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Qualitative Study: Issue(s) of Stray Animal(s) in Turkey from the Point of View of Volunteers

Bir Nitel Araştırma: Gönüllülerinin Bakış Açısından Türkiye’de Sokak Hayvanları(nın) Sorun (ları)u

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of this study is to reveal the issue of stray animals from the volunteers' viewpoint and determine the views and suggestions of volunteers who struggle for the rights of stray animals in Turkey. For this, a study based on qualitative research techniques was carried out with participants who voluntarily work for stray animals. Among the qualitative research patterns, case study pattern, semi-structured interview as data gathering tool, among nonprobable choice method, snowball method as data gathering tool were chosen. All the data which were acquired with semi-structured profoundly interviews were analyzed by descriptive analyzing method. This study does not reveal that fact issue of stray animals in cities of Turkey but reveals the issues of stray animals themselves and also the volunteers who have been striving for stray animals voluntarily. The issue of stray animals in Turkey is rooted mainly in local governments' executions. It is emphasized one more time that the current executions of local governments are inadequate to be able to solve the issues of stray animals. The most important cause for this is that local governments' not having applied the process of sterilization effectively and thus, the population of stray animals cannot be taken under control. The other significant causes are inefficiency of animal shelters run by local governments during the treatment, the unawareness of the people in the public and the nonlegal applications done by the local governments through stray animals. According to the volunteers, this issue can be handled by the state. The solution for this issue is effective sterilization and the raising awareness of the people. Eventually, it does not matter whether the solution for the issues about stray animals or the solution for issues which stray animals face, local and central governments have plenty of duties. But the main actor for this is the central government.

KEYWORDS: *Animals, Animal Rights, Domestication, Stray Animals, Urbanization*

ÖZ:

Araştırmanın amacı sokak hayvanlarının hakları ile ilgili olarak uğraş veren sokak hayvanları gönüllülerinin gözünden sokak hayvanları sorununu ortaya koymak ve Türkiye’de sokak hayvanları sorununun çözümü için gönüllülerin görüş ve önerilerini belirlemektir. Bu amaçla sokak hayvanları için gönüllü olarak mücadele veren katılımcılar ile nitel araştırma tekniklerine dayanan bir çalışma gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden durum çalışması deseni, veri toplama aracı olarak yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşme yöntemi, örneklem yöntemi olarak olasılıklı olmayan örnek seçim yöntemlerinden kartopu yöntemi seçilmiştir. Yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşme yöntemi ile katılımcılardan elde edilen veriler betimsel analiz yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma Türkiye’de kentlerde sokak hayvanı sorununun değil sokak hayvanlarının sorunlarının ve onlar için gönüllü olarak mücadele eden gönüllülerin yaşadığı sorunların bulunduğu gerçeğinin ortaya koymuştur. Türkiye’de sokak hayvanları ile ilgili sorunlar en başta yerel yönetim uygulamalarından kaynaklanmaktadır. Mevcutta yerel yönetimlerin uygulamaları sokak hayvanlarının sorunlarını çözmede yetersiz kalmakta olduğu bu çalışma ile bir kez daha ortaya konmuştur. Bunun en önemli nedeni

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yerel yönetimler tarafından kısırlaştırmanın etkin şekilde yapılması ve bu nedenle sokak hayvanlarının nüfuslarının kontrol altında tutulmamasıdır. Diğer en önemli nedenler yerel yönetimlerin yönetiminde olan barınakların sokak hayvanlarını tedavi ve yetersizliği, toplumun sokak hayvanlarının haklarına yönelik olarak farkındalıklarının olmaması, yerel yönetimler tarafından sokak hayvanlarına yönelik yapılan yasal olmayan uygulamalardır. Gönüllülere göre sorun ancak devlet eliyle çözülebilecek bir konudur. Çözüm ise en başta etkin kısırlaştırma ve toplumun eğitimidir. Ayrıca mevcut yasanın gözden geçirilmesi gerektiği de belirtilmiştir. Sonuç olarak ister sokak hayvanları sorununun çözümü ister sokak hayvanlarının yaşadığı sorunların çözümü olsun yerel yönetim ve merkezi yönetime büyük vazifeler düşmektedir. Ancak başaktör merkezi yönetimidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Hayvanlar, Hayvan Hakları, Evcilleştirme, Sokak Hayvanları, Kentleşme*

GİRİŞ:

The humans protected him/herself as they appeared on the Earth at the beginning or hunted animals to get some food. "Circa 10000 B.C." in Neolithic Age, humans passed into permanent settlement by domesticating some plant species firstly, then according to their needs, some animal species (Baskıcı, 1998, p.73). At first, in order to give warning toward the enemy or help with the hunt, dog was domesticated (Galibert, 2011; Isaac, 1970; Bakıcı, 1998). Afterwards, with the order, sheep and goat, reindeer and cattle for food, donkey, camel and horse for carrying loads were domesticated (Isaac 1970; Bakıcı, 1998). Cat was domesticated after passing into permanent settlement and building the first settlements in Neolithic Age around 12000 B.C. in Mesopotamia (Driscoll et al. 2009; Rule, 2019). But, with domestication of some animals and plants, they have been dependent on humans, and these domesticated animals lost the ability to survive under natural circumstances (Baskıcı, 1998).

