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The Interspecies Family: Attitudes and Narratives

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THE INTERSPECIES FAMILY: ATTITUDES AND NARRATIVES

by

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ABSTRACT

Families are conceptualized and accomplished in increasingly diverse ways in the 21st century. A constructionist framework was utilized to examine a widespread contemporary family form, the interspecies family. This mixed-method approach relied on both quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data. First, survey data from the 2006 Constructing the Family Survey were analyzed to understand who in America counts pets as family. Many social demographics were associated and predicted counting pets as family but gender was one of the strongest associations. However, marital status moderated the relationship between gender and counting pets as family at a statically significant level. Men who are currently or have ever been married are less likely to count pets as family than never married men. Second, I conducted 32 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 39 people during 2014-2015 in Central Florida to understand how people who count their cats and dogs as family members narrate this process. Narrative strategies documenting exactly how cats and dogs become family members within interspecies family narratives include: time-related narratives, timeless narratives, and patchwork narratives. Additionally, all participants considered their cats and dogs family but only some of them felt like pet-parents. Narratives of childless participants are compared with narratives of parents to examine the impact of family form on the construction of pet parenting narratives. Implications for the family change literature are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The ways family is conceptualized and accomplished through narrative including its symbolic meanings and functions, are undergoing considerable change in the 21st century. Families in the twenty-first century share their own set of unique problems and trends including marriage inequality, the "stalled" (Hochschild and Machtung 1989) or "continuing" (Sullivan and Coltrane 2010) revolution, marriage delays, childfree and childless coupling, increases in cohabitation, and more diverse pathways to parenthood. One intriguing way families are changing is the incorporation of nonhuman animals[1] as integral family members. Nationally representative studies have documented the prevalence of pets in households (AVMA 2007). More people live with pets than children under the age of 18 (American Humane Association 2013, United States Census Bureau 2012). Research suggests that people increasingly treat animals as family members (Albert and Bulcroft, 1988; Belk, 1996; Belk, 1998; Cain, 1983; Gillespie, Leffler, and Lerner 2002; Greenebaum 2004; Hirschman, 1994; Owens 2015; Sanders, 1999; Veevers, 1985). Yet, these two issues have not been connected. In other words, it is not yet understood who among the many people living (or not living) with companion animals actually count these beings as family members. Also limited in the research is how these stories unfold through narrative.

By examining American attitudes on whether pets count as family and the narrative strategies employed to accomplish pets as family by people who consider their own cats and dogs to be family members, the present study contributes to the scholarly knowledge on family

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[1] Hereafter referred to simply as animals

change as it relates to interspecies families. This dissertation research investigated two interrelated questions. First, what are the socio-demographics of people in the United States who count animals as family members? Second, what are the narrative strategies people employ when constructing cats and dogs as family members? The answers to these questions provide a clearer picture of what it means to "do" family in the 21st century as well as expands the literature on the sociological study of animals and society.

By using quantitative survey data and in-depth interview qualitative data on pets-as-family, this study showcases the utility of using a constructionist theoretical framework in examining family change. The quantitative data provided a broad picture of American attitudes towards this phenomenon. For instance, the importance of gender, marital status, and parenthood were identified. As the research process moved forward, these quantitative findings helped navigate the qualitative research. Findings also contribute to the broader literature on how families of choice are assembled and accomplished through narrative by focusing on how interspecies families are storied. This research also provides the foundation for a social construction of parenthood. By comparing pet parenting narratives among the childless and pet parenting narratives among parents of younger and older human children, parenting is revealed as interpretive practice – or "an interactional achievement" (Holstein and Gubrium 2008: 5).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of the literature begins with a brief introduction to the socio-historical context of family change. Next, a few major changes in families over the past decade of primary interest to family scholars including marriage rates, cohabitation, childless/childfree families, families of choice, and pathways to parenthood are examined. Finally, I place companion animals[2] into the current sociological literature on families.

Socio-Historical Context

Debate on whether the family has changed more in the past few decades than during any other time in history continues into the 2010s (Popenoe 1993). Coontz's (1992) research on historical family change demonstrates that families have not undergone more change in the 21st century when compared to family change throughout history. Contemporary nostalgia for a return to the traditional family of the past is a misconception of what families in past centuries were actually like. For instance, colonial families in the 1800s were highly patriarchal and over half of children residing in the South had lost at least one parent by the time they reached age 13 (Coontz 1992). Middle-class Victorian families relied on slave labor and the poor to improve their quality of life. During this time, children under the age of 11 comprised half of the labor in factories (Coontz 1992). During the early 1900s, ethnic and racial minorities and many children continued to work in sweatshops (Coontz 1992). Depression and Second World War families

