

VETERINARY PRACTICES, REACTIONS AND LAWS: ANALYZING THE DIFFERENCE
IN RURAL AND URBAN PRACTICES

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Arts

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This qualitative analysis seeks the difference in thought on practicing veterinarians in urban and rural areas. Kentucky law does not currently require that veterinarians report animal cruelty and through a qualitative open-ended interview process this study talks to veterinarians on a more personal and in depth level while probing for their opinion on animal cruelty laws and reporting practices, including if Kentucky should require that animal cruelty be reported by the practicing veterinarian. After the interview process is complete the interviews of the urban and rural veterinarians will be compared and contrasted to see what differences exists.

Accepted by: _____, Chair

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Chapter 1 – Introduction and Motivation..... | pg. 1-5 |
| - Stories of Animals..... | pg. 1-5 |
| - This is Why We Must Act..... | pg. 5 |
| Chapter 2 – Literature Review..... | pg. 6-17 |
| - Veterinary Forensics..... | pg. 7-13 |
| - Policy and Veterinarians..... | pg. 13-17 |
| Chapter 3 – Theory Orientation..... | pg. 18-25 |
| - Robert Agnew..... | pg. 18-23 |
| - Animal Abuse..... | pg. 24-25 |
| Chapter 4 – Methodology..... | pg. 26-31 |
| - Introduction..... | pg. 26-27 |
| - Choosing a Method..... | pg. 27-28 |
| - Concerns and Roadblocks..... | pg. 28-30 |
| - Choosing Questions..... | pg. 30 |
| - Data interpretation..... | pg. 30-31 |
| Chapter 5 – Results..... | pg. 32-45 |
| - Veterinarian’s Age and Sex..... | pg. 32-33 |
| - Defining Animal Abuse..... | pg. 33-38 |
| - Reporting Animal Abuse..... | pg. 38-41 |
| - Veterinary Familiarity with Animal Abuse Laws..... | pg. 41-43 |
| - Evaluating the Owner of an Animal..... | pg. 43-45 |
| - Where Does Animal Abuse Come From?..... | pg. 45 |
| Chapter 6 – Conclusion..... | pg. 46-48 |
| References..... | pg. 49-51 |

Chapter 1: Introduction and Motivation

“Kindness and compassion towards all living things is a mark of a civilized society. Conversely, cruelty, whether it is directed against human beings or against animals, is not the exclusive province of any one culture or community of people.” – Cesar Chavez

I begin this work with what motivates me to pursue this study. There are several pictures scattered around the internet or in newsletters that go over unthinkable acts of animal cruelty but there are also countless acts of animal cruelty that are never reported, or even seen as wrong by the people who commit the animal cruelty according to humanesociety.org. This chapter will be dedicated to the stories that have inspired me to research animal cruelty and maybe help solve the problem of what doesn't get reported. According to the Humane Society in media-reported animal cruelty cases, dogs are the most common victim of animal cruelty, which accounted for 64.5% of media reported cases. Cats were the second most abused animal taking up 18% of the reports. The remaining percentile of animal cruelty reported cases were labeled under other animals. Also in their report The Humane Society states that pit-bull type dogs were involved in 25% of the abuses against dogs alone. Another surprising highlight of the Humane Society's report is that it states that many states specifically exclude livestock or any “common” agricultural practices out of their animal cruelty laws, and that even when laws include livestock in its laws it can be difficult to get law enforcement officials to seize livestock from the owners (Humanesociety.org 2014).

Animal cruelty reporting in the media has gone up over the years and with that comes very specific reports. Some reports over the past three years have been morally reprehensible, cases such as Hope the kitten, Little Man the puppy, and Caitlyn the dog.

The Story of Hope the Kitten



Photo from 6abc.com

Hope was a kitten of about ten weeks old in Chester county Pennsylvania. 24 year old James Myers committed an atrocity to the cat for unknown reasons other than a heroin habit. Police officers found Myers in his parked car, in the middle of the road abusing the kitten. According to the officer who arrived at the scene the kitten was nearly under the vehicle, had been choked, was bleeding and had its teeth knocked out with a rope around its neck. The officer at the scene also noted that they found two dozen bags of heroin on Myers, they also found fifty hypodermic needles and hundreds of used heroin bags. Myers had also spray painted the obscene phrase on the road “Slam it you pussy!” The man was also on heroin at the time. Veterinarians who were working on reviving the kitten gave the animal some Narcan a drug used to revive humans from heroin overdose, the kitten “suddenly bounced right back up” according to the veterinarian that worked on the kitten. Hope had been given an overdosing amount of heroin by

Myers then he proceeded to beat the kitten. After the incident the Hope recovered and was put up for adoption. Myers was charged with cruelty to animals, drug possession and related charges, he was then locked up on a \$25,000 bail (6abc.com).

The Story of Little Man the Puppy

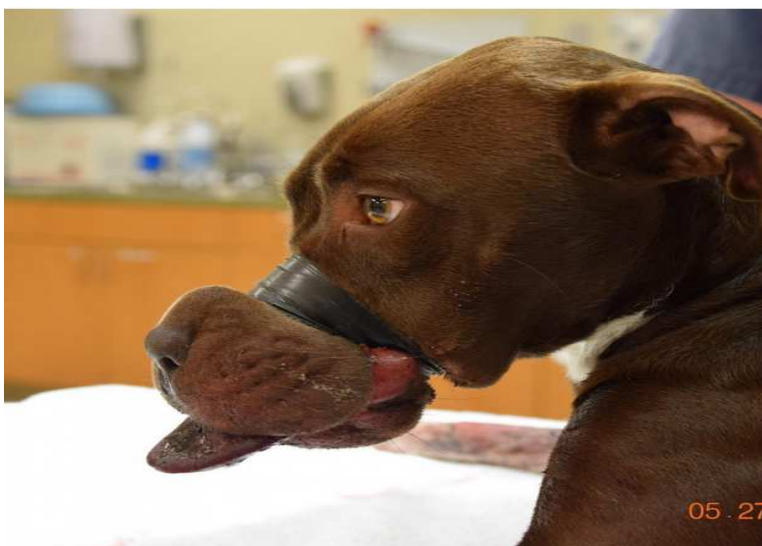


Picture taken from The Huffington Post

Little man, a pit bull puppy was found caged and left for dead in a damp basement in Pennsylvania. A non-profit animal rescue shelter managed to find him and rescue him. The puppy was in such poor condition when they found him, that the rescuers thought he was dead. The puppy wasn't moving at all, and his temperatures wouldn't register but he was still breathing. The puppy was estimated to be between six to eight months old when he was rescued on April 15th 2015. The animal was reported by a neighbor who discovered a kennel in very poor

condition in his neighbor's basement. The kennel was covered with a blanket. Little Man was covered in sores from laying in his own feces and his feet were severely burned from the urine he had to stand in. A veterinarian started an IV drip on the puppy and he started to recover. The dog will be up for adoption once he makes a full recovery (Huffington Post).

The Story of Caitlyn the Dog



Picture from washingtonpost.com

Caitlyn is a 15 month old chocolate Staffordshire bull terrier mix and she had her muzzle taped together by thin electrical tape by her owner. She was reported by a person that was closely to the owner's house but it was unclear who reported this act of cruelty. The owner had just newly acquired the dog and he could not stop the dog from barking and being incredibly active. The dog had its muzzled taped shut for over 48 hours, and its tongue had become black from being trapped outside its mouth while the dog was biting down on it. Veterinarians were able to save most of her tongue, she only lost about one eighth of it according to the Washington Post. The owner, William Leonard Dodson was arrested on the felony charge animal torture, Dodson

was put on record for laughing about taping the dogs muzzle shut. This happened in South Carolina. Dodson had a criminal record behind him, which included drug and gun charges as well as previous counts of ill-treatment of animals. Dodson faces 180 day to five years in prison and a fine of \$5,000 dollars. Caitlyn is making a good recovery and is due to go into surgery for her torn lips next. Veterinarians have said she is back to eating and drinking normally already and will make a fast recovery (Washingtonpost.com).

