our actual wellness: Exercise addiction afflicts 3 percent of regular gym-goers (and 52 percent of triathletes). [C]reating and following diets is a sort of immortality ritual," Michelle Allison explains for The Atlantic. "People adhere to a dietary faith in the hope they will be saved. That if they're good enough, pure enough in their eating, they can keep illness and mortality at bay. That mindset makes sense (though it's based in a harmful fear of disability and aging); it's hard to fault anyone for wanting more days under the sun. But the pursuit of beauty, really, is no different.