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Green and/or brown: Governing food production in India

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ABSTRACT

In 2011, the Indian state made it mandatory to label all packaged food products to indicate whether they are vegetarian (green/veg) or non-vegetarian (brown/non-veg). Given the rise of a consumer culture relying on super/hypermarkets, these labels are now ubiquitous on packaging throughout India. While the concept of *ahimsa* (non-injury to all living creatures) is central to Hinduism, and Hindu vegetarianism has been thoroughly explored in the literature, there is no corresponding exploration of how labelling "green" and "brown" conditions food and food ingredient production in India. Moreover, India is a major producer of meat, in particular water buffalo beef. Based on fieldwork in India, this article explores how manufacturing companies understand and practice "green" and "brown" as nationalized standards. I argue that while existing studies of vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism overwhelmingly explore micro-social aspects, such as everyday consumption among social groups, the nationalized overlapping technologies and techniques of production and regulation, which combined determine whether a product is veg or non-veg and thereby help to format the market, are not well understood. This paper addresses the research question: what are the consequences of the nationalized green/brown regulation for food production in contemporary India? Based on ethnographic fieldwork, the paper explores the green/brown regulation and the management thereof in manufacturing companies.

1. Introduction

During my eight-month fieldwork trip to India in 2017, I visited one of the country's largest multinational food manufacturing companies, located in South India. The company manufactures both vegetarian (including ready-made meals) and non-vegetarian (meat, poultry and seafood) food, which poses certain challenges in terms of managing vegetarian (green/veg) and non-vegetarian (brown/non-veg) production. Companies such as this one, producing both veg and non-veg, are not easy to find in India. I intend to show how the boundaries between green and brown production are more regulated and enforced than ever before in Indian history. In 2011, the Indian state made it mandatory for all processed food products to be labelled to indicate whether products are vegetarian (green) or non-vegetarian (brown) (Fig. 1) and I shall explore this legislation as an effort to nationalize food production in the country. The food processing complex in the multinational food manufacturing company occupies a large area in a rural zone outside one of South India's major cities, and the whole complex is carefully designed and managed so that green and brown production remain separate, in line with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI, 2011) specifications. The FSSAI often carries out both announced and unannounced inspections and audits to check that green/brown production compliance is properly managed. The concept of *ahimsa* (non-injury to all living creatures) is central to Hinduism, and Hindu vegetarianism has been thoroughly explored in the literature. However, there is no corresponding exploration of how "green" and "brown" in the wake of the 2011 nationwide legislation condition food and food ingredient production in India. At the same time, India is a major exporter of meat, in particular water buffalo beef – for example, the company discussed above is a major producer of water buffalo meat and I shall return to that in the empirical portion of the article.

Based on fieldwork in India, this article explores how manufacturing companies understand and practice "green" and "brown" as nationalized regulation and standards. I argue that while existing studies of vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism overwhelmingly explore micro-social aspects, such as everyday consumption among social groups, the nationalized overlapping technologies and techniques of production and regulation, which combined determine whether a product is veg or non-veg and thereby help to format the market, are not well understood. This paper addresses the research question: what are the consequences of the nationalized green/brown regulation for food production in contemporary India? Processes of globalization are also essential: for example, as we shall see, the world's largest producer of enzymes, Novozymes, complies with Indian green/brown legislation in the company's plant in Bangalore.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork, the last part of the paper explores green/brown regulation and management in manufacturing companies.

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Fig. 1. Veg (left) and non-veg (right) instant noodles in an Indian hypermarket.

Representatives in companies were selected for in-depth interviewing and participant observation, focusing on corporate strategies for coping with the vegetarian regulation. The paper is divided into the following sections: firstly, I discuss how this paper forms part of a larger research project. Secondly, the scene is set by reflecting on the relationship between *ahimsa* and meat in the Indian context with a specific focus on the anthropological literature. Thirdly, the next section focuses on the politics of veg/non-veg. Fourthly, I discuss the nationalization of "the green" in India, including standards and audit culture. Fifthly, I move to describing the green/brown ethnography of manufacturing companies. Lastly, the conclusive discussion ties the findings of the article together and reflects on this paradox: an ever more dominant ideology of vegetarianism introducing vegetarian state regulation since 2011 in the context of India becoming ever more meat producing/eating.

2. The project

This paper forms part of a larger research project that explores veg and non-veg at different levels of the social scale such as food producers, super/hypermarkets, regulators and veg and non-veg Hindu middle-class consumers in India (Fischer, 2019). Hyderabad was chosen as the primary fieldwork site because the city has experienced a retail revolution and changing consumer culture as have few other places in India. Over the last couple of decades, the city has boomed economically, and this has led to an influx of well-educated migrants and social mobility among Hindu groups most of all. For example, more and more international super/hypermarket chains such as Star Hyper and Spar, in which I did fieldwork, open outlets in the city and particularly in the surrounding suburbs: in these outlets all packaged foodstuffs carry green/brown logos. My project explores the paradox between an ever more dominant ideology of vegetarianism and India becoming ever more meat-eating in the name of "meat modernity," that is, meat, and non-veg more generally, signifying health, nutrition, and urbanized/individualized/flexible lifestyles. My study shows that the relationship between veg and non-veg is being redefined in contemporary India: the long-held idea that the more individuals and social groups follow a vegetarian lifestyle, the higher the social status they will enjoy is breaking down. Moreover, veg and non-veg are increasingly individual lifestyle choices determined by concerns such as health rather than religious orthodoxy—and ironically all this takes place in the context of state regulation of veg (green) and non-veg (brown).

