

# Diverse Human Families and Pet-friendly Work Environments: Pawternity of Dogs

Maria Alejandra Gonzalez-Perez and Andri Georgiadou

## Abstract

*Purpose* — This chapter of exploratory nature aims to provide an account of the reviewed literature and presents some empirical cases to come to conceptualize dogs as social actors with different legitimate roles in the working, social, private, economic, and family life of human beings.

*Design/Methodology/Approach* — This chapter is the product of a research inspired by the great interest of the authors on rising awareness of the importance of dogs in human working lives. For this, a purposive literature review took place; we consulted scientific studies databases, and also gathered information from market research agencies, and other general media resources. To have a more comprehensive view, and to respond to a specific question on dogs at the workplace, a selection of cases is used to illustrate. For the case studies, secondary data research was used, and individual, structured interviews were conducted and analyzed.

*Findings* — This chapter reviews the relationship between humans and animals. It identifies attitudes and perception toward animals, highlighting the evolution of the intimate bond and the deep relationship between dogs and humans. It describes some cases of dogs as working beings at the service of human functions and dimensions of the pet care markets. Finally, it presents some cases of pet-friendly work environments.

*Originality/Value* — The novel contribution of this chapter is putting dogs in the management of diversity academic literature. In this study, we find that the role, meaning, and purpose of dogs in people's lives (and in many cases in organizations) are being underestimated. Including and making visible the presence of dogs in the personal, work, and well-being of people represents challenges to be addressed by

managers. Additionally, it represents challenges to think about and investigate the welfare of dogs that interact with human beings in productive environments.

**Keywords:** Pet-friendly; working environments; pawternity; diverse human families; well-being; diversity management

## **Human–animal Relationships**

Changes in lifestyles and evolutionary patterns have made pets more and more an integral part of many people's lives. The relationship between humans and animals has many dimensions. The first dimension that emerged already from prehistory is related to the use and exploitation of animals to fulfill basic human needs such as food and protection (Urichuk & Anderson, 2003).

Another dimension of this relationship extends beyond the needs of human survival and is related to its well-being. The human–animal bond has been scientifically explored and proves to provide significant physical, psychological, and physiological benefits to human well-being (Jackson, 2012).

An important dimension, finally, of the relationship between humans and animals is related to the latter's involvement in activities for educational purposes. This includes them being studied in the context of lessons for children to get familiarized with living organisms, participate in action research and experiments, as well as in various educational programs aiming at raising awareness and cultivating respect and responsible behavior toward other animals specifically, and as a consequence to nature in general (Cunningham, 1995).

The relationship with other animals begins from the childhood of individuals. This connection of children and animals is indisputable. Animals are, of course, part of the child's micro-world, and in the United States around 70% of households own a pet (APPA, 2018). But even when there is no pet in the families, children are surrounded by animals from a very young age. They have puppies, kittens, giraffes, monkeys, and teddy bears in their clothes, in their games, on the walls of the schools. They come in contact with animal characters through cartoons, stories in books, movies and videos, through computer games, and the Internet, while gaining experiential experiences by visiting zoos and farms (Walsh, 2009).

For children, the existence of a pet in their life is very important. A research study indicated that when children aged between 7 and 10 were asked to make a list of the 10 most important persons in their lives, they included two pets on the list (Foer, 2006). In a similar survey, a question about to whom the children would go to if they felt sad, angry, happy, or wanted to share a secret, almost half (42%) of children aged five years old responded to their pet (Foer, 2006).

Further research has dealt with the contribution of animals to the smooth cognitive and behavioral development of children. The results of these studies have shown that the presence of animals in the life of children, whether real or imaginary

and symbolic, contributes to their positive psychosocial development. Children who have an animal at home or have a daily interaction with animals exhibit greater self-esteem, cognitive and emotional development, social interaction, and empathy (Poresky, 1990; Triebenbacher, 1998). Finally, the interaction of children with animals can work educationally and instructively by helping them cope with serious issues of childhood, such as separation from beloved persons, death, and autonomy (Walsh, 2009).

## **People's Attitudes toward and Perceptions of Animals**

The increasing number of companion animals is a response to demographic and sociological changes: growing number of urban and aging population, with smaller and more fragmented families than in the past century (Hall, Dolling, Bristow, Fuller, & Mills, 2017).

