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Franziska Schwemmer, BA

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Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stephan Procházka

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Terminology, Transcription Rules and Abbreviations

Environment:

Humans, animals and the environment can be regarded as separate categories. One can differ between humankind in contrast to other animals and both in contrast to the Earth's biosphere with its vegetation by sea and by land and its atmosphere. However, the term "environment" can be seen as a hypernym, including the fauna and, thus, humans. According to this, environmental ethics refer not only to the destruction of flora, fauna, sea, land and atmosphere, but comprise the thereby affected animal welfare and human health.

The usage of the term "environment," in this paper, is often used in its comprehensive meaning.

MENA:

The acronym "MENA" refers to the "Middle Eastern and North African" region. There is, however, no final definition which countries that the term includes. In the narrower sense, MENA means the 17 countries of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.¹ A broadly construed definition can also encompass the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, Turkey and the Western Sahara.²

This thesis, however, uses the narrower 17-country definition.

Vegetarianism vs. Veganism:

Vegetarianism and veganism are kinds of lifestyles and forms of nutrition. What exactly is suitable for each form depends on the definition.

According to the European Vegetarians Union (EVU) definition proposed in July 2019, both nutrition forms exclude slaughter products or byproducts and food made by use of slaughter processing aids. Components or derivatives of living animals (such as milk or beeswax) for food production or its processing are suitable for vegetarian nutrition.

Vegan nutrition, in contrast, even excludes food that consists of or is created from any part of a living animal as well. It is purely plant-based.³ According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, veganism is therefore classified as a subcategory of Vegetarianism.⁴

¹ Cf. If Palestine is regarded as a separate country.

² Cf. Boshers 2020. Cf. Pew Research Center 2010.

³ Cf. Berthold 2019, p. 4.

⁴ Cf. The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, s. v. "vegetarianism."

Contrary to common belief, not eating meat except fish and sea fruit is not officially recognized as a vegetarian diet. Neither is any other form of eating certain kinds of animals, in particular chicken or parts of them.⁵

Technical Information:

- The spelling of Arabic words, phrases and proper names complies with the transcription rules of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* (DMG) with slight modifications, particularly ay/aw instead of ai/au.
- Year dates correspond to the Common Era.

Overview of Abbreviations:

- Abbreviations used from Chapter 2.2 on, as categories:
ES: Environment/Sustainability
H: Health
LS: Lifestyle
F: Faith
- Abbreviations used in Chapter 2.3 in accordance with the online survey:
OE: Own Ethics (relating to someone's personal ethics)
M: Mixed Question
MFC: Meat/fish/chicken

⁵ Cf. Berthold 2019, p. 4.

1 Introduction and Background

A comprehensive study reveals that an abstinence from meat and milk consumption constitutes the highest impact on humans' ecological footprint. The English University of Oxford's study, published in the journal *Science* (June 2018), shows quite plainly the damage that agriculture causes to the planet. While providing less than a fifth of the world's calories and less than two-fifths of the proteins, the production of meat, dairy products, eggs and aquaculture takes up more than four-fifths of the world's farmland. Simultaneously, it accounts for more than half of the food's various emissions. Even the animal products which cause the smallest environmental impact bring about more environmental degradation than the most unsustainable types of vegetables and cereals.⁶

1.1 Research Question and Complex of Problems

However, the emissions are not the only negative impact on the environment, as the examination shows. Analyzing all kinds of groceries, from the producer to the customer, the study incorporates all factors, like fresh water, water and air management, packaging and transportation, etc. In-depth scrutiny shows that food's land-use worldwide could be reduced by 76% if people stopped eating animal products.⁷

Moreover, it is not “only” about the Earth's surface with regards to its flora and fauna. As the recent Covid-19 pandemic illustrates, the effects of the (excessive) meat consumption can rebound injuriously on the human species.⁸ By reference to collected data, the Oxford study points out the customers' responsibility and their capability for a change. Meanwhile, further studies motivating people to take responsibility and change their eating habits followed.⁹ In light of this, it is evident that minimizing the ecological footprint does not necessarily force people to follow a rigorous vegan diet from the scratch. Choosing vegetarian nutrition or reducing at least the consumption of meat (and dairy products) precipitates a vast improvement, too.

For the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), such steps towards sustainability and environmental protection represent an essential task. In addition to the global issue of climate

⁶ Cf. Poore and Nemecek 2018, p. 990.

⁷ Cf. Poore and Nemecek 2018, p. 990.

⁸ Several animal diseases that arose from intensive stock breeding threatened human health already in the past. Cf. Steinfeld, pp. 69–70.

⁹ I. a. cf. Ritchie and Roser 2020.

change, pollution, water shortage and a fragile ecosystem characterize the territories' difficulties. Due to the economic surge as part of the modern world, consumer behavior has been established, which devours water resources and arable land.¹⁰

Thus, the question arises if people are aware of their impact. Do they know the correlation between their consumption and the consequences for environment, animals and themselves? (Does the current pandemic maybe also play a role within the discussion?) Or is such information not even reaching the people?

Is vegetarianism practiced in the MENA region? Does environmental ethics influence people in the region to change their eating habits? If so, to what extent? Or is the debate about meat reduction and vegetarianism based on another motivation? What are those possible further motivations? In what contexts is vegetarian nutrition addressed?

Since it makes a difference in implementing a plant-based diet, what exactly is meant when using the Arabic term *nabātī*? Derived from the collective noun *nabāt* ("plant," "plants"), the adjective subsequently actually means "plant-" but Modern Standard Arabic dictionaries often give "vegetarian" as a translation.¹¹ Is there a differentiation between veganism and vegetarianism in the MENA region?

Do veganism and vegetarianism have a high reputation in the region or is there a negative connotation? Are these kinds of diets entirely new for people and maybe even seen as a phenomenon coming from outside, particularly from what is regarded as "the West" or something familiar?

Spanning three continents, various cultural, ethnic, governmental, linguistic and religious factors act upon the region. Nevertheless, in nearly all MENA countries, Islam distinctly represents the dominant religion (around 90% of the region's entire population is Muslim).¹² For this reason, a focus on the Islamic approach to eating animals is of great import to this research as well.

¹⁰ Cf. International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement 2020.

¹¹ Cf. Langenscheidt Arabisch-Deutsch Wörterbuch 2020.

¹² The conducted source provides numbers from 2010 and count Sudan as having a 90.7% Muslim population and the Western Sahara with a 99.4% Muslim population among the MENA states. Thus, the source estimates the region's Muslim population at roughly 93%. The region's largest religious group after Muslims is Christians. In 2010, they comprised roughly four percent of the population. The number of Jews ranked between one and two percent. The rest is made up of people who either do not identify with any religion or Hindus, Buddhists and followers of other religions. Cf. Pew Research Center 2010. Cf. Boshers 2020.

1.2 Classification and Demarcation

The main target of this paper is to explore the decision to abandon animal products for environmental reasons. Still, this thesis cannot be restricted to environmental science. Settled in the environmental (protection) sector, it focuses on the topic of ethics, politics and social sciences. The above-discussed complex of problems, furthermore, shows that the research questions relate to psychology, especially if it is about a sense of and willingness to change.

As the investigation area covers the MENA region, the work is part of MENA studies and it gives insight into the region's sectors. Amongst them are health and nutrition issues, social and family life, finances and religious areas. Dealing with environmental and animal welfare in Islam, this paper enters the domain of Islamic studies as well.

Moreover, this thesis is part of Arabic Studies in two respects: Making out what it is exactly that people understand under the heading *nabātī* is, technically speaking, a linguistic problem; a further point of intersection is Arabic dialectology, as a part of the survey makes use of the Tunisian dialect.

1.3 State of Research

A debate about environmental topics by scholarly literature has taken place. In fact, it is ongoing. The above-described problems that the MENA region is facing are not new.

However, the solution-oriented sustainability discussion in the MENA region proceeds usually within economics or engineering (talking about water management or solar panel installation, etc.). Papers, articles and monographs delve into the subject, examining case examples of educational and further governmental measures for raising people's environmental awareness. Djoundourian, for instance, attends to, in his work "Environmental Movement in the Arab World" (2011), the awakening of environmental consciousness in MENA countries on a political level.¹³ Nevertheless, the impact that the region's population has by their choice of diet seems to be neglected in this discussion.

Within a religious context, abandoning meat-eating as a contribution to maintain the planet is indeed broached. Several scholarly debates handle animal welfare from an Islamic standpoint. Others approach the topic even more, illuminating the term *ḥalāl* in regard to eating animals, while few papers even discuss the question if vegetarian nutrition is un-Islamic or not. Some

¹³ Cf. Djoundourian 2011.

papers merely address particular countries, be it defined as a Muslim country or referring to respective communities in other countries outside of the MENA region. Other papers, for their part, have no reference to any area but are limited to a purely theoretical level. A broadly conceived investigation if and how people in the MENA region deal with this consideration has not been carried out yet. Despite this, the literature serves as a source for discussing a plant-based diet within the Islamic context. This scholarly literature is presented below:

The scientific work “Human-Animal Relationship: Understanding Animal Rights in the Islamic Ecological Paradigm” (2015) traces animal welfare within the Islamic discourse about environmental issues back to the seventh century. It thus describes modern examination as kind of an eco-Islamic revival.¹⁴ Discussing animal rights within the socio-political context, the paper “‘That’s the beauty of it, it’s very simple!’ Animal rights and settler colonialism in Palestine-Israel” approaches the human-animal relation (2018).¹⁵ The journal article “Animal Protection Theory in U.S. and Islamic Law: a Comparative Analysis with a Human Rights Twist” (2015) compares Islamic legal precepts of animal protection with the United States of America’s legal theory, highlighting the compatibility of both concepts.¹⁶

A further inspiring investigation, “Muslims and Meat-Eating: Vegetarianism, Gender and Identity” (2015) points out suspenseful correlations between sex and food as specific signifiers amongst Muslims in the United Kingdom.¹⁷ Similarly, the paper “*Vegetarismus im Islamischen Kontext*” (2017), addressed to the Austrian Muslim community, contextualizes meat abandonment and Islam.¹⁸ It refers to the academic treatise “*Naturnähe und Naturverständnis in den Grundlagen des sunnitischen Islams: Ein Beitrag zum aktuellen Umweltdiskurs*” (2010), which is consulted for this thesis as well. Investigating the rank of animals in Islam, the author dedicates Islamic vegetarianism as a subchapter.¹⁹ The same question is the topic in the journal contribution “Is Vegetarianism Un-Islamic?” (2001).²⁰ Providing arguments for abstinence from meat-eating, the scholar Masri explains on his website “Animals in Islam” (2012) the compatibility of a vegetarian diet and the religion.²¹ A contribution, directing the attention to husbandry, can be found in the work “From Permissible to Wholesome: Situating *Halāl* Organic Farms within the Sustainability Discourse (2015).”²²

¹⁴ Cf. Islam and Islam 2015.

¹⁵ Cf. Alloun 2018.

¹⁶ Cf. Abdelkader 2015.

¹⁷ Cf. Ali 2015.

¹⁸ Cf. Sejdini and et. al. 2017.

¹⁹ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010.

²⁰ Cf. Foltz 2001.

²¹ Cf. Masri 2012a. Cf. Masri 2012b.

²² Cf. Iqbal 2015.

1.4 Methodology and Selection of Material

1.4.1 Literature Research

Different methods carry out the investigation. Research based on heretofore collected data and literature aims to provide facts about livestock and environmental issues. The research gives insights about the MENA region within a global context. Moreover, it illuminates natural goods in Islam, particularly animal welfare. The focus lies on human impact on nature by consuming and producing meat. Besides the scientific works, listed above (s. 1.1 and 1.3), the databanks of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)²³ and the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE)²⁴ as well as country-specific information and graphics from the journal website *Our World in Data*²⁵ are consulted for this analysis.

1.4.2 The Content Analysis and its Material

While the Literature Research already embeds the topic of vegetarianism into an environmental context, other parts of the work investigate its different contextualization by empirical studies, to figure out how people (can) approach plant-based nutrition. One of them, referring to the whole MENA region, is the qualitative method of content analysis.

Aim and Suitability of the Method

Mass communication has an important social function. Symbols, which are conveyed in communications, can indicate attitudes, opinions, values, tendencies and desired impact of prejudices of the respective author or publisher. Examining what information is shared and who shares it with whom, content analysis has established as a method for mass communication. It, moreover, analyzes the publisher's intention and the information's effect.²⁶

In general, qualitative methods give an edge on investigating an issue, including its contextual setting and meaning.²⁷ Thus, qualitative analysis suits the aforementioned aim in order to determine whether and how vegetarianism is discussed as an environmental issue and in what other contexts going meatless is addressed. If the term *nabātī* is indeed used to describe pure plant-based nutrition or if it includes forms of vegetarian diet as well arises from the context. The

²³ Cf. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

²⁴ Cf. Langenscheidt Arabisch-Deutsch Wörterbuch 2020. Cf. International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE) 2020.

²⁵ Cf. Team of Our World in Data.

²⁶ Cf. Meyen et al. 2011, p. 142–44.

²⁷ Cf. Meyen et al. 2011, p. 46.

analysis also aims to monitor the relevant proportion of the content's subject and its evaluative impact, differing between veganism as the main topic or its mentioning amongst other things. Simultaneously, it focuses on the content's assessment, classifying it into positive, negative or descriptive-informing. Though the approach is qualitatively orientated, the analysis eventually shows a certain ratio for each of these aspects.

Material Selection

The material to investigate, Arabic online newspapers, is selected under the consideration of circulation and high readership within MENA countries. Social media channels, for instance, would certainly deliver enough material for a fascinating examination, too. Nevertheless, bearing each application's popularity in mind, which differs between parts and countries of the MENA,²⁸ makes any limitation on a particular platform or channel inappropriate for a comprehensive supranational analysis.

News reports which are widely accessible online lend themselves better to a comprehensive investigation, finding out different thematic embeddings of the topic. Moreover, online (accessible) Arabic newspapers often include articles which appeared after the corresponding printed version and articles referring to TV and radio reports. Hence, a focus on online newspapers more likely includes audio-visual or printed media, which might be preferred by illiterates and elders not familiar with internet use, than the other way around. Therefore, Arabic online newspapers seem to be the most qualified sources.

The list of the most influential Arabic online newspapers in the MENA region (compiled by the Arabic translation company Industry Arabic in 2020) serves as an orientation to draw up a short list.²⁹ The Arabic language newspapers *ar-Ra'y* (based in Jordan),³⁰ *al-Waṭan* (based in Qatar),³¹ *Yawm 7* (based in Egypt),³² and – ranked first – *ad-Dustūr* (based in Jordan),³³ as well as the English language online newspaper *The Daily Star* (based in Lebanon),³⁴ find themselves amongst the ranking's top five. Unfortunately, no single Maghrebian newspaper is featured in this selection, since no paper released in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia or Libya even appears in the top-20-list of 2020.³⁵

²⁸ Author's own observation.

²⁹ The ranking's analysis is based on qualitative-quantitative methods investigating the paper's coverage and impact. Cf. Industry Arabic 2020.

³⁰ Cf. الرئيسية - صحيفة الرأي.

³¹ Cf. الوطن.

³² Cf. اليوم السابع.

³³ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية.

³⁴ Cf. The Daily Star - Lebanon.

³⁵ Cf. Industry Arabic 2020.

Despite their lower coverage within the overall MENA region, newspapers from Maghrebian countries should not be ignored for this analysis. Considering the historical, socio-economic backgrounds and cross-national influences to which each MENA country is exposed, Maghrebian newspapers could put a new view on the topic. Representing the Maghreb part of the region, the three other online newspapers *Le Matin* (based in Morocco),³⁶ *an-Nahār* (based in Algeria),³⁷ *aš-Šurūq* (based in Tunisia),³⁸ and *al-Fağr al-Ġadīd* (based in Libya)³⁹ are consulted. These papers again are chosen according to an algorithm-based popularity ranking on the internet. Each Maghrebian newspaper is ranked first in its respective country on the web site “4 International Media & Newspapers.”⁴⁰ The ranking is updated every six months.⁴¹

While all newspapers are selected after their up-to-date ranking, the frame for their content analysis is not only restricted to current articles. The material to investigate consists of all articles the respective search engine lists until the September 1, 2020. Thus, possible development of the topic’s conversation over the years can be followed. To find relevant articles, Arabic language newspapers are examined using the search keywords *nizām nabātī*, the Maghrebian based papers, in addition to that, with the search keywords *tagdiya nabātīya*, *(an-)nabātīyūn* and *(an-)nabātīyīn*.⁴² To check the English language newspaper’s topic-related articles, the searching keywords “vegan,” “vegetarian,” and “plant-based” are used, and accordingly, for the French language ones, the search keywords *végétalien*, *végan* and *végétarien*.

A more distinct principle of choice within this selection of articles follows the criteria of matching the topic or not. For instance, reports talking about the benefits of vegetables, which advise readers to enrich their diet with greens – without mentioning a reduction of animal products – are not consulted for the research. As the point of vegetarianism is not discussed here, the article could simply be a suggestion to eat more vegetables instead of sweets or noodles as well. In contrast, a written account about meat reduction, even if the alternative is not about becoming vegetarian or vegan, fits the issue of this work and is examined.

³⁶ Cf. Haitami.

³⁷ Cf. النهار الجديد.

³⁸ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية.

³⁹ Cf. الفجر الجديد 2020.

⁴⁰ Cf. Top Newspapers in Algeria by web ranking 2006-2020. Cf. Top Newspapers in Morocco by web ranking 2006-2020. Cf. Top Newspapers in Tunisia by web ranking 2006-2020.

⁴¹ Cf. 4 International Media & Newspapers 2006-2020.

⁴² Using the keywords *nizām nabātī*, and even the restriction on the term *nabātī*, the newspapers’ engines did not show all reports about vegetarian diets, as a double check with a web searching engine revealed. For that reason, it was necessary to enhance the research keywords with respect to concerned newspapers.

Categorization and Data Analysis

To bring the content analysis's results into line with the research questions, a categorization system provides the necessary transparency and structure.⁴³ Using the quotation management program *Citavi*, ancillary input fields were added to the given fields for the references' publishing information. Each of these fields complies with one of the above-mentioned aspects (1) context, (2) term definition, (3) evaluation and (4) proportional relevance within the article, to which categories are conceptualized (s. Figure 1).

- (1) Concerning the context, the sources are classified into the four basic categories: **environment and sustainability** (ES), **health** (H), **lifestyle** (LS) and **faith** (F). A particular idea of this classification already existed by topic-relevant, primary literature (1.1 and 1.3). Still, the categories' determinations derive inductively from the concerned newspaper articles themselves. An area for notes, which was already given in the reference management program *Citavi*, serves for a more concrete description of the content. Thus, it allows further distinctions within each of these four categories and serves as an orientation scaffolding to sum up relevant articles later.

Context:	H
Notes:	Study: A vegetarian diet that lowers cholesterol like medicine
Term definition:	VN
Evaluative impact:	P
Proportional relevance:	+
Custom field 5:	

Figure 1: Scaffolding for the Articles' Analysis by Ancillary Fields
Source: Screenshot of the author's own scaffold within the *Citavi* program.

- (2) The categorization which refers to terminology distinguishes **vegan nutrition** (VN), **vegetarian nutrition** (VG) and – if present – a context which deals with a reduction of meat or animal products, without focusing on veganism or vegetarianism. In the latter case, a respective phrase (for instance “meat reduction”) is used instead of the shortcuts “VN” or “VG.”

⁴³ Cf. Meyen et al. 2011, pp. 35–36.

- (3) The criteria of proportional mentioning are marked with a plus sign (+) if the article's emphasis is on a plant-based diet. The shortcut of the *inter alia* phrase (**i. a.**), in contrast, marks material that remarks on a completely different topic but somehow mentions veganism.
- (4) The sources' evaluative factor is on target by shortcuts as well. Articles which cast a shadow on vegan nutrition are marked with the letter N (**negative**), while the letter P respectively stands for a **positive** evaluation and D for a **descriptive-informing** content.

Often an article's content fits into two categories (or, within the contextual categories, even three). A clear definition, what *nabātī* means, for instance, does not emerge in many articles. Some of them also explain the term – equal to the English language – as a hypernym for vegan and vegetarian nutrition. Another example is an article about a public character who decided to abandon meat. This article is generally assigned to the category of lifestyle. The report, however, includes the celebrities' arguments to change their eating habits, which are environmental concerns and their health. Thus, the article fits into the ES and H category, too. The evaluative impact is often a mixture between informing about and attaching a negative or positive idea to the issue. Eventually, one article can be assigned to two or more different categories for each aspect. If one of the categories within an aspect has more weight, the other is noted in parentheses. For instance, an article whose context mainly relates to the environment and solely mentions health benefits, is categorized with the shortcuts “ES; (H).”

The content analysis attaches importance to both content categories and formal ones.⁴⁴ For the analysis's further proceeding, adjusting to context's categories, the notes and the evaluation's categories provide the content scaffolding. On this basis, the categories' ratios within each aspect can be indicated.

The focus of attention lies on each articles' message about veganism or vegetarianism. The formal criteria of topic relevance and the term's definition within the article both compliment this framework. Still, the analysis incorporates further formal aspects, such as different lengths of articles, their structure, as well as their form of representation (for instance, a commentary vs. a report). It might give a clue about the topic's accessibility and reception in the MENA region.

⁴⁴ Cf. Meyen et al. 2011, pp. 153–154.

1.4.3 *Quantitative Online Survey*

The literature research and the newspaper content that were analyzed earlier show the wide range of how and in which contexts the topic of meat abstinence is discussed within MENA countries. Furthermore, the content analysis of newspaper articles implies some quantitative results. These ratios might give insight into how people are confronted with vegetarianism through official news.

Aim and Suitability of the Method

However, the quantitative survey aims to investigate the people's agreement with those results and with additional considerations based on previously treated literature. It illuminates people's mindset about going meat-free, their approach and – possible – own experience with this subject. This examination spans the definition of the term *nabātī*, and other aspects such as the role of eating (products from) animals in religion, the influence of the financial situation or the surroundings.

An evident advantage of the quantitative method certainly lies in its objectivity. Compared with a qualitative face-to-face interview, the experimenter bias can be widely prevented, as the interviewer's difficult-to-control influence on the interviewees is barely there.⁴⁵ The online survey avoids subconscious communicative signals and indications of paralinguistic (tone, emphasis, pauses, etc.) or facial expressions (smile, nod, visible relaxation when the "right" frown is reached) from the beginning.⁴⁶

Online, in this case, means the inquiry's instrument, as the data are collected utilizing the internet. As the questionnaire is presented on a server, interviewees have to participate online. This prerequisite for attending is, on the one hand, a restriction, as not everyone has internet access or the necessary competences for using it. On the other hand, this manner allows people to participate in the survey regardless of any location. A high level of flexibility speaks in favor of online interviewing, as many people can be reached simultaneously. Besides, the cost and the time required on the part of the creator are low or hardly of any importance.⁴⁷ The same is the case for possible participants, who have, if anything, just a slight financial effort because of the necessity of the internet. Moreover, participants are only, to a minimal extent, time-bound for carrying on the survey.

⁴⁵ Cf. Wagner and Hering 2014, 662–663. Cf. Meyen et al. 2011, p. 86.

⁴⁶ Cf. Meyen et al. 2011, p. 86.

⁴⁷ Cf. Keusch 2011, 87–88. Cf. Wagner and Hering 2014, p. 663. Cf. Meyen et al. 2011, p. 86.

These factors have to not be underestimated regarding people's motivation, as one of the online survey's disadvantages lies in a higher dropout rate due to low motivation.⁴⁸

Survey Design

A further factor for people's dropping out is the length of the questionnaire.⁴⁹ For this reason, it is essential to restrict the survey to a certain number of questions. To define an average survey operation time for users, the inquiry design is based on multiple- and single-choice questions. Choosing closed questions moreover facilitates the participation. In contrast, (half-) open questions can overwhelm people, as they must verbalize things instead of simply affiliating options.⁵⁰

When carrying out the inquiry, compliance with data protection and the anonymous and confidential handling of the collected information is crucial.⁵¹ Transferred variables that save information about the participant's devices (browser, IP address, etc.) are not protocolled, to guarantee a completely anonymous participation. Only the access time and the length of an interviewee's stay during the survey are recorded.

Since psychological effects can falsify the survey's results, appropriate measures were adopted. For instance, many people tend to choose answers that seem desirable to them (social desirability). Answering in the affirmative (tendency to choose "yes") is a further commonly occurring effect.⁵² Counteracting this striving for desirability, a focus was laid on well-balanced answer choices. Thus, either the choices include a "no answer" option, such as "I do not know," or the option to skip the question is enabled.

Eventually, the inquiry schedule is divided into the four sections of (1) a greeting part, (2) the actual questionnaire (consisting of 18 topic-relevant questions), (3) the asking for sociodemographic data and (4) a closing phrase. As the survey revolves around a very narrow topic, no transitioning sentences or phrases are needed between the single questions.

- (1) The inquiry starts with a greeting and an acknowledgment for participation. The welcome text contains a short introduction of the researcher (student at the University of Vienna) and an explanation about the survey's background (Master's thesis about the abstinence from meat-eating).

⁴⁸ Cf. Keusch 2011, pp. 87–88.

⁴⁹ Cf. Keusch 2011, pp. 87–88.

⁵⁰ Cf. Holm 1986, p. 55.

⁵¹ Cf. Wagner and Hering 2014, p. 670.

⁵² Cf. Holm 1986, p. 55.

Furthermore, a note regarding anonymizing the data is added. Requesting to finish the whole questionnaire, the hint that the questionnaire consists of multiple- and single-choice questions (marked in each case) is made. Moreover, an email address in case of queries is indicated. Intentionally no detailed information like the exact topic of this thesis or the survey's context is explained to avoid any influence from the outset.

- (2) For breaking the ice,⁵³ the questioning ensues asking about the term *nabātī* (access). A part of the questions focuses on the participant's perception while another part goes more in-depth, asking about people's own mindset (s. Appendix).

For a rough classification, the above-defined shortcuts "ES" for environment- and sustainability-related questions, "H" for health-related ones, and "LS" for lifestyle, are in use. For faith- and/or ethics-related questions, and such concerning personal consumption, the additional category of personal ethics "OE" was introduced. As not every question can be assigned to only one category, some questions are marked as mixed "M."

This categorization is not visible for the participants. It however later helps for reproducing the answers.

- (3) Asking for a few metadata, the inquiry closes. These sociodemographic questions (labeled as such with the shortcut "SD") concern the participant's age, gender, as well as the governorate they are currently living in,⁵⁴ and the question if they had already lived abroad or not.
- (4) For expressing gratitude, a short phrase closes the questionnaire. Simultaneously, it serves to motivate the participants to share the link to the inquiry with others.

⁵³ Cf. Meyen et al. 2011, p. 88.

⁵⁴ See investigation area below.

Area of Investigation and Respective Adaption

For delivering convincing figures, the investigation area needed to be circumscribed, as interviewing the whole MENA region would exceed the scope of a Master's thesis distinctly. That again signifies that the online survey's results – compared with those using the above-described qualitative method – are no comprehensive analysis of the overall region, but a case study. Hence, one has to preconceive the cultural, historical, social, economic and linguistic individuality regarding the investigation outcomes. However, the elaborated questionnaire can be regarded as a template for further research in the region.

The area to investigate spans the North African country of Tunisia. According to the National Institute of Statistics' estimation, Tunisia's population ranges between 11.6 to more than 11.7 million people.⁵⁵ Despite only Tunisians living in Tunisia were addressed, the sampling was random (regarding age, gender and education) and quantitative, aiming to reach as many as 200 participants, with no cap.

Even within Tunisia, personal circumstances and people's mindsets differ a lot depending, *inter alia*, on the region people grew up in. For instance, the capital lies in the northern part of the country. Simultaneously, the northern and eastern part of the country have access to the sea and therefore a lot of tourism and exchange with foreigners. Furthermore, these regions are richer than the country's western, central and southern parts which can also have an impact on their eating habits.

People's attitudes towards changing their nutrition in certain regions of Tunisia might not be possible in the same way that it is in other parts of the country. That applies to turning omnivorous nutrition into a (more) plant-based one, as well as the other way around. One might eat more meat than someone else eats because of not having many vegetables or fruits available. In contrast, someone else might be vegetarian, not out of a free will, but because of not being able to afford the prices of meat.⁵⁶

Thus, the metadata about the governorate in which participants currently live play an important role in the analysis. Considering the influence that living in other parts of the country might have on the diet, a question about spending periods in other Tunisian provinces (for instance, in a coastal city) would have been interesting, too. For preventing any participant's agitation concerning anonymity, this question was, nevertheless, cut out.

Even the inquiry, what religion tells people about meat consumption, is regarded as sensitive.

⁵⁵ Cf. L'Institut National de la Statistique: INS 2020.

⁵⁶ Locals' information and author's own notice.

It might affect some people or put them into a situation of blame, feeling unable to answer honestly. The advice to cross it out from the questionnaire was considered. Notwithstanding, the role of religion (and traditions attributed to it) matters. Bearing in mind the sensitiveness, a prefer-not-to-say option (“I do not want to answer this question”) was added to the possible answer “I do not know.” Since this survey aimed to reach broad levels of the population, the inquiry’s questions and answers have been written in Tunisian dialect using Arabic letters. Considering the widespread use of French in the formerly colonized country, single words, such as the term *végan*, follow the Arabic spelling with Latin letters in brackets. Due to the already-known, ambiguous understanding of what “meat” refers to, the expression “meat” was, in the survey, expressed with “meat/fish/chicken (MFC)” in Arabic.

These decisions have been made after consulting some locals from different Tunisian regions concerning the selection of the language (French, Modern Standard Arabic or Tunisian dialect) but also with respect to the questions’ and answers’ adequacy, integrity and intelligibility.

Afterwards, a draft of the survey was sent to three expatriates and two of the locals who helped create the survey. Thanks to their feedback, some questions have been turned from single- to multiple-choice to increase the interviewees’ capabilities of finding an appropriate answer. As these five pretests took around three minutes or less, the estimated time needed, a maximum of five minutes, was confirmed.

Conduct and Data Analysis

The survey was conducted using the online survey tool *SoScisurvey*. The questions are numbered consecutively. For the interviewee’s orientation, this numbering is displayed.

In contrast, the labeling corresponding to their assigned categories (ES, H, etc.) served for the analysis. Every question and its respective answer options feature a separate identifier based on the category labeling and a numbering. *SoScisurvey* uses these identifiers to represent the raw data of returned forms in combination with variables (the number “2” for instance, states the value “answer selected”). In this form, the data can be downloaded as an Excel-file for its further proceeding. The analysis itself ensues manually through calculation formulas in the spreadsheet program Excel, where the respective diagrams are afterwards created, too.

For the analysis’s comprehensibility, the identifiers are, moreover, used to describe the results in the main part. In pie charts and diagrams showing multiple-choice answers, they are added in brackets. Since they are shorter, they – especially in the case of multiple-choice questions – replace the actual answer text. The full questions and answers are, in addition, accessible in the appendix, where the original questionnaire and translation of it are attached.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

After the short introduction, which already reasoned the complex of problem, the central part focuses on issuing and answering the research questions. The pivot of this part is to illuminate if and how the MENA region approaches abstinence from meat-eating. The paper works its way forward from already-collected data about this topic, to people's access to it. Eventually, their reception and attitude towards vegetarianism are examined. Simultaneously, the work proceeds from general information about the impact of meat consumption on our planet and the region's role to the case study of Tunisia.

The single chapters are scheduled according to the applied methods:

The first chapter (2.1) provides facts and figures based on literature research. Split into two subchapters, it explains why vegetarian diets should be approached in the region. The Subchapter 2.1.1 gives an overview of the MENA countries' dealing with environmental problems and their involvement within global environmental issues by meat consumption. Arrived at an individual level, Subchapter 2.1.2 takes up people's responsibility as consumers and vegetarianism as a religious question.

By conducting the newspapers' content analysis, the second subchapter (2.2) shows if and how (much) going meatless is discussed as an environmental issue in the MENA region (2.2.1). Moreover, it enumerates some further contexts in which the topic is mentioned (2.2.2) and eventually, shortly summarizes the empirical findings (2.2.3).

The third chapter (2.3) focuses on people's reception and mindset regarding the topic, adducing Tunisia as an example. Starting with an overview of the survey's frame and its participants (2.3.1), the subchapter applies itself to the results. It thereby approaches the ambiguity of terms (2.3.2), the interviewees' attitude towards vegetarianism and eating animals (2.3.3) and their own dietary patterns (2.3.4). Equal to Subchapter 2.2, the third subchapter closes with a short review conflating the surveys' results (2.3.5). It, moreover, links the qualitative findings of the previous newspapers' content analysis with the survey's quantitative outcomes and provides an explanatory approach.

Eventually, a conclusion (Chapter 3) summarizes the investigation and highlights essential results. As usual, a bibliography (Chapter 4) lists the consulted sources. Furthermore, an appendix (Chapter 5) shows the original questionnaire of the online survey and its translation into English. In the end, an abstract in English and German (Chapter 6) is attached.

2 Approaches to Vegetarianism in the MENA Region

This chapter explains why and how the MENA regions' meat supply is linked to environmental problems and discusses eating animals within the context of Islam. Moreover, it elaborates the media coverage about vegetarianism in the MENA region, before it goes into details showing people's personal attitude towards vegetarianism based on the case study of Tunisia.

2.1 Why the MENA Region Should Approach Vegetarian Nutrition

Djoundourian describes in his work the increasing importance that environmental issues play in the MENA region. Examining the countries' governmental commitment, he illuminates if there is an establishment of appropriate environmental ministries, laws and regulations. He eventually points out that each country must be viewed individually.⁵⁷ Environmental policies can have global dimensions or be restricted on national or even local level.⁵⁸

On the national level, Israel already formed a Ministry for environmental matters in 1989.⁵⁹ Among Arab countries, Saudi Arabia took on a pioneering role with establishing a Presidency of Meteorology and Environment Protection and the enactment of a corresponding law in 1992. Two years later, Egypt followed with a ministry for environmental affairs and Yemen in 1995 with a ministry for water and environment. Other MENA states subsequently set up equivalent ministries – or integrated respective departments into already existing ministries – at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century.⁶⁰

As a supranational consolidation, in June 2009, the Arab Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (ANECE) was founded in Jordan.⁶¹ Moreover, a permanent subcommittee specialized on environmental matters, the Council of Arab Ministries of Environment, has been established within the Arab League. Most MENA countries additionally signed individual bilateral agreements.⁶² From the INECE's point of view, however, the MENA region's environmental protection laws and initiatives are still too weak and easy to break.⁶³

⁵⁷ Cf. Djoundourian 2011, pp. 745–749.

⁵⁸ Cf. Steinfeld, p. 224.

⁵⁹ Cf. الوزارة لحماية البيئة 2020.

⁶⁰ Cf. Djoundourian 2011, p. 746.

⁶¹ Cf. INECE 2020.

⁶² Cf. Djoundourian 2011, p. 746.

⁶³ Cf. INECE 2020.

This statement is rather reflected in the public's mind. According to an online public opinion poll about environmental awareness in Arab countries, people in different MENA states show a high dissatisfaction with respect to their countries' environmental situation. Many interviewees consider their government's effort on environmental protection too little.⁶⁴ The ministries focus' as well as the laws and penalties for breaking them, indeed, differ completely from country to country: In Kuwait, for instance, compliance is rarely pursued, in contrast to Saudi Arabia, where violations can result in high fines and even prison sentences of up to five years.⁶⁵ For a gauge, how close countries are to established environmental targets, the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) provides a ranking based on each country's respective scales every year (s. Figure 2).

COUNTRY	RANK	EPI SCORE	10-YEAR CHANGE
FILTER BY REGION: GREATER MIDDLE EAST			
Israel	29	65.8	5.2
United Arab Emirates	42	55.6	11.3
Kuwait	47	53.6	12.8
Jordan	48	53.4	11.2
Bahrain	56	51	17.3
Iran	67	48	9.1
Tunisia	71	46.7	6.4
Lebanon	78	45.4	1.1
Algeria	84	44.8	0.5
Saudi Arabia	90	44	6.4
Egypt	94	43.3	7.7
Morocco	100	42.3	13.3
Iraq	106	39.5	0.2
Oman	110	38.5	11
Qatar	122	37.1	-4.8

Figure 2: Rank, EPI Score of MENA Countries

Source: Wendling et al. 2020b, Filter by region: "Greater Middle East."

⁶⁴ The article provides no information about the date of the poll's conduction. The survey concludes 22 Arab countries. Thus, numbers are not entirely representative for the 17-countries MENA region. Cf. Saab 2018.

