

# Veganism and the Social Identities of Race, Gender, and Sexuality: A Scoping Review

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## Abstract

A small but growing body of literature exists around social identities and veganism. Interest in veganism is increasing, thus it is important to understand how social identities may contribute to experiences of veganism. This scoping review seeks to report on the available literature as it relates specifically to veganism and identities related to race, gender, and/or sexuality. This is the first scoping review on this topic. Records were identified through databases (n=7), and hand searches of key authors, reference lists, and the author's personal library. This review identified 29 studies that fit the inclusion criteria. There were 27 qualitative studies (93%), and 2 quantitative studies. Both hegemonic masculinity and whiteness were challenges that vegans had to contend with but were also concepts vegans reinforced. Whether they challenged or reinforced these concepts often depended on the vegan's own social identities but was not limited to those. Thematic coding of the primary studies' content identified barriers (social disruption, accessibility, and representation), and facilitators (personal development, social relationships, good food, activism) of veganism. There were few primary studies (13, 45%) and of these studies each mostly considered only one of, gender, race, and sexuality. Therefore, more primary research in these areas should be conducted to strengthen the results of previous studies. Finally, veganism must be decolonized but it also holds decolonizing potential.

**Keywords:** vegan; social identity; hegemonic masculinity; whiteness

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social identity has been defined as “part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel 1978:69). Social identities may include one’s racial or ethnic groups, gender groups, and groups related to sexual orientation. These groups are important to study because they are connected to power and privilege within society. Increasingly, people are making the case that social identities can influence one’s experience of veganism (Conn 2015; Greenebaum 2018; Harper 2012; Ko and Ko 2017).

In the *Sexual Politics of Meat*, Adams (1990) explores the relationship between gender and animal consumption, arguing that feminism and vegetarianism are interconnected. Lockwood (2021) estimates that 80% of vegans in the United States are women. This uneven gender distribution among vegans could be indicative of broader concerns. For instance, recent research finds hegemonic masculinity to be an issue within veganism (Brookes and Chalupnik 2022; Jones 2021). At the time this scoping review was undertaken there existed one systematic review on the intersection of gender and vegetarianism/veganism (Modlinska et al. 2020). This review explores, within the psychological literature, the sex and gender differences in perceptions of vegetarianism/veganism including the perceptions from both those who eat meat and those who exclude animal products from their diets (Modlinska et al., 2020). Since this time, an additional literature review of the psychological literature (Salmen and Dhont 2022), has been published, finding that vegan men are considered less masculine within society. Finally, regarding 2SLGBT+ people and veganism, Quinn (2021:265) suggests that “one seems to encounter more vegans within LGBTQIA+ communities than anywhere else.”

When it comes to race and veganism, authors such as Ko and Ko (2017) and Harper (2012) explain that mainstream media often present veganism as a white phenomenon. This stereotype is connected to the concept of whiteness. Whiteness is “the way that white people, their customs, culture, and beliefs operate as the standard by which all other groups of [sic] are compared” (National Museum of African American History & Culture, n.d.) Thus, people of colour have been marginalized and largely erased from the image of mainstream veganism due to the privileging of white vegan representation (Alvarez 2019). A seminal work that challenges this erasure is *Sistah Vegan* edited by A. Breeze Harper (2010/2020). Authors in the anthology focus on Black women’s veganism, and how veganism can be leveraged as a tool towards decolonization.

The research that has been undertaken on veganism and social identities comes from a wide range of disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, and communications studies, among others, so researchers may not be aware of the literature that exists beyond their academic field. Further scoping or systematic reviews that examine the intersection of veganism and social identities are needed because they may reveal insights related to the experience of veganism within different social groups. In addition to impacting people within that social group, different experiences may lead to differences in the uptake and maintenance of veganism. It is important to understand what the various disciplines have covered thus far in regard to veganism and social identity so that researchers, and advocates

of veganism, will begin to know where there may be gaps related to equity and veganism, at least as related to the social identities explored within this scoping review.

In this scoping review, I seek to report on the extent of the available literature as it relates specifically to veganism and identities related to race, gender and sexuality. Additionally, I will report on barriers to veganism and facilitators of veganism which are at times influenced by the social identities of identified populations. I aim to go beyond generating an overview of the body of literature found through the scoping review, to explore in depth, through thematic coding, the content of the studies identified through the scoping review (Arksey and O’Malley 2005). It was anticipated that studies had selected people who self-identify as vegan, which I accepted for this scoping review.

