

Ethical Consumption: Values and Practices of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian Vegans in the UK

Ellie Atayee-Bennett, Department of Sociology, Social Policy, and Criminology, University of Southampton
Supervisors: Dr Bindi Shah, Prof Emma Roe, Dr Heidi Armbruster



Background

- Veganism is rapidly growing in the UK.
- Religion remains significant, with up to 2/3 of the population of England and Wales still identifying with one of the above-named religions [1].
- Studies on veganism rarely explore religious belief and practice.
- Food and ritual are very important to religion, so studying veganism in relation to it is very important.



Research Aims

1. How does one become a Muslim, Jewish, or Christian vegan?
2. How are veganism, religion, and culture negotiated in everyday practice?
3. How do Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans relate to the wider vegan community?

Overall Research Question:

How are Muslim, Jewish, and Christian vegans reshaping and redefining religiosity and veganism in late modern Great Britain?



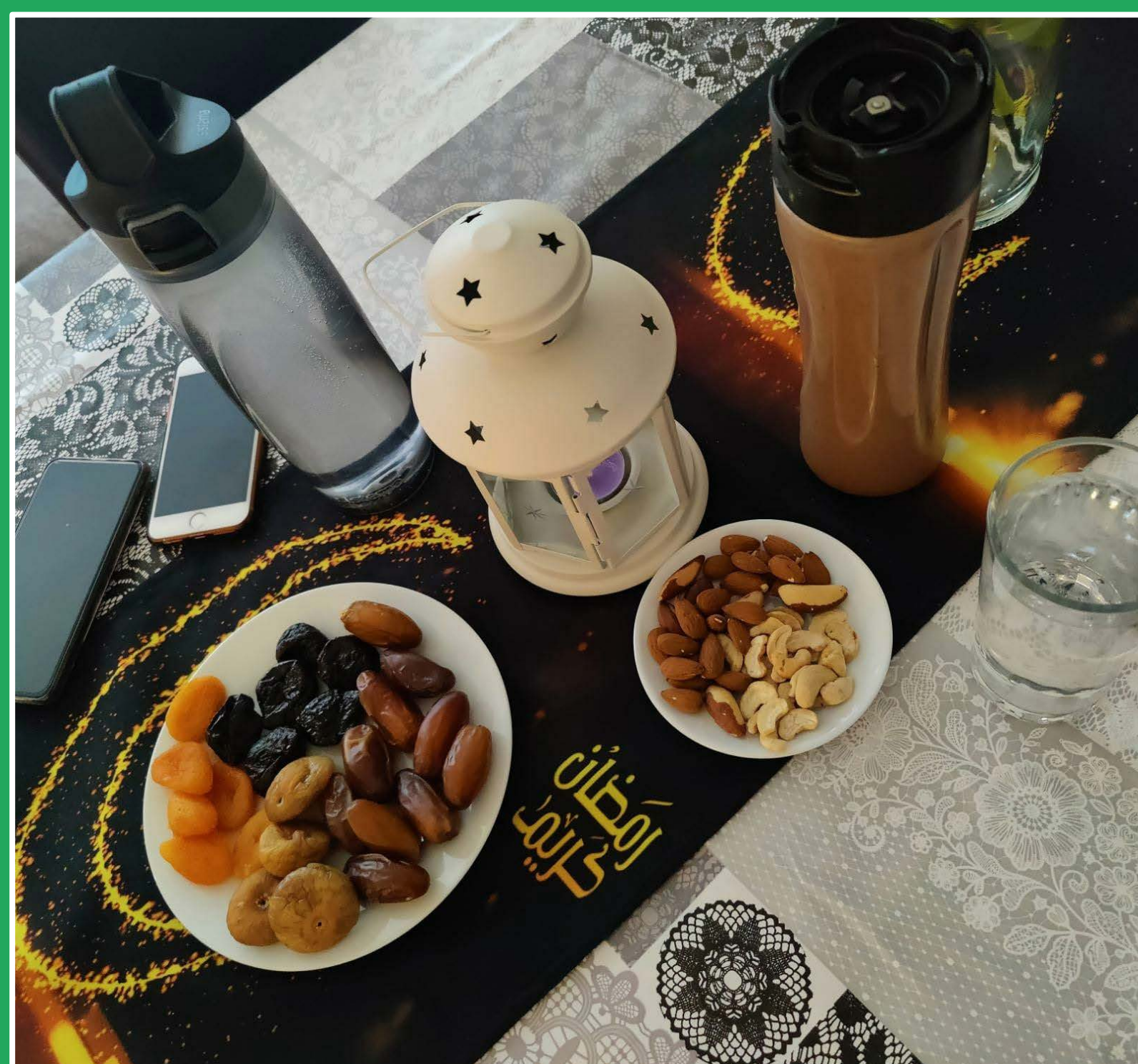
Methodology

Sample:

- 36 participants:
 - 12 Muslim vegans
 - 12 Jewish vegans
 - 12 Christian vegans
- Aged 18+
- UK resident for 5+ years

Methods:

- 36 semi-structured qualitative interviews
- Three WhatsApp diary groups (one for each religion) spanning 3-4 months
- Participant observation conducted over six online calls involving cooking demonstrations and/or kitchen tours



Key Findings

- Participants' thought processes were guided by their understanding of ethics.
- Participants re-interpret or reflect upon religious teachings and values in line with veganism.
- Participants overcome challenges posed by religion and culture by veganising recipes, opting for alternatives, or transforming religious practice in line with religious teachings and values.
- Religious vegans rarely interact with the wider vegan community and thus have more isolated experiences.
- Due to conflicting beliefs and values, some religious vegans didn't feel comfortable with vegan activists.
- Instances of antisemitism, Islamophobia and even stigma towards Christians in vegan communities have further isolated participants.



Conclusion

- In late modern Great Britain, religious pluralism, religious individuality, and religious re-interpretation are on the rise.
- Veganism was understood in multiple ways but all considered it to be in alignment with religious values and teachings and an appropriate response to the context of the modern day.
- Many participants felt that in being vegan, they were consequently better practitioners of their religions.



References

[1] Office for National Statistics (2020) 'Exploring religion in England and Wales: February 2020'. Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/exploringreligioninenglandandwales/february2020>

Ellie Atayee-Bennett

✉ E.Atayee-Bennett@soton.ac.uk

🐦 [E_AtayeeBennett](https://twitter.com/E_AtayeeBennett)

🌐 www.ellieatayeebennett.com

