A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF THE SOCIAL BEHAVIOR OF FREE-RANGING DOGS IN GEORGETOWN (GAMBIA)



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OBJECTIVES

DESIGN A RESEARCH PROJECT

To explain the social behavior of free-ranging dogs in the Gambia

ETHOGRAM

Create a list of all the normal behaviors.

SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Study the presence or absence of social hierarchy among the dogs observed.

METHODS TO OBTAIN DATA

Choose the observation area and schedule, the individuals that are going to be observed and the recording methods.

WHY?



Low human interference

So, the behavior observed could be used as a reference for normal dog behavior.



Improve welfare and population handling

Benefits of knowing dog behavior.

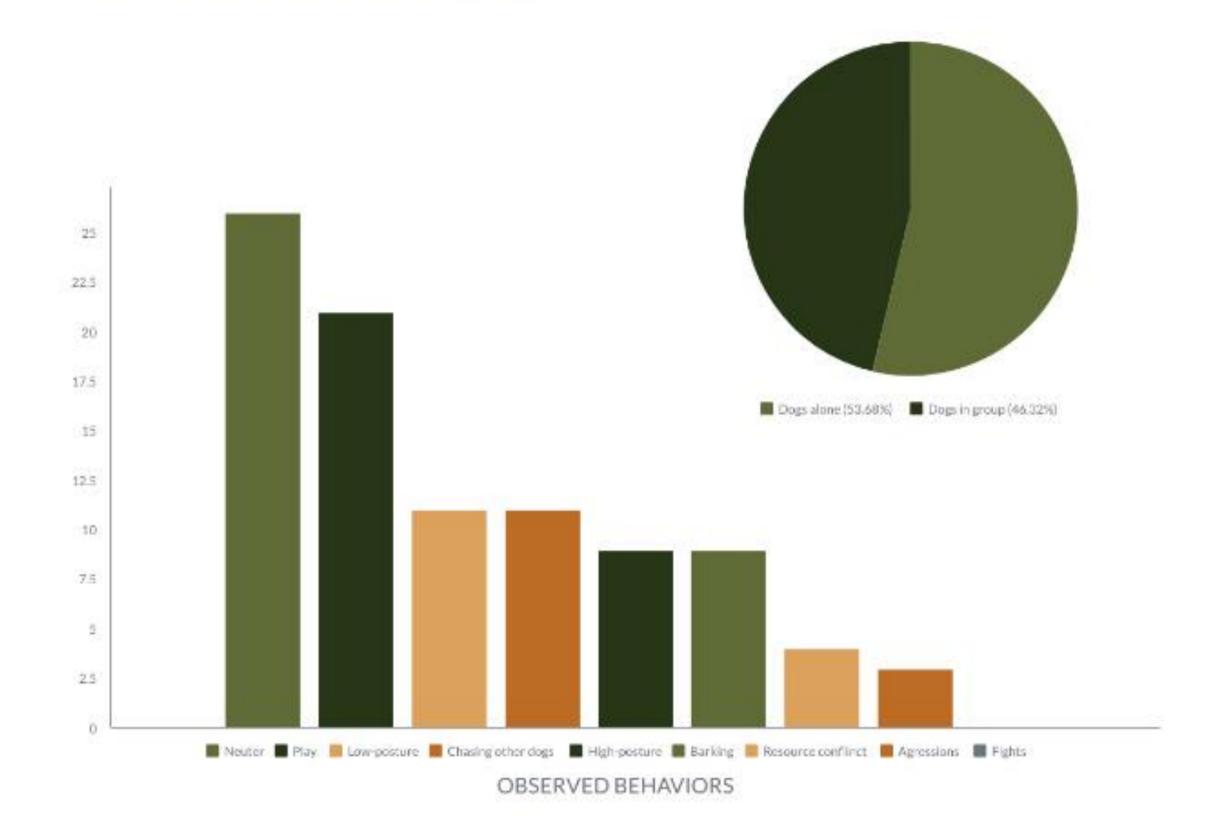


Better doghuman coexistence

It would lead to less accidents and avandonements.

RESULTS

The dogs seemed to group randomly, and they didn't show any evident hierarchical behavior.



They spent most of the time sleeping, foraging, rolling around the mud and playing. Conflicts were unfrequent.

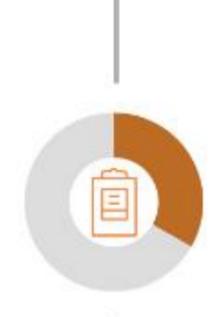
After the preliminary results we discussed...

OUR HYPOTHESIS



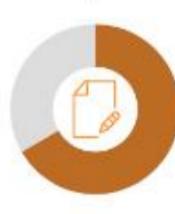
Dogs in Georgetown do not set up social groups hierarchically organized.

HOW WOULD WE PROVE IT?



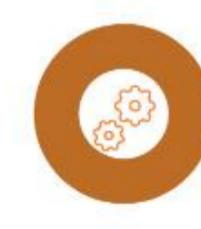
METHODS

Identification would be done by visual differences, the data would be collected by ad libitum direct observation and filming and with the help of the members of the comunity.



BEHAVIOR

Behavior matrixes will be used to record the behaviors. The animals emitting the behaviors will be in the columns and the receptors in the rows.



STATISTICAL

A linear model, a regresion model and an 'Improved test of Linearity' (De Vries 1995) will help us to confirm or recect our hypothesis.



CLUES TO IMPROVE THE RESEARCH

- A proper dog ethogram is needed to keep on doing research about their social behavior.
- There is a need to collect data in an objective way. Double-blinded tests and using quantitative data would be essential to get significative results.
- Time-budget, social play, communication and human-dog interaction are interesting subjects for **further research**.