This scoping review is guided by the following questions: 1. What does the existing literature say about the intersections of veganism and race, gender, and/or sexuality? 2. What are the barriers or concerns of people in race, gender, or sexuality related population groups regarding veganism? 3. Are there any identified factors that facilitate the practice of veganism for people within race, gender, and/or sexuality related social groups?

In the sections that follow I will first describe the methodology used for this scoping review, followed by the quantitative and qualitative results. These results include major and minor concepts found within the literature. The major concepts were engagement with hegemonic masculinity and engagement with whiteness. The minor concepts were women’s healing from disordered eating and queerness. Thematic coding revealed a series of barriers and facilitators to the practice of veganism. The barriers are social disruption, lack of accessibility, and representation, while the facilitators are personal development, improved social relationships, good food, and activism. The results are followed by a discussion, an overview of the limitations of this scoping review, and conclusions.

2. METHODOLOGY

In this review, I follow the Joanna Briggs Institute protocol for scoping reviews outlined in the *JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis* (Peters et al. 2020). Vegans are the population under study, and the context is global. The inclusion and exclusion criteria include the type of resource among other factors. Please refer to Table 1 for more information.

TABLE 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Contains the key words in title and/or abstract	Review article
Engages with the concept of social identity and veganism	Veganism, or plant-based eating, is not the primary focus of the article.
Peer-reviewed literature or dissertations and theses	Results are purely medical or nutrition oriented.
English language	Results relate to vegetarianism only
Published in 2010 or later	Grey literature (except dissertations and theses)

In consultation with a librarian at the University of Waterloo (Consultation date: February 1, 2021), I chose seven databases based on their comprehensiveness: CINAHL, LGBTQ+, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global<sup>TM</sup>, PsychInfo, PubMed, Scopus, and Sociological Abstracts.

After searching all databases, I uploaded results to Covidence, a tool for managing systematic reviews. Duplicates were automatically removed, except for one pair that was removed during full-text screening. Myself and another reviewer, completed the screening process. To supplement this process, I also searched the works of pre-identified authors of interest (A. Breeze Harper, Cory Wrenn, Carol J. Adams, Jessica Greenebaum, Laura Wright). Then, once all records were identified, myself and the second reviewer each reviewed a random selection of 25 records. When we agreed about the inclusion or exclusion of the records, we moved on to title and abstract screening of the remaining records. At the screening mid-way point, we met to discuss our progress. We determined there were no additional modifications to the screening criteria required, and each reviewer completed the set. I then scanned the reference lists of records that remained post-abstract screening for any additional records that could be added. Next, we each charted three records and the results were compared across reviewers. A high level of consistency was found, so I charted all records remaining after the abstract screening.

The variables used for data charting were: author name(s), year of publication, title, topic, country of origin, country of study, resource type (i.e. journal article), academic field, purpose, research questions related to veganism, definition of veganism, author reflexivity, social identity of participants, additional group characteristics, number of participants, methodology, methods, key results, themes, strategies for veganism, barriers to veganism, and facilitators of veganism. Any statement about an author's social identity was considered an element of author reflexivity. I then tallied or coded charted data by hand, using a deductive and inductive approach. Thematic coding was used for the inductive approach (Lam, Dodd, Skinner, Papadopoulos, Zivot, Ford, Garcia, IHACC Research Team, and Harper 2019) and was applied to the data in the categories of key results, barriers, and facilitators of veganism.

### 3. RESULTS

Following the process outlined above resulted in two forms of results, quantitative and qualitative. In the following section, I present the quantitative results of the scoping review first, followed by the qualitative results. Within the qualitative results are the results of the thematic coding and the minor and major concepts found within the literature. The minor and major concepts were identified based on frequency, yet I summarize them qualitatively.

TABLE 2. Search Terms Used with the Database Search

<b>"Vegan*" or "Plant-based" and Race</b>	<b>"Vegan*" or "Plant-based" and Gender</b>	<b>"Vegan*" or "Plant-based" and Sexuality</b>
Aboriginal*	"Female-to-male"	2SLGBT*
"African American"	Feminin*	Bisexual
"African Americans"	FTM	Gay
"African Ancestry"	Gender dysphori*	GLBT*
"Alaska Native"	Genderqueer	Homophile
"Alaska Natives"	Gender	Homophilia
Asian	Gender minorit*	Homosexual*
BIPOC	"Gender nonconforming"	LGBT*
"Black American"	Gender transition*	LGBBT*
"Black Americans"	Masculin*	Lesbian*
Caucasian*	Man	MSM
Ethnic*	Men	"Men who have sex with men"
"Ethnic group"	Non-binary	Non heterosexual
"Ethnic Groups"	"Trans female"	"Non heterosexual"
"Ethnic population"	Transgender	"Pansexual"
"Ethnic populations"	"Trans male"	"Polysexual"
Hawaiian*	Trans man	Queer
Hispanic*	Transman	"Same sex"
Indian*	Transmen	Sexual*
Indigenous	"Trans men"	"Two-spirit*"
Latin*	"Trans people"	"Women who have sex with women"
Maori	"Trans persons"	WSW
"Mexican American"	Transwoman	
"Mexican Americans"	Transwomen	
"Mixed-race"	"Trans woman"	
"Native American"	"Trans women"	
"Native Americans"	MTF	
"Pacific Islander"	"Male-to-female"	
Pacific Islanders"	Woman	
"People of colour"	Women	
"Person of colour"		
"People of color"		
"Person of color"		
Race		

