

PSYCHOLOGY IN RELATION TO FOOD CONSUMPTION

JEREMY FALZON 0365299M

Institute of Tourism Studies

DECLARATION FOR AUTHENTICITY

Student's ID: 0365299(M).

Student's name and surname: JEREMY FALZON.

Course: BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN CULINARY ARTS.

Title of Dissertation: PSYCHOLOGY IN RELATION TO FOOD CONSUMPTION.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is not about the vegetarian or vegan lifestyles ... it is on how food affects the way of thinking in our lives. Why did we become to eat the number of livestock that we eat and what is its effect on our life? How does the body change when following a vegan diet? Does the rejection to some foods mean the rejection of some ideologies? Are some diets deserving of moral superiority over others?

To answer the research question, Saunderson's research onion means of gathering data was adopted using philosophies of both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

Data gathered in numerous ways such as surveys (165 respondents) shows how the percentage of the general population thinks about these matters and interviews with experts in different fields gave their thoughts on how some choices are made and the difficulties faced with these choices. Psychiatrist gave his views on extremists and addiction related to food and a vegan gave her views on how it affected her life as a woman and as a chef. A representative from the MAYA organisation gave her views on how local chefs could promote the local produce which would lead to less harm in the environment and how people's mentality changes when a product is branded rather than unbranded.

Autoethnographic research was also carried out to analyse the vegan lifestyle, answering questions and satisfying curiosities.

Keywords: Psychology, perception to diets, body changes, meat culture

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She passed on my birthday, 28 October 2021 and will always be remembered for her kind heart and wise mind.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 – Background to the Research

The motivation for my research on what influences people's choices when choosing, and why certain food items on a menu are sold more often than others.

The main reason for my research was understanding... if one can understand what is the reason people choose to eat what they eat, then one can produce a menu to what people subconsciously want to eat.

Another element which was always a marvel for me was the question of why people become vegetarians, and my curiosity led me to try a vegan lifestyle for 5 months. It was an inspirational part of this study because where before I used to see vegetarians as the worst segment of my clientele now, I understand why they do what they do. Putting myself in somebody else's shoes proved educational for me, formulating new recipes to suite my new lifestyle, and taking notes on changes in my body.

Whilst starting this new lifestyle I realised that vegan food items were not as appealing as normal food items, mainly being desserts, I took it as a personal goal to improve on these vegan food items for myself in the first place and I am still up until now avoiding certain desserts because I became accustomed to healthier food items. While I am no longer a vegan because of some fatigue I used to feel when practicing some sports (might have to do with the variety of foods I used to eat), I am definitely more vegetarian than I was before I started.

1.2 – Objectives

To analyse what influences people to eat what they eat as well as how and when certain foods became socially unacceptable. To research about what makes food good enough to try by different sensory 'tools' as well as the analysis of the 'meat' culture and its repercussions.

To draw out and match different research on food consumption and human-animal studies and address the repercussions of accepting/avoiding meat consumption.

1.3 – Research Question

If one can understand what are the factors that influence people what they eat one can produce a menu on what people subconsciously want to eat.

1.3.1 – Factors to be measured

Physical, social and psychological are the characterisations in which a person's food choice is categorised. In this dissertation both qualitative and quantitative means of research will be used to give answers to this research question using different means of gathering data outlined in the methodology.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 – Food Choice

The result of a person's choice of food is a set of processes categorised in different ways:

- Physical factors: Geography, Food Technology, Economics, Season
- Social factors: Class, Religion, Education, Advertising
- Psychological: Hereditary, Allergy, Nutritional needs (Ogden, 2010).

Everything that is edible is at the mercy of his vast appetite, the machinery of taste attains a rare perfection in man making him the only gourmand in the whole of nature.

Brillat Savarin

For people trying to manage their weight, psychology plays a part in their everyday diets, due to two elements:

2.1.1 – Behaviour

An individual's eating patterns could be observed to identify what are the bad habits of the person in the aim of changing eating behaviour (Cleveland Clinic, 2021).

2.1.2 – Cognition

Thinking patterns contribute to weight management, self-defeating patterns tend to hinder the ability to control what the person eats. Self-defeating thoughts take different shapes, the sense of failure and the sense of 'this is too hard' hinder the ability to take path towards self-betterment (Cleveland Clinic, 2021).

2.2 - The Evolutionary Process

Approximately 2.5 million years ago it is believed that the human evolved and transitioned from an herbivorous diet to an omnivorous one and this evolution contributed to the development of early human societies (Monteiro, Pfeiler, Patterson, & Milburn, 2017).

The Ruminant, animal that resembles goat, eats only grass however the grass by itself does not give the animal all the nutrient it requires to survives ... however it serves as food for the micro-organisms that live in the animal's gut ... these in turn leach out all other nutrients that are needed for survival. The genius in this digestive system does not rely on the brain (hunting expertise) but rather to the digestive system of the animal. Similarly, to the koala this animal does not need to devote a lot of brain power to look for food ... this is why the koala has a small brain since it eats only eucalyptus trees however it has a very strong digestive system necessary to break down those fibrous leaves. Just opposite to us primates which we evolved into a more varied higher quality diet (Pollan, 2007).

Rat minimises neophobia (fear of ingesting anything new) by nibbling a very little bit of the new food ... assuming it is food and waits to see what happens this is called delayed learning whereas to link stomach-ache in the present with food ingested a half hour before (Pollan, 2007).

This is also the reason why there are rats and humans all over the world because they can both adapt to foods and when these become short in supply there are always others they can try (Pollan, 2007).

Instead of genes the human developed sensory and mental tools to help identify between eatable and poisonous foods some of these tools are shared between mammals but other single us out as primates.

2.2.1 - First tool - Sense of taste

This is split in two powerful instinctual biases, one positive which is sweetness which signal a rich source of carbohydrate energy this is why we still look for sweet items when we are well fed hence why dessert comes at the end of the meal not the beginning. The sweet tooth represented adaptation for an omnivore at times where sources of sugar were few and far between. The second Bias which is negative predisposes us against bitter tastes ... pregnant women are particularly sensitive to bitter tastes which is a defensive mechanism designed to protect the developing fetus (Wrangham, 2009).

The consistent evidence is where babies have a certain preference to certain foods. It can be observed through facial expressions and sucking behaviour that babies prefer sweet substances and have an existing rejection to bitter and salty substances. In the same research it was also observed that the crave for sweet tastes may vary with family history as well as ethnicity (Ogden, 2010).

2.2.2 - Second Tool - Disgust

Disgust is intuitive microbiology.

Steven Pinker

Disgust is essentially the fear of ingesting offending substances into one's body ... most of what is deemed disgusting is culturally determined however there are substances which are internationally disgusted ... corpses, bodily fluids and secretions, feces, decaying flesh.

2.2.3 - Third tool - Recognition, Memory and Communication

'The Physiology of Taste' helps us to choose, from the various substances offered to us by nature, those which are proper to be consumed.

Brillat Savarin

The sense of taste was not enough when determining what was edible or not because in the case of plants (such as opium poppy and bark of the willow ... pain relief) the instinctive aversion to them was overcome by the cultural belief that they were worth ingesting for their nutrients and properties. This is how we are able to identify edible mushrooms from non- edible ones.

2.2.4 - Fourth tool – Cooking

Forwarding to two million years ago humans began to cook their food, cooking was our ancestor's cleverest tool, it is believed that the cooking of meat made humans superior to any other species In the world ... when cooking was invented it vastly increased the amount of energy available to humans accounting to the dramatic increase of the brain as well as evolving early human's teeth, jaws, gut to their present proportions improving digestibility and freeing that time and energy to be used in other pursuits. With the current size of the human teeth if humans were to eat raw food, they would spend 43% of the day chewing rather than the 4.7% that humans spend chewing to eat cooked food. More energy and more calories are obtained from food if it is cooked (Wrangham, 2009). In early times the battle between eaters and potentially eaten unfolded at a stately pace until early humans came on the scene ... with a counter measure such as cooking changing the rules of the game and instantly the early humans developed a tool to breach animal's defence against being eaten and to develop another one it would have had to take time ... evolutionary time.

...nature does everything in the operations of a beast, whereas man contributes to his operations by being a free agent. The former chooses or rejects by instinct and the latter by an act of freedom.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

2.3 - The Omnivore Dilemma

The vegetarian/omnivore dilemma where the dilemma of the omnivore which would be that meat is the pinnacle of hierarchal domination in so we are on top of the food chain of whatever we eat, then would the rejection of meat be the rejection of this domination? Taking this question in consideration if meat transfers human to animal relations to human relations in general then the acceptance and rejection of meat and the hierarchal domination should reflect basic personality differences ... Knowing if or when these differences are established one could compare and conclude if meat consumption or rejection is the result of these differences (Allen, Wilson, Hung NG, & Dunne, 2000).

The Human has liberty more than the beast to eat whatever he wants and chooses or rejects foods because of this liberty. ... in fact since the human was not guided by natural instinct his appetite could have been his undoing because what is to stop him from eating other human omnivores. The potential for savagery is there for a being having such a vast array of foods. When nature does not draw the line around humans then human culture must step in introducing taboos, customs, rituals, table manners, and culinary conventions (Pollan, 2007).

Since mankind is on top of the food chain while some people do not physically go and kill the animals that they are about to eat they are willing to pay someone else to kill them to emphasize his carnistic domination. The attitude that man is morally superior to animals is allowed to use and kill them emphasizing social dominance (Monteiro, Pfeiler, Patterson, & Milburn, 2017).

2.4 - The Four Claims Against Meat Consumption

- To eat an animal, you have to take his life.
- The conditions of raising, slaughtering, and transporting animals are bad to say the least. The capability of suffering is an important factor, taking in consideration the quality of life and period of suffering in farming is the main pinnacle of global well-being in farms where the level of farming and the number of animals killed gives out the quality of life of the animal (Krzysztof, 2012).
- It is environmentally inefficient and destructive converting plants to meat ... as mass. The Meat industry produces more GHG's than any other industry (Monteiro, Pfeiler, Patterson, & Milburn, 2017). From the global agricultural land, 70% is occupied by livestock production (FAO, 2006).
- Eating meat regularly causes obesity, cancer, and heart disease (Herzog H. 2010).

You ask me why I refuse to eat flesh. I, for my part, am astonished that you can put in your mouth the corpse of a dead animal, astonished that you do not find it nasty to chew hacked flesh and swallow the juice of death wounds.

J.M. Coetzee

There are many moral reasons and arguments around the killing of animals for food and much more for sport however it has been seen that animal welfarist's and vegetarian's most common justification for veering away from animal products is because of their condemnation of unjustified killing of animals in the same argument that they refuse to eat meat in protest of the farming methods which have no respect for the animal's standard of life (Krzysztof, 2012).

2.5 - Meat in A Meat Centred Culture

If I go to a barbeque and I don't find meat ... I ask where's the meat? ... All people love meat. You don't make friends with salad.

Homer Simpson

The concept of death is not something we are born with it because we are brought into a large and crowded living world and the idea of life being taken when a young child is being cared for by its mother is simply non-existent (Becker, 1973). From children we are guided to think of meat as the

centre of our civilisation it is shown as a healthy thing to do (eating meat), however the concept that meat comes from dead animals is eluded by us until much later in life when we had already grown accustomed to meats in our diets.

Even in our country the physical act of killing an animal in its natural habitat is seen as a sport. Hunting used to be seen as a necessity however with the rise of farming and the quality of life we have today it is absolutely not needed anymore.

When you start with a necessary evil and then over time the necessity passes away, what's left?

Matthew Scully

2.5.1 – Speciesism

Speciesism is the idea that some animals including humans have less moral value than others therefore have are mal treated because of this. In this idea humans occupy the top rung in the ideology (Joy, 2021).

2.5.2 – Carnism

Carnism is perceived to be the exact opposite of veganism. A sub-ideology of speciesism where humans can eat some of the animals on the lower rung of the hierarchy. Both are systems of oppression sharing the same structure and reflecting the same mentality. Human privilege grants us complete control over an animal's habitat, body, lives, and deaths and all the suffering is disregarded if it serves the human interest. Human privilege is deep in culture, strongly defended, mostly invisible, and strongly defended (Joy, 2021).

2.5.3 – Food being power

Taking the reasoning that money is power, by using one's purchasing power to buy products, people are showing support and increasing demand for what they are purchasing. In his video (David, 2014), Marc David argues that the food chain is being shaped by what is being purchased, every animal product not bought is a vote for veganism.

2.6 – Vegetarianism Through the Ages

The opposite of a meat-centred culture is a vegetarian diet-based culture, eating meat by abundance has become normal relatively recent, certain cultures have been more vegetarian than others. Vegetarianism/veganism is the practice of avoiding animal products, people who choose to avoid this lifestyle are motivated to do so for different; personal, social, political, or cultural reasons brought over by increased awareness on the person's implication with his food choices.

2.6.1 – Ancient Egypt

Protein is absorbed by the hair ... and when the hair of mummies between 3500B.C and 600A.D was tested for absorbed proteins (alongside bone and teeth which absorb protein at a lower rate) it was found that they matched the diet of a modern-day vegetarian. Another surprise was a that carbon-12 and carbon-13 ratios in bone, enamel, and hair was compared to pigs with a controlled diet of C3 and C4 foodstuffs (C3 plants take in carbon-12 isotope and C4 plant take the heavier carbon-13) this meant that the Egyptians adapted to the changing climate of the Nile by farming and irrigation whereas the researchers expected change. The mystery of this research was that in a river with signs and proof that fishing was done very few isotopic signatures related to fish consumption were found (Hellemans, 2021).

2.6.2 – Pythagoras

Pythagoras believed that animals have souls and believed that all animals have intelligence but not the power of speech. He abandoned the meat diet of the Greeks at the age of 19-20 because he believed it was conducive to peace since killing and eating an animal made it far easier for man to kill a man and engage war (Wynne-Tyson, 1985).

As long as man continues to be the ruthless destroyer of lower living beings, he will never know health or peace. For as long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed, he who sows the seed of murder and pain cannot reap joy and love

Pythagoras attributed by Ovid

2.7 - The Meat Paradox

When human beings eat meat, they neither worry about their pet's feelings on them eating animals nor wish for their pet to be cooked for them to eat. Where does the psychology of eating come from, what makes it right for races to conclude that eating pork is alright but for others it's considered a capital sin? (Loughnan, Bastian, & Haslam, 2014).

Melanie Joy (2009) argues that we live in carnistic system which relies solely on violence because meat cannot be obtained without killing animals being pervasive, entrenched, and non-conscious system of norms allowing people to deny animal suffering caused in production. People who care for animals are confronted with wanting to eat meat ... this paradox can only be resolved either by rejecting meat consumption or by denying animal's cognitive capacities making oneself justify the fact that eating meat is ok by stating that animals do not feel. Research shows that people do care about animals however most researchers do not take into account recreational hunting where the act of physically killing an animal takes place ... this would be hard for a person that cares about animals therefore goes without saying that some people are less empathic towards animals (Monteiro, Pfeiler, Patterson, & Milburn, 2017). The way we think about animals is reliant on our own perspective, people can opt to not eat animals but they can apt to not assign fish to animals they won't feel like animals to them (Herzog H, 2011).

We are becoming more and more distant from the harsh reality that meat comes from dead animals because supermarkets today no longer bring in whole carcasses of meats to dissect but they opt to have prepacked meat or restructured animal products such as breaded chicken and battered cod (Herzog H. , 2011). Scandinavian market researchers concluded that the redder and more animalized cut of meat the more it turns the consumer off (Herzog H, 2010). The documentary Food Inc. states "In the meat aisle there are no bones anymore... there is a deliberate veil between us and where the food is coming from." Big corporations of fast-food industry demand big suppliers... which are of a handful ... so a handful of food companies control our food industry. In 1970 the top 5 beef producers in America controlled 25% of the market however today the top 4 control more than 80% of the market same thing happened to pork so even if you don't eat at a fast food restaurant, you're still eating the same meat produced by the system (Schlosser, et al., 2014). The main reason that people still eat meat is that it simply tastes good but it is not simply a gustatory behaviour but also an ideological one (Monteiro, Pfeiler, Patterson, & Milburn, 2017).

After the eating process occurs one study concludes that people who have recently consumed beef have their morality restricted when it comes to the animal they have just eaten and assume that the cow is less capable of suffering. This moral change in their mind happened to relieve their mind of any negative feelings from their meal (Loughnan, Bastian, & Haslam, 2014).

Over the last 30 years the number of creatures killed for consumption has jumped from 3 billion to 10 billion from 56 animals a year per family to 132 (Herzog H, 2010).

Not thinking where your dinner comes from is the main reason for suppressing any meat-related guilt. Scandinavian researchers found out that if the meat has more an animal form therefore it is less processed the more the average consumer opts to not buy it this creates a conundrum in the meat business because usually fresh is better (Herzog H, 2010).

All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.

George Orwell

Philosophers argue that the reason why societies eat some animals and not others is because of that societies' prejudices towards that species (Monteiro, Pfeiler, Patterson, & Milburn, 2017). Humans have made the rules of wise eating in an elaborate structure of manners, taboos, rituals and traditions this in turn covers everything from size of portions to the type of animals okay to eat ... some of these rules do not make biological sense as in kosher which is more focused to protect the identity of a group rather than protect health. But a great many of these rules make sense and keep each of us from having to confront the omnivore's dilemma every time we are in a supermarket or when we sit down to eat (Pollan, 2007).