The knowledge that people have about animals influences their behavior toward and beliefs about them, so building positive attitudes toward animals is one of the main goals of environmental education. Researchers suggest that attitudes are related to awareness, but an even greater correlation is observed between attitudes and behaviors; changing knowledge and understanding of animals can affect animal perceptions (Batt, 2009). In light of this, the environmental education includes information to enhance environmental knowledge but also other factors so as to achieve the manifestation of (environmental) attitudes and behavior (Thompson, 2009).

Some researchers believe that environmental knowledge is the precursor to the formation of attitudes toward the environment and therefore to animals. However, the relationship between attitudes and knowledge is more complex than it seems. In his research, Cohen (1973) showed that a group of students with more environmental knowledge had different attitudes than a group of pupils with less environmental knowledge. In a survey conducted by Hsu and Roth (1996) in Taiwan, the relationship between environmental attitudes and behaviors has been investigated and a positive correlation between environmental knowledge and behavior was found.

There are various factors affecting the attitudes toward animals. First, people's attitudes toward animals vary according to the species of animals. Bjerke and Østdahl (2004) found that humans are more positively related to the smallest animals, such as small birds, squirrels, dogs, and so on, and dislike invertebrates, bats, rats, and mice. In contrast to the above finding, Kellert (1997) found in his research that adults have a more positive attitude toward large animals, especially those with high intelligence and social connectivity.

Second, differences in people's attitudes also exist between men and women. Women appear to have a greater humanitarian and empathetic disposition than men. In a survey conducted in 15 countries and assessing people's attitudes toward the use of animals in biomedical research, women were significantly more opposed than men in the use of animals in experiments (Pifer, Shimizu, & Pifer, 1994). On

the other hand, men seem to have more positive attitudes toward species that are not particularly popular, such as wild animals and exotic birds, while women have more positive attitudes toward more popular species such as pets (Bjerke & Østdahl, 2004) (Lindemann-Matthies, 2005).

Finally, culture seems to be influencing significantly the attitude toward animals. To investigate this further, Kellert (1993) undertook a series of intercultural research. In a survey he conducted in Japan he found that compared to the American population, the Japanese population has more sovereign attitude toward nature and wildlife. That is, the Japanese often try to manipulate and control nature. There was also a lack of interest in wildlife and ecological processes, and limited support for wildlife protection. Unlike the Japanese, the Germans were proved to have more developed moral and ecological attitudes and greater willingness to subordinate their needs to preserve nature and wildlife.

## **Human–Dogs Relationships**

The global dog population is estimated to be 900 million (World Atlas, 2018). In the United States, there are nearly 80 million dogs (Serpell, 2017; Statista, 2018). In the United Kingdom, there 65 million companion animals (Hall et al., 2017).

Dogs play different roles as family members, and valued assistants. Nonetheless, only a very small percentage work or hunt (Lord, Schneider, & Coppinger, 2017). In fact, “the domestic dog has become something of a scientific celebrity in recent year” (Serpell, 2017, p. 2).

The *canidae* is a group of terrestrial mammal carnivores divided into 36 species, including the domestic dog (*canis familiaris*), foxes, coyotes, and other canids (some already extinct) (Clutton-Brock, Corbet, & Hills, 1976). Canids communicate with each other through facial expressions, body postures, body movements, and in some cases sounds. Since before Charles Darwin, there have been discussions and studies to determine the ancestry of domestic dogs; namely whether to be considered as descendants of wolves (*canis lupus*) or golden jackals (golden aureus) or other extinct species. However, Darwin (1868) considered that perhaps this could not be determined with certainty.

Those who have found evidence that domestic dogs are descendants of wolves consider that dogs have inherited from the wolf essential biological characteristics including social behavior in herds, which has coincidences with human families, among which are territoriality, cooperation to go hunting, respect for leaders (alpha), emotional connections, and greetings after separating.

Dogs and humans have lived together for thousands of years. Nicky Charles, director of the Center for Women and Gender Studies at the University of Warwick in England, has been investigating the link between humans and nonhuman animals, and in an article from the year 2016, which reports the results of a study with empirical data, she argues the emergence of post-human families, or families more than human. This sociological investigation explains how power relations between

humans and dogs are unequal, and therefore dogs (and other companion animals) incorporated into families are dependent (Charles, 2016). For this reason, we are responsible for their well-being (as if they were infant children).