### 3.1 Quantitative Results

In total, 1232 records were found through the database searching (See Figure 1). Searching the papers of key authors yielded another 14 records. Searching reference lists and a hand search of my library of literature yielded 5 and 4 records

respectively. After screening, 29 studies remained, as indicated in Figure 1. For a list of the included studies see Table 3.

**TABLE 3. Studies Included within this Scoping Review**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Aguilera	2014	Gender
Avieli and Markowitz	2018	Race
Bartke	2019	Gender
Brady and Ventresca	2014	Gender/Race/(Class)
Brown	2014	Gender/Race/Sexuality
Costa	2019	Gender
Crimarco	2019	Race
Dean	2014	Gender
Doyle	2016	Gender/Sexuality
Dunn	2019	Race
Fegitz and Pirani	2018	Gender/Race/Sexuality/(Class)
Gambert and Linné	2018	Gender/Race
Greenebaum	2018	Race
Greenebaum and Dexter	2017	Gender
Harper	2010	Race
Harper	2013	Race
Hart	2018	Gender
Johnson	2011	Gender
Lindgren	2020	Gender/Race(Class)
Navarro	2011	Gender/Race/Sexuality/(Class)
Potts and Parry	2010	Sexuality
Quarles	2018	Gender/Race
Robinson	2013	Gender/Race
Simonsen	2012	Gender/Sexuality
Stenberg	2017	Gender
Stephens Griffin	2015	Gender/Sexuality/(Class)
Thill	2021	Gender
Thomas	2016	Gender
Wrenn and Lizardi	2020	Gender

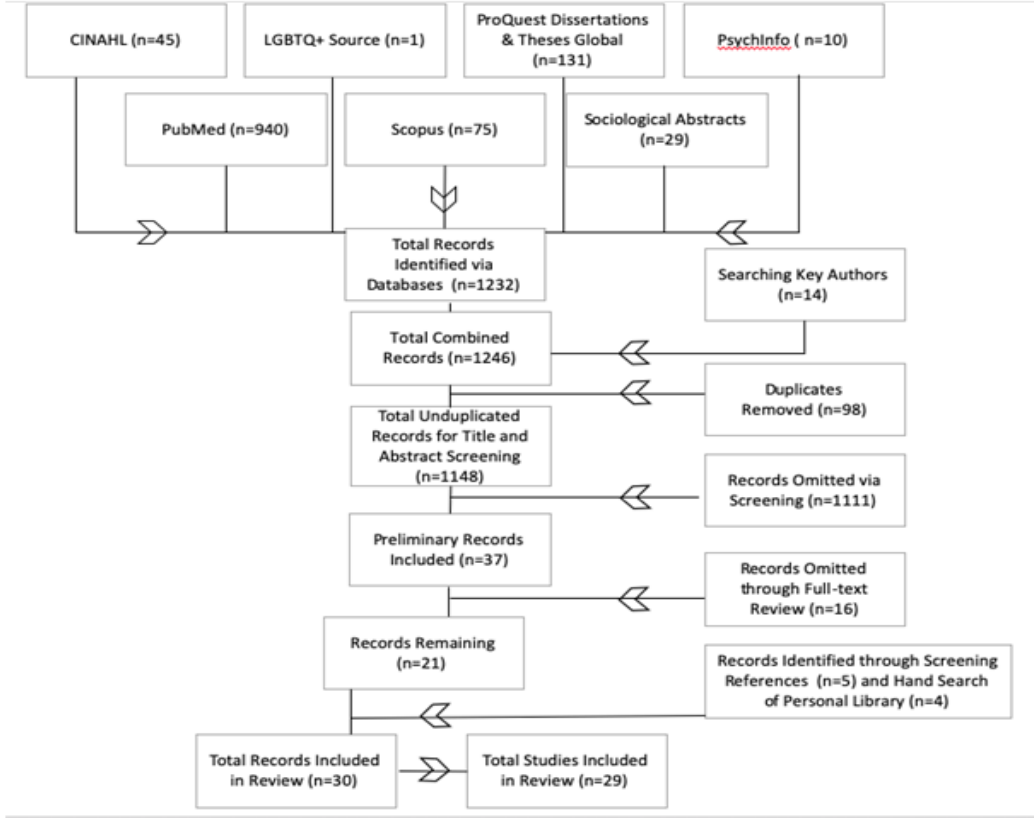
Of the 29 studies, 7 (24%) (Aguilera 2014; Doyle 2016; Greenebaum and Dexter 2017; Johnson 2011; Lindgren 2020; Stephens Griffin 2015; Thill 2021) endorse a definition of veganism provided by the Vegan Society or by the founder of the vegan society, Donald Watson. Eight (28%) other studies describe veganism holistically as a way of life (Greenebaum 2018; Navarro 2011; Robinson 2013), a “worldview” (Bartke 2019) a form of activism (Costa, Gill, Morda, and Ali 2019), an ethic (Harper 2013b), while one expands the definition of veganism to incorporate a Māori worldview (Dunn 2019) and another the African Hebrew Israelite worldview (Avieli and Markowitz 2018). However, five (17%) studies have less fulsome definitions and describe veganism only in dietary terms (Crimarco 2019; Harper 2010; Hart 2018; Thomas 2016) or as a “consumption-based movement” (Wrenn and Lizardi 2020:1). The remaining nine studies (31%) do not provide a definition of veganism. The earliest studies were published in 2010 (Harper 2010; Potts and Parry 2010). From January 1, 2010 to March 1, 2021, there were between 1 and 5 studies published annually. The most recently published study, a dissertation, was published in January 2021 (Thill 2021). There was at least one study published each year from 2010 onwards, and there are more studies concerning gender in the second half of the decade of 2010-2020 than in the first half. The majority (16, 55%) of the papers’ authors are from American Universities, followed by Canada and the UK which each produced 4 (14%) studies, then Sweden with 3 (10%), Aotearoa (New Zealand) with 2 (7%), Australia and Israel with 1 (3%) each. Of note is that some studies have authorial teams with members from different countries, so the total exceeds 29.