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[2] Human-animal studies scholars are encouraged to abandon terms like "owner" with replacements such as "keeper," "caretaker," and "guardian." However, "pet owner," "animal guardian," and "animal caretaker" are used interchangeably throughout the manuscript to remain consistent with language past researchers have used. "Companion animal," "animal," and "pet" are also used interchangeably throughout the paper in order to remain consistent with language past researchers have used to discuss findings.

shared their own set of problems, including crippling poverty which forced families to work together whether they desired to or not (Coontz 1992). As Popenoe (1993) recalls, the 1950s were a time when many pro-family features were implemented, but it was also a time when women were given shock treatments for wanting an abortion, marriages were less satisfying for both men and women, single men were considered pathological, and racial segregation was legal in the South (Coontz 1992). The unflattering descriptions of families above are to illustrate that although families have changed throughout history, they have always changed for the better and worse, in different ways.

Families continue to transform in the 21st century. It is increasingly difficult for researchers to define and agree upon a workable definition of family, but sociologists typically define and think about family in three main ways. First, there is an official federal definition of the family used by the United States Census Bureau (2013), which is "two or more people living together, who are related by marriage, blood, or adoption." Second, there are nuclear families, which Palackal (2013: 237) describes as a heterosexual, universal social institution which exists to fulfill "sexual, reproductive, economic, and socialization functions." Third, there are families of choice. According to Cherlin (2004: 851) families of choice are "one that is formed largely through voluntary ties among individuals who are not biologically or legally related." Families of choice are often discursively and experientially created and maintained. Families of choice contribute to the many trends characterizing the deinstitutionalization of marriage.

The deinstitutionalization of hegemonic marriage refers to the ways in which social norms weakened surrounding the institution of marriage (Cherlin 2004). This is in part due to the the increase in births occurring outside of marriage, the rise of cohabitation, and the social

movement toward and legalization of same-sex marriage (Cherlin 2004). Yet, Fincham and Beach (2010: 630) found that "in the last decade, articles with the word 'marriage' in their title increased by approximately 48% compared to the preceding decade." This may be due in part to shifting meanings of marriage. In other words, marriage was once viewed and functioned as an institution, like any other bureaucracy which was based on a division of labor (Cherlin 2004; 2009; Hochshild 1989). In the early 20th century, the meaning of marriage shifted to a more romantic, companionate relationship and then shifted again to what Cherlin (2004: 851) calls "expressive individualism." A few hallmarks of expressive individualism include a desire for personal growth and a conscious and continual look inward.

According to Amato, Booth, Johnson, and Rogers (2007: 70) individualized marriage took off in the 1960s and accompanied five demographic changes including "(1) the rise of premarital cohabitation, (2) the trend for young adults to delay marriage, (3) the increase in second and higher-order marriages, (4) the growing percentage of spouses who experienced parental divorce as children, and (5) the increase in marriages between spouses who differ in basic characteristics such as race and age." Individualized marriage is grounded in the perspective that personal happiness and individual growth is of prime importance. Marital union is unnecessary to accomplish this goal as people can establish meaningful relationships with intimate others outside of the institution of marriage. It is under these circumstances that other shifts in marriage and family are situated (Amato, Booth, Johnson, and Rogers 2007). The deinstitutionalization of marriage and expressive individualism may also have contributed to the changes in how we think about and interact with the important nonhuman beings in our lives.

A few past researchers have denounced that companion animals can be minimized to surrogate children and human replacements (Beck and Katcher 1983; Serpell 1986). Serpell (1986) specifically argues that framing animals in this way trivializes the entire study of human-animal relationships. Yet, animals are considered surrogate children in a number of recent studies (see Gillespie, Leffler, and Lerner 2002 and Greenebaum 2004). Turner (2001) suggests this designation of animals as children by their caregivers could be a result of the totally dependent relationship an animal has with her caregiver. These changing human-animal relationships occurred in the same window of time marriages and other traditional family forms were changing. It may not be the case that companion animals are replacing human relationships, but it is clear that the incorporation of companion animals into families has occurred alongside these other family changes including marriage delays, the rise of cohabitation, childless/childfree coupling, the growth and acceptance of families of choice and more pathways to parenthood.

Family Change

Several trends in marriage and family have given rise to conditions that make animals-as-family possible. In the late 1800s, age of first marriage was 23 years for women and 26 years for men, respectively (United States Census Bureau 2012). This trend decreased during the mid-1900s where the average age of first marriage for women was approximately 20 years of age and 24 years of age for men, respectively (United States Census Bureau 2012). Within the past ten years, the average age of first marriage spiked to higher average ages than the ages documented during the late 1800s. In 2010, the average age of first marriage for women was 27 years of age and 29 years of age for men, respectively (United States Census Bureau 2012).