Food must be not only good to eat but also good to think.

Claude Levi-Strauss

A lot of cultural energy goes into the food problem ... food problems might also be tied to together big existential problems (Pollan, 2007). Food must be good to think where you take into consideration to choose to observe halal or kosher or determine whether or not it is ethically defensible to eat meat. Or to choose between an organic to imported strawberry (Pollan, 2007).

2.7.1 – Semiotics

While our daily eating decisions are guided by cultural, psychological, and emotional reasons ... even if we do not realise it a semiotic analysis into food consumption and human-animal relation studies may differentiate between the meanings of a living animal and the meaning of one served on a plate. Taking for example the case of horsemeat, being not in the same category of domesticated animals as a dogs and cats and not being common production animals such as pigs and cows. This makes consumers contemplate about eating them.

2.7.2 – Sociocultural settings

English-speaking countries have a cultural tendency to respond negatively to horsemeat whilst French-speaking countries are in favour of it. Taking Finland as an example, having used horses in farming and leisure for a long time whilst eating horsemeat as well (in low quantities) it can be taken as an example as a country between these 2 schools of thought.

In the same country the idea of horsemeat was pondered extensively with marketing and received heated media discussions. An experiment done by bunching horses together with 17 different animals concluded by having a larger mental capacity this led to them being considered inedible however in a different way from dogs, cows and monkeys. This might be on par with the reason that horses are semi-domesticated animals because they are neither human-like animals nor animal-like animals for their mental capacity compared to other animals (Leipämaa-Leskinen, Jaskari, M.-M., & H., Syrjälä, H, 2018).

2.8 - Body Changes in Relation to Meat Rejection

A vegan lifestyle more so than a vegetarian lifestyle has various health benefits over animal rich diets. Heart disease, obesity, cancer, and diabetes are all risks frequent with conventional diets which are diminished with a vegan diet. Since vegan diets consist of high quantities of fiber, magnesium, folic acid, vitamins C and E, iron and phytochemicals while also being lower in calories and saturated fats it is a useful diet for increasing the consumption of protective nutrients and reducing the dietary factors implicated with several chronic diseases (Craig, 2009).

2.8.1 – Blood pressure

It is clinically proven fact that vegetarians have slightly lower blood pressure than people with regular diets. In a study made in New England, United States of America two samples of the population were taken, a vegan population and a lacto-vegetarian population... compared to the general population in the same area they both had lower blood pressure with the vegan sample even lower than the vegetarian sample (Sacks & Kass, 2018).

2.8.2 – Cancer

Cancer remains an untreatable disease and in 2004, 13% of deaths worldwide were cancer related. However, cancer is perceived as a preventable disease with 90% - 95% of causes related to environment and lifestyle. Most important lifestyle factors are tobacco, diet, alcohol, sun exposure, environmental pollutants, infections, stress, obesity, and physical inactivity. Of all cancers in the US in 1981 dietary factors were responsible to 30%-35% of them.

The different cancer causes by the diets:

70% - colorectal and prostate cancer

50% - breast, endometrial, pancreatic, and gallbladder cancer

20% - lung, bladder, mouth, and oesophageal cancer

In a study made across 38 countries a strong connection was found between animal fats and breast cancer however no connection was found between fats of plant origin and breast cancer. In addition to this China was taken as an example where it was observed that the proportion of breast cancer increased as the animal fat intake across the country increased.

Red meats and processed meats (even salted and cured meats) have been linked to a number of different cancers. As the meat is cooked at high temperatures carcinogenic compounds and heterocyclic amines are formed and these compounds have been strongly linked to increased cancer risk (Lanou & Svenson, 2010).

2.8.3 – Cholesterol

In a study done to differentiate nutrient levels between vegans and omnivores showed slightly lower Bone mineral density among vegans the difference is too small to be statistically significant. Results of cholesterol levels and lipid analysis was different, compared with omnivores vegans showed around 10% less cholesterol levels (Ho-Pham, Vu, Lai, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2012).

2.8.4 – Type 2 diabetes

Vegetarian diets have been observed to play a role in health promotion and obesity prevention however it has been observed throughout all the different varieties of vegetarians that the overall BMI increases as meat products increase in the respective diets, seen lowest in vegans and intermediate fish eaters. In addition to this the vast difference choice of foods typically eaten by vegetarians may carry metabolic advantages that prevent type 2 diabetes while intakes of red meats and processed meats are associated with increased risk of diabetes (Tonstad, Butler, Yan, & Fraser, 2009).

2.8.5 – Oxidative stress

During the metabolic process oxidative stress is caused by reactive oxygen species. Excess oxidative stress is shown to cause damage to proteins, DNA, and cell membranes therefore it is a major cause for cardiac diseases, diabetic vascular diseases, cancers, and also early aging. Studies made with long term vegetarians concluded that since more fiber and antioxidants are consumed as well as the intake of saturated fatty acids is restricted it can be observed that a vegetarian diet can have an impact on oxidative stress (Kim, Cho, & Park, 2005).

2.8.6 – Dietary inadequacies in vegetarian diets

Various micro-nutrients deficiencies may arise in vegetarian diets these will also come with their problems as well however some can be addressed with plant based supplements their only downside being their steep price however some vegetarians opt to go for supplements of animal origin just because they do not associate it with breaking their diet. The most common deficiencies are as follows:

- Iron
- Vitamin B₁₂
- Folic Acid
- Calcium
- Vitamin D
- Zinc
- Vitamin B₆

However, the possibility of other nutrients being low in vegetarian diets is there, it is suggested that blood tests are performed every 6 months to monitor the process (T.Dwyer, 1991). In addition to this, our stomachs produce an enzyme specifically designed to break down elastin ... a type of protein found in meat and nowhere else (Pollan, 2007).

2.9 – The Quality of Meat

It is an ever-growing concern about the quantity of antibiotics that are fed to livestock and research on how these can be reduced is constantly being conducted. In the United States in 2018, 80% of all prescribed antibiotics were consumed by farm animals (Blitz Results, 2018).

Medicine has been used in the veterinary practices since before the end of the second world war, where infusions of penicillin in saline were given to lactating dairy animals. Early 1950's antibiotics became used in livestock management and meat production. The use of antibiotics in the treatment of animal diseases quickly became used in the prevention of the diseases ... coincidentally growth and performance enhancing antibiotics also rapidly started being used. The negative effect of these antibiotics is that it generates large amounts of resistance plasmids in the livestock then eventually consumed by humans they would limit the effectiveness of human antibiotics when there is the need for them (Gustafson, 1991).

2.10 – Moral Values

Vegetarianism and veganism are considered to be new ways of thinking, this might be the case that vegans are 15 times more likely to be politically liberal than conservative alternatively conservatives are more likely to show negative attitudes towards vegetarians. There are many factors that might shape a person's morality that later in life they might opt to not eat meat anymore; one such case might be when having pets as young children might shape his morality to eat less meat in adulthood, associating the feeling of empathy to oppose the exploitation of animals (Rosenfeld, 2018).

2.10.1 – Motivations

The two main motivations why people follow a vegetarian diet are either for ethical or health reasons.

The main ethical reasons are for the welfare of animals and animal rights or for concern for the environment, studies have showed that the main reason that people follow a vegetarian diet is for these ethical reasons rather than health ... mainly weight controlling and general wellness promotion. These motivations serve as a predictor to one's personality ... people that are vegetarians for ethical reasons tend to advocate more about the effect vegetarianism had on their lives and end up excluding most animal products from their lives (make-up, leather). There are gray areas when it comes to vegetarianism, honey being one of them. As an animal product some vegans still choose to consume honey while others do not, there is no fine line to what these food items should be in a vegan's diet however these are left to what the person chooses to regard them as such (Rosenfeld, 2018).

Veganism is a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing, or any other purpose.

The Vegan Society

This definition is the main reason why arguments exist about some crops not being vegan. Taking into consideration the avocado, the debate around is that it is very hard for it to get pollinated naturally without any human interference. Avocados are therefore cultivated by transporting bees in trucks across countries. This migratory beekeeping is an unnatural use of animals hence there are numerous foods that fall foul of this. Some vegan experts argue that they are still vegan, and the debate is still ongoing; this goes to show that the gray areas mentioned before are an important factor in a vegan's diet and research is needed to provide a finer line between the two schools of thought (VeganLife, 2018).

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 – Introduction

For this dissertation the interview questions will be gathered in reflection of data gathered from the literature review. The aim is of finding why people choose the foods they choose and why certain lifestyles are more accepted in the eyes of the community. The research will be done based upon the research onion of (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2018) where the six layers will be done one at a time and will make up the research methodology.

Section 3.1 will be an overview of how the foundations of Saunders' research onion will be applied within the confines of this research. As seen in figure 3.1 layer by layer will be given a detailed description of how data gathering has been executed.

Section 3.2 will be a short explanation of each of the steps of Saunder's research onion for the reader to further understand the purpose and details of this method of data gathering.

Section 3.3 will follow with limitations faced during data gathering.

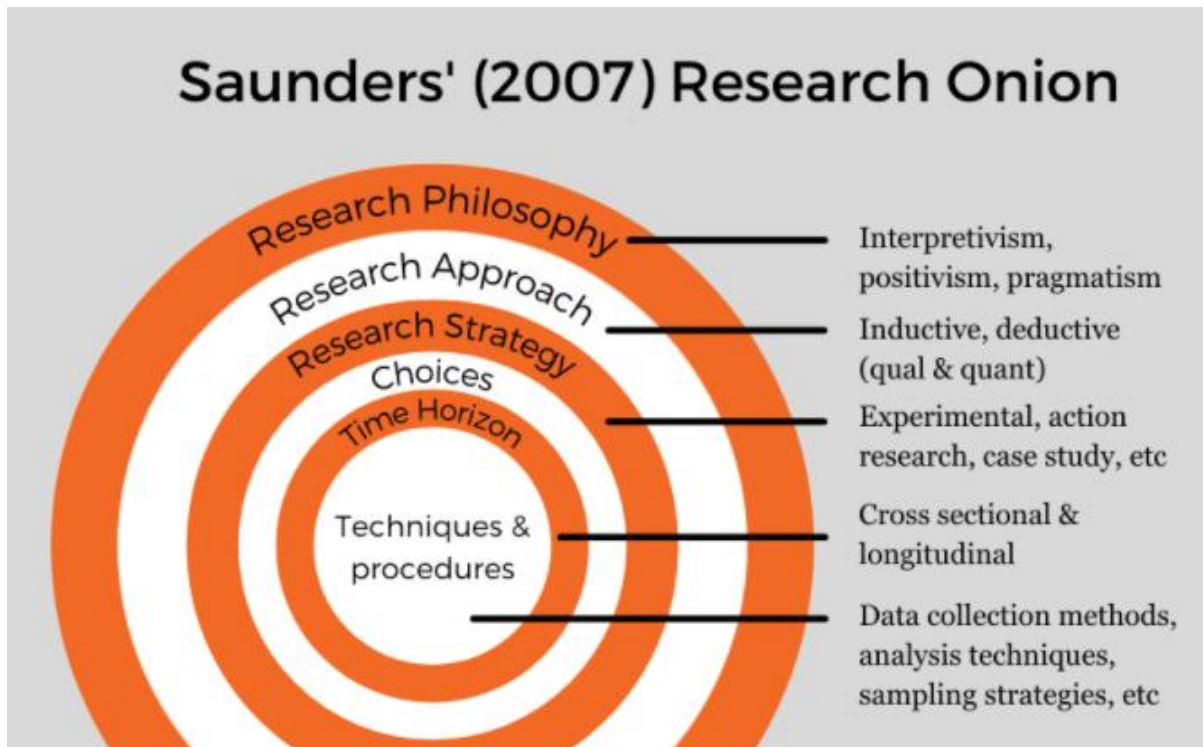


Figure 3.1

3.1.1 – Research philosophy

This research will be conducted by a pragmatic philosophy, not being limited to one philosophy but using the philosophy that is most fitting for the scenario, is what has been observed to be the most adequate for the topic. The thought experiment would see the positivism views such as how to remove reasons tied to religions because there is no way of proving the reality of heaven or hell in any shape or form in every religion. Another methodological assumption would be to incorporate interpretivism views in my research and placing myself as part of the research allows me to examine how my point of view might be different on certain aspects than of those in different situations than mine.

3.1.2 – Research approach

For the purpose of this research a deductive approach has been chosen and the starting point has a pre-existing body of research. While a deductive approach to research has been traditionally associated with quantitative research (Crossley & Jansen, 2021) however for the purpose of this dissertation both qualitative as well as quantitative means of data will be used. The differences between quantitative and qualitative are not direct opposites but they are differences in continuity. The research will show differences and similarities in the literature, data collected and intention between the means of research (Soiferman, 2010).

3.1.3 – Research strategy

While there are certain limitations in place for research to be done in an experimental manner because it is quite hard to change one variable of an item and observe how it is perceived by the public.

Action and case study research on the other hand, are very doable strategies which will be applied by interviews with various people in different fields of study/work, both research strategies will make up the qualitative part of my research.

Ethnographic research is another qualitative method of research, fully immersive ethnographic research requires the researcher to experience long-term the conditions of living and working of a specific group of individuals (Logan, 2022). For the purpose of this dissertation autoethnographic research has been conducted by placing myself on a vegan diet for five months, still working as a chef and documenting the struggles faced as well as the benefits observed.

Grounded theory research will make up the quantitative part of my research and will be applied through an online survey.

Archival research has already been applied in the literature review where data already available has shaped questions of interviews and surveys.

3.1.4 – Time horizon

Longitudinal time horizon will be applied to certain cases in interviews when comparisons will be made on today with the past of the certain expertise the expert specialises in.

Cross-Sectional time horizon will be applied to the questions of the survey in an observation of how the public thinks on matters now.

3.2 – Research

The Saunders' research onion is split into six layers, which will be peeled one by one starting from the research philosophy and ending with techniques and procedures as shown in figure 3.1.

3.2.1 – Research philosophy

Ontological – The asking of 'what' and 'how' of what we know and the nature of what we understand.

Epistemological – The asking of how we can come to understand the item and the realisation of where the limits of this knowledge are (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.1.1 – Positivism

There are three main research philosophies. Positivism takes the viewpoint that research cannot include opinions or viewpoints, rather that knowledge might exist in areas that are not studied. Through observation knowledge can only be true, false or meaningless. Taking the question 'Do Muslims go to hell if they eat pork?' any knowledge or scriptures related to the matter are irrelevant as any answer to this

question cannot be proven to be true or false therefore it is seen as meaningless (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.1.2 – Interpretivism

The viewing of how social and cultural factors are having on people's thoughts. In this case the researcher plays a role in the study. In a study where the side effects of food products, and whether they are causing schizophrenic symptoms in people, the interpretation of the study from the point of view of the researcher will depend on the country they are in. Schizophrenic symptoms are seen as a good thing in Hindu practicing countries where they are indications that the person is a spirit medium (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.1.3 – Pragmatism

The approach to the research from a practical point of view by using the best possible tools for the investigation. This approach takes knowledge as an unfixed point being constantly questioned and interpreted. It is not limited by one system, but it is flexible in terms of philosophies. Taking an example, the trolley problem; a person is asked if he should kill one person to save five or kill five people to save one. The pragmatic approach would be to keep asking the question with different variables, one cow for five humans or one human for five dogs. The outcome of the pragmatic approach would be the thought experiment rather than the philosophical idea (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.2 – Research approach

When it comes to research strategies, the approach to the research can take an inductive approach, where theories are generated from the research or a deductive approach where the research has begun with a theory and the research is used to test or build on it (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.3 – Research strategy

On a more practical side of the research, the research strategy chosen should reflect the aim of study, several study approaches could be taken into consideration (Crossley & Jansen, 2021):

3.2.3.1 – Experimental research

The process of manipulating one variable to observe changes in other variables. Its aim is to support, contradict or validate hypotheses. It is also a deductive means of research and positivist in its philosophy (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.3.2 – Action research

Action research is research done in practical settings rather than a lab where the variables are controlled. There is a strong focus on the participants involved and it is the kind of research generally done in social sciences. It is also commonly adopted in qualitative studies because it makes use of language and interaction as opposed to statistics and numbers (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.3.3 – Case study research

A study done to gain an in depth understanding of a single subject, in a case study the social and cultural aspect, as well as the researcher's assumptions play a role in the research. The case study research is also typically undertaking an interpretivist philosophy and qualitative in most of the cases. If a boycott were to happen on animal products while the making of this dissertation this would influence the data gathered from the public in a way of how the boycott would be received (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.3.4 – Grounded theory

The grounded theory approach would take the data gathered and make it interpret itself into developing theories. Grounded theory can use both qualitative and quantitative means of research taking an inductive approach. This means of research makes the results drawn to identify commonalities between sets of data without the intention of strengthening a pre-existing theory (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.3.5 – Ethnography

“Ethnographers study the meaning of the behaviour, the language, and the interaction among members of the culture-sharing group.”