This is why we must act

As a criminologist you learn early that a good amount of crimes go unreported, particularly by the victim of the crime. This is especially true for crimes in which the victim is either too ashamed to report being victimized or cannot report for any other reason. This reflect on animal abuse as well since the victim of the animal abuse can never speak up about victimized. The way we treat animals reflects upon us and what we do about it also reflects upon us, this is why it very important to establish what causes a veterinarian, the front line in the role of animal protection, to report on an animal cruelty incident and to protect the veterinarian during the reporting process from legal repercussion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter I will go over some of the reasons that animal abuse may happen, what environment it might happen, the demeanor of the people who abuse animals, forensic veterinarian science and animal cruelty policy. One of the major inspirations of this piece was the work of Williams et. al. Williams et. al surveyed veterinarians in New Zealand by method of postal questionnaire, this questionnaire was meant to be completed in twenty minutes and it covered the demographics of the veterinarian as well as the demographics of the patients (animal type, animal breed, and owner demographics) the frequency of the type of animal abuse observed, the awareness of violence toward humans, what types of families the household violence was seen in, (as from the vets perspective) the methods used for managing human and animal abuse, (what did the vet do?) the incidence of psychological abuse of the animals, and what the belief of the veterinarian was in regards to the link between animal and human abuse.

The present research will use qualitative in person interviews. The interviews will cover the same topics as the questionnaire from the study by Williams et. al. Williams et. al concluded that the respondents of their surveyed has seen cases of abuse that happened in the past five years, that dogs were the most commonly abused animal, and that veterinarians felt that they had a strong ethical duty to report animal abuse but at the same time felt uncomfortable in dealing with the human abuse aspect despite being aware of the high link between animal and human abuse. I'd expect to find similar results to this study with my own study.

Veterinary Forensics

This section of the literature review will be targeted toward the field of veterinarian forensics. One piece that was also a thesis project of another graduate student takes an in detail look at veterinarian forensics. In Janel Brown's honor thesis "Veterinary Forensics: Giving a Voice to Those who Cannot Speak For Themselves" the author compares and contrasts the differences between human forensic cases and animal forensic cases, the field of veterinary forensics is a relatively new field and as such the research is very limited but current. What this piece of literature entails is that while human and veterinarian forensics are similar, many alterations must be made in order to accommodate a proper investigation into a crime scene where an animal is victimized. Along with veterinarian forensics this article links animal abuse with other violent crime which highlights the importance of animal abuse prevention, building onto that the work by Brown provides evidence that links childhood animal abuse with domestic abuse and serial killers. This article however, mainly covers the field of veterinarian forensics.

According to a citation that Brown provides there is no national database such as the Uniform Crime Report on animal abuse and this is troubling (Brown 2009), this may be a product of the variance in state to state laws on animal cruelty and the lack of concrete, universal definition of animal cruelty across the United States. In recent events in 2014 however the FBI has added animal cruelty as a crime against society in the Uniform Crime Report. Before this, according to the FBI animal cruelty was recorded under the generic category "all other offenses", now it will be recorded as a "Type A" offense with four different categories: simple/gross neglect, intentional abuse and torture, organized abuse (animal fighting), and animal sexual abuse. These changes will happen in 2015.

All fifty states in the United States classify some form of animal cruelty as a misdemeanor or a felony as of April 2008, (Brown 2008). Kentucky for instance, has a law that makes dog fighting a felony, however fighting bipedal animals only constitutes as a misdemeanor. Furthermore, the definition variance across the states is one of the reasons that animal cruelty is not officially recorded. Brown gives three laws across the states all of which are different, Washington, Idaho and Kentucky all have different definitions on what exactly constitutes animal abuse. The American Society of the Protection of Animals or the ASPCA was an organization founded in 1866 in order to provide means for animal cruelty prevention in the United States. The functions of the ASPCA is to provide shelter for animals, treat sick and injured animals and this organization is also responsible for many of the legislative acts that occurred for animal abuse in the U.S. Furthering amending this piece, the FBI has finally given an official definition to animal cruelty, this definition is: “Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly taking an action that mistreats or kills any animal without just cause, such as torturing, tormenting, mutilation, maiming, poisoning, or abandonment.” This is certainly a step in the right direction.

The lack of reported cases of animal abuse only complicates this problem even further. In order to solidify the point of veterinarian forensics being similar to human forensics, Brown writes a history of human forensic science. After this, she provides a meaningful definition of forensic science which is “any scientific field that is used to investigate crimes and prosecute criminals.” (Brown 2009). Brown brings up a point however that in human forensic investigations there are multiple experts present who conduct investigations in different areas such as fingerprinting or blood spatter analysis. Veterinarian forensics however has to for the most part solely rely upon the veterinarian to fill most of these roles. Furthermore, the

veterinarian is often not called to the crime scene right away to investigate but rather after the crime scene has been released. In her paper Brown provides reasons as to why veterinarian forensics is important to pursue as a means of investigating animal cruelty, which in turn highlights good reason as to why animal cruelty legislation is a good thing in practice. This helps prevent future cases of animal abuse through proper investigation of a crime scene which in turn could save the people and animals alike from abuse and perhaps save their lives.

Brown's 2009 research can be seen as a reinforcement of Babcock et al. 2006. Babcock et al offer that veterinarians play a key role in the investigation of animal cruelty cases and their cooperation and input is essential in the pursuit of justice in animal cruelty. Much like Brown's work Babcock et al goes over states that made animal cruelty a felony but also points out the ones who only have them as misdemeanors, for example: Alaska, Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Mississippi, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah are all states in which animal cruelty is not a felony (Babcock et al. 2006). This article then continues the theme of stating that animal cruelty laws that are felonies are not consistently defined throughout the nation. For instance, New York and California have similar laws in that animal cruelty is unnecessary or unjustifiable pain or suffering is caused to the animal. In the case of these two laws however what constitutes as unnecessary and unjustifiable? These definitions contrast with states such as Michigan which holds a much more tangible definition to animal cruelty, the law in the Michigan law book goes into extraordinary detail. For example it defines exactly what an animal custodian is supposed to provide. (Babcock et al. 2006). Babcock et al. stress and I will also stress in this research that it is important for veterinarians to be familiar with the laws of their states in which they practice veterinarian medicine.

An important aspect of Babcock et al's work is that she goes into detail on what states require veterinarians to report animal abuse, these eight states are Arizona, California, Illinois, Minnesota, Oregon, West Virginia, and Wisconsin (Babcock et al 2006). Some of these mandatory reporting regulations are statutory while others are located in state law. These statutes assume that veterinarians report in good faith and as such provide immunity from civil and criminal liability. Babcock et al also recognize that Maryland, Illinois, Arizona, and Oklahoma require that veterinarians report evidence of animal cruelty.

These statutes however do lead to the very plausible concern from veterinarians in that how do they properly identify animal abuse? This is in part due to how animal cruelty laws are not uniform and defined, a common problem that is highlighted in this research. Despite the caution that veterinarians use when reporting animal cruelty offenses they are the most qualified group of people when it pertains to judging what animal cruelty is and if it should be reported. This is especially the case in the identification of an animal's injuries as accidental or not, many veterinarians report that established guidelines of animal abuse would greatly increase their confidence in reporting animal abuse to authorities (Babcock et al. 2006). Other veterinarians fear repercussion from reporting a false case even if the case was reported in good faith, a problem already solved by some states which have included protection laws for veterinarians that do report (Babcock et al 2006). Furthermore there are guidelines that can assist in the reporting of animal cruelty, an example of this is The Tufts Animal Condition and Care Scales. This guideline could help substantially in establishing an official guideline in animal cruelty reporting.

Much like Brown, Babcock et al delve into the realm of veterinarian forensics as a method of investigating and reporting animal abuse. The APSCA organization is brought up in

Babcock's research as well which details a website that was established to aid those who are investigating animal cruelty crimes. (APSCA.org) This website will provide example guidelines to those who are investigating animal cruelty along with sample forms to go over during the investigation. Also, APSCA launched a program in 2006 that operates similarly to a poison control center in which the organization will take questions pertaining to the recognition of animal cruelty, necropsy techniques, diagnostic testing, evidence collection and documentation, photograph analysis, expert witness testimony and other things (Babcock et al 2006). This program is called the National Veterinary Forensics Service Center or the NVFSC.

In addition to protections provided for reporting some states offer immunity from liability associated with reporting suspected animal cruelty. These twenty-one states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Florida, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia) have laws that protect veterinarians from civil or criminal repercussions while reporting animal cruelty. Four states provide complete immunity from liability if the veterinarian participates in the investigation process of the animal cruelty (Idaho, Florida, Maine and New Hampshire) (Babcock et al. 2006).

Some other concerns that veterinarians may hold toward the reporting of animal abuse is that if reporting the animal abuse may infringe upon the client's confidentiality (Babcock et al. 2006). This concern creates a conflict of interest between client (the human) and the patient (the animal) and this particular clause applies to Kentucky especially. Finally veterinarians are concerned that if they report animal abuse it may affect their business. Babcock recommends that all veterinarians should be obliged by law to report in order to even the playing field in this aspect (Babcock et al. 2006).