When the first cities which were built after Industrial Revolution were examined "like the effect of industrialization", it is seen that these cities were built with "the effort of animals" (Karayaba, 2020, p.267). At those times, in Western countries, the rapid growth and development of the cities were based on farming animals (Atkins, 2012). For instance, the horses were used in the carriage of humans and loads, as well as, in the building of modern cities (Atkins, 2012). The borders of city roads were determined with the dimensions of the vehicle which were pulled by animals (Ataüz, 2002).

However, with economic, social, cultural, technological and political changes in urban structure which were appeared with the urbanization process beginning with Industrial Revolution in the beginning of 19th century, differentiated social structure and the shape of city administration changed the viewpoint over stray animals, and stray animals became unwanted in the cities (Yalçın, 2020). Prior to the 19th century, human and animals both took place in the centre of relationship between humanity and its environment, with the start of 19th century, in the West, with the development of machines used in agriculture, the level of depending on animals decreased, animals began to get out of this relationship (Berger, 2009). Because humanity did not need animals anymore. Therefore, with the start of 19th century, in many countries, owing to the thought of their being threats for human health and hygiene, animals were estranged, the existences of stray animals were destroyed by murdering them generally (Önen, 2020; Özmen, 2020).

Nowadays, the existence of stray animals is generally seen as a threat in cities in Western societies. Therefore, cats and dogs which are unwanted and wander around the city freely are taken into animal shelters, in some countries, in case they are not able to be adopted, after a while later, their lives may come to an end with euthanasia operations (Voslárvá and Passantino, 2012).

When the Turkish society is taken into account, it is seen that cities had a closed-street and introvert lifestyles and traditional neighbourhood culture until 19th century. In these settlements, stray animals, particularly dogs, were accepted as a part of the society until 19th century. However, with 19th century, as a result of the start of migration from villages to cities and correspondingly urbanization, at the same time, rising of the contact with the West and deterioration of traditional neighbourhood culture, the relationships with stray animals changed, stray animals became surplus in cities in Turkish culture as well (Melikoğlu, 2009; Karabulut, 2016; Aydın, 2016; Aydoğdu and Tuncer, 2018). Another point which changed this relationship is that Turkey reached the application modern Turkish municipal work with Imperial Edict of Gülhane (Sunay, 2002). Before hand, stray animals participated in a set of works such as security and cleaning, with the modernization of the cities in 19th century, local governments began to run these kinds of responsibilities and there was no need for stray animals (Gündoğdu, 2018; Sümer, 2021; İstanbul Araştırma Enstitüsü, n.d.). For these reasons, initially in İstanbul, starting from 19th and until the end of 20th century, there have been many interferences to remove stray animals, especially dogs. Some of these incidences involved even poisoning stray animals openly or shooting stray animals armed machines (Onay, 2019; Özdoğan and Bilgin, 2021). But these interferences could not be effective to lessen the number of stray animals in the city centres (Alkan, 2016; Onay, 2019; Özdoğan and Bilgin, 2021).

In Turkey, through the end of 20th century, the policy of administration of dog population (catch, inject, sterilize and leave it to where taken) was put into practice which was developed in collaboration with WHO and WSPA via activists and non-governmental organizations. On the date 24.06.2004, the law of animal protection with the law no 5199 was legalized (Özdoğan and Bilgin, 2021). With this law, important steps were taken such as "the development of animal rights and awareness of animal rights", many civil associations were founded, "on the media and public territories, animal right became much clearer". But, nowadays, in terms of

the scientific and legal works about animal rights, it is not possible “to explain that even if serious steps were taken, there is not eligible progress about the freedom, welfare and rights of stray animals” (Akıllı, 2018, p.97). According to Özdoğan and Bilgin (2021), with the law of animal protection, even if they are thought to be under protection of local governments which murdered animals in the middle of the streets openly, “the institutive violence towards street dogs was not removed, instead, it was converted” (p. 71). Because as long as their population grows or they are complained by the people, particularly dogs are collected, on the contrary as stated in the laws, they can be thrown into the places like forest which is “out of sight”, even sometimes they are imprisoned under bad conditions (Zeybek, 2014, p.270).

When the law of animal protection is studied, it is seen that many responsibilities are transferred to the local governments about stray animals. Yet, the efforts and struggles of local governments are inadequate in solving the problems of stray animals. According to Akıllı (2018, p.113), the reasons for this occasion are “the issues on responsibility complexity between local governments and institutions, the issue about coordination and communication; the lack of legal penal sanctions, the lack of institutive capacity, animal shelters, medical, physical and technical specifications of health centres and the lack of skilled staff and educational practises; not producing permanent and sustainable solutions for the issues.

