



INVITED REVIEW

**Attitudes to animal welfare and rights throughout the world in the modern era:
A review**

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Özet

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Hayvan hakları ve refahı konuları günümüzün güncel konuları olup, dünyanın pek çok bölgesindeki insanlar hayvanların bu yaşamsal sorunlarından kaygı duymaktadırlar. Bu sorunlar genellikle hayvanların hayatını etkileyen insan davranışlarından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu nedenle insanların hayvan problemleriyle ilgili düşüncelerini öğrenmek önemlidir. Biz bu çalışmada toplumların hayvanlarla ilgili tutumlarını araştırdık. Gelişmiş ülke toplumları diğer ülkelere göre ekonomik güçlerinden ve yüksek refah sistemlerini destekleme kapasitelerinden dolayı hayvanlara karşı daha duyarlı bir tutum sergilemektedirler. Bununla birlikte çiftlik hayvanı refahının sürdürülebilmesi için toplumlarda ortak bir görüş bulunmakta ve bu nedenle, en azından minimum hayvan refahı standartlarını sağlayan hayvan refahına uygun yetiştirme sistemlerini desteklememiz gerekmektedir. Fakat günümüzde halen yüksek ücretlerinden dolayı hayvan refahına uygun yetiştirme sistemlerinden üretilen hayvansal ürünleri birçok kesim tüketememektedir. Ayrıca, son yarım yüzyılda vejetaryenlik birçok gelişmiş ülkede orta bir yol olarak hızla yayılma göstermektedir. Hayvansal ürünlerin özellikle de et ürünlerinin tüketiminden uzak durmada hayvan refahı önemli bir kriterdir. Bununla beraber, hayvan deneyleri insan ve hayvan hayatı için faydalı olcaksa insanlar tarafından desteklenmektedir. Cinsiyet önemli bir demografik belirleyen olup bayanlar erkeklere göre hayvanlara karşı daha sempatik tutum göstermektedirler. Ayrıca büyük küseli hayvanların diğerlerine göre daha fazla acı çekme kapasitesinde oldukları düşünülmektedir. Sonuç olarak, tüm hayvanlara özellikle de eti için yetiştirilen hayvanlara karşı sevecen tutum temel görüş haline gelmektedir.

Abstract

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Animal rights and animal welfare issues are topical issues, with many people across the world expressing concern about the major welfare problems of animals. These problems are generally based on people attitudes that affect the animals' life. It is therefore important to learn about people's attitudes towards animal issues. We investigated society's opinions about the animals in a series of cross-cultural surveys. People who live in developed countries generally display more concern to animals than others, which appears due to their economic circumstances and ability to support high welfare systems. However, there is a common belief across societies that farm animal welfare should be maintained, and that we should support animal friendly rearing systems which at least ensure minimum standards of animal welfare. But, because of the high cost of animal friendly products many people are unable to consume these products. Besides, vegetarianism has been becoming more mainstream in many parts of the developed world over the last half century. Animal welfare concern is one of the important causes for avoiding animal products, especially meat. Most people support animal experimentation if these will be beneficial to human and animal lives. Gender is an important demographic determining factor, with females being generally more sympathetic to animals than males. Furthermore, large sized animals are generally accepted as more sentience animals. It is concluded that benign attitudes to animals are becoming more mainstream, particularly in relation to animals reared for meat.

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► Introduction

The advances of human beings in the last century have happened much faster than in previous centuries, as a result of greater education, research, economic improvements and social advancement. In this context, the changes in attitudes to animals have been much more rapid than previously. As a result of this change in people's attitudes many Non-government Organizations have been established to address animal welfare and rights and numerous legal control methods launched throughout the world. This increased interest in the welfare of animals is closely linked to increased attention paid by humans to animals, particularly to pets. However, some have asserted that people's concern to increase the welfare of animals is because of benefits to themselves (e.g. Leak and Christopher 1982).