⁶⁵ Cf. Djoundourian 2011, p. 747. Cf. INECE 2020.

In 2020, the national scales are driven by the data of 32 performance indicators.⁶⁶ On this basis, the EPI summarizes the sustainability's state and ecosystem vitality of 180 countries worldwide to help government officials discover problems, track trends and set new environmental protection targets.⁶⁷ While Israel is in 29th place, the United Arab Emirates in 42nd place, and Kuwait in 47th place, show a better environmental performance; Iraq in 106th, Oman in 110th and Qatar in 122nd perform more poorly.

Overall, the high degree of heterogeneity amongst the MENA states concerning their EPI, emphasizes the individual approach each country chooses. Neither the geographical closeness of two or more countries within the region nor their prosperity indicator bear any proportion to their state of sustainability and ecosystem vitality.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Those indicators comprise the environmental health categories "air quality" (20%), "sanitation and drinking water" (16%), "heavy metal" and "waste management" (two percent each). Regarding ecosystem vitality, the results base on the categories "climate change" (24%), "biodiversity and habitat" (15%) "ecosystem services" and "fisheries" (six percent each), "water resources," "pollution emissions" and the "Sustainable Nitrogen Management Index (SNMI)" (three percent each). Cf. Wendling et al. 2020a.

⁶⁷ Cf. Wendling et al. 2020a.

Remark 1: Data coming directly from governments is not accepted. Still, government agencies count besides international organizations, research institutions and academia among the data providers. Most data are verified or based on data collection that is accessible by a third party. Cf. Wendling et al. 2020a, FAQ.

Remark 2: Ad Libya: Gaps arise i. a. from the lack of comprehensive datasets. Cf. Wendling et al. 2020a, FAQ.

Remark 3: Except Libya, the EPI covers all MENA territories, though Palestine is not treated as sovereign state.

⁶⁸ Cf. Wendling et al. 2020b, Filter by region: "Greater Middle East."

2.1.1 Eating Animals as an Environmental Issue in the MENA Region

Due to their subtropical climate zone, they, nevertheless, face similar environmental challenges of water shortage, air and land pollution, ecosystem alteration and depletion of arable areas. At this point, it is undoubtedly important to note that human impact is not the only reason environmental problems in the MENA region occur. However, humankind's consumption patterns substantially increase the region's preexisting water scarcity, put strain on its fragile ecosystems and cause air pollution. The stress on water supplies and arable land deterioration along coastal zones, moreover, threatens the marine ecosystems.⁶⁹

Livestock – and consequently the consumption and production of meat and further animal products – plays a major role in those issues. Stockbreeding influences the environment negatively on different local, national and global levels. Freshwater withdrawals, for instance, have to be weighted by local water scarcity. Emitting greenhouse gases and eutrophication or acidifying emissions, however, causes problems beyond any artificial state borders.⁷⁰ While local nature protection depends on decisions at the lowest relevant organizational level, the farming's footprint reaches in many respects the global dimensions of environmental policies. The loss of biodiversity and climate change have to be issued within an international scope.⁷¹

A further negative consequence of eating animals which is not limited to particular countries or regions is the impact on human health. Besides causing animal suffering and murdering, a high meat consumption is related to several human diseases. That includes obesity, diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, as well as certain cancers.⁷² Moreover, certain zoonotic diseases, which emerged and disseminated through production intensity and the limited space in which animals are concentrated, can be passed from animals to humans. Especially in urban environments with great density, the intra- and interspecies contamination risks are high.⁷³

Human health is, however, suffering from a further negative consequence of animal farming. The pollution by emitted agricultural residues and drug residues, which ends up in lakes, rivers and the sea, does not “only” affect aquatic animals and plants; the global warming by animals' gases, and the effects on water, land as well as biodiversity resources do not “only” destroy the natural habitat.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Cf. International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement 2020.

⁷⁰ Cf. Poore and Nemecek 2018, p. 987.

⁷¹ Cf. Steinfeld, p. 224.

⁷² Cf. Steinfeld, p. 10.

⁷³ Cf. Steinfeld, pp. 69–70.

⁷⁴ Cf. Steinfeld, pp. 4–6; pp. 34–43; p. 195. Cf. Ritchie and Roser 2020.

Humans suffer from the pollutants and the global warming, after all, too. Climate change exposes humans and animals to diseases that are basically restricted on a geographic range or depending on climatic conditions. Both developing and developed countries are concerned about this phenomenon.⁷⁵

For that reason, one has to not only focus on livestock patterns within MENA territories.⁷⁶ Importing meat from other countries, on the one hand, means exacerbating the husbandry problems in the respective producer's country. On the other hand, the consequences of such seemingly local degradation affect, in the end, all regions on Earth due to global warming.

Meat consumption, hence, intensifies the MENA region's specific environmental problems even if the livestock is imported from other countries. Thus, neither the quantity of a country's livestock (and its amount of meat production) nor the numbers surrounding its meat export and import are extremely relevant for their impact on the environment, but rather the mounting evidence about its consumption.⁷⁷

Development of Meat Consumption in the MENA Region

The FAO estimates the worldwide meat production in 2019 at 338,828,000 tons (carcass weight) while the utilization's estimate for the same year is 2,528,000 tons less.⁷⁸ According to this computation, more than 2.5% million tons of carcass have been overproduced, causing the killing of countless animals. Simultaneously, it conduces to the destruction of the biosphere and the atmosphere.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the year 2019 was no exception. Since the end of the 20th century, meat production has been globally growing.⁸⁰

International comparisons showed that people's meat consumption is related to their wealthiness. Besides population growth, which boosts the increased meat consumption trends, economic transition plays a role. In China, for instance, the per capita consumption has grown about 15-fold since 1961. Brazil's rates have almost quadrupled. The richer a country is (as measured by its GDP), the more meat is consumed per capita.

⁷⁵ Cf. Steinfeld, p. 6.

⁷⁶ Cf. PETA 2019.

⁷⁷ Not (only) referring to the MENA region, but the researchers Ritchie and Roser explain in their subchapter "You want to reduce the carbon footprint of your food? Focus on what you eat, not whether your food is local" how overestimated the trend of consuming local is. If it comes to environmental ethics, the question of what people eat is considerably more important than how far the food has been traveling. Cf. Ritchie and Roser 2020.

⁷⁸ For simplification, the numbers here and in the whole chapter represent (only) the total primary meat production within the concerned MENA territories. Additional numbers that include milk, eggs and meat processing are not listed. Moreover, rates of single kinds of meat are not mentioned for keeping the text clear. Cf. FAO 2020, p. 5.

⁷⁹ Cf. Ritchie and Roser 2017.

⁸⁰ Cf. FAO 2020, pp. 1–2.

As a global average, in the year 2014, individual persons consumed approximately 20 kilograms of meat (excluding seafood and fish) more per year than in 1961. Thus, the average consumption per capita was around 43 kilograms in 2014. The highest consumption patterns on meat show high-income countries, which is why the most-massive meat-eaters find themselves in Australia, Europe and North America. On the other hand, meat consumption has been nearly stagnating or even decreased within the last half-century in those high-income countries.⁸¹

An identical pattern can be found in the MENA region. In general, the supply per capita in Israel, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Oman is much higher than in the region's North African part. Following the meat supply's development in the MENA region between the year 1961 and the year 2017, the phenomenon of high-income countries' stagnation or decline is also reflected by Israel and the Gulf states. In the main, this phenomenon occurs in the respective MENA countries with the beginning of the 21st century.

The MENA states' meat supply, as a rule, shows a rise from the 1970s or 1980s on. Still, the degree of increase in Yemen, Algeria, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco is moderate in comparison with other MENA countries. Proceeding from around 10 kilograms per capita between the 1960s and 1970s, the respective countries' values grew only sparsely. Thus, Algeria, Yemen and Iraq within those nearly 60 years never have had any per capita supply over 20 kilograms. In Tunisia and Egypt, the stock values exceeded 20 kilograms from around the year 2010 to 2017, while Morocco within this time approached over 30 kilograms.

In Saudi Arabia, however, though the meat consumption graph started equally with around 10 kilograms in 1961, the yearly meat supply per capita has increased fourfold between the first years of the 1970s and the first years of the 1980s. With the beginning of the 21st century, it seems to have reached a plateau of a yearly 50 to 60-kilogram meat supply per person. Its development and values are like those of Oman and Lebanon.

Lebanon's graph starting point, though, showed already a 20-kilogram average in 1961. Israel's yearly meat supply in 1961 was estimated at around 35 kilograms per capita. It grew moderately but quite steadily until the year 2000 when the value jumped to nearly 100 kilograms. So far, it seems to have leveled off at this amount.

⁸¹ Cf. Ritchie and Roser 2017. Cf. Ritchie 2019.

The here-quoted numbers, as well as the following ones, refer to the meat supply per person. A country's supply, however, does not necessarily represent the quantity of meat that indeed has been consumed in the respective country. As explained above, the amount of produced meat might differ from its eventual consuming amount. Nonetheless, the weight of all (killed) animals has an impact on the environment, not only the weight of those who, in fact, end up eaten.

The United Arab Emirates has already had a per capita value of almost 80 kilograms in the 1960s – the highest value in comparison with all other MENA states conducted for the chart. However, its yearly supply ranged between less than 50 and more than 100 kilograms per capita within the examined period.

Besides purely economic reasons, national and international conflicts, such as civil uprisings and wars, impinge upon people's consumption (possibilities) as the chart in Figure 3 shows.⁸²

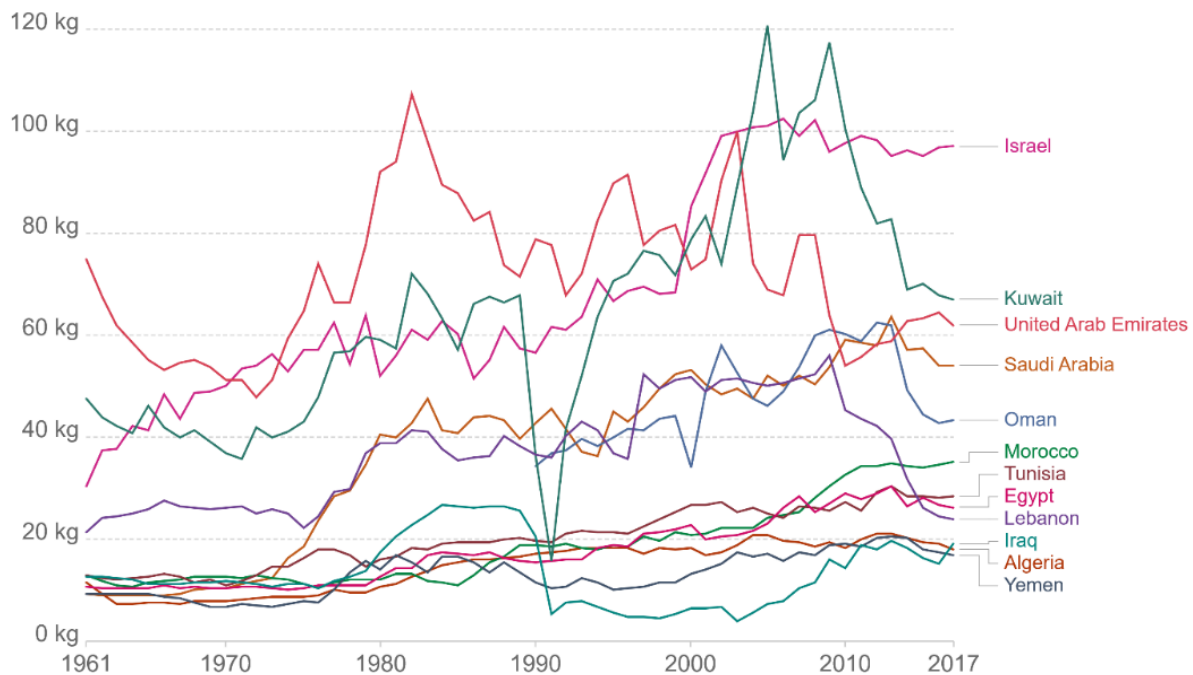


Figure 3: Development of the Average Meat Supply per Capita (Fish and Other Seafood Sources Excluded)
Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); CC by OurWorldinData.org/meat production.

The most evident example within the given period is the Second Gulf War (August 1990 to February 1991), causing a per capita meat supply diminishment in Iraq and – considerably more – in Kuwait. From 1961 to the 1970s, the yearly amount was estimated at around 40 kilograms per person. It increased to nearly 60 kilograms in the mid-1970s and temporarily reached over 70 kilograms between the years 1980 and 1990.

In times of war, Kuwait's meat supply graph plunged to around 15 kilograms. Eventually, it already rebounded very quickly. A few years later, the stock reached 80 kilograms and even grew up to more than 120 kilogram per person between the years of 2000 and 2010. After the

⁸² Cf. Ritchie and Roser 2017: Interactive chart "Meat supply per person, 1961 to 2017."

As the graph for the country of Oman only starts with the year 1990, it seems like no numbers for earlier years are available.

year 2010, the meat supply has decreased again and almost halved itself until 2017. Nevertheless, a per capita consumption of 120 kilograms is the climax value any of the regions' countries has probably shown so far. Iraq, in contrast, shows the lowest values in the decade after the Second Gulf War. As per chart, the country's meat supply has been appreciably less than 10 kilograms per person from 1991. The graph increases moderately only with the beginning of the new century.⁸³

The Decline of Meat (Trade) in the MENA Region

It has to be emphasized that in large parts of the MENA region, the meat consumption seems to be moderate in comparison with the worldwide average, as shown in Figure 4.⁸⁴

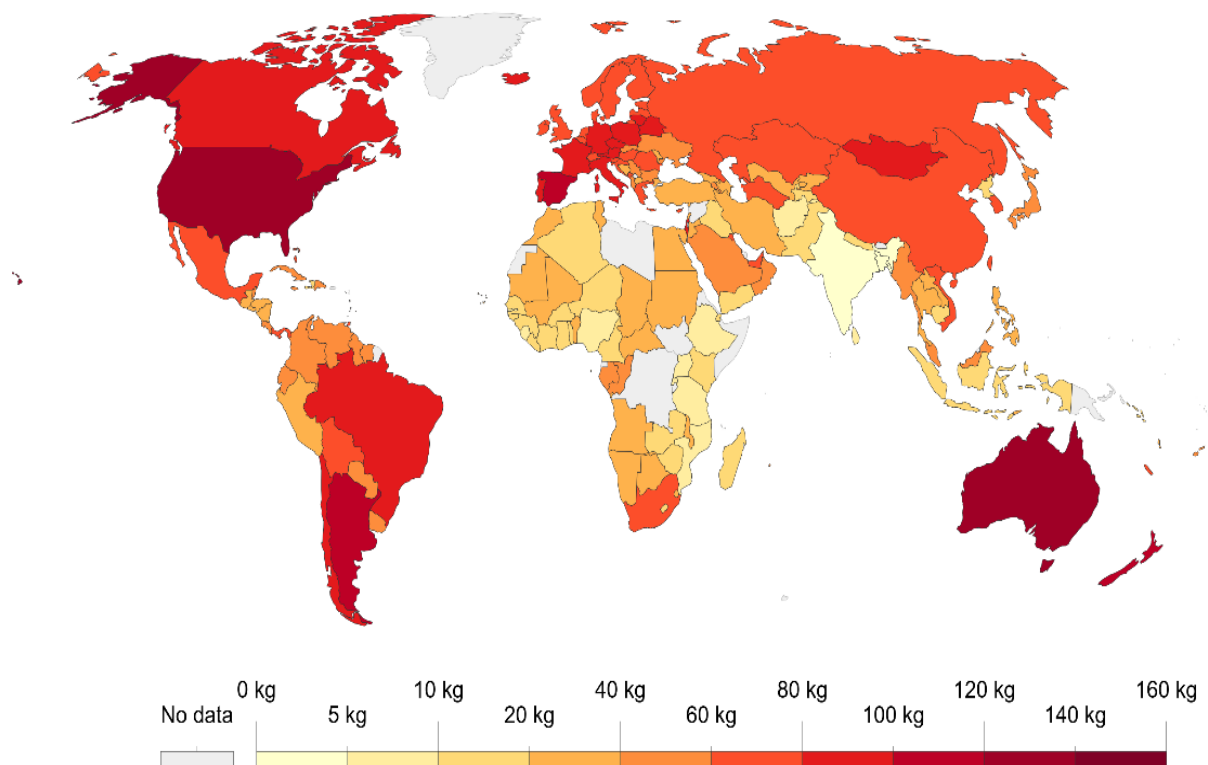


Figure 4: Worldwide Meat Supply per Person in 2017 (Fish and Other Seafood Sources Excluded)
Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); CC by OurWorldinData.org/meat production.

⁸³ Cf. Ritchie and Roser 2017: Interactive chart “Meat supply per person, 1961 to 2017.”

Despite the graphic starting with the year 1961, one can assume that the stock before the year 1961 has not reached any higher value. Unfortunately, it seems that no calculation for Jordan, Qatar, Libya, Bahrain and Palestine exists, which has to be considered.

⁸⁴ Cf. Ritchie and Roser 2017: Interactive chart “Meat supply per person, 1961 to 2017.”

On the other hand, the impact on the environment is not only about the carcass weight but also about the kind of animal. Beef, for instance, ranges from three to 10 times higher than chicken when it comes to the greenhouse gas emissions impact, land use or water. Pork is ranked somewhere in between them.⁸⁵

However, such facts do not seem to have any influence on the people's consumption patterns. After more than two decades of continuously growing, the worldwide meat output fell by 1.0% in 2019. The reason was the African Swine Fever (ASF), which caused a 9.2% decline in global pig meat production. Other animals were used for compensation, which is why the overall output reported only such a small fall.

As the production cycle is shorter, especially poultry substituted a large amount of the pig meat shortfall. Still, poultry meat worldwide, reached, after pig meat and bovine, only the third place of most exported meat.⁸⁶ This export ranking reflects the global average preferences per capita. The eating preferences, nonetheless, vary significantly across the world.⁸⁷

What the MENA region shares with the global meat trade market is that curtailing imports is usually restricted on a certain kind of meat and only temporarily. If the reason lies not in a sufficient domestic production, the decrease in imports is based on animal diseases and/or meat certificate requirements.⁸⁸ According to the meat market report 2019, the detection of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus, for instance, caused the United Arab Emirates and Oman to suspend their poultry import from certain countries.⁸⁹ On the other hand, trade restrictions that have been imposed earlier due to food safety concerns have been removed within the same year.⁹⁰ Moreover, such restrictions do not necessarily have an impact on the overall meat production. The import declines usually refer to particular countries in which a disease broke out and do not exclude any import of other kinds of meat.⁹¹

At least, certificate requirements can encompass more than health issues and risks. Tunisia, for instance, in 2019, approved a law on food and feed safety. The creation of a national authority for food safety is one of its key measures. The law includes certain food content requirements as well as labelling and marketing, which should be under the control of the national authority.⁹²

⁸⁵ Cf. Ritchie 2019.

⁸⁶ Cf. FAO 2020, pp. 1–2.

⁸⁷ Cf. Ritchie and Roser 2017.

⁸⁸ Cf. FAO 2020, p. 3.

⁸⁹ Cf. FAO 2019, pp. 8–9.

⁹⁰ Cf. FAO 2019, p. 10.

⁹¹ Cf. FAO 2019, pp. 8–9.

⁹² Cf. FAO 2019, p. 10.

Though it does not necessarily imply a reduction of meat consumption, this law, defines animal welfare in its Article 43 as a task for which the authority shall be responsible. The authority is bound in law to control animal and plant safety in all stages, from the primary production to distribution, including trade.⁹³

As mentioned above, the implementation of laws and, consequently, the control about such measurements, is not guaranteed. Nevertheless, the public opinion poll about environmental awareness shows that people in the MENA region do think that changing their consumption patterns might have an impact on the environment. While these results might refer to general environmental issues such as plastic packaging rather than meat-eating and animal welfare, the survey reflects the participants' consciousness about their own responsibility as consumers.⁹⁴ Discussing the eating of animals as an environmental issue is consequently dedicated to NGOs and individuals.⁹⁵ Calling for their attention, activists try to raise awareness of the responsibility every single consumer has. In 2018, for example, NGO affiliates in Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates took to the streets demonstrating against the live-export shipping from Australia to several MENA destinations.⁹⁶

Besides, persons of influence fight against the cruelty animals have to undergo after ending up at a consumer's plate. A prominent representative who repeatedly advocates veganism, animal and environmental protection in the Middle East and beyond, is the Saudi Arabian prince Khaleed bin Waleed bin Talal. Informing other people about the advantages of a plant-based lifestyle, the prince confirms his environmental ethic ambitions by financially supporting vegan companies.⁹⁷

⁹³ Cf. USDA Foreign Agricultural Service Tunisia 2019, p. 9.

⁹⁴ Cf. Saab 2018.

⁹⁵ Cf. Alloun 2018, p. 562. Cf. PETA 2019.

⁹⁶ Cf. PETA 2019.

⁹⁷ Cf. Gillett 2019.

2.1.2 *Vegetarianism and Islam*

However, ethics are often connected or even grounded on religion. In most of the MENA countries Islam is officially endorsed by the state. A great majority of around 90% across the whole region call themselves Muslim.⁹⁸ Thus, for understanding people's attitudes towards any kind of vegetarianism, an examination within the framework of Islam gives important input.

Terms and Approaches

For many Muslims, the legitimacy of social justice causes hinges upon the compatibility between Islam's faith and its laws. Since they regard the Koran as God's verbatim word, the book provides the first source of Islamic law. Still, the Koran does not represent any code of laws but gives general guidance for humanity and mainly relates to spirituality, morality and belief. Thus, its principles often entail explanation by the hadiths.⁹⁹ The hadith literature is a textual source delivering Prophet Mohammed's tradition, how he behaved, what he said and did concerning particular matters (Sunna). In contrast to the Koran, no divine origin is attributed to it.¹⁰⁰

Throughout the last several years, environmental issues are increasingly discussed in context with religious aims amongst the world's major religions. For that reason, the Islamic Ecological Paradigm (IEP), which roots in the above-explained Islamic sources, gains attention from activists and scholars.¹⁰¹

Addressing the environmental issues based on a religious perspective influences farming practices, too. Iqbal describes in her work the emergence of organic farms run by Muslims in North America. Starting with the phenomenon of organic farming, she discusses the meaning of the Koran term *ḥalāl* and its significance regarding environmental issues including animal welfare.¹⁰² Therefore, the author distinguishes two main approaches of interpreting religious sustainability in literature: one approach is based on a secular worldview using the latest scientific principles and searching for the religion's accordance with it. The religious perspective is consequently regarded as the secular norm's supplement. For the other approach, in contrast, faith is the norm-giving basis to fight ecocide.¹⁰³ As the literature research below illustrates, the scientific and the faith-based approach can, however, lead to the same results.

⁹⁸ Cf. Boshers 2020. Cf. Pew Research Center 2010.

⁹⁹ Cf. Abdelkader 2015, pp. 47–49.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Abdelkader 2015, p. 57.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Islam and Islam 2015, p. 97. Cf. Ali 2015, pp. 271–272.

¹⁰² Cf. Iqbal 2015, p. 51.

¹⁰³ Cf. Iqbal 2015, pp. 51–52.

Indeed, word translations (including ellipses and appositions) matter.¹⁰⁴ The Islamic concepts *ḥalāl* and its specification *ṭayyib* are seen as predicted principles referring to modern agricultural industrialization and factory farming.¹⁰⁵ Both approaches face the term's range of interpretation with respect to Islamic jurisprudence. Depending on which of the different traditional school of laws one follows, the word *ḥalāl* can be translated either as "barely permissible" or even as "obligatory."

In the Koran, it is, however, the counterpart of the term *ḥarām*, which means "forbidden." Encompassing different issues of life, the *ḥalāl* principle does not only deal with justice practices and worship. It refers furthermore to economics, interpersonal relations as well as consumption and nutrition in Koran. From the believers' view, these laws are God's will. Hence, following this law is part of their spiritual practice. In terms of diet, *ḥalāl* does not solely forbid Muslims explicitly certain food, namely pork, which has to be cut out of the nutrition. According to the principle, the consumption of other animals' meat is only allowed if the slaughtering is in line with the Koran dictates.¹⁰⁶

So far, the *ḥalāl* question seems to mainly focus on slaughtering itself, but not in animal husbandry.¹⁰⁷ In effect, the name of God has to be pronounced while slaughtering. The concerned animal has to be killed swiftly by slicing its jugular veins with a sharp and smooth blade and in the absence of other animals. Nevertheless, humans even account for the animals' raising as fulfilling all their needs. Thus, amongst the Muslim community in the U.S., progressively more people cast doubts on the meat industry's compliance with the Koranic requirements.¹⁰⁸

Middle Eastern countries, on the other hand, import much of their meat from factory-farming countries.¹⁰⁹ In those factories, animal remains are often fed to other animals, which is a further reason to challenge the *ḥalāl*-labeling.¹¹⁰ Amongst Islamic scholars it is, moreover, controversial whether stunning before slaughtering is allowed or not, as the animals' blood might not drain away completely if being stunned before its killing. Still, the meat industry uses the technical process of stunning.¹¹¹ Consequently, the MENA countries' meat import is, in many regards, controversial.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Iqbal 2015, pp. 53–54.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Iqbal 2015, pp. 51–52.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Iqbal 2015, pp. 53–54.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, p. 271.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Iqbal 2015, pp. 53–54.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. PETA 2019.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 48.

¹¹¹ Cf. Islam and Islam 2015, pp. 108–109.

Specifying the *ḥalāl* concept, another Arabic term, *ṭayyib*, has to be mentioned. The adjective expresses that something is “pure,” “good,” “clean” or “pleasant”.¹¹² Like the term *ḥalāl*, it is used within different contexts in the Koran, amongst them diet. Going beyond the requirements that the principle of *ḥalāl* food implies, the term *ṭayyib* often holds the meaning “wholesome” and refers within the context of organic groceries to sustainability.

It involves all aspects of a particular food, such as its ethical footprints as well as environmental, social and economic factors. Meeting the conditions for qualifying meat not only as *ḥalāl* but *ṭayyib*, a proper caring for animals is thus required.¹¹³ The criteria existing in Islam aim for animal welfare and feeding as well as their compassionate treatment and the avoiding of unnecessary suffering before and during slaughtering.¹¹⁴ As maintained by a hadith, imprisoning animals is, in fact, said to be a sin.¹¹⁵ Besides the ban of abusiveness, hadiths about humans serving thirsty dogs water teach Muslims, moreover, to intervene if aware of animals suffering. According to the IEP, treating animals kindly is regarded as a good deed in the same sense as it is between human beings.¹¹⁶

These conditions are incompatible with factory farming and industrial slaughtering, as Muslim vegetarian advocates state.¹¹⁷ This fact seeps into individual consumers and organizations’ consciousness and leads to the establishment of Islamic associations calling for a boycott of bulk meat products.¹¹⁸

Still, the concept of *ṭayyib* is seen as voluntary lifestyle advice with no exact instruments to measure within Islamic tradition. The scales of what can be called *ṭayyib*, as well as its implementation, therefore, vary.¹¹⁹ From an Islamic perspective, considering the meat’s origin would be undoubtably desirable, as religious guidelines for animal husbandry and slaughtering exist.¹²⁰

¹¹² Cf. Masri 2012b.

¹¹³ Cf. Iqbal 2015, pp. 54–55.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Foltz 2001, pp. 43–44. Cf. Masri 2012b.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Islam and Islam 2015, p. 105.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Islam and Islam 2015, p. 103; 110. For hadith examples concerning abusiveness of animals: Cf. Abdelkader 2015, pp. 58–60.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Masri 2012b. Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 191.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, p. 271.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Iqbal 2015, p. 56.

¹²⁰ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, p. 271.

Both the Sunna and the Koran demand their believers to show compassion for the animals.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the two primary sources of Islamic law provide no clear answer whether the consumption of animals that were not kept according to Islamic guidelines (no species-specific husbandry or feed, or cruelty to animals through mass transports) is permitted for Muslims.¹²² Therefore, the two other extensions of Islamic jurisprudence should be mentioned. Despite not existing in a written form, the doctrine of an independent justice finding of *iğtihād* and the concept of public interest *maṣlaḥa* contribute to the Islamic judicature. From the eighth to 10th century, Islamic law developed by these doctrines.

The *iğtihād* principle derives legal provision from already existing laws in order to authorize or ban certain matters according to specific circumstances and if necessary. Besides such cases, the framework (of time or conditions) might have an influence on accomplishing the Islamic law's objectives. For this reason, the *maṣlaḥa* concept has been established. It serves to consider whether a law that is applied within another framework and/or different conditions is indeed in accordance with the religion's objectives and beneficial or even harmful. Both principles might have a significant impact on legal interpretation.¹²³

It may be accepted that the Prophet Mohammed, who cared about animal welfare and condemned animals' mistreatment, would have deplored both the meat industry's cruelties and the consumption of its products.¹²⁴

Historical Background

The question of whether the Islamic criteria of treating and raising animals are not consequently leading Muslims to any form of vegetarianism arises. The author Foltz persuades this precise question in his article.¹²⁵

He recognizes an anthropocentric tradition in the religion of Islam as humans are regarded in Koran as *ḥalīfa* "vicegerents of God on Earth" (with respect to the Verses 2:30; 6:165; 35:39). Moreover, he traces the believers' attitude towards meat-eating back to certain Koran Verses, for instance, Verse 5:1, which allows them grazing livestock.¹²⁶

Referring to the same Verse and a few others (16:5, 66; 40:79), the author points out that the Koran often talks about deriving sustenance from animals in general, which, however, does not necessarily imply any slaughtering. He quotes Verse 16:66 and 40:79, explaining that the first

¹²¹ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 51.

¹²² Cf. Masri 2012b.: Slaughter of Animals Used for Food. Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, p. 271.

¹²³ Cf. Abdelkader 2015, pp. 60–61.

¹²⁴ Cf. Masri 2012b.

¹²⁵ Cf. Foltz 2001.

¹²⁶ Cf. Foltz 2001, pp. 41–42.

one explicitly talks about milk and the second about riding on some livestock while deriving food from others. Foltz criticizes that “flesh of” would be often inserted into the English translations of the Koran.

A hadith, moreover, reprimands harrying animals. The Koran and the Sunna speak out against abusing them. It is even said that Prophet Mohammed cursed people who hunt for sports.¹²⁷ Moreover, the Koran Verse 5:1 prohibits the hunt during pilgrimage time, which indicates that the act of hunting is regarded as impure. Still, meat-eating, in Koran, is described as one of the paradise’s pleasures (Verses 52:22 and 56:21).¹²⁸

Examining the contradiction of having compassion with animals and then, nevertheless, slaughtering them, Foltz illuminates vegetarianism and animal welfare in earlier Islamic eras.¹²⁹ Certain anecdotes issuing animal rights have survived. Foltz alleges examples of short stories in which the killing animals for food is criticized. One of them is a hagiography from the eighth century about the two early Muslim mystics Rābi‘a al-‘Adawīya al-Qaysīya and al-Ḥasan bin Abī l-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. According to Foltz, the hagiography talks about the trust and impartiality gazelles have towards humans and the animals’ eventual aversion for those humans who eat (one of) them. Another anecdote he quotes dates back to the 10th century. Written by a group of anonymous philosophers calling themselves *Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā* “Pure Brethren,” it gives its recipients food for thought. As Foltz maintained, the anecdote addresses God while speaking from the perspective of animals. The animals, in the anecdote, claim about humanity and their destroying of a harmonic and peaceful balance on Earth by their unreflectively abusing, hunting and murdering animals.

The Brethren’s view fits nicely into the discussions of the 21st century, Foltz notes. In the subsequent centuries, following their work’s publishing, though, only parts of a Shia sect, the Ismaelites, accepted their writings as normative ethics.¹³⁰ Another narration to which Foltz refers dates the 11th century and criticizes hunting. As described by Foltz, a hunter pursues an antelope when a voice asks him whether this (hunting) is for what he was created for. The protagonist answers this question by stopping his hunt as well as his wealthy lifestyle.¹³¹

In contrast to those anecdotes, the legal literature that debates using – and killing – animals was rare in the Classical Islamic period, Foltz remarks.¹³² He refers to the 11th century jurist Ibn

¹²⁷ Cf. Masri 2012b. Cf. Islam and Islam 2015, p. 100.

¹²⁸ Cf. Foltz 2001, pp. 52–53.

¹²⁹ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 51.

¹³⁰ Cf. Foltz 2001, pp. 44–45.

¹³¹ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 52.

¹³² Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 39.

Ḥazm. According to Foltz, Ibn Ḥazm argued that one needs the ability to speak for understanding Allah's words. Thus, "Allah's laws,"¹³³ would only be applicable for humankind. On this ground, the early jurist argues against ethical considerations on killing animals. Pertaining to this, Foltz reports that by understanding animal communication, this argument could serve for moral considerations on killing them. Birds' speech, for instance, is testified by the Koran Verse 27:16.¹³⁴ In another place in Koran, Verse 16:68, God himself even communicates with an animal, directing himself towards a bee, Masri adds.¹³⁵

Still, medieval legal literature provides a further argument against vegetarianism: The abstinence from meat-eating is connected to other religions. Thus, eating meat means a demarcation and contraposition especially to Buddhism and Hinduism. Known as religions worshiping idols while having a vegetarian lifestyle, vegetarianism has been ascribed to – what the Koran calls – unbelievers. Foltz at this point, refers to the 13th-century scholar ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Sulamī, who, in line with this, comments that a prohibition of slaughtering animals for nothing but their integrity would be incorrect.¹³⁶ This point of view has survived until today. As described by Kowanda-Yassin and Foltz, the contemporary Islamic scholar Mawil Izzi Dien states that vegetarianism and Islam are irreconcilable, if not justified by medical reasons or unavailability. The scholar argues with a prohibition of the believers' abandoning food that is allowed by Islam (Koran Verse 5:87).¹³⁷

Towards this statement, Foltz holds the historical fact that numerous Muslims have been choosing vegetarianism for reasons of piety since early times. On the other hand, it seems like the question of allowance to choose, was unclear. Foltz cites an anecdote about a vegetarian Sufi who is reputed to have been persecuted because of her decision to abstain from meat-eating.¹³⁸ Human health, in contrast, was a significant motivation justifying a vegetarian diet in medieval Islamic societies. Among Sufis, austerity entailing meat abstention was regarded as purifying. Moreover, the idea that eating animals or their fat might lead to animality was spread.¹³⁹

¹³³ that is to say the sin of killing.

¹³⁴ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 42.

¹³⁵ Cf. Masri 2012a.

¹³⁶ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 42.

¹³⁷ Cf. Foltz 2001, pp. 39–40. Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 188.

¹³⁸ Cf. Foltz 2001, pp. 39–40.

¹³⁹ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 47.

Vegetarianism and Islam in Modern Times

Though not encouraged by mainstream Islam, vegetarianism was partially practiced and partially accepted in the medieval Islamic era.¹⁴⁰ However, the diet continues to be banned in modern times. Foltz describes meat consumption as a social habit people who claim Muslim identity share – regardless of the country or region they live in.¹⁴¹ Referring to Muslim communities in the diaspora, the author Ali agrees with Foltz’s observation. In her paper, she describes the diaspora believers’ tendency to be comparatively more attentive about eating only *ḥalāl* meat. As a result, meat-eating generally holds the character of Muslim identity.¹⁴²

Thus, vegetarianism is rejected as un-Islamic, modern western innovation or even as sin, since meat consumption is not prohibited in the Koran or in the hadiths.¹⁴³ According to the Koran Verse 5:87, it is often seen as a transgressing to declare something God allowed as forbidden. Although it is to be kept in moderation, from an Islamic perspective, slaughtering animals is not considered killing. It is regarded as the human demand from the natural food chain, to which all living beings are bound and therefore, allowed.¹⁴⁴

The contemporary scholar and former Imam Masri, nonetheless, contradicts his medieval predecessors, after whose arguments the slaughtering would be allowed. He explains that the Arabic term *nafs* has until recently been translated in the meaning of “human beings” but would indeed represent “breathing beings,” which includes animals. As killing the *nafs* without any rightful reason is said to be one of the deadly sins, any unnecessary animal killing is consequently forbidden.¹⁴⁵

Kowanda-Yassin, however, points out that the Koran not only allows but even encourages believers to slaughter an animal on certain occasions as sacrifice fairs, such as in Verse 108:2.¹⁴⁶ Quoting the ninth century scholar Ibn Māḡa, she mentions a hadith, stating that those who are wealthy and have not slaughtered a sacrificial animal should not approach the praying place.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 47.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 39.