Nowadays, in coordination with local governments, many volunteers who work co-ordinately, plenty of civil associations and many volunteers who work personally strive about the rights of stray animals.

The aim of this research is to set forth the issues of stray animals from the point of view of volunteers who strive about the rights of stray animals and to determine opinions and suggestions of volunteers for the solutions of issues of stray animals in Turkey.

1. Method

This study is based on qualitative research technique. From a holistic point of view, qualitative researches are the methods “which embark on analysing research method with a commentative approach” and providing understanding of standpoints of participants deeply (Karaş, 2017, p. 71). In the study, qualitative research method was selected to reach more broadscale data for determining the standpoints about the problems about the rights of stray animals and the problems of stray animals in Turkey, and to make “in-depth analysis” and “exposition” (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 49).

1.1. Research Design and Data Collection Tool

Qualitative research design which was used in this study is the case study, the method of data collection tool is in-depth interview technique. The case study pattern is “needs to address the role of the researcher: past experiences, personal connections to the site, steps to gain entry, and sensitive ethical issues. Discussion of data collection should include the purposeful sampling approach and the forms of data to be collected” (Creswell, 2016, p.97).

In this study, the reasons why in-depth interview technique was selected as data collection tool are that it has deeper data collection potential compared to the others (Türnüklü, 2020), has the flexibility, obtains high or whole of level of answering questions (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016) and an effective way of people’s explaining their experiences, attitude, view, complaint, senses and beliefs (Briggs, 1986).

1.2. Study Sample

Stray animals’ volunteers who work voluntarily form the target population of the study. Owing to the fact that volunteers were difficult to reach, a nonselective sample choice methods, snowball method was chosen.

Snowball method was applied in the way of when someone who is suitable for criteria in demand, trying to reach other people who have similar specifications. The process of the study began on Instagram with detection of participant/s who work actively, personally and voluntarily about stray animals. By asking “On this subject, who do you suggest me to get contact?” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 28; cited: Özkanan and Erdem, 2015) questions to the volunteer/s accessed, new people were able to be reached. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were done with the participants who were determined with this method.

“The depth and width of the data” collected with qualitative research “are inversely proportional to the sample” (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016, p. 124). Also, sampling in qualitative studies contains more than the number of participants and “is a process that includes each connection and contact number” with all participants (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007, p. 117). In this respect, to be able to get deeper results, the number of the participants was restricted and in-depth interviews were completed with 16 participants.

The matter which determines the number of the participants is data satiety. The notion of data satiety in qualitative research is explained as new data cannot contribute to the expansion of the study, can cause repetition and thus, it gets to the point of

completing all the process about collecting data. (Glaser and Straus, 1967) At the beginning of research, sufficient number of interviews were planned to explain the study, but during the interview with the 14th participant, data satiety was reached. To be sure about data satiety, two more interviews were also done. In total, as a result of reaching data satiety, the procedure finished with 16 interviews.

Because the target population covers all over Turkey, to be able to have access to all participants from different cities, depth interviews were handled on Google Meet platform.

1.3. Data Collection and Analysing Process

At the beginning of depth interview, the participant was asked for the interview to be recorded and then interviews were recorded. The questions for the participants were directed with five main subjects: the descriptive information about the participants, the information about voluntary works of the participants, the personal difficulties which participants have, the issue of stray animals in Turkey and the solution suggestions of the participants.

With the semi-structured depth interview method, descriptive analysis which were gathered according to the answers of the participants were analysed. Descriptive analysis is a process which is used to code the qualitative information, enables one to regulate the series of data in detailed way and provides descriptive description, when it is needed it is able to turn qualitative data into quantitative data. (Boyatzis, 1998) By reevaluating the codes which were created with inductive method, they were placed under the themes and instead of coding inside the themes directly, the structure of the codes was formed based on the data. In the first phase of this study, the process of categorization and theming was started with in-vivo coding, in the second phase, by reregulating the categories on the base of questions, categories reformed again on the base of research questions were reregulated around theoretical notions which are related to the structure of codes. Data analysis proceeded from tangible to intangible and code structure was formed. The indications gained with descriptive analysis were all commented in an objective way and without any change in what participants stated, cited directly, regulated in the indication part.

2. The Evaluation of Interviews

2.1. The Descriptive Information About Participants

16 participants were included in total for this study as to state the issue about stray animals from the point of view of stray animal volunteers, to determine all standpoints and suggestions of volunteers in Turkey. The information belonged to the participants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive information about a participants.