Ascione et al 2009. discuss veterinarian forensics and animal cruelty law policy and gives a definition of animal abuse as well. Animal cruelty is an action that is socially unacceptable, non-accidental behavior that causes pain, suffering, distress, or the death of an animal (Ascione et al. 2009). Ascione et al. also states that animal cruelty definitions up to this point are socially constructed. This is an important statement due to the now debated definition of emotional abuse of animals, this is especially true with difference in rural and urban veterinarian practices. Research of animal cruelty however is usually based on the definition that the researchers themselves give, now that the FBI has given a standard animal abuse definition research may now be refined and standardized.

Ascione et al 2009. discuss policy as well in their article, the authors start by stating that policy change is probably directly affected by the modern urban-based development of companion animals in the home. Furthering the authors point on this is that of all the households in the U.S 59% of these households have a companion animal in their home and within this percentile, 87% of these households include their companion animal as individuals in their home (Ascione et al. 2009). Ascione et al then argue that since animals may be included in the family then they take on both the risks and the rewards of this situation, this includes abuse and neglect within the family. The authors of the article argue that the family dog and cat have allies and enemies within the family, boundaries and open and closed lines of communication. This has also influenced policy change on animal abuse. Ascione et al. then uses a system developed in the 1960s in the mental health community in order to organize policy changes. This system is organized into three types of prevention, simply primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention refers to efforts to reach the general population, before the problem occurs to begin with, this is mainly done through education. Secondary prevention is the ability to

recognize a problem before it happens and this is accomplished through remedial and preventive programs, it is aimed at individuals who are at risk but have yet to cause a problem. Tertiary prevention is an intervening type of prevention that is designed to give treatment to those that are already demonstrating socially unacceptable behaviors (Ascione et al. 2009). This particular article serves as a bridge to animal cruelty policy and veterinarian forensics.

Policy and Veterinarians

Veterinarians do have a role in animal cruelty reporting and according to the literature it often comes as the front line of the reporting. This seems to be a trend in many facets of the animal cruelty prevention processes in that the veterinarian is taking on the burden of many roles. Benetato et al.'s 2011 article discusses animal protection laws, the veterinarians' role in animal cruelty cases and links animal cruelty with violence against humans. Benetato also highlight that there is no national database or agency that is responsible for the collecting and reporting of statistics on animal cruelty incidents. This results in current statistics being imprecise due to the small sample sizes currently available, current under reporting of animal cruelty and the ambiguous definitions of animal cruelty. Benetato then cites a Massachusetts study that shows that animal cruelty is not uncommon. (Benetato et al. 2011).

Benetato et al discusses animal cruelty and the link to human violence in this research. She discusses that animal cruelty was seen as a form of corruption dating to as far back as 1751 in which William Hogarth published engravings titled, the "Four Stages of Cruelty" which illustrates the cycle of the sociopath, this process begins with animal cruelty and ends with homicide. Benetato and colleagues then discuss several studies that attempt to link animal cruelty with human violence. The example given in this article is a survey of 38 women entering battered women shelters. Results indicated that 71% of the pet-owning women that their partner

had hurt, threatened to hurt, or even killed one of their pets. Other studies have also found that there is a link to animal cruelty and human violence, studies such as Ascione's "Children who are Cruel to Animals: a Review of Research and Implications for Developmental Psychopathology", which was published in *Anthrozoos* in 1993. The conclusion made by the authors of these studies is that violent offenders were significantly more likely than nonviolent offenders to have committed animal cruelty acts in the past. Furthermore, the position of this paper as a whole is, for legislative change and linking human violence with animal cruelty, a good way to influence policy.

Benetato reviews the history of animal cruelty laws which as stated in the article goes back to the 19th century which reflected the property status of animals. Early laws however only applied to commercial animals and did not protect companion animals from cruel interaction from their owners. Early laws also required the offender to commit the act of cruelty with willful or malicious intent, these statutes made the act of animal protection quite difficult. (Benetato et al. 2011). Animal cruelty laws have since improved but still have a long way to go.

Benetato also reviews a study that found that almost all veterinarians (93.6%) that were interviewed felt that they have a strong ethical duty to report suspicion of abuse, however when prodded further, far fewer (44.5%) responded that veterinarians should be mandated to report animal cruelty (Benetato 2011). The reasons suspected for the reservation for reporting animal abuse go in agreement with the work of Babcock et al. in that veterinarians are fearful of identifying false positive cases of animal abuse, fear of losing clients, fear of litigation being used against them, doubt that any action will be taken as a result of the report and concerns with breach of client confidentiality. Benetato explains that veterinarian students are not very likely to encounter animal abuse during their training and even less likely to be exposed to the procedures

to follow if they do encounter an animal abuse case. Veterinarians provide many roles in the investigation in animal cruelty cases and as such it is imperative to train veterinarian students in the ways of reporting and recognizing animal abuse.

Benetato concludes by stating that veterinarians share many roles in the animal abuse case investigation. Veterinarians act as reporters of animal abuse, medical examiners during the investigation process and they can act as an expert witness during the trial. It is brought up also that while human investigations have different types of experts involved with investigation, animal abuse cases usually only have the veterinarian as the expert that is involved. Benetato recommends that experts need to be trained in order to support the enforcement of animal cruelty laws. This is especially pertinent to crime scene investigation on the forensics side of the investigation.

Are there differences in urban and rural practices though? A piece on urban versus rural tendencies is that of Tallichet Hensley and Evans. Tallichet et. al conducted a study using survey data from 180 prison inmates, the goal of the study was to examine how demographic characteristics, exposure to animal cruelty in childhood and other variables contributed to animal cruelty in urban and rural settings. One of the findings of this study was that recurrent animal abusers in rural areas tended to abuse stray and pet animals while those in urban areas abused only pets. The findings of this article then suggest that there are placed based differences in animal cruelty acts which helps this study. In this article Tallichet et. al state that current research suggests that we need a better understanding of animal abuser characteristics and circumstances under which animal cruelty is committed. (Tallichet et. al 2011). The process of how an animal was abused in this case can be retrieved from practicing veterinarians. In the literature review of this particular article it is cited that there are some differences in demographics that effect

attitudes toward animal abuse. For example, Agnew found that women tend to be more empathetic and concerned with animal abuse than men (Agnew 1998). The major importance of this article is that it illustrates urban/rural differences in animal cruelty actors. One of the statistically significant variables that this research found was that people who witnessed animal abuse in a rural setting were more likely to commit animal abuse at later dates, this was not found with the urban respondents (Tallichet et al. 2011). As the authors of this article state themselves, the knowledge of place based differences will greatly help in the policy making process in order to prevent animal cruelty.

Another piece that is useful in urban versus rural policy and practices is Keller's article "American Attitudes Toward and Knowledge of Animals: An Update." *Advances in Animal Welfare Science*. While this is an older article, it is still useful as the article cites that a rural population is more likely to look at animal for their utility purposes. Kellert divided individual attitudes toward animals into four moralistic categories, these categories show a difference in how ones location in their upbringing may have an effect on how they feel about animals. Once again these categories could impact policy toward animal cruelty laws in a state or how animal cruelty is reported in a particular area. The categories that Kellert used are: moralistic, humanistic, utilitarian, and negativistic. The moralistic category represented the people who had a strong opposition to the exploitation or cruel treatment of animals. The humanistic category represented those people who had a strong affection for animals. Those people who had a utilitarian point of view saw animals through a practical lens and how useful or not they were to work or material functions. Finally, the negativistic category of individuals either avoided or disliked animals (Kellert 1984). These attitudes toward animals will be a useful resource in

making sense of where state law policy is concerned as well as identifying a difference in urban and rural practices.

This brings the paper to its next chapter, the theory orientation chapter. In the next chapter I will link the literature review and the research problem to Robert Agnew's general strain theory as well as give background information on the theory before linking it to how it carries significant effect on what causes animal abuse.

Chapter 3: Theory Orientation

The purpose of this project is to utilize Robert Agnew's Revised Strain theory to explain animal cruelty. This paper will examine the history of strain theory which begins with the theoretical work of Emile Durkheim and his concept of anomie. Secondly, this research poses the question of whether or not animal cruelty can be explained by elements of social strains? Specifically, are those individuals who experience strain through the removal of positively valued stimuli, or through the introduction of a negative stimuli, or simply those whose goals are blocked, more likely to harm animals? For example do people commonly come home frustrated and take it out on the family animal?