¹⁴² Cf. Ali 2015, p. 271. This identity construction is not always – or not only based on Muslim self-definition. Alloun’s article “‘That’s the Beauty of It, It’s Very Simple!’ Animal Rights and Settler Colonialism in Palestine-Israel” gives inspiring inputs to challenge this statement. Instead of Muslim’s self-distinction from others by defining themselves as meat eaters, it can be as well others’ self-distinction from Muslims and therefore their defining themselves as vegan(-friendly). To make this veganism an identity marker for (Jewish) Israelis, to national and international congresses in Israel, (Muslim) Palestinian animal right groups are simply not invited and/or vegan organizations are also simply not invited. Hence, Muslim vegetarianism seems far less than it is causing or strengthening the image of meat-eating Muslim identity. Cf. Alloun 2018, p. 560.

¹⁴³ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 188. Cf. Ali 2015, p. 271.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, p. 269.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Masri 2012b.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 188.

Furthermore, slaughtering for the sacrifice or a child's birth is a strong Sunna.¹⁴⁷ One event on which eating meat is seen as a sacrifice and which has to be practiced on a yearly base, is the Feast of Sacrifice *ʿīd al-Adhā*. Foltz, nevertheless, shows that even this slaughtering is unnecessary and facultative. He mentions the bans of King Hassan II during the 1990s. The king of Morocco enjoined the slaughtering of animals on *ʿīd* out of economic reasons.

Furthermore, Foltz states that these plentiful animal killings root in pre-Islamic Arabic customs. At that time, animals hold the meaning of surviving and therefore of a sacrifice, he argues.¹⁴⁸ The authors Islam and Islam even classify the sacrificial slaughtering in line with the Judeo-Christian tradition as a commemoration of Prophet Abraham's sacrifice slaughtering.¹⁴⁹ Referring to the Koran Verses 2:196 and 22:28, Masri complementarily elucidates the aim to allow Muslims scarifying animals: Its main purpose was, according to him, turning this already existent tradition into a charity instrument by fulfilling the social obligation of feeding the poor.¹⁵⁰ Kowanda-Yassin, who focuses on debating vegetarianism in modern Islamic society, however, criticizes the attribution of meat-eating as a (purely) traditional based habit.¹⁵¹

Nevertheless, all authors agree that the early Arab pastoralists, who needed animal products to survive, did not affect any ecocide or injustice amongst humans by their food consumption.¹⁵² In contrast, meat consumption nowadays represents wastefulness and social inequality. Social justice is, however, in the Koran, one of the main topics, as Foltz explains:

Growing up in an environment of a weighty economic disparity, the Prophet Muhammad used to preach against egoism. In the seventh century, he criticized the wealthy elite of Mecca. Amongst most societies today, the abundantly meat-eating as more affluent people's privilege represents exactly this inequality. After all, the privilege causes malnourishment and chronic hunger for 20% of the world's population – with a considerable proportion of Muslims, the author comments.¹⁵³

Factory farms and large parts of arable land being used for fodder growing instead of food for humans and destroy, at the same time, the ecosystem.¹⁵⁴ At this point, the above-mentioned anthropocentrism can be used to hold humanity to account addressing the role of vicegerents over creation in the light of ecocide. Hence, Muslims eating meat – which is for a vast majority

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, p. 269.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Foltz 2001, pp. 49–50.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Islam and Islam 2015, p. 100.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Masri 2012b.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, p. 272.

¹⁵² Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 191. Foltz 2001, p. 54. Cf. Masri 2012b. Cf. Islam and Islam 2015, p. 102.

¹⁵³ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 48.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 54.

of them unnecessary – bear not only for social harm responsibility. As maintained by the vicegerents’ concept, they are responsible for serious environmental destruction, including human health.¹⁵⁵

The Koran Verses as well as the hadiths, remind believers of their conservation duty. Some admonishments such as the prohibition of water pollution are even formulated very clear (for instance, in Koran, Verse 2:60). They refer directly to an environmental issue which is linked to stockbreeding. Other religious requests, like the invitation to do good, to live economically and moderate as well as the ban on causing trouble on Earth, are not explicitly referring to environmental protection. Nonetheless, they can be applied for it.¹⁵⁶

As the guiding principle of Islamic environmental ethics Kowanda-Yassin quotes the Koran Verse 3:191 stating that God did not create anything aimlessly. As everything is created with an aim, she subsequently deduces its worthiness to be protected.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, the author reminds of certain principles like cleanliness and purity *naẓāfa*. This principle refers to human body, nutrition, public places and keeping the water and the air clean.¹⁵⁸ In addition to the purity principle and the principle of mercy *raḥma* towards all living beings, the balance principle *mīzān* should be mentioned. Muslims are urged to keep this God-given balance.¹⁵⁹ Islam and Islam add that the IEP consists, besides the trusteeship concept, of two other fundamental conceptions for balance keeping: the divine unity *tawḥīd* and the hereafter *āḥira*.¹⁶⁰ Still, as it is known that the Prophet Mohammed used to eat meat, meat-eating, in general, can barely be interpreted as balance destroying. The meat consumption’s excessiveness, on the contrary, does destroy the balance and is therefore questionable from both an ethical and an ecological point of view.¹⁶¹

Compared to European countries, debates about Muslim countries’ environment feature a significantly lower priority: Although it is confirmed on request that nature needs to be protected, there are no far-reaching measures to protect it. Kowanda-Yassin explains this fact with social and economic problems that consider a sustainable lifestyle as an unnecessary expense or even luxury.¹⁶² The authors Islam and Islam analyze a feeling of victimhood in Asian and African

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 49. Cf. Masri 2012a.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 143 (referring to the Koran: *lā tufsidū* “does not cause unrest” in Verse 2:11 and 7:85. Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 146–147 (with respect to thrift, Verse 7:31; regarding modesty, Verse 92:11).

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 144.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 144. Cf. Masri 2012b.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Masri 2012b. Concerning the importance of respecting nature’s balance cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 144.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Islam and Islam 2015, p. 98.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, pp. 192–193.

¹⁶² Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2011, p. 144, p. 151.

Muslim societies. People, therefore, often feel preoccupied with human rights, which might explain the forgetting of environmental topics and animal welfare, the authors infer.¹⁶³ Alloun's paper, however, shows the exact opposite. It approaches the human-animal-relation by reference to Palestinian animal rights activism under the Israeli occupation. According to her analysis, the (feeling of) oppression seems to be the motor boosting Palestinian people to not only fight for their own but for animals' rights, too.¹⁶⁴

Abdelkader observes a gradual emerge of animal welfare movements in other Arabic language Muslim-majority countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar.¹⁶⁵ While scholarship largely neglects this subject, animal protection advocates in Arab countries started to attend to it, he explains. Members of Egypt's People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) started to defend animal rights and vegetarianism referring to Koran Verses. An opinion piece in Saudi Arabia critically challenged the Kingdom's status of animal welfare, pointing out Islamic references and requiring a legal reform. Connecting animal cruelty and the mistreatment of humans, the advocates quoted religious text sources in their opinion piece. They used narratives laden with references to Islam, reaching out initiatives that aimed at reform.¹⁶⁶ On the one hand, the religious embedding enhances the campaigns' validity; on the other hand, it makes the recipients scrutinize their understanding of religiously mandated legal action.¹⁶⁷

Eventually, vegetarianism can neither be defined as the nutritional form offered in Islam nor, as mentioned at the beginning, rejected as a non-Islamic innovation. Vegetarian nutrition forms represent a possible alternative Muslim consciousness, handling of nutrition that includes both health, ethical and ecological aspects.¹⁶⁸ The question of whether the request to kill certain animals – as can be seen from some hadiths – are binding or not becomes more and more important and must be clarified. Thus, it seems necessary that contemporary scholars issue vegetarianism. They might continue to disagree. Still, they have to examine the topic and take a stand on it.¹⁶⁹ Muslim vegetarians use the Prophet's meat consumption modesty as an argument at least for a low-meat diet.¹⁷⁰ Still, the wide range of interpretations of Islam, which is often praised by

¹⁶³ Cf. Islam and Islam 2015, p. 113.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Alloun 2018, p. 567.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Abdelkader 2015, p. 45.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Abdelkader 2015, p. 47.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Abdelkader 2015, p. 51.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Ali 2015, p. 273. Cf. Sejdini and et. al. 2017.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, pp. 273–274.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Ali 2015, p. 272. Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, p. 272.

Muslims as the property of a flexible religion, poses a problem in animal husbandry.¹⁷¹ For this reason, an anti-cruelty law in line with the religion's objectives can be a starting point.¹⁷² Moreover, already in the classical Islamic period, human health provided a convincing argument to stop eating animals or reduce meat consumption. In modern times, abstinence from eating meat – especially industrial products – might be even more crucial with respect to health. While Foltz criticizes people's idleness to face scientific facts about the meat consumptions' impact on health, Kowanda-Yassin argues that this indifference roots in a lack of information.¹⁷³ Eventually, it is true that there is hardly any written discourse about the effect of eating animals in Islamic countries.¹⁷⁴ The information gap can, however, be filled through education and media work.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, pp. 273–274.

¹⁷² Cf. Abdelkader 2015, p. 63.

¹⁷³ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 54. Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, p. 271.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Foltz 2001, p. 54.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Kowanda-Yassin 2010, pp. 273–274.

2.2 Veganism and Vegetarianism in MENA Newspapers

The above-described (s. 1.4.2) content analysis approaches the question of if and how forms of vegetarianism are discussed in the MENA region. The examination of the Arabic online newspapers *ar-Ra'y*, *al-Waṭan*, *Yawm 7*, *ad-Dustūr*, *The Daily Star*, *Le Matin*, *an-Nahār*, *aš-Šurūq* and *al-Fağr al-Ġadīd* yielded 119 articles until the scheduled date of September 1, 2020.¹⁷⁶ This number consists of both articles having meat abstinence as their main topic and articles in which vegetarianism is only touched amongst other things.

The oldest entries which, eventually, set a time limit for the analysis's frame, date back to the year 2003. In this year, the Moroccan online newspaper *Le Matin* published two articles treating vegetarianism. The first one, published at the beginning of March 2003, has a cultural context and only alludes to vegetarianism. It relates to a vegetarian artist, who chooses slaughterhouses for his plastic installations as these places represent something spiritual, namely the symbol of death, to him.¹⁷⁷ The other *Matin* report, published in Mai 2003, embeds vegetarianism issuing the fight against obesity. It explains that a diet free from starch might help losing weight faster, but not more effectively. The article presents a clutch of medical nutrition advice, certain studies and their failings. Eventually, the posting closes with a quotation of the U.S. Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) head, who argues in favor of high carbohydrate absorption, but predominantly plant-based diet avoiding animal fats.

Additionally, the PCRM head, and thus the article quoting it, informs the addressee about further health benefits by a vegan diet.¹⁷⁸ The Jordanian online newspaper *ad-Dustūr* provides the third 2003 article. It refers to a Canadian health study, which revealed that Veganism lowers cholesterol as much as medicine does.¹⁷⁹

Within the following almost 17 years, however, other online MENA newspapers delved into the subject. Most results were found on the Lebanese webpage of *The Daily Star*. It covers the topic 32 times. The Egypt online newspaper *Yawm 7* provides 24 articles, the Jordanian online newspaper *ar-Ra'y* 17. The other Jordanian based newspaper, *ad-Dustūr*, has 13 entries on its webpage that discuss meatless diets, followed by the Tunisian newspaper *aš-Šurūq* with 13 items and the Qatar newspaper *al-Waṭan* with 12. Though it seems like *Le Matin* was ahead of

¹⁷⁶ This number includes, however, duplications as in some cases, two newspapers published the same article.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *Le Matin* 2003b.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. *Le Matin* 2003a.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2003.

the curve when it comes to sharing vegetarianism-related information, the number of articles found between 2003 and 2020 comes to only eight articles overall.

No single mentioning of vegetarian diets was found on the internet websites of the Algerian newspaper *an-Nahār* and the Libyan newspaper *al-Fağr al-Ġadīd*. The number of articles in which vegetarianism is the text's heart, however, adds up to only 85. The Egypt *Yawm 7* website provides with 21 postings almost a fourth, as well as the Lebanese *Daily Star* does with 19 articles. *Aš-Šurūq* contributes 13, *ar-Ra'y* 11, *al-Waṭan* 10 and *ad-Dustūr* nine articles to it. In comparison, the online newspaper *Le Matin* only has two articles addressing vegetarianism as the central theme (s. Figure 5).

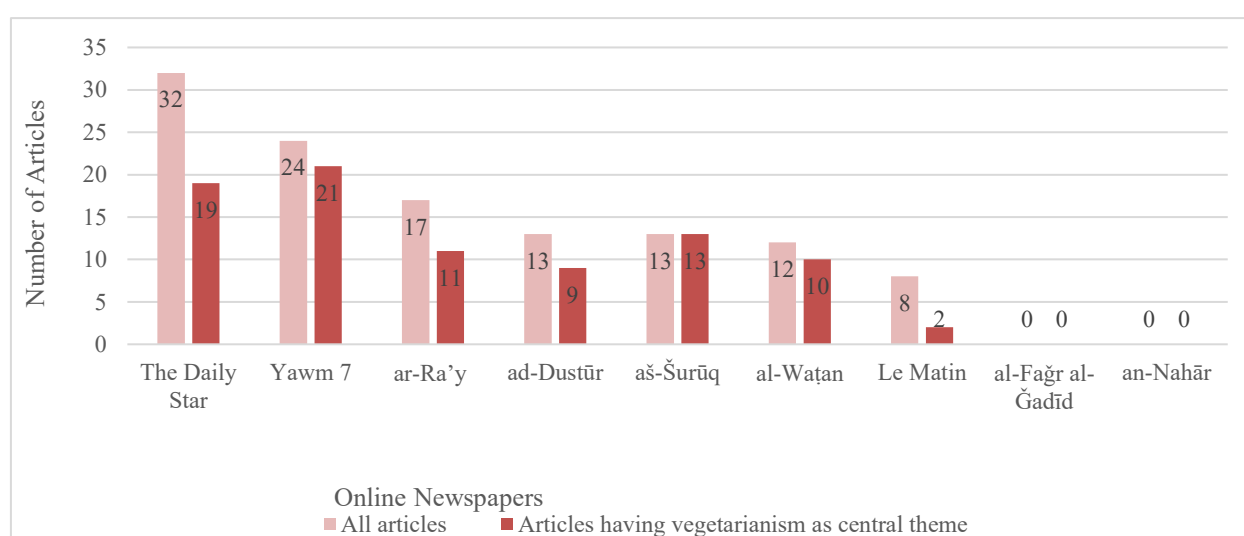


Figure 5: Contrasting Juxtaposition: Total Number of Articles vs. Articles Having Vegetarianism as Central Theme
Source: Author's own diagram based on the articles' categorization scaffold.

Regardless of whether the articles only touch vegetarian diet forms or elaborate it centrally, the number of topic-related postings grew over the years.¹⁸⁰ More than half of the results have been published within less than the last three years (from March 2018 until September 2020).

Below examples show if and how vegetarianism is treated as an environmental topic (2.2.1) and in which further contexts meatless diets are approached (2.2.2). Finally, the empirical findings and their (un-)usual features are concisely summarized in a third part (2.2.3).

As stated before, most articles cannot be assigned to only one of the four categories (ES; H; LS; F). Moreover, H-related articles can be categorized into further subsections since they outnumbered any other category by far. Most of the articles bear a cover picture. The motives are usually food, humans who eat, or – especially with respect to LS-related articles – celebrities.

¹⁸⁰ Of course, one has to consider the increasing digitalization as a factor for online publishing.

As appropriate, noticeable other motifs are broached shortly. Except for press releases, sources to which the articles refer are in each case mentioned as far as they are given.

2.2.1 How Newspapers Approach Vegetarianism as Environmental Issue

In 37 articles, vegetarianism is linked to environment and sustainability. Still, only a few of the collected 119 articles address vegetarian diet solely as ES issue. Some newspapers, however, approached the abstinence from meat-eating within an environmental context, particularly in recent years.

Vegetarianism (Only) Discussed as an Environmental Issue

One longer article, nonetheless, dates already back to October 2010. The report, found on the newspaper website *ar-Ra'y*, informs its readers about the scientists' call for curbing meat consumption. The *Ra'y* article refers to researchers from the Canadian Dalhousie University and their newly published study. Quoting the two scientists, the online newspaper elaborates that preserving the environment and curbing climate change is in every single one's hand by reducing their meat consumption. Eventually, the online newspaper remembers that this call for scaling down the world's meat consumption was not the first. The article indicates to the German scientist Ralph Conrad who demanded a limitation of cow raising. Counteracting global warming, the director of the Max-Planck Biogeochemistry Department is cited, stating that reducing the animals' gas, methane, might have a faster positive impact than that of carbon dioxide emissions. The *Ra'y* article, moreover, lists some celebrities known for their commitment to vegetarianism but returns to the Canadian study. The two researchers predict a doubling of livestock production between 2000 and 2050 and an increased pressure on the ecosystem and climate, as the paper records.¹⁸¹

In August 2019, the *Yawm 7* author Mu'annis published an article claiming that humans have to switch to plant-based nutrition to save the planet from climate change. He refers to a report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The report reveals that resolving the climate crisis requires a shift in food production around the world. It indicates that humans need to reassess food production and land management for saving the planet.

Pointing to the reports' detailed information, the author continues informing about the current exploitation of the planet's ice-free surface (72%). The article says that agriculture produces a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions and that livestock and rice fields account for a big amount of methane emissions.

¹⁸¹ Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2010.

Keeping on quoting the IPCC report, Mu'annis lists some consequences, such as land degradation, the severity of drought, heat, sea level rise and wave movement. Eventually, he closes his posting with the warning but inviting words:¹⁸²

*Wa-yuṣaddid at-taqrīr 'alā 'anna al-'arḍ sataḥtāğ 'ilā 'idārat mustadāma,
wa-yağib 'alā al-baṣar ḥaḥḍ istihlāk al-luḥūm li-l-ḥadd min inbi'āt al-mītān.*
“The report stresses that the Earth will need sustainable management
and people have to reduce meat consumption to limit methane emissions.”¹⁸³

Both articles, the one from 2010 as well as the one from 2019, are useful but seldom examples of pure ES articles. They both refer to other countries' news and scientific results. While in the *Ra'y* report the call for a meat reduction is relayed on the words of scientists and celebrities only, the author of the *Yawm 7* report takes up an attitude himself. Nevertheless, both articles call for a switch to vegetarianism, representing a vegetarian diet as a solution to fight climate change and its consequences.

A further ES article, which, however, only touches on vegetarianism, is Hood's report *Ecological land grab: Food vs. fuel vs. forests* in *The Daily Star Lebanon*. Likewise published in summer 2019, the author describes the planets' current environmental crisis. Referring to different scientists, the article provides facts and informs its addressees about diverse solution approaches, such as forest restoration, and their pros and contras. In the last part of the report, a former director of the Potsdam Institute of Climate Change is quoted. According to him, any chance to still feed the increasing population worldwide in 2050 is attached to the following conditions: An investment in new technologies reducing environmental impacts, cutting off food waste and the adoption of a healthy plant-based diet. Despite written at the end and mentioned in only one sentences amongst other things, even this article calls for a turn to vegetarianism. However, Hood closes the report with the conclusion that it would remain uncertain whether that food transformation matches with plant-based systems sucking CO₂ out of the air.¹⁸⁴

Only three days later, *The Daily Star Lebanon* published a further article authored by him. Again, the newspaper article does not directly call for switching to vegetarianism. Referring to a UN report, it however, concedes that turning to a vegetarian diet would facilitate protecting the Earth from overheating. More than a quarter of the emissions that are food-related come

¹⁸² Cf. مؤنس 2019.

¹⁸³ مؤنس 2019.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Hood 2019a.

from sheep and cattle, describes the author indicating an IPCC article. Subsequently, the double threat of climate caused by the livestock industry (replacement of CO₂ absorbing forests by land for grazing and forage production on the one hand and huge amounts of greenhouse gases on the other hand) is explained.

At this point, Hood mentions the World Resources Institute's comparison between plant and beef protein. It specifies that beef emits 20 times more greenhouse gases per edible protein unit than plant proteins, while it requires 20 times more land. Still, the author draws attention to emphasizing that a complete meat abstinence is not necessarily stipulated. Hood reminds in his *Daily Star* article that billions of poor people would depend on fish and some on meat. Quoting from the Lancet study, the author eventually puts on a record that a nuts- and veggie-rich diet, which is short on sugar, dairy and meat would be optimal for health. In figures, the red meat shortness is described by weekly 100 grams per capita. This diet could even feed the population of 10 billion in 2050, the author adds. Hood's article closes with the information that meat consumption already has leveled off in richer countries, while a slight rise in the global consumption of the four major meats beef, pork, chicken and lamb can be extrapolated.¹⁸⁵

The fourth longer article that is completely dedicated to the ES category was published by *Le Matin* at the beginning of September 2019. Equal to the previous articles, the article refers to study results. More precisely, it introduces the findings of the Johns Hopkins University's scientists. They modelled the impact of nine different diets within a span of 140 countries. The main message of the study, published in the journal *Global Environmental Change*, is that a development towards vegan nutrition is significant for reaching environmental goals and fighting global warming, *Le Matin* cites.

The author explains that a vegan diet reduces the average CO₂ footprint per capita by 70% and that the diet implies the lowest greenhouse gases in 97% of the 140 countries. However, the author indicates that diets including meat and fish provide more flexibility in terms of protein absorption. This flexibility might be essential for certain populations, he continues. Similar to Hoods, the *Matin* article eventually advises to curb the meat down and take two out of three meals vegan, while keeping one vegetarian or pescetarian, to minimize the amount of red meat and adopt one meatless day per week. The author shares the study's outcomes with the readers: Ruminants' (red) meat implies the highest CO₂ footprint per protein, which is, on average, 316 times more than that of legumes, 125 times more than that of nuts and seeds and 40 times more than that of soybeans.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Hood 2019b.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. *Le Matin* 2019.

Vegetarianism in ES-LS Context

A *Waṭan* article from 2020 shortly summarizes the realizing of the previous articles already at the beginning. It notes that a vegan diet, followed by a vegetarian one, may be the best way to protect the planet. Since some people do not have the ability to adhere to either system, a reduction of meat would be the best solution, the introduction continues.

Ensuing, the article focuses on answering what the actual amount of meat and milk is that should be consumed and addresses getting enough protein. Thus, the author covers the topic by listing six bits of advice from the *New York Times* food writer Melissa Clark that should help eat less meat and dairy products. The first advice, eating large amounts of legumes, follows a citation of the food writer. She recommends looking for fewer common varieties, such as brown-spotted beans, purple beans, chickpeas, lentils and marine beans and use them as a replacement in meat receipts. The article's second advice is to rely on cereals is. Besides quinoa as a protein source, the cited food blogger explains that other cereals such as wild rice, cornmeal and buckwheat and even pasta are rich in protein and other nutrients. She indicates that dishes containing grains imply varied nutrition as they are easy to combine and season.

Clark's third recommendation is Tofu cheese. The article quotes certain preparation recommendations but also her advice to mix it with meat or chicken, which again shows that the article's aim is to reduce meat or help people with their transition to vegetarianism. As fourth recommendation, she emphasizes the benefits and the multiple applications of nuts and seeds. After that, the food writer discusses with her fifth recommendation, vegetable meat before she eventually comes to her last proposal, which is still to still accept a few meat. However, Clark advises to appreciate the few meat and combine it with other food, mostly plant-based one and to make use of leftovers for broth to avoid wasting.¹⁸⁷

In comparison with the previous ES articles, the *Waṭan* article already states from the beginning its focus on reducing, but not excluding meat from the plate. The ES context, however, seems to somehow gets lost within the article's main part. The central topic is where to get protein from and how to combine or to prepare it without mentioning why the different protein-rich plants are better for the environment than eating meat. No numbers or technical terms from any scientific study are quoted. On the other hand, exactly this shortness of mentioning the food's environmental impact initially in combination with the food writer's personal input through the whole article might be simply more appealing to readers. Moreover, Clark's drawing attention

¹⁸⁷ Cf. الوطن 2020a.

to keep the food waste as low as possible at the end of the text, gets the article in line with its starting point: Saving the planet by changing eating habits.

Two years before, in September 2018, the online newspaper already published an article that considers itself a guide helping its addressees go vegan. Quoting the British newspaper the Guardian, it provides seven steps, starting with taking it easy adapting a vegan diet gradually. It encourages the readers, as a second step, to trust in vegan options while ordering food outside advertising the application *Happy Cow* that helps to find vegan(-friendly) restaurants. The third and fourth advice concern social life. One should be prepared for other people's unfamiliar reactions, including their random questions and connect with other vegetarians to benefit from their experience. The fifth step is to learn vegetarian signs for understanding the ingredients of products, the quoted report states. As a sixth step or advice, the article invites its readers to try alternatives, pointing out that from nearly every kind of cheese, vegan versions exist, too.

At the very end, the report approaches veganism as an ES issue. In case of unsureness, it says, people should focus on the target. The quoted report reminds its readers to remember why they decided to go vegan referring to boycott the meat and dairy industries and the fact that plant-based food is an effective way to help the environment.¹⁸⁸ Besides a short introduction, there seems to be no input of *al-Waṭan* within this article. For this reason, it seems like the newspaper supports the recommendations that it shared.

Similar to that, a *Daily Star* article from March 2012 approaches veganism. The author Reaney reports about a New York chef who impresses with meat-free recipes. After a brief introduction of the chef, the article follows a Q&A-structure. Very short but at the very beginning the article links within this frame veganism and environment: The cited chef answers the question of why she decided to become a vegan chef, with her loving animals. Nevertheless, the article does not expand on environmental issues. Like in the *Waṭan* articles above, the focus is on how to cook and get vegan protein sources and providing advices how to switch to a vegan diet. Closing the interview, Reaney eventually adduces a chocolate strawberry cupcakes recipe.¹⁸⁹

In contrast to this way of directly addressing the readers with constructive suggestions, another *Daily Star* article is written in an observing-narrative style. The report, published in August 2017, tells about a vegan British football club. The environmental context is given as veganism is listed as one of the features that define the club ecological. The *Forest Green Rovers Club* is under the leadership of a renewable energies' entrepreneur, the author Mamet informs. Going into details, Mamet describes the club's training ground in Southern England: While collected

¹⁸⁸ Cf. الوطن 2018a.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Reaney 2012.

rainwater irrigates the field, solar panels, installed on the stands' roof, provide 20% of the energy.

The article comprises some direct quotations of the club's leader Dale Vince. He therein emphasizes the club's aim to give people – especially football fans – an understanding of sustainability. Some more quotations of players and Mamet's descriptions of the surroundings let the readers know that even the equipment is selected after the criteria of being vegan and organic. Within another quotation, the club's chef states that the vegan diet is most helpful with respect to the sportsmen's nutrient and protein supply. Manet notes that the club's manager, although he is not a vegan, ascribes the team's fitness and success to their vegan nutrition.

On the other hand, the author mentions that the players are not forced to keep vegan nutrition off the field and, thus, might eat omnivorously. Mamet, moreover, mentions that the fans have mixed emotions towards the offered food. Finally, the article closes with the amusing commentary that if it comes about drinks, all fans agree in preferring beer to soymilk.¹⁹⁰ As this last part of the article shows, the author endeavors not only to integrate different views but also mentions a possible impact on health by changing eating habits. Simultaneously, he at the very end, emphasizes the (importance of) free choice.

The article provides an excellent example of embedding vegetarianism within the context of resource-conserving, organic surrounding and equipment. Some other articles selected for this analysis, mention veganism even only, while they discuss other (environmental) topics. In April 2018, for instance, the two *Daily Star* authors Mondesert and Gibbons published an article about the animal rights group PETA. The group declared that 2018 would be the year of bidding goodbye to fur, the authors inform. In the following, the article describes PETA's fight for a fashion without animal products and the increase of fashion houses who decide to go fur-free. Some luxury brands like Gucci and Versace are enumerated as they announced to quit pelt fashioning. Emphasizing their decision, the authors Mondesert and Gibbons insert the fashion designers' explanations about what prompted them to go fur-free. The designer Donatella Versace, for example, states that killing animals for making fashion simply does not feel right. However, Mondesert and Gibbons call attention to the fact that not all designers fall in beside this opposing cruelty. Quoting Karl Lagerfeld, the article at this point connects the topic with nutrition. The designer reasons his use of real fur with people's consumption of meat and leather. Although the report is mainly talking about the clothing business, (not) eating meat gives a vital input.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Mamet 2017.

The authors explain that PETA also campaigns for a plant-based diet. They allude to the famous designer Stella McCartney and bring up that she is a vegan and animal rights activist herself. She has pushed the ethical envelope the furthest by refusing to use fur, leather or feathers, as Mondesert and Gibbons amplify. Vegans target to ban all animal products, including wool, the article eventually explains.

However, the article reproduces critical voices, too. Such come from the International Fur Federation who denotes going fur-free as a marketing gimmick and indicates the fake fur's danger to the environment by its plastic. A quotation from the Faux Fur Institute, however, disputes this, since from an ecological point of view, using a waste product from oil was better than farming millions of animals and treating their pelts with chemicals.

Finally, the article lets the readers know of the marginal relevance the fashion houses' decisions globally play as the fur sales in China, the world's biggest fur consumer, still flourish. The short mention of nutrition is not pursued any further.¹⁹¹ However, Lagerfeld's argument embedded in the middle of the article might provide food for thought to the readers.

In 2012, a further *Daily Star* article informed its addressee that veganism is not necessarily restricted on nutrition. The report talks about the growing trend for clear-conscience consumerism in Germany, which has an impact on the consumption of sex toys, too. In the first part of the article, the author describes the opening of a sex shop specialized in sex aids that are certified as organic and vegan. Quoting the shop owner, the article lets its readers know that veganism is not only a nutrition form but also means avoiding products that come from an animal or that were tested on animals.

The following part of the article provides general information about veganism in Germany. Referring to the Vegan-Berlin association, it reveals that half a million vegans live in Germany while one can see a strong increase. Moreover, in 2011 Europe's first 100% vegan supermarket opened in the German capital next to a store offering non-leather footwear, the author continues. Coming back to the report's starting point, the writer explains that, consequently, vegetarianism also has an impact on love. The article mentions that a Berlin restaurant in the respective year offered a vegetarian speed-dating event for St. Valentine's Day.

Besides explaining that even non-food products can be classified into vegan and non-vegan depending on their production and ingredients, the article does not discuss veganism within an environmental context but fits more into the LS category.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Cf. Mondesert and Gibbons 2018.

¹⁹² Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2012b.

The same is the case for the following examples. In 2013, *The Daily Star Lebanon* and *Le Matin* reported about a phenomenon called woofing. Despite the *Daily Star* article being in English while the one from *Le Matin* is in French, both newspaper websites published the exact same article provided by the French Press Agency AFP. In contrast to *Le Matin*, *The Daily Star Lebanon* mentions the author's name, Gavard. Explaining the term Wwoof (WorldWide Opportunities on Organic Farms), he explains that Wwoofing was based on the idea of exchanging farm work against a countryside bed and breakfast.

Quoting agricultural laborers from a French farm, the articles emphasize the benefits for people who invest their effort and time. The volunteering workers meet new people, have breakfast in an organic garden and learn sustainable farming techniques. After providing some numbers about the woofing in France, Gavard points out that even the farmers learn from the people they host. He quotes two vegetable farmers telling that they got in touch with veganism through the exchange with their guests and thus switched their diets.¹⁹³ Still, the articles' operative word is on the mutual benefit by exchange, not on veganism. They only touch on the diet briefly as one of the exchange's benefits, describing it as a positive experience, though.

The opposite is the case with two *Daily Star* articles from April 2018. Both report about a gun shooting in San Bruno, California, executed by the vegan YouTuber Nasim Najafi Aghdam. The 39-year-old woman shot and injured three people at the YouTube headquarters before killing herself, the articles tell. Her motive is based on anger about Youtube's taking down her videos as the newspaper explains.¹⁹⁴

One of the reports focuses on the question of why the company generally takes down videos. The author Anderson only starts with the back then current case of Aghdam. Explaining that YouTube often acts if video content violates its guidelines, she refers to different cases. Aghdam's perspective is displayed as believing that YouTube was suppressing her videos. In this context, the author mentions that the videos included segments about veganism and cruelty towards animals.¹⁹⁵

The second *Daily Star* article referring to Aghdam's shooting, however, concentrates more on the shooter's person and thus on her motives. It reports that the woman blogged about veganism and warned that the planet was sick and full of unfairness. According to the article, Aghdam railed against YouTube before her channel was deleted. The report quotes her statements of feeling discriminated. Referring to the local police, it lets the readers know that her shooting

¹⁹³ Cf. Gavard 2013. Cf. *Le Matin* 2013.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Anderson 2018. Cf. *The Daily Star Lebanon* 2018.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Anderson 2018.

might be grounded on her anger against the company. Eventually, the author disperses the activism for veganism and animals, which was mentioned at the very beginning of the article. The report ends – equal to the one of Anderso – directing the attention to YouTube’s censorship and gun rights.¹⁹⁶

Both articles touch on veganism within an environmental context. Nevertheless, discussing YouTube guidelines, guns and shooting sprees of which the central part of both reports consists, is more assignable to the LS category. Still, the articles give an interesting input into the content analysis, as they are amongst the few examples in which vegetarianism is neither discussed neutrally nor positive. Even though both articles describe the shooter’s motive grounded on her conflict with the company, the linking to veganism puts a negative spin on vegan diet.

An example for a neutrally informing newspaper article fitting into the categorization ES and LS, is for instance, a *Daily Star* report from 2017 about the back then published movie *Okja*. Kennedy, the author, informs the readers about its content. “Okja” is the name of a sow created in a lab, he notes. Kennedy describes a South Korean girl who raises the animal spending time together in nature and collaborating with it by their mutual search for food until the laboratory that produced the superpig, kidnaps it. The girl persuades the lab company with some animal rights activists’ help getting her pet back, the author continues.

Critically he describes the movie’s structure and production, observing that its director, Bong Joon-Ho, assigned the parts discerning good and evil without any nuances. The laboratory company represents the business concern Monsanto, he analyses. At the end of his article, the author comments that it is not clear if the movie’s message is an accusation of capitalism. However, as the author writes it at the very beginning, the film director speaks out for veganism and wants his audience to reflect what is on their plates. Kennedy, who analyzed the film, closes his film review stating that it augurs to make ordering food harder.¹⁹⁷

A longer neither positive nor negative report that already dates to November 2011 dwells on stars who turned vegan. Enumerating various celebrities out of different branches including a talk-show host as well as the politician Clinton, the author introduces the prominent advocates of a plant-based diet. Explaining that vegan restaurants’ clientele consists of both vegans and non-vegans, she ascertains that the image of the vegan lifestyle has changed with time. The author Noveck cites the famed vegan chef Ronnen, who describes the veganism’s shifting from a hippies’ movement to a lifestyle of businesspeople and good-looking stars.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2018.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Kennedy 2017.

Eventually, Noveck describes two different approaches of her above-listed stars. The actress De Rossi and her husband DeGeneres, for instance, chose the diet out of concern for animal welfare, while Clinton's veganism is motivated by weight loss, she reports. Nevertheless, the article's rest continues talking about image change and the impact celebrities have had on that.¹⁹⁸ Generally, it seems like the author confines herself on that. Apart from mentioning animal welfare as inducement amongst others, there is no link between food and the environment.

Another *Daily Star* article from February 2019, titled *Beyonce, Jay-Z offer chance of lifetime tickets to fans who go vegan*, relates to the musicians' campaign for veganism. The title already indicates the article's main information. Going into detail, the author explains that the challenge Beyoncé announced to her 123 million Instagram followers, is grounded on supporting a certain Greenprint Project. For limiting environmental footprints, the project promotes the adoption of a partially vegan diet, the article continues. With one sentence, the *Daily Star* lets its readers know the terms for participation. After signing up online, one would be chosen at random for a 30-year-long annual win of concert tickets with an estimated value of 12,000 dollars. Ensuing, the article reports that the singer herself, supported by her personal trainer, announced to go vegetarian on Mondays and keeps her breakfast plant-based. Her husband Jay-Z stated that two of his daily meals would be vegan. This description points out that the couple themselves do not follow any strict vegan diet, but only occasionally replace some omnivorous dishes. At the end of the article, the author, however, gives some examples of celebrities who indeed adopted a plant-based diet, such as Miley Cyrus and Ariana Grande.

Within this context, the report shortly answers what veganism means. Finally, it refers to science noting that cutting meat and dairy products can improve the Earth's health as it reduces farmland use and greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁹⁹ The article is comparatively short. The author holds a certain balance between updating the readers on celebrities and informing them about veganism and its environmental impact. In contrast to the prior article, the latter one at least explains the role food plays in terms of conservation, even if it does not expand on it.