Participant	Gender	Age	Profession	Education Status	Province of residence
Pt.1	Woman	36	Faculty Member (biologist)	PhD	Tekirdağ
Pt.2	Woman	43	Landscape architect	Licence	İzmir
Pt.3	Woman	46	Organic farmer	Licence	İzmir
Pt.4	Woman	47	Faculty member (city planner)	PhD	Tekirdağ
Pt.5	Woman	34	Nurse	Licence	İstanbul
Pt.6	Woman	32	Biologist	PhD	Ankara
Pt.7	Woman	44	City planner	Licence	İzmir
Pt.8	Woman	22	University student	University student	Çanakkale
Pt.9	Woman	22	University student	University student	Rize
Pt.10	Woman	32	Municipal civil servant	Licence	Rize
Pt.11	Woman	28	English teacher / master's degree	Licence	Van
Pt.12	Woman	37	Landscape architect	Licence	İstanbul
Pt.13	Woman	27	Lawyer	Licence	Edirne
Pt.14	Woman	22	University student	University student	Kocaeli
Pt.15	Woman	41	Faculty member	PhD	Yozgat
Pt.16	Male	26	Lawyer / master's degree	Licence	Diyarbakır
Pt: Participant					

2.2. Information about the Volunteer-based Work of the Participants

The information about the volunteer-based studies of the participants consists of 11 categories under three themes. These themes, categories, and codes are presented in Table 2 to summarise them as a whole.

Table 2. Themes, categories and codes for the participants' volunteer-based work

Theme	Category	Code	Participant
Reason for starting to work as a volunteer	Animals	Adopting your first cat/dog	Pt.12, Pt.13, Pt.4, Pt.6, Pt.5, Pt.8, Pt.9, Pt.10, Pt.12, Pt.13
		Excess of cats in the neighbourhood	Pt.7, Pt.14, Pt.15, Pt.16
		Death of a treated puppy due to shelter	Pt.1
	Social media	Cute videos on social media	Pt.5, Pt.11
What is done for stray animals	Feeding	Food distribution and feeding	Pt.1, Pt.2, Pt.3, Pt.4, Pt.5, Pt.8, Pt.9, Pt.10, Pt.11, Pt.12, Pt.13, Pt.14, Pt.15, Pt.16
		Collecting food from canteens	Pt.15
	Treatment	Treatment of injured animals	Pt.1, Pt.2, Pt.3, Pt.4, Pt.8, Pt.9, Pt.10, Pt.11, Pt.12, Pt.13, Pt.15, Pt.16
		Internal and external parasite applications	Pt.1, Pt.2, Pt.3, Pt.6, Pt.7, Pt.15, Pt.16
		Scabies treatment	Pt.1, Pt.6, Pt.7, Pt.15, Pt.16
	Population control & sterilization	Sterilization	Pt.1, Pt.2, Pt.3, Pt.4, Pt.5, Pt.6, Pt.7, Pt.9, Pt.15, Pt.16
	Nest finding and building	Permanent adoption	Pt.4, Pt.7, Pt.9, Pt.10, Pt.11, Pt.16
		Temporary hosting	Pt.7, Pt.9, Pt.13
	Informing	Hanging and disturbing posters for informative purposes	Pt.7
		Informing on social media	Pt.15
	Shelter	Strive to prevent the shelter from taking	Pt.6, Pt.15
		Visiting and showing the banned breeds taken to the shelter	Pt.7
Covering expenses	Own income	Own budget	Pt.1, Pt.2, Pt.4, Pt.5, Pt.6, Pt.7, Pt.8, Pt.11, Pt.12, Pt.13, Pt.14, Pt.15
		Student scholarship	Pt.8
	Near neighbourhood	Friends	Pt.1, Pt.2, Pt.3, Pt.9, Pt.15, Pt.16
		Family	Pt.1, Pt.3, Pt.8, Pt.14
	Donation aid	Help from social media	Pt.4, Pt.15, Pt.16
		Donation through social media	Pt.9, Pt.10
		Fair	Pt.15

2.2.1. Theme 1. Reason for Starting to Work for Stray Animals Voluntarily

According to the answers of the participants, the very first turning points to start working for stray animals voluntarily are adopting the first cat and awareness comes afterwards.

Pt.4. I always loved stray animals but I think my turning point became adoption of my eldest cat Findik. I adopted it from the street and then I started to strive for stray animals by putting them in my cat's shoes.

It is stated that the cute videos of cats and dogs on social media under the category of social media became the most recurring turning point.

Pt.5. You know those funny cats and dogs' videos on Instagram. I began to feed stray animals with the help of those funny and cute videos. My first contact began with this.

Another important cause to have started to work for stray animals voluntarily is that the abundance of the cats in the near environment.

Pt.14. There were too many cats in my neighbourhood near my high school. I used to buy food for them all the time. Then I started to feed. After then, their health problems and vet expenses came up etc. The environment factor, let's say. The excessive number of the cats.

The bad experience of one of the participants was an important turning point in raising awareness about stray animals. This experience also gives clues about the situation of shelters and people's perspective on animals.

Pt.1. I started with a three-month old dog with mange that came in front of my house. We took it to the vet. ... We were told to bring him regularly. It was living in front of our house, but after about two weeks, the municipality took it to shelter on my neighbour's complaint.... He was 3 months old. We took him out of there, but he died nearly 15 days later due to the bloody diarrhea virus he contracted in the shelter....

