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Discrimination against Vegans

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ABSTRACT

There are many circumstances in which vegans are treated or considered worse than nonvegans, both in the private and the public sphere, either due to the presence of a bias against them ('vegaphobia') or for structural reasons. For instance, vegans sometimes suffer harassment, have issues at their workplace, or find little vegan food available. In many cases they are forced to contribute to or to participate in animal exploitation against their will when states render it illegitimate to oppose or refuse to support some uses of animals. For the most part this remains socially invisible. Vegans, however, often recognize this as a form of discrimination against them. But they seldom campaign against it, as they regard it as a consequence of another and more important discrimination, i.e. speciesist discrimination against nonhuman animals. If this is correct, discrimination against vegans can be characterized as a form of second-order discrimination, that is, discrimination against those who oppose another (first-order) form of discrimination. If speciesism really is unjustified and discriminatory, then discrimination against vegans will always be discriminatory and unjustified too. But even if our current attitudes towards animals were justified there would be strong reasons to claim that vegans do suffer several forms of private and public discrimination that are unjustified.

INTRODUCTION

Veganism is the view that it is morally wrong to participate in practices that entail that sentient animals are harmed, together with the behavior consistent with that view. Accordingly, vegans do not consume animal products, use animal services, or harm animals in other ways.

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There is a growing number of people who choose to live vegan, even if they are still a minority. As a result, in many different countries it is now becoming very easy to go vegan, and many people among the general public have a positive attitude about veganism or not eating animals (Chin et al. 2002). However, there are still many situations in which vegans are treated or considered worse than nonvegans, and in which they are worse off for structural reasons. In light of these circumstances, there are reasons to think vegans are being discriminated against, and a number of them actually believe this to be the case (International Vegan Rights Alliance 2016a; Vegan Society 2016a; Veggie Pride 2016). Many people may find this claim surprising as, in fact, this form of discrimination is mainly invisible. Contributing to this invisibility is the fact that vegans themselves rarely choose to denounce their own discrimination and typically focus on aiding nonhuman animals instead.

This paper will not examine the reasons why we should not eat animals or use animal products in general (for that see for instance Singer 1975; Davis 1976; Norcross 2004; Francione 2008; McMahan 2008; McPherson 2014; Bruers 2015; Hooley and Nobis 2015). Instead, it will assess whether vegans are really discriminated against in different circumstances and whether that is justified. It will not consider the question of when discrimination against vegans is harmful, though most of the examples it will consider will be cases where harm is inflicted. For the sake of simplicity, the paper will not discuss how we should define discrimination and will present its arguments in a way that is compatible with different ways to understand discrimination. It will just assume (i) that discrimination occurs when someone is treated, intended to be treated, or considered worse than others, and (ii) that this is due to a difference between them that should not justify such unequal consideration or treatment. Under these assumptions, the term ‘discrimination’ will cover not only those cases where someone is clearly treated in a discriminatory way, but also cases where someone means to do so but fails for reasons beyond his or her control, or where the discriminator just considers discriminatees to be less worthy of consideration without actually attempting to do anything to them (as in the case of epistemic discrimination, which we will see later). The claims made in this paper can also be accepted whether or not one holds the view that discrimination requires that some disadvantage is imposed on the discriminatee (Wasserman 1998, p. 805; Sawyer, 2000, p. 396; Lippert-Rasmussen 2006; 2014, p. 18) or the view that in order to be discriminated against one needs to belong to

some salient group (Young 1990, p. 196; Cavanagh 2002, part 3; Lippert-Rasmussen, 2006; 2014, pp. 30-36).

The paper will proceed by presenting in section 2 some of the different ways in which vegans are treated or considered worse than nonvegans. Section 3 will claim that this is related to the ways nonhuman animals are also commonly treated and considered worse. Section 4 will then draw a distinction between first- and second-order discrimination and explain that discrimination against vegans can be considered a form of second-order discrimination. It will claim that if discrimination against nonhuman animals is wrong, then all the circumstances and actions resulting in vegans being discriminated against must be wrong. Section 5 will examine if the way vegans are treated or considered in the private sphere is unjustified and discriminatory. Section 6 will consider the objection that fighting discrimination against vegans may result in nonvegans being discriminated against. Finally, section 7 will examine in which ways vegans may also be discriminated against in the public sphere and whether this may be unjustified.