The vast majority of my Hindu respondents/informants are meat-eaters who listed reasons such as health, taste and family for meat-eating. Thus, regardless of age, gender, education/income and caste, the idea that meat is healthy has become widespread. The majority of meat-eaters consume meat on a weekly basis, and as income levels rise meat is more frequently bought in hypermarkets where respondents come into contact with the green and brown marks. However, the vast majority of informants were not familiar with green/brown logos. These findings contrast the Indian vegetarian ideology – meat-eating is dominant across all social groups in Hyderabad. Moving beyond veg and non-veg, Harris' (2016) ethnography explores diabetes and obesity in Mumbai. More specifically, the study considers how people make connections between food and urban life, including how food produced by large companies is promoted to incorporate "healthy" qualities. Of specific relevance to my study is longstanding fears of food adulteration, which the food industry now addresses by producing and marketing branded, packaged and supposedly healthier/safer foods. Luetchford's (2008) ethnography on coffee in Costa Rica details cooperative members' engagements with Fair Trade to demonstrate the cultural embeddedness of the movement in moralizing discourses about the economy. Fair Trade Coffee is framed as an ethical purchase and a moral decision to challenge neoliberal transactions as inherently unequal. Not unlike the vegetarian ideology in India, the feel-good Fair Trade marketing discourse and the movement's calls for social justice also lead to multiplicity and ambiguity among various actors. In sum, veg/non-veg is only one example of broader tendencies to promote/mark mass-produced foods as healthy, ethical and proper. At the same time, production processes governed through standards are essential to format the market.

3. *Ahimsa*, veg and non-veg

Ahimsa originally signified non-violence to living beings and had nothing to do with vegetarianism (Alsdorff, 2010). Cow veneration in India comprises the world's most important surviving cattle cult, rejecting beef as food for humans, even though cattle are important in Indian economic life. The sacred cow concept gained impetus from rivalry between Muslims and Hindus at independence and the ban on cow slaughter was incorporated into the Constitution of India, Article 48, leading to decades of legal controversy often involving Muslims. Today, cow slaughter is banned in many Indian states. Article 48 mandates the state to prohibit the slaughter of cows and in 2005 the Supreme Court of India upheld the constitutional validity of anti-cow slaughter laws enacted by 20 out of 29 Indian states. While the export of beef (cow, oxen and calf) is prohibited, the meat of buffalo, goat, sheep and birds is allowed. India is home to the world's largest concentration of water buffalo. It is important to note the difference between water buffalo and cattle beef or zebu cows (also known as indicine cattle or humped cattle). However, as we shall see, this paper moves beyond meat when exploring the consequences of processed and packaged

foods that carry green/brown labels such as the instant noodles in Fig. 1. This type of product reflects the success of global capitalism and a form of "consumer citizenship", that is, industrialized foods that allow affluent groups of consumers to belong in the modern world and transform social relations in India (Baviskar, 2018).

I now review the recent anthropological literature on vegetarianism and meat. To Hindus, food/drink is closely related to bodily substance, health, well-being, purity/pollution (Malamoud, 1996), as well as to caste, class, gender and kinship (Caplan, 2001) – and foreign foods are particularly susceptible to pollution and this warrants the display proper labels and logos. In a Special Issue of *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* on *Food: Memory*, *Pleasure and Politics* (Osella, 2008), Indian vegetarianism was explored from a range of perspectives. The editor writes that while subaltern groups are normatively non-veg, many dominant groups are normatively veg and another assertion is the association made between vegetarianism and non-violence. This is one of the cornerstones for upper-caste Hindu claims to moral, spiritual and personal superiority, discourse commonly claims that Muslims and Dalits, untouchables, are inferior and violent meat-eaters. As we shall see, the vegetarian discourse (vegetarian food is superior and pure and so is high-caste Hindus) has given impetus to a range of governing practices in industrialized food production. Other contributions explore the food hierarchy in India: an order of superiority that descends from vegetarianism, to meat-eating (but no beef), to beef-eating Chigateri (2008) and at the heart of this food hierarchy lies the sacredness of the cow and understandings of non-violence. Another point is ways in which the veg/non-veg food distinction among the powerful northern India caste, the Yadavs, enters the nexus of caste and politics (Michelutti, 2008), that is, veg and non-veg in India index types of people and physical, psychological and spiritual effects. Donner (2008) focuses on the how the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s informed changing lifestyles and consumer orientation with reference to food availability and consumption among urban Indian middle-class households. More specifically, semi-processed foods associated with the "West" were introduced and these were both popular and debated among Bengali middle-class households. Non-veg dishes were now available in shops to be consumed in middle-class nuclear households. Similarly, based on material from Madras, Caplan (2008) challenges the idea that vegetarianism is associated with Brahmins and non-vegetarianism with non-Brahmins, arguing that a more complex and changing array of dietary choices exists within the Brahmin and non-Brahmin middle-class populations. Finally, in Klein's (2008) afterword, he argues for more cross-cultural comparisons of meat-eating and vegetarianism. Moreover, decisions to eat or accept particular foods may be highly strategic in the broader perspective of historical transformations such as how the transnational food economy, for example, is conditioned by specific economic and cultural contexts.