2.2.2. Theme 2. Activities for Stray Animals

The applications performed by the participants for stray animals are generally multiple applications. The most common of these applications are feeding, treatment of injured animals, sterilization, internal and external parasite applications, permanent adoption and babies treatment respectively. Other applications are given in Table 2.

Pt.2. Firstly, sure, I fed and gave water to the dogs in front of my door and treated and sterilized them, I have been doing this for many years. I have another hobby, cycling. As I travelled away from the city on my bike, I saw dogs in miserable conditions and I carried food for them for many years regularly.... Later on, my awareness changed, I perceived other things. For instance, we think that there is water and food in the city when we see it in 1-2 places, but actually, it is not placed regularly. I also realized that the mortality rate of babies is extremely high I found a solution for both situations, I put regular food and water wherever I can access, which is a territory of 60 acres now, and I began to sterilize every cat which I saw.... I care for an estimated 180 cats. I have sterilized 147 cats in my neighbourhood by far.

Pt.7. ... In the last 2 months, a group of friends picked up 90 stray dogs and many cats in Seferihisar region, sterilized them in the local government's shelter, had them chipped, internal and external parasite application and rabies vaccination and released them to the place where we picked them up.... In the district where I live, I distribute posters and talk to my friends to inform people about stray animal and sterilization. Because I am against imprisonment, I visit the shelter at the weekend especially for animals which are in the shelter for no fault of their own especially because of the nonsense called banned breeds, I take them out of their cages, take them for a walk and love them. By taking photos of the dogs and cats which can easily find a home and sharing them on social media., I try to get them out of the shelter, get treatment and find home. In this way, this year I found home for more than 60 dogs by taking them out of Seferihisar and Karabağlar shelters and having them treated and rehabilitated.

2.2.3. Theme 3. Reimbursement of Expenditure

According to the statements of the participants, most of the expenses in the applications for stray animals are covered from participants' own budget. However, since the volunteers' own budget are not sufficient, help is also received from family and friends.

Pt.1. Mostly from my own budget. From time to time, I get support from close friends or family.

A volunteer, who is a university student, stated that he covered his expenses from his pocket money and the scholarship he received.

Pt.8. From my own money. From my scholarship or the allowance my parents give me. Since we take care of it as a family, we do it together from the money at home.

Apart from the participants' own budget and donations from friends, social media is also used to collect donations. Other tools used for donations are donations through associations and bazaars.

Pt.15. I cover most of it from my money. I have most of the sterilization done by the local government... For other expenses, I either advertise social media and ask for donations, or I ask for donations from friends from my environment, sometimes I visit the bazaar. We sell handicraft cakes and pies.

2.3. Problems Experienced by Individual Participants

Participants usually gave more than one answer regarding the individual problems they experienced while fighting for stray animal. These problems are grouped under four categories: practices of local government, laws, economy and human behaviour. The most

frequently mentioned problem under these four categories is the high prices of treatment, medicine and food under the materialistic category. The second most frequently mentioned problem is the inadequacy of the shelters under the management of local governments in treating stray animals. Again, under this category, no sterilization or not sterilizing properly in shelters is another most frequently mentioned problem. Other frequently mentioned problems by the participants under the category of human behaviour are abandonment of adopted animals, not paying attention to speed of the cars in the city, traffic accidents leading to the death of stray animals, and lack of animal love and awareness around people. Other problems are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Themes, categories and codes related to the problems experienced by the participants while fighting for stray animals

Theme	Category	Code	Participant
The problems experienced by the participants while fighting for stray animals.	Applications of local governments	Inadequacy of the shelter in treatment	Pt.2, Pt.4, Pt.8, Pt.10
		Failure to sterilize / improper sterilization in shelters	Pt.1, Pt.5, Pt.16
		Changing the habitat of animals	Pt.1
		Lack of co-operation with volunteers	Pt.1
	Laws	Inadequacy of the laws	Pt.7
	Economy	High prices for treatment, medicines, and food	Pt.2, Pt.3, Pt.4, Pt.9, Pt.10, Pt.12, Pt.16
	The behaviours of people	Abandonment of adopted animals	Pt.4, Pt.5, Pt.7
		Car speed, road accidents	Pt.8, Pt.13, Pt.14
		Lack of animal love and awareness in people	Pt.6, Pt.11, Pt.16
		Constant discarding of the things	Pt.5, Pt.13
		Poisoning	Pt.7, Pt.14
		Unfounded complaints to the local governments	Pt.7, Pt.15
		Fake news	Pt.15
Concretisation		Pt.13	

Pt.1. The biggest problem is that local governments do not fulfil their duties. Law 5100 imposes the responsibility of the sterilization and treatment on local governments. However, local governments, in violation of the law, even with unfounded complaints, take stray animals from the area where they live and throw them into the nature, forests or change their habitat without even sterilization, and do not treat them. At the same time, shelters of the local governments stay away from working in co-operation with volunteers...

Pt.2. Money, definitely. From food to nappies, it is all about money. I can only get sterilized through the state. Zero treatment. What goes out alive comes back dead. The local governments have x-rays and blood medicines, but they do not use them....