One year later, veganism found itself within a further *Daily Star* article. Again, the topic is solely mentioned amongst other things. However, its weight for environmental protection is thrown into sharp relief. The report records the Critics' Choice Awards in Los Angeles and Quentin Tarantino's film *Once Upon a Time*. Commenting in detail on the ceremony, the South Korean film director Bong Joon-Ho (mentioned above in Kennedy's article), is quoted, too.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Noveck 2011.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2019a.

The article cites his statement that he was trying to enjoy the event, but indeed enjoyed the vegan burger. Explaining this note, the *Daily Star* informs the readership in a subsequent sentence about the award's serving a vegan menu for boosting environmental awareness. The rest of the report revolves around film celebrities and what made them distinguished by the award.²⁰⁰ At the beginning of the year 2020, *Yawm 7* also dedicated an ES-LS-related article to vegetarianism. It introduces five stars and their reasons for adapting a plant-based diet. Nearly 10 years after Noveck's report on the website *The Daily Star Lebanon*, also the *Yawm 7* author Salāma starts her article, affirming that the shift towards vegetarianism has become a general trend amongst world celebrities.

However, in contrast to Noveck, Salāma focuses on only five persons, but illuminates their motivation: She notes already in her introduction that the decision to go vegan might be based on personal taste, health or environmental reasons, but also on ethical ones. She adds that the UK court in January 2020 declared veganism a philosophical belief, which consequently enjoys law protection.

Keeping the focus on Great Britain, the article quotes a Vegan Society research from 2018. It informs the readers that, as per the research, 600,000 vegans live in Great Britain. For the central part of the report, the author draws on an article of the women's magazine *Elle* and lists the five most famous people who turned vegan. First, Salāma enumerates Miley Cyrus and talks about her vegan wedding, featuring a selection of plant-based foods and a wedding dress of the anti-fur activist Vivienne Westwood. A direct citation of Cyrus reasons her dress choice. She explains that her decision is based on living sustainable and vegan. The second celebrity the article quotes is Ariana Grand. After shortly summing up that the star used to live nearly her whole life as a vegetarian, again a citation explains the celebrity's motivation.

According to this, her motive lies in her love of animals, but also in her conviction that a plant-based diet helps prolong life and makes happier. The motive of Gina Dewan, the next celebrity, is, as per the report, reasoned in her watching a documentary about slaughterhouses and thus a morally one. At the end of the article, Salāma mentions Beyoncé Knowles and Thandie Newton. Referring to Beyoncé's nutrition documentation on YouTube, her decision is described as health wise. The article ends informing that Thandie Newton became a vegetarian after working alongside Woody Harrelson in the film *Solo: A Star Wars Story*.²⁰¹

Half a year later, in July 2020, the same newspaper published a rather similar article. In contrast to Salāma, the author Ṭāriq skips any introduction. Referring to the magazine *Insider*, the report

²⁰⁰ Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2020b.

²⁰¹ Cf. سلامة 2020.

directly starts stating that celebrities, especially musicians, follow a vegetarian diet for various reasons. Ṭāriq mentions that those reasons would include health benefits or animal welfare. Afterwards, the article gives few examples of such celebrities and background information about what they eat or when they adopted a vegetarian diet.

Critically the report also indicates that the singer Ariana Grande, who in November 2013 switched to a vegan diet, promoted a drink containing dairy products in 2019. Jennifer Lopez and her vegetarian diet for losing weight after giving birth, is the last example that Ṭāriq quotes.²⁰²

As with the non-existing introduction, the author does not complete the article with any conclusion or commenting. Nevertheless, the two articles broach the different motives for going vegetarian. The quoted celebrities serve as specimens. While these reports can be mainly assigned to the category of lifestyle, they touched on the ES category, too. Even health and faith are mentioned.

Vegetarianism in ES-F Context

Faith, however, is the category to which only the fewest articles could be assigned to. Only five reports out of the whole material selection approach vegetarianism within a religious context. Four of them feature both ES- and F-related content.

Two articles bear upon the same topic, on which the prior article already touched: the UK tribunal decision whether veganism should be protected as a belief or not. Elks, the author of both *Daily Star* articles, first published a report in January 2020 announcing that a tribunal will occur.²⁰³ The following day, an article proclaiming the tribunal's outcome ensued.²⁰⁴ As the first report explains, the case is precedential. It is based on a dismissal, which is, according to the demander and former staff, unlawful. Elks adds the information that the demander argues his ethical veganism should be treated equally to religion and thus be protected by the law.

Within the first half of the article, "ethical veganism" is explained as a commitment to avoid harming animals. Elks ensuing provides facts, such as that the number of people curbing down their meat and dairy products grows due to the awareness of their food's impact on climate. However, the first part of the article does not mention how the staff's veganism is involved with his layoff and why the court's decision should change anything on that. Bit by bit the reader gets to know that a successful complain would entitle ethical vegans to protection from any discrimination. At this point, the article explains the difference between veganism and ethical

²⁰² Cf. طارق 2020.

²⁰³ Cf. Elks 2020a.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Elks 2020b.

veganism: The author states that vegans cut out any ingredients from animals from their nutrition, while ethical veganism has tendencies to go beyond by avoiding anything linked to animal exploitation, too. However, Elks comments that there is no clear definition of what precisely the term ethical veganism refers to.

Just at the very end, she answers to the emerging question of why ethical veganism could have posed a problem for the staff. The article enumerates, for instance, the skipping of gatherings where not-plant-based food is served and the avoiding of sitting on leather chairs. Finally, it closes with a citation from the concerned staff stating that ethical veganism was not different from other people's treating their religion.²⁰⁵

The writing seems relatively neutral towards vegetarianism but in its content rather confused. It does not elaborate for what the protection of discrimination, the demander claims for, was useful. The article about the tribunals' decision, which followed one day later, enlightens this question. In a landmark hearing, the British court ruled that choosing to be a vegan for ethical reasons was a "philosophical belief." It thus warrants protection by law, she reports. According to a law lecturer, this ruling would give vegans more evident rights to accommodations like suitable food at work gatherings, Elks finally explains.²⁰⁶

Two further F-ES articles about veganism relate to the ancient Indian religion of Jainism. One of them, a *Daily Star* report from August 2013, informs its addressees about the reinterpretation of this ascetic faith by U.S. born Jains. The author Flaccus starts his article with a short explanation defining the faith as a close cousin of Buddhism. Since the believers are very strict in terms of nonviolence, the religion would have been often hard sell in the U.S., he continues and explains that this attitude means valuing even small insects, forbids eating meat and encourages fasting days.

The longer article gives insights about some further aspects such as meditating. It depicts very detailed how (especially young) people find this religion and how difficult the merge of acting on it and life in the U.S. is. According to Flaccus, the U.S. Jains expand the definition of peacefulness encompassing environmentalism, animal rights as well as corporate business ethics and veganism.

Referring to a bioethics and religion professor, he notes that some believe even the use of electricity could add to bad karma as it affects other living things. According to the professor, many Jains nevertheless work with computers, etc. trying to find a compromise between faith and practicality. Ensuing, the author gives an example of a teenager. He cites her stating that she

²⁰⁵ Cf. Elks 2020a.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Elks 2020b.

adopted the attitude of trying to do the best as possible. Flaccus adds that for Jains, who struggle to follow traditional rituals, veganism, which is required by the faith, too, is on the rise. He goes into details about not food-related rituals noting that the changes in acting out the faith might affect Jainism in the U. S., where the faith has about 150,000 followers. Briefly, the article also discusses other aspects such as women's status, the religion's appearance in "the West." Veganism is not mentioned any further. However, the author points out that the represents (amongst other things) a reduced form acting out Jainism in the U.S for those who cannot follow all the required rituals and rules.²⁰⁷

The other Jainism article, which was published on the website of the newspaper *ar-Ra'y* in December 2016, touches on veganism even shorter than the prior one. It reports about a famous architectural building of the Mughal Emperors in New Delhi, which Jains turned into a hospital providing medical services for infected or sick birds. Within this context, the *Ra'y* article informs its readers about the more than 3,000-year-old religion and its origin in India, where it is currently followed by less than one percent of the population.

Before going deeper into details about the birds' treatment in the second half of the article, the author shares what constitutes the religious basis of Jainism: living beings, whether small or large, are sacred and must be protected. Adherents of the religion believe in the interconnected spirits of living beings, who accordingly must mutually support each other, he continues. Jains follow a firm vegan diet, which includes avoiding swallowing an insect, the author describes, before the rest of the article continues reporting about the birds' hospital.²⁰⁸

Vegetarianism in ES-H Context

Forms of vegetarianism are quite often linked to health topics. More than two out of three articles, namely 83, relate to vegetarianism within a health context.²⁰⁹

Amongst them are eight in which articles can be assigned to both the ES and the H category. In May 2008, for example, a *Dustūr* article reported about PETA's appeal to the Egyptian government. The international animal protection organization drew president Hosni Mubarak's attention to the country's population's nutrition and demanded him to reduce Egypt's meat consumption, as maintained by the article. The reason was a grocery crisis many countries worldwide suffered from and the bread's price rise in Egypt by which many families were hit, *ad-Dustūr* notes. Citing the organizations' declaration, the reader comes to know that crops and other agricultural products were fed to livestock for meat production instead of feeding hungry

²⁰⁷ Cf. Flaccus 2013.

²⁰⁸ Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2016c.

²⁰⁹ Except the few reports about celebrities, etc., which briefly alluded to health (i. a. as motive to go vegetarian).

people. Besides mentioning the cruelty towards animals, the article gives account to the meat production's inefficiency. According to the organization, up to 16 kilograms of corn are needed to yield one kilogram of meat, *ad-Dustūr* writes. In the end, the organization, and thus the article, indicates that going meat-free brings along health benefits, such as the reduction of coronary and cancerous as well as a achieving to get a slight figure.²¹⁰ Overall, the report consists mainly of reproducing the PETA's declaration. Thus, the author seems to share the organization's concern. This article is one of the seldom specimens within the selected material in which veganism is discussed while issuing the situation in any MENA country.

One decade later, in July 2020, *ar-Ra'y* and *Yawm 7* published news about the animal rights activist group Animal Rebellion. The activists poured a red liquid into the water of two fountains in the British capital, to protest animal husbandry in farms. The dyeing is meant as a symbol for the blood staining hands of the government, as the newspapers report. In addition to that, *ar-Ra'y* and *Yawm 7* embedded pictures of the manifestation showing activists raising boards with slogans like "Global warming" or "Global boiling." Citing the activists, the newspapers drew attention to a further aim of the group: Adverting to the current Covid-19 pandemic, they asked their government to prevent future epidemics, consequently, end animal husbandry and go vegetarian.²¹¹

Another *Yawm 7* article, published in January 2020, enumerates four benefits for both the body and the planet. The author al-Bannā alleged illustrative examples while avoiding any numbers, which probably helps reach a broad public.²¹²

A *Daily Star* article from March 2016 imparts the same message but does argue based on hard data. Similar to the above-quoted articles of *ar-Ra'y* 2010, Mu'annis 2019, Hood 2019a and 2019b, the author Rowling discusses the impact of food on the environment. Even so, she additionally goes into its direct impact on human health multiple times.²¹³

Two ES-H-related *Waṭan* articles about veganism feature very specific content. A very short one, published in July 2018, relates to an Australian cat owner, forcing his cats to follow a vegan diet and thus receiving criticism.²¹⁴ The other, longer one, published in May 2019, is dedicated to milk myths. With reference to different statistics and experts, the author illuminates the harmful impact of cow milk, especially the industrial one, for animals, humans and the

²¹⁰ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2008.

²¹¹ Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2020; Cf. اليوم السابع 2020a.

²¹² Cf. البنا 2020.

²¹³ Cf. Rowling 2016.

²¹⁴ Cf. الوطن 2018b.

planet. Dispelling myths, the author, argues in support of plant-based milk. In comparison to a plant-based one, cow milk, contains however more proteins, the article concedes at its end.²¹⁵

2.2.2 *The Dominant Role of Health*

Even Hood's article *Diet a major factor in global warming: report* alludes to the ES-H category.²¹⁶ However, it concentrates more on ES than on H issues. Most other ES-H reports are, however, exactly the opposite. Some articles even fit most likely into the LS category and only touch on ES and H matters.

Vegetarianism in ES-H-LS(-F) Context

A typical example might be a *Daily Star* article from March 2018. It reports about a New York opera singer, who started his career in a Karaoke bar. Describing his person, the article refers to his blog, where he writes about his decision to go vegan based on compassion for animals and for losing weight.²¹⁷ In contrast, a *Daily Star* article from Mai 2020 represents an untypical example linking veganism, celebrity news and health within the context of racism. The report talks about the Canadian rock musician Bryn Adams and his apologizing for an anti-Chinese posting. Discussing his statement, the article reveals the story's background which is the current Covid-19 pandemic: The celebrity insulted Chinese people as greedy bastards who caused a deadly virus recommending Chinese people to go vegan. As the newspaper reports, animal rights groups praised his clamor while others regarded it as racist remarks and irresponsible. Later in the article, racist attacks against Chinese people are reported. *The Daily Star Lebanon*, pointed, moreover, out that according to the WHO, the Chinese wildlife market was only a possible source for the outbreak. Citing Adam's excuse, the reader at the end of the article gets to know that Adams wanted to promote veganism and raise attention about the cruelty against animals in wet markets.²¹⁸

In most cases, vegetarianism is however treated more centrally within the articles. Two reports, one dating back to October 2004, the other to January 2011, represent good ES-H-LS overlapping examples. Like Noveck's and Salāma's article about the image change of veganism represented by famous peoples' going vegan (s. Vegetarianism in ES-LS context)²¹⁹ but dwelling deeper on H issues, two ES-H-LS articles elucidate the rise of veganism.

²¹⁵ Cf. الوطن 2019a.

²¹⁶ Cf. اليوم السابع 2020a.

²¹⁷ Cf. Tandon 2018.

²¹⁸ Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2020a.

²¹⁹ Cf. Noveck 2011; Cf. سلامة 2020.

Summarizing the different motives that potentially make people become vegan, they even touch the F category. The articles mention that the decision can be grounded on religious, philosophical or spiritual reasons.²²⁰ One, a *Daily Star* article from 2004, refers to the increasing popularity in Lebanon.²²¹

The other, a *Dustūr* article from 2011, in contrast, describes the growth as a worldwide phenomenon instancing Germany. The latter one defines the image change from a person who drinks soybean juice to heroes expressing their views on the need to preserve the environment, health and animal welfare. Ensuing the author quotes some facts such as that one percent of the U.S. population is vegetarian, while the number of members who newly joined the German Society of Vegetarians increased from 2,700 to 3,500 within just one year. This image change is also visible in Berlin's restaurants, where one, for instance, finds Ravioli pastries filled with cashews and kale, as the article continues. However, the report remarks that the restaurant's chef avoids using the term "vegetarian," as many non-vegetarians would not like it.

The increasing popularity of the vegetarian lifestyle can be linked to the growth of the organic food's movement over the past decade, the author comments before he continues to elaborate the influence on health. It has been proven that vegetarian food reduces the risk of heart disease and obesity, although, as with any diet, it is important to ensure that plant foods are well balanced, the article states. Corresponding to that, the article ends with some health advice: It recommends eating at least five pieces of fruits and vegetables per day and reduce the consumption of peeled grains as many of the nutritional contents are lost when the peel is removed. The author moreover indicates that vegans have to take care about getting the vitamins B12 in addition to omega-3 and that the nutritional balance is especially for pregnant women and children of importance.²²²

More detailed and consequently longer is the *Daily Star* article about the growing popularity of veganism in Lebanon that dates back to 2004. The article starts introducing a 23-year-old vegetarian student and her background. As the author Ghazal uses many citations, the report acquaints the readers with the subject on a livelier and personal basis. One gets to know that the student's motivation is based on opposing killing animals and that, according to health professionals, more Lebanese women between the age of 18 and 25 are following suit. Ensuing, Ghazal leads over to health issues. Citing a dietician and nutritionist, she stresses the importance of a balanced diet and possible negative nutrient deficiency consequences. Hence, vegetarian

²²⁰ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2011b Cf. Ghazal 2004.

²²¹ Cf. Ghazal 2004.

²²² Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2011b.

sources for respective nutrients, vitamins and protein are enumerated.

Issuing vitamin B12, the article, moreover, illuminates the difference between vegetarian diet, and vegan diet. After that, the article details the yin-yang based macrobiotic diet, which became very popular in Lebanon and discusses its controversial influence on health. Equal to the previous article that reported the image change, Ghazal mentions some restaurants' adaptation of supply to demand for organic, vegan and vegetarian dishes. At the end of the article, the author provides an overview of the different vegetarianism types lacto-ovo, vegan, fruitarian and macrobiotic and gives a short definition to each.²²³ In summary, the article provides many facts about vegetarianism with respect to terms, motives, the availability in restaurants and health issues. The author chose a lively but not biasing writing style.

Meat substitutes are a further topic on which ES-H-LS articles can be based. A report from April 2019, for instance, is dedicated to lentils. Published on the websites of both the newspaper *ar-Ra'y* and, three days later, also *ad-Dustūr*, the article concentrates on highlighting the legumes' positive effects on health. It bears the title '*laḥm al-fuqarā' ... fawā'id muḍhila li-l-ʿadas bi-anwāʿihi*' "Meat of the Poor' ... Amazing Benefits of All Kinds of Lentils." Therefore, it does not seem to be involved with vegetarianism or any environmental issues at first glance. While praising the diversity and application possibilities, the article, however, compares lentils with meat and states that lentils contain a high percentage of protein. For that reason, it represents an essential component of vegetarian diet, especially as it is rich in dietary fiber and iron, the report continues. It informs the readership about the vitamins, minerals and further nutrients the legumes provide and explains their positive effect on the human body.

Moreover, the article draws attention to the fact that lentils rather extend to soil and animals than meat does.²²⁴ Although the content does not center on vegetarianism, the article invites the addressees to replace meat by lentils and hence, to try a vegetarian alternative.

Vegetarianism in H-LS Context

Notwithstanding, most of the H-LS-related articles focus only on human health and do not link it to other environmental issues. This is also the case, for two further articles that deal with meat substitution. A *Waṭan* article from June 2016 advertises a certain company in San Francisco called The Impossible Burger. As *al-Waṭan* reports, the name refers to a new type of burger slice that is 100% plant-based. Quoting the company, the article says that the portions were

²²³ Cf. Ghazal 2004.

²²⁴ Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2019b. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2019d.

cheap and low in calories. At the same time, the slices feature a high nutritional value in comparison to meat, which causes many diseases to the body. According to the article that keeps on referring to the company, the product has been tested on a segment of consumers, who were unable to distinguish between real meat burger and vegetable burger in taste, shape and smell, too. The short report closes with stressing the great success for the company.²²⁵

The author skipped any (critical) commenting and kept on invoking the company indirectly through the whole article making this posting act as an advertisement. The opposite is the case with a *Daily Star* article that was published only two months later. Therein, the author criticizes exactly this establishment of junk food amongst the vegan community. Referring to observations of what is offered in restaurants and on vegan festivals and additionally including some citations of vegans, the article emphasizes that veganism can be unhealthy, too.²²⁶

In contrast, vegetarianism, gains a very positive image with respect to health through celebrity articles, even if only some of them particularize the diet centrally. There are, for instance, two *Yawm 7* reports. One was published in November 2019, the other in February 2020. The article from 2019 refers to the British talent show arbitrator Simon Cowell who states that his vegan diet made him a better father. Quoting different sources, the article dwells deeper upon this statement. It reveals that the celebrity has lost about 10 kilograms since he stopped eating animal products. The weight loss would help him deal with his five-year-old-son and give him more energy, the article ensuing explains.²²⁷

The *Yawm 7* article that appeared only a few months later, however, mentions nutrition only shortly and less central. It talks about the 66-year-old American actor and model Christie Brinkley and her youthful skin. Revealing her secrets for a great skin, the article lists amongst sun-block and laughing, staying active with exercises and nutritional supplements, also a vegetarian diet.²²⁸

A further celebrity-related *Yawm 7* article about vegetarianism reports about the vegan bodybuilder Jim Morris. The article's author Mu'annis was already quoted above within the ES context. Still, the article about the celebrity was published first, in January 2014. Mu'annis therein, introduces vegetarians as people who feature best health and long life. This fact was, as the article continues, already proofed by the former bodybuilder Jim Morris (back then 78 years old). Taking part in a PETA campaign to promote vegetarianism, Jim Morris exhibited

²²⁵ Cf. الوطن 2016.

²²⁶ Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2016a.

²²⁷ Cf. اليوم السابع 2019.

²²⁸ Cf. اليوم السابع 2020b.

his naked body and took the pose of Rodin's Thinker to show that his body has not been affected over time, the author explains.

Moreover, Mu'annis cites Morris' words towards the health debate. According to the former bodybuilder, animals' protein was loaded with fats, chemicals and all kinds of harmful things to humans. He was suffering problems in digestive system when he had eaten meat; Morris confirms that his health would be worse if he would have continued to eat animal products, the article continues. The author obviously espouses the bodybuilder's point of view. Eventually, he uses the last paragraph for mentioning that even the musician Elton John, whose bodyguard Morris used to be, switched to a vegetarian diet.²²⁹

A *Ra'y* article dating back to February 2012 talks about a Hong Kong Marathon runner. After shortly informing about the marathon, the article focuses on a 100-year-old British Indian who claims to be the world's oldest marathon runner and won a 10-kilometer race in Hong Kong. According to *ar-Ra'y*, the runner attributed his physical strength to his healthy lifestyle, based on a vegetarian diet and his abstinence from alcohol and smoking.

The rest of the article continues reporting about the unsureness of the runners' real age and some more information about the marathon.²³⁰ Four years later, another article reports a very similar story. *The Daily Star* article from November 2016 accounts to another Hong Kong marathon runner and dad of two children who used to suffer under his obesity. After changing certain attitudes, such as switching from omnivorous to vegan, he ran into record books, as the author Thomas describes.²³¹ Altogether, both articles highlight the positive impact on health by the abstinence from meat-eating.

In a further *Ra'y* article, vegetarianism is listed as one of five factors for healthy living and youth. At the end of the year 2019, the online newspaper reported the world's five so-called *Blue Zones*. The idea of such zones goes back to the explorer and journalist Dan Buettner, who stresses that the residents of these areas were the happiest, healthiest and long-living ones, the article explains. The author informs the readers that the mentioned areas are in Okinawa (Japan), Sardinia (Italy), Nicoya (Costa Rica), Ikaria (Greece) and Loma Linda (California). Ensuing, *ar-Ra'y* approaches what characteristics those areas share.

In first place, the article lists vegetarianism. However, in its explanation, the article states that the respective residents do eat some meat, but only few, besides a mainly vegetarian diet that

²²⁹ Cf. مؤنس 2014.

²³⁰ Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2012.

²³¹ Cf. Thomas 2016.

includes appropriate amounts of beans, nuts and vegetables. Quoting Buettner, the author explains that 50% of the good health and longevity in *Blue Areas* are grounded in this kind of diet. The article, then, dwells upon the other 50%: It consists of physical activity, having a plan or cause for life, helpfulness towards friends and a lack in longing for sugar, fat and salt.²³² Despite still including a small amount of meat, the article talks about vegetarianism and emphasizes its positive effects for health, as did the celebrity-related ones before.

Nevertheless, there is an article that casts a shadow on the health effect of vegetarianism. Before Tāriq published her article about celebrities and their reasons to go vegan (s. Tāriq 2020), she in November 2019, wrote an article about 10 former vegetarian celebrities who came back to meat. Already within this 2019 article, she summarizes every single celebrity's reasons for adopting a vegetarian diet. In contrast, to her eight months later published article, she connects this background information with the update that all these stars (amongst them Angelina Jolie, Beyoncé Knowles and Bill Clinton) were unable to continue the diet. Referring to different magazines, the *Yawm 7* article explains the celebrities' return to meat or fish by their inconsistency and desire but also doctor's advice and getting protein.²³³

Vegetarianism (only) Discussed as a Health Issue

The debate about whether vegetarianism has a positive or rather a negative impact on health, becomes still more obvious analyzing the H articles that are not overlapping with any other category. There are 60 (solely) H-related articles, which equates to roughly half of the selected material. Due to the huge material collection of this category, this subchapter does not amplify each of them in detail. Still, it concentrates on the main topics quoting their according articles by way of illustration. Nevertheless, even within the H category, most articles either put a positive spin on vegetarianism or are neutrally informing. Only about one-fifth, namely 13 articles, put a negative evaluative spin on vegetarian diets.

From the Negative Impact on Child's Health to B12 Deficiency

Some draw attention to possible vitamin or nutrients deficiencies referring to child nutrition. There are, for example, four articles about an Italian causa. Topic is the right Italian Forza-party's demand for the punishment of parents forcing their children to follow a vegan diet.

A *Daily Star* article from August 2016 informs its readers about a law which is expected to be implemented. According to the newspaper, it proposes a one-year custodial sentence with respect to forcing children under 16 years to follow a vegan diet and even stricter punishments if

²³² Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2019a.

²³³ Cf. طارق 2019.

children younger than three years are concerned. Explaining the background, the author refers to previous precedence where a one-year-old boy died because of malnourishment, which the author ascribes to a vegan diet. The article, moreover, notes that some pediatricians advise to not feed children vegan to avoid a lack of sufficient nutrition. Within this context, the article shortly explains the difference between vegetarians and vegans.²³⁴

Five days later, *ar-Ra'y* published a similar article on its website. Referring to the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, the author summarizes the back then ongoing debate. The article cites the Forza-deputy Safino, stressing that a vegan diet could cause children suffering an iron,- zinc,- or omega-3 deficiency and a lack of many other vitamins. However, it also shows the other side, quoting the Italian Society of Food Science president. The president comments that a diet containing excess sugar and fat could cause far more harm than eating vegan meals. At the end of the article, the author mentions that the demand for this new law followed a registration of dangerous cases among children suffering from acute malnutrition in Italy.²³⁵ Three months later, *aš-Šurūq* dedicated an article to the same subject. Here, however, the author skips the additional negative information about previous malnutrition cases of children ultimately.²³⁶

In February 2017, a *Dustūr* article followed. Its content is a mixture of the previous *Daily Star* and the *Ra'y* article. Besides explaining the causa, the article contains the citation of the Italian Society of Food Science president. Nevertheless, the author also raises specific negative examples of malnourished children that are linked to vegan nutrition.²³⁷

Not related to the debate in Italy, but to children's health, a *Waṭan* article from June 2017 discusses vegetarianism critically. The article refers to a German pediatrician who warned about vegan pregnant mothers' lack of vitamin B12. According to the article, the doctor explains that this vitamin is found in animal products, which is why vegan people feature only very little of it. The doctor advises the mothers to have a medical consultation, as the article reports. Vitamin B12 deficiency leads to developmental disorders in infants after four or six months. Moreover, anemia and muscle weakness, which may result in permanent damage, are possible complications, the report explains with reference to the doctor. In addition to vitamin B12, a vegan nursing mother has to ingest sufficient calcium, vitamin D and iodine, the author at the end adds.²³⁸

²³⁴ Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2016b.

²³⁵ Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2016a.

²³⁶ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2016b.

²³⁷ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2017a.

²³⁸ Cf. الوطن 2017a.

Undoubtedly, the article points out possible negative consequences of vegan nutrition. However, it shows how to guard against them and thus shows in a neutrally informing way that a vegan pregnancy is possible.

A *Šūrūq* article a few months later, in contrast, casts a shadow on vegetarianism. Referring to a U.S. National Institute for Alcohol Abuse, the author points out that pregnant women's meat abstinence leads to an increased risk of drug and alcohol addiction for their babies. The researchers analyzed 5,109 women and their 5,246 children, whose average age was about 15.5% years, the article says. The study found that 15-year-olds whose mothers abstained from eating meat during pregnancy were more likely to abuse drugs, the author continues. Within the following paragraphs, *aš-Šūrūq* explains to its readers that this link might be grounded on the women's lack of nutrients, especially B12, that affects the development of their fetus.²³⁹ Unlike the previously discussed *Waṭan* article, there is neither any information about how to prevent such deficiencies nor even such a solution. Vegetarianism is hence introduced as unhealthy and even harmful.

A further article dedicates itself to vitamin B12 and its deficiency. Published in both newspapers, *ar-Ra'y* and *aš-Šūrūq*, on October 1, 2016, the article addresses indications concerning vitamin B12 deficiency. Its introduction points out the importance of B12 for the human body and possible diseases a deficiency of it can cause. Ensuing to that, the article refers to a certain *Boldsky* health site and its enlisting of 12 facts about B12 deficiency.

One of them is the statement that following a vegetarian diet makes people more likely to suffer a vitamin B12 deficiency.²⁴⁰ Since the article enumerates 11 further indications, vegetarianism is only touched briefly within this article. However, its mentioning is embedded within a negative context.

More general, a *Matin* article from January 2014 approaches B12. In the first part of the report, the author issues different types of anemias, their appearances and their consequences for the body, such as cancer and inflammatory diseases like rheumatoid arthritis. The second part of it centers on explanations and prevention. Citing a doctor, the article warns to follow a strict vegan diet, as it does not meet the minimum vitamin B12 requirements.²⁴¹ This advice is enumerated amongst others but put in front with emphasis and thus puts a negative spin on the diet.

Nevertheless, the prevention of cancer by a vegetarian nutrition is controversial within the selected material. A *Daily Star* report from August 2019 confirms that, according to a study,

²³⁹ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2017b.

²⁴⁰ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2016a.

²⁴¹ Cf. Le Matin 2014.

vegetarianism has been proven effective for mice. The restricted intake of an amino acid found in red meat and eggs significantly enhanced cancer treatment in the animals. As a result, tumor's growth has been slowed, the *Daily Star* explains. Nevertheless, this result cannot be transferred to human's encountering cancer by a vegan diet, the article eventually states with reference to a researcher.²⁴²

A *Šurūq* article from May 2019 emphasizes the lack of sufficient research. It refers to the British newspaper *The Sun* and back then recent Oxford study concluding that people who do not eat any meat were at risk of developing hemorrhagic strokes. The article points out that meat eaters were more likely to develop heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes problems. Ensuing the article provides some facts, such as that 1.7 million British people are either vegetarians or vegans. A short explanation of the difference between veganism and vegetarianism and some more information about the study follows. In the last paragraph, an Oxford University professor is quoted stating that more research was needed before instructing to change diet guidelines.²⁴³

From Dental Health to Mental Health

A further article in which vegetarianism does not come off very well relates to dental health. The *Dustūr* article from October 2019 refers to a prominent British dentist from the London Center for Aesthetic Dental Medicine. Citing the dentist, the article warns that moving to a vegetarian diet might lead to tooth decay because of a lack of vitamins, essential nutrients and an increased consumption of sweets and starchy foods producing more acids in the mouth.²⁴⁴ Focusing on vegetarianism and its impact on the body's single parts or organs one finds further reports.

In October 2016, *Yawm 7* published an article about a young woman whose acute skin eczema made her wake up at night from the severity of pain and itching. The article refers to the British website of *Daily Mail*. According to the website, the concerned woman could not achieve any improvement despite using various drugs. A new treatment method based on a vegetarian diet method, however, stopped Eczema attacks on her. The article contains many citations of the former patient and even finishes with her words.²⁴⁵ *Yawm 7* thereby shares the patient's enthusiasm towards vegetarianism.

²⁴² Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2019b.

²⁴³ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2019a.

²⁴⁴ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2019a.

²⁴⁵ Cf. فايد 2016.

Mental health is discussed very contentiously within the selected material. After a briefly enlightening the history of vegetarianism in its introduction, the *Waṭan* article from August 2017 comes to the point that vegetarians suffer twice as much from depression. These results refer to a University of Bristol research published in the *Journal of Affective Disorders*, the newspaper explains. Quoting the study, the article reasons the research results in a lack of nutrients like iron and vitamins like B12.²⁴⁶

One year later, in November 2018, *Yawm 7* published an article stating precisely the opposite. The newspaper entry bears a cover picture that shows a heart filled with colorful vegetables and fruits in front of a stethoscope. Even its title announces a report about a diet that helps to prevent heart disease and diabetes. The author soon gets on to the mental effect of meat-free diets: According to a University of London study published in the *BMJ* magazine, vegetarianism is linked to the improvement of a person's mental state.

Moreover, vegetarianism reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and heart diseases, the article informs its readers, before it goes a bit more into details, providing some more information about the study.²⁴⁷ Similar to that, a *Ra'y* article from November 2016 states that, according to dietitians, giving up meat would have many health benefits. Describing what happens to the human body after giving up eating meat for more than one year, the article lists physical benefits such as weight loss and the prevention of chronic diseases. However, the article closes by enumerating its last benefit, which is feeling happier and more comfortable.²⁴⁸

More articles approach vegetarianism in context with mental health and physical health. Most of them generally inform people who (want to) follow a vegetarian diet have to give attention. They provide information about different essential nutrients in which groceries one can find them and how much the body needs, or they recommend a supplementation.²⁴⁹

Their focus is to guide people to follow a healthy vegetarian diet. Amongst them is a report that addresses pregnant women. The *Yawm 7* article from August 2020 primarily talks about breastfeeding and follows a Q&A structure. One of the questions is about which nutrients women following any form of vegetarian diet need.²⁵⁰ Another one talks about nutrition in general and refers to hair healthiness. However, the *Ra'y* article from August 2014 raises vegetarian nutrition forms therein, too. Addressing vegetarians, the author lets the readers know where to find

²⁴⁶ Cf. الوطن 2017b.

²⁴⁷ Cf. اليوم السابع 2018.

²⁴⁸ Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2016b.

²⁴⁹ Cf. الكور 2011. Cf. الخالدة 2012. Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2019b. Cf. خليل 2019. Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2018b. Cf. Le Matin 2008. Cf. خليل 2018.

²⁵⁰ Cf. عادل 2020a.

iron in plants.²⁵¹ A *Dustūr* article from February 2018 very briefly alludes to veganism specific to what the body needs from the age of 50. This context also mentions the diet as one obviation factor against symptoms of old age-centering.²⁵²

Entercounting Heart Diseases, High Blood Pressure and Diabetes

Two other reports from 2018 bear the same frontispiece, a heart filled with groceries, as the *Yawm* 7 from 2018 article does. Both *ar-Ra'y* as well as *aš-Šurūq* published the same article on June 12. The article relates to a University of St. Andrews study about reducing blood pressure without medication in two weeks. The researchers' recommendations consist of following a vegetarian diet, drinking large amounts of water, getting enough (between seven and eight hours) sleep and exercising outside, the article explains. Within the study, this program has been tested on 117 people with high blood pressure successfully. It lowers the risk of heart disease and stroke, as the report quotes the researchers. At the end, the lead researcher is cited, highlighting the programs fast and cheap application and avoiding any side effects by medication. The article closes with reference to the World Health Organization (WHO) and informs its readers about cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death, representing 30% of the yearly death rate worldwide.²⁵³

Many further H articles have heart diseases or rather their prevention by switching to a vegan as a theme. A *Waṭan* article from August 2020, for instance, reports about heart-healthy fasting. Taking Germany as an example, the author states that heart disease is common for many different age groups. In Germany alone, the number of people with such disease reaches about six million, the article continues. Equal to the articles *Ra'y* 2018 and *Šurūq* 2018b, it informs its addressees about its worldwide leading position in causing death. Thus, a German expert suggests intermittent fasting combined with healthy meals, as the author quotes.

Referring to the German newspaper *Bild*, *al-Waṭan* eventually reveals that the doctor advises to reduce the number of animal products. Quoting the expert to better follow a vegetarian diet, besides avoiding fast food and sweets and practicing some sports, the article affirms the positive impact of vegetarianism on human's hearts.²⁵⁴

Several reports, broach cholesterol and blood pressure embedded within other contexts. They, for instance, touch diet and veganism debating what the human's body needs and from where to substitute it as a vegan or vegetarian.²⁵⁵ A *Dustūr* report from August 2011, furthermore,

²⁵¹ Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2014.

²⁵² Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2018.

²⁵³ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2018c. Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2018a.

²⁵⁴ Cf. الوطن 2020b.

²⁵⁵ Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2008. Cf. بن سالم القحطاني 2011. Cf. إسلام 2015. Cf. البنا 2017b. Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2019b.

suggests its readers to switch to a vegan diet during the fasting month of Ramadan. It calls for avoiding red meat and dairy products and eating plant-based to reduce cholesterol values for preventing heart diseases.²⁵⁶

A *Šurūq* article stating that vegans would live longer than omnivores dates to September 2015. The article is based on a study from the Californian Loma Linda University published in the *HealthDay News* magazine. Reasoning its linking between a lower mortality and veganism, the article approaches heart diseases. Amongst other examples, it explains that a high amount of cholesterol in the blood due to eating meat increases the risk of heart disease. The proportion of vegetarians with heart disease is, hence, much fewer than that of meat eaters, the article continues.

