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Carers for abandoned animals as a specific type of volunteers: the influence of the relationship with the animals on the construction of identity

Abstract

This thesis deals with voluntary carers for abandoned animals in the shelter and the construction of their identity in animal-interaction context. In the theoretical part, the author relies on the theory of constructing the identity of the animal's role in sociology and in our society. This thesis processes seven qualitative interviews with people who care for abandoned animals within specific organizations. The practical part is, except for introducing the institution and consultants, focused on the data analysis. The caregiver's relationship with animals began to form during childhood and further tightened through their help abandoned animals. This relationship had an impact that they decided to fully focus on taking care of animals in a particular shelter. This experience was the reason to create new abilities and attitudes that are necessary for doing this work effectively. Especially emotional detachment and accepting the fact that you cannot save every animal. It also had an impact on the social aspects of the caregiver in terms of interaction with other people and worsening relations them. Human is perceived the reason why animals suffer. Through differentiation from individuals who, in their opinion, do not behave well to animals construct their own identity. Help abandoned animals has become an integral part of their lives. They cannot imagine their existence without it.