Marriage trends are also shaped by race, ethnicity, and education. In 2008, percentages in which non-Hispanic African-American women, Hispanic women, and non-Hispanic White women were expected to be in a first marriage differed (Bramlett and Mosher 2002). Bramlett and Mosher (2002) reported that slightly over half of non-Hispanic African-American women, 77% of Hispanic women, and 81% of non-Hispanic White women were expected to be in a first marriage by the age of 30. The United States Census Bureau (2012) reports that the age of first marriage for Black men is higher than White men since 1960, whereas, the opposite was true from 1890-1950. In 2010, the average age Black men enter a first marriage is 31 years of age compared to White men at 28 years of age (United States Census Bureau 2012). College education bifurcates these marriage trends too, with college graduates delaying marriage until older ages but being more likely to enter into marriage overall (Cherlin 2010). It has not been established whether a relationship exists between these delays in marriage and the increase in perceptions that companion animals are family members. It is possible that companion animals are in some way supporting unmarried adults in ways which would have previously been accounted for by spouses.

Second, the rise of cohabitation has also shaped current family trends. Cohabitation occurs when romantic partners move into a shared living situation (Sassler 2010). Cohabitation trends in the United States are well documented and are shaped by education, social class, age, and ethnicity. Among individuals with the least amount of education, two-thirds have cohabited and 45% of people with a college degree have cohabited (Cherlin 2010). Serial cohabitation (i.e., living with multiple partners over the life course) is most common among the poorest Americans, although this trend has started to shift with cohabitation becoming more prevalent

throughout all social classes (Sassler 2010). Older Americans are increasingly catching up with younger Americans in rates of cohabitation (Cherlin 2010). Among Mexican-American and Puerto Rican individuals, generational status influences cohabitation rates, with cohabitation rates increasing with each subsequent generation born in the United States (Sassler 2010).

Cohabitation trends have also been documented among same-sex couples. Despite the absence of federal data on same-sex unions prior to 1990, researchers found that cohabitation is common among lesbians and gay men with 594,391 of same-sex couples cohabiting, according to the 2000 Census (Cherlin 2010). More recently, the 2011 American Community Survey found that there are 605,472 same-sex households with 437,380 of the same-sex households cohabiting, as opposed to being married (United States Census Bureau 2013). Slightly more lesbian couples cohabit than gay male couples, based on a study of California residents (Carpenter and Gates 2008). Lesbian couples cohabit at similar rates as heterosexual women (Cherlin 2010).

Data on same-sex cohabitation must be contextualized as marriage equality only became legal for the entire United States in 2015. Only six states had legalized same-sex marriage in 2011. In early 2014, just 17 states had legalized same-sex marriage (Freedom to Marry 2014). Data collected on same-sex cohabitation and marriage are likely to change now that marriage equality is protected by federal law. This is to say that research needs to continue on same-sex cohabitation and marriage. Cohabitation clearly influences marriage trends. It is unclear how the companion animal as family member may fit within the cohabitation trend. These trends have emerged simultaneously and could both be outcomes of the deinstitutionalization of marriage.

The third trend in families which must be recognized is the demographic increase in childless/childfree families. Researchers sometimes differentiate between the childless and the childfree. Childfree refers to a couple or a woman's choice not to have children. Childless captures childfree individuals, individuals who have outlived their children, and/or individuals who have no relationship to their children (DeOllos and Kapinus 2002). Other researchers use childfree and childless interchangeably, without explaining how language possibly informs or shapes the lived realities of this growing group of people (see Gillespie 2003). Similar to DeOllos and Kapinus (2002), childfree is often used to describe people who consciously made a choice to not have children. Whereas, childless commonly refers to those who end up without children for a variety of reasons, which may or may not have included a conscious choice (Sandler 2013).

Increasingly, women are delaying or declining having children. Umberson, Pudrovska, and Reczek (2010) point out that the rate of childlessness grew from 15.6% to 28% of women between the ages of 30-34 years of age, according to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau. Childlessness increased from 10.5% to 20% among women between 35-39 years of age (Umberson, Pudrovska, and Reczek 2010). The Pew Research Center (2014) reports that one in five women do not give birth to a child by the time she reaches the end of her childbearing years, compared to one in ten during the 1970s. These demographic changes also vary by education, race and ethnicity, and marital status (Pew Research Center 2014). The childless are better educated, less religious, more likely to be employed and committed to their careers, and more likely to reside in urban areas compared to their counterparts (DeOllos and Kapinus 2002). A

large percentage of women who do not have children by their mid-forties are voluntarily childless (Abma and Martinez 2006; Smock and Greenland 2010).