Robert Agnew

Durkheim focused on the decrease of societal restraint and the strain that resulted at the individual level and groups. Merton studied the cultural imbalance that exists between goal and the means available to individuals to achieve those goals (Merton 1968) (Greek 2005). Agnew's general strain theory offers a significant advancement beyond traditional strain theories. The reason that Agnew claims that strain theory is distinguished from social learning or social control theory is that it focuses primarily on negative pressures towards deviance (Agnew 2012). Since Agnew's general strain theory specifies the types of strain and outlines the factors that influence each adaptation, Agnew moved strain theory closer to social bonding and social learning theories, thereby incorporating a number of explanatory variables from those theories (Akers 2004). Based on the theory work, anomie can be broken down into the macro side and the micro

side. The macro side is about society and its inability to set limits on goals and to keep its individuals in a law-abiding manner. The micro side of anomie is what strain theory is. Micro side anomie is focused on the reasons behind the increased likelihood of deviance that results from the breakdown of society (Greek 2005). Agnew's generalized strain theory comes from a social psychological perspective. According to micro side anomie, or strain theory, a decrease in social regulation increases the pressure to commit deviant acts. Social control theory has similarities to the macro side of anomie. Agnew went on to say that his strain theory is related to social control and social learning theory. Agnew's approach is primarily to broaden the concept of strain beyond that produced by the discrepancies between aspirations and expectations, to encompass several sources of stress or strain. According to Agnew, delinquency and crime are adaptations to stress. Agnew then identifies three major types of deviance producing strain. The three types are: The failure to achieve positively valued goals, the removal of positively valued stimuli, and the confrontation with negative stimuli (Akers et al 2004).

The failure to achieve positively valued stimuli has three subtypes. The first of these is the disjuncture between aspirations and expectations. These aspirations can be anything from immediate goals to future goals and the results (or lack of in this case) include not only blocked opportunities, but also the ones that were a result of individual inadequacies in regards to their skill set. The second subtype is the gap between expectations and actual achievements. This subtype can lead to anger, disappointment and resentment from the person in question. The third subtype is what one views as fair between the actual outcome and the expected outcome of an event. For the third subtype the positive consequences of an activity or relationship are not perceived as comparable to the amount of effort put into it and are viewed as unfair when compared to others' efforts (Akers et al 2004).

The second type of deviance producing strain is the removal of positively valued stimuli. This type of strain is the experience of the individual during stressful life events that can happen to teens. This is usually a loss of something that is perceived to be of great worth, and can be the death of a family member, the loss of a boyfriend or girlfriend, a suspension from school, or the changing of schools can all produce anomic feelings. The third type of deviance producing strain is known as confrontation with negative stimuli. This strain happens when a person is presented with negative actions done by others. For instance a child may be exposed to child abuse, victimization, adverse school experiences or other foul stimuli. Since the people who we are talking about are children, they have no legal way to escape from family and school, and then legitimate ways to avoid bad situations from family and school are blocked. This adds up to a juvenile acting out and going deviant. Agnew finishes up with the three types of major strain by saying that deviance is most likely to occur when the response to strain is anger (Akers 2004). People may use their anger so that they can justify their crimes to themselves. Anger in itself can lead to a desire to exact revenge on the person that they are angry with. Other things that anger may cause a person to do is to take action, or lower their own inhibitions. Agnew especially stressed that individuals who are subject to repetitive strain may be more likely to commit crime or delinquent acts. This is largely due to the fact that other coping mechanisms may be exhausted or overtaxed. At this point in time the individual may become more hostile than they usually are. Deviant actions may be taken in order to cope with stress, people may react to strain by seeking vengeance, finding ways around the negative stimuli, or the use of negative coping tools such as drugs (Agnew 2012).

There are other methods to cope with strain that are not so negative. There are three methods Agnew discusses dealing with strain, these three methods are cognitive, emotional, and

behavioral. These methods allow people to deal with strain in a legitimate way. The cognitive coping method involves the individual minimizing the importance of the strain causing event. This could mean that the individual will place less importance on a goal they wish to achieve. Once the negative effect has been minimized then one would try to maximize any positive effects in their life. This helps the individual in ignoring any negative outcomes. Another method for cognitive coping is the acceptance of responsibility for negative outcomes. (Greek 2005). The behavioral method of coping involves the individual to seek out positive stimuli in order to avoid negative stimuli. A good example of this is the “my anti-drug campaign” that is going on now. (Example: “Basketball is my anti-drug” – from the commercial.) The third type of coping strategy is emotional coping. This differs from the two previous strategies because the individual is focusing on removing the negative feelings rather than trying to alter the event itself. Some examples are exercise and relaxation methods (Greek 2005).

Agnew’s General Strain theory argues that certain strains or stressors increase the likelihood of crime, stressors and strains such as economic deprivation, discrimination, criminal victimization, child abuse, etc. If these things happen to people it then puts them in negative emotions such as anger or depression which in turns makes them want to take some sort of action against this, sometimes the action against this is a criminal act (Agnew 2012). Most people that experience strain do not cope with crime, however, there are those that do cope with crime and there are factors that push people to cope with crime. These factors can include poor coping skills and resources, beliefs that favor crime and memberships in gangs and such (Agnew 2012). General strain theory can be used to explain the difference in crime between larger groups, such as the difference in crime rates between communities, and the high rate of crime in adolescents (Agnew, forthcoming). General strain theory has also been applied in criminology to explain the

high rate of crime among males as opposed to females. Agnew and Broidy used this theory to explain the increased rate of crime among males and the reason why females commit crime (Agnew et al. 1997).

Agnew and Broidy state that the processes in general strain theory may be different for males and females (Agnew et al 1997). Their research hypothesized that the perceptions of strainful situations, types of emotional responses and availability of legitimate and illegitimate coping mechanisms may vary based on gender. There have been several pieces of research that state there are no differences in levels of strain or anger amongst the genders. Agnew and Broidy found that males and females respond differently to strain and may also have different types of strain triggers. For example males were found to be more concerned with material success, this in turn lead to a higher rate of property and violent crime if their goals are somehow blocked which then causes the strain. Females on the other hand were concerned with creating and maintaining close bonds and relationships with others – thus lower rates of property and violent crime (Agnew et. al. 1997).

Greek has charts in his work which are nice for showing how males and female experience and respond to strain.

| Females | Males |
|--|---|
| Concerned with creating and maintaining close bonds and relationships with others - thus lower rates of property and violent crime | Concerned with material success - thus higher rates of property and violent crime |
| Face negative treatment, such as discrimination, high demands from family, and restricted behavior | Face more conflict with peers and are likely to be the victims of crime |
| Failure to achieve goals may lead to self-destructive behavior | Failure to achieve goals may lead to property and violent crime |
| Female | Male |
| More likely to respond with depression and anger | More likely to respond with anger |
| Anger is accompanied by fear, guilt, and shame | Anger is followed by moral outrage |
| More likely to blame themselves and worry about the affects of their anger | Quick to blame others and are less concerned about hurting others |
| Depression and guilt may lead to self-destructive behaviors (i.e. eating disorders) | Moral outrage may lead to property and violent crime |

(chart taken from Greek 2005)

According to Akers, though no studies have included measures of negative emotion or legitimate coping strategies, both of these are thought to be crucial in explaining the gender differences in crime within the context of general strain theory (Akers 2004).

Animal Abuse

This paper hopes to find an association between strain experienced and animal abuse, while comparing urban and rural environments. Using Agnew's Strain theory as a basis to explain animal cruelty, Agnew suggested that strain and stress may indirectly or directly lead to animal abuse. For instance, an animal may interfere with the achievement of a positively valued goal or engage in behaviors that may annoy the person around the animal (Peterson and Farrington 2007). This will cause some individuals to engage in animal abuse, feeling that the animal deserved the abuse for the action the animal has taken. Other forms of abuse that may be induced by strain is animal abuse with the goal of revenge in mind, or some sort of gain. Furthermore, strained individuals may use animals as scapegoats and abuse them as a result, with the thought of the animal as a safe target for the discharge of aggressive feelings (Peterson and Farrington 2009). Similarly in the social learning perspective it is argued that those who abuse animals are frustrated individuals who transfer their frustration on an animal that cannot retaliate. Hensley and Tallichet concluded in a study of two hundred and sixty-one inmates that animal cruelty is a learned behavior (Hensley and Tallichet 2005). This study found that 43% of the incarcerated males had engaged in animal cruelty, of these 63% reported that they had killed or hurt dogs and 55% had abused cats. Many of these inmates grew up in a hostile environment and through imitation and reinforcement they became abusive to others, in the case of this paper, the animals that are being abused, constitutes as "others".

