



THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ANIMAL
CRUELTY

Ramona Birău

Lecturer Ph.D, Constantin Brâncuși University of Targu Jiu,

Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

Craiova, Romania

Ramona.F.Birau@gmail.com

Abstract

The main aim of this research article is to investigate the socio-economic and psychological implications of animal cruelty. Cruelty against animals has often as primary causes severe emotional problems or profound psychological disorders. The level of development and standard of living are factors of significant influence regarding the issue of legislative requirements on animal cruelty.

Keywords: animal cruelty, behavioral deviations, legislation, psychological disorders, law enforcement

I. INTRODUCTION

Animal cruelty is a very complex term which includes a plurality of manifestations in reality. Is there a universal definition of animal cruelty? Unfortunately no because various forms of animal cruelty highlights levels of aggression way too heterogeneous to be summarized in a basic definition. Animal cruelty is a growing phenomenon especially developing countries. Nevertheless these signs should not be ignored. Animal cruelty also known as animal abuse or animal neglect can take various different forms. Moreover, debating an issue which is very important for humanity as a whole highlights the main concern for the moral values remaining affordable for the future generations. Animal cruelty includes among others, deliberate acts of violence against animals, intentional abuse towards animals which are often neglected or forced to fight. Animal cruelty has the form of a social issue affecting innocent animals, ie either domestic (such as livestock and pets), production or wild species. The largest concern is targeting animal victims involved because it often constitute an intentional abuse as a basic cause of human behavioral deviations. The level of development and standard of living essentially influence the legislative requirements regarding animal cruelty. In addition, cruelty against animals is most often based on a deviant human behavior with profound psychological implications.



II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Agnew (1998) investigated the causes of animal abuse and suggested that "I do not believe that criminologists should restrict their attention to criminal acts as legally defined". Schaefer (2007) discussed the topic of animal cruelty along with its numerous negative consequences by using terms such as "critical mental health" and "societal issue" in order to describe it. Bowles, Paskin, Gutiérrez and Kasterine (2005) conducted research based on case studies in the beef and poultry sectors from three countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America in order to investigate animal welfare and high-welfare products from developing countries.

According to National District Attorneys Association in the United States of America, National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, the concept of animal cruelty may involve the following intentional conduct :

- Animal fighting (dog fighting, cock fighting, hog-dog fighting)
- Bestiality (sexual assault)
- Physical harm or killing (beating, burning, choking, hitting, kicking, mutilating, poisoning, shooting, stabbing, torturing)
- Targeting the pet for physical harm in order to coerce humans into silence or compliance of their own abuse.

Arluke, Carter and Ascione (1999) investigated the relationship of animal abuse to violence and other forms of antisocial behavior based on assumptions that support the evolution "from violence against animals to violence against humans". Moreover, PETA international organization stated that : "All animals have the ability to suffer in the same way and to the same degree that humans do."

National District Attorneys Association in the United States of America, National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse suggested that certain american state laws exempt the following activities from animal cruelty laws, ie : animals in research, euthanasia practices, farming practices, hunting and trapping, pest control and rodeos.

According to the Universal Declaration of Animal Rights (proclaimed in Paris on 15 October 1978) at UNESCO : "All animals are entitled to respect" and "No animal shall be ill-treated or shall be subject to cruel acts". Regarding the issue of legislative aspects of farm animal welfare, the European Commission argued that the "enforcement of animal welfare legislation falls within the principle of subsidiarity".

National District Attorneys Association in the United States of America, National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse exemplify human behaviors that define animal neglect, ie :

- Abandonment without proper food, water and shelter (this includes "foreclosure pets" who are abandoned in foreclosed homes)
- Failure to provide proper food, water and shelter
- Failing to provide medical care
- Hoarding
- Puppy Mills
- Starvation
- Tethering a dog outside without proper care



It is also very important that people of good faith report any act of animal cruelty to the local law enforcement or animal control agency. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) revealed a variety of signs that help people to recognize animal cruelty, ie :

- *physical signs of cruelty* such as :
 - extreme thinness or emaciation
 - untreated skin conditions
 - open wounds, signs of multiple healed wounds or an ongoing injury or illness that isn't being treated
 - fur infested with fleas, ticks or other parasites
 - weakness or limping
 - tight collar that has caused a neck wound or another suffering caused to the animal
- *environmental signs of cruelty* such as :
 - Pets are tied up alone outside for long periods of time without adequate food or water or are kept outside in inclement weather without access to adequate shelter
 - Pets are kept in an area littered with feces, garbage, broken glass or other objects that could harm them
 - Animals are housed in completely inadequate kennels or cages