WAYS IN WHICH VEGANS ARE TREATED OR CONSIDERED WORSE THAN NONVEGANS

Vegans are often treated worse than others simply for being vegan. In some cases, their worse treatment is intended, due to a bias against them (Cole and Morgan 2011a; MacInnis and Hodson 2015). This bias has been referred to as vegaphobia (Cole and Morgan 2011b; Wright 2015, ch. 4). Examples of vegaphobia include when people make jokes or nasty remarks about veganism, eat meat in front of vegans just to offend or ridicule them, or harass them in other ways.

In other cases, vegans are considered worse in ways that may or may not result in their actually being treated worse than nonvegans. For instance, it is not uncommon that the opinions expressed by vegans about issues relevant to veganism, such as those involving nonhuman animals or nutrition, are not taken seriously by some nonvegans, even if they are right on the points under discussion. This is because vegans are erroneously considered less reliable epistemic subjects than nonvegans on those topics. Sometimes this happens because vegans are considered to be biased on topics involving nonhuman animals or nutrition, or because their claims are assumed to be wrong

without proper scrutiny (Varner 1994). In other cases, it is due to brute disregard. These are cases of epistemic discrimination against vegans. They are similar to what occurs in the case of other, better studied cases of epistemic injustice such as those involving women and people from other socially salient groups (Code 1991; Fricker 2007).

Sometimes vegans are considered worse than nonvegans not as cognitive but as moral subjects. Since vegans regard it as wrong to harm nonhuman animals, some nonvegans understand that according to vegans' views they are doing something wrong. This leads them to see vegans as arrogant as well as morally confused. So they have less consideration for vegans than for nonvegans. This often happens even when vegans have not said a word about veganism to them. In some cases this results in vegans having to go through some unpleasant situations, but in other cases it may have more important consequences for them. For example, vegans often try to conceal the fact that they are vegans when they are looking for a job, as managers biased against veganism can decide not to hire them for that reason.

The fact that vegans are often considered worse than nonvegans epistemically, morally, and in general due to vegaphobia explains some cases where they are intentionally treated worse, and also why vegans are in many cases pressed by others to quit veganism. But in other cases vegans find themselves to be the victims of structural discrimination. This form of discrimination occurs when institutions or socially prevalent attitudes and practices entail that some are unjustifiably worse off than others, even if no agent or small group of agents can be singled out as intentionally responsible for it. In some cases, the agents whose actions entail vegans end up being worse off may be unaware of this effect. Or they may be aware of it but regard it as an undesirable outcome which they do not mean to bring about. This can happen in some cases in the workplace, when vegans are forced to use animals in order to carry out tasks that could be performed without them (Soifer 2002; Page 2004).

Most commonly, vegans find themselves worse off for structural reasons when they have few vegan food options available. In some cases this happens in the private sphere, such as when social or family events are organized at venues where vegans have very few food options. In other cases, it takes place in the public sphere, such as when there are few or no food options suitable for vegans at public places such as schools, universities or hospitals.

Finally, vegans are often forced by the state to contribute to animal exploitation against their will. For instance, they have to pay direct or indirect taxes with which the

states they are citizens of finance some forms of animal exploitation. One such case is the subsidizing of animal farming and other animal exploitation industries (such as the fishing industry) (Simon 2013; Chemnitz and Becheva 2014; Piccinini and Loseby 2016). These subsidies are granted in certain situations in which the public would consume more subsidized animal products than unsubsidized, given their cost. Even an ideal vegan who never suffered any kind of discriminatory treatment in the private sphere and who never ate at public facilities would still be unable to avoid indirectly financing animal exploitation this way. In addition, as we will see in more detail below, there are other ways vegans can be forced by the state not to oppose or even to actively engage in the very animal exploitation practices they deeply reject because it is considered illegitimate not to support those practices. This can be claimed to be discriminatory against vegans not because it entails that a view they oppose is considered legitimate in their political community, but because their own stance as vegans is (unnecessarily) rendered illegitimate.