The well known ethical interest in animals started with Aristotle, who believed that animals exist for the benefit of human beings. Almost 2 millennium later the concept of Animal Machines (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - Rene Descartes 2008) was rejected in 1789 by Jeremy Bentham (1996), who thought that animals are capable of pleasure and pain. More recently Singer (1975) has advocated a zoo-centric approach in favour of animals, this process culminating in the "Universal Declaration of Animal Rights" in 1978. Subsequently, there have been great advances in terms of legal arrangements for, and scientific studies of, animal welfare. Many countries have put laws in place to control animal protection. Working mainly from a scientific perspective, animal ethics and animal welfare centres have been established at universities throughout the world, particularly in developed countries. Innumerable animal ethics committees have been established under the umbrella of faculties and institutes in which experimental animals are used in scientific research.

Much of this scientific interest in animals was started by surveys conducted in developed parts of the world. From these more questions were postulated, such as: Is it really important to know people's perceptions of different forms of animals use? And, why it is important? It is clear that animals often can't decide for their lives and future, a responsibility often transferred to people in charge of the animals. It is important to understand what different cultures think about animals, because it will impact on trade in live and dead animals, and will affect, for example, how students treat animals in the classroom in multicultural societies. This review aims to investigate attitudes to animals and their use in different fields across the world.

► Cross Cultural Attitudes to Animals

It is obvious that animal welfare and rights issues have been gaining importance over recent decades, particularly in developed countries, but also more recently in developing countries. One study (Kjaernes et al 2005) conducted in Italy, France, Hungary, England, Holland, Norway and Sweden found that 35-77% of participants perceived animal welfare to be an "important" item. A more recent study (Phillips et al 2012) found that nationality had a major influence on students' attitudes towards animal welfare and rights. It was observed that respondents in the European countries, and particularly eastern Mediterranean countries, had greater concern for the welfare of animals than those in Asia. Differences between nationalities appear to be partly explained by differences in economic status of respondents and partly by the extent of legislation concerning animal use in the country concerned. In this context, the Eurobarometer survey (EC 2007) found that 60% of respondents believed that welfare protection had improved in their country over recent decades. When compared to other European countries, Scandinavian countries have probably the strictest legislature for animal welfare in farm production systems, with the greatest levels of concern being in some eastern Mediterranean countries. People are generally concerned about animal welfare issues in Turkey, perhaps because of its location in the Eastern Mediterranean region, but religious influences cannot be discounted (Izmirlı and Yasar 2010). European people surveyed in the Eurobarometer (EC 2005, 2007) considered the welfare and the protection of farmed animals to be superior in the EU compared to other regions in the world. Whilst there can be little doubt that the level of protection is higher than elsewhere, the evidence for welfare status is not apparent.

► Attitudes to Farm Animals

There is much concern about farm animals' situation, particularly in intensive production systems. It is therefore of no surprise that many legal regulations have been enacted in the EU; such as 78/923/EEC¹, 98/58/EC² and 2006/778/EC³. It is generally agreed that animal friendly husbandry systems are a positive development (Frewer et al 2005). For example, in a survey 83% of Italians thought that there is a strong relationship between rearing conditions for farm animals and their products (Quintili and Grifoni 2004). In a recent survey in Australia, 93% of participants found it acceptable to consume meat which has been reared and slaughtered humanely (Franklin 2007). However, in USA universities, Heleski et al (2004)

¹78/923/EEC: Council Decision of 19 June 1978 concerning the conclusion of the European Convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes Official Journal L 323 , 17/11/1978 p. 0012 - 0013

²Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes Official Journal L 221, 08/08/1998 p. 0023 - 0027

³Commission Decision (2006/778/EC) 14 November 2006 amending Decision 2000/50/EC concerning minimum requirements for the collection of information during the inspections of production sites on which certain animals are kept for farming purposes (Text with EEA relevance) (Official Journal L 314, 15.11.2006 p. 0039-0047)

found that animal and veterinary scientists reflected a high degree of concern for farm animal welfare, particularly when afforded by the “Five Freedoms –e.g. freedom from injury and disease, thirst, unnecessary pain and/or discomfort, hunger, unnecessary fear and/or distress and freedom to perform normal behaviour” items. Bennet (1997) found that 41% of respondents in Great Britain were very concerned about the processes of the farm animal rearing for food products. According to the study of Pan-Huy and Fawaz (2003), Swiss consumers perceive that their animal friendly husbandry practices are of higher quality than others, demonstrating a national pride in animal welfare standards that is probably evident elsewhere. Moreover, Bennet et al (2002) considered that consumers with high levels of moral concern about animal welfare issues are willing to pay more for the products of systems that are taking account of animal welfare.