Other maladies such as obesity and diabetes are enumerated informing that vegans suffer less than omnivores of it.²⁵⁷ *Aš-Šurūq* on the same day published a further but shorter article in which it summarized the prior, including the health benefits. However, in its last sentence, the article advises against switching to a completely vegan diet. Referring to experts, the report explains that vitamins like B12 would only be available within meat and thus recommends a moderate diet.²⁵⁸

The same newspaper approaches the link of vegetarianism and heart diseases in February 2018 again. Studies indicate that obesity, diabetes and smoking do not cause heart disease unless the cholesterol level is high in the blood vessels, make it necessary to talk about food, the article states. It explains that foods, containing trans fats, like processed foods, meat and dairy products and saturated fats found in animal products affect the cholesterol level. Within this context the author adds that according to the study, a vegan diet would help the body prevent diseases. A clinical professor is quoted stating that a practical experiment proved that a vegetarian diet and other healthy lifestyle changes could have impressive results in improving heart patients' health. In the end, the article lists certain groceries that help to prevent heart diseases such as mango, avocado and garlic.²⁵⁹ In February 2020, *aš-Šurūq* republished the results of this study again, shortly summarizing its content.²⁶⁰

A *Yawm 7* article from June 2017, authored by al-Bannā, addresses the same subject.²⁶¹ Half a year later, in December 2018, another *Yawm 7* author Yāsir, published an article. Referring to

²⁵⁶ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2011a.

²⁵⁷ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2015a.

²⁵⁸ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2015c.

²⁵⁹ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2018b.

²⁶⁰ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2020.

²⁶¹ Cf. البنا 2017a.

the American website *Healthline*, it first expounds on what different kinds of vegetarianism exist and how veganism is distinct from it.

Ensuing, the article dwells on the question of if following a vegetarian diet protects humans from diseases. It eventually answers in the affirmative, enumerating the reduced risk of developing heart disease, cancer or diabetes, a strengthened immune system and weight reduction.²⁶² Two further *Yawm 7* articles from 2020 are written by the author Ḥalīl. Like her colleague al-Bannā, Ḥalīl end of July published an article stating that a high protein plant-based diet may reduce the risk of heart disease.

The comparatively long article comprises different studies and provides facts and figures. Eventually, it emphasizes that following a high protein vegan diet helps reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke and other diseases such as osteoporosis.²⁶³ A bit more than a month later, Ḥalīl published a further article. Therein, vegetarianism is not the central topic but only touched. Referring to an American Medical center, Ḥalīl lists the vegetarianism, besides physical activity, enough sleep and rest to relieve stress and social bonding.

Similar to some previous articles, the article, moreover, talks about a Mediterranean and hence, *mainly* vegan diet that, however, consists of fish, too. Equal to the previous quoted report, also this one refers to further maladies such as obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes.²⁶⁴ The same is the case for a *Dustūr* article from August 2019. It describes how to avoid or eliminate different diseases in their first stages. Thus, the newspaper points to the doctors' recommendation to follow a vegan diet against blood pressure and against its possible consequences, namely heart diseases and diabetes.²⁶⁵

Diabetes again is the central theme of further 10 articles that have been published from 2015 on. More precisely, they are nine articles as the newspaper *aš-Šurūq* republished its article from June 2015 in April 2017 unmodified. The article reports about a study of the Medical Committee for Responsible Medicine, a non-profit organization that seeks to promote vegetarian diets, preventive medicine and alternatives to conducting animal research.

As the article reports, the organization's study shows that a low-fat vegetarian diet may help people with type 2 diabetes reduce the physical pain caused by their health. *Aš-Šurūq*, moreover, informs the readers that type 2 diabetes is the most common and mostly obesity linked variant of diabetes and that it leads to painful neurological impairments.

²⁶² Cf. ياسر 2018.

²⁶³ Cf. خليل 2020b. Cf. البنا 2017a.

²⁶⁴ Cf. خليل 2020c.

²⁶⁵ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2019f.

Quoting the NGO and their 20-weeks study with 35 participants, the article notes that people who follow a vegetarian diet lost about seven kilograms and indicates that they felt much less pain than before.²⁶⁶ Similar to the heart-related articles (s. *aš-Šurūq* 2018b and *aš-Šurūq* 2020), also here *aš-Šurūq* shortly summarizes the previously published (*Šurūq* 2015b, 2017a) articles within a further additional report in November 2018.²⁶⁷

Some of the reports feature a blood sugar monitoring device as cover picture. Amongst them is for instance, a *Dustūr* article from July 2019 as well as a *Yawm 7* article about one month later. Both approach vegetarianism and diabetes particularized. The *Dustūr* article refers to an American study that revealed the link between following a vegan diet and reducing the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Citing a professor from the Department of Nutrition at Harvard T.H., the article emphasizes the importance of fresh groceries and the reduction of sugar-sweetened beverages and refined carbohydrates within the diet for reducing the risk of Diabetes type 2 by 30%. Doctors would have long known that following a healthy diet along with regular sports, maintaining a healthy weight and not smoking were among the means of preventing or delaying the onset of type 2 diabetes, the article adds. The last paragraph states that more than one out of 10 people in the United States have diabetes, nearly 95% from type 2 diabetes. Eventually, the article closes, informing its readers that according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, even worldwide the number of diabetes increases.²⁶⁸

Referring to different studies and a long-term observation, *ad-Dustūr* three days later, published another article. Therein, the author elaborates on what exactly people should eat, giving them concrete examples.²⁶⁹ *Ad-Dustūr* already in March 2019 published an article emphasizing the insulin resistance improving effect by a plant-based diet. In contrast to the other articles, the report is, however, kept very short.²⁷⁰

The already above-quoted *Yawm 7* author al-Bannā chooses in her article a numberless style of writing. She gives the readers general information about diabetes, such as that people with diabetes need to monitor their sugar levels during weather and seasonal changes, before bridging to the influence of diet.

²⁶⁶ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2015b Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2017a.

²⁶⁷ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2018a.

²⁶⁸ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2019c.

²⁶⁹ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2019b.

²⁷⁰ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2019e.

Besides the contextualization of a vegetarian diet for reducing diabetes, she emphasizes the benefits of sesame seeds against the diseases and spends some paragraphs explaining its nutrients' effect on the human body.²⁷¹

Linking diabetes and obesity, two further articles report about the preventive effect of a vegetarian diet. One of them, a *Waṭan* article from mid-August 2019, broaches the subject comparing different types of diets with respect of counteract diabetes. Quoting different studies, the article lists vegetarian nutrition as one of the effective diets that, at the same time, helps to reduce the BMI.²⁷²

The other article, a *Yawm 7* report that followed that from *al-Waṭan* one year later, in its first part, defines what a plant-based diet means before connecting it then with its effect of preventing health risks, such as diabetes. The author, moreover, shortly explains the three different types of diabetes. The main part, however, concentrates on details of vegan nutrition, respectively on the five foods, nuts, squash, leafy greens, broccoli and strawberries, which the diet includes. Going into details about their ingredients, the article lets the readers know how exactly each food lowers the sugar naturally and what further benefits these groceries bring for the body. Squash, for instance, is known to be beneficial for obesity, the article states.²⁷³ The above-quoted *Šurūq* 2015a moreover, relates to vegetarianism in context with diabetes and weight, too.

Obesity and Weight Loss

Besides these mentions, weight loss through going vegetarian has already been treated in the *Matin* 2003a article as well as within LS and H overlapping articles (for instance, *Ra'y* 2012). However, five further articles centering on overweight, find themselves within the H category. In March 2006, *ar-Ra'y* published a relatively long article noting that vegetarians and vegans are the least overweight people.

The article refers to a five-year period study, for which researchers studied the food habits of 22,000 people. The conductor of the study, which was a cooperation between the British Cancer Research Foundation and the University of Oxford, says that people who changed their diet to eat fewer animal products lost the most weight, the report notes. Quoting the study, *ar-Ra'y*, in its last sentence, enumerates obesity as the second reason after smoking leading to cancer in developing countries.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Cf. البنا 2019.

²⁷² Cf. الوطن 2019c.

²⁷³ عادل 2020b.

²⁷⁴ صحيفة الرأي 2006.

In August 2017, *ad-Dustūr* published an article about weight loss, too. The central issue therein is the question of why diets often fail. With reference to a health expert, the problem is answered by the diet's short time. According to the report, the expert thus exemplifies a vegetarian diet rich in fiber, low in calories and fat, as the best advice for easy, quick and lasting weight loss.²⁷⁵ While this article does not point out, if it indicates a vegetarian diet that includes dairy products, etc., a *Waṭan* article from January 2019, distinctly refers to veganism.

The article even starts with a definition and demarcation of veganism, calling it “pure vegetarianism.” After informing the readers that veganism is worldwide growing, it broaches the example of a certain woman called Susanne. A German nutrition researcher gave her the advice to try a vegan diet, as she wanted to lose some weight after finishing smoking, *al-Waṭan* explains. The 52-year-old lost six kilograms within 10 weeks, the article continues.

Nevertheless, the woman does not want to keep on with the strict vegan diet, as the article notes in its last sentence.²⁷⁶ While the whole article actually presents veganism as a solution for losing weight, the end of the article prompts questions.

Animal Farming and Health

Only two articles issue the meat's negative impact on human health with respect to the husbandry conditions that facilitate the spreading of diseases. One of them, a *Matin* article from 2012, reports about the local slaughterhouse and meat market *Gourna* in the northwestern city Sidi Bennour – and its unhygienic state.

The frontispiece already makes the reader have a presentiment about the article's content. It shows a cow carcass lying on the bare floor of a van. The author, moreover, goes directly within the first paragraph into details, describing that some of the carcasses the market offers even touch the ground. At the same time, a horrible stench accompanies the bloodstreams flowing from butcheries, the article says. The slaughterings were conducted under poor hygiene conditions and without any veterinarian control, *Le Matin* continues. Simultaneously, this market provides one-third of Sidi Bennour's meat supply, which represents a vast number regarding the risks for consumers, the author comments.

Citing a veterinarian, the report informs the readership that the consumption of uncontrolled meat might lead to diseases, such as tuberculosis and brucellosis. As the article, eventually, explains, the lack of hygiene is grounded on financial reasons. While the national standards require 400 liters water per animal for guaranteeing hygiene, Sidi Bennour, for instance, does

²⁷⁵ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2017b.

²⁷⁶ Cf. الوطن 2019b.

not even feature any cold storage, it reveals. Before *Le Matin* continues relating a planned modernization of the slaughtering chain, the author annotates:²⁷⁷ “Une virée au centre de la ville a de quoi rendre végétarien le plus carnivore d’entre nous.”²⁷⁸ Although the article does not really address going meatless but a refusal of not controlled meat, these words as well as the whole article, might give the readers food for thought.

The same is the case with a *Yawm 7* article published at the end of May 2020. The author Ḥalīl quotes the British newspaper *Daily Mail* that again cites the American physician Michael Grager. The doctor, famous for defending vegetarianism, warned of chicken farms as there might develop a new, even more dangerous virus than corona. Referring to the newspaper, the doctor is cited stating that this pandemic might kill half of the world’s population.

Keeping on citing the physician, the article informs its readers that the key to all epidemics was animal diseases that by mutation and adaptation to other species become lethal. Ḥalīl also refers to a book of Grager providing examples such as the transmission of tuberculosis from goats to humans thousands of years ago, measles from sheep and goats as well as leprosy from water buffalo. Finally, the article gets on to Corona.

Quoting the doctor, one gets to know why the article at the beginning speaks about a greater spread: Chickens are the most widespread on the planet and even bats, who are less spread, already caused a pandemic. Ḥalīl moreover points out that, according to *Daily Mail*, especially influenza could end up killing many humans if Dr. Grager’s predictions were close to the truth. Eventually, she closes her article, emphasizing the danger of influenza referring to scientists and the WHO.²⁷⁹

Vegetarianism in LS context

Out of the whole material, 11 articles have been assigned as not H-or ES-related LS articles. Half of them only allude to vegetarianism. Amongst them is, for instance, the *Le Matin* 2003 report about the vegetarian artist who chose slaughterhouses for his installations.

All further examples were found at the online newspaper *The Daily Star Lebanon*. An article from February 2012 reported about the back then new fashion trend of fur. Within this context, the author comments that real fur might not be accepted amongst younger shoppers in particular because of the mainstreaming of veganism and animal rights.²⁸⁰ Three other Daily-Star articles report about celebrities and mention their being vegan or vegetarian amongst other things and

²⁷⁷ Cf. *Le Matin* 2012.

²⁷⁸ *Le Matin* 2012.

²⁷⁹ Cf. خليل 2020a.

²⁸⁰ Cf. *The Daily Star Lebanon* 2012a.

without elaborating any motive. In June 2012, for example, an article reports about a boxer, mentioning that he was convinced by his vegan diet while his trainer doubts it.²⁸¹ In January 2017, the newspaper described a tennis star who set a new record after a throwback and shortly notes within the article that she meanwhile became vegan.²⁸² The same is the case for an article published in July 2020 in which a rock star who turns into his ninth decade mentions his maintenance on vegetarian nutrition.²⁸³

Similar in structure and content, *The Daily Star Lebanon*, three months later, relates to the motorsports star Hamilton and his switching to a vegan diet. However, within this article, the celebrity's success is more obviously linked to his decision to go vegan: The report at the very end quotes the celebrity stating that his diet switching was one of the two major factors for his raising another level.²⁸⁴ In June 2019, Alsharif published a very short celebrity posting on the *Daily Star* website. The author informs the readers that a certain Patrick Aramouni, known as "Shirtless Vegan" on Instagram, visited Lebanon in April to open a vegan restaurant.²⁸⁵ For reading the whole article, the website, however, requires a subscription.

Two further LS articles refer to reports about meat analogs. A *Wāṭan* article bearing the title *Dağāğ nabātī* "plant-based chicken" from August 2019 addresses the food chain Kentucky Fried Chicken's launching of nuggets and chicken wings that are based on vegetable protein.²⁸⁶ The other article, a *Daily Star* article from February 2020, refers to the coffee chain Starbucks, reporting that they start selling sandwiches with meat-free patties in Canada. In contrast to the *Wāṭan* article, the report shortly summarizes who provides these patties (the company Beyond Meat). It describes what these patties consist of and, eventually, gives some numbers about Beyond Meat in Canada. Both articles are descriptive-informing. However, the *Daily Star*'s titling *Fake Meat and a Latte? Starbucks adds Beyond Meat in Canada* shows a certain hostile stance towards the new product.²⁸⁷

Already in the previous LS-related chapters, vegetarianism has been issued within the context of substitutes. In contrast to these previously quoted articles, the *Wāṭan* 2019b article as well as the *Daily Star* 2020c article do not link to any health topics or involve any ES issues. The reports instead seem to have an economic focus.

²⁸¹ Cf. Bryan 2012.

²⁸² Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2017a.

²⁸³ Cf. Marszał 2020.

²⁸⁴ Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2017b.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Alsharif 2019.

²⁸⁶ Cf. الوطن 2019d.

²⁸⁷ Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2020c.

In only one LS article, vegetarianism performs quite harmful. The *Matin* article was published in June 2018. Its cover picture shows a man in profile biting into a whole pumpkin as if it was an apple. The title itself addresses Moroccans, asking them whether they would want to join the vegan sect while explaining to them their “program” as vegans within the subsequent article. Deriding about vegans, the author indicates in his introduction that vegans would be fashion victims, ready for everything for holding up their heads high in a bobo world.

With the parenthesis “oui oui même chez nous,” the article lets the readers know that veganism already exists in Morocco. Before the author starts explaining what vegan people eat – or do not eat – he compares the decision to go vegan with participating on a Bar Mitzvah²⁸⁸. However, the report defines the abstinence from meat, fish, chicken, dairy products, egg, honey and so on as coercion imposed by veganism. Describing the three traditional sources of protein, the author continues stating that vegan people were, moreover, forced to eat seitan, tofu and tempeh. Millet, barley, rye, nuts and seeds, legumes and other vegetables are enumerated, too. The article reminds its addressees that they need to replace eggs within all possible dishes by plant-based groceries, before it closes – most probably ironically – with the eulogistic phrase “On n’a qu’un mot à te dire, mec... bravo.”²⁸⁹

Vegetarianism in F-LS context

A report that indeed relates to both faith and lifestyle talks about where to pass Easter time. Quoting the top-ten-list of the website *Cheapflights.com*, the *Daily Star* article from March 2013 suggests its readers 10 places to celebrate Easter. In third place is Lebanon. The author describes the streets, shops and restaurants richly ornamented with all kinds of Easter decorations, the tradition of a Friday mass and of the celebration of Easter Sunday in church.

After that, the article approaches one of the local kinds of fasting, namely the fasting before Easter. It lasts 40 days and comprises a vegan diet. As the article continues, this veganism, which is based on the Christian religion, is, eventually, broken with a feast featuring lamb and lots of egg breaking.²⁹⁰

Already in some previously treated articles, veganism was discussed as a diet people adopt either as a permanent lifestyle- and philosophy or as a part-time diet. Still, the temporary veganism in the respective articles related to replacing some omnivorous meals by plant-based ones or introducing some complete vegan days into the weekly schedule for curbing down the

²⁸⁸ Jewish ritual for becoming a full member of the Jewish community, here obviously standing as a symbol for conversion to Judaism.

²⁸⁹ Le Matin 2018.

²⁹⁰ Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2013.

meat- and dairy consumption in general. The *Daily Star* article, however, touches on veganism giving a religious tradition as a motive. Since the actual topic is rather about locations than about fasting, the article does not elaborate on the (health) benefits and the idea behind the fasting time. In contrast to the few other F articles about ethical veganism and Jainism, it, moreover, does not link to any environmental topic.

2.2.3 *The Empirical Findings and its (Un)usual Features*

One article does not fit in any other category, though its content is in accord with many other articles of each category.

The Definition and Compartmentalization of Vegetarianism

The *Yawm 7* article from May 2020 seems to have the aim to clarify terms and addresses its readers in its title with the question, *hal ya'kul an-nabātīyūn al-bayḍ?* “Do vegetarians eat eggs?”. In contrast to already-treated articles, it concentrates on demarcating different types of vegetarianism without any H,- ES,- LS,- or F-related context.

As its title already shows, the article particularly centers on the distinction between vegetarianism and veganism. *Yawm 7* hence refers to the medical Site *Healthline*. It shortly explains why some people who are called *nabātīyūn* do eat eggs which is reasoned with the absorption of high-quality protein, essential nutrients and vitamins.

Eventually, the article provides an overview of the different kinds of vegetarianism and their appellation. It describes the isolated term *nabātī* as a person who avoids all animal-derived products, including meat, fish, eggs, dairy products and other ingredients, such as honey. This explanation fits the literal translation of the word. The term *nabātī* grammatically represents a relative adjective built of the collective noun *nabāt* “plants” and the suffix *-ī*. Thus it signifies “vegetale, plant-” and can, as a noun, be translated with “a plant-based one,” “someone who follows a plant-based diet” or just “vegan” – and so does its plural form *nabātīyūn*.

People who eat eggs but no meat, fish or dairy products, in contrast, are called *nabātī bayḍawī* “ovo vegetarian,” while those who consume milk, but no eggs, meat or fish are called *nabātī lāktū* “lacto-vegetarian,” *Yawm 7* explains. The terms are obviously loan²⁹¹ translations. Literally translated, the term *nabātī bayḍawī* would mean “egg vegan,” as the adjunct *bayḍawī* is a further relative adjective deriving from the noun *bayḍa* “egg.”

²⁹¹ As the original source of the article is the American site *Healthline*, it is obviously an English-Arabic translation, while “ovo” and “lacto” originally go back to Latin language.

The collocation *nabātī lāktū* even borrows the Latin term *lacto* signifying “milk.” Thus, a *nabātī lacto-ovo*, which is in the article explained as someone who avoids meat and fish but does eat food containing eggs and dairy products, can be translated as a “eggs and milk (eating) vegan” or just “vegetarian.”²⁹²

Nevertheless, this definition is not universal. The above-discussed articles show that sometimes the term *nabātī(yūn)* without any adjunct adjectives signifies “vegetarian.” The context or a relative clause is needed to understand whether the article refers to vegans or vegetarians.

The ES-LS-H article *Dustūr* 2011b that reports about the diet’s image change, for instance, does not reveal whether it relates to veganism or more generally to vegetarianism. However, it references the German Society of Vegetarians of Berlin and mentions their representing the interests of all vegetarians, including those who eat eggs and dairy products.²⁹³ One can therefore assume that the whole article does relate to vegetarianism, not (only) veganism.

The *Yawm* 7 article Yāsir 2018 that approaches vegetarianism based on a Q&A structure is another good example. Again, based on the website *Healthline*, it provides a definition that classifies three types of *nabātīyūn*. Enumerating and explaining these three types (vegetarian, ovo-vegetarian and vegan), the article uses the same term (*nabātīyūn*). Each explanation uses a relative clause starting with (*al-aṣḥāṣu*) *an-nabātīyūna alladīna yatanāwalūna* ... “the *nabātīyūn* (persons), who eat ...”²⁹⁴ followed by a description of what exactly they eat.²⁹⁵

Others avail themselves of different adjectives than the loan translations above. The *Waṭan* 2019b article, for instance, distinguishes two main categories describing the vegan one as *nabātī ṣirf* “pure vegan,” which gives the isolated term *nabātī* consequently the meaning of “vegetarian.”²⁹⁶ The *Šurūq* 2019a article chooses the same wording. Elucidating that there are two types of *nabātīyūn*, the vegan one is therein called *nabātī ṣirf*, while for expressing “vegetarian” the adjective *‘ādī* “ordinary” follows the term *nabātī*.²⁹⁷

Besides the different definitions and their categorization in Arabic, the English and French language articles provide some further subcategories of vegetarianism. The *Matin* 2019 article, for instance, makes use of the term “pescetarianism,” while the *Daily Star* article Ghazal 2004 alludes to vegan subcategories such as the macrobiotic and the fruitarian diet.²⁹⁸

²⁹² “lacto-ovo” follows, in the article, the word *nabātī* in Latin letters. Cf. اليوم السابع 2020c.

²⁹³ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2011b.

²⁹⁴ ياسر 2018.

²⁹⁵ Cf. ياسر 2018.

²⁹⁶ Cf. الوطن 2019b.

²⁹⁷ Cf. جريدة الشروق التونسية 2019a.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Le Matin 2019. Cf. Ghazal 2004.

Moreover, a few articles point out that veganism is not purely a question of diet. The term sometimes goes beyond involving not eatable animal products, as, for instance, the article Monderest and Gibbons 2018 showed,²⁹⁹ and can even reach the level of a belief.³⁰⁰

Summary of the Evaluative Impact

The articles' review in the Subchapters 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 shows very detailed the newspapers' approach to vegetarianism. Thus, it might be comprehensible that the categorization of articles putting a positive, descriptive-informative spin, versus a negative one, on vegetarianism is ambiguous, as it depends on the reader's assessment. Therefore, the categorization of the evaluative impact is an attempt that aims to be as much objective as possible.

According to that, 56 articles are analyzed as connoting vegetarianism positively, while 12 further articles are assigned to the descriptive-positive category. Approximately the same is the case for descriptive-negative articles which amount to 10. Only eight articles are classified as disapproving of vegetarianism. The number of articles classified as neutral towards vegetarianism, having an informing-describing character, amounts to 33.

In summary, it therefore can be said that most of the articles feature a positive or neutral connotation of vegetarianism, while only in very few instances a shadow is casted on the diet. Moreover, no newspaper shows more partiality to or more hostility against the diet than another one.

One can, however, recognize some authors' commitment to vegetarianism. Within the relevant period, Ḥalīl, for instance, published five articles on the website of *Yawm 7*. Four of them can be categorized as positive towards vegetarianism.³⁰¹ One is more neutral.³⁰² Another example is her *Yawm 7* colleague al-Bannā, who published four articles on the website, which all feature either of an positive or positive-descriptive, evaluative impact.³⁰³ An example of an author, who once published an article that reflects well and another article that reflects badly on the diet, has been already mentioned above: The two celebrity-related articles Ṭāriq 2019 and Ṭāriq 2020 have been likewise published on the website of *Yawm 7*. Ṭāriq in 2019 first published an article emphasizing the negative impact of veganism on health by informing about celebrities' turning away from the diet, but published half a year later an article that illuminates the positive impact of vegetarianism for the environment.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁹ Cf. Mondesert and Gibbons 2018.

³⁰⁰ Cf. Elks 2020a.

³⁰¹ Cf. خليل 2020c, خليل 2020a, خليل 2018, خليل 2020b.

³⁰² Cf. خليل 2019.

³⁰³ Cf. البنا 2020, البنا 2019, البنا 2017b, البنا 2017a.

³⁰⁴ Cf. طارق 2020, طارق 2019.

Aside from the online newspaper *Yawm 7*, *The Daily Star Lebanon* quite often published news naming the author. In three out of the 17 *Ra'y* an author's name is given too. *Le Matin*, *aš-Šurūq* and *ad-Dustūr*, in contrast, never published any article providing an author's name.

The Underrepresentation of Region and Religion

On the other hand, many articles seem to represent only translations of press reports released by western newswires or of articles that have been published on mainly North American or European (medical) websites or magazines. In some cases, two different newspapers published even the same article, including the same title. Thus, the author's own contribution seems to be often restricted to some introducing phrases. The two articles *Le Matin* 2012 about slaughtering conditions in Sidi Bennour and *Le Matin* 2018 asking Moroccans in a teasing, ironic way to go vegan represent probably an exception to that.³⁰⁵

Moreover, these two articles belong to the very few contributions that are related to the MENA region. While *Le Matin* 2012 has a local reference point, but eventually involves Moroccan national laws, *Le Matin* 2018 directly addresses Moroccans themselves.³⁰⁶ Apart from this, region-related articles are only found in one *Dustūr* and three *Daily Stars* articles. Reporting about PETA's appeal to the Egyptian government and providing some background information, the *Dustūr* 2008 report bears upon the North African country of Egypt.³⁰⁷

The three *Daily Star* articles concern Lebanon: The article Ghazal 2004 relates to the growing popularity of vegetarianism in the Middle Eastern country.³⁰⁸ The report Alsharif 2019 informs the readership about a celebrity's opening of a vegan restaurant in Lebanon,³⁰⁹ while the *Daily Star* 2013 article touches on the country suggesting places to pass Easter celebrations.³¹⁰

Features and Findings with respect of the Contextualization of Vegetarianism

This Easter report is, moreover, one of the few articles that feature a religious relation.³¹¹ Informing about the local's Christian fasting, it bears reference to a religious minority in the MENA region.³¹² Any further religious context within the selected material refers either to ethical veganism and its equal treatment with religion or the Indian religion of Jainism.

³⁰⁵ Cf. *Le Matin* 2012, *Le Matin* 2018.

³⁰⁶ Cf. *Le Matin* 2012, *Le Matin* 2018.

³⁰⁷ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2008.

³⁰⁸ Cf. Ghazal 2004.

³⁰⁹ Cf. Alsharif 2019.

³¹⁰ Cf. *The Daily Star Lebanon* 2013.

³¹¹ Cf. *The Daily Star Lebanon* 2013.

³¹² Cf. Pew Research Center 2010.

The only article that slightly touches on the most widely spread religion within the MENA region is the *Dustūr* 2011a article. It briefly broaches the Islamic fasting, suggesting its readers to go vegan during the fasting month.³¹³ Overall, the material selection bears only little relation to Islam, the MENA region or parts of it.

Chapter 2.2.1 answered if and how the selected online newspapers approach vegetarianism within an ES context. The analysis proved that the abstaining from meat is in fact covered as an ES topic. Nevertheless, only six articles really focus on vegetarianism as ES issues, while 31 further reports only mention it as such within a mixed context. Vegetarianism within the LS context is more widespread. From 42 ES-related articles, 11 do not overlap with any other category. As Chapter 2.2.2 already showed, H is the most dominant category in which vegetarianism is discussed. While 83 articles link vegetarianism to H issues, 60 out of them do not overlap with any other category. The larger number of articles, again seems to lead to more controversy than within the other categories.³¹⁴

The current corona pandemic is namely mentioned in only two contributions from May 2020. One of them is the report about Bryan Adams apologizing for his anti-Chinese posting.³¹⁵ The other mention is embedded within Ḥalīl's article about the physician's warning of animal farming.³¹⁶ Another article of July 2020, found in the two newspapers *ar-Ra'y* and *Yawm 7*, obviously hints to the pandemic as well. Though not calling it by its name, the article about the animal rights activist group and their protest in London, contains an activist's quotation. Therein the activist asks the government to prevent future epidemics by ending animal husbandry and switching to a vegetarian diet.³¹⁷

Altogether, the content analysis shows that there are many ways to draw the reader's attention to vegetarianism. The material comprises hard-data and easy-to-read articles, reports that directly address their readers as well as purely narrative ones. People do not necessarily have to consider ES issues as their priority. Even reading a report about celebrities or a movie review can lead to an examination with the diet. One can be a football fan and, get in touch with veganism, reading about a vegan football club in the newspapers. Another one might have health issues and/or wants to lose weight and consequently follows any news about this subject, getting inspired to try it themselves. Nevertheless, the providing of information faces its actual reception.

³¹³ Cf. جريدة الدستور الاردنية 2011a.

³¹⁴ The numerical data refers to the number of newspaper articles. Subsequently, the data might include possible duplications – as in some cases, two different newspapers published the same article.

³¹⁵ Cf. The Daily Star Lebanon 2020a.

³¹⁶ Cf. خليل 2020a.

³¹⁷ Cf. صحيفة الرأي 2020. Cf. اليوم السابع 2020a.

2.3 The Case Study of Tunisia: People's Mind-Set in Figures

This chapter elaborates on a national level what people in fact think about vegetarianism and whether they are aware about the significance of meat abstinence. The study gives an insight of private persons' approach to vegetarian diets and the extent of people's agreement to the previous findings. Afterwards, a review reflecting main results and features gives an explanation attempt.

2.3.1 The Survey's Frame and Participants

The online survey in Tunisia started with July 14, 2020 and lasted until October 11, 2020. Within this 90-day period, 200 forms were completed validly.

Distribution of Interviewees per Governorate (SD04)

Voices from each of the 24 Tunisian governorates are represented, though five of them record solely one interviewee. In contrast, other governorates' pollees are very high in number (s. Figure 6).

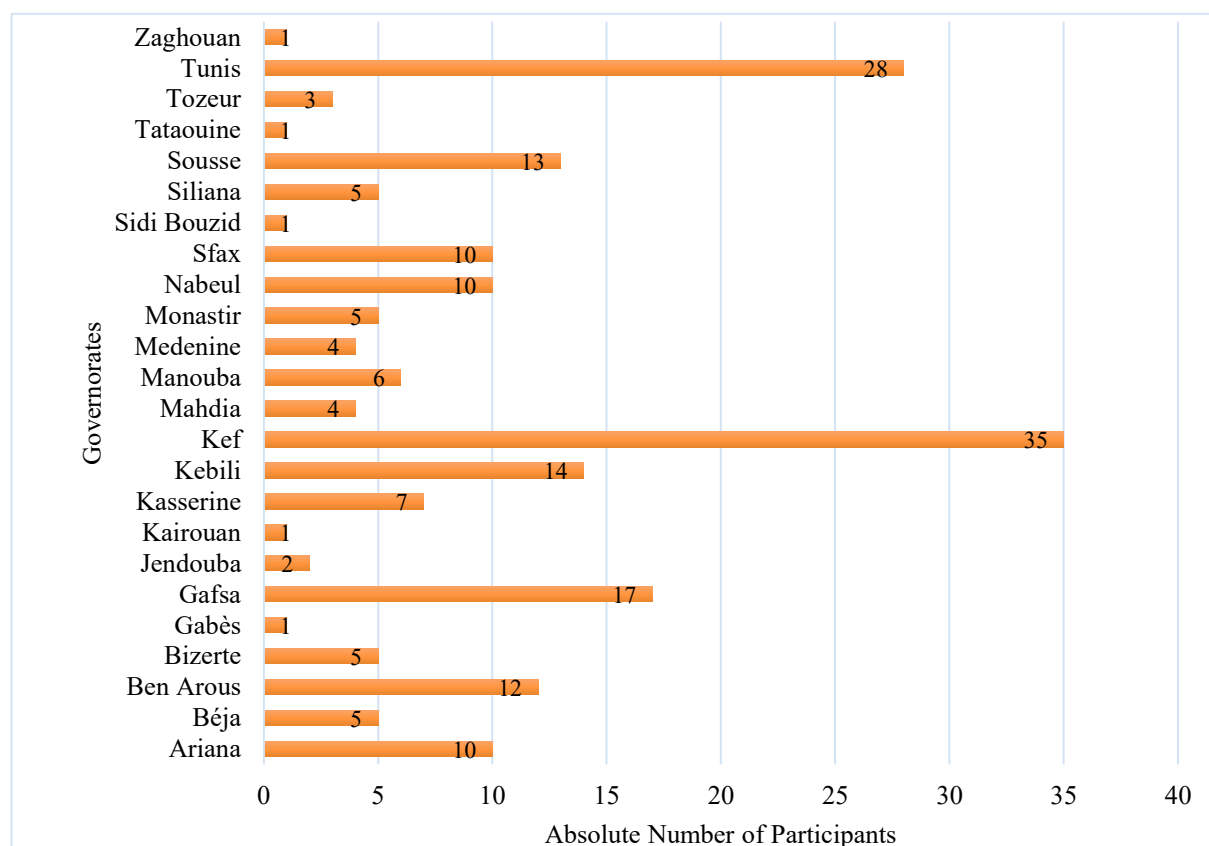


Figure 6: Number of Participants per Governorate

Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of question SD04.

The northwestern governorate of el Kef leads with 35 participants, followed by the country's capital of Tunis, from which 28 forms returned. In the two south Tunisian governorates of Gafsa and Kebili, the survey yielded 17 and respectively 14 forms. At the eastern coast between four and 13 persons per governorate participated, in the country's northern and central part between one and 12 completed forms per governorate returned. Overall, the survey involves information about the people's attitude towards vegetarianism from all cardinal directions of Tunisia.

Further Sociodemographic Data (SD03, SD02 and SD01)

Most interviewees, namely 83.5%, specified that they have never lived outside of Tunisia (SD03). More than half of the interviewees are female. While three percent of the participants did not want to furnish particulars about their gender, 44% marked as being male and 53% female gender (SD02).

With 61%, the age-set between 21 and 34 is the most represented one, as Figure 7 shows. Further, 20.5% of the participants are between 35 and 49 years old, while 13% stated to be 20 years old or younger. Only 4.5% belong to the age-set of 50 and older. One percent did not want to provide any information about their age (SD01).

Health, Environment and Faith as Areas of Interest (M005)

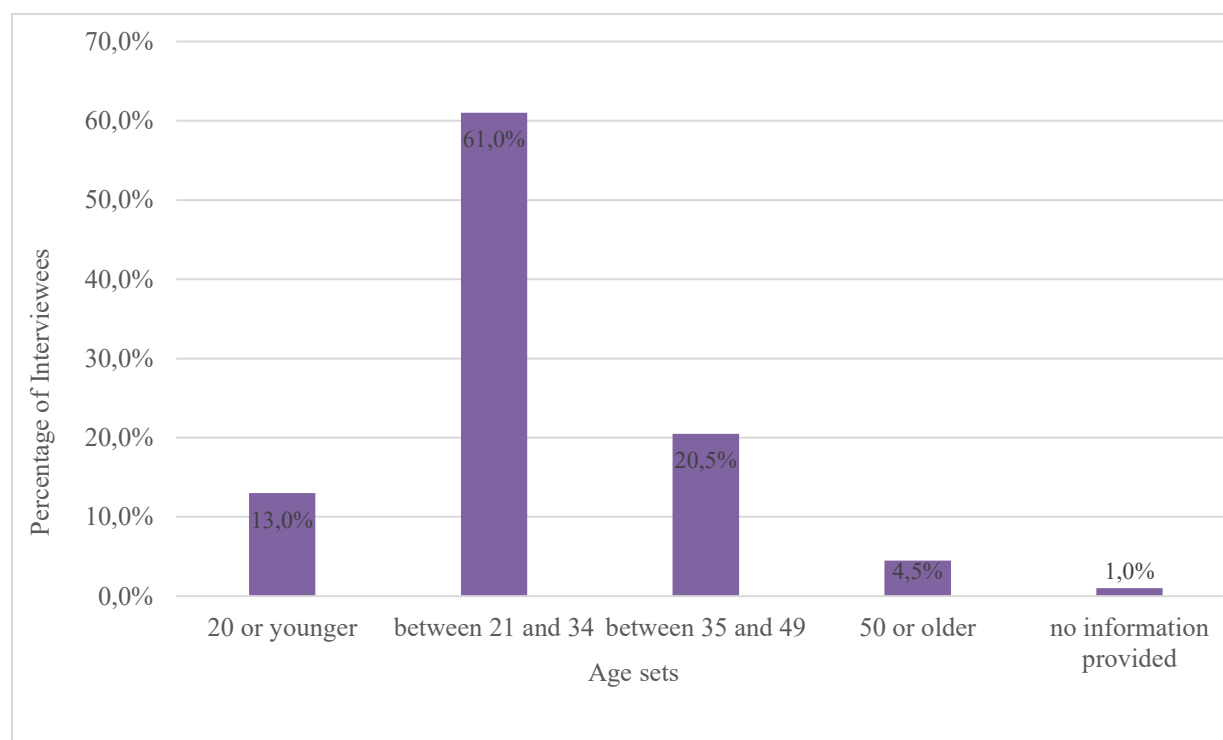


Figure 7: The Interviewees' Age Set Distribution in Percentage
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of question SD01.