Ahmad (2018) explores successful Muslim Qureshi butcher shops in Delhi in the context of ways in which the meat sector, both domestic and for export, has exploded in the last three decades. The meat sector has seen the emergence of new technologies, new geographies and new economies in the post-colonial and particularly post-liberalization period. Similarly, Brara (2018) explores the visual culture of meat-shop signs in Delhi and these religious signs are concerned with morality and ethics voiced in the idiom of the religious. Inspired by the anthropology of ignorance, Staples' (2019) study of butcher shops, cattle traders, and beef eaters in South India (where most of my fieldwork also took place) shows that the beef trade, unlike popular notions, also directly concerns Hindus. The emergent body of literature on animality in South Asia (Dave, 2014; Govindrajan, 2018; Narayanan, 2018) is welcome as it provides a more nuanced picture against the predominant literature that mostly explores microsocial aspects such as everyday consumption among Hindu groups and, to a lesser extent, public veg/non-veg. The reviewed literature shows that meat production, trade, regulation and consumption are integral to everyday practice in India and in the ethnography, I shall explore how not only meat production, but also the production of processed foods and food ingredients are subjected to new forms of national standards.

4. The politics of veg/non-veg

In 2011, under the Congress-led government by PM Singh, FSSAI under The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare introduced green/vegetarian/veg and brown/non-vegetarian/non-veg marks on all packaged foods/drinks in India. Non-vegetarian food is defined as "an article of food which contains whole or part of any animal including birds, fresh water or marine animals or eggs or products of any animal origin, but excluding milk or milk products, as an ingredient". Whereas vegetarian food is "any article of Food other than Non-Vegetarian Food as defined in regulation" (2011,30). Moreover, "Every package of 'Non-Vegetarian' food shall bear a declaration to this effect made by a symbol and colour code as stipulated below to indicate that the product is Non-Vegetarian Food. The symbol shall consist of a brown colour filled circle … inside a square with brown outline having sides double the diameter of the circle". Conversely, "Every package of Vegetarian Food shall bear a declaration to this effect by a symbol and colour code as stipulated below for this purpose to indicate that the product is Vegetarian Food. The symbol shall consist of a green colour filled circle … inside the square with green outline having size double the diameter of the circle".

In November 2017, I was in the audience when the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, delivered his speech at the major food fair, *World Food India*, held in central Delhi, which attracted more than 2000 participants and 400 exhibitors from 20 countries. Modi, who has been Prime Minister since 2014, belongs to the Hindu nationalist The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is a strict vegetarian, and promotes vegetarianism as a national project. He informed the audience that India is the world's largest producer of milk and the second largest when it comes to rice, wheat, fish, fruits and vegetables. Modi failed to mention that India is also one the world's largest and fastest-growing producers of meat, and in particular water buffalo beef. Modi's omission points to a much larger issue in that it sustains a vegetarian ideology, namely that India was, is and should be a vegetarian nation. Brahmin groups, the Hindu priestly caste within the *Varna* (caste/class) system, who traditionally promote vegetarianism, and the Hindu nationalist movement of which Modi is at the forefront, have carefully supported this idea. *World Food India* also signifies the complex and changing relationship between nationalized food regulation and globalized food markets I shall explore below.

Under the heading *India's* '*Vegetarian*' *Edict Dismays Cosmetics Industry*, Financial Times (2014) asked "Are your soaps, shampoos, body lotions and cosmetics derived from animal products? India's recently elected Hindu nationalist government believes the country's 1.2bn consumers – many of whom are vegetarians – have a right to know." However, this edict "dismayed India's $6bn personal care and cosmetics sector" that filed a complaint in the Bombay High Court. The dispute put pressure on PM Modi, who promised to "make doing business in India easier yet also needs to placate his most ideological conservative supporters, many of them upper caste Hindus, and strict vegetarians." It was ruled that consumers had a "fundamental right" to information that would allow them to act in consonance with their religious beliefs. The consumer goods industry in India appealed, arguing that questions of "vegetarian" or "non-vegetarian" did not arise, since make-up, soaps and shampoos are not meant to be eaten. After a decade-long legal battle, the companies thought they had finally won their case last year when the Supreme Court overturned the lower court ruling, saying it had no authority to order such a requirement, and only appropriate government authorities could amend the rules. Consequently, PM Modi's administration, "with an eye on its conservative Hindu constituency, has moved to do just that, requiring that any package containing soap, shampoo, toothpastes, cosmetics and toiletries should display the red or brown dots for non-vegetarian products."

I am not aware on any studies that explore the consequences of these transformations. Conversely, BJP's ban on cow slaughter and opposition to meat-eating has been explored as an attempt to provide an account of

Indian cultural history and meat-eating. The Marwaris of Rajasthan are successful merchants, and Babb's (2004) study focuses on trade and its social implications. Babb argues that in India, Hindu and Jain trading castes tend to be associated with vegetarianism and non-violent traditions, and that these privileged positions inform the social and political structures of contemporary India. More specifically, these notions form an important part of the social base of Hindu nationalism. Cow protection, the banning of animal sacrifice, and "vegetarian politics" promoted by the BJP and Hindu groups mobilize constituencies around India. To my mind, the seminal ethnographic study of Hindu nationalism and meat-eating/vegetarianism is Ghassem-Fachandi's (2012) study, which explores violence against Muslims in the state of Gujarat in 2002 in the context of extreme Hindu nationalism. The book focuses on *ahimsa* in the media, violent action and everyday life, demonstrating how ethnic and religious differences between Hindus and Muslims were constructed through diet, animal slaughter and religious sacrifice. Modi was Chief Minister in Gujarat and arguably played a role in these atrocities.