- Creswell (2013)

Ethnography is all about understanding the people’s experiences with the certain study that is being undertaken ... in a psychology study ethnography is used for analysing interactions and drawing conclusions from the participant’s experiences (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

Ethnography can help identify unexpected issues whilst also delivering a detailed and truthful image of the researchers’ attitudes (Logan, 2022).

Autoethnography can be approached in different ways, for the purpose of this research reflexive kind of autoethnography has been done where the researcher documents the changes observed as a result of doing field work and the gathered research takes the form of memoirs (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011).

3.2.3.6 – Archival research

Archival research is research that draws from information that is already gathered ... typically used for historical research and can use materials such as manuscripts. Research done about the medieval period will use manuscripts from that time (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.4 – Choices

This process is where the data type will be chosen ... being qualitative, quantitative or a mixture of both. For this dissertation a mixed method approach will be taken, the reason being to have quantitative results to be compared to qualitative ones (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.5 – Time horizon

The time horizon is the description of the points in time the data is collected from. There are two different varieties: longitudinal and cross-sectional (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.5.1 – Longitudinal

Longitudinal is the collection of data over multiple points in time, the benefit of this is to study the progression or change over time of the topic being researched. An example would be the study of how veganism in a particular country evolved over time (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.5.2 – Cross-sectional

A cross-sectional time horizon is when a data is gathered from a particular point in time, so in keeping with the previous example, rather than seeing how veganism changes in a particular country over time the focus would be a particular point in time (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.2.6 – Techniques and procedures

To conclude the research on the techniques and procedures are the methods that are going to be used to collect and analyse the data. The important thing is that the methods align with other layers of the research onion (Crossley & Jansen, 2021).

3.3 – Limitations

Reliability concerns when it comes to different types of bias, when it comes to interviews, the way that the question is grammatically structured, or tone of voice and non-verbal behaviour might influence interviewees' responses. A factor which could also affect the outcome is the interviewer's assumptions when formulating the questions which could create a bias in the interpretation of results, this bias can be limited but not vanquished by applying an online data collection method.

Response bias, which is also referred to as the Hawthorne effect is basically where the source the data is gathered from will not be provided fully or altered for the interviewee to maintain a more socially accepted image. Another limitation faced is low response bias, for a good analysis of data quite a good number of surveys must be completed and having no personal contact with correspondents one could very easily disregard the request for participation.

A limitation that I encountered whilst conducting the ethnographic research was the amount of time that it took, to have an insight on the veganism mentality, five months felt like an absolute minimum considering there are people who do the diet daily, however it is not enough to have a proper mental evaluation and analysis over the transformation of the body.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 – Autoethnographic Research

4.1.1 – Nature of research

The autoethnography conducted by me was reflexive in nature, its basis was observing the changes in my life as a chef following a vegan diet and living a vegan life. The duration of the ethnographic research was of 5 months and it was about observing difficulties and how they can be overcome concerning a vegan lifestyle.

4.1.2 – Reasons for a vegan diet

Apart from this research, what inspired me to switch to a vegan diet was the fact that when a vegan comes to eat in my place of work it feels like a burden to cater for this person because the food was always more boring than what I used to do usually, in addition to this I had been coming from a period of more than one year working the grill section of a high production restaurant so meat had become a second nature to me. What I used as a motivation to make the switch was the documentary ‘Food Inc.’, particularly the parts where maltreatment to animals is shown this stayed in my mind for about two weeks upon which I made the switch overnight to vegan on May 1st. Another experience which I went through in my life which made me feel remorse towards animals was an experience from my childhood where I saw my grandmother slaughter a rabbit for cooking by stamping on his head.

4.1.3 – Efforts and positive remarks

My first challenge which I had to overcome was finding foods to replace the ones I used to eat before. The first recipe I produced was a burger which could be grilled on the barbeque so I would enjoy it with my family during barbeque night. The recipe of the burger consists of black beans, red kidney beans, cannellini beans, chickpeas, yellow lentils, red beetroot, and potato starch. The beans and pulses were soaked overnight and boiled in fresh water and rough blended with a food processor the beetroot was boiled with the skin and then peeled and grated with cheese grater everything was mixed with the starch and seasoned, its advantage was that being a cooked product it could be tasted for seasoning without cooking. This burger could be grilled, and it would develop the traditional crunch on the outside like the traditional burger which gives it an advantage on other vegan burgers. Another analysis is that the beetroot ribbons mimic meat fibres and when cooked for my family without them knowing my brother went through eating it all before realising it wasn’t beef.

Another item which proved to be helpful was dried soy mince, it could be substituted to minced beef in the traditional Bolognese sauce. Certain Italian cooking habits became quite known to me such as ‘agliolio’ sauce and the differences between a good olive oil and a better one. Spices also became very common to me where I would eat a plate of pasta with oil every day of the week, but it would be different because of the different spices.

A positive remark was weight loss, before the start of my vegan period I was weighing 113kg and at the end I was weighing 89kg.

4.1.4 – Difficulties in everyday life

The first difficulty I was faced with was the tasting ability I had taken away from me, at first I resorted to asking my colleagues to taste for me, but that quickly became a burden where I resorted to tasting the food and spitting it out.

The other difficulty faced was exercise, perhaps it had also to do with the weight loss but felt fatigue like never before. Before my vegan period I felt fatigue during exercise that had to do with my weight and with my asthma problem but during my vegan period especially in the first two months I felt fatigue which had to do with lack of energy or power; during football,

kicking the ball with power was more difficult than before, as well as the footing, moves that used to come as a second nature to me became slower to me or I had to force myself through them it is a difficult feeling to describe but what felt that needed 90% of effort before now needed 100% of effort.

4.1.5 – Possible flaws in my method

A flaw in my method could have been the overnight switch as opposed to the gradual conversion to veganism as observed in the interview with the vegan person, this could have been the reason for the initial shock and fatigue.

Another flaw could have been the fact that while I was losing weight, I was by no mean having a healthy diet, I used to frequent Mc. Donalds for the fries, and eat pasta almost every day of the week. I also opted to eat vegan ice cream, so I still ate a considerable amount of fats they just were not coming from animal origin.

4.1.6 – Lack of knowledge in people

My treats used to be smoothies from a reputable place in Mosta but some of these smoothies consisted of yoghurt and I always asked for it without yoghurt, I was often asked if I would like sorbet instead to which I replied that the sorbet probably consisted of milk, and they would check, and I would be proven right.

4.1.7 – Reasons for stopping the research

After the period of five months, on the day of my birthday, (28 October 2020) I was set to cook a demonstration of a kaiseki course in Asian cuisine and culture subject at ITS and one of the dishes was a chicken broth. I had always planned to break the diet on my birthday but that dish's smell proved to be the first non-vegan dish for me to eat.

4.2 – Survey

4.2.1 – Survey medium

The survey consisted of 19 questions, which were derived from the topics researched about in the literature review. It was conducted through survey monkey for various reasons having to do with ease of gathering data, ease of question formats, number of questions available, price of monthly subscription and ease of sorting data.

4.2.2 – Demographics

The survey had 165 respondents, out of which only one had been abandoned leaving 164 valid responses.

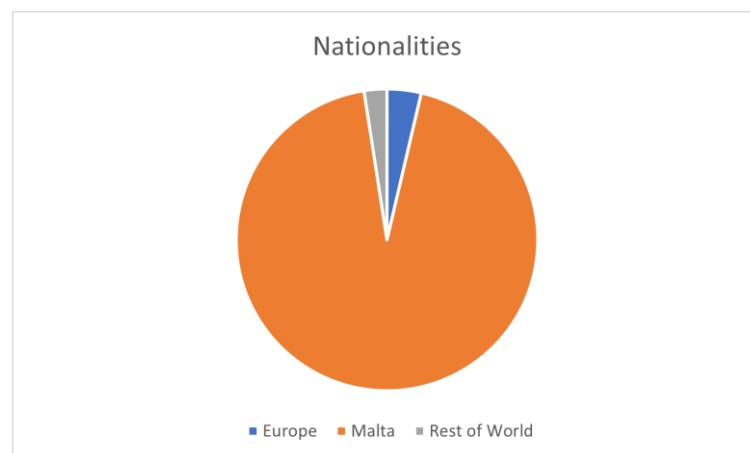


Figure 4.2.2.1

Within the nationalities of the respondents, 154 were Maltese, 6 were from the European continent and 4 were from other continents, these numbers, unfortunately were not enough to compare data between different continents as originally intended.

The average age of the respondents was 40, with the youngest being 18 and the oldest being 71.

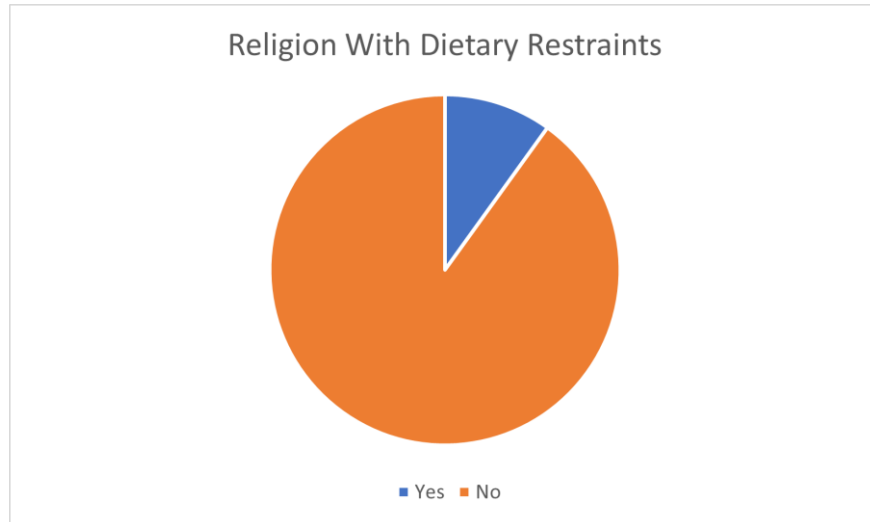


Figure 4.2.2.2

Out of the respondents, 90.06% did not follow a religion where restraint to a certain food product is practiced. Islam, Hindu, and Jewish cultures all practice restraint to some food stuff or another for different reasons, people from these cultures made up 9.94% of the respondents.

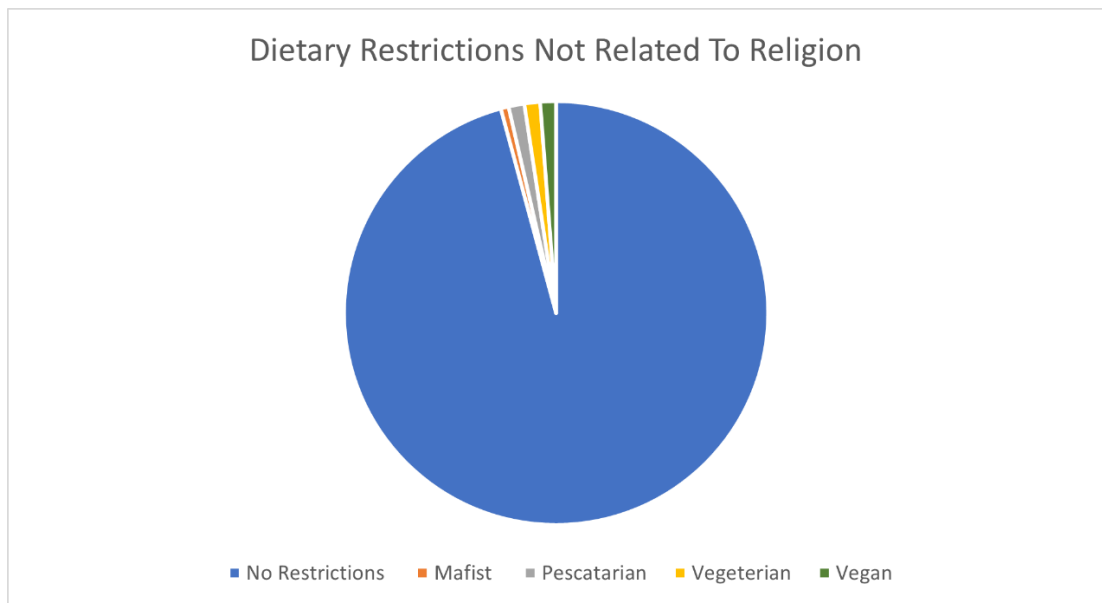


Figure 4.2.2.3

The question asked was:

Do you follow a diet, not restricted by allergies or religion, where you opt to not eat certain food products such as pescatarian (does not eat meat but eats fish) or vegetarian (does not eat meat or fish but still eats animal products such as milk and eggs)? If yes, please specify.

When it comes to dietary restrictions, not related to allergies/intolerances or religions, these were in an absolute minority.

The people who answered yes consisted of two vegans, two vegetarians, two pescatarians and one mafist (person who does not eat mammals, also known as pesco-pollotarians).

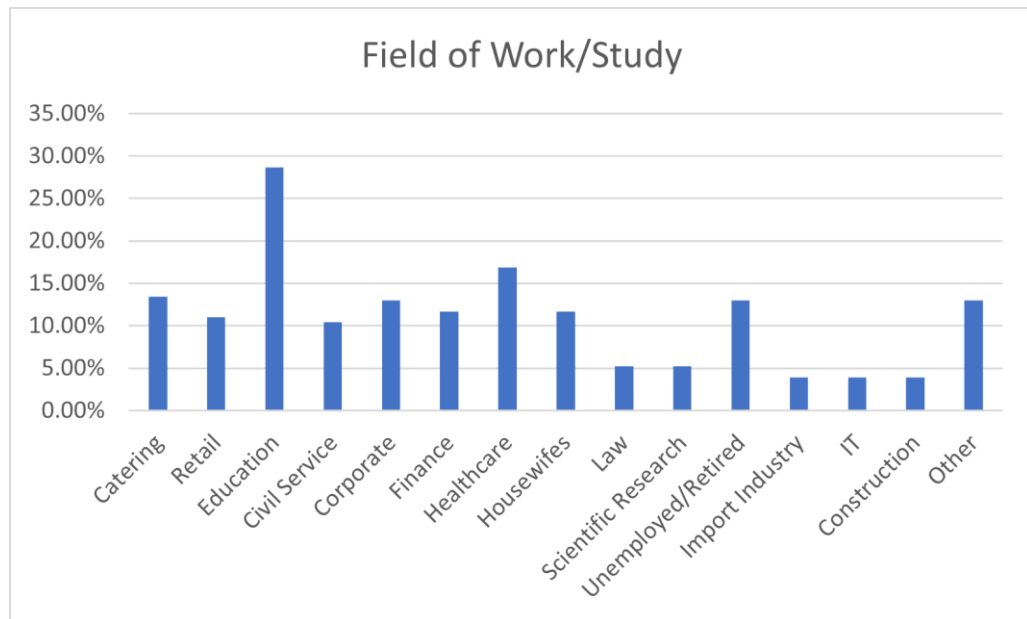


Figure 4.2.2.4

A question was also asked about the different fields of work from the respondents and as observed in Figure 4.1.2.4, the answers were quite balanced with education being the most prominent field consisting of 28.66% of the respondents. All these questions were asked to analyse trends between respondents of similar demographics.

4.2.3 – Literature review inspired questions

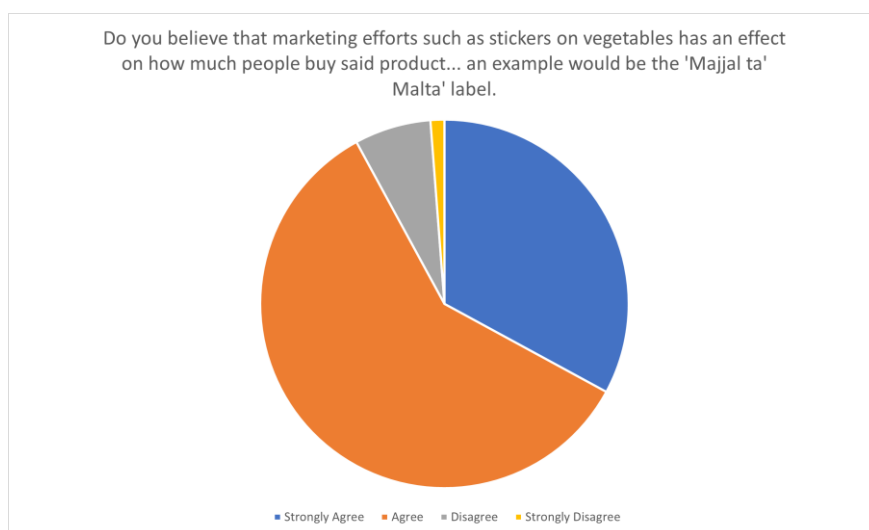


Figure 4.2.3.1

In the interview with the representative of the Malta Youths in Agriculture, the representative drew attention to the fact that many farmers, mainly the older generation resist the change of packaging and marketing. This is in line with the social factors of food choice discussed about in 2.1. As observed in the survey 92% of the respondents agree with this with a comment option open for this question there where 16 respondents who wrote their point of view:

‘True, It draws attention and makes the label more serious’

‘Sometimes they don’t market enough on the product’

‘The marketing associated with the product, may be linked to a certain quality or properties by the consumer which lead to them eventually buying the product’

Some respondents claimed that they do not take notice of marketing efforts, or that in certain produce, such as the butchering industry, labels are not required as the representative behind the counter will give the information himself, this can be sufficient for households, not so much in restaurants where proof of traceability is often asked to be presented for various reasons (HACCP, halal certifications). Two thirds of the people that disagreed with the statement that marketing efforts has an effect on consumption also went on to answer true to the statement that ‘Not knowing where the food comes from is the most powerful reason for eliminating any meat related guilt’, the third that answered false to this statement gave the reason for their answer that meat is easy to know where it comes from because it is written on the label... concluding that the 13 people who disagreed with the statement that marketing has an effect on consumption still see the importance on labelling on products for their information. To further this statement only one person from these 13 admitted to not knowing where his food comes from.

