



# Asya Studies

Academic Social Studies / Akademik Sosyal Arařtırmalar  
Year: 8 – Number: 28 p. 109-116, Summer 2024

## An Overview of Veganism on X: Is Veganism A Political Activism or a Dietary Style in the Turkish Case?

*X'te Veganizme Genel Bir Bakıř: Türkiye Örneğinde Veganlık Siyasi Bir Aktivizm mi, Yoksa Bir Beslenme Tarzı mı?*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31455/asya.1405715>

Arařtırma Makalesi /  
Research Article

Makale Geliř Tarihi /  
Article Arrival Date  
16/12/2023

Makale Kabul Tarihi /  
Article Accepted Date  
19/04/2024

Makale Yayım Tarihi /  
Article Publication Date  
30/06/2024

## Asya Studies

Prof. Dr. Ayře Fulya řen  
Fırat Üniversitesi / İletifim Fakültesi  
fulyasen@firat.edu.tr  
ORCID: 0000-0003-3350-8292

### Abstract

Veganism is commonly described as the attempt to avoid, as far as possible, the exploitation and consumption of animals and animal products. It is acknowledged as a collective action aimed at political transformation, not an individual quest for a pure ethical diet. Many times, veganism is misinterpreted as a diet or style of eating. It's a movement against the needless suffering and exploitation of non-human animals. As a result, veganism rejects human consumption habits that harm animals, such as those found in our clothes, food, makeup, and entertainment (Cochrane and Cojocar, 2023a, 2023b; Linton, 2022). Hence, this study aims to explore how veganism was framed on X (formerly Twitter) and associated with political activism. It claims that veganism is beyond a personal lifestyle, a form of activism providing insight into political change. This paper, which examined the posts of the Vegan Association of Turkey and also 4 news websites, Hurriyet, Haberturk, BirGün, and Bianet, has revealed that the Vegan Association of Turkey dealt with mostly vegan activism patterns but did not refer to the elements of political activism. It also displayed that although the left-wing and alternative news media covered the activist practices of veganism, the sampling news websites mostly framed veganism within nutrition and lifestyle patterns. In particular, the mainstream news media excluded the political and activist roles of veganism from vegan representations. In conclusion, under-representing political constituents of veganism on X means that the hegemonic consumerism culture is reproduced and new perspectives on consumerism, capitalism, gender, and the environment have not been sufficiently debated in the public sphere.

**Keywords:** Vegan, Veganism, Vegan Activism, Political Activism, Vegan Nutrition

### Öz

*Veganlık genellikle hayvanların ve hayvansal ürünlerin sömürülmesi ve tüketiminden mümkün olduđunca kaçınma giriřimi olarak tanımlanmakta, salt bir etik beslenmeye yönelik bireysel bir arayıř deđil, siyasi dönüşümü amaçlayan kolektif bir eylem olarak kabul edilmektedir. Çođu zaman veganlık bir diyet ve beslenme tarzı olarak yanlış yorumlanmaktadır. Aslında bu, hayvanların gereksiz yere acı çekmesine ve sömürülmesine karşı bir harekettir. Sonuç olarak veganlık, kıyafetlerimizde, yiyeceklerimizde, makyajımızda ve eğlencemizde bulunan hayvanlara zarar veren insan tüketim alışkanlıklarını reddetmektedir (Cochrane ve Cojocar, 2023a, 2023b; Linton, 2022). Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, veganlığın X'te (eski adıyla Twitter) nasıl çerçevelendiğini ve siyasi aktivizmle nasıl ilişkilendirildiğini arařtırmayı amaçlamakta, kişisel bir yaşam tarzının ötesinde, siyasi deđiřime ışık tutan bir aktivizm biçimi olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Türkiye Vegan Derneđi ile haber sitesi olarak Hurriyet, Habertürk, BirGün ve Bianet'in gönderilerini inceleyen bu makale, Türkiye Vegan Derneđi'nin çođunlukla vegan aktivizm örüntülerini ele aldığını, ancak siyasi aktivizmin unsurlarına deđinmediğini, sol ve alternatif haber medyasının veganlığın aktivist pratiklerine yer vermekle birlikte, örnek olarak incelenen haber sitelerinin veganizmi beslenme ve yaşam tarzı kalıpları kapsamında çerçevelendiğini, özellikle ana akım haber medyasının veganlığın siyasi ve aktivist rollerini vegan temsillerinin dışında tuttuđunu ortaya koymuřtur. Sonuç olarak, veganlığın siyasi bileřenlerinin X'te yeterince temsil edilmemesi, hegemonik tüketim kültürünün yeniden üretildiđi ve tüketim, kapitalizm, cinsiyet ve çevreye ilişkin yeni bakıř açılarının kamusal alanda yeterince tartıřılmadıđı anlamına gelmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Vegan, Veganizm, Vegan Aktivizm, Politik Aktivizm, Vegan Beslenme