III. A SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ANIMAL CRUELTY

Guidance and legislation framework covering significant issues regarding protection and welfare of animals are directly influenced by the development level of that particular country. The relationship of interdependence between individual and society is rather close and unequivocal. Moreover, the development of society is fundamental in order to achieve a better understanding of the animal cruelty issue. Animal cruelty is caused by deviant human behavior such as antisocial personalities, sadistic, psychopathic personalities or even apparently normal people who have sociopathic tendencies. The main reason leading deviant and pathological behavior is the morbid desire for power and control. However, not all forms of violence against animals are caused by pathological human behavior. In some cases, the basic justification is limited to human greed, negligence, indifference, poverty, poor education or natural desire to obtain economic profit.

According to the most recent FTSE Annual Country Classification Review released on September 2016, countries are classified based on the following categories : developed, advanced emerging, secondary emerging and frontier. The *developed countries* category includes the following : Australia, Austria, Belgium/Luxembourg, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and USA. The *advanced emerging countries* category includes the following : Brazil, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, and Turkey. The *secondary emerging countries* category includes the following : Chile, China, Colombia, Egypt, India, Indonesia,



Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russia and UAE. The *frontier countries* category includes the following : Bahrain, Bangladesh, Botswana, Bulgaria, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Palestine, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Vietnam.

According to the World Bank statistics, for the current 2017 fiscal year and based on the World Bank Atlas method, the classification of countries is the following :

- low-income economies are defined as those with a GNI per capita of \$1,025 or less in 2015;
- lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$1,026 and \$4,035;
- upper middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$4,036 and \$12,475;
- high-income economies are those with a GNI per capita of \$12,476 or more .

The level of development and standard of living occupy a significant place in developing the legislative framework on violence against animals. Cruelty against animals is a negative social phenomenon affecting particularly underdeveloped or developing countries. This negative social phenomenon is generated by the increased level of poverty, social inequality, economic and financial imbalances and insufficient specific legislation. A permissive legislative framework on violence against animals can lead to dramatic acts of abuse based on the quasi-inexistence of the moral conscience of the violent human subject. Thus, in many countries, penalties for acts of violence against animals are very often limited to a mere contravention fine, and that in very serious cases. The majority of violent acts against animals remains unpunished especially in poor countries. Nevertheless, the basic awareness of the seriousness of acts of animal cruelty is an indicator of the level of civilization for a country.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this research article is to investigate the socio-economic and psychological implications of animal cruelty. Cruelty against animals is associated in most cases with severe emotional problems or other psychological disorders. The animal welfare legislation is very important in order to ensure that all the proper acts, regulations, delegations, policies, procedures and rules are implemented and enforced by authorized institutions. A general framework on animal cruelty provides a comprehensive perspective on basic priorities of that particular country. Moreover, law enforcement officers are very important in order to combat violence against animals. In this regard, pecuniary penalties, contravention fine, and especially custodial sentences greatly contribute to deter acts of animal cruelty. In addition, the essential role of the competent authority is to establish relevant legislative requirements in order to fight violence against animals.



REFERENCES

1. Agnew, R. (1998) "The Causes of Animal Abuse: A Social-Psychological Analysis", Theoretical Criminology, SAGE Publications, London, Volume: 2 issue: 2, page(s): 177-209, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480698002002003>
2. Arluke, A., Carter, J.L, Ascione, L.F., (1999) "The Relationship of Animal Abuse to Violence and Other Forms of Antisocial Behavior", Journal of Interpersonal Violence, Vol 14, Issue 9, pp.963-975
3. Bowles, D., Paskin, R. , Gutiérrez, M. , Kasterine, A. (2005) "Animal welfare and developing countries: opportunities for trade in high-welfare products from developing countries", Revue Scientifique et Technique (International Office of Epizootics), 24(2), pp.783-790
4. Schaefer, K.D. (2007) "Cruelty to Animals and the Short- and Long-Term Impact on Victims", Journal of Emotional Abuse Volume7, Issue 3, pp. 31 - 57, NCJ 222417
5. *** - Universal declaration of animal rights (15 October 1978) - UNESCO
6. *** - http://www.ndaa.org/animal_cruelty.html National District Attorneys Association, National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse
7. *** - <http://data.worldbank.org/> - The official website of the World Bank Group
8. *** - <http://www.unesco.org/> - The official website of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
9. *** - <http://www.peta.org/> - The official website of PETA international organization
10. *** - <https://www.asPCA.org/> - The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
11. *** - https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/legislative_aspects_en - The official website of European Commission
12. *** - <http://www.ftse.com/products/indices/country-classification> - FTSE Annual Country Classification Review