

Risks of Veganism's and Rawism's Popularity for Ecology

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It would be reasonable to say that switching to meat-free dietary preferences became a major trend of the twenty-first century. While some people refuse to eat meat for ethical reasons—namely fighting against cruelty against animals—others suggest that plant-based diets are the ones that are the most sustainable, thus environmentally friendly. However, among people who refuse to include meat in their daily diet, there are individuals that seemingly go to extremes. Such people appeal to veganism or rawism—a kind of dietary preference that excludes cooking products by any means. In such a sense, veganism and rawism is a growing trend. In fact, proponents of such diets argue that eating food uncooked constitutes not only the best way of obtaining essential vitamins and microelements, but also presents the most sustainable way of eating. Following such logic, one should argue that regardless of the claims that rawism and veganism are the most sustainable dietary preferences, such diets tend to pose significant risks to ecology.

As a starting point, it may be assumed that rawism and veganism are the most environmentally friendly and sustainable forms of eating since there is no need of killing animals. Therefore, there should be visible positive effects of rawism and veganism on ecology. However, research suggests the diametrically opposite—namely indicating diets that incorporate some animal-source foods require the utilization of less land than vegan diets (Smith, 2017). In such a sense, one should proceed by saying that there is a geographic location where people cannot afford growing enough plant-based foods to sustain the existence of population living in that area. In fact, one can think of regions consisting predominantly of dry lands. Farming becomes the only sustainable option for individuals living in such areas (Smith, 2017). As a result, one can say that in the context of the growing problem of overpopulation, rawism and

veganism are not the most sustainable solutions—the ones that will help ecology to maintain the needs of humans.

Going further, it is necessary to admit that the majority of products consumed by people who can switch to rawism and veganism are imported from distant countries. Interestingly, with the growing demand for plant-based products from abroad, the cost of exportation of such products increases. As a result, while growing foods for export, people in countries from which plant-based food originates can suffer from high prices for their products (Henderson, 2018). So, while consumers from developed countries benefit from importing healthy plant-based foods, exporters of such products can experience financial damages. As a result, a heavy focus on plant-based foods, a core constituent of veganism, cannot be deemed sustainable when individuals from the developing world experience adverse economic impacts from a large demand for such products on the part of the developed world.

Furthermore, when evaluating rawism and veganism on the scale of its positive environmental impact, one should say that results presented by proponents of such dietary approaches are highly overestimated. In fact, people choosing rawism and veganism consider cooking as an act of killing a plant. However, what people forget to mention is that cooking or pasteurization is also a process of eliminating bacteria and viruses. As a result, it is apparent that while avoiding cooking food, people intentionally make themselves susceptible to various diseases (Wanjek, 2013). The problem is that many diseases a person can catch are infectious. It seems reasonable to suggest that the potential rate of spreading viruses and bacteria among people who do not cook their food can be devastating. On the grander scale, rawism and veganism can cause a pandemic—something that will undoubtedly pose a severe risk to ecology.

Finally, when comparing the different dietary preferences of people, it becomes apparent that it is not the diet per se that is sustainable and ecologically friendly, but instead the individual choices people make. The study, "Environmental impact of omnivorous, ovo-lacto-vegetarian, and vegan diet," compared different meat-based and plant-based diets—suggesting the least environmental impact was made not by particular dietary preferences, but instead by the way people grew and consumed food (Rosi et al., 2017). So, it may be more ecologically friendly to have meat in one's diet than be a proponent of veganism if the meat a person consumes was grown locally. As a result, balance is the right word when it comes to choosing the most environmentally friendly dietary approach.

Considering all the above, one should say that while rawism and veganism can potentially pose significant ecological risks related to the pandemic or rapid spread of infectious diseases, it also seems that the rate of sustainability of such diets is overestimated. While it has been proved that rawism and veganism require more land to feed populations, a dependence on plant-based foods—primary ingredients in diets as mentioned earlier—can have adverse economic effects on countries exporting such foods. Therefore, avoiding ecological risks by prioritizing particular diets is not appropriate. Instead, people should think about the ways they get products as well as the means they use to consume them. Balancing one's dietary preferences is the key to an ecologically friendly diet.

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