OPPOSITION TO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST VEGANS AND OPPOSITION TO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST NONHUMAN ANIMALS

There are many vegans who, for the reasons pointed out above, think they are discriminated against. However, there are reasons to think that most of them regard the effects of this discrimination as quite minor in comparison to the effects of disregarding the interests of nonhuman animals. While this author has found no surveys assessing this claim, there are other, very strong pieces of evidence that support it. It is not simply that veganism is by definition the view that we should not harm animals. Rather, the way vegans behave suggests that they prioritize animal discrimination over their own. There are countless campaigns encouraging people not to use animals, which are run, accordingly, by people who do not participate in such use of animals. On the other hand, there is very little activism opposing discrimination against vegans. There are few exceptions to this, and they are carried out by organizations concerned with nonhuman animals as well. The British Vegan Society (2016a) has a webpage which gives advice on how to fight workplace discrimination against vegans and invites visitors to report suspected cases of discrimination against vegans. This organization argues explicitly in favor of veganism by appealing to the benefits for animals (Vegan Society 2016b).

Also, an event to denounce discrimination against vegans, the Veggie Pride (2016), has been held annually since 2001, starting in France and now spread to many other countries. But the organizers of this event make it clear that its focus is not only or mainly to denounce discrimination against vegans, but actually to challenge disregard for nonhuman animals. The International Vegan Rights Alliance (2016a) also provides information about legal rights defending vegans against discrimination, and it links discrimination against vegans to their opposition to the discrimination against nonhuman animals (2016b). In Canada, an organization carrying out legal advocacy for nonhuman animals, Animal Justice, has been campaigning in recent years for the Human Rights Commission of Ontario to rule that ethical veganism should receive the same protection that belief systems such as religions and strong ethical creeds receive. The argument for this move is that if it is unjustified to force someone to act against what her religious morals tell her to do, it has to be unjustified to force vegans to act against their ethical views too. If this claim were to be accepted, it could mean that public facilities such as schools, hospitals and places of employment should not deny vegan meals when requested, and that students must not be forced to perform animal dissections (Labchuk 2016). This organization is focused on the defense of animals, as its name (Animal Justice) shows. It is understandable that it nonetheless carried out this campaign as reducing discrimination against vegans will likely encourage more people to go vegan, which will result in less animals being harmed. A plausible hypothesis for why vegans focus on challenging attitudes toward nonhuman animals directly, despite the good that might come from fighting discrimination against vegans, is that they think that challenging attitudes towards animals is a more cost-effective course of action. A further reason may be that claiming that vegans are discriminated against could discourage nonvegans from becoming vegans, something that vegans want to avoid.

Therefore, it seems that we have reasons to conclude that (i) there is much less activism defending vegans against discrimination than defending animals, and (ii) that those who are involved in the defense of vegans are typically concerned with the defense of animals too, and are probably involved in the former because of their concern with the latter.

FIRST- AND SECOND-ORDER DISCRIMINATION

What we have just seen can be explained if we consider that discrimination against vegans is an example of second-order discrimination, which can be defined as follows:

x suffers from second-order discrimination =df x is discriminated against because x opposes (or does not support) a certain case of first-order discrimination.

First-order discrimination can then be described like this:

x suffers from first-order discrimination =df x is discriminated against for whatever reason different from the fact that x opposes some other form of discrimination.

This use of the term ‘second-order discrimination’ is different from another one previously used in the literature by Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen (2014, p. 44), which describes what happens when agents consider one form of discrimination more objectionable than another, similar one. But these two meanings can both be referred to as second-order as the forms of discrimination they point at are both discriminatory in how they consider other forms of discrimination.

Examples of second-order discrimination include discrimination against feminists (who are discriminated against because they oppose discrimination against women) and discrimination against those who oppose homophobia or racism. (Of course there could also be instances of third-order discrimination if someone is discriminated against for opposing some form of second-order discrimination).