This concern for farm animals is likely to influence to the consumers’ choice of animal products. The number of people in the UK who claim to be vegetarian has increased during the last half century; statistics from the Second World War suggest that 0.2 per cent of the population were vegetarian in the 1940s, and it is estimated that in 2000 between 3 and 7 per cent of the population were vegetarian (Spencer 1993). Between 5 (Kalof et al 1999) and 7 per cent (Dietz et al 1995) of US citizens claim to be vegetarians. In a recent study (Izmirli and Phillips 2011) that was conducted in 11 Eurasian countries approximately 4 per cent of students considered themselves vegetarian and 0.4 per cent were vegan. Spencer et al (2007) found that the three most commonly cited reasons for self-reported vegetarianism were their health, animal welfare and the environment, respectively. According to the study of Fox and Ward (2008), ethics was the first reason to be a vegetarian. Another study has found that the strongest predictor of vegetarianism as a dietary choice is the belief in supporting the environment (Kalof et al 1999). This was not supported by the study Izmirli and Phillips (2011), which indicated that concerns about health were more important than the environment. Animal welfare usually gets the third position in the importance ranking.

► Attitudes to Research Using Animals

Millions of animals are used in research every year throughout the world. For instance, 12.1 million animals are used in experiments in the European Union (except one country) in 2005 (Anon. 2005) and 17-22 million rodents are using in experiments in USA per year (Robertson 2002). Because of these huge numbers, there is a great concern for experimental animals. In recent research conducted in the UK (Knight et al 2009) among scientists, animal welfarists, and laypersons, animal welfarists were opposed to all types of animal use, whereas scientists implied support for the use of animals for scientific research.

According to a study in Australia (Franklin 2007), almost 55% of the participants found animal use to be acceptable if human lives are saved. According to another study (Davey and Wu 2007), Chinese university students displayed considerable concern for the use of laboratory animals. They mostly thought that the use of animals for testing cosmetics and household products is unnecessary.

► Gender Effects on the Attitudes to Animals

There have been many papers published which introduce the relationship between gender and attitudes to animals and their uses in different fields (Wells and Hepper 1997, Paul and Podberscek 2000, Hagelin et al 2003, Heleski et al 2004, Phillips and McCullough 2005, Serpell 2005, Herzog 2007, Phillips et al 2011). These studies have identified that females generally display greater concern for animal issues than men. Phillips et al (2011) also tested their theory of ‘female empowered empathy’ in 11 Eurasian countries using a survey of female and male students’ attitudes to the use of animals. In countries where females were more empowered, principally Sweden, Norway and Great Britain, the females had much greater concern than males for animal issues, whereas in other countries where females were not empowered the responses of males and females were more similar. Thus it is clear that empowered females are making independent decisions to support animal welfare.

► Perception on Sentience of Animal Species

Numerous different studies have suggested that people have in their mind a ranking of animals’ sentience, which may relate to how they feel the animals should be treated. People generally suppose biologically large animals to be more likely to suffer pain than the small animals. According to the international students survey of Phillips and McCullough (2005), the order of sentience that was attributed to different species was monkey > dog > newborn baby > fox > pig > chicken > rat > fish. Correlations between animal sentience and attitudes towards the uses of animals showed that students opposing, or advocating constraints on, the use of animals in society attributed more sentience to those animals. Phillips et al (2012) found in a wider ranging international survey that the overall order of attributed sentience for the different species was human infant > chimpanzee > dog > dolphin > cat > horse > cattle > pig > rat > chicken > octopus > fish. It was almost same for females and males (Phillips et al 2011). Fishes almost always get the lowest ranking in the different surveys. Özen et al (2009) found the rating of the moral status of animals was as follows: mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and insects. A recent study by Knight et al (2009) showed that belief in animal sentience was lowest in scientists, followed by laypersons, while animal welfarists scored the highest.

► Conclusions

Attitudes to animals across the world are changing because of the social conscience of the modern era. People are more sensitive to their obligations to animals, and this has directed them in many countries to promote legal arrangements to protect animals. Besides, this change affects people's attitudes to animals positively. We suggest that people support animal rearing and animal use partly for the benefit of humans, but also because they want animals to be treated humanely for their own sake, with special regard to animal welfare and rights.

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