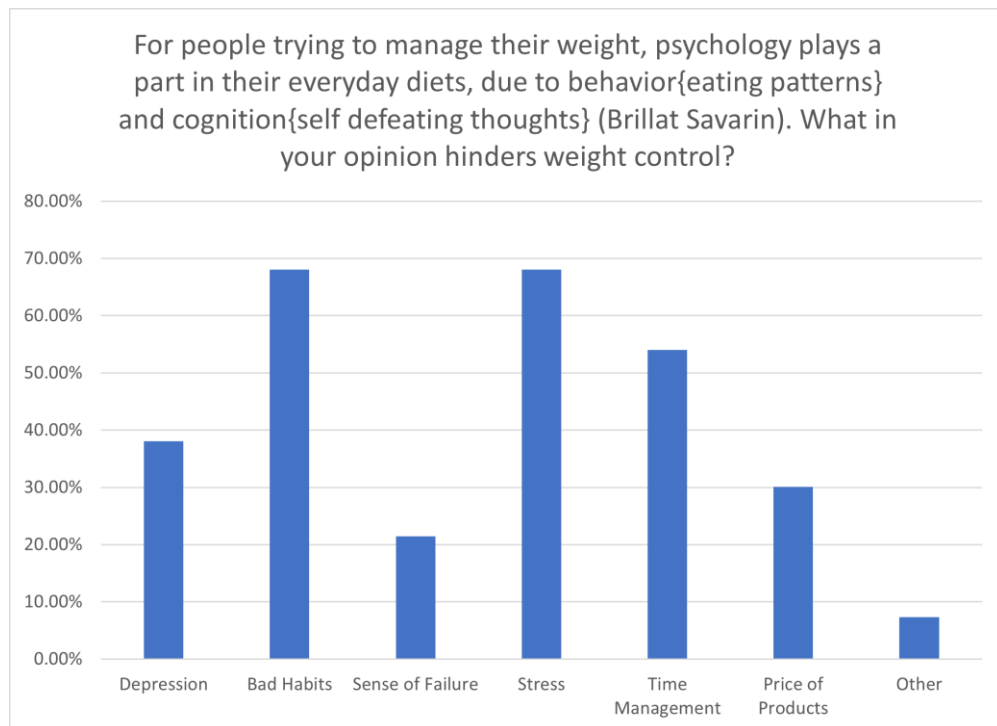


Figure 4.2.3.2

Figure 4.2.3.2 shows, the first four most common occurrences have to do with behaviour and cognition, a limitation found with this question was that the question could not be formatted in a way that the answers seen on the ‘other’ could not be seen and voted on by other participants, answers such as ‘lack of knowledge, treatment and anxiety’ were all answers formulated by respondents in healthcare with more knowledge on this particular question, they

still fall under the broadness of the cognition and behaviour umbrella of Savarin and the almost 70% of respondents answering bad habits and stress is definitely reflective of the culture that we live in.

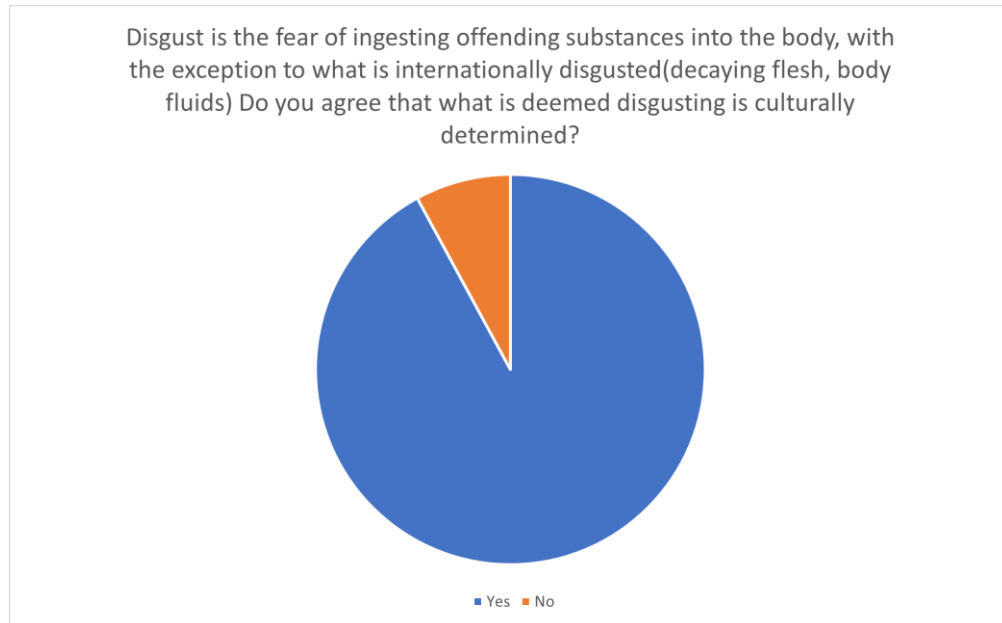


Figure 4.2.3.3

92% of people agreed with the research gathered in the literature review, what is however particularly interesting is that the 13 people who answered no to this question most of which gave somewhat a similar reason, they attributed disgust with taste and preference, and they are not socially determined.

‘To some degree yes but mainly no. I feel like many cultures love to try other cultures food. For example, in Australia there are many restaurants with different cuisines offered. It comes down to personal choice if you are willing to explore the different foods available’

None of these 13 people, agreed with the fact that meat is the pinnacle of hierarchal domination which while it is a question having nothing to do with the previous one, it still strikes the theory of similar schools of thought.

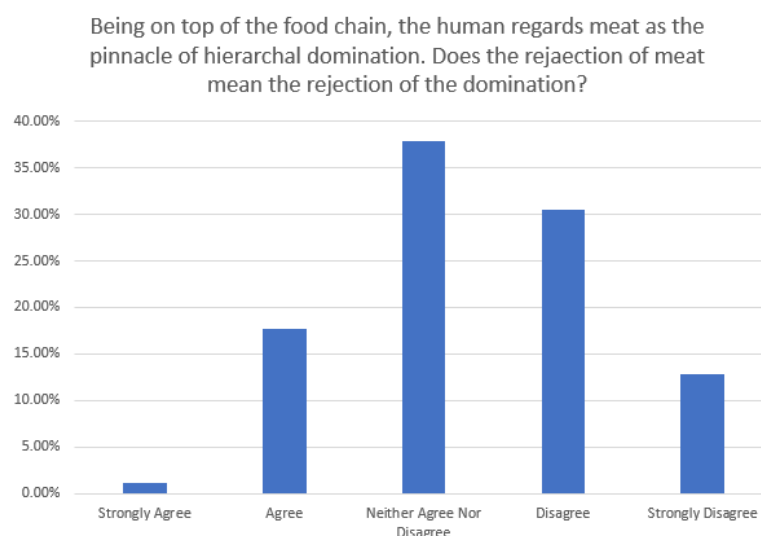


Figure 4.2.3.4

This is a question which contradicted the information gathered for the literature review. The omnivore dilemma as observed in the paper of (Allen, Wilson, Hung NG, & Dunne, 2000) is exactly this question, only 19% of people agreed with this statement however it could also be said that the inclusion of a middle grounds on the matter could have played a part in the lack of decisiveness in the total answer.



Figure 4.2.3.5

When this question was formulated, the option of both was not given, rather an open option of ‘other please specify’ was given, however the four people who answered this way all had a similar answer with quite a compelling argument:

‘As omnivorous organisms, we are born with all the biological mechanisms necessary for the consumption of meat (something we are born with). The consumption of meat is then presented to us as a crucial dietary requirement throughout our childhood and adolescence. Thus, both factors are of equal importance.’

While the majority of 79% agrees with (Becker, 1973), the reasoning of the biological mechanisms doesn’t necessarily contradict this reasoning, even his book ‘The Denial of Death’ is split in three parts, where in part one he brings up the psychological depth of human concepts, then he points out the failure of the human concept of heroism in part two and part three where he draws attention to the dilemma taking note from psychology and religion. The author started the book with confusion, for the purpose of understanding, the same way this dissertation was started ... the purpose of understanding.

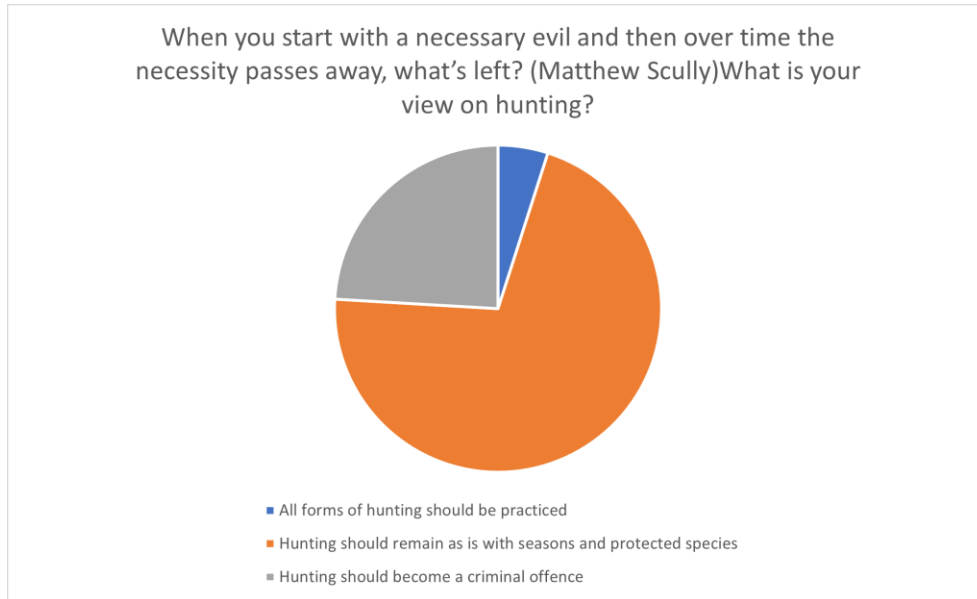


Figure 4.2.3.6

For this question, the quote of Matthew Scully was attached, the concept of hunting is quite a vicious one on the island, the question of hobby or tradition is brought up quite often, the psychiatrist I interviewed commented that there is a lot of careful threading on the subject, however the questionnaire shows that there is a difference between mentalities. Most of the people see no problem with how the situation is now, hunting in specific times throughout the year and with various protected species. There are different reasons why certain species are protected being extinction threats or national importance. Only 5% of people argue that all forms of hunting should be practiced and 24% of people feel that hunting should become a criminal offence.

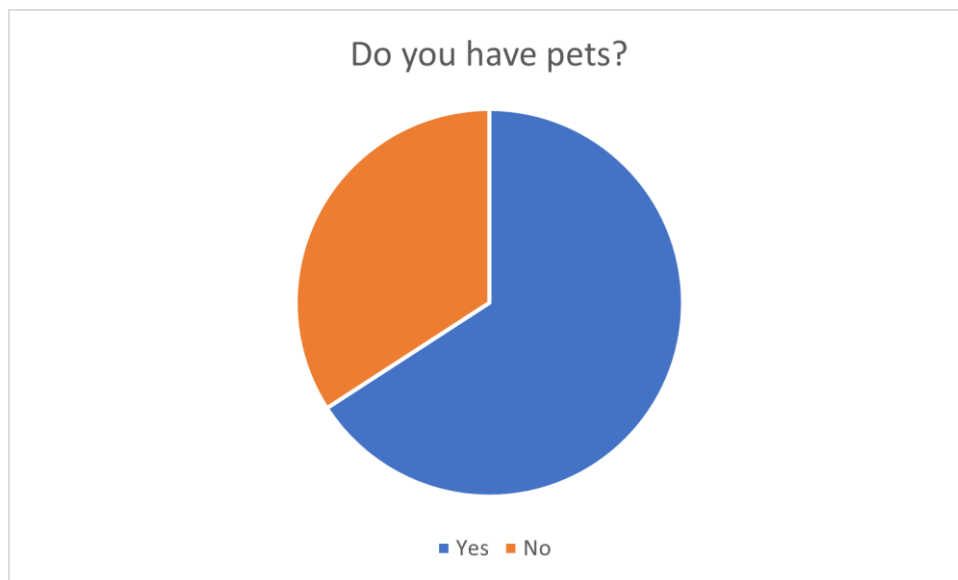


Figure 4.2.3.7

66% of the survey respondents have pets.

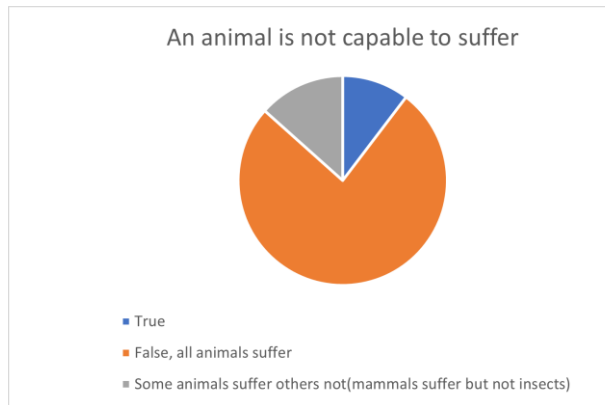


Figure 4.2.3.8

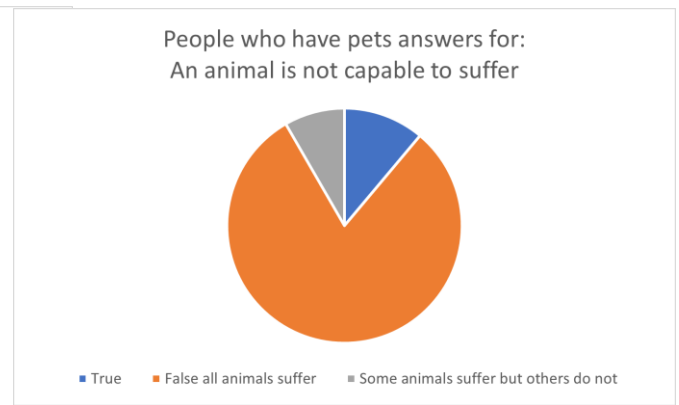


Figure 4.2.3.9

With the question of whether an animal is capable of suffering is where a conundrum is observed. Firstly, the grey area of some animals suffer, while others do not, registered 13% of responses with a further 11% saying that an animal is not capable of suffering. Even more interesting that 11% of all people who have pets state that an animal is not capable of suffering with a further 8% saying some do others do not, having pets does not differentiate the percentages drastically.

The following question might give an answer to this conundrum, when respondents were faced with the meat paradox seen in section 2.7, about the worries of pet's feelings when eating meat, the answer was a version of attachment.

‘The issue of attachment. I have never been emotionally attached to a pig or chicken, nor think I will ever spend a long time with such animals for me to grow that sense of attachment with them. This is why, I can easily eat chicken but will never try dog meat.’

‘Most of the time, when eating meat, you do not imagine a pig, cow, chicken etc... Being slaughtered. So that is why you do not wish for your pet to be cooked, because you cannot imagine it easily. However, when you see a clip of animals being slaughtered for food, there is where it kicks in.’

The answer for the capability of suffering for some might be in line with knowledge... the not knowing and not seeing is in line with the not feeling, where with their pet when it becomes part of the family it ceases to be regarded as an animal and starts being regarded as a family member.