Someone may be the victim of both first- and second-order forms of discrimination. Women involved in feminism are clear examples of this (and in their case the resulting discrimination they suffer is usually significantly greater than the sum of its parts). But first-order discrimination is suffered much more commonly than second-order, as there are far fewer individuals who oppose discrimination than suffer from it. So not everyone who suffers from first-order discrimination will suffer from second order-discrimination, and indeed not everyone who suffers from second-order discrimination will suffer from first-order discrimination. A cow or a woman with sexist attitudes would be the victims of first-order but not second-order discrimination. For their part, a human vegan or a man who is discriminated against for supporting feminism would

be the victims of second-order discrimination, even though they do not belong to the group whose first-order discrimination they oppose.

The reason why second-order discrimination takes place is that second-order discriminators consider it wrong or just unimaginable to reject the first-order discrimination in question, or that the prevalence of that view results in its being structurally embedded in discriminatory social institutions and practices. That is, it is the endorsement that first-order discrimination receives that entails that second-order discrimination occurs. This means that second-order discrimination is just an expression of the first-order discrimination it derives from. For instance, those who discriminate against men who oppose sexism do so because they think it is wrong not to accept sexism. In other words, the attitudes towards those who oppose sexism that result in discrimination against them are sexist attitudes.

This means that every case of second-order discrimination is not only the result of the first-order discrimination that causes it to take place, but is actually an instance of it. Due to this, we can claim that second-order discrimination inherits, so to speak, the lack of justification of first-order discrimination. Accordingly, if some form of apparent first-order discrimination really is unjustified and discriminatory, then none of the circumstances or actions that render those who oppose it worse off will be justified.

In fact, there are two further reasons to believe this claim. First, it seems that it cannot be justified to treat or consider someone worse than others only for opposing something that is unjustified. (To be sure, it can be justified to treat or consider someone worse than others because of the way she opposes something, even if what she opposes is unjustified, but in that case it would not be her view as such that causes that treatment or consideration, but something else belonging to her manner of expressing her view). Second, discrimination against those who oppose a certain case of first-order discrimination collaterally entails that the struggle against this first-order discrimination is undermined. Thus, second-order discrimination indirectly reinforces first-order discrimination. If such first-order discrimination is unjustified, supporting it in this way cannot be acceptable either.

All this means that if any of these three arguments is correct, then the following must be true: if some first-order discrimination is actually unjustified, then the second-order discrimination that may result from it will necessarily be unjustified too.

In light of all this, and of what we have seen in the previous section, it can be argued that discrimination against vegans is in fact a case of second-order discrimination,

which is a consequence of the first-order discrimination against nonhuman animals, also known as speciesism (Ryder 2010 [1970]). The reason why vegans are worse off in the situations mentioned above is because they choose not to use nonhuman animals in ways that are harmful for them, while most people do. Vegans would claim that such use constitutes discrimination against nonhuman animals.

This means that if (i) the arguments presented above are correct, and (ii) the use of animal products and services is unjustified, then discrimination against vegans cannot be justified either, because it entails indirectly discriminating against nonhuman animals in an unjustified way.

It is also possible, however, to think that some form of apparent first-order discrimination is actually justified and not discriminatory at all, yet still think that the second-order discrimination against those who oppose the apparent first-order discrimination is unjustified, or at least that it is unjustified in some cases. The mere fact that someone has a certain objectionable view based on a wrong belief does not mean it is justified to treat them or consider them worse than others. Even the fact that someone has an unjustified moral view is not always enough to justify treating or considering them worse. This is why you can oppose Islamophobia or discrimination against Christians or Buddhist even if you are an atheist, and even if you think that people are actually epistemically wrong in being Muslims, Christians or Buddhists. Indeed, someone could think those religious views are immoral and still oppose these forms of discrimination and think that they are unjustified.