### Citation Information/Kaynakça Bilgisi

řen, A. F. (2024). An Overview of Veganism on X: Is Veganism a Political Activism or A Dietary Style in the Turkish Case? *Asya Studies-Academic Social Studies / Akademik Sosyal Arařtırmalar*, 8(28), 109-116.

\*\*\*COPE-Dergi Editörleri için Davranıř Kuralları ve En İyi Uygulama İlkeleri" beyanları: Bu makale için herhangi bir çıkar çatıřması bildirilmemiřtir. Bu makale, Creative Commons lisansı altındadır. Bu makale için etik kurul onayı gerekmemektedir.

## INTRODUCTION

It is known that vegans do not eat foods that come from animals, including dairy products and eggs. According to the NHS, the vegan diet is based on plants (such as vegetables, grains, nuts, and fruits) and foods made from plants (NHS, 2022). The movement of veganism had its start as a means of opposing animal abuse and exploitation. This remains the main goal of veganism to this day. At the forefront of the vegan movement remains animal welfare. Research indicates that around 68.1% of vegans are driven by their concern for animals, with health coming in second at 17.4%. Even while the livestock and dairy industries are major contributors to global greenhouse gas emissions—to name just one environmental issue among many—the environment lags at 9.7%. A little over one percent of the world's population, or 79 million vegans, were estimated as of September 2021. But there has never been a more popular vegan lifestyle than there is right now. It began mainly as a means of outlawing animal abuse, but more recently, concerns about sustainability, health, and the pressing issue of climate change have also fueled its growth (Vegan Statistics, 2021).

Billions of humans eat meat, so animals are raised. This requires growing crops to feed the animals. It leads to deforestation and uses lots of water. Moreover, these animals produce staggering amounts of waste that poison water sources and soil. They produce staggering amounts of greenhouse gases. On the other hand, vegetarians exclude meat from their diets for a variety of reasons, including health concerns, parental insistence, and a dislike of meat, and also for ethical reasons. The idea that eating meat is ethically bad, and hence, "wrong," is known as moral vegetarianism. Most contemporary arguments for moral vegetarianism start with premises about the wrongness of producing meat and move to conclusions about the wrongness of consuming it (Doggett, 2023). Why people avoid using or consuming animal products is rationalized for animals, the environment, and human health. Accordingly, it is claimed the same factory farm methods used to produce most meats are also used to produce most milk and eggs. Animal agriculture takes a devastating toll on the earth. It is an inefficient way of producing food since feed for farm animals requires land, water, fertilizer, and other resources that could otherwise have been used directly for producing human food. It is also linked to the consumption of animal fats and protein has been linked to heart disease, colon and lung cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes, kidney disease, hypertension, obesity, and several other debilitating conditions (Vegan.org., n.d., <https://vegan.org/about-veganism/>).