Of the total studies, 17 (59%) are journal articles, 8 (27%) are master’s theses, and 4 (14%) are doctoral dissertations. Of these studies 13 (45%) are primary studies<sup>2</sup> 16 (59%) are secondary studies and 1 (3%) is conceptual (Simonsen, 2012). In terms of engagement with the themes under investigation 22 (76%) studies include analysis related to gender, 14 (48%) include analysis related to race, and 7 (24%) include analysis related to sexuality. Some of the papers engage with more than one of these themes. While it was not under investigation in this scoping review it is worth noting that 5 (17%) papers include analysis around class as well.

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<sup>2</sup> One study, (Navarro 2011), used both primary and secondary data

FIGURE 1. Flow Chart



3.2 Qualitative Results

The quantitative results have helped provide context for the qualitative results. The qualitative results indicate major and minor concepts discussed directly by the authors in the literature in relation to race, gender, and sexuality. The major concepts include hegemonic masculinity and whiteness, while minor concepts include improving women’s disordered eating and queerness. Through thematic coding, several themes in relation to barriers to the practice of veganism (e.g., social disruption, accessibility, representation), and facilitators of the practice of veganism (social relationships, personal development, good food, activism) were found. I will present engagement with hegemonic masculinity and whiteness first, followed by healing from disordered eating, queerness, barriers to the practice of veganism, and facilitators of the practice of veganism. The barriers and facilitators are found within the primary studies that were included in the scoping review due to their focus on veganism and one of the aforementioned social identities. Therefore, while the barriers and facilitators may not all link directly to social identity, they are found within studies that focus on social identity and are therefore relevant to this scoping review. Only primary studies were analyzed because the secondary studies for the most part did not explore barriers and facilitators of veganism.