Pt.4. I think the biggest problem I have with stray animals is that the animals I have adopted return... Apart from that, I think the biggest problem is the cost of the treatment of these animals. Because unfortunately, many treatments are too difficult to be done in shelters. And after the negative experiences I have had in shelters, I have to do the treatment and sterilization in private clinic. This corresponds to really big sums.

Pt.6. People. Lack of love for animals.

Pt.7. Laws are very insufficient, only in favour of people, they do not protect them, they do not treat them. People are ignorant. When people see a dog, they act as if they see a monster, poison them as if they are the only ones in the world, make unfounded complaints to the local governments and throw the animals they take care of at home to the streets....

Pt.13. First of all, it is basically caused by people. There is too much concrete everywhere. The natural environment of these animals is completely destroyed.

Pt.15. This recent false news. People making complaints without knowing dog behaviour. Complaints are the biggest problem. The biggest problem is people.

2.4. According to the Participants, the Problem of Stray Animals in Turkey

The responses of the participants regarding the biggest problem related to stray animals in Turkey are grouped under four categories: local government practises, central government practises, urbanisation and people's point of view. Participants gave more than one answer regarding to the problems. The most frequently mentioned problem under the category of local government practises is that sterilization is not carried out effectively by local governments and therefore the population of stray animals cannot be kept under control. The second most frequently mentioned problem, also under the category of local government practises is that local governments throw animals to the other districts and change their habitats. People's lack of awareness and education about stray animals, which is under the category of people's point of view, is the third most frequently mentioned problem. Lack of proper implementation of the existing law on stray animals by local administrations and people's lack of respect for the right to the life of other living creatures and lack of love, which are expressed under the category of people's point of view, are expressed as the fourth biggest problem. Other problems are given in Table 4.

Table 4. According to the participants, the biggest stray animal problem or the problem of stray animals in Turkey

Theme	Category	Code	Participant
The problem of stray animals in Turkey.	Local government practises	Ineffective sterilization	Pt.3, Pt.4, Pt.7, Pt.8, Pt.9, Pt.10, Pt.13, Pt.15, Pt.16
		Changing the habitat of animals	Pt.4, Pt.5, Pt.9, Pt.10, Pt.15
		Failure to implement the law as it should be	Pt.1, Pt.4, Pt.9
		Insufficiency of local government facilities	Pt.3
	Central management practises	The Attitude of the state towards the issue	Pt.5 Pt.15
		Insufficiency of the laws	Pt.7
		Lack of resources	Pt.6
	Urbanisation	Unplanned construction and restriction of animal habitats	Pt.3, Pt.14
	People's point of view	Lack of awareness and education	Pt.6, Pt.12, Pt.14, Pt.16
		People's lack of respect for the right to life of other living beings and lack of love	Pt.2, Pt.3, Pt.11

Pt.3. There are many problems. Restriction of living spaces, unplanned construction, this is the case not only for stray animals but also for humans. Global warming, lack of love, selfishness, ineffective sterilization, lack of employees or equipment which should be under the service of local government.

Pt.4. The biggest problem with stray animals in Turkey is the failure of local administrations to fulfil their duties. While the law states that animals should be taken, treated and then released back to where they were taken from, unfortunately, the violation of the law and the practises carried out or the law is not applied correctly. While the problem of stray animals is an issue which can only be solved by sterilizing of these animals, unfortunately it is not done....

Pt.9. Lack of sterilization. Local governments throw the dogs to each other. The fact that no centre is established in the districts in the name of sheltering, instead the districts solve the problem by throwing dogs to the border of other districts.

Researcher: Is that what they do?

Pt.9. Of course. Although we have evidence for about 6 months, we have not been able to impose and sanctions on the local government.... There are a lot of lives which are thrown into the unknown by giving it to a labourer and collecting a lot of stray animals. For example, last week, Çayeli local government collected dogs and injected them with anaesthesia, and an animal died there because they could not adjust the dose.

Pt.10. The biggest problem is that sterilization is not done properly.... we are in 2023 and sterilization is still not operational in many cities. Sterilization made only for show save the day. Wherever it is possible to enter the mountain, bay, plateau, pasture, wherever it can be entered, it is necessary to enter everywhere and sterilization should be applied. As the district of Fındıklı, we had the sterilization of animals in the whole district last year.... But since this is not an issue which a single district can solve, this circulation never ends. In the meantime, this is a very big problem in these discards from the villages and districts. This does not stop because

of these activities. As I said, we have finished this in Fındıklı district. But when we look at it, there are still some on the streets. Unfortunately. There is still.

Pt.15. Local governments do not sterilize. Taking the complained dogs out of our sight and throwing them to the mountains, forests and villages. Therefore, this is a vicious circle. The dog which is not sterilized constantly gives birth and the dog which gives birth becomes a problem. They take the dog which is a problem and leave it in the mountains and hills. It gives birth again at the same time, the state has a lack of control.