Hindu revivalist agendas characterized by discourses and institutions are penetrating everyday life and reconfiguring public culture (Hansen, 1999). For decades, the promises of modernity, national strength and development were the predominant rallying points in national politics for Congress. Conversely, Modi focuses "on operationalising mega-development in India via globalisation to position the country as an emergent, modern world power and, simultaneously, a well-defined Hindu state." (Chatterji et al., 2019: 10). These changes reflect major shifts in governance, ideology, identity and social relations between the local and the national. The 2011 legislation was introduced under PM Singh and elaborated under Modi in 2014 as we saw it above so these transformations most of all reflect efforts from both Congress and BJP to govern veg/non-veg. This point resonates with Appadurai's (1981, 1988) exploration of "gastro-politics," that is, how beliefs about food encode complex sets of social and moral propositions when tracing the formation of "the national cuisine" and middle-class and public food consumption. He focused specifically on the heightened importance of institutional, large-scale, global, multi-ethnic and public food consumption in India. Class transformation and changed cuisines flourishing in Indian cities are supported by changes in the technology and economy of cooking, for example a large and growing food industry selling ingredients and instant/processed foods. These transformations should all be seen in the context of the commercialization of agriculture, transport, marketing, and credit that are making it possible to expand nationalized food markets and systems in India subjected to green/brown legislation and labels.

5. Nationalized food standards in an era of globalized mass production

Agriculture, food production, modernity, and nation-building are inseparable in India (Gupta, 1998; Ray and Srinivas, 2012). Modern "food science" in India has been nationalized as a hybrid form of knowledge that combines western ideas about science/regulation with local cultural and religious understandings, that is, science's cultural authority as a legitimating sign of rationality and progress (Prakash, 1999). Since the mid-1990s, formal scientific risk management has been codified at all levels of food safety governance in India: firm-level standards, national regulation, and international law. Central is adoption of science-based governance models and ways in which local actors attach their own interests and agendas to science-based reforms. FSSAI is an example of these trends and building strong politico–scientific networks was part of a larger strategy for exercising power (Epstein, 2014).

An important theme is "the green" as ideology versus "brown" practices in modern India. Not only are green/brown labels ubiquitous throughout India and beyond, powerful green discourses proliferate politically, economically, and culturally. It is significant to note a fascination with "the green" in discourses and regulation while, concurrently, India has never produced as much meat as it does today (Natrajan and Suraj, 2018). Foucault's (1991) concept of "governmentality" describes forms of proceduralism and expert knowledge that reshape attitudes and values and interiorize forms of (self)discipline. According to this approach, bureaucratic regulation creates compliant subjects, and auditing and risk management can be seen as the internalization of attitudes and procedures (Power, 1999). Audit culture has been explored from an anthropological perspective focusing on consensus endorsing government through economic efficiency and good practice. In this form of modern accountability, the financial and the moral converge to form a culture of what are deemed acceptable forms. Audits and audit practices are discussed as distinct cultural artefacts in the market that works as a platform for both individual interest and national politics (Strathern, 2000). Bear's (2013) study in an Indian shipyard shows how audits create opacity, disorders the work process and is part of value chains supported by diverse forms of charisma and racial distinction.

Standardization processes are apparent in green/brown certification, but standardization can also be also market driven. Standards are part of the moral economy of the modern world, stipulating norms for behaviour and creating uniformity – which is also pertinent when it comes to the emergence and expansion of green/brown legislation/labels. Moreover, standards are the recipes by which we create realities and they invoke the linguistic categories we use to organize the world – material as well as ideal. Moral and religious behaviours are subject to standards of tolerance, since they define the limits of tolerable behaviour (Busch, 2013).

The 1991 reforms completely altered landscapes of consumer spaces/goods and economic policies (Fernandes, 2006). During a major balance-of-payments crisis, Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's government introduced radical policy changes in the economic sphere that came to be known as "economic reforms" or "liberalization": trade barriers were significantly lowered, the policy of state regulation of industrial production was effectively dismantled, and investments were significantly liberalized. With this, India abandoned a state-centric development model and embraced a market-oriented one. These transformations also mirror wider societal changes, most notably in the form of increased affluence, material status and the fact that a large number of Indian middle-class women work outside the home while still being in charge of buying groceries and preparing food. The whole story is visible in Indian food producers: we see how neoliberal reforms and the intensified globalization of food markets from the early 1990s onwards have led to an increased number of multinational food and biotech producers operating in India and at the same time intensified food imports/exports have led to a pluralization of shopping desires and choices. Thus, green/brown production in India is part of a huge and expanding globalized market in which certification, standards and labelling play important roles. In sum, based on empirical data, this paper explores green/brown standards and their stories in the wake of Hindu nationalism, that is, how manufacturing companies interact with standardized forms, technologies and conventions built into infrastructure (Star and Lampland, 2009). These changes can only be explored on the backdrop of the 1991 reforms and wider processes of globalization and it is to an ethnography of how veg and/or non-veg production exemplifies this I will now turn.

6. Green and/or brown ethnography

I will first explore "green" companies (that only produces veg), then "brown" companies (that only produces non-veg) and finally "green and brown" companies (the produces veg as well as non-veg). Vidal's (2000) ethnography of the grain market at Naya Bazaar, Old Delhi, shows that the grain market is subjected to the politics and fiscal policies of the Federal government. A system of generalized grading has effectively been put into use in the case of certain agricultural products and the biggest traders and exporters support this system and argue that national grain production should be homogenized. Thus, standardization is inseparable from broader processes of classification and categorization. Such processes produce new identities, subjectivities, and forms of social organization. Standards are one of the most important devices that are at play in rearticulations of the

governance of economy and society that also discipline people, organizations, and states in the promotion of self-regulation (Ponte et al., 2011).