### 3.3 Major Concepts in the Literature

#### 3.3.1 Engagement with Hegemonic Masculinity

Of the studies that focus on gender, a common concept is hegemonic masculinity (9, 31%). Hegemonic masculinity is defined as “the pattern of practice (i.e. things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:832). Hegemonic masculinity is based on the concept of the ‘ideal man’, who is constructed as heterosexual, white, cis-gendered, able-bodied, middle-class, etc. (Johnson 2011). The studies that specifically included the topic of hegemonic masculinity draw on primary (Greenebaum and Dexter 2017; Stenberg 2017) and secondary data (Aguilera 2014; Bartke 2019; Brady and Ventresca 2014; Brown 2014; Gambert and Linné 2018; Johnson 2011; Potts and Parry 2010; Quarles 2018). There were a further 3 secondary studies that spoke of the reinforcement of traditional Western gender norms more broadly (Doyle 2016; Fegitz and Pirani 2018; Hart 2018). The concept of hegemonic masculinity manifests in response to veganism and from within veganism. Explanations for this include the idea that because meat is so linked to masculinity (Adams 1990) non-vegan men feel threatened by vegans (Potts and Parry 2010), while vegan men may either feel their masculinity is threatened or they may embrace an alternative masculinity. In the sections that follow, I will present these alternative masculinities and a brief overview of media and hegemonic masculinity. Alternative masculinities can exist outside of hegemonic masculinity and anti-hegemonic masculinity through what authors term either renaissance (Brady and Ventresca 2014) or hybrid (Greenebaum and Dexter 2017) masculinities. Vegans that reinforce hegemonic masculinity have been termed, ‘hegans’ (Johnson 2011). Greenebaum and Dexter (2017) state that the vegan men in their study do not qualify as hegans, rather the participants’ hybrid masculinity blends aspects of hegemonic masculinity with femininity. However, hybrid masculinity does not directly confront hegemonic masculinity. For example, Greenebaum and Dexter (2017:341) note that, “veganism did not shape their [participants’] definition of masculinity, it strengthened their identity as ‘good’ men”. In contrast, Stenberg (2017) finds that veganism shapes some participants’ views of masculinity, yet men in Stenberg’s work also reinforce hegemonic masculinity. Bartke (2019) also concludes that vegan men reinforced hegemonic masculinity through the images they shared on social media, while also representing themselves as “good” men, through posing in photographs with domesticated animals. Bartke (2019) notes that through vegan men’s construction of hegemonic masculinity, they may create a veganism that is less threatening to mainstream men’s masculinity and therefore may attract more men to veganism. This increases the normativity of veganism, which could have implications for veganism as a queer practice. Referring to the insider-outsider representation of veganism, one outsider group of interest is the media. Cole and Morgan (2011:134) introduced the term “vegaphobia” in reference to the media’s treatment of veganism. Although a vegaphobic media could be presumed to represent hegemonic masculinity, the media’s portrayal of vegans challenges and reinforces hegemonic masculinity (Aguilera 2014; Brady and Ventresca 2014; Potts and Parry 2010). The media may, for example, choose to focus on the health over ethical reasons for why

someone would become vegan, thereby preserving the masculinity of the vegan which would otherwise be threatened (Brady and Ventresca 2014).

As Brown's (2014) analysis of a PETA campaign demonstrates, hegemonic masculinity can also be reproduced through organizations that create media. Brown (2014) finds the PETA campaign reinforced aggression, violence, and dominance. Hart (2018) also finds that vegan bloggers and commenters reinforce traditional Western gender norms through their casual banter on blogging websites. The average vegan man may challenge and reinforce hegemonic masculinity as well through actions as commonplace as posting to social media (Bartke 2019; Gambert and Linné 2018). Individually, a person may contest hegemonic masculinity and reassert it, regardless of their status as a vegan or not.

The studies in this scoping review found that high-status vegans, such as celebrities, can resist or reassert hegemonic masculinity through the media they produce. This is significant because celebrity vegans may have a large following and can be influential in the lives of their followers. For the studies included in this scoping review, media relates to celebrity vegans: Alicia Silverstone, Arian Foster, Beyoncé, Ellen DeGeneres, Queen Afua, and Stic.man. Of these celebrities, the authors' analyses indicate that only DeGeneres "calls into question normative values, extended by her choice to become a vegan" (Doyle 2016:787). DeGeneres is notably an out lesbian.

### 3.3.2 Engagement with Whiteness

Within this section, I present whiteness as the second major theme that emerged from this review. Whiteness is an element of the colonial view of the 'ideal man'. Thus, it is no surprise that whiteness emerged as a significant concept within this scoping review given the prominence of hegemonic masculinity. Of the studies that explored race and veganism, more than half included a specific examination of whiteness (Brown 2014; Gambert and Linné 2018; Greenebaum 2018; Harper 2010; Harper 2013b; Lindgren 2020; Navarro 2011; Robinson 2013). Harper (2010:5) has critiqued mainstream American veganism as having "epistemologies of whiteness" and called for "anti-racist and color-conscious praxis". However, the issue of whiteness is not limited to the USA at the time of Harper's writing, as Lindgren (2020) recently found whiteness to be an issue in Sweden. Non-vegans may try to reinforce whiteness and repress vegans, in particular vegans of colour (Gambert and Linné 2018). White vegans themselves may also be guilty of reinforcing whiteness (Greenebaum 2018; Navarro 2011). Confronting whiteness is a challenge for all vegans, and Harper (2013b) writes that even vegans of colour who seek to decolonize can inadvertently perpetuate whiteness through their own actions and statements.