A vegan is an ethical person who believes that using any animal products for anything other than food is wrong, dangerous, and unjust. Unlike opinions that minimize veganism to a modern fashion statement about one's identity or health, it is stated that the choice to abstain from animal products has significant political ramifications. It addresses several significant concerns, such as public health—such as the expanding issue of antibiotic resistance—and environmental degradation, as well as justice for animals, action on global warming, and stopping environmental degradation. Furthermore, it is contended that animal agriculture puts the health of those who work in slaughterhouses and in fields where a lot of chemicals are used to generate animal feed at risk. In addition, a large number of these laborers face societal disadvantages. In Germany for example, the weekly *Die Zeit* described the hiring practices of German slaughterhouses as “human trafficking for cheap labor, covered by EU law.” (Weisskircher, 2016). Many times, veganism is misinterpreted as a diet or style of eating. It's a movement against the needless suffering and exploitation of non-human animals. As a result, veganism rejects human consumption habits that harm animals, such as those found in clothes, food, makeup, and entertainment (Linton, 2022). It is argued that veganism is less about self-improvement and individual consumer choice and more about addressing the harms created by social structures and systems, which requires a form of activism to be conducted collectively with others (Cochrane and Cojocar, 2023a).

There is substantial animal, labor, and environmental abuse involved in the production of meat and other meals derived from animals, particularly in their industrialized form. But animal welfare is frequently ignored in left-leaning politics, and veganism is frequently mocked by leftists as a liberal endeavor. Many claim that veganism is insensitive to the oppressions carried out by Western, capitalist epistemologies and economic systems and is instead fixated on consumerism, asceticism, identity, and deontological ethics (Dickstein et al., 2022: 56). Social media platforms have helped to popularize veganism and create a more positive perception of it. Through their social media platforms, an increasing number of food bloggers, influencers, and celebrities publicly advocate for vegan diets, reaching millions of followers and potential copycats. A vegan lifestyle can be chosen for a variety of reasons, including health problems, social pressure to follow veganism, or awareness of the benefits one's consumption

choices can have for society, the environment, and animals. In the latter case, veganism serves as an example of how a person's regular behavior, like consuming, can serve as a vehicle for expressing political, social, ethical, or ecological concerns as well as goals to alter undesirable market, institutional, or social practices. Stated differently, veganism might be viewed as an unorthodox political engagement—a daily commitment to solving communal issues (Kalte, 2021: 815).

Dickstein et al. (2022: 58) define veganism not as an overarching moral position or political end goal, but more modestly as a tactic and a type of boycott. Consequently, veganism can be understood as a particular kind of "practice movement," or as an explicitly political kind of "unorganized and unrepresented but collective action." It is also adaptable enough to fit into various material and cultural contexts, including indigenous cosmologies and situations. Cochrane and Cojocar (2023a) also highlight that veganism is a collective action aimed at political transformation, not an individual quest for an ethical pure diet. Hence, this study has examined how veganism was framed on social media and news media and how it was associated with political activism. It has also discussed how veganism contributes to the political public sphere. This study focuses on examining veganism discourses in the Turkish case and aims to analyze how the Turkish mainstream, left-wing, and alternative news media and the Vegan Association of Turkey frame veganism and the forefront of which aspects on X (formerly Twitter). Analyzing whether veganism discourse is only a personal lifestyle, healthy diet or a form of political activism will provide insight into the potential of veganism to create a political change.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Veganism, in its narrowest sense, is the practice of eliminating all animal products—apart from human milk—from one's diet. More widely, veganism is an ethic that extends to all facets of life, eating (Mancilla, 2016). Animal suffering and animal agriculture are major causes of advocacy for ethical veganism, environmental preservation, and health enhancement in the twenty-first century. This tripartite paradigm, which aims to lessen animal suffering or maltreatment, premature mortality, and greenhouse gas emissions, respectively, challenges the rigid ecological boundary of public health to humans (Pacaol, 2023: 367). A vegan or plant-based diet has been linked to major environmental advantages. The environmental effects of veganism deserve special attention in light of the pressing need for widespread societal transformation to address climate change. According to research showing the harm animal agriculture causes to deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions, adopting a vegan diet is perhaps the single best strategy to lessen your effect on the environment. The majority of vegans are motivated by a concern for animal welfare, while some may choose this diet for its positive effects on the environment or their health. It has been suggested that veganism is a novel way to engage in politics since it advocates for nonviolence toward animals and rejects speciesism (Menziez et al., 2023).