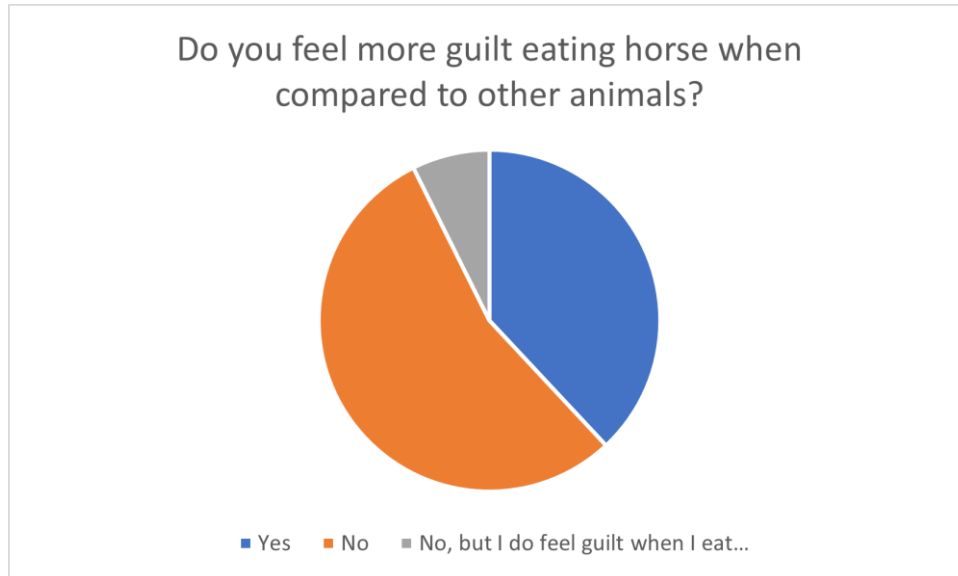


Figure 4.2.3.10

‘I have stopped feeling guilty for a while now. But I think these are exactly, culturally based behaviours, still towards cognitive dissonance, as I'm going to give you an example, if a puppy is shot in the head, people would call that evil. If a male calf is to be shot in the head, it would be called humane and for its production of veal. So, it's really just humans being biased towards a certain type of belief, their belief in which they were brought up in.’

This answer, by this respondent perfectly sums up the factor of guilt, some people admitted to feeling guilty when consuming rabbit or deer, but others dread the thought of consuming horsemeat because they own horses as pets, while others eat horsemeat and still adore and love their horses.



Figure 4.2.3.11

The respondents who answered false for this question, gave a couple of reasons worth contemplating on. Firstly, meat is the easiest product to know where it comes from. Secondly, while it is not visible at first hand, the origin of the meat being hidden will only mitigate the guilt, it does not eliminate it. Lastly, it all depends on the morality of the customer rather than the information behind the dish.

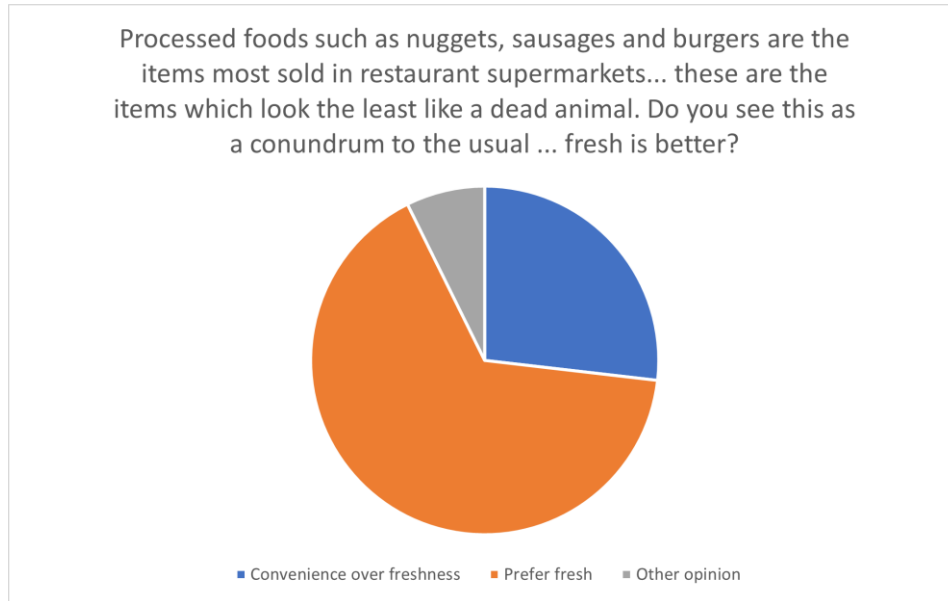


Figure 4.2.3.12

‘Of course fresh is better and preferred especially by parents of young kids. However the price and the time it takes to turn something fresh into something attractive for kids is not the easiest and the most convenient’

While most people responded they prefer fresh, some admitted that they buy both for various reasons; finance, location, taste, convenience, health and a very compelling answer is that balance is key or that they look at foods as options rather than only buy one and not the other.

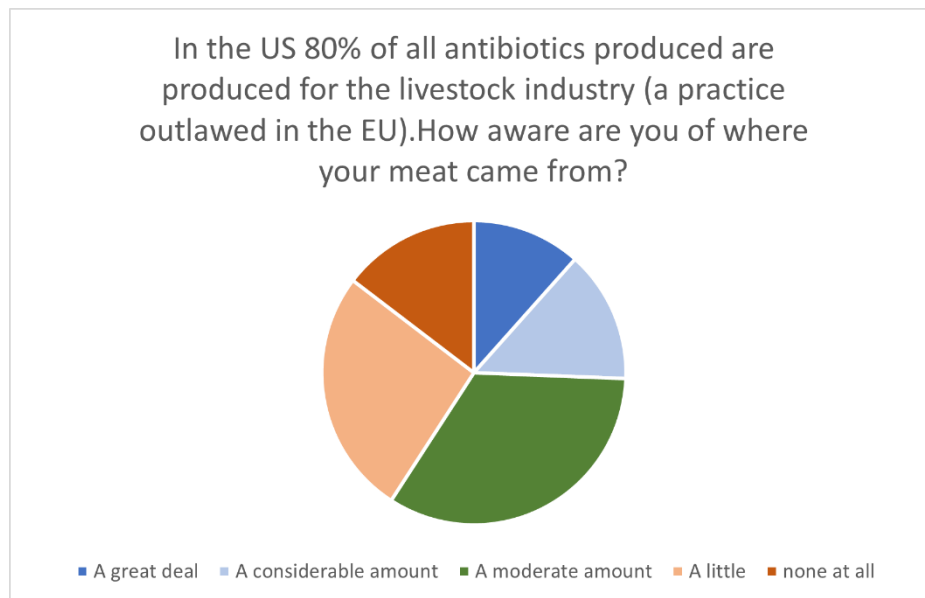


Figure 4.2.3.13

Awareness is something clearly lacking in the general population, with 40% of the respondents either a little aware or none at all.



Figure 4.2.3.14

Something which was unknown to me before the start of the research was that beef bones are used in the process of refining white sugar (PETA, 2022). So even for some vegans, exceptions like these are made, most of these examples are not well-known facts which strikes the question; Are all of these details known by vegans of today?

4.3 – Interview MCAST Lecturer, Malta Youths in Agriculture

The first interview, done with a lecturer at MCAST, highly involved within the farming community on the Maltese Islands, he/she wished to remain anonymous, however the aim of this person's work is to promote sustainable agriculture and enhance relations between Maltese and EU farmers as well as holding discussions about agricultural issues. This person used to teach me at MCAST while I was studying sustainable engineering, and I have followed their professional career with great interest ... following interviews and blogs made by this person over my time as a student at ITS.

The interviewee was unavailable for a face to face interview and she suggested I send her the questions and she sent the answers online.

4.3.1 – Marketing and image issues

The interviewee brought up an issue during the interview where the produce that farmers produce is not labelled. A simple sticker was suggested and often the older generation of farmers are not willing to spend the extra fee for it because sales are not in their interest.

'If for example Farmer X has excellent strawberries and takes it to Pitkalija with no packaging (even simply a sticker, that I mentioned) that product goes to the mainstream with all the other strawberries of other farmers. Also, consumers cannot link which producer has excellent strawberries. It's a lost battle from both ends.'

I added the fact that during my time as vegan, restaurant menu's vegan options consisted mostly of imported produce, when a local nectarine can taste better than an imported mango. In the interviewees' opinion, there is not enough pride in selling local (although it's changing), there

is a demand for exotic produce such as mango and avocado and that there is a lack of networking and training between catering sector and agriculture sector.

I gave the example of Benna and their successful marketing campaigns and asked why the agriculture and farming industries do not have such luxuries. The fact that Benna is 30% state owned is their advantage because money is allocated differently from when budget is coming from a private enterprise. He/she stated that a producer's organisation or co-operation is necessary.

Another issue that was brought up is that some farmers still keep their seeds, meaning that the produce is a purely local landrace, but the issue is that it is never marketed as such and the public will never know.

4.3.2 – Viewpoint on veganism

'I believe that all consumers should have the choice to choose whatever they feel comfortable with. I am more inclined to believe that the Mediterranean diet is the healthiest and environmentally sound diet. After all, it has been given the UNESCO heritage title for a non-tangible asset. Eating more plants than meat makes more sense, however, the balance is key. I would go further to the choice of meat; chickens and rabbits are more efficient meat producers. Rabbit meat has many more health benefits for instance.

Don't forget that products such as Quinoa, flax and other products are causing extreme poverty in rural communities. They are being exploited by large multinationals to produce these trendy products which was their only source of food and income. Very few people think about where food is coming from.

Almond 'milk' for instance, exploits bees in a way that no traditional beekeeper would do. So, which is more environmentally and ethically produced? I don't think, being extreme vegan is the right solution. Buying local surely reduced carbon footprint and also injects money into the local economy. Eating more plants is good but one has to be careful from where they are coming from.'

4.3.3 – Quality of produce

When it comes to pork, local pork is definitely not inferior, the interviewee stated that pork rearing management is much better. The issue is like in the agri-business where the good product and the inferior product are mixed. This creates a detriment to the overall image because of the lack of grading. The person also went on to dictate that the animal welfare rules are very different from the USA and the EU, there are a lot of measures in place, and a lot of checks are done at veterinary services for antibiotic residues. Preventative measures are also in place such as improved ventilation and bedding which allow the animal to grow without getting sick.

4.3.4 – Difficulties in our times

The scenario was set by describing that in Malta people are buying frozen chicken nuggets made from chicken from the USA, breadcrumbs from Japan, packed in New Zealand and imported from the UK. The interviewee was then asked if the local farmers are being restraint by different entities making it more difficult to put their product on the market.

'Bureaucracy and flooding local farmers with EU regulations are making local agriculture become increasingly difficult. Many people have no idea about how difficult it is to produce food here in Malta and what it takes to be a farmer. Consumers and caterers need to be made aware that local products offer more advantages.'

4.3.5 – Animal cruelty

'I love animals and at the same time, I visit many farms every year. I only buy meat directly from trustworthy farmers/sellers; pork, rabbits, chicken, and beef.

I very much believe that we do not have to be cruel to rear animals and science has thought us to rear and kill animals humanely, without pain. The system is not perfect, and a lot more needs to be done. When I visit a livestock farm, I can recognise immediately the welfare status by observing basic things...just like humans, animals need to be comfortable. If the animals are not comfortable, they will not grow, they will not produce, and this is to the detriment to the farmer's pocket. No production = no money.

The basic 5 freedoms need to be safeguarded. At no point in time, I would NOT accept or concur with a producer harming animals in any way.'

4.4 – Interview with a Vegan Person

This interview took place face to face and the recording lasted for 1hr 35min.

4.4.1 – Reasons for becoming vegan

The lack of good pastries offered by her workplace was the first thing that sparked the interest into the vegan diet, being a hotel permission was given for her to try out. The challenge of making something that tasted good as well as the constant research in the field brought her slowly to love a vegan lifestyle. The turning point was when she walked into a kitchen and seeing a 'mountain of chicken breast' and when her favourite chicken dish was made she couldn't eat it.

'I always try to choose vegan but I'm not going to create a fuss either. I saw something where ... Ok you choose to be vegan but then it doesn't give you the right to throw away stuff either, so I did go somewhere once and the avocado toast I said no egg and she gave it to me with the egg and I'm not going to complain, I don't really want to eat it but if I don't, it has been cooked and it's going to be thrown away so I'm going to eat it now.'

4.4.2 – Do you own any leather products?

'When I first turned vegan, I didn't really pay attention to this but with time I have become more aware of it, in Malta we are quite limited with products and good quality products if you're looking for something non-vegan.'

What has been bought from abroad and in vegan leather was a handbag, in Malta however there is a shop in Valletta which sells vegan leather items but they were described as out of her price range.

4.4.3 – Challenges faced as a vegan in the food industry

The biggest challenge is tasting, some employers will not employ vegan employees.

'Last summer I was working in a very busy outlet and he saw my CV and he saw I was vegan and he asked me if I am going to taste the food, and I had to explain to him that this is my career and it is based on me having to taste such products, so yes I will do it but I know there are other vegans that won't ... if you're in the food industry unless you're going to work in an all vegan outlet, you can't stick to it 100% unfortunately that's how it is ... now a lot of places are offering vegan options and such but you can't really be limited to just making that in a kitchen.'

Working in an all-vegan outlet is not always a possibility. Another observation she brought up was that when at one point she had her own line of vegan desserts and her wish was to re-create a cassata in vegan, it had been years since she tasted cassata and to re-create a recipe in vegan she had to buy a cassata from a reputable place to compare the taste with her own vegan one.

4.4.4 – Reactions of family and friends

Her ex-boyfriend did not approve of her vegan lifestyle and her family did not understand it at first, today she described it easier for her to go out with her family as most of the establishments offer vegan options so a dinner with the family is easier nowadays than it was 4 to 5 years ago.

4.4.5 – Body changes to transitioning to a vegan diet

Some people when they transition they experience a fatigue, she did not because the transition was over a period of time and a full year has passed as a transition period so the body adapted slowly.

‘I did go through a period last summer where I started buying a lot of vegan processed foods, they were vegan, but I didn’t feel good... I felt sluggish and heavy, and I had to think healthy... I vary a lot and I try to get 5 different fruit and veg a day, I try to differ the ingredients like, I’m not going to take tofu 5 times in a row so one day I might take chickpea, other day tofu. I might even take protein powder if I’m doing exercise.’

4.4.6 – Drawbacks

Social drawbacks such as wine and charcuterie platter with friends will go away because there are not much vegan platters available or all of them are carrot sticks and hummus. Before she also used to enjoy going for sushi, it was a social thing for her that also had to stop because places had to be found where this concept had to be balanced.

4.4.7 - Interesting vegan dishes

‘Back when I was in the UK, I discovered aquafaba, (chickpea water) and for me it blew my mind and my colleague’s mind, I remembered going to work one day and one of the chefs was going to make hummus, and I told him can you save the water for me because I want to try something? And when I showed it to the chef, he was like ... you’re trying to tell me that that was once chickpea water?... and he couldn’t believe it and when you taste it you don’t realise that it was chickpea water... Another thing which I am proud of myself is vegan smoked salmon, so I wanted to celebrate some achievement by making vegan sushi, but not the traditional boring one, I wanted to elevate it and I tried making vegan smoked salmon using carrots, a friend of mine brought me some smoked tea and I took thin slices of carrots and I blanched the carrots in the tea and left it there overnight and the next day it tasted like smoked salmon and I was impressed and the members in my family no one believed me.’

4.4.8 – How animals are viewed

The relationship with animals did not change,

‘I mean I have always loved animals ... back when I was doing the degree, they took us to a Benna farm, and I had to move out because I didn’t like how the animals have been treated. The cows were skinny, and they couldn’t even stand up and were sliding all over the place. I had to walk out, I didn’t walk out because I’m vegan, but animal cruelty is still animal cruelty ... I don’t agree that a cat or a dog should eat a vegan diet. There are vegans who try to enforce it on their cats.’

4.4.9 – Omnivore dilemma

‘I don’t think that just because you eat meat you are better, even in the chef world maybe ... the person on the meat section is the prestigious one and the hardest one ... something which I don’t understand. I do think however that knowing how to make a cake the traditional way is ok but it shows one level of knowledge ... but if you can make a cake without using eggs, butter, cream or cream cheese... the adapting to dietary requirements I think is more prestigious.’

4.4.10 – Concept of death

‘I used to teach children how to cook, and I used to have them all gathered around me while I break down a chicken for chicken nuggets and all of them used to be disgusted when I show them the neck and bones and such. Once I broke it down and cook it all of them were like mmm this is delicious ... even doing it in front of them did not affect their taste... they have to realise it by themselves.’

4.4.11 – Environment preservation

‘As much as possible I do try to support local, avocados are treats for me and I do try to buy a lot in season, the shop I go to he gets most of his produce from Mgarr. When I buy nuts they come from the USA, I guess I am a bit hypocritical but at the end of the day you cannot be everything, the same with a car ... I am concerned about the environment, but I have to drive to places... I do know people who do not drive just because of nature but you can’t walk everywhere. We are living in a world where you can’t be perfect...’

4.4.12 – Certain crops not being vegan

‘Did you know that white sugar contains beef? Yes, apparently, they use beef bone char to whiten the sugar! So, I don’t take sugar anymore! ... I’m not that kind of vegan. I worked in an outlet last summer where the truffle paste had anchovies in it ... and I went to a place to eat a plate of vegan pasta and it had this kind of truffle paste so there is a lack of knowledge. Not all wine is vegan because they use egg whites in some. Guinness used to use fish ... now it is vegan but before it wasn’t and I do think that a huge company is going to remove fish unless it makes business sense. As I explained earlier I do take avocados and it was a treat for me.’

4.5 – Interview with a psychiatrist

This interview took place face to face and the recording lasted 38 minutes.

4.5.1 – Eating habits

Eating and appetite are very complex behaviours, there is the behavioural element, the social and the cultural element but there is also the health element.