Vegans of colour may resist the whiteness associated with veganism (Greenebaum 2018; Harper 2013a). Greenebaum (2018:680) finds that the vegans of colour who participated in their research "engage in a process of differentiation and normalization from white veganism to destigmatize veganism to communities of color". Navarro (2011) writes that vegans of colour may take up an intersectional approach to their veganism that may be missing from a white vegan approach. Robinson (2013) explains how there are associations between whiteness and veganism, but upon exploring the legends of her Mi'kmaq community, she finds that

veganism is compatible with her Indigenous identity. Both Robinson (2013) who writes from Canada and Dunn (2019) from Aotearoa (New Zealand) find that veganism could be compatible with their specific Indigenous worldviews and is perhaps a way to decolonize. Harper (2013b) and Navarro (2011) wrote of decolonizing through veganism as well.

### *3.4 Minor Concepts within the Literature*

#### **3.4.1 Women's Healing from Disordered Eating**

The first of the minor concepts that arose from examination of all 29 studies is women's healing from disordered eating. Some of the studies engage exclusively with women's narratives, or with participants who identified as women, and had experienced disordered eating patterns (Costa et al. 2019; Dean 2014; Thill 2021). The women in these studies were reported to generally have seen a reduction in their disordered eating patterns, which they attribute to veganism. The authors connect this to the deeper reasons for veganism such as ethics.

#### **3.4.2 Queerness**

Queerness is the final minor concept that emerged from this scoping review. Two studies engage with the notion of queerness in substantive ways. First, Simonsen (2012) explores the notion of queerness, which was defined as outside of sexuality and conceptualized as a form of deviance so that in becoming vegan, one effectively becomes queer. Simonsen (2012) asserts that not eating meat is a way to resist heteronormativity. Second Stephens Griffin (2015) self-identifies as queer and explains his attempt at showing what the 2SLGBT+ community may have in common with veganism whilst not equating the two. Similarly, Wrenn and Lizardi (2020) contrast older adult 2SLGBT+ people's experiences with older vegans' experiences particularly as it relates to social relationships. Although some studies identified having participants who were 2SLGBT+ the studies did not explore these participants' experiences to learn about how they may differ from non-2SLGBT+ people (Greenebaum and Dexter 2017; Stephens Griffin 2015; Thill 2021; Wrenn and Lizardi 2020).

### *3.5 Results of Thematic Coding*

#### **3.5.1 Barriers to the practice of Veganism**

There are a few barriers to the practice of veganism that were identified within the primary studies. These barriers are social disruption, lack of accessibility, and representation and they will be elaborated upon in the following section. Social disruption involves participants feeling disconnected from others due to their veganism (Costa et al. 2019; Greenebaum 2018; Stephens Griffin 2015; Wrenn and Lizardi 2020) as well as challenges with cultural differences between a vegan diet and the participants' original way of eating (Crimarco 2019; Greenebaum 2018;

Stenberg 2017). The results indicate that participants feel judged by non-vegans (Wrenn and Lizardi 2020) but at times by vegans too (Thill 2021). Lastly, vegans of colour face microaggressions from the white vegan community (Lindgren 2020). A perceived lack of accessibility of veganism is related to a lack of knowledge (Avieli and Markowitz 2018; Crimarco 2019; Stenberg 2017), including on the part of healthcare professionals, (Wrenn and Lizardi 2020). Another concern is the expense of healthy food in general (Crimarco 2019; Greenebaum 2018). For example, Crimarco (2019:108) finds that “[B]lack neighborhoods in particular lacked quality healthy meals”. Some vegans also report that ideas of purity in veganism are a barrier (Thill 2021) and some vegans consider themselves to have “broken” their veganism if they ingested medicines or underwent medical treatment that was not vegan (Stephens Griffin 2015; Wrenn and Lizardi 2020).

The representation of veganism is also a barrier because of the negative portrayals of vegans through stereotypes, including whiteness (Greenbaum 2018; Lindgren 2020; Navarro 2011) which links to one of the identified major concepts. Other stereotypes include vegan men being seen as weak and effeminate (Greenebaum and Dexter 2017), linking to the other identified major concept of hegemonic masculinity. In contrast, women are seen as thin and healthy (Thill 2021). These stereotypes may have negative implications for the wellness of vegans of different body types, abilities, and health statuses. Finally, older vegans report a lack of representation within the vegan movement (Wrenn and Lizardi 2020).