Younger childless adults experience higher rates of well-being than young parents (Umberson, Pudrovska, and Reczek 2010). At older ages, results are mixed. Some researchers find that the childless are more likely to become institutionalized for illness, have fewer social resources, and feel socially isolated if married, when compared to those who are parents (DeOllos and Kapinus 2002). Yet, others find that unmarried older childless women fare better off than men, with older, single, childless men experiencing higher rates of depression (Umberson, Pudrovska, and Reczek 2010). In addition, childless couples or individuals are often met with suspicion, pity, and women in particular experience prejudice by others for not fulfilling social expectations of femininity related to motherhood norms (Baru and Dhingra 2003; DeOllos and Kapinus 2002). Consistent with Glick's (1947; 1988) family life cycle model, becoming a parent is interpreted as normal and natural (DeOllos and Kapinus 2002). Those who do not have children are considered deviant, or interpreted as living an alternative lifestyle (DeOllos and Kapinus 2002). Finally, Morell (1994) found that people who hold beliefs that women are obligated to give birth as a part of their natural duty point to ways they perceive women as compensating for this perceived shortcoming. One of the reasons identified by observers is childless women's care-taking relationships to pets (Morell 1994).

Fourth, "families of choice" have arisen as a way to discuss additional patterns of familial relationships. Families of choice primarily enter the literature within the context of same-sex intimacies. Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan (2001: 11) find that for same-sex couples, the family is both "a site of hostility, and something they can invent." Family is something people "do" or

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accomplish (Carrigan 1999; Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan 2001). Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan (2001: 49) also find that "if we see family in terms of practices rather than institutional forms, of meanings rather than structures, many non-heterosexuals 'do family' in ways that parallel heterosexual patterns."

In some ways, the more families change, the more they stay the same. Carrington's (1999) fieldwork and in-depth interviews with fifty-two lesbigay families shows that although these couples value egalitarianism, the reality is that domestic work is frequently divided in familiar ways. Feeding work (e.g., preparing and planning meals) (DeVault 1991), kin work (e.g., maintaining relationships with families of origin and friends), consumption work (e.g., documenting and comparing prices on good and services), and housework (e.g., caring for companion animals) are all ways that most lesbigay families, similar to heterosexual families, experience and recreate the division of labor in the home (Carrington 1999). Transformations in intimacy and families have occurred in both heterosexual and non-heterosexual relationships. As a result, romantic relationships in the early 2000s are more open and democratic (Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan 2001). By documenting the "life experiments" of non-heterosexual relationships, we see how important family remains in contemporary society (Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan 2001: 28). Family transformation in both non-heterosexual and heterosexual relationships show myriad possibilities for all families to create their own meanings and practices. In this regard, companion animals may become family members of choice, as families are performed and created through interaction.

Americans support of alternative family arrangements is increasing overall. Powell, Bolzendahl, Geist, and Steelman (2010) captured Americans' definitions of family. Through

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analyzing responses of over 1,500 people in "Constructing the Family Surveys" during 2003 and 2006, a clearer picture of who Americans count as family was demonstrated. The 2006 results show the living arrangements Americans count as family: husband, wife, children (99.4%), woman with children (95%), man with children (94.4%), husband, wife, no children (91%), unmarried man, woman, children (81.4%), two women with children (61.4%), two men with children (58.9%), unmarried man, woman, no children (39.7%), two women, no children (32.3%), two men, no children (32.2%), housemates (10.8%) (Powell et al. 2010). These data show a majority of Americans count a number of chosen and/or alternative families including childfree couples, single parents with children, lesbian couples with children, and gay couples with children. Slightly over half (51%) of Americans also counted pets as family members (Powell et al. 2010). Ironically, the only two family arrangements Americans counted less in 2006 than 2003 were: husband, wife, children and husband, wife, no children. These shifting attitudes toward family suggest that pets may be one of the major ways families are changing in the 21st century. Therefore, it is not only the ways family structures have changed which provide opportunities for Americans to interact with animals in new ways, but the wider society also thinks about these relationships in new ways as well.

Fifth, it is important to point out how parenthood has shifted over time. As noted above, in 2006 Americans considered having a parent/s and a child/children in the home the most important component in determining whether a living arrangement counts as family (Powell et al. 2010). Parenting was once considered a father's responsibility because women and children were both treated as fragile subordinates in the early 1800s. The tide changed mid-1800s to more

of a mother-centric model (Kimmel 1987). In the 21st century, men increasingly became more involved in parenting, although women still do a majority of the family work.