This thesis' focus lies on vegetarianism as environmental ethics. As Chapter 2.1 showed, these ethics can be based on, inspired by or else contradict one's own faith (i.e., interpretations).

Chapter 2.2 even further conveyed the dominant role of human health within the discourse about meat abstinence. For this reason, interviewees were asked about their degree of interest in the three categories ES, H (nutrition) and F (M005). The analysis of answers revealed that the questionnees showed the most interest in H- and nutrition-related topics (M005_02). More than half the interviewees, namely 59, even stated to be “very much” interested in it (3), while a further 37.5% chose the option “some interest” (2). Overall, 96.5% of the interviewees stated to be at least a bit interested in H and nutrition. Two persons (one percent) refused to furnish particulars about their extent of interest (-1) and only 2.5% are, according to their choice, not interested in it (1).

With 89%, nearly nine out of 10 interviewees claimed to be interested in ES topics (M005_01). More than half of them (46.5%) were, according to their choice, somewhat interested in it (2) and “only” 42.5% even very interested (3). Nine percent indicated to be not interested in ES (1), while two percent refused to answer (-1).

Compared with the H and ES categories people showed less interest in F (M005_03), as Figure 8 illustrates. Only 36.5% chose the answer option to be much interested in it (3) and further 43.0% somewhat interested (2). Thirteen percent, however, stated to be not interested (1). Relatively many people (7.5%) did not want to provide any information about their interest in F-related topics.

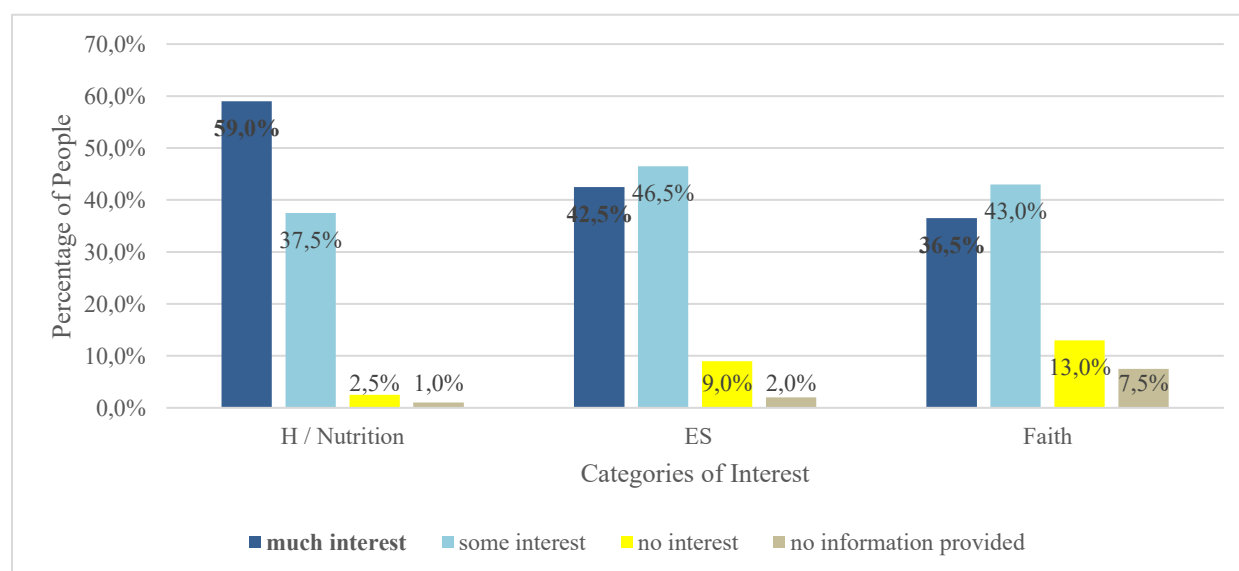


Figure 8: Overview of the Interviewee’s Interest in each, H, ES, and F Topics
Source: Author’s own diagram based on the survey results of question M005.

2.3.2 (Un-)Clarity of the Terms

The Term *nabātī* (D003)

The previous content analysis already showed how different the Arabic term *nabātī* can be interpreted. Skipping the fact that forms of vegetarianism go beyond nutrition, the question of what people understand under the term *nabātī* (D003) is already formulated using the phrase *niẓām al-akl* “the nutrition system/diet” in apposition of *an-nabātī*.

Being asked what a *nabātī* diet means to them, around half of the interviewees (48%) chose the answer: “A nutrition system, which is based on plants and plant products only (no MFC, no animal products like milk, honey or cheese), also called vegan” (D003_01). Eight further percent selected this definition (D003_01) in addition to the answer “A nutrition system excluding MFC but products like milk are allowed, also called vegetarian” (D003_02). For these 16 out of 200 pollees, the term *nabātī* can consequently indicate both vegan and vegetarian. A bit fewer than one out of three (28.5%) defines the term as (not-vegan) vegetarian (D003_02). With overall 84.5% the broad majority, excludes MFC from the definition (s. Figure 9).

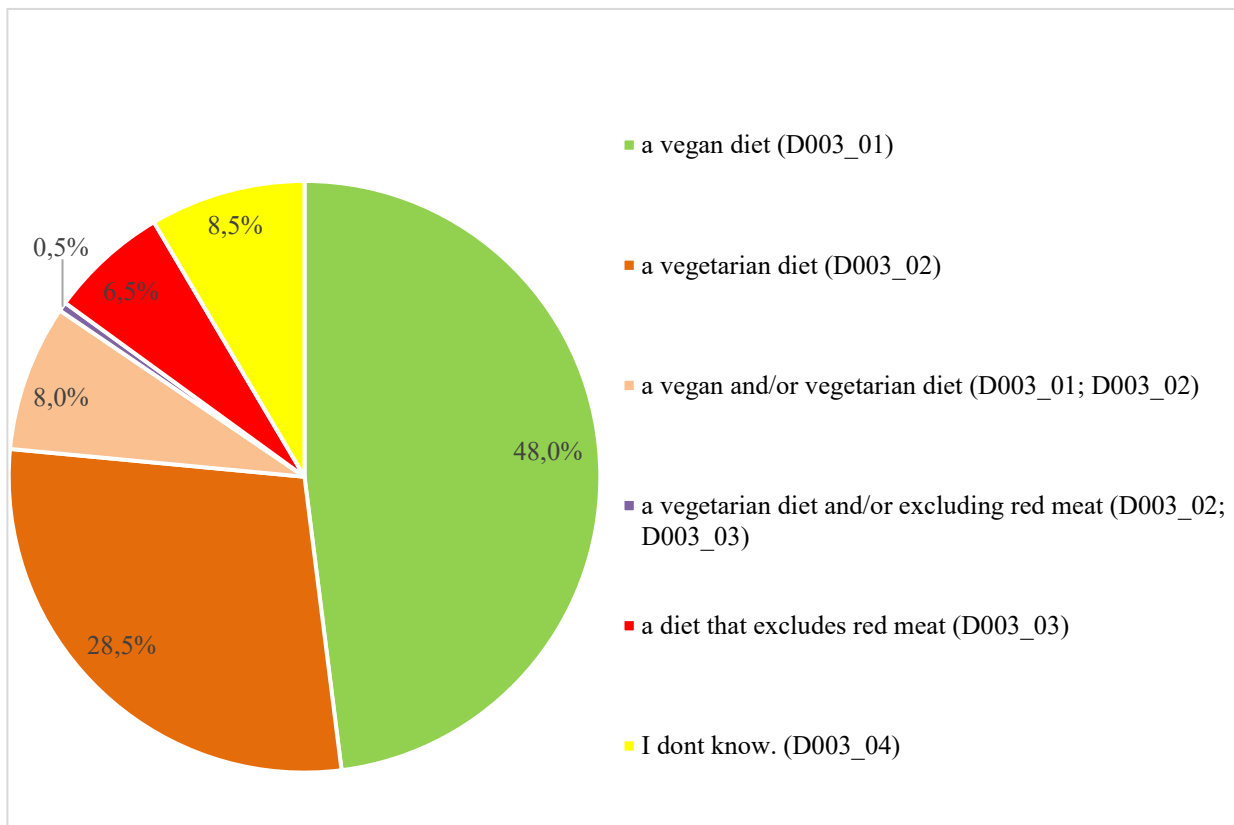


Figure 9: Answers to the Question, What a *Nabātī* Diet Means to the Interviewees in Percentage
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of question D003.

Only a few interviewees (6.5%) consider chicken and fish to be included in the diet, excluding, however, red meat from it (D003_3). Additionally, one person chose both a vegetarian (D003_2) and a diet including chicken and fish but excluding red meat (D003_3). Eventually, 8.5% chose the option: “I do not have any idea what *nabātī* nutrition means” (D003_4).

What the Interviewees Define as Meat (D002)

A similar result shows the analysis of the inquiry’s second question (D002). Choosing what the statement “We do not eat any meat” means to the respondents, 10% gave the answer “I do not know” (D002_04). Amongst them is one person, who additionally selected the multifarious answer “Sometimes it means that they do not eat any red meat, but sometimes it means that they neither eat red nor white meat and also no fish” (D002_05). Overall, 36.5% agreed to this answer that is a combination of the three other separately available answer options D002_01, D002_02 and D002_03.³¹⁸ It expresses that for some people or in some occasions, not eating meat refers either to red meat or to every kind of meat, including fish.

Several people who selected this combined answer D002_5, even additionally chose only one of the already-covered answers. Five percent, for instance, selected D002_05, but also chose: “They do not eat any red meat or white meat like, for instance, chicken” (D002_02). Two persons chose the same combination (D002_05 and D002_05_02) in addition to the answer D002_03, which excludes fish. One person chose D002_05, besides the statement: “They do not eat any red meat” (D002_01).

The overlapping can, in such cases, be unintentional caused by reading the answers top down and leaving the already marked answer – “They do not eat any red meat or white meat” – while choosing the combination that is ranked beneath it. Nevertheless, it can also be an intentional choice. Participants could, for instance, emphasize, what kind of answer out of those the combined answer includes, is the most common one to them.

³¹⁸ The number consists of 29% that only chose answer D002_5 and 7.5% that chose it in combination with one or more answers.

Single choices or multiple choices without the combined answer D002_05, however, show more clearly, what not eating meat means to the interviewees. Figure 10 illustrates that indeed, 20.5% (only) chose D002_01, while 28.5% of the participants (only) agreed to the answer D002_02.³¹⁹ However, 49.5% do not count fish as meat. Two interviewees decided for D002_01 and D002_03, which means that they understand “We do not eat any meat” as a refusal of red meat and fish. One person chose only the “no fish” answer D002_03.

Three persons chose the answers D002_02 and D002_03. Four more chose the three options D002_01, D002_02 and D002_03. Therefore, seven people understand “eating no meat” as refusing red and white meat as well as fish.

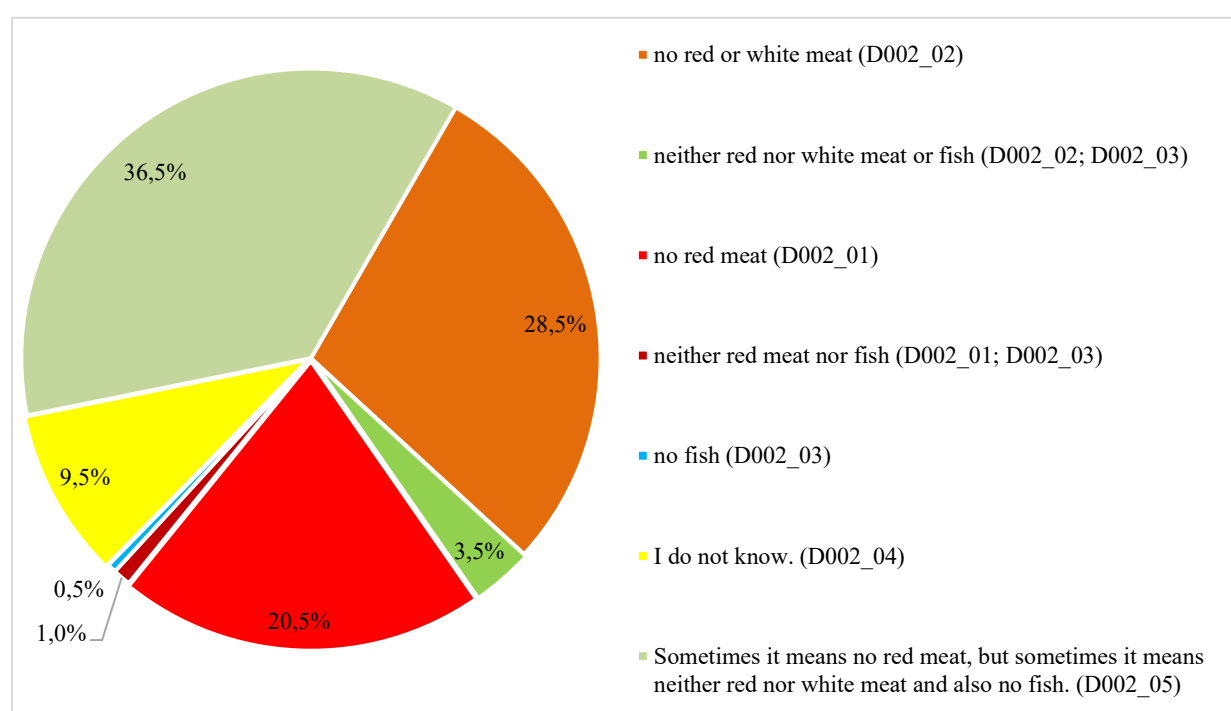


Figure 10: Participants' Understanding of “Eating No Meat” in Percentage
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of question D002.

Comparing the results of both definitions questions (D003 and D002), it becomes clear that the statement “We do not eat any meat” brings a broader interpretive framework with respect to the exclusion of a certain kind of carcass than the usage of *nabātī* does. Around the same number of people state to have no idea what “We do not eat any meat” and what *nabātī* means. However, the majority – that is, 84.5% – could exclude any carcass if the term *nabātī* is used, while only 3.5% would definitely exclude a carcass if one explains eating no meat.

³¹⁹ Only one person chose both answers D002_01 and D002_02, which was assigned to D002_02, as this answer includes D002_01.

2.3.3 Attitude towards Vegetarianism and Eating Animals

For finding out what the questionees ascribe to vegetarianism without referring to their own consumption, the questions M001 and M002 invited people to continue the phrase: “A MFC free diet is ...”

General Assessment of Vegetarianism (M001 and M002)

The single choice question M001 asked the participants for sharing their rough cost assessment. According to their answers, a large part of the pollees, namely 66.5%, considered vegetarian nutrition cheaper than omnivorous (M001_01). Only 11% maintained the contrary (M001_02), while 22.5% stated that they would not have any idea about this (M001_03).

In the multiple-choice question M002 the answer options consisted of phrases related to LS, F, H and ES. For a better overview, answers that show a bad picture of vegetarianism are in Figure 11 shown as red bar graphs, while those expressing a positive attitude towards MFC-free diets are green and (more) neutral blue.

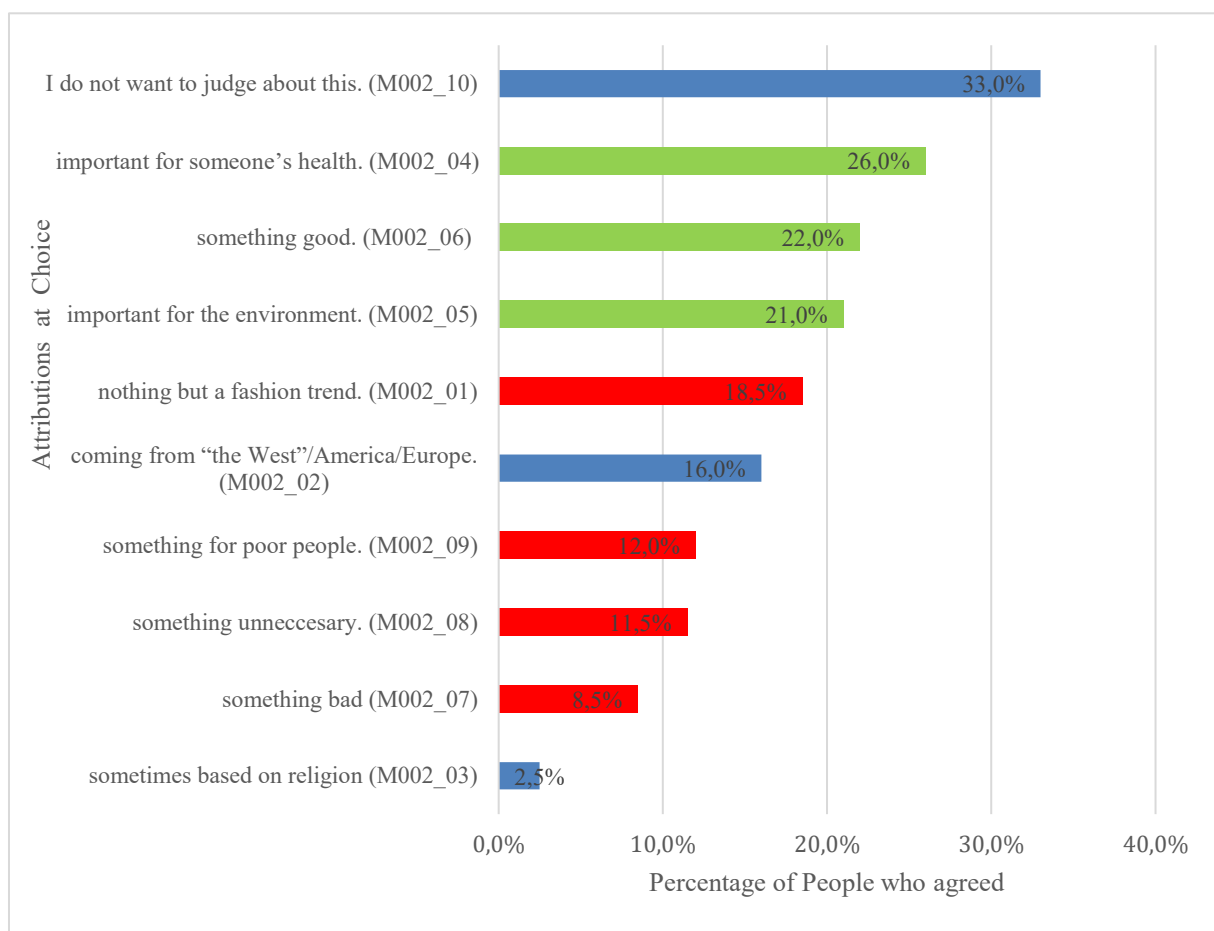


Figure 11: Participants Agreement to Different Attributions towards Vegetarianism in Percentage
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of question M002.

The ascription as “something bad” (M002_07) to which 8.5% agreed is an obvious example of a negative attitude towards vegetarianism. Still, the ascription as “something unnecessary” (M002_08) that yielded 11.5% as well as the judgement that the diet was nothing but a fashion trend (M002_01), to which 18.5% of the people agreed, likewise bear witness of negativity. A further devaluation is the idea that MFC free diet was “something for poor people” (M002_09), which 12% of the interviewees chose.

Answer option M002_04 that states a MFC free nutrition was important for health obtained with more than 26%, however, more than double approval. Additional 22% generally considered vegetarianism as “something good” (M002_06). Nearly the same number of people (21%) agreed that abstaining from MFC was important for the environment (M002_05) which shows a positive attitude towards vegetarianism, too.

One can discuss whether the answer option “coming from the West/America/Europe” (M002_02) puts a negative or a positive spin on vegetarianism, as it depends on the participants’ attitude towards the West. The question rather aimed to prove whether the overrepresentation of the West that was found in the newspapers (s. 2.2) influences the idea people have about vegetarianism. According to their choices, in fact only 16% considered vegetarianism a Western phenomenon. Still less people chose the statement that vegetarianism was sometimes based on religion (M002_03), which likewise does not imply neither any positive nor any negative attitude on an MFC free diet.

Almost one out of three (33%) decided to answer, “I do not want to judge this,” which was supplemented by the phrase “*kull ḥadd kīfāh*”³²⁰ “To each their own” (M002_10). While 25% left their answer at that, the other eight percent shared their idea of vegetarianism using the multiple-choice option. Three percent, for instance, stated that they do not want to judge (M002_10) but considered vegetarianism as important for the environment (M002_05). The classifications as a fashion trend (M002_01) or as coming from the West (M002_02) were chosen additionally to M002_10 by two percent each. The same is the case for thinking vegetarianism is good (M002_06), as well as thinking it is unnecessary (M002_08).

Nevertheless, the “To each their own” attitude found the most approval within this question.

³²⁰ Tunisian idiom expressing “To each what he/she deserves or likes,” which corresponds to the English translation “To each their own.”

Vegetarianism vs. Omnivorous Diet with respect of Health (H001)

Dwelling deeper upon people's attitude towards health and vegetarianism, the survey differs between veganism (H001) and (not-vegan) vegetarianism (H002). Comparing the diets with omnivorous nutrition, people, in both cases, had to decide for one answer. The percentage of questionees who do not consider the MFC free diets to have any positive or negative impact on human's bodies is in both cases very low. Only four percent chose this answer with respect to veganism (H001_03), six percent regarding a vegetarian diet (H002_03). A further 15.5% in each case selected the "I do not know" option (H001_05, H002_05).

The number of respondents who considered MFC-free diets less healthy is kept within bounds. Again, the results with respect to vegan nutrition are, with 17% (H001_2), very close to that of vegetarian nutrition, which amounts to 16% (H002_02).

In contrast, the opinions were divided when it came to agreeing that MFC-free diets would be healthier. Only 9.5% acknowledge a vegan diet to be healthier than an omnivorous diet (H001_01), while nearly double (17.5%) approved it for a vegetarian diet (H002_01). This difference is balanced out with the answer option: "Healthier, if people make sure to get all nutrients the body needs." In combination with this ancillary condition, 54% of the participants agreed that a vegan diet was healthier than an omnivorous one (H001_04). Comparing vegetarian nutrition with omnivorous, 45% confirmed that a MFC free diet is healthier, if people make sure that their body gets all necessary nutrients (H002_04). Overall, this answer option was the most chosen one, in both comparisons, as Figure 12 illustrates.

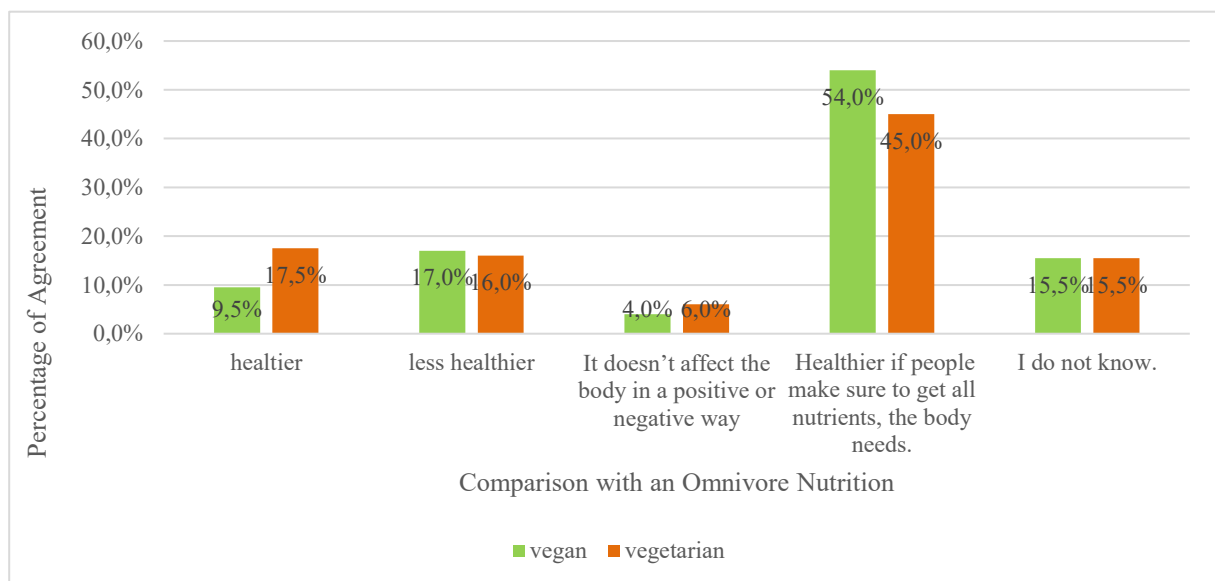


Figure 12: People's Estimation of Vegetarian Diets' Healthiness

Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of the questions H001 and H002.

The Corona Pandemic: “A Bit” Thought-Provoking (ES02)

Since this paper focuses on analyzing meat abstinence in ES context, the questions about the diet’s impact on health is kept very general, skipping different aspects of health (for instance, mental or physical) as well as its influence on or prevention of any maladies.

Concerning the current coronavirus pandemic, the survey, however, dwelled deeper. Asked whether the pandemic makes them think about their MFC consumption (ES02), only 8.5% of the survey’s participants clearly affirmed (ES02_01), while more than double of it (21.5%) negated (ES02_02). A majority of 70% however stated that the pandemic made them think “a bit” (ES02_03).

Understanding of Vegetarianism’s Environmental Impact (ES01)

The question “Would it, in your opinion, be good for the environment (regional and global) if more people turned to vegetarianism?” (ES01) elaborates people’s understanding of the impact that animal-based food has on the environment.

Around one out of four (specifically, 24%) did – according to their answer choices – not think that a diet switch would have any effect on the environment in a positive way (ES01_01). In contrast, 17% of the interviewees chose the confirming answer: “Yes, definitely” (ES01_02).

An additional 19% agreed that it would globally have a positive impact, but that they do not see any effect for their own country (ES01_03).³²¹ Only 1.5% considered it to be the other way around – that is to say, a regional but not global positive impact (ES01_04).

Altogether 12.5% of the respondents acknowledge an effect with respect to animals, but no further environmental issues (ES01_05).³²² One person combined answer ES01_03 with answer ES01_05, expressing seeing the positive impact not in their country and “only” restricted on animal welfare.

³²¹ This percentage is comprised of 1.5% of people who chose the answer ES01_03, in combination with the generally confirming answer ES01_03.

³²² This percentage is comprised of 2.5% of people who chose answer ES01_05 in combination with the generally confirming answer ES01_03 and one percent who chose ES01_05, generally denying any positive impact on the environment (ES01_02).

As Figure 13 points out, 25% of the pollees were, according to their answer choices, not aware of the food's impact on the environment. One out of four selected the answer option ES01_06 stating to, so far, not have been paying any attention and thus being unable to answer the question (ES01_06).³²³

One person chose the answer combination ES01_03 and ES01_04 that contradicts itself. It therefore was equated with not being able to answer the question (ES01_06).

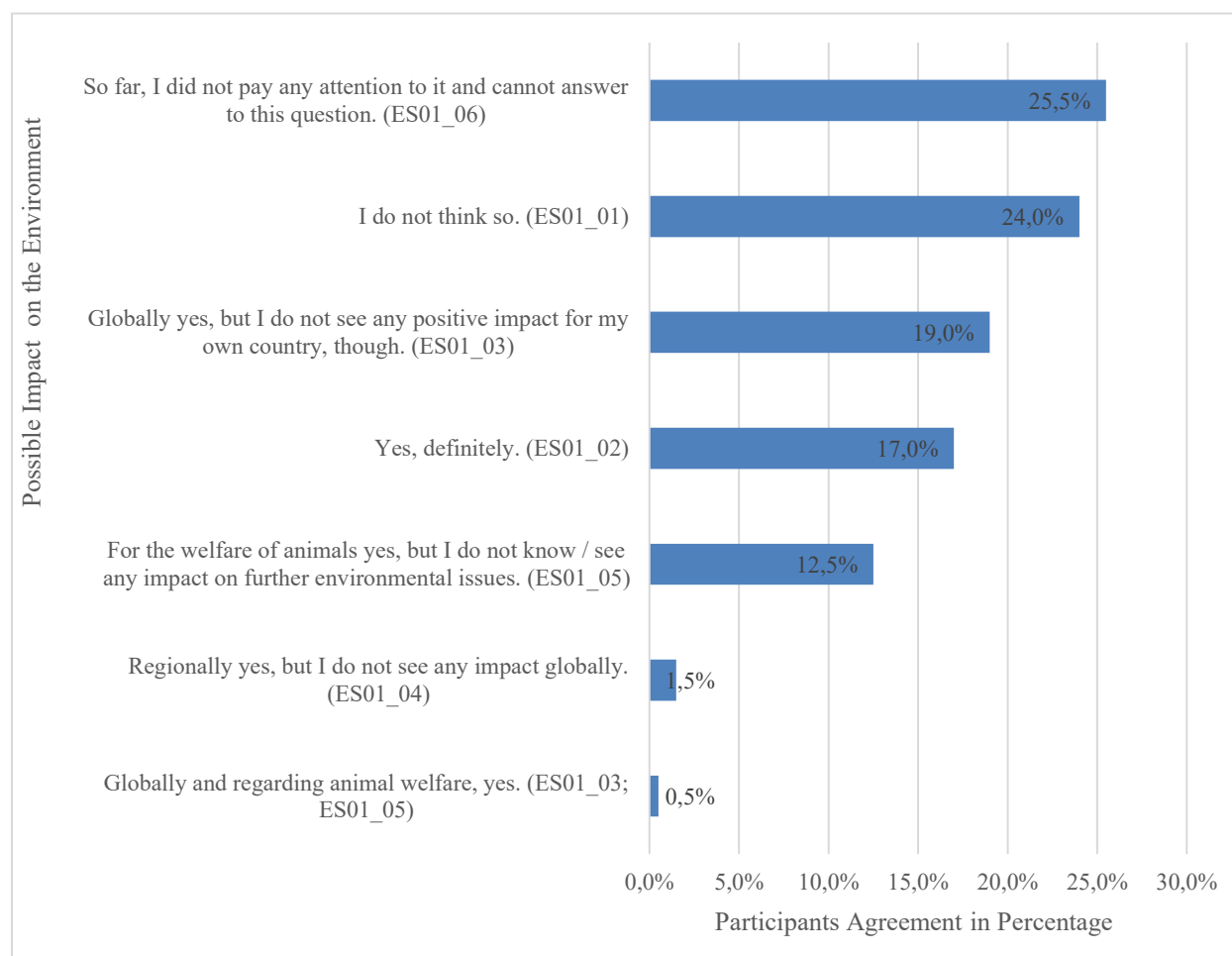


Figure 13: Percentage of Agreement Regarding the Positive Impact of a Vegetarianism on the Environment
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of the question ES01.

³²³The percentage consists of one person who chose the answers ES01_01, ES01_03 and ES01_04 in addition to answer ES01_06.

Eating Animals and Personal Ethics (OE02)

Despite some people's limiting the influence on animal welfare or geography ascriptions, altogether, half of the participants do agree that a growth of people who turn to vegetarianism would be good for the environment. This result leads to the analysis of the question of whether people subsequently still consider eating animals or parts of them as ethically correct (OE02).

As Figure 14 shows, 18% of the interviewees indeed stated that the consumption was only ethically correct to them if it does not affect the environment in a bad way (OE02_04). For five percent, the answer OE02_04 was the only one. The rest 13% selected it amongst other answers using the multiple-choice option.

The condition that the respective animal was not tortured before and during its death (OE02_03) is for 23.5% of the interviewees a deciding factor, for 7.5% the only one.

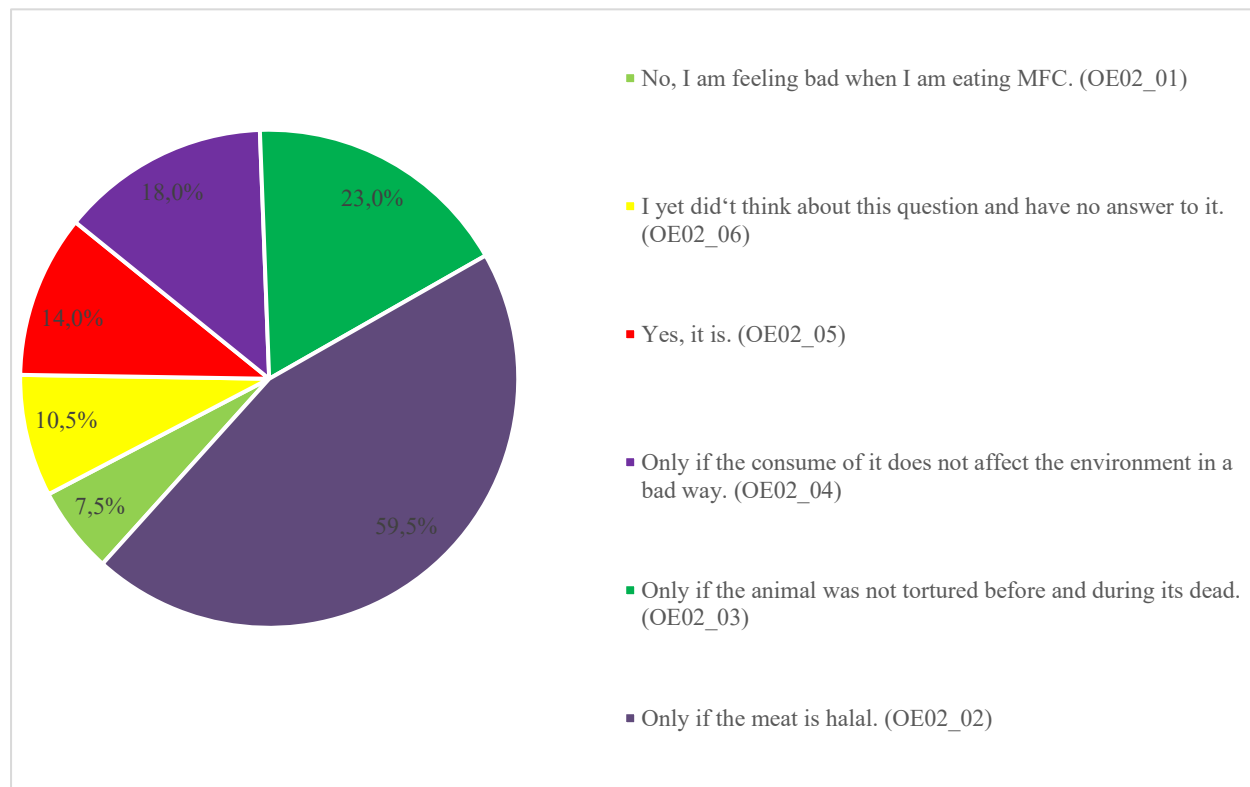


Figure 14: Pollees' Agreement to the Ethical Correctness or Different Conditions for Eating Animals in Percentage
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of the question OE02.

Answer option OE02_02 that imposes the condition "only if the MFC is *ḥalāl*" was, however, with 59.5%, by far the most chosen one. Around two-thirds of these 59.5% solely chose this answer. One-third however combined the answer OE02_02 with other options.

Many multiple-choice answers were sporadically chosen (s. Figure 15). However, option OE02_02 and OE02_03 that requires the MFC to be *ḥalāl* and (thus) that the animal was not mistreated before and during its death were combined by 5.5%. Together with the option OE02_04 that encompasses not to affect the environment, the options OE02_02 and OE02_03 were selected by a further 5%.