A Meat Food Products Order from 1973, issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, reads:

> If the licensed premises are used for the manufacture of meat food products and non-meat food products there shall be a gap of at least one month when the change is made from marine products to meet food products and three days gap when the change is made from fruits and vegetable products to meat products. The premises shall be cleaned thoroughly with disinfectants, one day in advance of production of meat food products and the equipments shall be sterilised before use.
>
> [(Ministry of Agriculture, 1973)]

However, the Order was issued at a time when import substitution was still the order of the day and neoliberal reforms would emerge some two decades into the future, but it shows that veg/non-veg regulation has a long history in India. Under the heading *6 Months Imprisonment to Papad Maker, Sellers*, (The Hindu, 2011) reported that a Judicial Magistrate Court sentenced a papad maker and two sellers to six months imprisonment for making and selling products without conforming to the stipulations and norms of Prevention of Food Adulteration Act. When a food inspector conducted a "surprise check" in a grocery shop at Thatchanallur, the suspicion was confirmed in the analysis and the manufacturer had not printed the mandatory information such as a vegetarian label, batch number, date of manufacturing, or expiry date. The owner of the grocery shop was sentenced to six months simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1000. There may be other incidents such as this, but given the magnitude of green/brown regulation, it is striking that there does not seem to be more food scandals and reports of these in the media. The 2011 green/brown regulation is only the latest piece of legislation on veg and non-veg.

6.1. Green

At World Food India I met the CEO of the South Indian company that strictly produces veg and all the company's products carried the green label issued by the FSSAI in Delhi. The company has 32 employees and among other products it manufactures flour, *poha* (flattened rice) and *suji* (semolina). Before the company can use the mark signifying that the FSSAI audits the company, they test the "veg" quality of products and then the company pays the specified fee. The CEO explains that the FSSAI do "regular inspections and sudden inspections once or twice a month. They check for everything: hygiene, cleanliness, the way we treat plants." The CEO considers the FSSAI logo to be a specific type of "standard or certification". It is up to the company to choose the specific placement of the logo. The CEO considers the introduction of the logo in 2011 the start of a new era. While most companies manufacture either veg or non-veg, the CEO is aware of a handful of companies that do both – for example dairy, poultry and meat at the same complex.

At World Food India, I also met a company CEO and her Indian representative from a multinational food manufacturing based in Europe. The company has many years of experience with the manufacture of fruit-based raw materials for dairy products, beverages, bakery products, desserts, and added value products. The company has an advantage in the Indian market since all of its products are fruit based and can unproblematically carry the green label. Once the company paid the required fee, the label was considered a type of certification or standard. The CEO explains that "Inspectors do not really come to the plant. What they do, the system that we have in India is that they can pick up any product in the market and test it in principle." Local regulations, such as that of the green label, is seen to be part of a broader Indian quality control and assurance. Due to the company being veg in the first place, it did not affect production processes when the green label became mandatory in 2011. The company does not use gelatine: "If we have to use a flavour in our product then we have to take the necessary certificate from a flavour house and then we have to check if there is any non-compliance substance to the vegetarian in the flavour.", the CEO explains. Moreover, the company representatives argue that while the green label is only mandatory in India, the label serves to advantageously brand the company elsewhere too, due to the fact that there is a lot of focus on "green" production internationally. In a way, the representatives suggest, the green label is "added value to products and it can also be considered a standard because we are assuring it is pure veg and doesn't contain non-veg."

Novozymes is the leading enzyme manufacturer globally. The company has enzyme plants in six countries: three in Denmark, two in the US, two in China, two in India, one in Brazil, and one in Canada. Novozymes has more than 6000 employees, and the company makes around 900 enzyme products that are purchased by many different industries that manufacture detergents, food, beverages, textiles, biofuel and animal feed, among other things. The company started its operations in India in 1983 and is the largest supplier of industrial enzymes and microorganisms in South Asia. When I visited the Novozymes facility in Bangalore, the Senior Specialist explained that Novozymes India has more than 500 employees, with three sites in Bangalore that cover research/technology, manufacturing, business functions and a service centre. Some of the key business areas for Novozymes India are: household care, textiles, food/beverages, oils/fats, baking and beverage alcohol. The Senior Specialist has been with Novozymes for 18 years, and she holds an MSc in food technology. Her main responsibilities are raw materials and good manufacturing practices, including the FSSAI vegetarian regulation, kosher ("fit" or "proper" in Judaism) and halal. The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act from 1954 was the first federal law to ensure safe, pure and wholesome food for consumers. The current green/brown labels enforced by the FSSAI are only the latest versions of labelling indicating whether food and ingredients in India are veg or non-veg. Novozymes India is a strictly "green" company, that is, all the company's food grade products carry the green label. However, from 2011 onwards, Novozymes India had to apply for a FSSAI license. The Head of Quality Assurance explains that Novozymes must obtain a "central" license in Delhi. All details can be found on the FSSAI's website. For all three types of licenses, there is a fee that depends on:

> …the type of unit you are putting up. The FSSAI Inspectors come for inspections. They have their federal headquarters in Delhi, but inspections and audits are at the state level. They don't inform us when they are coming here. They can come down whenever they want. They inspected us in 2016. The person who came last time was here for around four hours. We also have FSSAI requirements like how the plant should be established, what kind of activities should be conducted regarding veg and non-veg. Everything is outlined on the website. We have never had any animal ingredients.