Scholars and the media continue to report on the "stalled revolution" (Hochschild and Machung 1989) or the "continuing revolution" (Sullivan and Coltrane 2010) referring to the advances women have made outside the home but the lack of advances men have made within it. Despite the stalled or continuing revolution, statistics show that men have started to engage in more child care. Although the numbers sound somewhat marginal, men spend four more hours per week engaging in child care than they did forty years ago; fathers working full-time now are performing child care 6 hours per week total. However, the number of hours mothers spend performing child care has also increased since the 1970s (Sullivan 2010). There are higher standards overall for both mothers and fathers in the twenty-first century (Hays 1996; Sullivan and Coltrane 2010). Parenting responsibilities have gone through gender shifts throughout distant and recent history, but time spent parenting has only increased in importance in more recent years.

Additionally, pathways to parenthood have expanded. Most children are born to heterosexual married couples but there are many babies living in various family arrangements including adoptive parents, same-sex parents, single parents, and parents who are cohabiting (Smock and Greenland 2010). In addition to family type expansions, pathways to parenthood are opening up through reproductive technologies as well. Less discussed are the pathways to parenthood formed by narrative strategies as opposed to birth and human babies. If families are socially constructed, a project, and something that is constantly being maintained by interaction and storytelling, parenting could also be maintained in this way as well. This current study

problematizes the construction of parenting in the marriage and families literature as an anthropocentric, human species-exclusive practice.

<center>Companion Animals' Emergence in Families</center>

Families in the U.S. have transformed over the past few decades in many ways including delayed marriage, increased cohabitation, electing to live childfree, experimenting with varying family arrangements as a matter of choice and finding new pathways to parenthood. While these changes have been occurring, Americans have started to think and interact with companion animals in new ways as well. To delve deeper into the past research on this trend, the socio-demographic composition of people and households which include companion animals is discussed. It has been argued that these animal family members are merely surrogate children for the childless or empty-nesters (Blouin 2012), but some researchers find that this is only partially accurate (Beck and Katcher 1983) and the statistics compiled here complicate the picture. Next, I highlight some interactional differences in the human-animal familial relationship across a number of socio-demographic family arrangements. Finally, I discuss the debate over whether animals should be considered family members of choice, including how the law has changed the way we interact with companion animals. All of these trends raise new questions about the companion-animal-as-family-member.

Companion animal guardianship, or pet ownership, is the keeping of animals for enjoyment rather than for utility. Thomas (1991) claims pets are animals that are named, are not consumed for food, and primarily live in the homes of humans. According to the American Pet Products Manufacturing Association (2014) 68% of households have at least one companion

animal living in the home. In the United States, people keep many types of animals as pets but 37% to 46% of households include a dog and 30% to 39% of households include a cat (American Humane Association 2013). In 2010, 55% of family households included their own children under the age of 18 (United States Census Bureau 2012), demonstrating that more people live with companion animals than children. Research varies on the percentage of households in which pets are considered family members. The percentage ranges from 51% (Powell, Bolzendahl, Geist, and Steelman 2010), to 63.2% (American Veterinary Medical Association 2014) to 76% (Mintel 2014).

Families with Companion Animals

Animal keeping, or pet ownership, is stratified by many socio-demographic characteristics. In one of the first studies aimed at understanding the demographic profile of pet owners in the United States, Marx, Stallones, Garrity, and Johnson (1988) used a nationally probability sample of 21 to 64 year olds to compare pet owners with non-pet owners. Appendix A includes a table which is adapted from Table 2 in Marx, Stallones, Garrity and Johnson's (1988) research, shows the socio-demographics of pet owners and non-pet owners. These data reveal that 64% of females and 61.6% of males are pet owners. Among marital statuses, 66.1% of married, 56% of separated, 54.7% of separated, 50% of widowed, 57.4% of never married people were pet owners. Across age groups, 64.2% of 21-30 year olds, 65.6% of 31-40 year olds, 67.8% of 41-50 year olds, and 53.1% of 51-64 were pet owners. Pet owners varied across education attainment with 65.7% of 0-11 years, 65.2% of 12 years, 58.7% of 13-16 years, 63.8% of 17 years completed. Pet owners' family income ranged from 57.9% earning under $20,000 per year, 62.3% earning between $20,000 and $40,000 per year, and 67.6% earning over $40,000 per

year. Among those with children in the home, 67.9% had a pet. In homes without children, 57.1% had a pet. Among Whites, 65.3% had pets and 46.2% of nonwhites had pets. Thus, in 1987, being female, married, White, between the ages of 41-50, having below 11 years of education, earning over $40,000 per year, and having children were associated with higher rates of pet ownership (Marx Stallones, Garrity, and Johnson 1988).