A problem with animal abuse cases however is that there is no consistent definition to what animal abuse actually is (Peterson and Farrington 2007 b). Peterson et. al continues with this by saying that there wasn't an article published about animal cruelty until 1997. Compounding this problem is that the literature on the topic of animal abuse is completely

ignored in criminology text books (Peterson and Farrington 2007 b) and that literature on the this topic is very limited in certain countries such as the United Kingdom. Finally the study of animal cruelty as a crime is also limited, this may be because that society values animals less than people (Peterson and Farrington 2007 b). In order to alleviate this issue a standardized definition of animal cruelty and abuse must be established as well as the research on the subject fleshed out. Kellert and Felthous in 1985 identified nine possible motivations for animal cruelty in their study of aggressive criminals, non-aggressive criminals and non-criminals. Men responded that they snapped the necks of animals or microwaving live cats for fun sometimes and the researchers provided nine possible motivations for this behavior: (1) to control the animal, (2) to retaliate against the animal, (3) to satisfy prejudice against particular species or breeds of animals, (4) to express aggression through an animal, (5) to enhance one's own aggressiveness, (6) to shock people for amusement, (7) to retaliate against another person, (8) to displace hostility from a person to an animal and (9) non-specific sadism (Kellert and Felthous 1985). Several of these can be explained and tested by using General Strain theory, in particular numbers one, two, six, seven, eight and nine. In order to help prevent animal abuse however, a definition of animal abuse must be established, and one of the places to start this is through interviewing veterinarians as they are seen as experts on the subject of animal abuse.

The next chapter will detail the methodology for my research, it will discuss how I obtained my data and give an overview of my needs and problems while conducting this research. It will also discuss why I chose the methods that I did and the transcription of the raw data so that I can use it in my results chapter.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

One of the special needs to perform this study will be transportation needs, as I'll be traveling between urban and rural areas in order to interview different veterinarians in different settings to see if there any meaningful differences between animal abuse in urban areas as opposed to rural areas. The two areas where the sample population is taken are Morehead, Kentucky, which is the rural sample and Cincinnati, Ohio which is the urban sample. The total sample of the research came out to be five urban veterinarians and four rural veterinarians. All of the veterinarians who were from urban practices were small animal specialist and the veterinarians of the rural sample were all large animal specialist.

The first question I asked every veterinarian was their age and the second question on the question list, but a question I never asked was their sex. This is to lay out of the basic demographics of the sample that I took in order to see if any themes emerged from age and sex. In terms of collecting data, Agnew stated that there were two ways to measure strain. There is the subjective approach, and then there is the objective approach. The subjective approach is where the researcher directly asks the individual being examined questions. These questions can vary but there are usually along the lines of "do you dislike the way you are being treated?" The objective view is where the researcher asks individuals about the pre-determined causes of strain. The causes of strain are things that the researcher identifies as treatment that a member of the group being studied would dislike. The objective approach is the one most often used in research, and it usually involves relationships with friends, family, and the community. One factor that must be considered is that individuals have different reactions to certain types of

strain and different subjective experiences with types of objective strain (Greek 2005). Agnew also noted several processes that must be employed in order to get an effective measure of strain. First, the researcher must develop a comprehensive list of negative circumstances that can result in strain. In this process it must be taken into account that strain is experienced differently by each individual. Also, the specific situations must be objectively identified along with variables that can determine the individual's reaction to strain. To obtain an effective measure of strain, the cumulative impact of negative relations must be taken into account. It is not entirely clear whether this relationship is additive or interactive. Another factor that must be considered is the presence of positive relations and the moderating or mediating effect that they may have on the strain that the individual may experience. The last things that should be considered when measuring strain includes the magnitude, recency, duration, and clustering of negative events (Agnew 1985) (Greek 2005).

Choosing a Method

I chose a qualitative approach to this study, the reason I chose this was based on two factors: 1) the nature of the research question that I am studying was to initiate a change process and the nature of the data. And 2) the subject of the matter is guided within a belief system, a changing process based on worldview and policy. This is a constructivist paradigm of inquiry. Constructivists, ontologically, reject the positivist notion of “scientific realism—the view that our theories chart, map, or refer to real features of the world” (Schwandt, 1997), and embrace the notion of people coming together to socially co-construct and make meaning of their realities. Epistemologically, constructivists reject the positivist notion of “scientific objectivity—when it is defined as accurate representation of the way the world really is” (Schwandt, 1997). Constructivists view the relationship between the researcher and the subject of

research as subjective, the researcher and the subject depend on each other to socially construct and make meaning and arrive at a consensus on what is real in their context and situation. I feel that qualitative is the best route to pursue for this project for how this subject can be very subjective in view.

Concerns and Roadblocks

In collecting the sample size there were numerous roadblocks to gathering the data. I contacted a total of 42 veterinarians' clinics and/or hospitals while trying to obtain an urban sample and of those only seven responded, of those seven five agreed to an interview, I contacted 20 rural practices and of those only two have agreed to interviews. This puts the response rate of this study at alarmingly low rates, with the urban populations' response rate at 5/42 or 11% and the rural response rate at 2/20 or 10%. While these average out to be around the same response rate the rural samples were exceedingly hard to get any response at all from, even a decline was rare as most simply ignored my inquiries. To make matters worse for the rural sample population of veterinarian clinics are very spread apart and fewer in number than urban practices, this leads to their being fewer windows of opportunity to interview rural veterinarians because they are very spread out. I.E the 42 urban facilities that were contacted were all within 20-30 miles from one another while the rural facilities were far more spread apart, with the 20 contacts being up to 100 miles or more apart from one another. This however is one of the many trials and tribulations of collecting primary data.

Finally wait in response times was a big problem, this is particularly true with the rural practices. Urban practices were very quick to respond either through e-mail or phone. The typical response time on an acceptance or decline for an urban practice was seven hours to a day. Most

urban practices however did respond, only one practice failed to respond at all from the 42 facilities contacted. Of the 20 rural practices petitioned, only 3 facilities bothered responding at all, two of which agreed to interview and the other response a formal decline. Contacting the actual veterinarian while trying to arrange interview for rural facilities did not happen unless the veterinarian agreed to interview, almost all the urban samples that accepted or decline was done so by the veterinarian themselves at the time of the question, this is an interesting comparison in the difference of practices.

One of my deepest regrets with this research is that I never had an opportunity to interview any rural single practice veterinarians, and I believe that I'd find a strikingly different opinion on many of the questions I asked during these interviews from rural single practice veterinarians. It would be prudent in future research to make serious effort to try to come into contact with these types of veterinarians, however, despite all of my efforts I wasn't able to book an interview with one. I do believe that social networking is key in contacting rural veterinarians, especially the single practice ones. The reasoning behind this is that veterinarians tend to be stressed for time, especially those that practice by themselves rather than in an animal hospital. Another regret is that due to the time limited schedule of veterinarians in general I had to cut most of the interviews down to a twenty minute time frame, this made information come out in short blurbs rather than fully thought out responses, and sometimes I had to skip over questions as a result of this.

Acquiring transportation to the interviews was an issue but not as much, Morehead State University provided me with transportation to Cincinnati, OH in order to conduct the urban interviews, all of these interviews took place on the first week of April and were conducted all within the metro area of Cincinnati. The rural interviews took place over a mix of in person and

on the phone interviews. Surprisingly, it was harder to fit the schedule of a rural veterinarian than that of the urban veterinarian.

Choosing Questions

The questions I chose were mainly inspired by the content of the literature review chapter and on how strain theory might affect abuse rates, for example if a drug addict is frustrated that he or she cannot achieve a goal (drug availability for instance) then they may take that frustration out on an animal, or in the case of spousal abuse the offending actor may take out frustrations on the family animal instead of the source that they are in disagreement with. Upon looking at this context I then will try to find out what would cause a veterinarian to report animal abuse (what do they see as animal abuse?) and how they would go about reporting that animal abuse, as well as why they may not report animal abuse. (What kind of repercussions would they face, or risks?) Other questions I will ask will pertain to the veterinarians attitude toward animals, are they more utilitarian, are they more humanistic etc.? This is mainly scoped so that researchers can form a more cohesive list of questions to perhaps pinpoint a solution to some problems such as cohesive animal cruelty policies.

Data interpretation

First I must obtain permission to record and interview the veterinarian in question, once a veterinarian has been interviewed and the interview has been recorded, then the recording will be transcribed and from there I'll take the interviews and compare responses between multitudes of variables. Will a rural veterinarian be more utilitarian, or humanistic? How about the urban veterinarian? Is there a major difference between how many clients a rural veterinarian will see when compared to a urban veterinarian? I'll be using two independent variables in this case, urban and rural, while using the dependent variables such as attitude, age, experience and other

dependent variables. The questions themselves will be discussed in the results section when looking at the questions to answers section of the paper.