This applies in the case of veganism too. If someone's ethical positions and requirements are not enough to justify treating or considering them worse than others, then perhaps the attitudes and behaviors of those who treat and consider vegans worse than nonvegans will be regarded as discriminatory and unjustified. We may reach this conclusion even if we oppose or remain neutral to the idea that using and harming nonhuman animals is discriminatory, though if the arguments against speciesism are solid ones then there can be no question that the unfavorable treatment and consideration of vegans will have to be rejected as discriminatory and unjustified.

TREATING VEGANS WORSE THAN NONVEGANS IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE

It seems relatively uncontroversial that treating someone worse than others out of a mere bias is wrong. This applies equally both in cases of first- and second-order

discrimination. Moreover, many people would agree that we should not be biased towards anyone for unjustified reasons. If this is correct, then vegaphobia must consequently be considered wrong, not only when it is expressed as a tangible behavior or behavioral pattern biased against vegans, but also as a mere psychological attitude against them.

Some cases in which vegans are treated worse than nonvegans for reasons unrelated to bias may also be relatively easy to identify as discriminatory. For example, employment and workplace policies commonly entail the use of animal products when nonanimal products could serve the same purpose. These policies put vegans at a disadvantage for reasons unrelated to circumstances relevant to their jobs, so we can consider them to be discriminatory and unjustified.

Other cases, however, are more controversial. Consider those cases where vegans are worse off concerning food availability. Suppose, for instance, that the only restaurant in a village has many nonvegan dishes on its menu, but no vegan ones. Vegan customers would be worse off under this state of affairs, even if it is not the result of any vegaphobic attitude on the part of the restaurant owners. However, if it is justified to exploit nonhuman animals, then most people would consider this an instance of justifiably treating someone worse. Most people would think that the restaurant owners are justified in serving whatever they want.

However, this is less clear than it seems. Consider another case in which vegans are forced to either use animal products or suffer a significant burden on their wellbeing: some medicines are produced by only one or a few companies and are only produced by using some animal product as an excipient, even if a nonanimal product could be used for that purpose too. These companies are thus forcing those vegans who need to take the medicine to use animal products which they would otherwise avoid. As in the case of the restaurant, we may claim that private companies are justified in selling the drugs they see fit. But leaving those decisions to the drug companies means that vegans who need those drugs are significantly worse off than nonvegans who need them. So our intuitions here may diverge. To some people, it will not seem right for a drug to be supplied only by private companies and for those companies to neglect to provide a desirable version of the drug to some of the people who need it (even though they could do so relatively easily). This case is similar to the way companies choose to produce drugs that treat conditions common in rich countries instead of diseases that are endemic to poor countries which lack medicine, leaving residents of those poor

countries to suffer. In both cases, the companies' decisions concerning what drugs to produce may be made without any intention of treating some worse than others, and have to do strictly with what is more profitable. Nevertheless, some people will think they end up discriminating against those whom they render worse off. Note that discrimination can occur even if it is only as a result of or as a means to another different purpose. In fact, this case may be similar to others where discrimination takes place quite clearly. Consider the case of a restaurant owner who decided not to admit African people not out of a racist attitude (which he may actually regard as absurd and undesirable) but only because he believes that this way he will get more rich European customers and increase his profits. Like the drug companies in the cases we have just seen, the restaurant owner is making a decision for strictly commercial reasons that entail that members of a certain group are worse off. This happens because of a structural situation in which the interests of the members of those groups are not equally taken into account.

There seem to be only two differences between all these cases. First, there is a difference in the degree of acceptability that certain forms of discrimination have in present societies: many people think that discrimination against vegans and against people from poor countries is much more acceptable than racism. But this does not mean that they are right. Another difference seems to be the degree of the disadvantage imposed on the ones who are worse off. If this factor is a relevant one, we could think that for a certain disadvantageous treatment to be discriminatory the burden imposed on the worse off must be significant enough. If this is the case, it would not be discriminatory if vegans have less options available to eat, but it may be discriminatory if they find themselves in situations where they cannot eat at all even though there is plenty of food for nonvegans.