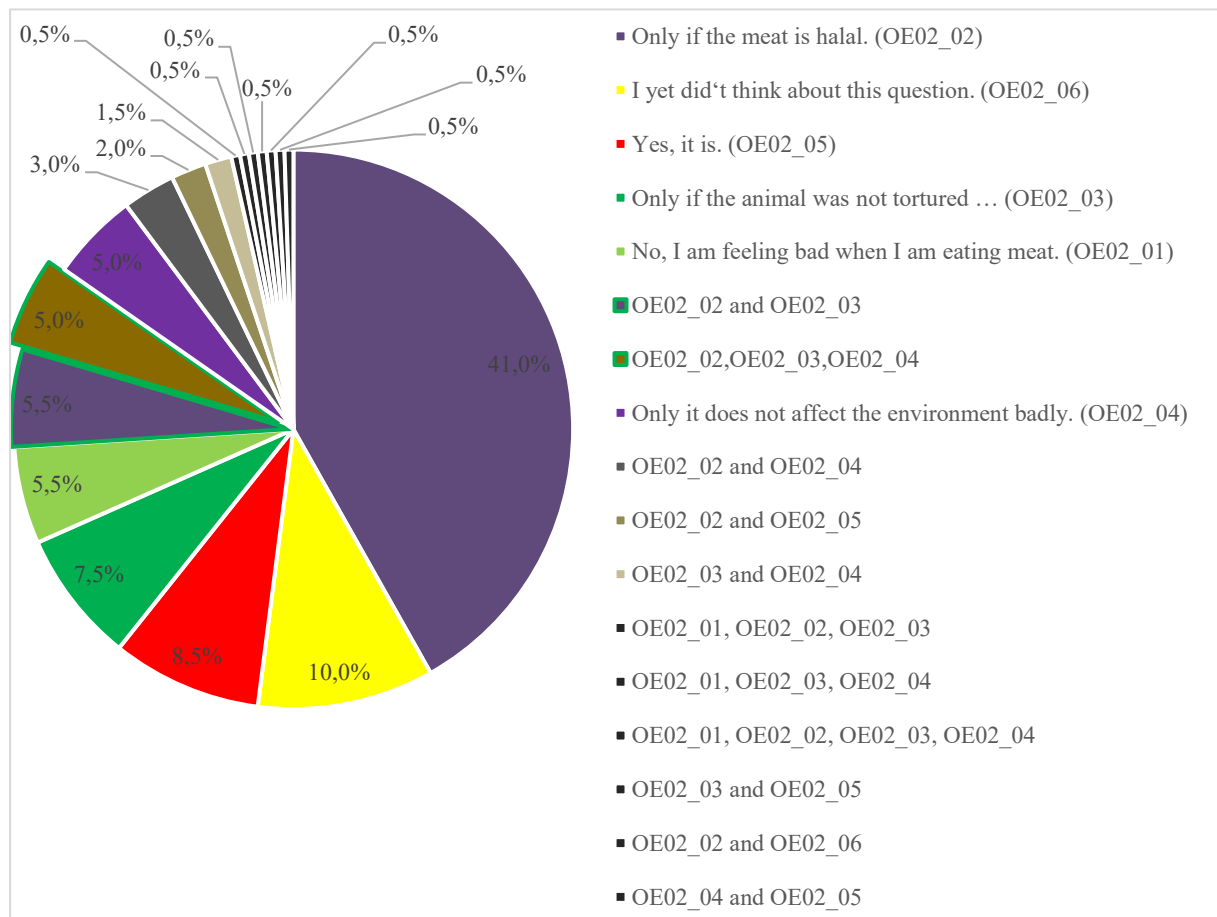


Figure 15: Percentage of Single and Multiple-Choices: (Conditions for) Ethically Correct MFC Eating
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of the question OE02.

Fourteen percent of the interviewees were, as maintained by their choice, convinced that eating animals was ethically correct (OE02_05). While 5.5% nevertheless attached at least one condition on the MFC eating using the multiple-choice option, 8.5% solely chose OE02_05. Around one out of 10 interviewees (10.5%) stated to have no answer as he or she did not think about this question so far (OE02_06). The rate of those who disagree that eating animals was ethically correct (OE02_01), adds merely up to 7.5%.

What the Term *ḥalāl* Means to the Interviewees (OE05)

Overall, the most dominant criteria for declaring eating MFC as ethically correct are bound on its being *ḥalāl*. What this term encompasses in the eyes of the interviewees was investigated within the separate question OE05. Since three people skipped this question and another nine did not know what to answer (OE05_05), altogether, six percent did not provide information about their understanding of the term.

Despite the multiple-choice structure, four of five participants selected only one answer (s. Figure 16). According to their choice, the majority (72%) put solely a proper slaughtering on a level with the principle of *ḥalāl* (OE05_01).

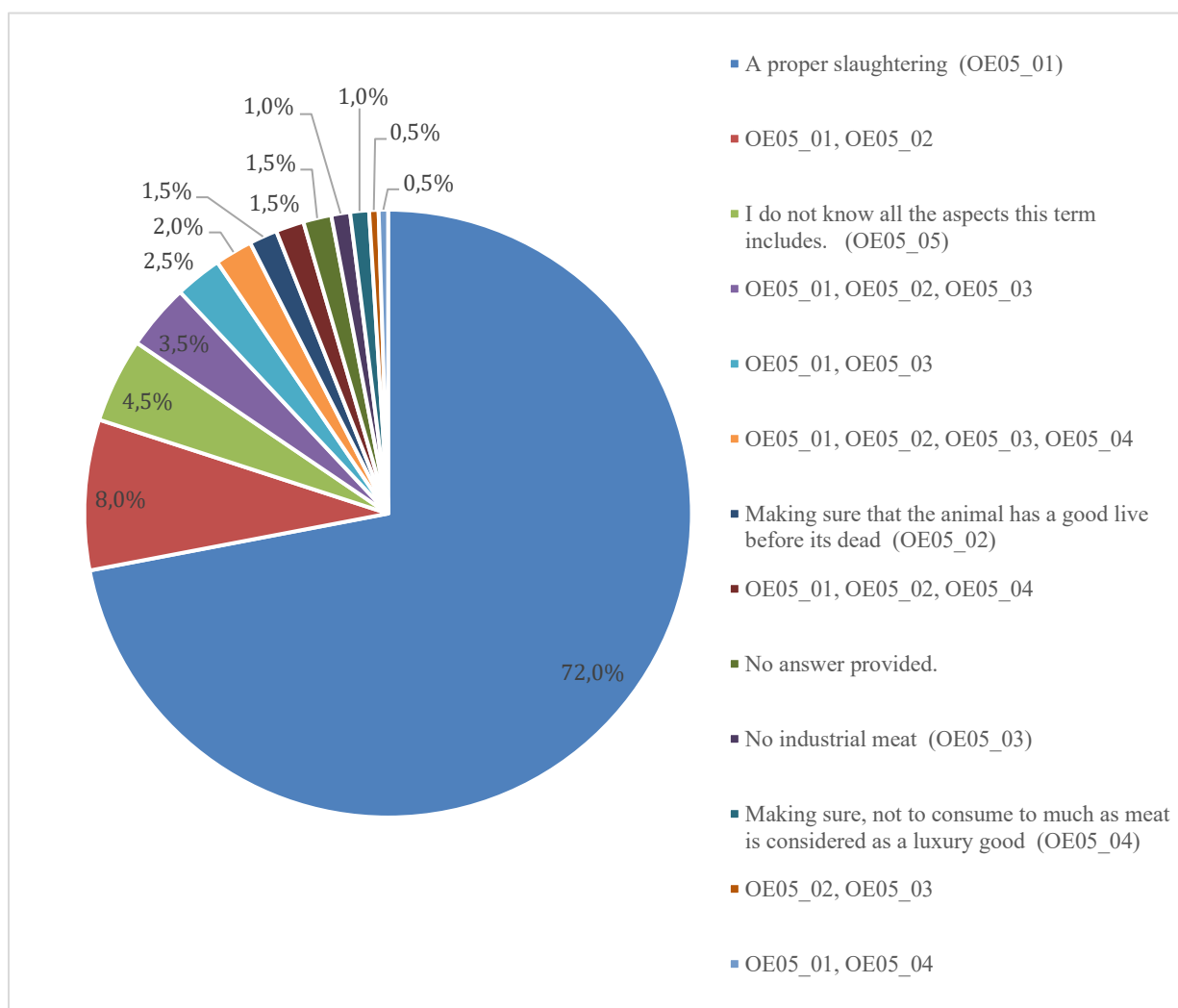


Figure 16: Percentage of Single and Multiple-Choices: (Conditions for) the Definition of the Term *ḥalāl*
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of the question OE05.

Three persons only chose the answer, “Making sure that the animal has a good life before its death” (OE05_02), while the answers “No industrial meat” (OE05_03) and “Making sure not to consume too much as meat is considered a luxury good (OE05_04)” were selected as a single choice only by respectively two persons.

In combination, the conditions of proper slaughtering (OE05_01) and caring for the animal’s welfare before its death (OE05_02) were selected by eight percent of the participants. The combination of answers OE05_01 and OE05_03 was chosen by 2.5%, who probably connected industrial meat with a not-proper slaughtering. In combination with the condition, “not to consume too much meat, as it is considered a luxury good” (OE05_04), answer OE05_01 was chosen only once.

Only two percent of the interviewees chose all four conditions (OE05_01, OE05_02, OE05_03, OE05_04). The three options of proper slaughtering (OE05_01), making sure that the animal has had a good life before its death (OE05_02) and (consequently) no industrial meat (OE05_03) were selected by 3.5%. A further 1.5% combined answers OE05_01 and OE05_02 with answer OE05_04, which restricts the consumption amount.

One person chose the answer to exclude industrial meat (OE05_03) in combination with making sure that the concerned animal has had a good life before its slaughtering (OE05_02) as *ḥalāl* dictates. Besides those, who stated not to know what the term comprises, this is the only answer (combination) in which the proper slaughtering (OE05_01) was not selected.

The Role of Religion (OE04)

The analysis already conveyed that the majority of interviewees did not link the adoption or the refusal of any vegetarian diet to their religion. Asking about what their religion tells them with respect to MFC consumption, question OE04 however, gives a more detailed account. Indeed, only 2.5% agreed to the statement that their religion would tell them to restrict or reduce their amount of MFC consumption (OE04_02).

On the other hand, more than one out of five (22.5%) confirmed that their religion was inviting them to eat MFC (OE04_01). The percentage of pollees, stating that their religion would give neither any advice nor any restrictions concerning their MFC consumption (OE04_05) came to 7.5%.

No interviewee regards MFC eating as completely forbidden by his or her religion (OE04_03). Fourteen percent, however either were not able to answer (OE04_06) or refused to choose any answer (OE04_07).

As Figure 17 shows, more than half of the participants (53%) specified that their religious restrictions relate to certain kinds of MFC (OE04_04).

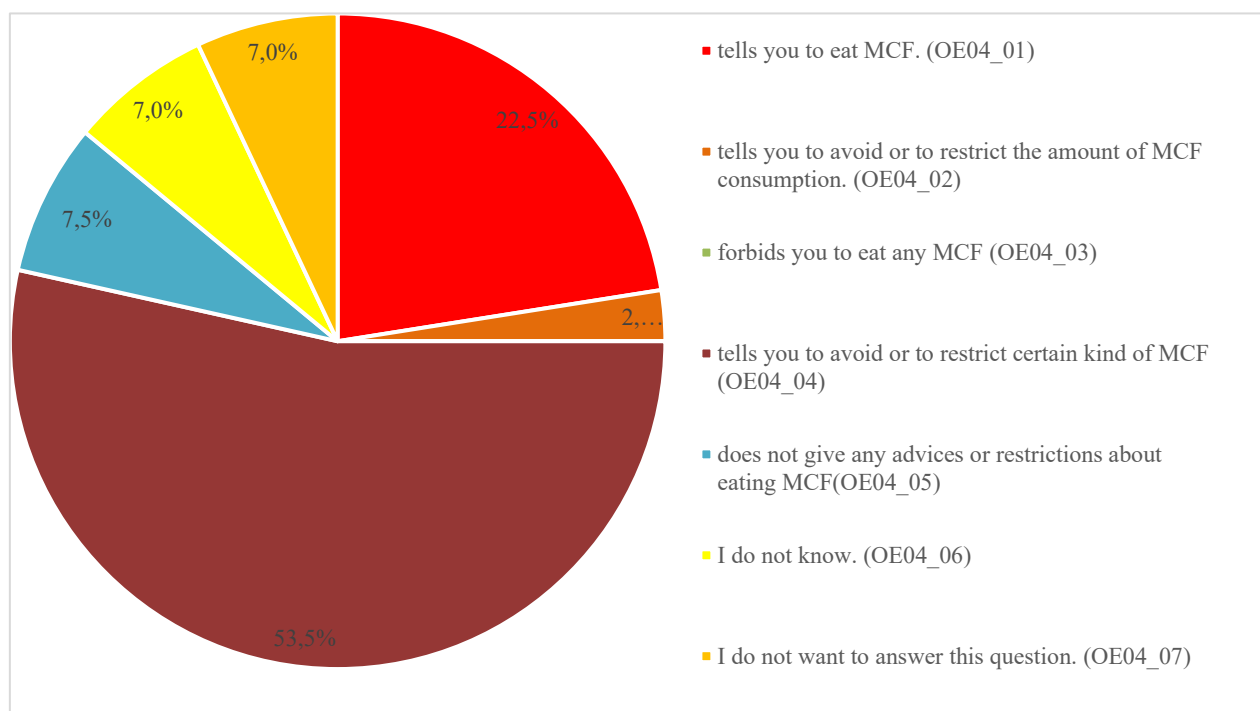


Figure 17: Percentage of Agreement to Possible Statements about the Religion's Influence on Meat-Eating
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of question OE04.

MFC Consumption Pattern during Fasting Times (OE03)

Fasting often involves both a cleaning aspect and period of reflection. For this reason, the question of whether the fasting affects the respondents' amount of MFC consumption (OE03) is worth an examination. In fact, only 15% of the interviewees stated eating less MFC than usual (OE03_02), while almost half (47%) specified eating an equal MFC amount as usual (OE03_03). Twenty-seven percent claimed to consume even more MFC than they usually do. The answer "I generally do not eat any MFC" – which, however, does not align with the OE08 results (s. 2.3.4) – was chosen by 3.5%.

The percentage of those, indicating that they could not answer the question, as they so far did not pay any attention, amounted to 7.5%.

2.3.4 The Interviewee's Own Dietary Patterns

For finding out the interviewee's average frequency of carcass consumption, people were asked to estimate how often they consume MFC.

Consumption vs. Abstinence of MFC (OE08)

According to their own estimation, two out of three interviewees eat MFC a few times per week (s. Figure 18). Thirty-three percent stated to eat it (nearly) on a daily basis (OE08_01), 33.5% around every second day (OE08_02). A further 18.5% of the participants estimate their consumption frequency to be once or twice a week (OE08_03), while eight percent consider it to be less than four times per week (OE08_04).

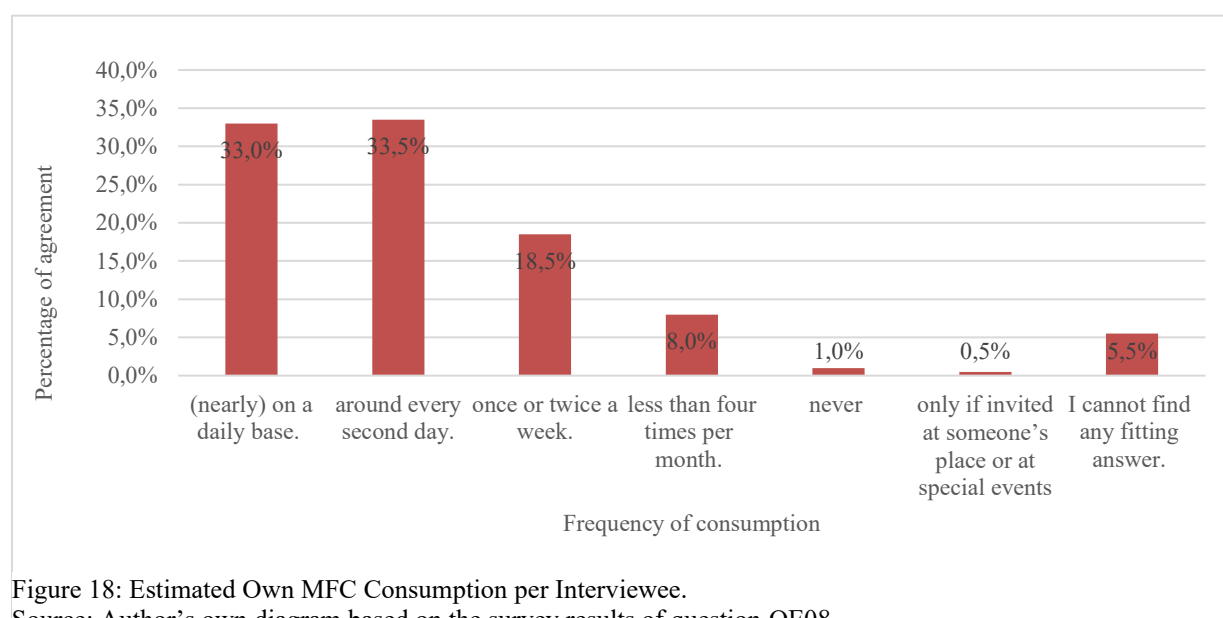


Figure 18: Estimated Own MFC Consumption per Interviewee.
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of question OE08.

Only two people declared to never eat any MFC (OE08_05). One person chose the answer option: "Only if I am invited to someone's place or if special events (for instance *al-^cīd*) occur" (OE08_06). Since 5.5% declared not to find any appropriate answer option (OE08_07), it can be assumed that their MFC consumption frequency might be very irregular.

Answer option OE08_06 already implies an irregular consumption pattern. However, this answer indicates that the MFC eating is bound on certain circumstances such as invitations and thus might be the reason for not being selected. Eventually, participants had to decide on only one option for answering this question. Thus, no answer combinations that would give an idea about the average consumption can be analyzed.

As most of the participants, nevertheless, found a suiting answer, it becomes, apparent that the vast majority of them eat some kind of MFC at least once a week, while a small part does not.

Experience with the Adoption of a Vegetarian Diet (OE06)

This distribution might change in future times, as the analysis of question OE06 shows. The interviewees were asked whether they were already (thinking about) turning their eating habits towards vegetarianism. As all the answer choices already presume a certain examination of this subject, participants had the option to skip in case of not finding any appropriate answer.

Still, no one did. Instead, 22% agreed to the statement: “I was already thinking about eating less meat” (OE06_03). An additional 18% chose the answer that they were already thinking about becoming vegetarian (OE06_02). Switching to veganism, in contrast, seems to be less contemplated by the participants (s. Figure 19). Considerably less people, namely 5.5%, took it into account (OE06_01).

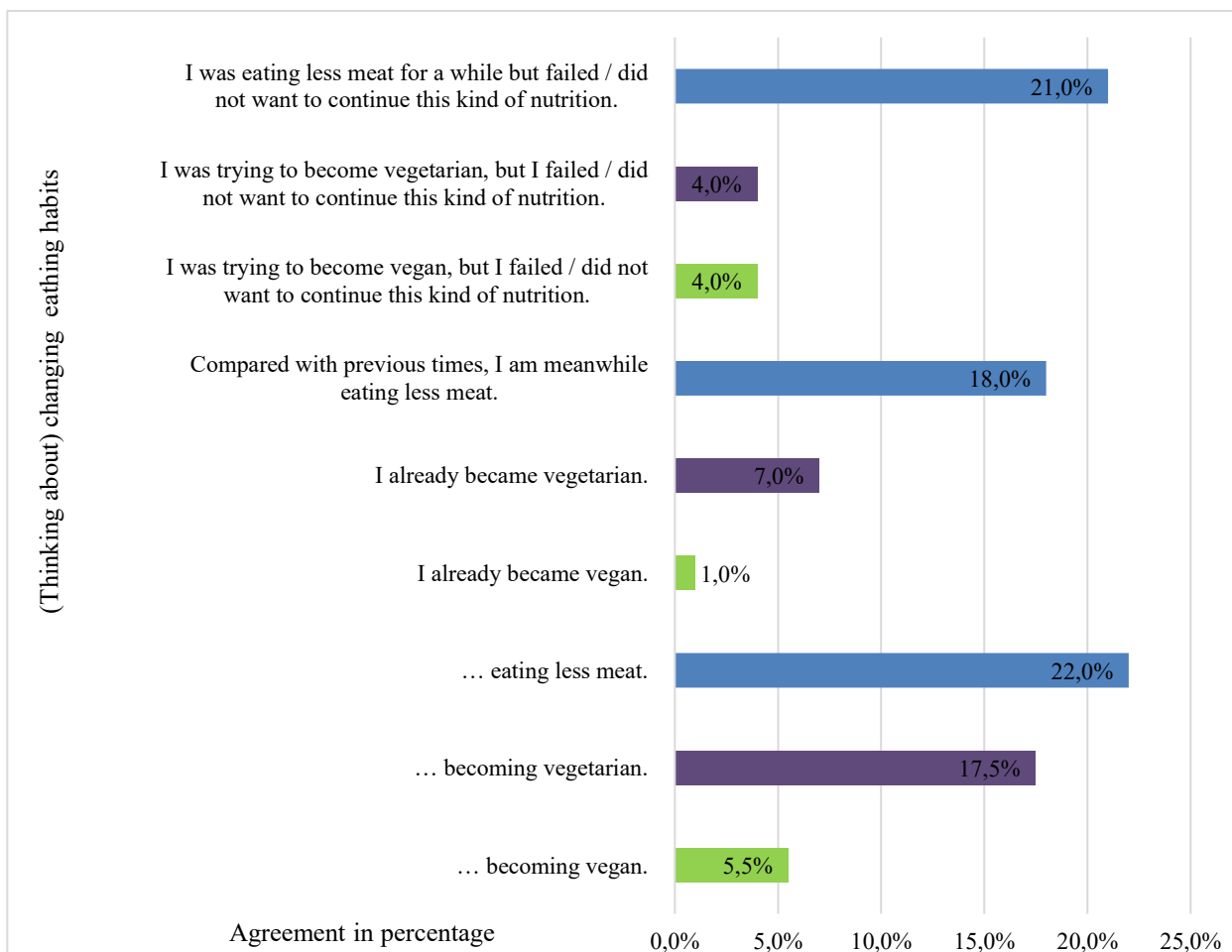


Figure 19: Percentage of Personal Considerations and Experiences with MFC Reduced Diet
Source Author's own diagram based on the survey results of question OE06.

In addition to that, 18% claimed to meanwhile eat less meat than in previous times (OE06_06). Seven percent chose the answer saying that they had already become vegetarian (OE06_05), while one percent had already considered themselves vegan (OE06_04).

These statements' (OE06_05 and OE06_04) percentages, though, show discrepancies comparing them with the previously elaborated result that only one percent of the interviewees never eats any meat (OE08_5). Taking a closer look at it, all those who aligned themselves with vegetarianism (OE06_05) have been contrasted with their respective answers, with respect to MFC consumption frequency.

The juxtaposition shows that only one out of the 14 interviewees that called themselves vegetarian also stated to never eat any MFC (OE08_5). Three more are amongst those who could not find any appropriate answer (OE08_5). Seven other self-identified vegetarians did, according to their answers at the time of the survey's conduction eat MFC.

Three of them stated to eat it less than four times per month (OE08_4) and another three once or twice per week (OE08_3), which could still be interpreted as temporary vegetarianism. However, the four others specified to eat MFC, at least every second day (OE08_02) or even more often (OE08_01).

Elaborating the respective OE08 answers to those who deemed themselves vegan (OE06_4), one finds both one congruence – the never eating any MFC answer (OE08_5) – but also the complete opposite. One person stated to be vegan (OE06_4) and, at the same time, estimated his or her own MFC consumption frequency as being on a daily basis (OE08_1).

Besides possible misclicks and the idea of part-time vegetarianism, the number of wrong self-assignments is probably further evidence of not having and/or not knowing definitions.

The percentage of people stating that they were trying to become vegan but had failed or did not want to continue this kind of nutrition (OE06_7), adds up to four. The same is the case for vegetarian nutrition (OE06_8). Still, 21% of the people declared that they have been eating less MFC for a while but failed or did not want to continue this kind of nutrition (OE06_8).

The Interviewees' Main Motivation to Adopt a Vegetarian Diet (M003)

According to the results of question OE06, some people, notwithstanding, thought about switching their diet towards vegetarianism. This begs the question of their motivation. Within the online survey, the interviewees were asked what their main motivation would be, if their circumstances would allow them to adopt a vegetarian diet. H-related reasons are the leading ones for answering this question this way.

As Figure 20 illustrates, nearly half of the interviewees chose that their main motivation would be to live generally healthier (M003_03). Twenty-seven percent reason their (possible) motivation with the prevention or the reduction of specific diseases (M003_04), while 24 specified the goal to lose weight (M003_02).

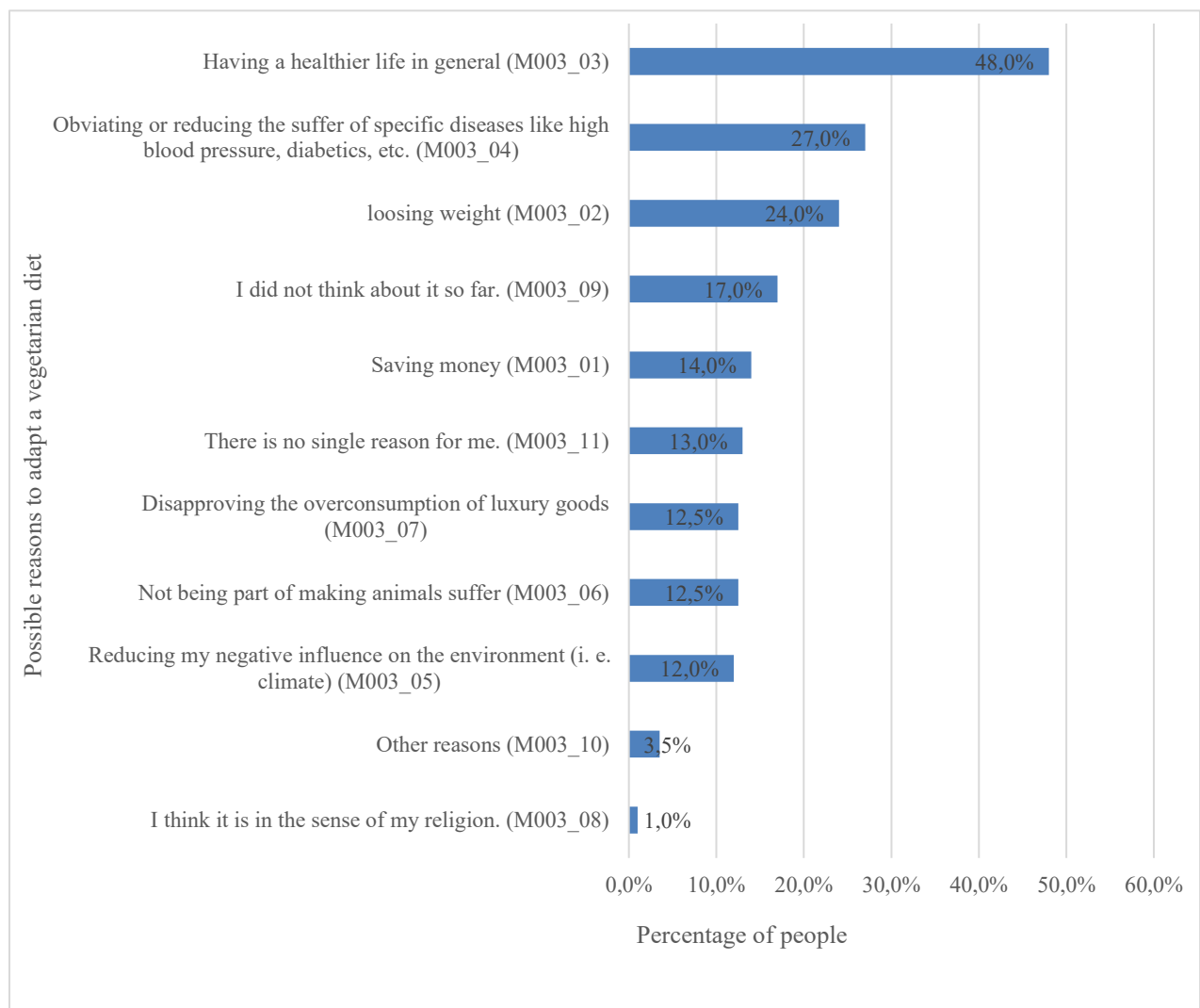


Figure 20: People's Agreement to Possible Reasons for Switching to any Vegetarian Diet
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of question M003.

Reasons unrelated to H, in contrast, were chosen comparatively less. Saving money would be a reason for 14% of the participants (M003_01). ES based motives were equally seldom stated. Not being part of making animals suffer (M003_06), as well as reducing their negative impact with respect to other ES aspects like climate change (M003_05), would both be a motivation to adopt a vegetarian diet for only 12% of the survey's participants. A similar number (12.5%) agreed that their disapproving of overconsuming luxury goods would be their main motivation (M003_07). As explained in Chapter 2.1.2, the self-restrained consumption of luxury goods involves a religious aspect. Nevertheless, only two people consider switching to any vegetarian diet as in the sense of their religion (M003_08).

Few people (3.5%) indicated that they would have other reasons (M003_10). Thirteen percent, in contrast, claim to have not any single reason at all to become vegetarian (M003_11).

What Holds the Interviewees Back to Adopt a Vegetarian Diet (M004)

Asking the interviewees what holds them back from switching to a vegetarian diet (M004), the reason most chosen shows that they view the change of their own eating habits as complicated (s. Figure 21).

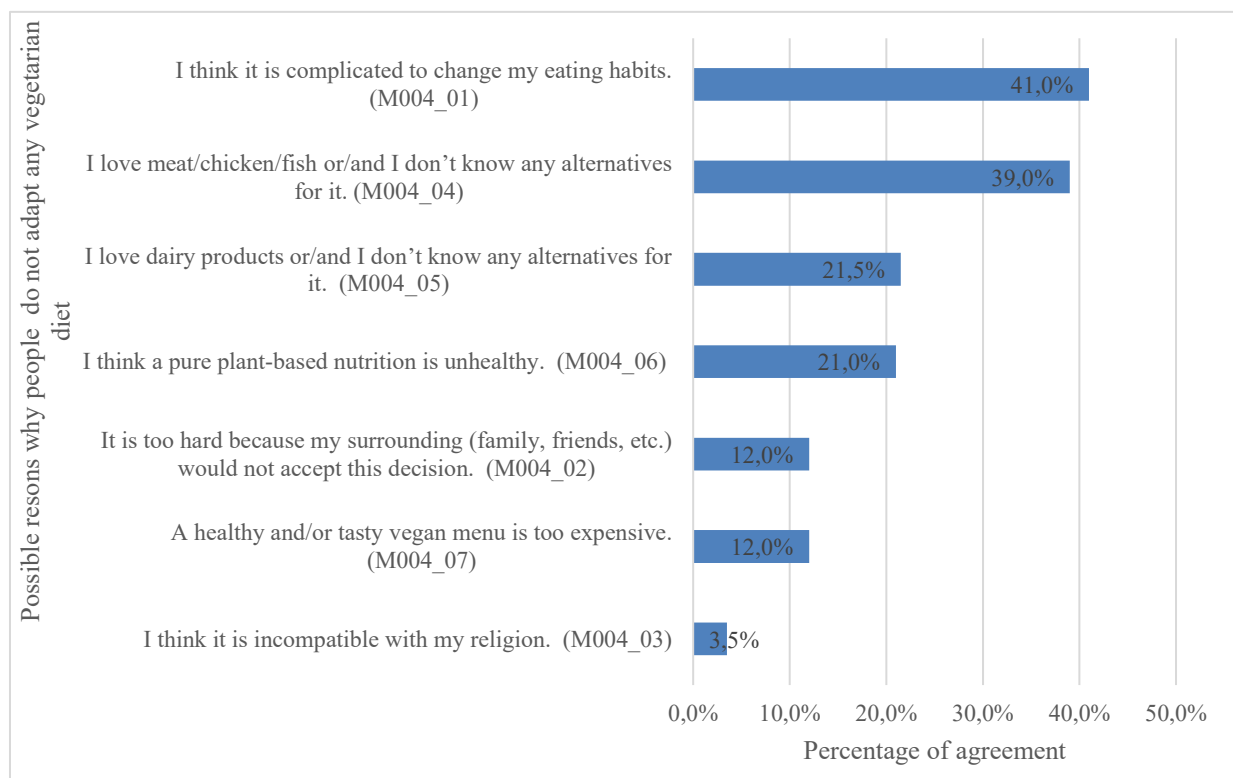


Figure 21: People's Agreement to Available Reasons for Not Switching to any Vegetarian Diet
Source: Author's own diagram based on the survey results of question M004.

Two out of five participants (41%) selected this answer (M004_01). Almost the same number of people (39%) reconciled their reservations to change their diet with their love of eating MFC and/or not knowing any alternatives for it (M004_04).

Concerning a vegan diet, around one out of five (21.5%) considered a pure plant-based nutrition as unhealthy (M004_06). Moreover, 21% stated to love dairy products and/or not to know any alternatives for it (M004_05).

Only 12% expressed their reasons as being financial (M004_07), or based on the surrounding of family and friends, who would not accept the decision (M004_02). The less chosen explanation was, “I think it is incompatible with my religion” (M004_03), to which only 3.5% agreed.

Implementation Possibility of Vegetarianism (LS01)

Question LS01 focused on the feasibility of a diet switching towards vegetarianism. The analysis of question M004, however, already made the implementation possibilities of a vegetarian diet a subject of discussion, conveying that many participants consider changing their eating habits towards vegetarianism complicated.

In accordance with that, nearly half of the participants (49.5%) continued the starting phrase “Meatless nutrition is ...” (LS01) with the statement “not feasible, even not at home (within the family)” (LS01_04). Additionally, 23% opined, according to their choice, that the implementation of a vegetarian diet would be easily manageable at home, but not outside (LS01_03).

The remaining 27% of interviewees considered a vegetarian diet generally easy to manage (s. Figure 22), though 17% under the condition that animal products like milk, etc., were still allowed (LS01_01), while 10% even considered a vegan diet easy to manage (LS01_02).

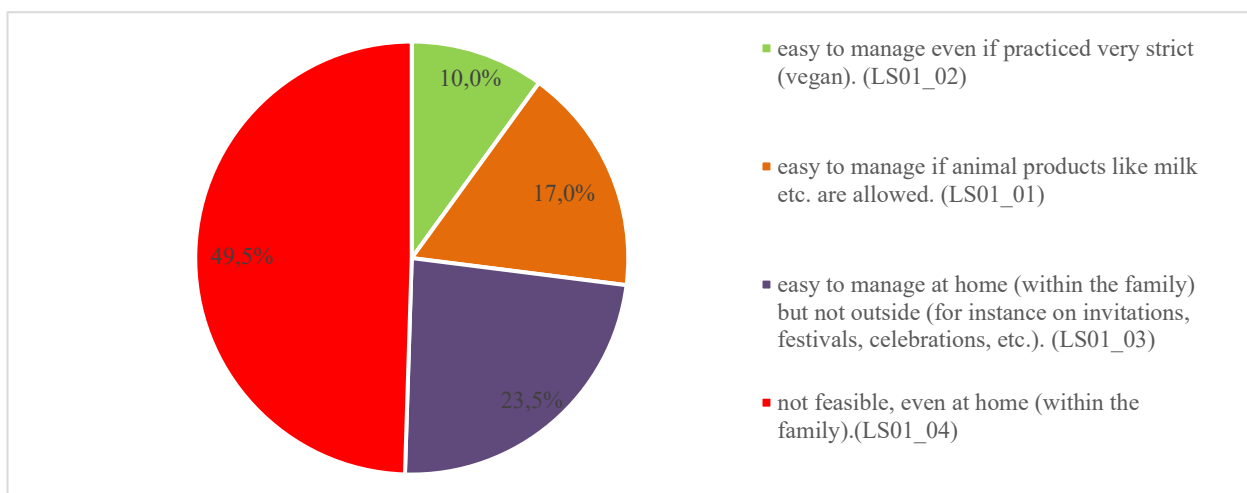


Figure 22: Overview of People’s Evaluation of Implementing a Vegetarian Diet.
Source: Author’s own diagram based on the survey results of question LS01.