When we discussed why green regulation was so important in India, the Head of Quality Assurance argued that: "In India we have populations from Rajasthan, Gujarat and Southern India where many people are vegetarian. There are different cultural backgrounds. So, these logos make it easy to choose veg or non-veg." Most of all, she considered the labels to be "symbols" rather than labels denoting certification or standards. The green label can be found on a wide range of Novozymes India packaging in India and elsewhere, and in Novozymes India's formulation unit, the relevant staff team receives training on labelling each product with green labels. In sum, for Novozymes India, green regulation in India is not very complex or challenging as long as the company only uses ingredients and products that are not of animal origin and there is no formal requirement in terms of staff being vegetarians themselves.

6.2. Brown

During the last phase of my fieldwork in India, I met a CEO of a multinational company based in Europe that produces marine omega-3 powder. Without any smell or taste, the powder can be added to food products to reduce risks of cardiovascular diseases and inflammation and it is important

to the cognitive development and function of children. The CEO explains to me that she has worked with omega-3 for more than 20 years and entering the Indian market has proven to be a major challenge. More specifically, the company faces three challenges, she suggests: firstly, there is the legal requirement that all processed foods in India must bear green or brown dots. This means that any product that is enriched with the company's omega-3 powder must bear the brown label and that is a challenge – especially when powerful discourses maintain that Hindus are or should be vegetarians. The company has contacted major "influencers" in the Indian market that produce biscuits, bread, cakes and dairy products as well as an Indian dairy cooperative that helped the country become the world's largest producer of milk. Both companies were interested in cooperation, but had to decline arguing that "We can't implement your ingredient as it is marine based. We have this regulation in India, and we can't risk our green dot, sorry." Even when the CEO explained that beneficial and efficient omega-3 can only come from fatty fish and not vegetarian sources, this did not animate the companies to reconsider. The CEO also recalls meeting a government civil servant who suggested that for the company to be successful with its product in the Indian market, it had to be a "rulebreaker" that could "green-dot" its products even though it should actually be labelled with a brown dot. The civil servant argued that "rule breaking" and "green-dotting" were in fact acceptable, as the majority of Hindus eat meat and fish in the first place and the green/brown legislation was all about politics and not religious sensibilities. In order to address these issues, the company produces a chocolate bar that contains the recommended daily intake of omega-3 a person needs. At a big food fair in United Arab Emirates several business people from India were interested in the chocolate bar, but had to decline cooperation as the product was not vegetarian. The company's main product is the omega-3 powder that is already added to a whole range of products around the world. This success is built on the company's aim to cooperate with local food producers that can also create value for not only producers, but also health-conscious consumers. One suggestion the CEO is working on is to target smaller and upcoming companies in India, as these may be more willing to take risks compared to the big "influencers".

Secondly, it has become clear to the CEO that not only is India vast and diverse, but existing market research is scarce and not always reliable. The company tried hard to set up meetings with the FSSAI through its home country's Foreign Ministry and embassy in India, but so far, no concrete meetings with the FSSAI have taken place. Multinational food producers new to India are often not sure why their products sell, or do not sell, and they call on their governments and embassies to assist with research and market analysis. "What do Indian millennials eat?" she asks. The CEO explains that even if there is memorandum of understanding between the Indian Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and its counterpart in the company's home country, this has not proven very fruitful so far – most of all there is talk, but not much corresponding action. It was not until the embassy employed local market experts that any progress was made. At the same time, among similar companies in the company's home country, there is reluctance to share experiences with working in India – perhaps due to a concern about intellectual property rights, the CEO speculated. In sum, a company such as this one feels that its Foreign Ministry and embassy could play a much more active role in supporting the company's vision to become successful in India – both in terms of market research as well as setting up specific lines of cooperation and communication between authorities in the two countries.

Finally, and inseparable from the first two points, there is the myth that India is or should be a vegetarian country. When legislation stipulates that all processed food products must be classified and labelled as either green or brown due to vegetarian sensibilities, this supports the myth that the majority of Hindus are or wish to be vegetarians. When we discussed my findings that the majority of Hindus eat meat and/or fish, as it was the case among 90% of my respondents in Hyderabad, this came as a surprise to the CEO. She was aware that demographically the Indian population is young, was aware of the value of omega-3 and that India is one of the top countries in terms of eating fish oil capsules, but she was more unsure about the existence and quality of market research on everyday food habits in a country where food habits are complex and changing. Prior to our conversation, the CEO had asked a Hindu consumer: "Why do you eat fish oil capsules? I thought Hindus were vegetarians." The consumer answered that: "My doctor tells me to eat this." To push for its endorsement of omega-3 enrichment of food and drinks, the CEO consider revisiting the Indian government, which is acutely aware of the omega-3 health benefits in a population that increasingly experiences a range of lifestyle diseases. Checking the stores in India, she found quite a number of products that contained animal ingredients that were erroneously "green dotted". In sum, a company such as this one experiences multiplicity and ambiguity in connection with green/brown regulation, its government enforcement and reluctance among Indian food producers; insufficient knowledge of the Indian market and institutional support from its home country; as well as the myth that essentially Hindus are or should be vegetarians.