‘So from a healthy psychological setup to a psychopathological way of behaviour ... ill-health ... mental ill-health and physical ill-health, and in that dimension there are a number of disorders which can influence my thinking I comfort eat, so if I eat I raise my serotonin levels (happy levels) that I’m going to eat more and I don’t care because I don’t want to go out , I don’t want to see people, I feel fat and ugly so I stay home and eat and eat. That becomes addictive so I have to eat more to attain the same level of serotonin release... so you can understand that it becomes a vicious circle likewise in reverse if I feel I’m too fat ... I will diet and diet and I can diet and restrict myself (anorexia) or I can diet and diet then all of a sudden I binge eat ... binge eating disorder. So when we speak about eating this is intrinsically ingrained in our culture in our life in our psychology and in our health both physical and mental.’

4.5.2 – Speciesism

The human being is fortunately and unfortunately on the upper chain of the food chain, the world is abused... nature and the environment... the very definition of farming is the industrialisation and commercialisation of nature.

‘... the problem is our greed, our intellect our ambition, our selfishness have coarsened and have abused the system ... we abused nature, animals, crops, and it is very difficult to say no because money is a very powerful force then there is the issue of good and healthy and young and sexy and a good physique. Social media doesn’t help because you do it all up ... drugs don’t help alcohol doesn’t help the rushed way of life doesn’t help ... who suffers the

vulnerable ... animals, nature, old people, young people ... greed ... think of war. So, man's selfishness ... man's best friend is his brain and intellect, man's worst enemy is his brain and intellect. Add to that psychopathy, indifference, the fact that I don't care about you and selfishness, so it cuts both ways ... are we advancing or are we regressing? That's the question.'

4.5.3 – Hunting

'This is a very controversial subject ... the culture of the place has a strong impact on hunting. If I hunt for pleasure or sport that is opening a very delicate subject ... political influence (you lose votes) cultural influence (how dare you stop me from my hobby), animal lovers... so it becomes very complex and emotions fly ... can you eradicate a tradition ... very difficult. Can you educate a future generation on what they should do... yes.'

4.5.4 – Introducing products to market which are disgusted but useful (insects)

'The word is marketing, a strategy both at government level and community level family level school level ... marketing, portraying this product as being indispensable for me. How do I know if a restaurant is good or not there are strategies, reviews, signs, science, so if you can marry a strategy with science, and show that 'I need to eat insects'. Because of A B C and this is the research A B C and because these public figures A B C ... marketing. Based on good research not clients.'

4.5.5 – Omnivore dilemma

'... There are people who have different values, a basic principles and values should not be judged but then there is right or wrong so in my code of ethics killing an animal is going to make him suffer, fine then I choose to eat plants, (vegan vegetarian whatever) so this is a very interesting concept. I think man is still on top of the food chain so man will still be on top unless aliens etc... but you can see how fiction fits in. So, to answer your question, we have to live together, we have to respect each other ... we have to basically work on moral, ethical, legal, cultural standards. The challenge is making all of them co-exist and having a happy compromise. Some people will suffer, some people will be happy others won't. You cannot make everyone happy all the time, but you can try and keep people happy at different times ... The bottom line is Primum no nocere... first do no harm, if what I am doing is not causing harm to me or other people then I can do it. I think man is always on top of the hierarchy. There are religions which do not kill cows or elephants ... am I going to criticise them no'

4.5.6 – Money being power

The bottom line is a code of ethics, the vulnerable to not be abused such as children picking cocoa leaves.

'When it comes to the Maltese product, being more difficult (putting the product on the market) that is where marketing comes in ... A genuine Maltese product, not for example Marsovin... Sicilian grapes ... Maltese wine. It really is all about using a code of ethics, business ethics, geopolitical forces at play to make sure that the vulnerable is not exploited ... that any illegal activity is addressed and that if I am paying €1 for that product it is exactly what I'm paying for and what it claims to be ... if I market Maltese honey but 80% it is Sicilian honey ... it is not Maltese honey ... olive oil etc. So, people cannot compete with the mass producer... but with marketing what do you want ... quality? Uniqueness? Genuine Maltese product? Or do you want Lidl biscuits... which is good but its in that club ... economies of scale ... quotas, and ways to protect the local industry which is part of our history. The honey rings are Maltese ... while there are variations in Spain ... that is our Maltese product so it needs to be patented and safeguarded ... even the ġbejna.'

4.5.7 – Concept of death

There is a beginning and an end on this planet, the psychiatrist stated that from day zero it must be taught, the way that is taught however it depends on their age, for example you are not going to take a child to the slaughterhouse to see animals get their necks slashed.

‘The concept is very deep. What happens if we find out that plants feel? Are we not going to eat them? What are we going to do? So, the argument is very complex. I feel that if a person is intelligent enough saying I don’t want to kill a cow, OK, I’m going to eat something else, but I have my vulnerable child and I must make sure that if he doesn’t get the protein from there, he gets it from somewhere else because that is neglect and abuse.’

4.5.8 – Consumer ‘sick’ society

The question was ‘The conundrum of freshness in a supermarket is that meat products with a less animalistic form ... more processed are bought much more than meat products with animalistic form ... this goes opposed to the usual of fresh is better. Does this happen for convenience only or is there an element of guilt?’

‘It all translates back to marketing and the consumer ‘sick’ society, it is all about selling, so all kids like chicken nuggets and if I want to sell, I will put barney shaped kitchen nuggets on the market, never mind processed meat the kids will like them.’

4.5.9 – Meat paradox

The pet is different from the animal being eaten because it has a name, it has an identity, it is a source of company. The pig does not have an identity ... it could but it is not known to you and the fact that you are not physically killing the pig.

‘Remember the markets do not want us to know this because if you have a child seeing the pig killed that means one less customer in the future.’

4.5.10 – Consequences of a food addiction

‘A food addiction could be as damaging as a drug addiction, the form changes but the damage is there. There are a number of things, weight loss, weight gain, vomiting, bingeing. Six KitKat at one go ... a whole Maltese bread, three gbejniet, four packets of Twix, a whole tub of Nutella... that is bingeing and then vomiting. Not functioning at work, school, home, relationships ... talk about self-harm, feeling ugly, not showering, looking at the signs, having other addiction, dieting, alcohol, excess gym, sleeping pills.’

There are different forms of help; the general practitioner, the therapist and there is also a new form of therapy called Magnetic Stimulation Therapy, it works like an MRI where whilst sitting and watching a tv showing food the magnet will be calibrated that for a binge eater it will suppress the excessive eating if not hungry, likewise for anorexia if too little is being eaten the magnet could be calibrated to balance the body image. Finally, there is the crisis team on Facebook as well as the Krizi App where help is available.

4.5.11 – Does veganism constitute moral superiority?

Some people want to belong to an ideology, veganism is one of the movements, vegans lend themselves to this ideology.

‘Some vegans are extremists on marijuana, politics, football, there are some personalities which lend themselves to that, there are certain characters which enjoy radicalism, extremism and it depends where you are in the world and what time you are in because if I’m a radical I can join the Taliban, if I’m radical, and in another place I can join veganism, I’m not saying all the

people that are vegan are extremists but it is more appealing because they get an identity, they want to be different, as I said there is no ideal in life. To conclude, whatever the case as long as my behaviour is done with good intention, and I don't hurt myself and society and nature so be it. Because like that we will have fewer problems, fewer psychological problems, fewer political problems, fewer spiritual problems, and we will hopefully try and live with respect and with harmony between ourselves and nature.'

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

5.1 – Discussion

This study started with the aim of understanding the choices of consumers, this has been a success, through autoethnographic research I was able to understand the struggles of veganism, and through the interview with a vegan person I was able to add to what was being said. Before this study was made the issues and the lack of availability for food stuffs was oblivious to me and as a chef in the industry there is a tendency of laziness to continue doing what was done before rather than look at what the demands are of our times.

The issues that face our farming industry as discussed with the representative of MAYA was also something not known to me, when the quality of the product starts to be tarnished in the restaurant industry, we order from abroad but when the local market has good quality produce that is being mixed with the bad one both industries will suffer losses ... farming industry of image and catering industry of quality and price. Marketing plays a part in almost every part of this business, in the interview with the psychiatrist, this was explained, other countries are far prouder than us with far lesser products, even more when introducing a product that is frowned upon (insects and GMO) marketing was told to be key ... through influencers and the making viewers think that they need said product.

The interview with a psychiatrist also proved to be helpful in several ways such as how to help people who are suffering from a food addiction and understanding veganism extremists.

The survey, served as an analysis between the data gathered in the literature review and the percentage of the population, comparisons have been observed but as well deviations which were very interesting, in addition to this, certain comments from respondents have proven to be very useful in analyzing schools of thought between different cultures.

5.2 – Further Studies

To further this research, historic studies on food trends could be undertaken ... analyzing repetition in modes over the years to predict what could be in fashion in the next few years based on what has been in fashion in the past century. Paired with this study that could be very useful when being a head chef of a leading restaurant or hotel.

Another study which could serve useful is the analysis of the population's perceptions to dietary trends and how these continue to evolve over time. Because of global warming, this could be very useful in the future where carbon footprint is becoming more and more taken notice of.

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CHAPTER 7 APPENDIX

7.1 – Interview with MAYA (Malta Youths in Agriculture) representative

The first interview, done with a lecturer at MCAST highly involved within the farming community on the Maltese Islands, he/she wished to remain anonymous, however the aim of this person's work is to promote sustainable agriculture and enhance relations between Maltese and EU farmers as well as holding discussions about agricultural issues. This person used to teach me at MCAST and I have followed the professional career of this person with great interest ... following interviews and blogs made by this person over my time as a student at ITS.

These is what was discussed during the interview:

1 - In your podcast episode on AMPED you discussed the problem that certain farmers do not want to put a sticker on their produce because they do not believe that the image will have an effect on their sales. During my vegan period whenever I was in a restaurant and there was a vegan/vegetarian option on a menu it always consisted mostly of, if not a 100% of imported produce. Do you think this is a problem of image in regards to Maltese produce or rather that we as a nation became accustomed to imported products such as the mango (when a locally produced peach or nectarine can sometimes even taste better)?

Yes many farmers, especially the older ones (50+) are resisting the change of packaging and marketing their produce.

They are so ingrained with the idea that "selling" is not in their remit, that they are stuck with a system of taking or dumping their produce at someone else; like what happens at Pitkalija.

If for example Farmer X has excellent strawberries and takes it to Pitkalija with no packaging (even simply a sticker, that I mentioned) that product goes to the mainstream with all the other strawberries of other farmers. Also, consumers cannot link which producer has excellent strawberries. It's a lost battle from both ends.

Re restaurants selling vegan food which is made of imported produce, I think you'd better ask a chef or restaurant owner about this.

In my opinion;

1. There is not enough pride in selling local...it's changing though.
2. Chefs, with all due respect, know very little about local produce, and I am sure of this!! Tipo, I know many chefs, and I ask them, "do you cook local stuff" they say "yes yes, our provider brings over lots of local produce"....well, they are trusting another person...usually an importer, to get them local produce...this does not bode well. For instance, the think that broccoli are local, and their provider brings them in jablo boxes...then they are 100% IMPORTED. No farmer in Malta uses Jablo to store broccoli.
3. There is a demand from consumers for avocado, mango and many other products which do not grow in Malta.
4. The catering industry can make more efforts in sourcing their produce.
5. there needs to be more networking and training to bridge the Catering sector with the agri sector.
6. Logistics is usually the most important and lacking factor.

2 – Do you think that there is a relation between foods of 50 years ago how used to develop back then and the larger variety of foods we eat today (in all their differences) and the way we think about foods now?

Well the varieties used today are far different that those used 50 years ago.
The production of seeds and plantlets is big business and farmers are not mostly depending on them.
Some farmers still keep their seeds, and these need to be marketed as purely local landraces. Again, if they are not marketed, no one will know!

3 - Taking the example of how Benna have increasingly improved their image through marketing what would be the next step in Maltese farming to become better and be taken into the future? What can restaurants do to help in this movement?

Sure, Benna has excellent marketing.
Marketing budgets need to be massive for such campaigns.
30% of Benna is state-owned! So the money allocated is different from when a marketing budget is forked from a 100% private enterprise.
Also, One individual farmer cannot possibly do the production, marketing, and selling (logistics) of the product.
That is why Producers organizations and Coops are necessary.
Restaurants can help by taking the time to learn about local agriculture and take time to source genuine foods directly from producers, rather than relying on someone who sells local and imported produce.

4 - Do you think that there is a difference between organic and GMO farming and their relation to psychological health?

No. All products, whatever the label they are given, should be safe and wholesome.
GMO is a tricky area, we do not know enough, but personally, I see the need for protecting local landraces.

5 - What is your professional point of view on the veganism mentality?

I believe that all consumers should have the choice to choose whatever they feel comfortable with. I am more inclined to believe that the Mediterranean diet is the healthiest and environmentally sound diet. After all, it has been given the UNESCO heritage title for a non-tangible asset. Eating more plants than meat makes more sense, however, the balance is key. I would go further to the choice of meat; chickens and rabbits are more efficient meat producers. Rabbit meat has many more health benefits for instance.

Don't forget that products such as Quinoa, flax and other products are causing extreme poverty in rural communities. They are being exploited by large multinationals to produce these trendy products which was their only source of food and income. Very few people think about where food is coming from.

Almond 'milk' for instance, exploits bees in a way that no traditional beekeeper would do. So which is more environmentally and ethically produced? I don't think, being extreme vegan is the right solution. Buying local surely reduced carbon footprint and also injects money into the local economy. Eating more plants is good but one has to be careful from where they are coming from.

6 - There is an increasing occurrence in menus of foraged ingredients, personally I have foraged wild mushrooms similar to the oyster and others similar to the porcini in Malta, as well as saffron, camomile, wild rocket and wild fennel... is there an initiative to make these more available to

restaurants? In my time in Scotland I have seen that the restaurant industry is willing to pay quite a high price for such commodities. (a kilogram of wild mushrooms used to cost £35)

This is a business opportunity!

There are some chefs who do some foraging but only a few.

One has to be careful about the Habitats directive since most of the wild flora/mushroom species are protected.

7 - Another occurrence in produce in Malta is food fraud what is the most common occurrence of this injustice?

A hot topic! Very little research has been carried out, but we know it exists and there is a lot of it...on fruit and veg, and meat, and eggs.

The problem is at the sales point.

Farmers have no interest in selling what is not their own produce.

The vendor earns more in selling foreign products due to higher profit margins.

Obviously, not all vendors do this, but authorities have not done anything to investigate this so far.

In the last budget, it was announced that a task force will be set up.

8 - It is common knowledge between us chefs that a beef product from Japan, Scotland and Uruguay is regarded as the best in the world, in the past Maltese pork was regarded as inferior to foreign one however nowadays this has been turned over its head with Maltese pork being some of the best pork in Europe. Can this effort be reproduced to Maltese beef? (personally, I had been led to believe that this cannot be because of the lack of grazing space however in high end farms around the world space isn't the main issue).

Local pork is definitely not inferior....it all boils down to grading. Pork from Spain is mass-produced, locally, pork rearing management is much better. As always, the good product is mixed with the inferior product, to the detriment of the image of all producers.

Re Beef, it's a different system...cows are ruminants and locally we cannot pasture animals, pigs are omnivores so their diet can be improved in captivity.

Even I tend to believe that countries that have the luxury of pastureland may allow beef cattle to eat and walk around fields at more cost-effective prices.

Having said this there are producers who rear beef cattle and get good results.

9 - Speciesism is the reason that us humans have made all the other animals subservient to us ... mal-treatment of animals in farms is very common in USA with chicken being overfed and basically dying from their own weight before they reach age as well as having 80% of antibiotic medicine production being given to animals as means of sickness prevention. Is this practice an occurrence in Malta and are there any measures against such practices?

Animal welfare rules in the USA are totally different than those of the EU.

EU rules are very strict, and antibiotics are very expensive and cannot be used for prevention.

Preventive measures such as improved ventilation, bedding and so on allows the animal to grow in a healthy environment without getting sick.

It is a very vast topic. There are a lot of measures in place...at the veterinary services a lot of checks are done for antibiotic residues, and they are taken very seriously.

10 - Maltese People are buying frozen chicken nuggets made from chicken from the USA, breadcrumbs from Japan, packed in New Zealand and imported from the UK. Do you believe that certain entities have made it more difficult for Maltese farmers to put their product on the table in turn

diminishing the carbon footprint of other products therefore making the consumer of that product not only pay for the killing of the animal but also pay for the increasing threat of global warming?

Yes, importation has been given more flexibility.

Bureaucracy and flooding local farmers with EU regulations are making local agriculture become increasingly difficult.

Many people have no idea about how difficult it is to produce food here in Malta and what it takes to be a farmer.

Consumers and caterers need to be made aware that local products offer more advantages.

11 - Perhaps a final question being in regards to your personal life rather than your professional one, When you eat meat you do not worry about your pet's feelings neither you wish for your pet to be cooked for you to eat, have you ever thought about this conundrum or perhaps about the one where it makes it right for us to make it right for us to eat pork and in other religion's cultures a capital sin?