### ***My Dog Is My Home***

“My Dog Is My Home” is a project in Los Angeles, United States, dedicated to sharing the testimonies of the bonds of care, empathy, reciprocity, and love between homeless or street people and their fellow dogs (My Dog is My Home, 2018). Researchers Kathryn Gillespie and Victoria Lawson (2017) studied the politicization of species relations, structural violence, and poverty, which reproduce concepts based on the material conditions of property, home, and family: thus achieving human lives and animals in street situations are perceived as disposable.

### ***The Deep Bond***

In spite of not having a consanguineous link, for many people the planning of the arrival, the care, the upbringing, the possession, the education, and the coexistence with a dog or another animal of company is an exercise of maternity/paternity. The humanization of pets has been evolving, giving them roles of companionship, therapy, friendship, and treating them as children.

Since the 1950s, John Bowlby (1958) defined attachment as an organizational construct that develops the emotional bond between human babies and their caregivers. According to Bowlby (1958), the function of attachment in the first years of life is to get protection and care from another person, and this is done by seeking to adapt the behaviors of the caregiver (usually the mother). More recent studies (Beetz, Uvnäs-Moberg, Julius, & Kotrschal, 2012) have found that attachment styles are a combination of genetic factors and social experiences.

The ability of dogs to develop attachment to humans is one of the most recognizable consequences of their domestication, and the way they develop affection is analogous to the attachment between human babies and their mothers (Topál, Miklósi, Csányi, & Doka, 1998). A study published by Kovács and colleagues (2018) found that the (mutual) attachment of dogs and their owners is associated with polymorphisms of the oxytocin receptor gene (OXTR) in both parts (thus dogs are obviously not genetically related to their caregivers), but also influenced by the personality of the dog owner and the attachment style.

In a study led by the team of Samantha Deffler (2016), it was demonstrated how in the human memory the dogs of the home are cataloged as family members. There are few lapsus linguae where one of the members of the family is called by the name of the dog. According to the study by Deffler and her colleagues (2016), these errors in calling or referring someone by name do not occur because we confuse the species or the gender of friends or relatives, but it has to do with the way in which the brain classifies the information. According to this research, these lapsus linguae happen with dogs, but not necessarily other pets. One of the reasons is that

people communicate verbally more with dogs than with other types of pets. However, the research indicated that perhaps the substitution of the name of a human member of the family for the name of the dog occurs because the brain does not classify the family names between humans and animals.

In an attempt to tackle mental disorders and promote mental health and well-being, specialists highly recommend physical activity as an essential part of their patients' therapeutic plan (Morgan & Goldston, 2013). To complement this, an auxiliary "animal-assisted therapy," "pet therapy," or simply a form of treatment with animals is gaining ground recently. Dogs, cats, horses, or even farm animals have been proved to be very effective therapeutic agents. Animal therapy has been effective in treating people of different ages with special medical needs or mental conditions such as attention and social behavior, mood disorders, anxiety, fear, and cardiovascular diseases (Fine, 2010). The benefits of this contact are found to be physical, mental, and social (Kovács, Kis, Rózsa, & Rózsa, 2004). Specifically, the therapeutic contact with animals seems to reduce levels of fear, sadness, and psychological discomfort and promote psychological well-being (Klontz, Bivens, Leinart, & Klontz, 2007). It also improves self-esteem and helps deal with various stressful situations (Berget, Ekeberg, & Braastad, 2008; Pedersen, Martinsen, Berget, & Braastad, 2012); it can help reduce the somatization of psychological problems (Schenk, Pollatos, Schenk, & Schandry, 2009), reduce depressive symptoms (Nepps, Stewart, & Bruckno, 2011), and anxiety (Hoffmann, et al., 2009; Lang, Jansen, Wertenaue, Gallinat, & Rapp, 2010), whereas it minimizes the emergence of violent episodes for patients with severe chronic psychiatric disorders (Nurenberg, et al., 2011).