Chapter 5: Results

I will break this results section up into parts by particular questions and compare the responses based on urban or rural distinction. The veterinarian's interviews were based upon how much time the veterinarian would allow the interview to last, the interviews last from as little as ten minutes to as long as ninety minutes. The questions asked during these interviews ranged from as little as twenty questions to as many as sixty-five questions. The veterinarians that were interviewed were promised that their names would not be used and their practices would not be named, as such in following in line with these promises I have labeled each veterinarian as R for rural or U for urban followed by a number, for example, R1 would stand for rural veterinarian number one and U1 would stand for urban veterinarian number one. Themes can be observed from the data but I'll break those themes down by the question.

Veterinarian's age and sex

The veterinarians ranged from 28-57 in age with the urban sample ranging from 28-57 in age and the rural sample ranging from 37-55 in age. Of the vets that were interviewed, five were male and four were female. These variables will be discussed within the other questions as in how they may affect ones response potentially. For the purposes of old versus young comparisons, ages 45 and older will be classified as older and 44 and younger will be classified as younger.

| Age | Sex | Location |
|-----|--------|----------|
| 37 | Male | Urban |
| 54 | Female | Urban |
| 28 | Female | Urban |
| 31 | Female | Urban |
| 57 | Male | Urban |
| 55 | Male | Rural |
| 36 | Male | Rural |
| 42 | Male | Rural |
| 45 | Female | Rural |

Defining Animal Abuse

All of the veterinarians in the sample identified neglect as part of the definition of animal abuse, neglect would include lack of shelter, and lack of food or a proper diet. Urban veterinarians did not bring up husbandry practices, they were all small animal veterinarians however, rural veterinarians always brought up husbandry practices but they were always large animal specialist. The most occurring theme within the definition of animal abuse was neglect through owner ignorance. All of the veterinarians – both rural and urban - identified this as animal abuse, even if the neglect is unintentional the owner is still responsible for the abuse. However, if this is the owner's first offense with neglect of an animal the veterinarian did not see this as intentional abuse and attempted to educate the owner about proper care for their animal.

All of the veterinarians also stated that if they detected neglect of an animal they would assume that the owner did not know any better. But if the owner did not improve the animal's condition by the follow up appointment they saw the neglect as malicious and considered it animal abuse. During an interview, one of the rural veterinarians brought up a case of a false positive report on a neglected looking dog. The dog was spotted by the neighbor of the owner and it was extremely emaciated, the neighbor then reported to the authorities and a veterinarian was called out to evaluate the animal. As it turned out the dog was a rescue dog that the owner had just recently acquired and the owner was in the process of restoring the animal back to health.

Not surprisingly physical abuse was also identified as animal abuse by all veterinarians, this includes beating the animal, shooting the animal, fighting the animal or any injury that would cause physical harm to the animal that was not accidental. An example of such an accidental case would be a dog being run over by a car. Interestingly enough, however, all of the veterinarians interviewed stated that they had not seen cases of blatant abuse in their practice and mostly what they see is in fact simple neglect due to ignorance. Physically abused animals they observed were referred by local law enforcement who called them in to assess an animal. Simply put, most cases of physical abuse are almost never voluntarily brought into a veterinarian clinic. Otherwise if a veterinarian had interacted with a physically abused animal it was reported by rescue shelter personnel.

Veterinarian response varied in regards to the emotional abuse of an animal, this was one of the more apparent differences in age and location. Urban veterinarians were more open to an idea of animals having emotions like humans do than rural veterinarians. Rural veterinarians also believe that animals have emotions but tend to believe that they are on a lower level than what urban veterinarians believe. For example one of the rural veterinarians told me:

“... I absolutely believe even if you have a really nice good hearted person... [who] loves animals all the good stuff, but they don't have the resources... money... whatever ... to take care of them, then they can abuse animals too. But from a physical standpoint I think, of chronic injuries a lot... But I'll also think from a mental standpoint... again I go back to that behavior... If you've abused an animal by whatever by whatever... chaining it with 6 inches of chain to a tree all its life. That animal is chronically not able to exhibit normal behavior. Even if you let the chain go... He probably still isn't. It's not like he is going to become normal overnight. I think animals if they suffer enough abuse then they will have... long term... again I want you to be careful with this term... long term behavioral emotional kind of problems... Mostly from physical abuse.

DJ: So you think emotional abuse is linked to physical abuse?

R1: I think emotional abuse can absolutely be associated with physical abuse... matter of fact I believe that 100%. The depth of that emotion is different than humans though. If you were locked in by your guardians the depth of that scar would be different than the depth of the scar of a dog locked in a cage. Still, either way there's going to be emotional trauma on either side. You're going to feel emotional trauma that dog is going to feel emotional trauma. It's mind will take a while to get screwed back on right.”

Whereas an urban veterinarian said:

DJ: So you would think that dogs, cat or any other type of animals can be emotionally abused?

U2: Dogs sure, um cats not so much... cats are much more independent and aloof in themselves and their can be a well socialized cat and it can simply just be mean... Sometimes you'll find dogs that can tell you specific things they don't like... for example some dogs are more adverse to men than women, and this is emotional and stems from abuse.

Other interesting information on emotional abuse came from the horse veterinarians that I interviewed as part of the rural interviews, all of the equine veterinarians agreed that horses can be emotionally abused, one of the veterinarians referred to this as the “cowboy way”

DJ: Do you think that an animal can be psychologically abused?

R3: Yeah, if you scream and yell at it, you can cause some traumatic events to an animal...

DJ: Have you ever suspected any kind of psychological abuse?

R3: Yeah... I mean I think the way... we call it the cowboy way to do things... I think it is wrong, you can't really fight with a horse and force it, you know you have to find your ways around.

This suggests that veterinarians believe that emotional abuse can be species based.

Moreover, age seems to have an effect on the perception of emotional abuse as well, although veterinarians were more likely to think that animals were less affected by emotional abuse, all veterinarians felt that you can abuse an animal emotionally. The oldest veterinarian in the urban sample shared insight on his view on emotional abuse of animals:

DJ: Do you think animals can be abused on a cognitive level?

U4: I mean it's there but I don't know how much of it is there... but if someone is going to hurt an animal they'll do it in any way they can.

DJ: What about emotional abuse? Do they respond to it?

U4: Sure, absolutely... you see those animals on commercials and it breaks your heart. Things like a dog being chained up outside and being brought food and water only once a week with minimal contact, that pet wants some love and it isn't getting it.

Whereas all the younger veterinarians answered much more convincingly and soundly with a simple yes response for psychological abuse cases and didn't give qualifications about it.

Sexual abuse was a much more controversial question within the pool of veterinarians that I interviewed. All veterinarians agreed that humans can sexually abuse an animal but on only on the human's level and not the animal's level. That is, people will seek sexual pleasure from animals but the animal doesn't recognize that it being sexually molested, or taken advantage of according to some veterinary responses. For instance some veterinarian responded with inquiry about sexual abuse with:

R1: Well, (sighs) I'm kind of a reproductive physiologist so I do, do a lot of fertility work in animals. I'm not sure that animal, so, so this term sexual abuse you know sexual abuse in a human, you know it gets deep in them, deep in their brain, deep in their heart, deep in their soul. It is a, you know it can be hugely devastating to them. Animals, I really do not believe, and they are people will argue me with this, and that's fine. I see animals have sex a lot, and I do not, I've never sensed that in 31 years of watching animals have sex, that there is some deep, emotional, component to them having sex. So if I knew that a person was sexually abusing a dog, my main concern would be that the person is sick. Is it going to affect the dog's brain, is it going to affect the cat's ability to handle stuff? Probably not. However I would more worried with them than about the physical abuse. Are they doing something that would physically you know, cause an issue with the animal, are they physically abusing the animal to where it might become fearful of somebody touching them down there or whatever. Do I think that they will have long term emotional traumatic events from it I really don't believe that they will. At the same time if for some reason they have physical injury, then you know if you want to talk about animals emotions, so sexual abuse to a person would be a very traumatic emotional issue to them.

R3: Yes, I think you can touch a horse and mess around in that area but I don't think the horse really minds it, or even knows that is being sexually abused.

U4: I've seen people put rubber bands around the testicle areas, and injuries around the anus, but the sexual abuse mostly is on the person's level rather than the animals level.