The cultural elements of the "veggie trend" are shaped by social media and the internet. Veganism is a very stringent way of living that involves avoiding all goods derived from animals as much as possible. Today, adopting a plant-based diet can be done in a flexible and well-liked manner by adopting this lifestyle. Although meat is lauded for being an essential part of a healthy meal, it is attacked for the harm it causes to animals, the environment, and human health. Additionally, meat is emblematic of strength and masculinity. The general public's negative and mistrustful views of people who adopt plant-based and vegan diets are a reflection of the high value attached to meat. First, there is evidence that eating food obtained from animals hurts the ecosystem. Second, a high intake of processed and red meat has been linked to a higher risk of chronic illnesses including cancer. Third, customers' trust in the safety and dependability of products produced from animals has been eroded by several food-related scandals in recent years, including foot-and-mouth disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, and dioxin in milk, eggs, and meat. Fourth, the suffering that the dairy and meat industries inflict on animals used for production has drawn heavy criticism. Plant-based diets have been suggested as a potential remedy because of these detrimental effects (Jallinoja et al., 2018: 157-180).

In Turkey, vegan activists use social media to inform other users, communicate with other vegans, announce upcoming activities, and focus on ethical veganism which defends animal rights and rejects animal products (Erben and Balaban-Salı, 2016). Erben and Balaban-Salı (2016) have analyzed the vegan activists' motivations on social media in Turkey and how they interact with others and conducted interviews with vegan activists who personally or collectively work for animal rights and use social media. The researchers have concluded that these communities' (individual activists and members of known activist groups) aims are not common, and they are considered—relatively—as minorities in

---

Turkey. Tunç (2023), to understand the dynamics of the vegan movement and the identifications and motivations of vegans in Turkey, has conducted semi-structured interviews with 25 self-identified vegans living in Turkey and defined three main types of veganism practiced: political, apolitical, and Sunni vegans. Accordingly, political veganism refers to a type of veganism that is more common among people who are politicized about different issues as well as veganism. Apolitical veganism means a more moderate type of veganism that centers on animal rights but pays more attention to veganism's effects on the environment and health. Unlike political and apolitical vegans, there is a third category of vegans in Turkey where their religious identities are more prominent in their veganism. Sunni vegans are neither as politicized as political vegans nor the same as apolitical vegans. They have built a different identity to prove that Islam and veganism can coexist. Tunç (2023: 107-108) claims that the vegan movement in Turkey has the characteristics of new social movements and that the general vegan identity in Turkey has more political ground than lifestyle or any other ground (health, environment, etc.), and points out that the main focus of vegans in Turkey is a right to the life of animals.

Jallinoja et al. (2018) have analyzed the evolution of the images and practices of veganism and examined what kind of political consumerism and consumption veganism, vegetarianism, and other forms of plant-based eating more broadly constitute, and conceptualized vegan and plant-based eating as political consumerism. Martinelli and Berkmanienė (2018) argue that there is an inherent connection between ethical veganism and left-wing political thinking and that vegans are likely to see veganism as a political issue, and in general their interest in politics is pretty high. Accordingly, it can be said that veganism, an ideologically charged movement, leaning toward more progressive/rational/egalitarian layers of society and ecological/organic food represents a “leftist” phenomenon to those who opposed industrial, mass (and unhealthy) production. Hamilton (2019) claims that veganism is so much more than what we eat and it's about striving to live an ethical life in a profoundly unethical world and wider struggles for social justice.

Lundahl (2020) has developed a discursive framing perspective of the role of media in the de-stigmatization process of a consumption practice and questioned how veganism has been transformed in recent years from a stigmatized lifestyle to a normalized, healthy diet by frame analysis. The study has also shown how “the media has been able to harness veganism in a bid to uphold the ideologies of consumerism and healthism both of which are linked to the overall neoliberal project”. Alam (2020) argues that many shows and movies feature vegans or the plant-based diet, but their representation is rarely positive, and the most common stereotype of vegans is that they are obsessed with the diet, conserving the environment, and are aggressive to meat consumers. Alam (2020) also points out these negative portrayals give viewers a negative impression of veganism. On the other hand, Cole and Stewart (2021) have examined “the media representation of vegans and veganism, focusing on detailed case studies of two films that feature vegan protagonists and themes” and concluded that their sampling units “provide a hopeful pathway toward pro-vegan (and therefore pro-nonhuman animal) media representations.”