Human contact with animals and the bond developed between them had been occurring since human beings began to domesticate the latter and transform them into domestic animals in order to benefit from them in hunting and carrying burdens (Urichuk & Anderson, 2003). There have been several archeological findings that testify the contact and the relationship that existed between humans and animals, such as fossil representations and references within archeological texts (Fradelos, 2014). Reports indicate that ancient Greeks used the horses as an auxiliary means for the treatment of war-wounded soldiers (Riede, 1987), justifying the peculiarity and timelessness of this bond (Fine, 2010).

Although the first written reports on the engagement of animals into a therapeutic approach can be traced back to 1792 (Trivedi & Perl, 1995), the systematic treatment of animals as therapeutic agents has only begun in the nineteenth century. As Nightingale (1992) points out, a small pet is often a great companion for the patients, especially for the chronic ones. A bird in a cage is sometimes the only real pleasure for those staying in a nursing home for years.

Since 1960, pet animals have been incorporated into the curative environment by Boris M. Levinson, a child psychotherapist and author of *Pet-oriented Child Psychotherapy* (Levinson, 1969). In this book he describes the procedures and benefits of sessions he had with children in which his dog was present as well. He emphasizes the various beneficial effects and encourages further research on this issue, thus opening a new potential avenue for psychotherapy.

## **The Public Life of Pets**

Parks and many public spaces are places where the interactions between dogs and humans are increasingly frequent.<sup>1</sup> For Simon Carter (2016), a professor of urban planning at the University of Melbourne in Australia, park planning is based on anthropocentric values, parks being spaces primarily designed to meet community priorities, and although dogs are an important interest group of park users, the urban parks, the design of parks in the cities still exclude them in the planning.

Around the world, shopping centers, restaurants, hotels, schools, universities, airlines, and other public establishments have been adapting to allow and regulate the presence of dogs and other pets within the facilities. Even several companies, as it is going to be described further in this chapter, have established codes of conduct and have declared themselves “pet-friendly,” allowing their employees to go to work in the company of their pets. In some countries, including Colombia, dogs and any other pets whose size is below 60 cm are eligible to use public transportation.

## **Working Dogs**

Working dogs are now used as reliable assistants in challenging occupations, such as the police for the detection of illegal substances and explosives or the detection of missing persons, the fire brigade as rescue dogs, or even the Red Cross, where they tirelessly climb the frozen mountain peaks in search of lost hikers and skiers (Sloane, 1955). And the list does not end here. In the dawn of history, people used dogs to assist them in their military activities, whereas nowadays dogs are also used as service dogs, assistance dogs, security dogs, shepherds, breeders, and disease bio-sensors. In the latter case, these are dogs that have been trained in recent years so as to use their extremely sensitive sense of smell to detect pathogens and diseases (Angle, Waggoner, Ferrando, Haney, & Passler, 2016).

### ***Police Dogs***

Out of various types of biological organisms that are used as volatile compound detectors, the most known and widely used are canines (Leitch, Anderson, Kirkbride, & Lennard, 2013). Literature indicates that there are more than 30 different sets of detection tasks that trained dogs can perform, making them ideal

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<sup>1</sup>Interestingly enough, as we were preparing this chapter, Limassol’s (Cyprus) municipality has banned dogs from one of the biggest parks in Limassol: a decision that has been strongly criticized by animal lovers around the country (<https://cyprus-mail.com/2018/08/29/limassol-municipality-says-dog-ban-due-to-law-breaking-owners/>)

police candidates (Lorenzo, et al., 2003). The duties of police dogs all over the world include mainly explosives and narcotics detection, as well as patrolling.

Specifically, explosive detection dogs help the police forces to detect explosive devices and to thoroughly search buildings, vehicles, and spaces. Their excellent smell leads to a more effective detection of explosives and exploration of spaces, which takes place either preventively or upon receipt of relevant information about the existence of certain substances. These dogs perform a plethora of precautionary investigations daily, in addition to the response to threatening phone calls. When the dog detects the exact location of the explosives, they are trained to sit and remain silent in that position while maintaining a passive stance (Furton & Myers, 2001).

Furthermore, drugs detection dogs assist police officers in examining individuals, vehicles, and premises. Their effective smell identifies well-hidden drugs, which are difficult or often impossible to locate with human senses. If there are drugs, even carefully hidden, at high points or buried or mixed in liquids with various other misleading smells, the dog will detect them. When locating them, the dogs are trained to actively respond by carving and barking.