This is not a very elegant solution. It seems that there should be some factor other than mere degree to explain when discrimination occurs. However, the alternatives are problematic. If the reason why these cases are instances of discrimination is different from the intensity of the burden, then that reason will also apply in the case of restaurants with few vegan options. On the other hand, if the intensity of the burden imposed on vegans is the reason why the case of the drug made from animal products is discriminatory, then it may still be unjustified and discriminatory if vegans cannot find any vegan food at all in some place because no restaurant or shop is selling it. In fact, there are many places where this happens. These cases would be analogous to the

drug company examples. We may reject this analogy, but that would probably entail the controversial view that what the drug companies do in the examples above is justified and not discriminatory. There are some people who will accept this, but others will disagree.

Considering all this, we can conclude that it may remain controversial whether treating vegans worse than others out of structural reasons alone can be justified or whether it is rather an instance of unjustified discrimination. While the former view may at first seem intuitive, there are reasons to question it. On the other hand, it seems uncontroversial that intentionally treating or trying to treat vegans worse out of mere bias is discriminatory.

CAN NONVEGANS BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST WHEN WE TRY TO AVOID PRIVATE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST VEGANS?

In light of what we have seen, it seems that we have at least a *pro tanto* reason for trying to avoid situations in which vegans are worse off for being vegan. However, there is an objection that is typically presented against trying to do this. It might be argued that even if vegans are worse off due to the food options that are prevalent today, the alternative would be discriminatory against nonvegans. Suppose that the organizers of some family or social event know some vegans will attend. They used to organize similar events at a place where vegans had few options, but vegans have complained about that. Now they wonder what to do. They conclude that the best way to avoid any form of discrimination against vegans would be to plan a menu where all food is suitable for vegans. This way, everyone has the same range of options, and vegans are no longer worse off. Otherwise, if there were any nonvegan options, vegans would not be able to eat them, whereas nonvegans could eat anything they want, either vegan or nonvegan.

In cases like this, nonvegans sometimes claim that they are being discriminated against, as an entirely vegan menu renders them unable to choose other products they may prefer. However, there are some reasons to reject this claim.

First, in those situations nonvegans are not worse off than vegans. While there are forms of discrimination that do not entail being treated in a disadvantageous way (such as when one is only considered or intended to be treated worse), if one is indeed being

treated in a discriminatory way, that means one is at a disadvantage. However, if a menu with only vegan options is offered to both vegans and nonvegans, nonvegans have just the same options vegans have. So their situation is the same, and no one is worse off. Nonvegans can object that this is misleading, as vegans have chosen to have those options, while nonvegans have not. So they may claim that vegans have more of their preferences satisfied than them, even if their actual situation is the same. But in fact this is misleading. In this case, what determines whether vegans and nonvegans are better or worse off is just the number of options available to them, which in this situation is the same. The fact that this situation also satisfies a preference vegans have for not having animals harmed does not alter the number of options that nonvegans have.

In fact, having an equal number of options available for everyone is the only possible way for no one to be worse off. Adding nonvegan options would have meant reducing the vegan options, thus putting vegans at a disadvantage. So it is not correct that a more equal distribution could be reached than the one in which everyone can eat the same.

Second, we must note that we never have all the options we may potentially like. No restaurant has an infinite array of options on its menu. Everyone knows that when you go somewhere to eat, your options will be limited. Yet nonvegans do not typically complain about that. They do not usually complain, when some social event is organized at an Italian restaurant, that they are being discriminated against for not being able to order Chinese food. It seems odd to claim that we discriminate against someone if we do not make all the food she would like to eat available, unless we can accommodate everyone else's ideal menu as well.

Moreover, vegans often mention that if you organize some event where only vegan food is served, but do not mention this to the people who attend, nonvegans rarely complain. The best explanation for this is that they think that the menu has been chosen for other reasons than providing a satisfactory menu for vegans, or even because they have failed to notice all the food is vegan. When they are informed that the menu has been designed so all the food is vegan, complaints are much more common, even if everything else remains equal (while I know of no empirical research that can support this claim, this is actually something that I have witnessed myself or been told about in many situations after being vegan for more than two decades). This suggests those complaints are due to a bias against veganism.