Kalte (2021) has examined the motives and aims of vegans in the Switzerland case and concluded that a vast majority of vegans are politically motivated and aim to induce change in society at large and they are highly engaged in a broad variety of political activities. Kalte (2021) has categorized the political motives as avoiding animal suffering, environmental protection, reduction of world hunger, and demonstration of ethical attitude while non-political motives are individual health, taste, quality, religious belief, and weight loss. Giraud (2021) has dealt with arguments in favor of veganism and the criticisms leveled at vegan politics and interrogated debates and topics that are central to conversations around veganism, including identity, intersectional politics, and activism, with research drawn from literary animal studies, animal geographies, ecofeminism, posthumanism, critical race theory, and new materialism. According to Giraud (2021), veganism has the radical political potential to be “more than a diet” by upending ingrained beliefs about how people should treat animals. Additionally, Giraud (2021) has clarified new conceptual frameworks for recovering veganism as a radical social movement and highlighted how the commercialization of the movement is complicating its radical potential. Kley et al. (2022) have explored whether today's news media consumption and in particular consuming and sharing information about food on social media are associated with following a vegetarian or vegan diet and revealed that vegetarians likely consume more personalized information tailored to their interests.

According to Wescombe (2019), veganism, as both a philosophy and social movement, faces numerous challenges to the communication of its ideas across society. Much of the modern-day exposure

to vegan lifestyles comes from current forms of media: social media, magazines, and newspapers. Sharma (2021) argues that veganism has seen an upsurge in the last few years as more and more people embrace the lifestyle for various reasons and social media platforms influence this rise of veganism in three ways. The first one is through peer-driven veganism, the second is via the attraction enforced by celebrities turning vegan, and the final one is through social media content displaying acts of cruelty towards the environment and living beings. BBC News Business Reporter Lora Jones (2020) has reported that across Britain, people are spending more money on vegan products and plant-based diets are trending online and pointed out that social media has had a big part to play in the rise of the plant-based lifestyle.

Veganism contains broader political goals and struggles beyond liberal activism patterns. Dickstein et al. (2022) argue that veganism should be enacted broadly on the left as praxis not only of anti-speciesist or animal-rights-motivated politics but also of broader politics of anti-capitalism and liberation. The authors situate veganism as a political action and explain why it offers an effective form of eroding capitalism and other systems of domination. The authors point out that refusing to consume animal products has tangible economic and social impacts, increases solidarity between human and nonhuman populations, and sensitizes individuals and communities to the socio-political effects of their consumer behavior. Dickstein et al. (2022) have explained why it constitutes an effective tactic for eroding capitalism and demonstrated that veganism is an effective tactic that groups and individuals alike should embrace for exerting pressure on value chains and for shifting norms as part of a concerted effort to erode capitalist exploitation.

#### METHOD AND FINDINGS

This paper has attempted to explore the political goals of veganism, how it is framed, what the key themes are on X, the political potential of veganism, and whether it is only a healthy diet choice or political activism. For this purpose, I analyzed the posts of the Vegan Association of Turkey (@TvdOrgTr) and the online news websites, mainstream and left-wing (@Haberturk, @Hurriyet, @BirGun\_Gazetesi, and @bianet\_org) by October 1, 2023. In the first stage of analysis, I examined the posts of the Vegan Association of Turkey and categorized them according to themes of the exploitation of animals/animal rights, the exploitation of labor, the exploitation of the natural environment, vegan activism, and a healthy diet/healthy lifestyle.