### 3.5.2 Facilitators of the practice of Veganism

The facilitators of the practice of veganism that appeared in the primary studies include personal development, improved social relationships, good food, and activism. First, personal development, which came from realizing one’s ethics (Costa et al. 2019; Thill 2021) and finding a sense of purpose (Costa et al. 2019; Wrenn and Lizardi 2020) as well as setting personal boundaries (Wrenn and Lizardi 2020), gaining control (Costa et al. 2019), and enhancing masculinity<sup>3</sup> (Greenebaum and Dexter 2017; Stenberg 2017). Second, improved social relationships includes making connections (Costa et al. 2019; Lindgren 2020) and love (Thill 2021). Third, good food reflects eating flavourful food (Crimarco 2019; Thill 2021) food that contributes to health (Greenebaum 2018; Navarro 2011; Thill 2021), and eating culturally appropriate food (Crimarco 2019; Greenebaum 2018; Navarro 2011). Finally, activism came in the form of fighting stereotypes, (Greenebaum 2018) providing education (Crimarco 2019; Thill 2021), normalizing veganism (Greenebaum 2018; Stephens Griffin 2015), updating images of veganism to represent vegans of colour, and fighting oppression (Greenebaum 2018).

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<sup>3</sup> Enhancing masculinity may have been perceived positively by the vegans who were performing their gender in this way, although it may have negatively reinforced hegemonic masculinity.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

In this scoping review, I identified two major concepts: hegemonic masculinity and whiteness. Importantly, this review has shown that hegemonic masculinity and whiteness are challenges within veganism as well as social constructs that vegans can contest. These concepts respectively answer the research question related to the intersection of veganism and gender and veganism and race. There were also two minor concepts. The first related to women's enhanced relationship with food and decreased disturbances in their eating patterns due to veganism, (further addressing the intersection of veganism and gender). The second, queerness, addressed the intersection of veganism and sexuality. Together these major and minor concepts reveal what the existing literature says about the intersections of veganism and race, gender, and/or sexuality. These social identities do intersect with veganism and their intersections demonstrate both limitations to veganism and opportunities for resistance. The concepts of whiteness and hegemonic masculinity (which include heteronormativity as a component) are tied to the ideals originally brought from Europe to the world during the colonial era. Therefore, the way to combat whiteness and hegemonic masculinity is decolonization. Indeed, Polish (2016) explains how critics of veganism have labelled it as neocolonial. However, recent works have challenged this notion, often by decentering whiteness (Deckha 2020; Dunn 2019; Ko and Ko 2017; Robinson 2013; Robinson 2014). Decolonization is an ongoing, daily process (Grey and Patel 2015), meaning diet is a particularly potent way to demonstrate commitment to decolonization given the frequency and regularity with which people eat. Authors have recognized the decolonizing potential of vegetarianism (Calvo and Rueda Esquibel 2015) and veganism (Harper 2020/2010). Several studies in this scoping review have labelled veganism as potentially decolonizing (Dunn 2019; Harper 2013b; Navarro 2011; Robinson 2013), while others have pointed in this direction (Avieli and Markowitz 2018). While there are limitations within veganism, as shown through the studies included in this scoping review, there is also fertile ground for resistance and decolonization. Future work should continue to explore the potential decolonial nature of veganism and the ways in which this can have an impact beyond individuals, extending to communities.

The first of the minor concepts was women's healing from disordered eating. The research included in this scoping review found for some women ethical veganism can be a mechanism through which lessening of their disordered eating occurs. Therefore, veganism should not be automatically dismissed within the lives of women experiencing disordered eating. Rather it will need to be explored on an individual basis, all the while recognizing that a person's motivations for veganism may change with time. As the studies on disturbed eating behaviours indicated, and Modlinska et al. (2020) have suggested, future research could focus on the intersection of mental health and veganism to determine the linkages that may exist.