VEGANS BEING WORSE OFF THAN NONVEGANS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

We can now consider what happens in the public sphere. There are reasons to examine this field separately as, while some people find it controversial whether private discrimination should be discouraged or punished by the state (as we saw in the two cases of drug companies mentioned above), discrimination in the public sphere is generally believed to be a more serious public issue.

Let us first assess the availability of food options in public places such as hospitals, prisons, schools and universities. It may be argued that, as vegans are a minority, it is justified not to offer vegan options in those places. However, there are reasons to reject this line of thought. To start with, in many cases even if vegans are a minority, they are nevertheless a large enough group for their interests to deserve much more consideration than they actually receive. This is starting to happen at many universities in different countries (MacInnis and Hodson, 2015). Concern for the promotion of equality gives us reason to support giving more consideration to the interests of vegans too. Furthermore, we must bear in mind that having a vegan option available on request in addition to nonvegan ones is usually not very difficult or expensive. It does not require any different infrastructure, and the ingredients that are necessary to prepare vegan food can be used to prepare nonvegan food too. So by not offering vegan options, these institutions are failing to properly consider the interests of vegans, often out of inertia and in some cases due to a bias in favor of those eating options considered standard, but not because adding vegan options would entail a big cost. Finally, we must remember again that nonvegans can eat vegan food too. They can enjoy it too (unless it is poorly prepared, something that would be unfair to vegans anyway). This means that when vegan options are not available in public places, significant interests of vegans are thwarted without equally important interests of nonvegans ever being at stake. What is more, with the possible exception of some places such as prisons, public places usually have several food options available, and it is often the case that none of them are vegan. Including at least one vegan option would improve the situation of vegans significantly, even if they would still be worse off than nonvegans (as there would still be more options for nonvegans to choose from). The fact that there is so often not even one vegan option shows that in these cases vegans are not only discriminated against, but are actually much worse off than they would need

to be for the situation of nonvegans to be allowed to remain quite similar to the present one.

Let us now examine other cases in which weightier interests of some nonvegans are at stake. Consider the subsidizing of animal farming. One main reason for those subsidies has to do with furthering the interests of those involved in animal husbandry. But those subsidies make a significant difference in the number of animals that are made to suffer and killed. Veganism entails rejecting this. Vegans would say that the interests of these animals widely outweigh the interests of the people who are subsidized. However, part of taxes vegans pay is put towards those subsidies, forcing vegans to contribute to something they strongly disagree with.

It could be argued that forcing vegans to share the cost of the subsidizing of animal exploitation via taxes is justified as a case of protecting a minority (in this case, animal farmers). Those who make this claim may say, for instance, that it is justified that abortions and expensive health treatments are financed by the public health system, even if that means using for those purposes the taxes of those people who oppose abortion or who advocate the privatization of public services.

There are several reasons, however, why this analogy does not really stand. It might be argued that subsidizing animal farming is not a measure to assist those who are worse off, to correct some injustice or to provide similar opportunities to everyone. This is clear from a global justice viewpoint. As it is well known, only rich and powerful countries can afford to subsidize certain industries. This means those powerful countries can unfairly outcompete weaker countries in the same industry. However, vegans may well dislike this argument for the reason that considering the problem globally requires us to consider the interests of all who are involved, including the exploited animals themselves. They can claim that such an argument is fully in accordance with speciesist thinking, even if it still concludes that subsidies for animal farming are unjust.