It is not an easy question. I love animals and at the same time, I visit many farms every year. I only buy meat directly from trustworthy farmers/sellers; pork, rabbits, chicken, and beef.

I very much believe that we do not have to be cruel to rear animals and science has thought us to rear and kill animals humanely, without pain. The system is not perfect and a lot more needs to be done. When I visit a livestock farm I can recognise immediately the welfare status by observing basic things...just like humans, animals need to be comfortable. If the animals are not comfortable they will not grow, they will not produce and this is to the detriment to the farmer's pocket. No production = no money.

The basic 5 freedoms need to be safeguarded. At no point in time, I would NOT accept or concur with a producer harming animals in any way.

You need to read more trustworthy sources about animal welfare and watch the film "The life of Temple Grandin" :)

It puts things into perspective.

7.2 – Interview with a vegan person

1. In your dissertation, you stated that you are 95% vegan and not 100% because of the occasional exception that your career is in the food industry. Is this still the case and why did you become a vegan in the first place?

I actually became vegan, partly because of work to begin with, while I was in the UK we had to cater for vegans, a lot of vegans used to come in, and I used to tell myself ... why do these people choose to not eat certain products ... its not like when you're gluten free, you don't have a choice (for health) vegan you are just doing it cause you want to, so I didn't understand them ... nonetheless we had to cater for them. Now back when I have just started working on the pastry section and in the UK afternoon teas are popular, they are very pretty, and gorgeous and whenever a vegan came in, they [their pastries] were dull boring plain didn't taste great either and I was like why on earth would you choose to be vegan when they don't even taste good. I took it like a challenge, apart from not finding it fair that vegans had mediocre quality afternoon teas compared to the other ones I spoke to the chef ... being a hotel they had more money and they let me try new things and they were willing to improve their offering and slowly slowly I ended up tasting and trying a lot of vegan products and recipes ... cakes and stuff and they were tasting good even the team was impressed cause seeing that you're kind of settled and that improved the pastry section I started to try things on other sections... slowly slowly my diet became more vegan and I slowly started to realise that I actually felt better eating like this ... the more you go home and look recipes up the more things come up ... recipes, seeing videos, so more and more I

kept leaning towards veganism. I remember one day I had walked in the kitchen, and I see a chopping board with a mountain full of chicken breast and I was like ... that was a chicken, those were a lot of chickens, and they cooked my favourite chicken dish for staff food and I ... couldn't eat it ... that was the turning point for me. Back then I was with my boyfriend and questions pop up later and he didn't really accept the whole veganism thing and I was ok I'll compromise to vegetarian When we broke up, I was like ... I'm vegan now so that is kind of how I became vegan. Am I still 95% vegan, unfortunately work wise, I've changed I'm having to taste more non-vegan products but again I usually only taste things I wouldn't go out and have a non-vegan meal, right now I'm in a very small artisan bakery and we do try different recipes, recently we made the English muffins, usually I take one and that's it and I'm happy ... it's not one of those things where I have to taste constantly like when you're in a kitchen and constantly tasting sauces like I was last summer... whenever I make a new batch of sauce you have to taste it ... in the beginning I tried to get my colleagues to taste it for me but when it's busy you need to taste it. I never tried something meaty but vegetarian wise I have to. Right now, the bakery I don't taste absolutely everything, but you have to make sure that the standards are there. It is just me and another girl working there you need to check the standards. Also I don't like being picky when I go out to eat, if I go out somewhere and on the menu it doesn't say vegan like avocado toast, I always ask the waiter without the poached egg, but then I worked in an outlet and I realised that they put butter on the bread as well which is something I never told the waiter not to put on the toast. I realise now that these are non-vegan ingredients. As much as possible at home I am vegan, I go to friend's houses I'm vegan as well when I go out to eat, I always try to choose vegan but I'm not going to create a fuss either. I saw something where ... Ok you choose to be vegan but then it doesn't give you the right to throw away stuff either, so I did go somewhere once and the avocado toast I said no egg and she gave it to me with the egg and I'm not going to complain, I don't really want to eat it but if I don't, it has been cooked and it's going to be thrown away so I'm going to eat it now. Now to try to make up some hours, in the place I work they have a brunch place, I've been going for waitressing, and last time there was a mess up in the orders and they had three dishes of non-vegan food and they were going to cook for me and I said it's not really worth throwing away and I said I'll eat it. That was an instance where I wasn't vegan. Before where I was working in a vegan outlet I didn't have these kind of cheating but at the moment you make what you can... I accept it.

2. Do you own any leather products? Do you shy away from certain brands because they use leather products?

This is a good question actually, when I first turned vegan, I didn't really pay attention to this but with time I have become more aware of it, in Malta we are quite limited with products and good quality products if you're looking for something non-vegan. The boots I'm wearing I got them a few years ago and I'm not sure if they are leather free. I have looked around and you don't really find a lot of vegan products. My handbag I bought it recently from abroad and it's vegan leather and it made me like I want it because it's vegan and it wasn't expensive either ... I am trying to make more conscious choices in that regard. Shoes are a bit different because I like to try it on first but a handbag or a jacket or watch I would always try to find vegan items to replace it because they are not really available in Malta ... is a shop in Valletta but the prices were too much ... not that I can afford. I did go to look in the shop because I really wanted to have a vegan bag but apart from not being nice they were out of my price range.

3. What would be the biggest challenge faced including your job in the food industry?

Tasting the product, is definitely the biggest challenge. I know another ITS student who is vegan and when she went to try out in her new workplace, everything went fine, but when it came to staff food and she told them she was vegan the boss went up to her and told her if I knew you were vegan before I wouldn't have given you the job. There are some employers that won't employ a vegan for that reason. Last summer I was working in a very busy outlet and he saw my CV and he saw I was vegan and he asked me if I am going to taste the food, and I had to explain to him that this is my career and it is based on me having to taste such products, so yes I will do it but I know there are other vegans that won't ... if you're in the food industry unless you're going to work in an all vegan outlet, you can't stick to it 100% unfortunately that's how it is ... now a lot of places are offering vegan options and such but you can't really be limited to just making that in a kitchen. I would prefer to work in an all-vegan outlet, but it is not always possible and if you want to learn I do think that you need to taste.

I'm going to rewind a bit ... I had my own brand of vegan sweets at one point, and I wanted to recreate a vegan cassata ... I hadn't had cassata in years, I did go and buy a slice of cassata from a reputable place to get the taste again ... to know what I am going to create and compare it to my own creation, something like that I had to taste the original and compare it to my own thing. Sometimes you have to make exceptions too.

4. How did family and close friends react when you transitioned to a vegan diet? Are there any lasting prejudices towards you?

I already mentioned that my ex did not approve of my vegan lifestyle. My family, they didn't understand it in the beginning, but I cooked my own food anyway at home and I don't really like my mom's cooking anyways at home, but when we went out to eat, we had to find somewhere that had vegan options ... again today it is much better that it was 4 or 5 years ago. Friends, the same thing, if we are going out to eat where there are vegan options another friend of mine turned vegan so there's two of us and another who has been a vegetarian all her life but there is one who is always teasing us but it's fine ... we're friends and he is the joker, so no one takes it to heart. It is maybe harder in the dating scene because you never know the other person, how he is going to take it.

I'm not a strict vegan as well, because there are those who are kind of in your face about it as well. It depends how you are as a vegan and how people look at you.

5. When I made my 5-month period of veganism, I experienced weight loss (25kg total) however I also experienced fatigue but that could have been due to lack of healthy diet because even though I was vegan I still went to McDonalds for their fries as a quick snack and I didn't really balance my diet to different beans, legumes, nuts. I did feel good though, sweating was easier, breathing was easier and when I took spirulina and orange juice as a boost it did actually give me lasting energy ... more than a go and fun would.

What were the changes in your body, did you feel any of these symptoms and what did you do you have any suggestions on what I could have done to eliminate these symptoms?

I do know people who experienced this fatigue that you said, I however did not, but my transition was gradual ... over a period of time, it was like a full year where I was transitioning so I guess my body adapted slowly. It happened probably because you went vegan overnight, going cold turkey you feel the shock. I do think that if you're going to eat a lot of processed foods, you're still going to feel very sluggish. I did go through a period last summer where I started buying a lot of vegan processed foods, they were vegan, but I didn't feel good... I felt sluggish and heavy, and I had to think healthy... so there were periods where I took 400g of banana for breakfast, when I say that to people, they react like are you crazy? But have you ever heard of the ice

cream like you take frozen banana and you blend it ... it's good it's like healthy ice cream but you can eat it for breakfast as I tell people that they shock like all that banana and sugar? It also depends on your day as well, like I take that knowing that I have a full day where I might even miss lunch at least that is something that is going to keep me going.

I suggest a variety of food, I like to say that I have a healthy diet ... I vary a lot and I try to get 5 different fruit and veg a day, I try to differ the ingredients like, I'm not going to take tofu 5 times in a row so one day I might take chickpea, other day tofu. I might even take protein powder if I'm doing exercise. I also like to go for whole foods more than the processed stuff, there was a time where I was buying vegan burgers and vegan chicken nuggets ... even vegan cheese I don't buy that anymore. I love nuts ... I treat them as a treat, people say that it's fattening but if my fat source is only the nuts it is one thing, I take a lot of deep-fried food it's a completely other thing.

I do think it's easier to lose weight on a vegan diet.

6. What do you feel was sort of a drawback when you first transitioned?

You can't eat everything, I have a friend of mine we like to go out and eat, and we used to like going for a bottle of wine and a platter... but when you switch to vegan that option goes away because there's not really any vegan platters available, maybe today you can find a place where they do some but are they good? Or is it like carrot sticks and hummus? Because if you're going out one night with wine you wouldn't really want carrot sticks and hummus. The same friend we used to enjoy going for sushi, and she doesn't like carrots and cucumber which are very common in sushi, and for me sushi is a very social thing, like you want to share it ... it's not like you're going for ribeye which you eat by yourself... so there was that aspect, we found places where we like to eat and we go there and instead of platters we each have our own meal, I guess that had an effect that we didn't go out to eat like we used to.

7. Are there any vegan dishes that you discovered that are so good/interesting/innovative even if they were created by you, that your past self (before you were vegan) would have been interested in?

Back when I was in the UK, I discovered aquafaba, (chickpea water) and for me it blew my mind and my colleague's mind, I remembered going to work one day and one of the chefs was going to make hummus, and I told him can you save the water for me because I want to try something? And when I showed it to the chef, he was like ... you're trying to tell me that that was once chickpea water?... and he couldn't believe it and when you taste it you don't realise that it was chickpea water.

A brownie, everybody knows what a brownie is but what makes a proper brownie? ... now I'm into pastries so I know what makes the brownie a better one and for me you have to have the top kind of crunchy and the middle spongy and I figured out that adding a little bit of chickpea water it proved that effect better.

Another thing which I am proud of myself is vegan smoked salmon, so I wanted to celebrate some achievement by making vegan sushi, but not the traditional boring one, I wanted to elevate it and I tried making vegan smoked salmon using carrots, a friend of mine brought me some smoked tea and I took thin slices of carrots and I blanched the carrots in the tea and left it there overnight and the next day it tasted like smoked salmon and I was impressed and the members in my family no one believed me.

8. Do you feel that you have a better "relationship" with animals now that you do not eat them anymore?

Not really, I mean I have always loved animals ... back when I was doing the degree, they took us to a Benna farm, and I had to move out because I didn't like how the

animals have been treated. The cows were skinny, and they couldn't even stand up and were sliding all over the place. I had to walk out, I didn't walk out because I'm vegan, but animal cruelty is still animal cruelty, I just found it disturbing. I can't really compare myself as having a better relationship with animals ... it's not like I have gone to sleep with a sheep now that I'm vegan but, I don't agree that a cat or a dog should eat a vegan diet. There are vegans who try to enforce it on their cats.

9. The omnivore dilemma places the human on top of the food chain, meat is the pinnacle of hierarchal domination. Does the rejection of meat mean for you ... the rejection of this domination?

I don't think that just because you eat meat you are better, even in the chef world maybe ... the person on the meat section is the prestigious one and the hardest one ... something which I don't understand. I do think however that knowing how to make a cake the traditional way is ok but it shows one level of knowledge ... but if you can make a cake without using eggs, butter, cream or cream cheese... the adapting to dietary requirements I think is more prestigious. I make my own vegan milk, like almond milk, nowadays you're going to find however I was honestly amazed about how much people are asking for these kinds of milks ... out of every 100 coffees we make around 60 of them are these kinds of milk and you have to understand that they are paying 60c extra for them.

10. The concept of death is not something we are born with, and children nowadays start eating meat before they know the concept of death. To help with this we are moving more and more away from the reality that meat comes from dead animals ... in supermarkets meat products that look the least like the meat are the items sold most (chicken nuggets, mince). What is your viewpoint on this?

I used to teach children how to cook, and I used to have them all gathered around me while I break down a chicken for chicken nuggets and all of them used to be disgusted when I show them the neck and bones and such. Once I broke it down and cook it all of them were like mmm this is delicious ... even doing it in front of them did not affect their taste... they have to realise it by themselves.

11. In Malta we are buying chicken nuggets where the chicken originated in the USA, the breadcrumbs came from Japan, the packet was assembled in New Zealand, exported to the UK and finally to the supplier in Malta. Money being power ... the act of buying meat products in general is an advertisement to the meat industry, buying products like these is not only helping kill more animals but also destroy the planet in the process. What is your viewpoint on this?

I do try to be a bit conscious, as much as possible I do try to support local, avocados are treats for me and I do try to buy a lot in season, the shop I go to he gets most of his produce from Mgarr. When I buy nuts they come from the USA, I guess I am a bit hypocritical but at the end of the day you cannot be everything, the same with a car ... I am concerned about the environment, but I have to drive to places... I do know people who do not drive just because of nature but you can't walk everywhere. We are living in a world where you can't be perfect...

12. Taking the example of the avocado, although there are more crops like this, is very hard to grow in farms and for it to grow forced pollination is used by transporting bees in trucks across huge distances of land, some vegans opt to not call it a vegan crop because of this other deny this statement and still consume them as part of their vegan diet. What is your mindset on this?

Did you know that white sugar contains beef? Yes, apparently, they use beef bone char to whiten the sugar! So, I don't take sugar anymore! ... I'm not that kind of vegan.

I worked in an outlet last summer where the truffle paste had anchovies in it ... and I went to a place to eat a plate of vegan pasta and it had this kind of truffle paste so there is a lack of knowledge. Not all wine is vegan because they use egg whites in some. Guinness used to use fish ... now it is vegan but before it wasn't and I do think that a huge company is going to remove fish unless it makes business sense. As I explained earlier I do take avocados and it was a treat for me.

7.3 – Interview with a psychiatrist

The dissertation is about why people choose to eat what they eat and how did it come about that we eat what we eat.

The motivation for my research on what influences people's choices when choosing, and why certain food items on a menu are sold more often than others. Another aspect is trying to understand why people become vegetarians a curiosity that led me to try a vegan lifestyle for 5 months just to observe body changes and mental changes.

1. For people trying to manage their weight, psychology plays a part in everyday diet, according to research I found, the two elements that contribute are behaviour (eating patterns) and cognition (self-defeating thoughts or sense of failure). Are there more psychological elements that play a part and how can a person work against self-defeating thoughts that are hindering the path to self-betterment?
 So eating, appetite, diet are very complex behaviours which have a number of factors as you correctly said there is the behavioural element, the social, cultural element there is also the health element so if I for example constitutionally I am used to eating a lot because mummy and daddy used to feed me a poor diet then the chances are that I am going to put on weight. If I'm going to put on weight because I'm modelling, the psychological element of modelling therefore my happiness can be eating therefore certain cultures boast that because you are fat it means you are strong you are good you are healthy (African countries) we know from science that a high BMI has its own problems... heart disease, cancer, depression those being three but not exclusive because we can mention others, sleep apnoea, diabetes etc. but from my perspective to answer your question when I eat and I comfort eat or not eat at all, so the psychological, so from a healthy psychological setup to a psychopathological way of behaviour ... ill-health ... mental ill-health and physical ill-health, and in that dimension there are a number of disorders which can influence my thinking I comfort eat, so if I eat I raise my serotonin levels (happy levels) that I'm going to eat more and I don't care because I don't want to go out, I don't want to see people, I feel fat and ugly so I stay home and eat and eat. That becomes addictive so I have to eat more to attain the same level of serotonin release... so you can understand that it becomes a vicious circle likewise in reverse if I feel I'm too fat ... I will diet and diet and I can diet and restrict myself (anorexia) or I can diet and diet then all of a sudden I binge eat ... binge eating disorder. So when we speak about eating this is intrinsically ingrained in our culture in our life in our psychology and in our health both physical and mental.
2. Speciesism is the idea that being a human is a good enough reason to think that it is better than all other species, having greater moral rights and using this to take advantage of the other species. Is this morally right knowing that all animals feel pain and even that different

animals have different brain functions such as the rat's adaptability to food in short supply?
What makes it alright for the human to do stuff just because it can?