2.5. Participants' Suggestions for Solutions to the Issue

The solution suggestions of the participants on the subject consist of 3 categories under two themes. These themes, categories and codes are presented in Table 5 to summarize them as a whole.

Table 5. Participants' suggestions for the solutions to the issue.

Theme	Category	Code	Participant
According to the participants, by whom is the problem solved	State	State	Pt.1, Pt.2, Pt.3, Pt.4, Pt.5, Pt.6, Pt.7, Pt.8, Pt.9, Pt.10, Pt.11, Pt.12, Pt.13, Pt.14, Pt.15, Pt.16
Solution suggestions of the participants on the issue	Suggestions for local government	Effective sterilization	Pt.1, Pt.6, Pt.7, Pt.11, Pt.15, Pt.16
		Transparency	Pt.5, Pt.12
		sterilization centres for each district	Pt.9
		Correct application of the laws	Pt.4
		Stabilisation of the shelters	Pt.7
		Accessibility of the shelter locations	Pt.12
		One earring colour for each district	Pt.9
		Increasing green areas	Pt.16
		Suggestions for central government	Education
	State control		Pt.8, Pt.10
	Deterrent sanctions and punishment		Pt.3, Pt.4
	Voluntary tax system		Pt.16
	No suggestion	No suggestion	Pt.2
No suggestion	No suggestion	Pt.2	

2.5.1. Theme 1. According to the Participants, by whom is the Problem Solved?

Almost all of the participants think that the stray animal problem in Turkey cannot be solved individually, but can be solved by the state.

Pt.10. This can only be solved by the state. The state will intervene, we have these laws. We are now taking it under control, and these laws will be implemented without leaving any gaps in between, otherwise I never believe that this can be solved.

2.5.2. Theme 2. Participants' Suggestion for the Solution to the Issue

The answers given to the question aimed at finding out the solution suggestions of the participants for the problem are gathered into two categories: suggestion for the local administrations and suggestions for the central government. One participant stated that he had no suggestion for the problem. However, it is thought that this answer reflects the hopelessness about the issue.

Pt.2. Unfortunately, I do not have any suggestion. For myself, I have learnt not to expect anything from people.

The solution suggestion of the participants is similar to the previous theme. According to this, although the solution suggestions are generally more than one, effective sterilization and education of people are expressed first and foremost. Other suggestions can be seen in Table 5.

Pt.1. Effective sterilization.

Pt.6. Education. For example, just as there are public service adverts about not smoking, we can also make public service adverts about animal... We can move people away from seeing them as monsters. My second solution is sterilization... Prevent the population from increasing, prevent the spread of diseases. This animal will not be aggressive anyway. Because there will be no disease, there will be no pressure to reproduce, there will be no fight for food because the population is small.

Pt.13...Just as I became conscious about this issue after the age of 26, it means that I had to reach the awareness of something... I could have touched the lives of more animals for a very long time, but I could not. Now, if the new generation is made aware of this issue, in the future they will be veterinarians, they will be working for local government, they will be working for shelters, if awareness is raised on this issue, something can be changed.... if there are public awareness raising activities on this issue, if there is something on the TV, if education is given in schools, maybe associations can provide education, a lot can change in schools. There are 15 million students in Turkey, maybe more. If 2-3 million of them become conscious, a lot will change...

Pt.15. Sterilization. This problem cannot be solved without sterilization.

Apart from these two solutions, the most frequently expressed suggestions were the transparency of shelters, state control and implementation of deterrent sanctions and penalties for crimes committed against animals.

Pt.5. Institutions managed by local governments should be transparent, to volunteers, to everyone.

Pt.4. As I mentioned above, my solution suggestion on the subject is the correct implementation of the law. Also, deterrent penalties must be given in cases of violence against animals. When I say deterrent penalties, I am not talking about fines. I think imprisonment should start at least for 10 years...

Pt.7. Sterilization and cleaning of the shelters of temporary care facilities. It is very important that it is really for treatment purposes. Shelters should be animal hospitals, not shelters. Animals should be sterilized and released back to the places where they were taken.

Pt.9. Of course. First of all, each district should establish a sterilization centre. Then each district should have its own ear tag colour. It is necessary so that dumping decreases.... According to the law, it is forbidden for local governments to throw dogs at each other, but since we cannot prove it, or rather, there is no sanction even though we prove it, they have no fear. For instance, in Rize, we differentiated the colour of the tags, and we did this in some districts. For instance, the local government of Çayeli is green, Rize is yellow, the earrings in the centre are yellow with new application. But there is something like this. The local government of Çayeli is looking at that if I take this animal from its own region, take it to the rehabilitation area and sterilize it, the dog will be embezzled to me. Naturally, I cannot throw the dog away. Let me take it and leave it in another district or mountain...

Pt.12. ...there is of course a need for shelters, but those shelters should be located in a more public place. For instance, there is one here in Polonezköy. At the top of the mountain. this is being done completely detached from the public. I think it would be more logical to locate these facilities in places where the public can come into contact with them. Thus, they can control more easily the increasing dog population...