**Table 1:** The Key Themes of the Posts of the Vegan Association of Turkey by the "Vegan" Keyword (by October 1, 2023)

<b>The Vegan Association of Turkey @TvdOrgTr</b>	<b>The exploitation of animals/animal rights</b>	<b>The exploitation of labor</b>	<b>The exploitation of the natural environment (climate/environment)</b>	<b>Vegan activism</b>	<b>Healthy nutrition/healthy lifestyle</b>
Number of posts	200	9	34	21	21

The Vegan Association of Turkey (TVD) defines itself as an animal rights organization that advocates equality and justice between species. TVD, whose foundations were laid as a platform in 2006, gained official status and became an association in 2012. It carries out awareness-raising activities to end the systematic exploitation of non-human animals by humans with the understanding of social justice, peace, and equality, and to eliminate the speciesist perspective. TVD's working system is mainly education-based. For this purpose, it provides free vegan training based on animal rights, environment, and health in universities across Turkey through the Vegan Academy. It aims to raise awareness by reaching wider audiences with Veg & Nature Magazine, the only periodical publication in the field of animal rights. As the organizer of events such as VegFest and World Vegan Day, it aims to bring the vegan lifestyle to wider audiences. The Vegan Association of Turkey (TVD) has grouped its conceptualization and philosophy under four headings: Animal rights, climate/environment, healthy nutrition, and sustainability (The Vegan Association of Turkey, n.d.). Within a total of 285 posts from the Vegan Association of Turkey, the most highlighted theme is the exploitation of animals/animal rights, the second is the exploitation of the natural environment (climate/environment), the third is vegan activism and healthy nutrition/lifestyle, and the fourth is the exploitation of labor. When it is considered general, it

is seen that the Vegan Association of Turkey touches on various elements of veganism related to social justice.

It is known that there are many factors influencing and shaping journalism and news culture, in particular, political-economic or cultural and ideological features of the setting in which the news media are situated (Preston, 2024). As Ryfe (2017: 1) notes, journalism tends to express the form of public life in which it is embedded. Lundahl (2020) has pointed out a discursive framing perspective of the role of media in consumption practices and the changing frames related to veganism in terms of the organizational, institutional, and national contexts as well as several macro-level ideologies. In this context, how *Hürriyet* and *Habertürk*, which are the mainstream news websites, and also left-wing and alternative news media, *BirGün* and *Bianet*, frame veganism on Xcompose the second stage of research. The two different perspectives were chosen to distinguish how mainstream and alternative news media cover veganism.

**Table 2:** The Key Themes of the Posts of the News Media on Veganism (by October 1, 2023)

Keyword= Vegan	The exploitation of animals/animal rights	The exploitation of labor	The exploitation of the natural environment (climate/environment)	Vegan activism	Nutrition/lifestyle
<b>Hürriyet</b> @Hurriyet	3	-	-	1	16
<b>Habertürk</b> @Haberturk	-	-	-	1	15
<b>BirGün</b> @BirGun_Gaz etesi	3	-	-	14	15
<b>Bianet</b> @bianet_org	2	-	-	32	26
<b>Total</b>	8			48	72

The 128 posts from the sample news media filtered via the "vegan" keyword show the representation of veganism posted by the mainstream news media over X is centered on diet, nutrition, and lifestyle themes. The other aspects of veganism such as activist practices, animal rights, protecting the environment, and awareness of the exploitation of labor have been underrepresented. On the other hand, BirGün, a Turkish left-wing daily, posted a total of 32 posts with a vegan theme by October 1, 2023. 14 of 32 posts are related to veganism and vegan activism, 15 of them are about nutrition and lifestyle, and only 3 posts are concerned with animal rights. When the posts on vegan activism and animal rights are considered, it can be argued that BirGün has further coverage on the activism aspect of veganism. In addition to the posts defending the right to a vegan diet and lifestyle, animal rights-themed actions of vegan activists and a vegan picnic event in Istanbul for LGBT Pride Week were highlighted. Thus, veganism has become more than just a dietary habit, it gains meaning within patterns of activism. *Bianet*, an alternative news media focusing on human rights, has the furthest content about veganism and vegan activism. 32 of 60 posts include vegan activism patterns, such as the vegan activists' utterances on the vegan lifestyle, solidarity, and social responsibility activities, vegan feminism, the "Call to be vegan" action, and the "Vegan Pride" picnic which is linked to LGBT movement. 26 of 60 posts refer to a vegan lifestyle and demands of a vegan menu in the public sphere. 2 posts are also about the protection of red deer in Bolu, Turkey. When it is analyzed totally, it is seen that *Bianet* has more coverage of the vegan activism practices based on feminist and LGBT identities and vegan menu rights.