Finally, patrol dogs support policing on a multifaceted basis. They are used in places where there is intense criminality, but at the same time in places with dense flow of people. They are one of the best crime deterrents used by the police worldwide with massive positive results. By all means, they do not substitute for other policing methods, but they modernize, complement, and reinforce the effectiveness of policing based on psychological influence and real-time circumstances of action. The patrol dog is an effective preventive and deterrent tool to help curb violence of any origin and form. They have advanced sociability and will execute actions only on command, which, of course, will be given solely by their companion and merely to prevent criminal felony acts.

The breeds that have been used so far as a pool for police dog candidates are German shepherds, Golden Retrievers or Labradors, and Malinois (Belgian shepherds) due to their abundance in the domestic and European markets. They are three easily trained breeds and are very social, disciplined, and receptive dogs, offering their services in the detection of drugs or explosives and the strengthening of pedestrian patrols. Nowadays, the dog selection process has changed and a dog's fit in the police force is not decided on the grounds of its breed. In contrary, each dog's characteristics, abilities, and skills are evaluated individually. Following that evaluation, they are been trained on the field they had best performed in during the individual evaluation and regardless of their breed.

### ***Service Dogs***

On the one hand, treatment dogs are trained to be able to accompany their owners to access buildings (including restaurants, libraries, supermarkets, and churches), transport systems, and other public spaces and services.



On the other hand, assistance dogs are domestic dogs, specially trained to help people with diabetes or mobility problems in order to improve their quality of life. Assistance dogs can learn to perform various tasks, such as leading people with partial or total blindness or deafness, pulling wheelchairs, and alerting in case of hypoglycemia crisis.

In theory, all breeds can be used as service dogs and therefore as diabetic alert dogs. However, short-breasted breeds are not indicated for becoming ones, because a shorter nose means that the odor entering the nasal cavity is processed by less tissue. This makes them lag behind the longer-breed races. In light of this, the required characteristics of the dogs, and by extension their breed, depend on the specific type of service they will be performing.

For example, Golden Retrievers and German Shepherd are common choices for blind people due to their helpful characteristics: their temperament, flexibility, size, intelligence, and availability.

Guide dogs must be hard working, and large enough to be able to guide people. At the same time, they should be tied up with a small leash to make it easier and more comfortable for people to move to public transport, and for the dogs to fit under the tables of the restaurants. Labrador Retrievers make excellent guide dogs, because they are very intelligent, quick learners, and extremely loyal.

Service dogs have special functions in addition to those described. [Mader, Hart, and Bergin \(1989\)](#) found that the service dogs that accompany people in wheelchairs are also very useful to overcome social isolation. Through observations, it was determined that when adults and children in wheelchairs have a service dog, these people receive greater social acknowledgments than when they do not have a dog with them.

There are different studies ([Hoffmann et al, 2009](#); [Lang et al, 2010](#)) that document assisted therapies with different animals to improve mental health and reduce the anxiety of some patients. Those studies determined that the presence of dogs produces significant psychotherapeutic benefits, especially in the reduction of anxiety and in increasing the motivation of therapists and patients.

### ***Disease Biosensors***

[Williams and Pembroke \(1989\)](#) described the story of a woman who realized that something bad was happening when her dog suddenly began to look overly interested in a mole on her leg. When she started looking for what was happening, she discovered she was suffering from skin cancer. This may have been the first story that was published and linked the dog with the detection of cancer, but it was not the last one. It was even a source of inspiration for an orthopedic surgeon, Dr John Church, who wanted to find out how exactly these brilliant animals manage to sniff out cell carcinomas ([Church & Williams, 2001](#)).

The enormous interest in the subject led researchers to establish the Cancer and Bio Detection Dogs in 2008 ([Medical Detection Dogs, 2018](#)), a research center where dogs are trained to sniff out instant fluctuations in an individual's personal

odor triggered by their disease and alert them to an approaching medical event. Within just the first 10 years of operation of the Center, another 16 cases of early cancer detection have come to light. As Dr Claire Guest, Co-Founder, CEO, and Director of Operations claims, the research team has been aiming to prove scientifically that people's best friend can indeed be trained to detect cancer, and possibly other diseases.