In 2006, the American Veterinary Medical Association (2007) collected data on households with and without companion animals. Appendix B includes a table which is adapted from the AVMA (2007) study on pet-owning and non-pet owning households. These households differed on a number of socio-demographic factors including by race, ethnicity, social class, marital status, parental status, household income, employment status, among others. These data reveal that 63.1% of White, 57.5% of Hispanic, 26.6% of Black/African American, and 49.4% of Asian/Pacific Islander/American Indian/Aleut Eskimo households owned pets. Pet ownership was highest among households earning between $55,000 and $84,999 annually and lowest among households earning less than $20,000 per year. Yet, pet ownership was highest among people living in a mobile home (68.5%), closely followed by those living in a house (63.4%). The lowest percentage of pet ownership among household type was among those living in an apartment (39.5%) (American Veterinary Medical Association 2007). Additionally, pet owning households were commonly married, parents, households with more than five members, and households where the householder was employed full-time (American Veterinary Medical Association 2007).

Research on the percentages of individuals who consider pets family members is consistent across various sources. The American Veterinary Medical Association (2007) reports

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that 49.7% of households consider their pets to be family members, while 48.2% of households

consider their pets to be "just pets." Only 2% of households considered their pets as property

(American Veterinary Medical Association). Powell, Bolzendahl, Geist, and Steelman (2010)

also found in a survey of Americans with a nationally representative sample that 51% of people

count their pets as family members. Blouin (2013) conducted 28 in-depth interviews with 34

Midwesterners with varying levels of attachment to their dogs and found three orientations

toward dogs. These findings are fairly consistent with the AVMA's (2007) report as these

orientations are humanistic, protectionistic, and dominionistic. Humanistic refers largely to a

pets-as-family-member orientation. Protectionistic could also fit with a pets-as-family orientation

but this orientation is concerned with the welfare of all animals, not just cats and dogs.

Dominionistic fits pretty well with a "just pets" attitude or potentially with owners viewing pets

as mere property (Blouin 2013).

Families with Companion Animals across Socio-Demographic Groups

Animals have always played a fundamental role in human societies. A few studies have

examined pets as family members in specific demographic groups. The rise of pets emerged as a

luxury for the wealthy and royal classes who could afford to keep animals not serving a

functional purpose, other than companionship (DeMello 2012). During the 19th century pet

keeping increased throughout the middle classes (Irvine 2004), but pets became commonplace in

the West only within the past century (DeMello 2012). Today people from all socioeconomic

statuses keep pets, as noted in the socio-demographic data above. Research shows that families

with higher household incomes live with pets more than those with lower household incomes,

and that pets within these households often elevate their dogs status to "fur babies" (Greenebaum

2004; Schaffer 2009). More recently, researchers have also identified a substantial number of pets residing at the other end of the socio-economic ladder, with the unsheltered homeless population.

Pets of the Homeless (2014) reports that between 5% and 10% of the homeless population have pets, and the number is closer to 25% in some communities. Wright and Donley (2011) found that there are approximately fifty to sixty homeless camps consisting of hundreds of people in the Central Florida woods. Among the reasons that these unsheltered homeless individuals refused housing was due to the lack of accommodations for their dogs and other pets. Irvine (2013: 85) conducted in-depth interviews with the unsheltered homeless and found that many referred to their animals as family members. When talking about their animals, they discussed the depth and intensity of their relationships, the responsibility, and the caregiving, often in comparison to their relationships with other people. One woman interviewed who was living in a car with her cat, poignantly stated, "You know, when you have a home, your relationships with animals take place at home. But when you're homeless, they are your home." Studies on the homeless and their pets reveal that although pet ownership may occur at higher rates among those with higher household incomes, pets may be considered family members just as strongly, if not more, by those living at the very margins of society. These companion animals are not only their family members, but they will not leave an encampment in the woods for a shelter if their pets are not accommodated. As Irvine's (2013) work showed, these pets are often their home.

A relatively small number of studies have explored the role of race and ethnicity on pet ownership. Prior to Blouin's (2013) work on orientations dog owners/guardians have toward

their dogs, Kellert (1989) identified ten attitudes Americans have toward all animals. These attitudes include: naturalistic (i.e., wildlife and outdoors), ecologistic (i.e., wildlife as a system), humanistic (i.e., affection for individual animals), moralistic (i.e., ethical treatment of animals), scientistic (i.e., curiosity about biological functioning of animals), aesthetic (i.e., artistic and symbolic meaning of animals), utilitarian (i.e., practical value of animals), dominionistic (i.e., mastery and control of animals), negativistic (i.e., fear and dislike animals) and neutralistic (i.e., no interest in animals). Kellert and Berry (1980) find that people of color have more utilitarian and negative views toward animals compared to Whites.