## CONCLUSION

Vegan studies in sociology are related to the development of environmental sociology, sociology of food, and sociology of animals and are debated in the frame of symbolic interactionist studies, sociology of culture, inequality (race and gender), and social movements (Cherry, 2021). In addition to focusing on how gender influences health, the environment, social group influence, and animal rights, vegan studies have also attempted to explore the ethical animal rights orientation at the core of vegan praxis and the connections between veganism and more general gender issues from intersectional dialogues (e.g., creative, literary, artistic, pragmatic, and journalistic). Gender studies and vegan studies work together to advance animal justice and emancipation (Lockwood, 2021). Today, veganism is much more visible everywhere and chosen to save the environment or to live a healthier life (Alam, 2020). However, veganism's political and sociological aspects and how it can create a new perspective for struggling with capitalism are not debated in the news media and on social media sufficiently. The main theme of the mainstream news media focused on nutrition and lifestyle has a risk of articulating veganism as a new market to capitalism. Moreover, advocating and understanding veganism is restricted to NGOs and community networks leaving it marginalized. According to Cochrane and Cojocararu (2023b), veganism should be viewed as a political movement that unites vegans to oppose animal oppression on behalf of other animals and in solidarity with other vegans. As such, veganism should be centered around achieving social change that eliminates animal oppression and, eventually, veganism itself. Cochrane and Cojocararu have also pointed out that vegans must embrace conventional kinds of political involvement and concentrate on a vision of institutional transformation, rather than focus solely on consumerism and other unorthodox forms of political participation (2023b).

In this paper, 413 posts have been analyzed, and the findings have been limited to the sampling units. This paper has revealed that the Vegan Association of Turkey highlighted the themes of animal rights and the exploitation of the natural environment, vegan activism, and nutrition choices on X, but did not refer to political activism patterns. It is seen that this organization's posts on X touch on various aspects of veganism as a voice of a social movement or activism pattern. In addition, although the left-wing and alternative news media covered the activist practices of veganism, mostly posts from sampling news websites framed veganism within nutrition and lifestyle patterns, and in particular, the mainstream news media excluded the political and activist roles of veganism from vegan representations. This paper has exposed that the left-wing and alternative media posted more on veganism-related issues and activist practices of veganism than the mainstream media. However, vegan ideas or principles should be strongly represented in the political public sphere to construct a more equal and fair public world; so, a pluralist press is indispensable. In conclusion, under-representing political constituents of veganism on X means that the hegemonic consumerism culture is reproduced and the new perspectives and struggling practices on consumerism, capitalism, gender, and the environment have not been sufficiently debated in the public sphere. Since veganism can potentially prevent many injustices and produce counter-hegemonic political discourses, the news media can cover veganism as a new path for constructing social justice and a counter-public sphere.

### **Yazarlık Katkısı**

Bu araştırma tek yazarlı olarak yürütülmüştür.

### **Etik Kurul Beyanı**

Bu araştırma için etik kurul onayı gerekmemektedir.

## REFERENCES

- Alam, A. (July 19, 2020). Representation of Vegans in Movies and TV Shows. Retrieved from: <https://theveganreview.com/representation-of-vegans-in-movies-and-tv-shows/>
- Cherry, E. (2021). Vegan Studies in Sociology. L. Wright (Ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Vegan Studies* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003020875>
- Cochrane, A. & Cojocararu, M. D. (2023a). Veganism: Why We Should See it as A Political Movement Rather than A Dietary Choice. Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/veganism-why-we-should-see-it-as-a-political-movement-rather-than-a-dietary-choice-197318#:~:text=Veganism%20is%20devoted%20to%20tackling,the%20products%20of%20animal%20exploitation.>
-