### ***Livestock Guardians and Herding Dogs***

Livestock guarding dogs are estimated to be the most populous working dog in the world (Lord et al. 2017). These dogs are prevalent and adjunct to pastoral cultures and communities. Lord et al. (2017) describe them as *landrace* dogs, because they adapt to both the environment and the task. The task of guarding livestock requires attention, trust, and protection, and these behaviors are not trainable (with operant conditioning), but these are results of early socialization in the first year of life of the pups.

Livestock guardian and herding dogs vary in size, color, and shape. Herding dogs have the work of conducting livestock from one place to another one causing fear-flocking behavior. Herding dogs share an instinctive ability to control the movement of other animals. Herding breeds were developed to gather, herd, and protect livestock (AKC, 2018). These dogs are divided into headers, heelers, and catch dogs depending on their specific tendency. Unlike livestock guarding dogs, herding dogs depend on a behavioral conformation of specific integrated sequences of movement (Lord et al. 2017). The herding dog breeds are Australian cattle, Beauceron, Belgian Malinois, Border Collie, and Briard, among others.

### **The Pet Care Market**

The pet care market is segmented into veterinary care, pet food, insurance, supplies, medication, live animal purchase, dog walking, grooming, and boarding services.

Tesfom and Birch (2010) in a survey-based study in the United States found that dog owners are more loyal to dog food brands than human food brands. Also, the study reveals that dog owners are more sensitive to human food price than dog food price. Furthermore, results of this research also show that dog owners are more serious about buying healthy dog food than buying healthy human food.

Euromonitor launched in March 2018 the trend report on pet care for this year. In this report it is estimated that the world market for pet care currently reaches 109 billion dollars. In an investigation by the insurance company Sainsbury included in the report, it was found that 46% of dog or cat owners say they take more photos of their pets than their partners, and 26% report taking more photos to pets than to his human children.

### ***Pet Food Market***

The market size of the pet food market in 2017 reached USD27 billion in the United States, and it is continuously growing (Packaged Facts, 2017); it is projected to reach worldwide USD98.81 by 2022 (Grand View Research, 2018). Beaton (2018) analyzes that the increasing growth in the global pet food market is driven by two specific factors: humanization of pets and premiumization. However, David Sprinkle, research director for Packaged Facts (2017), explains that the growth in this market can be explained by rapid acceleration of online sales, plus the emergence of millennials as noteworthy pet market consumers.

### ***Pet Insurance***

Remarkably, pet insurance has been around as long as human health insurance, being first established in Sweden in 1890 (McConnell & Drent, 2010). However, it was not until the famous dog Lassie first received a pet insurance policy in 1982 that pet insurance became an official choice. According to the North American Pet Health Insurance Association (2018), there are 179 million pets in North America, with close to 2.07 million pets being insured at year-end 2017, representing an increase of 16.8% from 2016 (North American Pet Health Insurance Association, 2018). According to the same source, approximately 1.83 million pets were insured in the United States and 244,000 in Canada. In the United States, 98% of those insured pets were covered either through an Insurance with Embedded Wellness plan or an Accident and Illness plan, whereas the remaining 2% were covered through a simple Accident Only plan.

Notably, the annual average growth rate in the US market of pet insurance since 2013 is 19.8%, whereas the corresponding rate in the Canadian market is 15.3%, thus indicating the increased awareness and engagement of pet owners (North American Pet Health Insurance Association, 2018).

## **Pet-friendly Work Environments**

Gurchiek (2018) analyzes how pet-friendly policies could translate into employee engagement and retention. In a 2002 study of full-time employees in a pet-friendly US company HABRI and Nationwide in Ohio in the United States, it was found that 90% of the workers feel highly connected to their company mission.

In a similar vein, Barker, Knisely, Barker, Cobb, and Schubert (2012) conducted an experiment where for a period of one week they divided 76 of a company's employees into the following three categories: 18 employees who owned dogs and took their dog to work, 38 employee dog owners who did not take their dog to work, and 19 employees who did not pet. Barker et al. asked the employees to report how stressed they were four times a day. Remarkably, employees with dogs

with them had always reported the lowest stress levels. The scholars emphasized, of course that, the benefits are much more than a reduced stress level. Employee dog owners who had their pets with them felt more support from the company's management team. Furthermore, participants' comments illustrated a number of potential benefits for animal-friendly companies, including increased productivity, increased morale, and increased cooperation.