The second minor concept was queerness, which may or may not relate to sexuality. Overall, within the literature there was limited research around sexuality, with one major exception being Potts and Parry (2010) who studied the notion of vegan sexuality. When Stephens Griffin (2015) explored the concept of vegan sexuality, he found the idea did not resonate with his participants. However, of the 13 primary studies that were included in this review, nearly half identified having 2SLGBT+

participants. It is possible that there were additional studies with 2SLGBT+ participants but the authors simply did not screen for this when collecting participant demographics. Although it is believed that veganism is common among the 2SLGBT+ community (Quinn 2021), I was only able to identify one study for which the queer experience was a focus (Stephens Griffin 2015). Within this study the author called for 2SLGBT+ specific research related to veganism (Stephens Griffin 2015). While recent texts have explored queerness and/or 2SLGBT+ identity and veganism (Ó Baoill 2023; Russell 2023), they are not primary research and thus do not contribute to filling the identified gap. However, this literature may point towards a rich avenue for future research. While the research on veganism and gender in particular, seems to be increasing, it appears to be limited to research on men and women, with the experiences of people who are non-binary, or identify with other genders, so far not having been explored. This is an additional area for future research.

Simonsen (2012) posited that the experience of coming out as a vegan may resemble in certain ways the experience of coming out of the closet for 2SLGBT+ people. While these two experiences cannot be equated, it would be worthwhile to investigate this further. As indicated by the studies included in this scoping review, individuals have found that the shift in identity to becoming a vegan led to disconnection from community, but this is an experience many 2SLGBT+ people have had when coming out as non-cis and and/or non-heterosexual. It would be important to know if 2SLGBT+ vegans faced further marginalization or were more readily able to navigate the vegan coming out process because of their experiences related to gender or sexuality. For instance, Modlinska et al. (2020) argue that a gay, vegetarian man may challenge societal norms in two ways, through vegetarianism and sexuality, and he may therefore face a double burden of stigma within society regarding perceptions of his masculinity.

This scoping review also identified a series of barriers and facilitators to the practice of veganism that are present in the lives of vegans as identified through studies on gender, race, sexuality, and veganism, thus answering the second and third research questions. The barriers were social disruption, accessibility and representation, while the facilitators were personal development, social relationships, good food, and activism. The barriers and facilitators of veganism were largely connected to social identity and suggest mental, emotional, and physical ways in which veganism could impact vegans. As in this scoping review, past research has found that vegetarianism and veganism may be associated with social disruption or discord (Asher and Cherry 2015; Jabs, Devine, and Sobal 1998; Torti 2017). The facilitators of veganism identified through this scoping review were like those found by Torti (2017) regarding ethics and Jabs et al. (1998) generally. These results suggest that there may be similarities in the experiences of vegetarians and vegans.

As with other identity categories there are insider and outsider views that are constructed about the identities of vegans (Wright, 2021) which can have implications for the wellbeing of vegans. On one hand, vegans may experience social disruption or lack of representation (both barriers identified within this scoping review). On the other hand, vegans can experience wellbeing through emotional, mental, and physical realms. The specific benefits or challenges vegans experience can be connected in part to their social identities (Ko and Ko 2017). For example, vegans of colour are negatively impacted by whiteness. There is a dominant "white narrative" (Alvarez, 2019:8) in American veganism, and while this message came

through within the scoping review as a major concept, studies that highlighted resistance to whiteness were also found (Greenebaum 2018; Navarro 2011). As I demonstrate, social identity can have significant connections to veganism through concepts that influence how social identities are experienced. Social identities shape barriers and facilitators of veganism. For example, in, *Aphro-ism*, Aph and Syl Ko (2017) explain that one's identity shapes their experience and understanding of veganism. Within this chapter, the authors advocate for connecting one's identity to their veganism as a mechanism through which to illuminate how their perspectives have shaped their veganism (Ko and Ko, 2017). This is a way to combat whiteness. However, there is a danger in this as well. For example, there may be implications for safety for 2SLGBT+ people outing themselves or for discrimination towards people who reveal they have a mental illness or a disability. These aspects of identity may be argued to inform people's veganism, but disclosure should not be necessary in order to legitimize one's veganism.

#### *4.1 Limitations*

This scoping review was limited to studies in the English language. Therefore, it is possible that articles of significance in other languages were excluded. Furthermore, the term vegetarian was possibly used as an umbrella term in some studies. Lacto-ovo vegetarianism and veganism are both different types of vegetarianism. While referring to both groups together as vegetarians is not incorrect, it does lack specificity and may have resulted in the elimination of studies that were referring to veganism and not lacto-ovo vegetarianism.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In this scoping review, I included both primary and secondary studies that considered gender, race, and/or sexuality. There were few primary studies (13, 45%) and of these studies each mostly considered gender, race, or sexuality alone. Therefore, more primary research in these areas should be conducted to strengthen the results of previous studies. The currently existing research points to important areas for further investigation. While there are different barriers and facilitators of veganism several of them are related to the prominent concepts of hegemonic masculinity and whiteness, which suggests that decolonization of veganism is required. However, the results of this scoping review also suggest veganism has potential to contribute towards decolonization.



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