We reach a similar conclusion if we consider the issue from a domestic, rather than global, viewpoint. There is a sound case for subsidizing those socially necessary services that would otherwise not be provided (for instance, transport to remote rural areas). But this is certainly not what happens in the case of the production of animal products. Not even an appeal to human nutritional needs would support this argument from social necessity, as nutrition would require subsidizing vegetables, not animal products. (Everyone knows that salads are healthier than burgers and cheese, and

government recommendations often point this out, yet the latter are sometimes cheaper than the former because they are the ones that are subsidized.) In fact, there is nothing special about animal industries to deserve state subsidies. Most other industries are not subsidized. Companies close down all the time because they are not profitable without subsidies to rescue them (with the exception of some banks and other financial businesses or big companies). Thus, there are reasons to think that the main reason why animal industries are subsidized is that they are a powerful lobby. In fact, if someone founds a vegan business with the aim of producing vegan food for people to eat instead of animal products, the odds are that that person will not be able to get any subsidies. The fact that vegans have to finance animal farmers only because the latter have more lobbying power seems unjustified. In addition, it shows that decision makers are not taking a neutral stance towards animal exploitation but rather supporting it, thus aligning with a nonvegan view.

Moreover, suppose we claimed that the interests of the people who benefit from subsidizing animal products should prevail because there are more farmers than vegans (although given that veganism is spreading relatively fast this may change in some countries in the future.) According to this argument, considering the numbers entails that we should accept the subsidies. But this argument does not work either. Even if there are more farmers than vegans, vegans are not be the minority in this case: those involved in animal exploitation industries are. Note that nonvegans also have an interest in seeing those subsidies cancelled, as their taxes pay for the difference between the price that is demanded and price that suppliers would set without the subsidy. So appealing to numbers actually entails that subsidies should stop. We conclude all this if we just consider the numbers of humans involved, but of course the vegan viewpoint entails that we consider the number of all sentient individuals involved, including nonhuman animals.

In addition, if subsidizing animal exploitation were acceptable because of the human interests involved, that would mean that exploitation should end if the numbers were different and most people opposed it (or some form of it). There are many actual cases, however, where popular opinion has no such effect. For instance, polls in Spain have shown that only a minority of people approve of bullfighting, and an even smaller group of people are actually interested in attending bullfights (IPSOS MORI 2016). Regardless, public institutions finance a very significant portion of bullfights, allowing them to take place despite the fact that only a few people attend them. In fact, this is

often done in the name of promoting Spanish culture, even though most Spanish people disagree with or dislike bullfighting. A similar situation occurs in other countries with bullfights too. This means that decision makers are interpreting the purpose of the state to include furthering the values of its population in a way that unjustifiably belittles the views of vegans. This is an instance of public discrimination against vegans (as well as against those nonvegans who oppose certain forms of animal exploitation like bullfighting).

Besides subsidizing certain practices, there are other ways in which the state may discriminate against vegans by failing to assume an impartial view towards animal exploitation. For instance, some states have passed legislation forcing their citizens to participate in animal exploitation practices or forbidding them to oppose them. According to the Faroe Islands law, for example, failing to report a whale sighting is illegal and heavily punished, as the whaling industry is very important in this country (The Government of the The Faroe Islands 2015). In many places where the hunting lobby is very strong, it is also illegal to make noises that may alert nonhuman animals so they avoid hunters (Arizona Revised Statutes Annotated 2014; Illinois Revised Statutes 2014; New York Environmental Conservation Law 2015). These pieces of legislation assume not only that it is legitimate to harm nonhuman animals, but also that it is illegitimate to oppose those harms or even not to actively support them. They thus render veganism an illegitimate stance. Similar examples include, as mentioned above, how some countries' public education systems force students to carry out dissections of animals killed for that purpose, despite the fact that there are alternative educational tools (Sapontzis 1995; Oakley 2013). Again, this entails that the default view is that it is justified to treat nonhuman animals in harmful ways while it is not justified to treat humans the same way. And again, this renders opposition to such a view illegitimate. All these cases exemplify an unnecessary and unjustified concession by the state to a particular moral view, to the exclusion of reasonable alternative views.

This means that the unfavorable consideration and treatment of vegans is unjustified and discriminatory not only in the private sphere, but also in the public one. If the arguments presented above are correct, we will have to accept this conclusion regardless of our attitudes towards nonhuman animals. Obviously enough, there is a more fundamental way to claim that those attitudes are discriminatory: by arguing that they are instances of speciesism and therefore inherit its lack of justification. At any

rate, as we have seen, there may be other reasons to oppose discrimination against vegans.

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