The response was fairly clear that sexual abuse in animals mostly fell back to only being on the sexual level to the human, and not the animal.

Animal hoarding was another type of animal cruelty or abuse that was discussed during the interviews. Most of the veterinarians agreed that animal hoarding was a form of animal neglect. However the line between pet enthusiast and animal hoarder seems to lie in the capability of the owner rather than a concrete number. This excerpt from an interview best sums up most of the veterinarian responses that were given:

DJ: What do you think about animal hoarders?

R1: What you find with a lot of hoarders is that their hearts are good, just their brain is disengaged. They can't see the harm they are doing they can't see the abusive situation. They love them so much, they just want to take them all in... well you can't take them all in, you can't afford it. A hoarder is a person with so many animals that they cannot provide proper care for them such as food and health care. I had already in my practice who had 10 dogs, you know what? Best looking dogs you've ever seen in your life... but she had money. All those dogs were on heartworm medication, she brought them all in, we had a whole half day dedicated to this one woman at my clinic. Everybody had proper nutrition and health care, to me that's not a hoarder, to me that is a person who has incredible passion about taking care of animals. To me a hoarder is a person who keeps a lot of animals without the ability to properly take care of them.

The definition was given in that excerpt as well, therefore an animal hoarder is a person that has so many animals that their resources aren't enough to properly care for them, resulting in neglect of the animals in question. As long as the animals are happy, healthy, and taken care of the veterinarians interviewed did not mind the number of animals an owner had. Animal hoarding however does lead to neglect when the owner's resources cannot handle the amount of animals in their household.

Reporting Animal Abuse

Without hesitation every veterinarian that was interviewed responded that reporting animal abuse is an ethical duty to all veterinarians and is a part of being in the profession. Veterinarians also unanimously responded that they felt that they were the first in the line of defense to protect animals against animal cruelty. They also agreed that any cases of animal cruelty should be reported to the authorities once they see them. However, the line blurred for several reasons when the question of if reporting should be mandatory and required by law came up in the conversation. :

R1: If you see somebody abusing an animal... you can go tell somebody, and you're not going to get in trouble. I am a licensed veterinarian so just like a medical doctor, just like a lawyer, just like a preacher, or a priest or any of those

people who are licensed folks, who have to abide by Kentucky revised statutes. We have confidentiality clauses in our practice acts, and the confidentiality in veterinary medicine, now obviously I don't have this in humans because you see some even a doctor, I mean doctors are some of the first people to report abuse. They've seen the light, they've gotten their law changed so that they can uh... doesn't matter what's on that... doesn't matter about anything on that patients private record you see abuse, you report it... point blank... matter of fact you get in trouble if you don't. Veterinarian medicine has not... We've not crossed the hump yet, we're still.. and again I don't think it is because of veterinary medicine, I think it's because of legislators and, and there are some people and again they are not really abusers of animals... they just fear anything that's going to, you know when the government comes in and puts any regulation on anybody they fear that. I don't like the government anymore than anybody else. I don't want them in my front yard and back pocket either.

Many veterinarians agreed that while it is their duty to report any form of animal abuse, mandatory reporting is something that they do not want to have. One of the reasons that several veterinarians gave was that they fear for repercussion on their practice, or that they simply do not want to risk the injured animal not coming back to their office due to the veterinarian reporting the owner of the animal.

R1: At the same time there are some common sense things that probably need to be done. So one of the things that probably need to be done. So one of the things that I would get in trouble, so I'll give you a scenario. Person brings a dog into my clinic, it's my client, I have a patient record with them, I have veterinary client/patient record with them. That's actually a legal entity. I think the animal has been abused... I have two options... I can report them... and let the authorities take care of whatever needs to be taken care of. If I do that, then I have broken the confidentiality, I've broken that legal entity, that legal concept, of a veterinarian client/patient relationship. If that client wants to come back and sue me he can. Now I don't know if he is going to win

DJ: So he can sue you over that?

R1: Yeah, he can sue me, now... Anybody with any sense probably ain't going to let him win. But just, I have never been in a law suit in my life, but I've known other veterinarians who have been in one... and I don't want to be in one. Even if I know I'm going to win... and my daddy's a lawyer I probably wouldn't have to

pay a lawyer fee. I just don't want to go through it. So... so but he can sue me, cause that's the way the law reads from it. Or, I can just say, I can plead the fifth and go I'm not going to say anything against him because he's my client. I would break the legal boundaries of client/patient confidentiality. So this law needs to be really changed. It needs to allow, it needs to keep the basic tenets of patient confidentiality.

Some other responses were shorter but similar in the same vein:

DJ: Would you like your state to grant immunity from reporting? What is the situation there with patient/doctor relationship and immunity?

U2: It can be hard... I think I have been in those situations, and the hardest part is that they don't come in telling you... I hit this dog.. fix it. Most of the time it's a family bringing them in and they say something's happened... like it fell down the stairs. You have to sort of think it's happening and you don't want to overstep your bounds and get them into trouble when there isn't trouble to be had... so... yes.. immunity in that situation would be nice, or sometimes you don't want to start that ball rolling, how much are you going to be comed back on, I'd like a situation where I could report then back away and then the process kinda take over. Because it is hard because you have a responsibility to take care of the animal but you also have a relationship with the people who bring them in and they are supposed to trust you, and you don't want to take back on that trust as well... Even if there is nothing going on and I was wrong, there wasn't really any cruelty or abuse going on.. that's still a big pain in the butt to get investigated. I'm sure I'll lose a client and respect out of that.

A reoccurring theme in the data was that veterinarians were concerned about legal ramifications during the reporting process, or the veterinarian would be concerned with reporting false positives. Even though many veterinarians weren't concerned with the client winning the lawsuit they still did not want to be involved in legal measures to begin with. Another question asked during the interviews involved mandatory reporting and if the veterinarians felt if it should be required by law to report animal cruelty if a case were to come into their clinics. Many of the veterinarians were hesitant to say that they wanted a law that would make it mandatory by law for them to report animal abuse, even if they were granted immunity from the situation. An excerpt best from an interview best shows this:

R4: If you know, and you turn the cheek... then you are just as bad as the person doing the abuse, but I would rather attempt to work it out with the client first... and if that attempt did not work out then I would go to the authorities to work it out through that channel.

Most veterinarians feel that they should work with the owner of the animal in most cases before trying to approach the authorities about the situation. This could be that most serious animal abuse cases do not show up in veterinary clinics but rather they show up in rescue shelters where often the animal is not present with the owner. Most cases of animal abuse that show up in veterinary clinics in which the owner brings their animal in, is neglect, and in most of those cases of neglect the owner is simply lacking knowledge of proper care for the animal, this is where the veterinarian would educate their client on how to take care of the animal. Concerns with the client-doctor-patient confidentiality were not really present in the animal abuse reporting process. Most veterinarians responded that their first duty is with the protection of the animal, they do however have to work with the owner every step of the way in every process involved with the animal due to the doctor/patient/client relationship, and in this case the veterinarian is the doctor, the animal is the patient and the human is the client.

Veterinary Familiarity with Animal Abuse Laws

Overall rural veterinarians showed a greater general understanding of their states animal abuse laws than that of their urban counterparts. One of the more surprising responses from most of the veterinarians that I interviewed is that most are not familiar with their states animal abuse laws. An example response of this would be:

U1: You know I'm not real familiar with them to be honest with you, we have... we've called the SPCA on some cases... if we see animals that are tied outside n

the freezing rain or snow, we'll the SPCA. I don't think they are as stringent as I'd like them to be. Because a lot of times if those animals are provided some sort of shelter that they can go in... You know like a dog house or something and food... there really isn't anything they can do about it. Which I think that, that's not... it's not stringent enough in that case.

U2: I'm not as much as I could be, honestly.

All of the rural veterinarians claimed at least some familiarity with animal abuse laws when compared to urban veterinarians:

R1: Somewhat familiar.

R4: I'm not familiar with the exact KRS statutes but I know they are pretty weak, as in general in my opinion... as far as the punishments... they are pretty vague and they aren't a whole lot of substance to people that are found guilty of animal abuse... there isn't a lot of recourse or accountability in our laws.

One of the bigger themes that emerged across all veterinarians was that they generally referred to their veterinarian oath rather than the state law. The veterinarian's oath is as follows from the AVMA:

"Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health and welfare, the prevention and relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of medical knowledge.

I will practice my profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics.

I accept as a lifelong obligation the continual improvement of my professional knowledge and competence."