At World Food India, I met a representative from a major meat-producing company based in Europe. He holds a diploma in commerce and began working in the meat industry in 1980. Since that time, he has focused on trading meat and training employees in Europe, the Middle East, and China. About 10 years ago, the company became interested in the vast and expanding Indian market. The representative remarked that: "a market of 1.3 billion consumers simply can't be ignored." Most importantly, the company exports pork to India, but it also buys Indian water buffalo meat that is exported to other countries in Asia, in particular. The company is aware that India has local pork production, but as far as the company knew, there is little research on this market.

In order for the company to export meat to India, products aimed at the Indian market are kept separate from "normal production" – especially because they must bear the mandatory brown labels. At the company's headquarters in Europe, this type of compliance only exists because the Indian market is seen to be vast and growing. More specifically, the company exports meat to a local Indian importer that sells the meat to hotels and restaurants and thus green labels have relevance beyond the retail sector. On each label, the following information is mandatory: the brown label issued by the FSSAI, the name and details of the exporter/importer, the license number, the type of commodity, and the expiry date.

The Indian market has proven to be challenging, and total exports to India "only" amounted to 650 tons in 2016: "We're still waiting for the boom, and one of the problems is that Belgian pork exporters were approved before us", the representative explained. These exporters sent large shipments of pork and were "first movers" in the Indian markets that have only recently and slowly begun to open up for meat imports, and pork in particular. "Being a 'first mover' in this emerging meat market for pork is absolutely essential", the representative argued. Moreover, negotiating with local importers is challenging. The company learned that large amounts of Belgian pork breast are consumed by Koreans working in the Indian car industry. The company has been exporting large quantities of pork breast to Korea for decades and knows Korean preferences well, yet the Indian context remains challenging. The Belgian companies were the first movers and they consequently they set a kind of informal standard in terms of pork cuts: chefs in Indian hotels and restaurants are now used to Belgian pork cuts that are cut into 68 cubes, while the cuts offered by the company in question are cut into 90 cubes. "Local chefs can't relate to that now that they're used to Belgian cuts and if we comply with the Belgian cut sizes it means that a lot of meat is wasted", maintained the company representative. Altogether, Indian meat markets are still "unstandardized", and this also goes for detailed market statistics that could potentially be provided by the embassy of the company's home country in India, except that such data has to be generated from scratch and this is time-consuming and expensive. The representative went on to explain: "And this is unfortunate: our feeling is that this is a market in which everything is changing, but we're not sure what the trend is". When company representatives first went to India 10 years ago, they visited Indian supermarkets in Bangalore and elsewhere, such as Big Bazaar and Ratnadeep, and all they found was a very narrow selection of frozen meat and fish – and no pork. Traditionally, pork products in India consisted of Spanish Serrano ham and bacon that had to be boiled or cured to be approved by the food

safety authorities. However, these authorities are often inefficient and difficult to reach. Even though obtaining a certificate signed by the FSSAI is the most important step in order to be able to import, if a customer has an order, this person must apply for an import permit with the FSSAI and this process takes around two weeks on average. When the customer is registered as importer, s/he instructs the company regarding detailed information on labels to be put on each piece of meat. The food safety authority in the company's home country have agreed with their Indian counterpart how a veterinary certificate must be done, and this certificate is then in the certificate database, just like any other certificate. The cold store downloads the form and fills in information about the number of boxes, kilos and product exported. This veterinary certificate is then signed by the veterinarian who supervises the cold store. Similarly, the process of putting the brown label on packaging is troublesome, to say the least, because the brown label is unique to India, it precludes any kind of standardized labelling that is normally unproblematic elsewhere. Altogether, the import process is bureaucratic, and every new customer headquarters has to issue new customer numbers.

6.3. Green/brown

During my fieldwork, I visited one of India's largest food manufacturing companies, located in South India. The company's history stretches back several decades, and during that time it has expanded not only within India but also abroad, where it has production facilities, offices and cold storage. Currently, there are about 1500 employees. The company produces both veg (meat, poultry and seafood) and non-veg food, including ready-made meals, which poses certain challenges in terms of managing veg and non-veg. Following approval by veterinary authorities in many countries, each month the company exports thousands of tons of meat to Asia and Africa especially. The food processing complex occupies a large area in a rural zone outside one of South India's major cities. The company stresses that it does not slaughter cows, bulls or oxen, but only buffaloes, and that as a "Muslim company" all slaughter is carried out according to halal guidelines. These points should be seen in the context of constant rumours circulated on websites, for example, that a company such as this one not only mistreats animals, but also slaughters cows, bulls or oxen illegally. More recently, the company started focusing on the vegetarian market, and now produces items such as frozen french fries, veg burgers, samosas, parathas, fruits, pulps and vegetables.

During my visit to the complex, the General Manager explained to me that he has been with the company for almost 20 years and that his father and grandfather are also part of the same company. As a Muslim, he explained that "If Allah allows us, I hope the future generation will also serve in this business." The green/brown regulation is resource intensive: the FSSAI regularly conducts announced as well as unannounced inspections and audits in the company. A typical FSSAI visit takes an entire day and: "It's different inspectors every time. Ingredients should also have that FSSAI certification and the FSSAI also checks for that. A large number of staff is involved in quality control because it is a big place." That goes both for halal and green/brown regulation. Green and brown labels are only necessary for the Indian market, not for exports, the General Manager explained, as we examined a box of frozen halal buffalo meat product intended for export to the Philippines. However, halal labels for exports are only necessary in relation to meat, not veg. "Food authorities in the Philippines don't require any marks on the inner packaging, but they require branding related to Islamic rights and the slaughtering of buffalos, land registration numbers, production codes and the name of the importer on packages." Islamic authorities often carry out inspections in the company. For example, the JAKIM visit every two years, whereas the FSSAI visit more often.