Anderson's (1990) ethnographic work in a low-income Philadelphia neighborhood demonstrated that Black community members had pets for protection, rather than for companionship. These dogs were often kept outside to intimidate trespassers. Dogs in this neighborhood influenced the interactions occurring between White and Black community members living in this location. While Whites neighbors primarily kept their dogs inside, when they took them for walks outside, the Black neighbors were intimidated by the dogs and generally did not understand the intimate relationships occurring between Whites, middle-class Blacks, and their pets. In another study, Tissot (2011) found small dogs were preferred by middle-class Whites who recently moved into a predominately Black neighborhood, compared to the larger dogs already residing in the neighborhood living with the Black working-class.

Counter to the aforementioned research, Risley-Curtiss, Holley, Cruickshank, Porcelli, Rhoads, Bacchus, Nyakoe, and Murphy (2006: 442) found through in-depth interviews with women of color, that their relationships with pets were described as "providing friendship, fun, love, comfort, and/or constancy for themselves or their children or both." This research aimed to

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include perspectives of women of color from a variety of ethnic backgrounds including women who self-identified as Korean, Salvadoran, Latina, African-American, Chicana, Puerto-Rican, Hopi/Pima, Guatemalan, Navajo, Japanese, and Mexican-American. This research demonstrated that the relationship between people of color and pets may resemble relationships between Whites and pets. Additionally, this research revealed new insights into what it may mean for pets to be considered family members in communities of color. For instance, at times pets became family members through their ability to help with work or protection (Risley-Curtiss et al. 2006). In this way, pets resembled Anderson's (1990) participants in their attitudes toward dogs as protection while also maintaining their status as family members.

As demonstrated above, companion animals occupy a "social place" in our households (DeMello 2012: 155), varying across socio-economic groups although in different ways. Americans tell stories to narrate and make sense of their family life by including, and sometimes centering, their animal family members in these stories. Human-animal family narratives may resemble other types of stories told by other families of choice. Families are transforming in the United States, but the sociology of family literature has not explicitly been used to contextualize the social processes which organize daily life in human-animal, or interspecies, families from a narrative approach. Some human-animal studies scholars are unsure whether companion animals should be framed as family members at all.

Debate on Companion Animals as Family

Arguments exist that both support and reject framing companion animals as a form of families of choice. Cherlin's (2004) definition of families of choice argues these families are not

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based on legal relation. In the context of the law, companion animals are not individuals, but they are legally bound to individuals. The legal status of companion animals has become a hot trend in law schools, as over 90 American Bar Association approved law schools offer courses on animal law (Gunderson 2008). A number of studies have addressed the battle over companion animals in divorce (Britton 2006; Kindregran 2012; Mills and Akers 2002). Kindregran (2012: 229) found that while the law overwhelmingly treats companion animals as property rather than "living property" or "human companions," an Alaska court came close to treating animals as some*one* rather than some*thing*. Specifically, the court revoked joint-custody of a dog after concluding that the dog's life was at risk at the ex-wife's home, due to the new boyfriend inflicting injury on the dog. The court gave the former husband sole custody after the incident (Kindregran 2012). The legal status of pets has also recently emerged in the literature on estate planning (Gunderson 2008). The legal interest in pet trusts ignited when Leona Helmsley of Sarasota, Florida left a sizable portion of her estate, $12 million dollars, to her Maltese dog (Gunderson 2008). While the validity of animal trusts are sometimes challenged in court, statutory law recognizes trusts for domesticated animals (Gunderson 2008). Whether companion animals are property or some other entity in the eyes of law, complicates whether animals could be included in families of choice literature based on Cherlin's (2010) definition.

Additionally, Irvine (2004) challenges the premise that companion animals are "voluntary" family members by questioning whether companion animals are actually enslaved by the families in which they reside. Serpell (1986: 25) calls this darker perspective on the human- animal familial relationship "playful domination." The pro-pet keeping side of this argument is the utilitarian animal welfarist position. This position comes from the work of

Jeremy Bentham (1781) historically, and the work of Peter Singer (1990) contemporarily. The animal welfarist position suggests that pet-keeping is moral, as long as animals are not unnecessarily suffering (intentional breeding which results in heightened risk to abnormalities, tail and ear docking, and shock collars would all be unnecessary suffering) (Irvine 2004). The other side of the debate is the animal rights position, most identified with the work of the philosopher Tom Regan. Regan (1983) and Franscione (1990) argue that animals have inherent value. Taking this position means that pet-keeping for the pleasure of humans would need to end, since keeping animals as companions for our own pleasure takes away the right of animals to not be treated as things (Irvine 2004). Applying either of these positions challenges whether human relationships with companion animals could be considered "voluntary ties," per Cherlin's (2010) definition of families of choice.