Pt.16. Maybe a voluntary tax can also be created. Volunteers routinely go and say "I want to give" ... Your mukhtar organises this. It does not go from general to local, that is, a solution is proposed locally in your own neighbourhood with your own animals. I also think that increasing the green area will be a solution even in a passive sense. It will be an active solution if the local governments make greying. The public should be educated on this issue and associations should be open to co-operate with local governments. I believe that we can solve a few things, especially if the local governments sterilize effectively and I do not know who builds the parks anymore, but I believe that we can solve a few things by increasing their green areas.

CONCLUSION:

It has been considered that with this work, which was done with the help of street animals volunteers who have been dealing with, there is not an issue of street animals in Turkey, but in fact, there are realities showing us the problems of street animals and volunteers who have been giving battle voluntarily for the sake of animals.

The issues about street animals in Turkey are derived from the applications of local governments. The main problem is that they are not fulfilling responsibilities or not doing properly. The most significant reasons for this are that the sterilization process is not held by local governments effectively, thus population of street animals cannot be kept under control. The participants also do some other practises such as injection, treatment and sterilization, actually local governments must do. However, during doing these practises, the participants have difficulties especially in terms of finance. Because most of the expenses are paid by the participants their own. Because of the fact that their budgets cannot afford all these expenses, they have to head towards the helps from their families, friends and social networks. The biggest challenge the participants face during the practises is that the costs of these applications are so high.

The other issue which volunteers face is that the shelters run by local governments fall short in terms of treatment of street animals. That is why the volunteers prefer going to private clinics for sterilization and treatment applications instead of shelters by local

governments. And again because of the insufficiency of shelters in the processes of sterilization done properly and deficiently leads the volunteers heading to private clinics.

As the volunteers express that people's unawareness and unconsciousness about the street animals' rights and also not showing any respect for other living beings' right to live are the other issues which block to figure out the problems.

The nonlegal practises to change the habitats of street animals by local governments, being thrown away to the borders of other cities and also trying to keep the population of street animals under control instead of sterilization are various obstacles to keep their population under control.

As the volunteers indicate, the problems of street animals are the subjects which cannot be dealt individually, but can only be solved by the state. The primary solutions are effective sterilization and educating the society. It is especially a need for children who are at the kindergartens and also the whole society to increase awareness on this subject. Moreover, the places such as shelters and animal caring units must be placed in highly accessible areas in each and every district of the cities. This will provide advantages such as not only the shelters could be controlled much more by the volunteers, but also by enabling society to get interaction with street animals, it will contribute people to raise awareness. Most of the people working and taking part voluntarily in these actions started with adopting an animal from the street. However, the videos of cute animals on the social media are another effective way which helps to raise awareness. It can be clearly that such videos could contribute a lot to raise awareness.

In terms of protecting the rights of street animals, it is an obligation that putting the existing law into practise properly and applying deterrent punishment and sanctions against animal abuse. On the other hand, the existing laws should be revised. It is mentioned at 6th damon animal protection law "waif and weakened animals must be taken to the shelters which were structured and allowed by the local governments." After taking these animals to these shelters, it is imperative that they should be neutered, injected and registered, and then primarily taking them back to the place they used to live (Republic of Turkey, Presidential Information System of Regulations, 2004).

However, in here the word "primarily" is considered as a problem. On the contrary to the fact that, by having lessons, local governments' taking the animals from their living spaces and then necessary operations done within the context of "primarily" as stated according to the laws. As Zeybek stated (2014, p. 270) these animals can be taken out of the city centres and abandoned to their fates. The volunteers have approved these conditions.

It has been stated one more time openly in this work that the existing operations done by the local governments are inadequate to solve the problems. Not budgeting sufficient amount of money, not taking sufficient and necessary care for this subject, not sterilizing properly and effectively and also nonlegal applications are the concerns, which cause local governments to fail during these processes.

To conclude, there are considerable responsibilities for local and central governments upon either the solution for the problems of street animals or the problems which these animals face. However, it is obvious that the main role is for central government. Under the control of central government, the local governments should be inspected and by the central government, in all parts of Turkey, sterilization operations should be done effectively and simultaneously. Moreover, it is extremely necessary to make people more aware about animal welfare starting with their early ages by been educated by the central government. This should be integrated into the curriculums as a school subject beginning with kindergartens. Even if these regulations are put into practice currently, it is not expected that the problems are solved immediately, within 10 years of time, the first fruitful steps will be taken.

As Marchesini (2016, p. 80) stated, "when we refer to the city, we generally consider humans as the only living referent found there". Hence, "today's cities are made for the use and consumption not only of humans, but paradoxically of one well-defined group of humans, that is those who produce." However, from Neolithic period until today, when we analyse the historical settlements of humankind, we owe excessively to the animals, and in accordance with reality that with the help of these animals we could build our cities, we should be living in the cities together peacefully. As the first step, it is obvious to destruct the human-centred point of view.

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