There are detailed FSSAI rules about the separation of veg and non-veg. The General Manager outlined these rules as follows:

> Veg and non-veg production must be in separate buildings, or at least there must be a wall between veg and non-veg production. When a company starts food production in India, the FSSAI provides layout plans detailing how the plant must be organized. When they award their license, they also check whether or not construction has been carried out according to the plan, and to FSSAI standards. These rules are clear and make production easier – even for companies that only produce veg. Standardizing everything will be good for the Indian market. There is no requirement that Hindus have to be involved in veg production. Anybody can produce either veg or non-veg, but when they produce, it should be pure veg and non-veg.

Similarly, people from all over India, including Maharashtra, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, work at the complex. About 230 employees are involved in veg and the number for non-veg is about 1100. The General Manager made it clear that the difference in the number of staffs assigned to each category has to do with volume. Staff never shift between veg and non-veg production.

Prior to the 2011 introduction of the green/brown labels, there was a mark for non-veg. It was a semicircle coloured brown. In other words, the company already complied with existing regulations and did not have to change its production processes. Most certificates are valid for four years, and if anything changes in relation to requirements or legislation, the FSSAI lets the company know so that it can adjust accordingly. We discussed why green/brown labels were introduced in the first place and in the General Manager's opinion, it was due to: "The unity of the people. According to me, the main idea behind the legislation is to make sure that nobody should suffer when choosing veg and non-veg food items." Before we started our tour around the complex, I noticed that several posters in the reception room stated that the company maintains the highest level of quality assurance, ensuring a hygienic production environment. This was evident as, wearing protective plastic suits, we moved from the non-veg/abattoir area to the veg area in which workers produce samosas, for example. In the veg area, signs above doors state that this was a "Raw vegetables" zone only.

7. Conclusive discussion: patrolling purity

Veg and non-veg are subjected to elaborate forms of regulation in manufacturing companies. Traditionally, companies tend to manufacture either veg or non-veg and that is still the case, except for the last company discussed that is Muslim-owned and the company Nissin that produces instant noodles, as shown in Fig. 1. Even in modern mass production contexts, notions of purity have filtered down and give rise to elaborate forms of proceduralism and expert knowledge, which reshape attitudes, values and interiorize forms of (self)discipline. Elaborate measures are in place to classify veg/non-veg in terms of content (in ingredients/products) and context. In other words, veg/non-veg are subjected to and modified by a whole range of (Indianized) notions, ranging from purification over nationalism to scientification. In all of this, a nationalized form of green ideology permeates manufacturing companies.

Globally, there is a plethora of vegetarian/vegan certifications and labels in existence, but to my knowledge India is the only country that has a national legislation/labelling. I have shown why and how green/brown regulation is inseparable from a new form of nationalized standardization in India. This has been given impetus by Hindu revivalist discourses, cow veneration and the banning of cow slaughter, vegetarian regulation in the form of green/brown labelling, and the fact that India is a major producer of meat and water buffalo beef, in particular. Moreover, neoliberal reforms and intensified globalization of food markets have led to a pluralization of shopping desires and choices and these transformations have direct consequences for local and multinational companies alike: as more and more food is processed and packaged, this calls for governance and labelling and veg/non-veg is only one type of governance to patrol purity/pollution among broader concerns about health and Fair Trade, for example. My study shows that green/brown governmentality also extends far beyond meat – into areas such as biotech production, and the company Novozymes is one such example. Within the past decade or so, the FSSAI has "disciplined" companies. In other words, in India regulatory institutions are

disciplining companies with regard to green/brown understandings and practices, but companies have also become more skilled at negotiating standardized requirements. One reason for this is that green/brown standardization in India is part of the particular history of the country and large companies have started "governing through standards", as it were. A central aspect of audit culture is the pushing of control and self-control further onto companies to satisfy the need to connect internal organizational arrangements with public ideals. As we have seen, audit culture can take on a life if its own. Paradoxically, while my research among Hindu consumers show that vegetarianism and meat-eating are increasingly individual lifestyle choices, rather than determined by religious orthodoxy, Hindus go about their everyday food consumption in a highly standardized market for vegetarian products. It is clear from the above that a multitude of divergent veg/non-veg understandings are now being overshadowed by processes of standardization, and that companies themselves are compelled to deal with these challenges.

Green/brown governmentality, as a state injunction, influences the social organization of businesses, that is, how companies understand and practice veg/non-veg requirements as social organizations. Green/brown regulation can be seen as an Indianized form of a moral economy, in which non-veg in all its forms proliferate when matched by regulation, standards/certification, proceduralism and expert knowledge – among managers, auditors and food scientists. By focusing on the "bigger institutional picture," including regulation, that now frames everyday consumption, I provided a multi-sited ethnography of the overlapping technologies and techniques of production, trade, and certification/standards that together warrant a product as veg or non-veg and thereby help to format the market. We must move beyond meat/beef/cow veneration/*ahimsa* in order to better understand the bureaucratization/scientification of Indian food markets with regard to the explosion of processed foods such as instant noodles. This study exposes a whole range of multiplicities involved in the tension between religion and secular concerns as well as ideology/legislation and everyday practice and more research is welcome in order to further explore these transformations in India and beyond.

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