- Cochrane, A. & Cojocaru, M. D. (2023b). Veganism as Political Solidarity: Beyond ‘Ethical Veganism’. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 54, 59–76.
- Cole, M. & Stewart, K. (2021). (Mis)Representing Veganism in Film and Television. L. Wright (Ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Vegan Studies* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Dickstein, J. J., Dutkiewicz, Guha-Majumdar, J. & Winter, D. R. (2022). Veganism as Left Praxis. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 33(3), 56-75.
- Doggett, T. (2023). Moral Vegetarianism. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2023/entries/vegetarianism/>.
- Erben, Ş. E. & Balaban-Salı, J. (2016). Social Media Use of Vegan Activists in Turkey. *Global Media Journal TR Edition*, 6(12), 75-88.
- Giraud, E. H. (2021). *Veganism: Politics, Practice, and Theory*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Hamilton, C. L. (2019). *Veganism, Sex and Politics: Tales of Danger and Pleasure*. Intellect.
- Jallinoja, P., Vinnari, M. & Niva, M. (2018). Veganism and Plant-Based Eating: Analysis of Interplay Between Discursive Strategies and Lifestyle Political Consumerism. In Magnus Boström, Michele Micheletti, and Peter Oosterveer (Eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Political Consumerism, Oxford Handbooks* (online ed, Oxford Academic, 08 August 2018).
- Jones, L. (2020, January 2). Veganism: Why are Vegan Diets on the Rise? Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-44488051>
- Kalte, D. (2021). Political Veganism: An Empirical Analysis of Vegans’ Motives, Aims, and Political Engagement. *Political Studies*, 69(4), 814-833.
- Kley, S., Kleinen-von Königslöw, K. & Dunker, A. (2022). Media Diets of Vegetarians. How News Consumption, Social Media Use and Communicating with One’s Social Environment are Associated with a Vegetarian Diet, *Environmental Communication*.
- Linton, K. (2022, August 6). Veganism: Political Not Philosophical. Retrieved from: <https://www.kevinlinton.co/blog/veganism-political-not-philosophical>
- Lockwood, A. (2021). Vegan Studies and Gender Studies. L. Wright (Ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Vegan Studies* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Lundahl, O. (2020). Dynamics of Positive Deviance in Destigmatisation: Celebrities and the Media in the Rise of Veganism, *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 23(3), 241-271.
- Mancilla, A. (2016). Veganism. In: Thompson, P., Kaplan, D. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Food and Agricultural Ethics*. Springer, Dordrecht.
- Martinelli, D. & Berkmanienè, A. (2018). The Politics and the Demographics of Veganism: Notes for a Critical Analysis. *Int J Semiot Law*, 31, 501–530.
- Menzies, R. E., Matthew, B. & Ilan Dar-Nimrod, R. (2023). The Vegan Dilemma: Do Peaceful Protests Worsen Attitudes to Veganism? *Appetite*, 186.
- NHS (2022, May 31). *The Vegan Diet*.
- Pacaol, N. F. (2023). Veganism and Public Health: A Brief Manifesto. *Journal of Public Health*, 45(2).
- Preston, P. (2024). Journalism Studies and “Cascading Crises”: Towards a Political Economic Approach. Henry Silke, Fergal Quinn and Maria Rieder (Eds.). *How to Read Economic News: A Critical Approach to Economic Journalism*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Ryfe, D. (2017). *Journalism and the Public*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Sharma, M. (2021, August 17). How has social media influenced veganism? The Vegan Review, <https://theveganreview.com/social-media-influence-on-veganism-instagram-vegan-celebrity-influencers/>
- The Vegan Association of Turkey (TVD). Who are we? Retrieved from: <https://tvd.org.tr/biz-kimiz/>
- Tunç, A. (2023). Vegan Identities and the Vegan Movement in Turkey. Master of Science in Sociology, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- Vegan Statistics (2021, December 15). Vegan Statistics – What is the Status? Retrieved from: <https://www.redefinemeat.com/blog/vegan-statistics/>
- Vegan.org (n.d.). *About-Veganism*. Retrieved from: <https://vegan.org/about-veganism/>
- Weisskircher, M. (2016, November 1). The rise of veganism in politics. Retrieved from: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/rise-of-veganism-in-politics/>
- Wescombe, N. J. (2019). Communicating Veganism: Evolving Theoretical Challenges to Mainstreaming Ideas. *Studies in Media and Communication*, 7(2).