### ***Pawternity Leave***

For companies to be transformed into pet-friendly environment or consider pawternity leave, [Gurchiek \(2018\)](#) proposes the further considerations for employers:

- Diversity with the pet definition. Pets aren't only dogs and cats. Fish, lizards, parrots, and so on are company animals and family members. Providing a stratification of pets, and giving more value to dogs and cats, might have negative effects.
- Time allowance. How much would the company give? What are the criteria? Per pet? Age? Health condition?
- Employees with no pets. Which similar benefits could be provided to employees with no pets?

## **Pet-friendly Work Environments: Cases**

### ***Amazon***

In recent years, a growing number of companies, although that number is still fairly small, have realized the benefits of becoming dog-friendly, thus allowing their employees to come to work with their pet ([Colarelli, McDonald, Christensen, & Honts, 2017](#)). In this light, they are also setting up special places for the pets to play and enjoy their time, while their human friends are working.

One of these companies is Amazon, which had proudly published on their blog pictures from their headquarters in Seattle featuring some of the 6,000 pets that accompany their human friends in the company. And all thanks to Rufus, a Welsh Corgi who had visited Amazon 10 years ago along with his human friend, an Amazon executive. Rufus had regularly participated in all meetings, gatherings, breaks and had soon won the employees' hearts. The positive impact of Rufus' interaction with the employees had led Amazon's executive team to allow their employees to come to work with their pets. Many of these puppies have their own profile on the Dogs of Amazon section of the Amazon webpage, whereas the Amazon's "Woof Pack" Manager ensures that both the dogs are happy and Amazonians are enjoying this the most ([Umoh, 2018](#)).

## **Google**

At Alphabet, Google's new company, pets are enshrined in the Google code of conduct (Hook, 2017). Specifically, they state that "Google's affection for our canine friends is an integral facet of our corporate culture. We like cats, but we're a dog company, so as a general rule we feel cats visiting our offices would be fairly stressed out" (Alphabet, 2018). Amenities include the provision of a doggie bus, both for dogs and their human friends who have to commute to the office from San Francisco.

## **Denver Airport**

The largest airport therapy animal program in the United States is been hosted at the Denver International Airport (Denver Airport, n.d.). The Canine Airport Therapy Squad (CATS) are a squad of at least 100 dogs, and one cat, thus representing at least 40 breeds. The Squad consists of four-legged keen volunteers whose duties include giving pleasure to travelers with a furry cuddle or a friendly wag. Denver International Airport's visitors can encounter these special employees throughout the airport, wearing their unique blue plaid "Pet Me" vests.

## **Arkix S.A.**

Arkix is a Colombian digital marketing agency founded in 2005 with nearly 180 employees. Arkix's main office is located in las Palmas neighborhood in Medellin. Mr. Misael Martinez is the general manager. Arkix is an expert in digital consulting, construction and operation of digital marketing strategies, relational marketing and advertising, as well as app and web development.

Arkix is pet-friendly since 2014. Mr Federico Alvarez Zuluaga, SEO leader, told us that the company was moved from an office in a building to a big house. A stray dog arrived to the house days after the company moved and an employee filed a petition to the managers to make Arkix Pet-friendly.

"Anti-dogs colleagues or clients have not said anything yet. Most people in the company are pro-dogs, we can have up to 15 dogs on one day in Arkix," states Federico.

Federico often goes with his female dog "Jani" to work. Jani means for Federico support and company, most of the time she's with him. "One of the best things of Arkix is that I can bring my dog," Federico states. "Jani isn't not my daughter, Jani is my pet. We cannot humanize our pets, we have them to keep us company but we can't treat them or love them as other human. I try to take Jani everywhere I can, like dog parks, hiking, to my country-house, to the office, shopping malls (I never go on busy hours) but I never take Jani to other people's homes," Federico clarifies.