2.3.5 *Review and Explanatory Approach*

The survey analysis confirms in many regards the results of the previously conducted articles' analysis. One example is the dominant role of health. According to the online survey, people generally show more interest in H and nutrition than in ES- and the F-related topics (s. M005). This higher interest in H topics, however, seems to correlate with people's mindset towards vegetarianism. Encompassing answers related to H, ES, F, as well as others, the evaluation of the questions M002 and M003 indicates that people rather consider vegetarianism as a H issue than linking the diet to other aspects.

The percentage of people ascribing a positive effect to health from MFC-free diets, is generally higher than that of those that account it negatively. This is shown by the rate of H-related answer choices in M002, M003 and M004, as well as with the analysis of H001 and H002 that exclusively address themselves to the diet's influence on health. The analysis of H001 and H002, however, reveals that most people, who considered vegetarian diets healthier than omnivorous ones, require that one makes sure to get all nutrients the body needs (H001_04 and H002_04). These answer choices again reflect findings of the newspaper articles' analysis which often emphasize to keep a wary eye on getting essential nutrients.

The content analysis moreover shows a poor reporting about the coherence of animal husbandry and epidemics. In accordance with that, the survey question of whether the Covid-19 pandemic has made the interviewees think about their MFC consumption was predominantly answered with hesitation: "Somewhat/a bit" (s. ES02).

Nevertheless, the awareness of the food's impact on the environment does not look that limited as the evaluation of the ES01 answer choices depicts. The Tunisian online newspaper *aš-Šurūq*, which was consulted within the content analysis, does not feature any single report linking vegetarianism and ES. Even within the whole newspaper articles collection, the impact of food on our planet was sparsely approached. Within the online survey, in contrast, around half of the participants (50.5%) acknowledged that a growth of people switching to a vegetarian diet was good for the environment (s. ES01).

Admittedly, 12.5% limited their positive assessment on animal welfare and could not imagine any positive impact on further environmental issues (ES1_05). The percentage of the rest, however, matches vaguely with the percentage of participants, claiming to be very interested in ES topics (M001). As the evaluation of the M003 answer shows, both the prevention of animal suffering (M003_06), as well as the reduction of the individual's negative impact on environment in general (M003_05) were only for around 12% of the interviewees a main motivation

to adopt a vegetarian diet. A potential explanation for this low percentage might be the feeling that the environmental improvement would not affect their own country (ES01_03) – an opinion that nearly one out of five interviewees hold. Considering the lack of Tunisia's involvement – or rather the lack of the whole MENA regions' involvement – within the vegetarianism-related newspaper articles, this result is unsurprising.

According to the analysis of question OE02, one-fourth of the polled persons, however, described MFC consumption only ethically correct if it does not affect the environment in a bad way (OE02_04) and/or the animal did not suffer any torture before and during its death (OE02_03). In fact, the percentage of people who attach any ES-related conditions on determining MFC consumption as ethically correct is even higher – a discrepancy which the answer analysis of question OE05 reveals. Eight percent of those who defined MFC eating ethically correct if the meat was *ḥalāl* (those who chose this answer as a single choice) (OE02_02) attributed to the term certain aspects of environmental protection, too.

For four percent, the assurance that the animal has a good life before its death (OE05_02) was included by the term *ḥalāl*. Two percent excluded industrial meat from it (OE05_03), while two more percent understood the *ḥalāl* principle as consuming not too much luxury goods (OE05_04). These definitions make clear that almost one-third of the interviewees attach ES-related conditions on defining MFC eating ethically correct.

The analysis of question OE04 showed that, with 56%, more than half of the participants deem their religion as giving them restrictions with respect to their MFC consumption. However, only 2.5% of them bear these restrictions on their consumption amount (OE04_02), while 53.5% chose that the restriction would concern certain kinds of MFC (OE04_04).

As none of the interviewees regards MFC consumption as generally forbidden by their religion (OE04_03), merely one percent quotes religion as the main motivation for a potentially turning vegetarian (M003_08). Despite 22.5% of the interviewees stating that their religion was telling them to eat MFC (OE04_01), only 3.5% explained that their decision to not switch to a vegetarian diet was because it contradicted their religion (M004_03).

While 36.5% described themselves as very interested in F topics in general (M005_03), most participants found neither motivating nor demotivating arguments for switching their diet based on their religion. In accordance with this, the analysis of their general assessment towards vegetarianism showed that most participants do not even associate MFC abstinence with (any) religion (M002_03). Again, a parallel to the newspapers' reporting can be drawn.

Despite more than three out of five pollees considering a vegetarian nutrition cheaper than omnivorous (M001_01), only 12% associate a vegetarian nutrition with poor people (M002_09).

Saving money thus is for merely 14% a main motivation to potentially switch their diet (M003_01). On the other hand, 12% claim that a healthy and/or tasty vegan menu was too expensive and thus holding them back to change their eating habits (M004_07). Overall, the financial aspect seems to play a minor role when thinking about a diet change.

Only 12% of the interviewees explained their not switching with their social surroundings, which would not accept their decision (M004_02). The main factor that holds people back is however, considering the change of eating habits complicated in general (M004_01) and not knowing any MFC substitutes (M004_04). Consequently, only 27% of the participants agreed that any MFC-free diet was manageable (LS01_01 and LS01_02).

Generally, considerations and attempts to reduce their personal MFC consumption were more spread than a complete meat abstinence. Veganism especially was, for most of the participants, out of the question (s. OE06).

As the comparison of these results with people's personal estimated MFC consumption frequency (s. OE08) showed, the number of people calling themselves vegetarian does not correspond to the only one percent of people who stated to never eat any MFC. While the analysis of D002 indicated the ambiguity of the term "meat," 84.5% excluded MFC from the term *nabāṭī* (s. D003). The discrepancy between OE06 and OE08 is, consequently, not necessarily explainable with unclarified terms or mistakes. It could be also based on the idea of part-time vegetarianism or a predominantly vegetarian diet with exceptions.³²⁴ The newspaper articles' analysis provides respective examples to this phenomenon, as well. The *Daily Star* 2019a article, for instance, reported the singer Beyoncé's promoting a partial vegan diet.

Altogether, the online survey confirms many findings of the articles' content analysis. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the case study of Tunisia can barely be transferred to the rest of the MENA region. The assessment of an MFC-free diet as complicated and the ignorance of any MFC supplement might root in the country's general food supply. Soy products, on which many meat and dairy analogs are based, are in some regions of Tunisia simply not known. Moreover, even the range of daily available vegetables is, in parts of the country, quite limited, which is why an MFC-free nutrition might lead to (the impression of) an unbalanced diet.³²⁵ The food supply however differs from country to country within the MENA region. This might have an impact on the respective inhabitants viewing it as being easy or difficult to implement vegetarianism. Furthermore, other aspects such as the role of religion and its interpretation with respect to eating animals might differ.

³²⁴ Author's observation.

³²⁵ Author's observation.

3 Conclusion

Overall, the investigation shows that the MENA region does consider vegetarianism. The region's countries all face similar environmental problems. The consumption of meat, which contributes to these issues, varies from country to country. Especially in Israel, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, the annual average meat supply rarely portrayed less than 60 kilograms per person over the last decades. Several years it reached even more than 100 kilograms. In contrast, in Algeria, Yemen and Iraq, the per capita supply amounts to only 20 kilograms or less for a number of years. While economic strength usually increases a country's meat supply, war is a deciding factor for its decrease. Import bans are usually based on food safety concerns, which are temporary and refer only to a certain kind of meat or its exporting country.

Indeed, NGOs and individuals in the region raise awareness of the impact the choice of food has on the environment. The religion of Islam, with which most of the MENA region's inhabitants affiliate, can serve as a basis for argumentation with respect to animal welfare. Its jurisprudence undoubtedly calls factory farming into question. Still, the religion provides a range of interpretations when it comes to meat-eating or its abandonment.

In accordance with that, the case study of Tunisia emphasized the severely limited religious influence on the decision to turn vegetarian or not. On the other side, most of the survey's participants defined eating animals as ethically correct (only) under the premise that their slaughtering was carried out *ḥalāl*. The MENA region's newspapers skipped the contextualization of vegetarianism and Islam completely. Only a few articles ever linked vegetarianism and religion but referred to Christian fasting and the Indian belief of Jainism. Besides the religion, the MENA region was underrepresented amongst the articles' dealing with vegetarianism. Nearly all of them quoted studies or stories from other countries, their scientists, journals or institutions, mainly from the West. Even celebrity-related articles, which constituted a large number of articles, almost entirely referred to Northern Americans or Europeans. Despite that, at least in Tunisia, vegetarianism is barely seen as a phenomenon coming from the West.

Only a small number of MENA newspaper articles put a bad spin on vegetarianism, focusing on vegan nutrition. Most reports were complimentary or informed their readers neutrally about the diets. According to the results of the Tunisian case study, people's assessment towards vegetarianism was, however, non-uniform. It ranged from considering it nothing but a fashion trend, to something very important for human health.

“Non-uniform” is, moreover, the term usage. Several times the examination encountered the ambiguity of the term *nabātī*. As maintained by the newspapers’ content analysis, no standardized word for veganism or further forms of vegetarianism exists in the region’s media landscape. Moreover, some articles even count pescetarianism as a vegetarian diet. The online survey in Tunisia confirmed this lack in a uniform word definition. However, most interviewees understood the exclusion of all carcasses under a *nabātī* nutrition, while their comprehension of “not eating meat” appeared to be more unclear.

Besides vague definitions, discrepancies in the survey’s findings (such as the number of people who claimed to never eat any animals versus the essentially higher number of people calling themselves vegetarian or vegan) indicates that the expression of vegetarianism is probably (also) used if the diets are followed inconsequentially. It seems like people do not differ between a partial or temporary vegetarianism and a complete refusal of eating animals.

Generally, the opinion poll in Tunisia showed that people took into consideration curbing their meat consumption rather than adopting meat-free diets. A purely plant-based diet was for most of the participants even out of the question. Crucial factors for this attitude were the lack of knowledge of any meat alternatives and (thus) the belief that implementing a meat-free diet would be complicated.

However, content analysis of MENA newspapers showed that veganism exists in the MENA region and even has a vegan royal advocate raising awareness of the food’s impact on the environment. Nevertheless, the protection of the environment seldomly represents a motivating factor for people to change their eating habits. The case study revealed that the main reasons making people think of adapting a vegetarian diet are health issues. It seems to correlate with the dominant role of health in the region’s reporting. Repeatedly and frequently, articles explained the prevention or palliative effect that the abstinence from eating animals or their products has with respect to concrete human diseases. Only a few articles amplified the extent food choice has on the non-human-related environment to their readers.

Moreover, the fact that (intensive) animal husbandry affects human health by establishing conditions conducive to spreading disease is only poorly covered – and is therefore not in people’s minds, as the poll revealed. Despite the occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the passing of zoonotic diseases from animals to humans hardly captured media attraction. The same is the case with long-term consequences of animal husbandry, such as climate change and pollution of water and soil, which eventually have adverse health effects, too.

As the Tunisian online survey showed, half of the interviewees were aware of the positive impact a switch in diet towards vegetarianism would have on the environment – though to a different extent. Nevertheless, the survey findings revealed that environmental protection was faintly chosen as a main reason to adopt any vegetarian diet or reduce the consumption of animal products. Since the newspaper's approach to vegetarianism shows a similar picture, it appears likely that the findings can be transferred to the whole region.

At this point, the investigation came across a contradiction: Both the reporting and the survey's respondents gave the prevention of specific diseases priority if it came to discussing a change in diet. Simultaneously, they widely ignored the negative impact on human's health caused by (intensive) animal farming.

Throwing light on the coherence of human's health, animal husbandry – and thus environmental ethics – could consequently strengthen people's environmental consciousness. Considering the largely insufficient governmental measurements for environmental protection and the room of interpretation in the region's dominant religion of Islam, spreading this awareness-promoting information might carry weight. Since the supply follows the demand, the establishment or the extension of meat and dairy substitutes and restaurants with available options in the MENA region might help people turn vegan, vegetarian or curb the consumption of animals and animal products.

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5 Appendix

5.1 Online Survey: Translation with Identifiers

Dear participants, my name is Franziska Schwemmer. Within the framework of my master's program I am conducting an online survey about vegetarianism in Tunisia. I would be very glad if you could spend five minutes of your time to participate on it. The questions all are multiple- or single choice. Thus, you only need to choose the answers that correspond the most to your opinion. The participation is anonymously. Personal data cannot be traced back to the study's participants. All information you provide is exclusively used for this survey. If you have any questions, please contact me via taghdhiya-nabatiya@gmx.net.	Intro
1. What does a <i>nabātī</i> diet mean to you? (multiple choice)	D003
A nutrition system, which is based on plants and plant products only (no MFC, no animal products like milk, honey or cheese), also called <i>végan/végétalien</i>	D003_01
A nutrition system excluding meat, fish, chicken but products like milk are allowed, also called <i>végétarian</i>	D003_02
A nutrition system in which people eat plant (products), milk (products), fish or chicken but no (red) meat	D003_03
I do not have any idea what <i>nabātī</i> nutrition means.	D003_04
2. If people tell you "we do not eat any meat," it means that ... (multiple choice)	D002
... they eat neither red meat nor white meat like for instance, chicken.	D002_02
... they do not eat any red meat.	D002_01
... they do not eat any fish.	D002_03
I do not know.	D002_04
Sometimes it means that they do not eat any red meat, sometimes it means that they neither eat red nor white meat and also no fish.	D002_05
3. How much MFC do you consume per week (if living in a shared household, try to count it down to one single person) (single choice)	OE08
I am usually eating MFC (nearly) on a daily basis.	OE08_01
I am usually eating MFC around every second day.	OE08_02
I am usually eating MFC once or twice a week.	OE08_03
I am usually eating MFC less than four times per month.	OE08_04
I am usually eating MFC only if I am invited to someone's place or if special events (for instance, <i>al-ʿīd</i>) occur.	OE08_05
never	OE08_06
I cannot find any appropriate answer.	OE08_07
(not answered)	(-9)
4. Do you think eating animals or parts of their bodies is ethically correct? (multiple choice)	OE02

No, I am feeling bad when I am eating meat.	OE02_01
Only if the meat is <i>ḥalāl</i> .	OE02_02
Only if the animal was not tortured before and during its death.	OE02_03
Only if the consumption of it does not affect the environment in a bad way.	OE02_04
Yes, it is.	OE02_05
I have not thought about this question yet and have no answer for it.	OE02_06
5. During fasting days, you are eating ... (single choice)	OE03
... more MFC than usual.	OE03_01
... less MFC than usual.	OE03_02
... an equal amount of MFC.	OE03_03
So far, I did not pay any attention to it and cannot answer this question.	OE03_04
I generally do not eat any MFC.	OE03_05
(not answered)	(-9)
6. Your religion ... (single choice)	OE04
... tells you to eat meat.	OE04_01
... tells you to avoid or to restrict the amount of meat consumption.	OE04_02
... forbids you to eat meat.	OE04_03
... tells you to avoid or to restrict certain kinds of meat.	OE04_04
... does not give any advice or restrictions about eating meat.	OE04_05
I do not know.	OE04_06
I do not want to answer this question.	OE04_07
7. Compared with omnivorous nutrition, a completely strict vegan diet is ... (single choice)	H001
... healthier	H001_01
... less healthy	H001_02
It does not affect the body in a positive or negative way.	H001_03
... healthier, if people make sure to get all nutrients the body needs.	H001_04
I do not know.	H001_05
8. Compared with omnivorous nutrition, a vegetarian diet is ... (single choice)	H002
... healthier	H002_01
... less healthy	H002_02
It does not affect the body in a positive or negative way.	H002_03
... healthier, if people make sure to get all nutrients the body needs.	H002_04
I do not know.	H002_05
9. Would it, in your opinion, be good for the environment (regional and global) if more people become vegetarians or vegans: (multiple choice)	ES01
Do not think so.	ES01_01
Yes, definitely.	ES01_02
Globally yes, but I do not see any positive impact for my own country, though.	ES01_03
Regionally yes, but I do not see any impact globally.	ES01_04
For the welfare of animals yes, but I do not know/see any impact on further environmental issues.	ES01_05
So far, I did not pay any attention to it and cannot answer this question.	ES01_06

10. What does the term <i>ḥalāl</i> mean to you with respect of meat consumption: (multiple choice)	OE05
A proper slaughtering	OE05_01
Making sure that the animal has a good life before its death	OE05_02
No industrial meat	OE05_03
Making sure not to consume too much as meat is considered a luxury good	OE05_04
I do not know all the aspects this term includes.	OE05_05
11. A MFC free nutrition is ... (single choice)	M001
... cheaper than omnivorous nutrition.	M001_01
... more expensive than omnivorous nutrition.	M001_02
I do not have any idea about this.	M001_03
12. A MFC free nutrition is ... (multiple choice)	M002
... nothing but a fashion trend.	M002_01
... coming from “the West”/America/Europe.	M002_02
... sometimes based on religion (for instance, during the fasting time or also generally)	M002_03
... important for someone’s health.	M002_04
... important for the environment.	M002_05
... something good.	M002_06
... something bad.	M002_07
... something unnecessary.	M002_08
... something for poor people.	M002_09
I do not want to judge this ~ <i>kull ḥadd kifāh</i>	M002_10
13. Did the Corona pandemic make you think about your MFC consumption? (single choice)	ES02
Yes.	ES02_01
No.	ES02_02
A bit.	ES02_03
14. Meatless nutrition is ... (single choice)	LS01
... easy to manage if animal products like milk etc. are allowed.	LS01_01
... easy to manage even if practiced very strict (<i>végan/végétalien</i>)	LS01_02
... easy to manage at home (within the family) but not outside (for instance, on invitations, festivals, celebrations, etc.)	LS01_03
... even at home not practicable (within the family).	LS01_04
15. You already were thinking about ... (single choice)	OE06
... becoming vegan.	OE06_01
... becoming vegetarian.	OE06_02
... eating less meat.	OE06_03
I already became vegan.	OE06_04
I already became vegetarian.	OE06_05
Compared with previous times, I am meanwhile eating less meat.	OE06_06

I was trying to become vegan, but I failed/did not want to continue this kind of nutrition.	OE06_07
I was trying to become vegetarian, but I failed/did not want to continue this kind of nutrition.	OE06_08
I was eating less meat for a while but failed/did not want to continue this kind of nutrition.	OE06_09
16. If your circumstances (would) allow you to become vegan or vegetarian or to reduce your meat consumption, what would be your main motivation to become vegan/vegetarian or to eat less meat (multiple choice)	M003
Saving money	M003_01
Losing weight	M003_02
Having a healthier life in general	M003_03
Obviating or reducing the suffering of specific diseases (like high blood pressure, diabetics, etc.)	M003_04
Reducing my negative influence on the environment (i. e. climate)	M003_05
Not being part of making animals suffer	M003_06
Disapproving the overconsumption of luxury goods	M003_07
I think it is in the sense of my religion.	M003_08
I did not think about it so far.	M003_09
Other reasons	M003_10
There is no single reason for me.	M003_11
17. What reasons are holding you back to become vegan? (multiple choice)	M004
I think it is complicated to change my eating habits.	M004_01
It is too hard because my surrounding (family, friends, etc.) would not accept this decision.	M004_02
I think it is incompatible with my religion.	M004_03
I love meat/chicken/fish or/and I do not know any alternatives for it.	M004_04
I love dairy products or/and I do not know any alternatives for it.	M004_05
I think pure plant-based nutrition is unhealthy.	M004_06
A healthy and/or tasty vegan menu is too expensive.	M004_07
18. Are you interested	M005
in environmental topics? (single choice)	M005_01
Very much.	3
Kind of.	2
No.	1
I do not want to answer this question	-1
... in health/nutrition topics? (single choice)	M005_02
Very much.	3
Kind of.	2
No.	1
I do not want to answer this question	-1
... in religious topics and behavior? (single choice)	M005_03
Very much.	3
Kind of.	2
No.	1
I do not want to answer this question	-1

Wow! You are nearly done! I only have a few questions to your person	
19. How old are you?	SD01
20 or younger	SD01_01
between 21 and 34	SD01_01
between 35 and 49	SD01_01
50 or older	SD01_01
(not answered)	(-9)
20. Gender	SD02
female	SD02_01
male	SD02_02
I do not want to answer this question.	SD02_03
21. Have you been living outside of Tunisia	SD03
Yes.	SD03_01
No.	SD03_02
I do not want to answer this question.	SD03_03
22. In which governorate do you live at the moment?	SD04
Ariana	1
Nabeul	2
Béja	3
Bizerte	4
Ben Arous	5
Tataouine	6
Tozeur	7
Tunis	8
Jendouba	9
Zaghouan	10
Siliana	11
Sousse	12
Sidi Bouzid	13
Sfax	14
Gabès	15
Kebili	16
Kasserine	17
Gafsa	18
Kairouan	19
Kef	20
Medenine	21
Monastir	22
Manouba	23
Mahdia	24
It is done! Very good! Thank you for your time and your participation. A wide participation gives the survey's results more validity. So, please share the link with your friends and relatives https://www.soscisurvey.de/nabatiyin	

5.2 Online Survey: Original in Tunisian Arabic Dialect



Page 01

T0

مشاركى الأعزاء

إسمى فرانزيسكا شويمر. فى إطار برنامج الماجستير متاعى،
قاعدة نقوم بإستفتاء عبر الإنترنت حول التغذية النباتية فى
تونس.

يفرحنى برشا لو ممكن تعطىونى خمس دقائق من وقتكم باش
تجاوبونى على شوية أسئلة.

تنجم تختار جواب واحد ولا أجوبة متعددة تتوافق مع رأيك
على كل سؤال.

المشاركة سرية للغاية و البيانات الشخصية تستعمل حصريا
للإستفتاء هذا و ما تتباحث للأطراف أخرى.

كان عندكم أي سؤال ابعتولي على الايميل

taghddhiya-nabatiya@gmx.net

Page 02

1. شنوة يعنىلك نظام الأكل النباتى؟

أختار/ي جواب واحد وإلا برشا إجابات

هو نظام غذائى مرتكز على أكل النباتات أو منتجات
النباتات معناها لا تاكل لحم لا حوت ولا دجاج ولا
حتى منتج عندو علاقة بالحيوانات كيما حليب عسل
وإلا الجبن. يتسمى النظام هذا نباتى وإلا بالفرنسية
فيجيتاليا (végétalien) ولا فيقان (végan).

هو نظام غذائى يستثنى اللحم والحوت والدجاج اما
منتجات الحليب مسموح تاكلهم و يتسمو زادا
فيجيتاريا (végétarian).

هو نظام غذائى يتركز على النباتات مشتقات الحليب
كيما الفرماج واللحم الابيض والحوت اما اللحم
الأحمر لا.

ما عنديش حتى فكرة على نظام التغذية النباتية شنية
معناه.

2. كان عباد قالو لك: "أحنا ما ناكلوش اي لحم" معناها...

أختار/ي جواب واحد وإلا برشا إجابات

انهم ما ياكلوش لحومات الحمرة ولحومات الببيضة
كيمة دجاج.

انهم ما ياكلوش لحومات الحمرة.

انهم ما ياكلوش حوت.

ما نعرفش.

أحيانا معناها انهم ما ياكلوش لحومات الحمرة, أحيانا
معناها انهم ما ياكلوش لحومات الحمرة والببيضة
والحوت زادا لا.

3. قاده تستهلك لحم/حوت/دجاج (كانك تعيش/ي مع عايلة
وإلا تعيش/ي مع مجموعة من صحابك حاول/ي تعطي حسب
التقريب واحد قاده يستهلك)؟

أختار/ي جواب واحد

ناكل اللحم أو الحوت أو الدجاج

تقريبا كل يوم

تقريبا نهار بعد نهار

تقريبا مرة فالجمعة

تقريبا أقل من أربعة مرات فالشهر

كان كيف نبدي مستدعي عند شكون وإلا في مناسبات
خاصة (مثلا في العيد لكبير).

أبدا

ما نجمش نلقى حتى اجابة مناسبة.

4. حسب رأيك مأكلة الحيوانات وإلا أجزاء من بدنهم أخلاقيا صحيح؟

أختار /ي جواب واحد وإلا برشا إجابات

لا. نحس إحساس خايب كيف ناكلهم.

كان كي لحم بيدنا حلال.

كان كي الحيوان بيدى ما تعذبش قبل وإلا وقت هو يتدبح.

كان كي الإستهلاك متاعو ما يضرش المحيط بطريقة مش باهية.

اي صحيح.

حتي لتوا ما عنديش فكرة على هالسؤال و ما عنديش جواب ليه.

5. في ايامات الصيام انت تاكل/ي...

أختار /ي جواب واحد

...أكثر لحم/حوت/دجاج مالعادة.

...أقل لحم/حوت/دجاج مالعادة.

...لحم/حوت/دجاج بمعدل متوسط لا أكثر مالعادة ولا أقل مالعادة.

...حتى لتو ما إنتبهتش لهالسؤال وما عنديش جواب ليه.

ما ناكلوش لحم/حوت/دجاج أبدا.

6. دينك ...

أختار/ي جواب واحد

... يقل لي بش تاكل اللحم.

... يقلك تجنب وإلا يحددك كمية اللحم/الحوت/الدجاج
اللي تستهلكها.

... يمنعك بش تاكل لحم.

... يقلك تجنب وإلا يمنعك بش تاكل بعض الانواع
مالحم.

... ما يعطيكش حتي نصائح وإلا التزامات على مأكلة
اللحم ميمنعكش.

ما نعرش.

ما نحيش نجواب على هالسؤال.

7. مقارنة بالتغذية المخلطة الحيوانية و النباتية, نظام الغذاء
النباتي الصارم (فيقان) هو...

أختار/ي جواب واحد

... صحي اكثر.

... صحي اقل.

... ما يثرش على البدن إيجابيا أو سلبيا.

... صحي إذا كان العباد يتأكدوا أنهم ياكلوا كل
العناصر الغذائية إللي يحتاجها البدن.

ما نعرفش.

8. مقارنة بالتغذية المخلطة الحيوانية و النباتية, نظام الغذاء النباتي الجزئي (فيجيتاريان) هو...

أختار/ي جواب واحد

... صحي أكثر.

... صحي أقل.

... ما يثرش على البدن إيجابيا أو سلبيا.

... صحي أكثر كان للعباد إلهي تعرف تاكل كل عناصر التغذية إلهي يحتاجها لبدن.

ما نعرفش.

9. حسب رايك شنوة أحسن للبيئة كي يولي عدد أكثر مالعباد يتبعو النظام الغذائي الصارم وإلا الجزئي؟

أختار/ي جواب واحد وإلا برشا إجابات

لا, ما نتصورش.

اي, بالطبيعة.

عالميا صحيح. اما ما نتصورش عندو حتى تأثير إيجابي كي بلادي اكهو طبق النظام هذا.

جهويا صحيح . اما ما نشوف عندو حتى تأثير عالميا.

أحسن لمصلحة الحيوانات . اما ما نعرش/ما نشوفش عندو اي تأثير بيئي على المحيط.

حتى لتو ما إنتبهتش لهالسؤال و ما عنديش جواب ليه.

10. شئوة يعنلك مصطلح "حلال" ففما فخص إستهلاك اللحم؟

أختار/ف فواب واحد وإلا برشا إجابات

طرفة ذبح صالحة

تتأكد أنو الحفوان عاش بالقدا قبل ما فذبوه

لحم مش صناعف

تتأكد ما تستهلكش برشا لحم على خاطر اللحم معترف حاجة عالية (نعمة)

ما نعرف حتى شف على هالمصطلح "حلال".

11. غذاء منفر لحم/حوت/دجاج هو ...

أختار/ف فواب واحد

... أرخص من التفذفة على اللحوم و النباتات.

... أعلى من التفذفة على اللحوم و النباتات.

ما عنف فحتى فكرة.

12. غذاء منغير لحم/حوت/دجاج هو ...

أختار/ي جواب واحد وإلا برشا إجابات

هي حاجة طالعة كيما الموضة ناس كل تبع فاها.

هي حاجة مستوردة جاية من "الغرب" /الأمريكا /
الأوروبا.

هي حاجة مبنية على الدين (مثلا في وقت الصيام وإلا
بصفة عامة).

... مهمة لصحة الإنسان.

... مهمة للبيئة.

... حاجة باهية.

... حاجة خايبة.

... حاجة مش مهمة.

... حاجة للناس الفقار.

ما نحبش نحكم على الحاجة هذي. كل حد و كيفاه.

13. هل الوباء أو فيروس كورونا خلاك تفكر في موضوع

إستهلاك اللحم/الحوت/الدجاج؟

أختار/ي جواب واحد

اي. شوي. لا.

14. نظام غذائي منغير لحم/حوت/دجاج هو...

أختار/ي جواب واحد

...سأهل تطبيقو إذا كان منتجات الحليب مسموح
ماكلتها.

سأهل تطبيقو حتي لو كان نظام صارم ملا فيقان/
فيجيتالي (végétalien/végan).

سأهل تطبيقو مع الدار العائلة اما صعيب الواحد يلتزم
بيه البرا (مثلا مأكلة مع الاصحاب وإلا المناسبات في
الاعراس و السهريات).

حتى في الدار صعيب تطبيقو (مع العائلة).

15. عمرك في حياتك خمنت وإلا وليت تحب تبع ...

أختار/ي جواب واحد

... النظام النباتي الصارم.

... النظام النباتي المعتدل.

... تاكل اقل لحم/حوت/دجاج .

...بطبيعتي انا نتبع النظام النباتي الصارم (فيقان /
فيجيتالي (végan/végétalien)).

...بطبيعتي انا نتبع النظام النباتي المعتدل (فيجيتاريا
(végétarian)).

مقارنة بقبل تو ناكل اقل اب برشا لحم/حوت/دجاج .

جربت نتبع النظام النباتي الصارم اما ما نجمتش
نلتزم/ما حبيتش نكمل فيه.

جربت نتبع النظام النباتي المعتدل اما ما نجمتش
نلتزم/ما حبيتش نكمل فيه.

جربت نقص من مأكلة اللحم/الحوت/الدجاج اما ما
نجمتش نلتزم/ما حبيتش نكمل فيه.

16. إذا كان ظروفك المعيشية تسمح لك إتبع النظام النباتي
والا تنقص من مأكلة الحيوانات, شنية كانت الأسباب
الرئيسية (باش) تبدل رجيم غذاءك?
أختار/ي جواب واحد وإلا برشا إجابات

توفير الفلوس

خسارة الوزن

الحصول على حياة صحية بشكل عام

تجنب أو تنقيص معاناة أمراض معينة (كيما ارتفاع
ضغط الدم ومرضى السكر وهكاكا)

بش تنقص من التأثير السلبي على البيئة (خصوصا
المناخ)

عدم المشاركة في معاناة الحيوانات

عدم الموافقة على الإستهلاك المفرط للسلع الكمالية

نتصور أنه بمعنى ديني.

ما خممتش فيها حتى لتو.

أسباب آخرين.

ما فماش سيب بالنسبة ليا.

17. شنوما الأسباب الي ما يخلوكش نباتي؟

أختار/ي جواب واحد وإلا برشا إجابات

نتصور تبديل عادات المأكلة متاعي صعب.

صعب برشا بالنسبة ليا على خاطر محيطي (العائلة والصحاب، وهكاكا) ما يقبلوش بالقرار.

نتصورها تتعارض مع ديني.

نحب اللحوم / الدجاج / السمك برشا و/إلا ما نعرفش حتى حاجة تعوضهم.

نحب منتجات الألبان برشا و/إلا ما نعرفش حتى حاجة تعوضهم.

نتصور التغذية النباتية الصارمة (فيقان) موش صحية.

المأكلة نباتية صحية و/إلا بنينة هي غالية برشا.

18. أنت مهتم بالمواضيع إيلي تخص

البيئة؟

ما نحبش نجابو على هالسؤال.	اي، برشا	شوية	لا
----------------------------	----------	------	----

الصحة / التغذية؟

ما نحبش نجابو على هالسؤال.	اي، برشا	شوية	لا
----------------------------	----------	------	----

الدين؟

ما نحبش نجابو على هالسؤال.	اي، برشا	شوية	لا
----------------------------	----------	------	----

19. تقريبا كملت/ي, يعطيك الصحة!
عندي ليك شوية أسئلة على روحك:

قداش عمرك؟

20 وإلا أصغر

ما بين 21 و 34

ما بين 35 و 49

50 وإلا اكبر

20. الجنس:

مؤنث

مذكر

ما نحيش نجاب على هالسؤال.

21. كنت/ي عايش/ة في الخارج؟

أي.

لا.

ما نحيش نجاب على هالسؤال.

22. أنت توة ساكنة في ولاية ...

[يرجى الاختيار]

Last Page

كملت/ي! باهي برشا، و يعيشك على وقتك و مشاركتك. كل
مشاركة تخلصنا نتحصلوا على نتائج أوضح، هذاكا علاش كان
تعمل/ي مزية تبعث الرابط هذا لأصحابك وأقاربك:
<https://www.soscisurvey.de/nabatiyin>

B.A. Franziska Schwemmer, Universität
Wien – 2020

6 Abstract

6.1 Abstract in English

The MENA region faces serious environmental issues. Intensive livestock production increases the local water scarcity and the ecosystem's fragility. As abstinence from eating meat and dairy products counteracts the environmental deterioration, this thesis examines the region's approach to vegetarianism.

Based on literature research, this work brings the 17 countries that are in a narrative sense assigned as the Middle Eastern and North African region in line with global environmental challenges and discusses vegetarianism in the context of the region's most widespread religion of Islam. A content analysis of nine local online newspapers reveals the extent of vegetarianism-related reporting, its opinion-forming impact, contextualization and diet terminology. This corpus assimilates 119 articles published between March 10, 2003 and September 1, 2020 in French, English and Arabic. Looking at Tunisia as an example for this research, an opinion poll, conducted between July 14, 2020 and October 11, 2020 with 200 participants, analyzes the public perception of vegetarian diets and people's assessment towards eating animals.

The paper exposes the room of interpretation with respect to Islamic jurisprudence's approach and term usage defining vegetarianism. Moreover, the investigation shows that the region approaches (forms of) meat abstinence mainly in context of health. Health improvement is a crucial factor for people to turn (partially) vegetarian. Nevertheless, the intimate correlation between human health, animal husbandry and environmental ethics is missing, as the analysis reveals.

This outcome suggests raising people's awareness of their food choices' comprehensive impact as an attempt to counteract the region's environmental problems.

6.2 Abstract in German

Gravierende Umweltprobleme stellen die MENA-Region vor Herausforderungen. Intensive Viehzucht verstärkt die bereits vorhandene Wasserknappheit und bedroht das ohnehin fragile Ökosystem. Da ein Umdenken in Richtung Veganismus und Vegetarismus einen entscheidenden Beitrag dagegen leisten könnte, untersucht die vorliegende Arbeit den Zu- und Umgang mit fleischlosen Ernährungsformen in der Region.

Anhand von Literaturrecherche wird der Fleischkonsum der 17 MENA-Staaten in einen globalen Kontext gesetzt und Fleischverzicht vor dem Hintergrund der dort mehrheitlich vorherrschenden Religion des Islam diskutiert. Mit einer Inhaltsanalyse neun regionaler Online-Zeitungen wird auf das Ausmaß der Berichterstattung über tier(produkt)lose Ernährung eingegangen. Ein Fokus liegt dabei auf der medialen Meinungsbildung und Kontextualisierung des Themas sowie auf den verwendeten Termini für die verschiedenen Ernährungsformen. Die Materialauswahl umfasst 119 französisch,- englisch- oder arabischsprachige Artikel, welche zwischen dem 10. März 2003 und dem 1. September 2020 veröffentlicht wurden. Eine im Zeitraum vom 14. Juli 2020 bis zum 11. Oktober 2020 mit 200 Teilnehmenden online durchgeführte Meinungsumfrage in Tunesien, dient als Fallbeispiel für die Analyse der öffentlichen Wahrnehmung fleischloser Ernährung in der Region.

Die Arbeit deckt, sowohl in religiöser Hinsicht als auch in Bezug auf die terminologische Abgrenzung verschiedener fleischfreier Ernährungsformen im Arabischen, Interpretationsspielräume auf. Vegetarismus wird überwiegend als Gesundheitsthema behandelt und stellt als solches die Hauptmotivation für fleischlose Ernährungsformen dar. Der Zusammenhang zwischen Umweltethik, Tierhaltung und Gesundheit der Menschen wird zumeist außen vor gelassen, wie die Untersuchung zeigt.

Dieses Ergebnis weist darauf hin, dass eine Bewusstseins-schaffung über das Ausmaß der Essenswahl in der Bevölkerung Umweltproblemen in den Regionen entgegenwirken kann.