Ok, what makes it alright for the human being to do stuff because it can, humans as you know are on the upper chain of species fortunately and unfortunately because we abuse the world ... nature the environment... we have industrialised things... farming by definition ... we have commercialised it. We have genetically manipulated crops, we have polluted the earth we have caused damage to mother nature which gives us our food, our health ... man doesn't need anything other than nature ... the problem is our greed, our intellect our ambition, our selfishness have coarsened and dictated have abused the system ... we abused nature, animals, crops, and it is very difficult to say no because money is a very powerful force then there is the issue of good and healthy and young and sexy and a good physique. Social media doesn't help because you do it all up ... drugs don't help alcohol doesn't help the rushed way of life doesn't help ... who suffers the vulnerable ... animals, nature, old people, young people ... greed ... think of war. So, man's selfishness ... man's best friend is his brain and intellect, man's worst enemy is his brain and intellect. Add to that psychopathy, indifference, the fact that I don't care about you and selfishness, so it cuts both ways ... are we advancing or are we regressing? That's the question.

3. To continue with question 2, hunting was a necessary evil in the past, but
When you start with a necessary evil and then over time the necessity passes away, what's left?

Matthew Scully

Can hunting be constituted as evil when the people practicing it are not practicing it with hateful intent?

The keyword is intent, so what is the reason for hunting because today we don't need to hunt to get food so technically speaking the hunting has become farming has become livestock management ... pig farms ... chicken farms whatever, the problem is, and this is a very controversial subject ... the culture of the place has a strong impact on hunting. If I hunt for pleasure or sport that is opening a very delicate subject ... political influence (you lose votes) cultural influence (how dare you stop me from my hobby), animal lovers... so it becomes very complex and emotions fly ... can you eradicate a tradition ... very difficult. Can you educate a future generation on what they should do... yes.

The worst thing to do is say stop hunting ... because the moment I tell you to stop hunting you say no, I'm going to do it, and you are not open to dialogue and dialogue brings about progress. The moment I say you're evil and even that word is hard ... so I would never use the word evil I would say listen let's sit down...

I cannot stop you from doing something which your family has done for generations, so I have to respect your views, but you have to respect the views of other people ... let's try to come up with an agreement but in time I would want to educate people and tell that traditions whilst in 1902 were valid because you had so many birds ... now because of overpopulation, pollution ... we have to take care... do we stop it eradicate it I would say not yet or no. but I wouldn't say stop if you're evil you're idiotic etc. ... no. alternatives then come in clay pigeon, virtual reality ... the more we get used to vr the more it becomes real it comes to no problem.

4. Most of what is deemed disgusting is culturally determined with the exception of the things that are internationally disgusted (corpses, body fluids, secretions, feces, decaying flesh). For example fermented products are well included in Asian cooking but they are still not widely acceptable in Europe. In addition to this, insects are being eaten in every continent except Europe, how would one introduce a product that is good for the body or in the case of insect

which is high in protein (could be part of the solution to world hunger) in a culture where it is not acceptable? Do we have to go the way like you give a pill to a dog (hide it in something else) or can promotion of said product be shaped in a way that would make it accepted faster?

The word is marketing, a strategy both at government level and community level family level school level .. marketing, portraying this product as being indispensable for me. How do I know if a restaurant is good or not there are strategies, reviews, signs, science, so if you can marry a strategy with science, and show that 'I need to eat insects'. Because of A B C and this is the research A B C and because these public figures A B C .. marketing. Based on good research not clients.

5. The omnivore dilemma is where meat is the pinnacle of hierarchal domination, so the human is on top of the food chain of whatever is eaten by him, does the rejection of meat mean the rejection of the hierarchal domination?

In addition to this if the domination is the translation of human – animal relations to human relations does that mean that the acceptance or rejection of meat consumption should result in personality differences?

The basic ... there are people who have different values, a basic principles and values should not be judged but then there is right or wrong so in my code of ethics killing an animal is going to make him suffer, fine then I choose to eat plants, (vegan vegetarian whatever) so this is a very interesting concept. I think man is still on top of the food chain so man will still be on top unless aliens etc... but you can see how fiction fits in. So, to answer your question, we have to live together, we have to respect each other ... we have to basically work on moral, ethical, legal, cultural standards. The challenge is making all of them co-exist and having a happy compromise. Some people will suffer, some people will be happy others won't. You cannot make everyone happy all the time, but you can try and keep people happy at different times. Worst thing in conclusion is never judge, so there are many things to say about this ... who is dominant on what ... if I eat meat am I better or worse but I know that eating too much can cause cancer Etc. whether I do well or not to criticise you that is the different story. The bottom line is Primum no nocere... first do no harm, if what I am doing is not causing harm to me or other people then I can do it. I think man is always on top of the hierarchy. There are religions which do not kill cows or elephants ... am I going to criticise them no.

6. To continue with question 5, being on top of the food chain and not being guided by natural instinct, the human had the potential for savagery, having such a vast array of foods. When nature did not draw a line around the human ... the human drew this line with culture ... such as taboos, customs, rituals and table manners how do you think this evolved and could there be a case where these rituals were made wrong? (sacrifice?)

Of course, yes ... definitely. How they evolved? History teaches us ... chance, science they evolved by migration, war strife, famine, plagues. Mesopotamia ... ex Iran Iraq ... wars pushed them out. The Jews had to move out of Egypt... Greed, bombs ... atom bomb there are so many factors ... this is the beauty of history because history does repeat itself, perhaps why we should learn from it. So the answer is all of these.

Rituals are rituals ... they don't have a value ... they are not right or wrong ... when the Aztecs used to sacrifice live slaves Cutting them up and throwing them down ... good or bad even slavery it was acceptable in those ages but not anymore... even abuse or paedophilia they used to be accepted before ... are they good , NO, horrible is that an excuse ... no but time teaches us. Now our generation has a bigger responsibility than the previous one because we know more ... more experience. The thing is that you have to learn from history.

7. Money is power, therefore by purchasing meat products, an advertisement is being made to the company that produces said product. In addition to this, it is very common nowadays that a pack of frozen chicken nuggets which will have the chicken originate from the USA, the breadcrumbs from Japan, the product assembled in Thailand, shipped to the EU which is then bought by Maltese suppliers; so in turn of the promotion to the slaughter of animals there is also the effect that global warming is having on the planet. How would one go to promote against said products? (Guilt trapping?, Education on why it is wrong?)

Market forces, politics, human rights, economies of scale, purchasing power ... these all come in. Bottom line the benchmark has to be that you don't abuse the vulnerable (children picking cocoa leaves) and then sold as Nescafe ... and you can use a parallel in the clothing industry such as Nike being criticised of using slave labour in gathering their raw material so the argument can apply everywhere else. I think the bottom line is to have consensus on a global level that there are laws that you can't abuse children, paying the worker the right wages, give him the right conditions, declare the country of origin, if there is any money laundering it has to be addressed, if there is war and strife and people are being used or if what's in the packet is not what it claims to be ... these are laws but it has to be all over the world.

When it comes to the Maltese product, being more difficult (putting the product on the market) that is where marketing comes in ... A genuine Maltese product, not for example Marsovin... Sicilian grapes ... Maltese wine. It really is all about using a code of ethics, business ethics, geopolitical forces at play to make sure that the vulnerable is not exploited ... that any illegal activity is addressed and that if I am paying €1 for that product it is exactly what I'm paying for and what it claims to be ... if I market Maltese honey but 80% it is Sicilian honey ... it is not Maltese honey ... olive oil etc. So, people cannot compete with the mass producer... but with marketing what do you want ... quality? Uniqueness? Genuine Maltese product? Or do you want Lidl biscuits... which is good but its in that club ... economies of scale ... quotas, and ways to protect the local industry which is part of our history. The honey rings are Maltese ... while there are variations in Spain ... that is our Maltese product so it needs to be patented and safeguarded ... even the ġbejna.

8. The high protein diet in our society is relatively a recent phenomenon 150 years or so in western countries, it has however become so entrenched in our culture that a child would start eating meat on a daily basis before he develops the concept of death. In addition to this in our society we are moving ever further away from the harsh reality that meat comes from dead animals ... there are no more bones in supermarkets unlike before where the butcher used to butcher and break down a whole body in the shop. Do you believe that the concept of death should be emphasized more from a young age or could it do lasting damage?

I think we need to teach the human being that there is a beginning and an end on this planet, how you teach it, depends on their age, their intellectual abilities and would they want or not want to know, but we have to teach it from day zero, because we are not here forever ... because if we don't know that we could be careless we could do things foolishly ... so if you like it is a way to remind people, listen... hang on you're going to die now whether you believe in god that is different, but you might be charged I don't know ... when you die. If you have a religion and you believe in God and I want to love my neighbour as myself, so to be careful. The other thing to say is, do you show a child a cow being slaughtered? I wouldn't go to that extreme when they are young but there are people who are closer to animals than others and now you know that even an octopus has sensation, so what's going to happen I'm not going to farm an octopus? Some people like Lobster boiled alive and it screams. Some people eat live birds (in France) so what are we talking about ... the concept is very deep. What happens if we find out that plants feel? Are we not going to eat

them? What are we going to do? So, the argument is very complex. I feel that if a person is intelligent enough saying I don't want to kill a cow, OK, I'm going to eat something else but I have my vulnerable child and I must make sure that if he doesn't get the protein from there, he gets it from somewhere else because that is neglect and abuse. In an ideal world we could artificially make protein and meat, but we don't know if it's safe or not.

If you are born in a meat-eating family, so what you're going to do ... not eat anymore? Or if it's your job? So, I tell you stop working?

I think there is no ideal diet, like these fad diets, blood group diets, keto diet, I don't think the evidence is very strong. If I like tiramisu, I cannot take it for 6 months after a while I'm going to take it. The bottom line is that there are ethical moral standards in a legal framework to protect the vulnerable and not abuse mother nature.

9. The conundrum of freshness in a supermarket is that meat products with a less animalistic form ... more processed are bought much more than meat products with animalistic form ... this goes opposed to the usual of fresh is better. Does this happen for convenience only or is there an element of guilt?

The people who I speak to that don't eat meat speak about them being slaughtered, so if they don't see the actual shape of the animal, yes. Its marketing again they want to appeal to the person for example I am vegan, and I am a body builder and I take protein. Bovine protein is an animal protein ... you have to kill the cow. It could be guilt, but it is about selling the consumer sick society ... you want to sell, if I know kids like chicken nuggets because all kids like chicken nuggets, I put them like barney shape because kids like barney, put bob the builder on them ... never mind processed meat.

10. The meat paradox, where when human beings eat meat, they do not worry about the feelings of their pet ... nor do they wish for their pet to be killed and cooked for them to eat. What makes it guilt free to kill and eat a pig but the thought of eating your pet utterly upsetting?

Because like human being your pet dog has a name, he sleeps next to you, he licks your hand in the morning, he is a source of company, he has an identity. The pig doesn't have that identity ... he could have it, but you don't know it and you are not physically killing the pig, pigs are also very intelligent animals there are stories of pigs running away. Winnie the pooh, piglet is a very prized person, In the lord of the flies, piggy was the intelligent one. The thing is you have to be an animal lover or no animals. Because if you never had an animal you don't care. Remember the markets do not want us to know this because if you have a child seeing the pig killed that means one less customer in the future.

11. While a food addiction might not have consequences as severe as an addiction to certain drugs, there are risks of binge eating; heart disease, diabetes, cholesterol, phases of hyperactivity and crashing when it comes to sugar addiction. Some people might use eating as a comfort, or they crave sugary products after a stressful or irritating life experience. Is there a way of analysing habits of friends or family in the aim of figuring out whether it is just simple indulgence or an addiction? How could one make moves to help a person who is in this destructive behaviour?

A food addiction could be as damaging as a drug addiction, the form changes but the damage is there. There are a number of things, weight loss, weight gain, vomiting, bingeing. Six KitKat at one go ... a whole Maltese bread, three gbejniet, four packets of Twix, a whole tub of Nutella... that is bingeing and then vomiting. Not functioning at work, school, home, relationships ... talk about self-harm, feeling ugly, not showering, looking at the signs, having other addiction, dieting, alcohol, excess gym, sleeping pills. Help your GP your therapist and if you need there is a new therapy which helps with excessive eating or not eating ... Magnetic Stimulation Therapy.

Like an MRI you sit down, you watch a tv showing food and if I eat too much the food the magnet is going to be calibrated to suppress the excessive eating, so when I'm hungry I want to eat if I am not hungry, I don't eat. The other way round, if I have anorexia and I eat too little, I can set the magnet and I can stimulate the magnet to balance the body image.

Also, for helping crisis, because this is a crisis, there is also the crisis team on Facebook, and there is also the Krizi app. That is where you can get help.

12. What is your opinion on veganism? Is it an enough foundation for a moral superiority over meat eaters or should it be taken as a "religion" where anybody should practice a diet as they please and nobody should consider his diet morally superior to other's?

All of those and more, it depends on the personal example, elitist snobbery, the I know more than you ... I care more than you. So really veganism is one of the movements ... there is Nazism, it is an ideology and a way of behaving ... some people want to belong to these extreme groups ... and some vegans are extremists on marijuana, politics, football, there are some personalities which lend themselves to that, there are certain characters which enjoy radicalism, extremism and it depends where you are in the world and what time you are in because if I'm a radical I can join the Taliban, if I'm radical, and in another place I can join veganism, I'm not saying all the people that are vegan are extremists but it is more appealing because they get an identity, they want to be different, as I said there is no ideal in life. To conclude, whatever the case as long as my behaviour is done with good intention and I don't hurt myself and society and nature so be it. Because like that we will have fewer problems, fewer psychological problems, fewer political problems, fewer spiritual problems and we will hopefully try and live with respect and with harmony between ourselves and nature

7.4 – Survey Sample

Q1
What is your country of origin?

Australia

Q2
How old are you?

23

Q3
Do you follow a religion where you practice restraint to certain food products? (such as but not limited to Islam or Hindu)

No

Q4
Do you follow a diet, not restricted by allergies or religion, where you opt to not eat certain food products such as pescatarian (does not eat meat but eats fish) or vegetarian (does not eat meat or fish but still eats animal products such as milk and eggs)? If yes please specify.

No

Q5
What is your field of study/work?

Other (please specify):
Corporate Business Administration

Q6
Do you believe that marketing efforts such as stickers on vegetables has an effect on how much people buy said product... an example would be the 'Majjal ta' Malta' label.

Agree

Q7

Q7

For people trying to manage their weight, psychology plays a part in their everyday diets, due to behavior (eating patterns) and cognition (self-defeating thoughts) (Brillat Savarin). What in your opinion hinders weight control?

Bad Habits

Time Management

Q8

Disgust is the fear of ingesting offending substances into the body, with the exception to what is internationally disgusted (decaying flesh, body fluids) Do you agree that what is deemed disgusting is culturally determined?

No (please comment):

To some degree yes but mainly no. I feel like many cultures love to try other cultures food. For example, in Australia there are many restaurants with different cuisines offered. It comes down to personal choice if you are willing to explore the different foods available

Q9

Being on top of the food chain the human regards meat as the pinnacle of hierarchical domination. Does the rejection of meat mean the rejection of the domination?

Neither agree nor disagree

Q10

The concept of death is not something which we are born with and in a meat-centered culture, meat is regarded as 'healthy' and we realize the concept of death when we have become accustomed to meats in our diets. Do you think that the reliance on meat is something we are born with or something which we are grown accustomed to?

Something we are born with

Q11

When you start with a necessary evil and then over time the necessity passes away, what's left? (Matthew Scully) What is your view on hunting?

Neither agree nor disagree (Hunting should remain as is with seasons and protected species)

Q12

Do you have pets?

Yes

Q13

When you eat meat chances are you do not worry about your pet's feelings... nor you wish for your pet to be cooked for you and served for you to eat, what do you think is the factor of this?

The pet is usually bred for meat and to be eaten. I would not personally eat a pet I am emotionally attached to

Q14

An animal is not capable to suffer.

Some animals suffer others do not (example: mammals suffer but not insects)

Q15

Not knowing where the food comes from is the most powerful reason for eliminating any meat-related guilt.

True

Q16

Processed foods such as nuggets, sausages and burgers are the items most sold in restaurant supermarkets... these are the items which look the least like a dead animal. Do you see this as a conundrum to the usual ... fresh is better?

No I prefer fresh over frozen

Q17

The British frown upon the eating of horse, while it is practiced in France where horses are even farmed for their meat. These socio-cultural factors make the eating of some animals, not being in the same category of domesticated animals such as cats and dogs and not in high production such as pigs or cows. Do you feel more guilt eating horse when compared to other animals?

Yes

Q18

Did you know that meat coming from different countries has different control measures, especially outside of the EU. In the US 80% of all antibiotics produced are produced for the livestock industry (a practice outlawed in the EU). How aware are you of where your meat came from?

A lot

Q19

When it comes to the Vegan argument, the argument about the exploitation of animals makes certain crops non-vegan. The Avocado being the most controversial of these crops uses forced pollination of bees (being transported in trucks across countries) this migratory bee-keeping is unnatural and cruel to the bees which are being exploited. Do you regard these kind of crops as vegan?

Yes (if you eliminate everything that had contact with animal you would eat almost nothing)