### ***Dogs Are Perceived as “Better Animals”***

Most pet-friendly work experiences are related to dogs and not other domestic animals. “About two months ago Arkix adopted two stray cats, but were very difficult to handle. They were adopted and took home by two employees afterwards,” describes Federico.

“Dogs are not exotic animals and are not dangerous in most cases. Dogs are easy to learn, they follow instructions and commands, they are easy to handle and they don’t cause allergies as much as cats,” Federico further explains.

### ***Pawternity Leave***

In Arkix, pawternity leaves are valid if it is strictly necessary. When a pawternity leave is granted, then people are allowed/expected to work from home.

“Some companies might oppose to be pet-friendly because they might think that employees won’t be as productive as they need to be because they also need to take care of the dog. Also, they don’t want to handle the mess that dogs can do,” Federico explains.

### ***Pet-friendly Work Environment: Gains and Regulations***

Federico describes the gains of working in a pet-friendly company:

It’s really fun to work and people actually enjoy the presence of dogs. Those who have dogs love to work at a pet friendly company because they don’t need to leave their dogs alone at their house.

We have a pet regulation that outlines the rules that dogs must follow in the office. Arkix also has a pet committee, this allows us to control what dogs do at the office. We need to pick up after our dogs, they go on the big backyard that surrounds the house. If we see other dog poop we also need to pick it up because we are a team. On Thursdays dogs are not allowed to come into Arkix because that day they do a deep cleaning of the house, dogs can’t come when it’s raining really hard because they can make a mess. Dogs also have a space for their food and water not inside the office. (Mr Federico Alvarez Zuluaga, SEO leader of Arkix)

## **Conclusions**

With this chapter we have included dogs in the management of diversity academic literature. In this study, a review of the relationship between humans and people was presented, as well as a review of attitudes and perception toward animals. It also presented an in-depth analysis of the evolution of the intimate bond and the profound relationship between dogs and humans. Additionally, some of the multiple work functions that dogs exercise as substitutes to working people at the service of humans (in productive, entertainment, and therapeutic activities) were described.

Some financial dimensions and economic considerations of the pet care market were also reviewed in this chapter.

Finally, we presented some cases of pet-friendly work environments.

As authors, we are left with many questions for future studies. Are dogs part of a firm's human resources? Are dogs considered as an annex to a particular individual? Is the establishment of welfare programs of dogs in organizations a responsibility of companies and their corresponding human resource departments?

Studies related to the business case of dogs in organizations can contribute to give figures on the financial benefit of achieving successful transition to be pet-friendly organizations.

It is also important to increase the number of empirical cases documenting both successes and failures of pet-friendly organizations. There are definitely challenges and discussions to be had about the inter-species coexistence, but also about the mechanisms that must be put in place to ensure the welfare of both dogs and humans. Is it time maybe, for human resource departments to move beyond anthropocentric needs?

We also note in the cases we reviewed that dogs occupy a higher place in the hierarchy of pets. This should also be reviewed, since there is not much published evidence of pet-friendly work environments open to other pets. Does George Orwell's famous phrase "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" in *Animal Farm* apply in this case?

Interdisciplinary work between management, ethology, psychology, veterinary sciences, anthropology, biology, and sociology can be fundamental to increase our understanding of the implications of not advancing toward being open societies to diversity. We definitely identify the need from ethology-based studies on animal behavior in human work environments.

This particular study proposes that diversity should include dimensions such as families with dogs, and organizations open to dogs. Being open to going beyond anthropocentric positions can help us understand differences, and understand others.

We believe that bringing this issue up on the academic and management agenda, invites both managers and academics to consider reflecting on the core needs of others within organizations. By having organizations that are pet-friendly, we should consider sleep, exercise, love, drink, food, toilet, and discipline on the agenda. It involves challenges such as ensuring decent conditions for dogs. It is for those responsible for health and safety to design and implement practices and procedures for making office safe for dogs.

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Picture 1: Maya – Cyprus.



Picture 2: Cian Felipe – Colombia.





Picture 3: Tiwaz Andres & Valentin Amado – Colombia.

Andres (Italian greyhound), and Valentin Amado (Italian greyhound). We would like to imagine they are proud and happy we finally wrote this chapter (with the support of Miguel Olivas-Lujan) to contribute a more inclusive and open world to diversity (Picture 1, Picture 2, Picture 3).

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