All of the veterinarians cited the veterinarian's oath as part of how they judge an animal cruelty case. However all but one of the urban respondents stated that they are were unfamiliar or not as familiar as they could be on their state's animal abuse laws. While all the rural respondents however said they had at least some level of familiarity with their state's animal abuse laws. Of the respondents that did show familiarity with the animal abuse laws of their state

all of them felt that they should be modified, due to the animal abuse laws being weak, or outdated. When asked about whether or not that animal cruelty should be a felony most veterinarians responded that it should be in gross cases of animal abuse, many others stated that it should be considered a crime in itself and ranked along the lines of assault and battery, robbery and other crimes of that nature.

Evaluating the Owner of an Animal

During the interviews I asked questions concerning the demographics of the owners of the animals that came into the clinics of the veterinarians, in particular I asked about owners that showed signs of neglecting their animals since blatant abuse cases were so rare. Veterinarians agreed that the two common traits in owners who neglect their animals was a lower education levels. When many veterinarians were asked about common traits in clients who neglected their animals they responded with statements such as “Yes, I tend to see people who don’t make a lot of money or are poorly educated with neglect cases.” Or “They don’t seem to make a lot of money and are from the poorer neighborhoods near here. I don’t think they are very educated either.” And “They don’t seem to make a lot of money.”

Although rare, blatant abuse cases do show up in the clinics of practicing veterinarians. One of the most cited traits of owner’s who abuse their animal that veterinarians gave during the interview was owner apathy and those who avoided the veterinarian’s questions. Owners who tend to abuse their animals would often show apathy toward the condition of their animal when the animal is being examined, they will make up a questionable story about what happened to the animal or they will simply not respond to questions at all or even avoid questions given to them by the veterinarian. Another type of avoidance is when the owner, or in this case the person that

brought the animal in falsely claims that the animal isn't theirs and is a neighbors, relative or someone else's animal that they know. This can be true of course, but sometimes that isn't the case. An example of this is the following:

R3: I've had people tell me that it's their brother's animal or their neighbor and so on but you still have to treat the animal of course, it's hard to prove anything with the owner.

Another example of this:

U2: It can be hard... I think I have been in those situations, and the hardest part is that they don't come in telling you... I hit this dog. Fix it. Most of the time it's a family bringing them in and they say something's happened... like it fell down the stairs. You have to sort of think it's happening and you don't want to overstep your bounds and get them into trouble when there isn't trouble to be had...

In some cases of owner abuse, owners are seeking drugs, and though I did ask every veterinarian questions the cases rarely came to light. In only two instances did this come up and they are worth noting:

U1: We actually had a case like that in our area where a man would bring in a hurt dog with some cuts and would ask for pain medication for the dog... the veterinarians in the area have since caught on to him though.

Another case happened in a rural area:

R1: You know there was a lady in um... South Central Kentucky area who was a drug addict, and she would cut her dog.... We're talking intent now. She would

literally take a blade and cut her dog, she would take it to the vet and the vet would suture it up, and they say ok. It's very typical to give some pain medication for traumatic injury. The vet would give the dog some tramadol, well the girl would go home and take the tramadol... couple weeks later cut the... I'm telling you... So that's a no brainer there... You look at that situation and go, she never needs a pet again for as long as she lives, and she needs to go to jail.

Interestingly enough veterinarians never identified anything on age, race or sex with animal abuse and this would be an area that is worth exploring for future research projects.

Where Does Animal Abuse Come From?

Many veterinarians attributed abuse to people becoming frustrated at animals, this was particularly common with veterinarians who primarily worked with farm animals, and an example of this would be a horse not doing what the owner wanted it to do for an extended period of time thus resulting in the owner becoming angry with the animal. Some abuse responses can come from an owner getting bitten by a dog or scratched by a cat for example, the owner might hit the animal back and do significantly more harm than the animal did to the owner. Some abuse cases can accidentally come from owners who were actually trying to do good things for an animal. In this case the owners is acting out of ignorance leading to abuse or neglect. An example of this behavior would be if the owner of an animal was trying to treat an animal's sickness but in doing so only making it worse. For example, giving an animal human medicine when it's actually harmful to the animal.

These finding are all fascinating, and this is very good information to start on, this leads me to the conclusion chapter consisting of a discussion of the findings and the implications of those findings.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The present research explained what would cause a veterinarian to report animal cruelty by asking them about reporting animal abuse and the current state laws regarding animal cruelty. During my interviews with veterinarians in the sample I found that in general veterinarians seem to be dissatisfied with the current set of animal cruelty laws. This study also explored what might motivate a person to commit acts of animal cruelty as well as what might cause veterinarians to actually report animal cruelty. An aspect of this research that ties into my theoretical perspective is that animals may cause stress to their owners, particularly those owners that are in the lower income and education bracket of the population, this stress can be identified as strain. Strain in this sense can be seen as the motivation to harm the animal. The particular strand of strain that is being examined here is the failure to meet a positively valued goal, and in this case that goal is the animal doing something that the owner wants it to do. Another case that this would fit is that the owner cannot meet their household needs, or meet a particular goal and then the owner would take that frustration out on a weaker target, or in this case a pet.

In the previous chapter, the example of a horse refusing to comply with a farmer came up in the dialogue, in this case the horse was refusing to do work for the farmer, in turn the farmer was becoming frustrated with the horse, after more than twenty minutes of trying to persuade the horse to do the work, the farmer finally resorted to abusing the horse in an effort to make the animal move. In this example the work that the owner of the horse wanted to accomplish is the positively valued goal, and the horse itself is blocking that valuable goal to the farmer, the farmer must do something in order to achieve that goal or otherwise the farmer will experience strain which leads to the abuse of the animal since the strain itself is what motivates the violence.

This research found that veterinarians were reluctant to report animal cruelty based majorly on two things: The first is that the veterinarian fears of wrongfully accusing a client of animal abuse, this could potentially ruin the relationship between client and veterinarian if the client had accidentally neglected or harmed the animal and was intent on fixing their behavior through learning how to properly care for their animal. The second reason a veterinarian would be hesitant to report animal abuse is fear of repercussions against their business or fear of being involved in a time consuming lawsuit. Veterinarians often expressed that they would probably win the lawsuit but they had no interest in being involved in one.

Overall, veterinarians just want to help the animals out that they are involved with and even those that need them to be involved with them, they keep busy schedules, some so busy they dedicate 14-16 hours a day to the job for upwards of 6-7 days a week, that isn't a job, it's a lifestyle choice. When compared though large animal specialist put in more hours than that of small animal specialist. This is also one of the reasons I really struggled to book interviews with most veterinarians.

The best way to look at this project can be summarized through a quote given by a particular veterinarian that I interviewed:

DJ: Do you think animal cruelty is a crime in itself?

R1: Sure no doubt. I wouldn't have a question in my mind. The tricky part is that there is so many different perspectives on it. Even if you tend to be an old hard boot veterinarian, there is still lines you can't cross. I think there is absolute animal abuse. There are perspectives where humans tend to personify animals and they put human traits on that animal. And I think you have to be careful with that, because they aren't human, they're animals. If you see a dog chained up and you say, "well I wouldn't want to be chained up" and well no you wouldn't. Uh.. and dogs are very curious animals and I'm sure chaining them up for a prolonged period of time without letting them express certain things wouldn't be good. At the same time at, night when everyone's in the house asleep and you don't want

your dog to be run over by a car, is it ok to chain it up? Well, chain it up or let it get run over, which is more abusive? You have to be a little bit.. you can't throw out common sense with it. I think sometimes that's unfortunate, we have people who have tremendously good hearts, folks who are passionate about animal care, passionate about loving animals and they just turn their brains off sometimes. Honestly some of the things we do to animals sometimes, because we're forcing human personality traits on them aren't good for the animals, it's a real perspective kind of thing. There are lines you can't cross though, and if you do cross the line you ought to go to jail.

In the course of this research I found that different veterinarians will of course have different perspectives but they all tend to have the same goal in mind, and that for the animal to be in good health. This study was designed to try to evaluate these perspectives and to make sense of them. Specifically urban veterinarians tend to be more humanistic in their perspective of animal abuse, while rural veterinarians tends to be more utilitarian but at the same time humanistic, that is they don't view the animal as an object but they don't think they function as well emotionally as an urban veterinarian would.

In sum, this study has shown that veterinarians would like to be able to report animal abuse cases as they come up without fear of retaliation in the form of lawsuits. Veterinarians do not want mandatory reporting because many feel that they should attempt to educate owners about the care of their pets before they report them. Many veterinarians feel that they should have more impact on the animal abuse laws and some have even suggest that veterinarians sit down and come up with new animal cruelty laws for their states. Learning

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