However, if the family is a social construction and something people "do" (Carrington 1999), families can be accomplished in a variety of ways, which move beyond formal definition. Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan (2001: 35) emphasize the importance of narrative when constructing relationships among families of choice. When individuals narrate their family life, they assign meaning, claim identities, and substantiate their relationships. Narrative gives families of choice a method to describe relationships as "something we've created, not as substitutes – that makes it sound inferior – but as an alternative that we've created." Gubrium and Holstein (1997) point out that narratives shed light on what individuals find important. As a storyteller narrates their life, bits and pieces of experience are tied together to make a meaningful whole, while other parts of experience are left out.

Sociologists have started to identify the ways in which human-animal families are narrated too. Among the homeless with pets, companion animals are constructed as friends and family members (Irvine 2013). These narratives also show that animals are storied by the homeless as vehicles for redemption (Irvine 2013). Similar to Fitzgerald's (2007) work on battered women's relationships with animals, the homeless discussed their animal family members as "suicide barriers" (Irvine 2013: 150). Anderson's (1990) ethnographic research in an urban Philadelphia community showed that dogs were storied based on race and class intersections. Cohen (2002) found among a sample comprised primarily of highly educated, Caucasian women living in New York City and clients of a state-of-the-art veterinary clinic, that these individuals felt very close to their companion animals and relied on them for emotional support. While storying is an important way for individuals to give meaning to their families (Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan 2001), the current stories of human-animal families of choice represent specific pockets of family life but there are many other groups missing from these studies (e.g., the childless/childfree). It is currently unclear whether these aforementioned family arrangements are the same ones most likely to consider pets family members.

Although there is some debate over whether companion animals are voluntary participants in families of choice, examining the narratives constructed by these family members is a critical way to uncover how and under what conditions individuals create meaning and "do" family in alternative ways. It is equally important to identify the families most likely to consider their pets family members. Recent research on pet ownership shows the population in the United States living with companion animals, but it does not illustrate whether these individuals

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consider pets to be family members or the narrative strategies employed that may serve to elevate these animals to "family."

The gap in the companion-animal-as-family literature is threefold. First, research shows that 68% of households own companion animals and that approximately 51% of people count animals as family members, but these two statistical findings have not been connected. Who considers these pets family members? Are they the same people? Second, research shows that people who consider their pets family members narrate their family life. However, the narratives in the research are on specific populations, not a sample of the population which represents the people who consider pets family members. For instance, we know how the homeless, the working-class Black community in Philadelphia, and affluent White women in New York City story their family lives with companion animals, but are these the populations who are most likely considering animals as family members and are the processes the same for other groups? It is currently unclear how companion animals fit into the other larger family trends, like the childless/childfree, for example. Research shows that the homeless elevate their pets to family members through constructing their animals as redemption vehicles, but are the social processes for elevating pets to family members the same for other populations? Third, research has not demonstrated the way lived experience of people living with pets as everyday practice is narrated. Goode (2007) conducted an ethnomethodological study of human-dog interaction, focusing on "play" but does not show the narrative processes in which animals become family members. Sanders (1999) shows how humans "speak for" dogs and how these processes shape interactions among human and animal actors, but again does not take a narrative approach to

everyday practices of humans living with companion animals as family. The proposed research will fill in these three gaps in the family trends and human-animal interactions literature.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding the proposed research is social constructionism. Social constructionism's roots are grounded in phenomenology and ethnomethodology. While Edmund Husserl, a mathematician, is considered the founder of phenomenology, Alfred Schutz introduced the perspective to sociology. Phenomenology is the theoretical perspective that reality is constituted by the subjectivities of people viewing and describing it (Hewitt and Shulman 2011). In other words, there are multiple realities, not just one objective reality. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966) social realities are constructed and maintained through shared meanings and common stocks of knowledge. This theoretical frame is primarily concerned with the subjective experience of everyday life. Language, signs, and symbols are all part of the social constructionists' analytic approach because they are stored within the individual's common stock of knowledge and are maintained, reproduced, and form an objective reality of the individual through interaction (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

Social constructionists often rely on narratives to understand the subjective realities of research participants. Narrative inquiry, and specifically interpretative practice, includes observing how stories are constructed and what the conditions of storytelling are as a form of conceptualizing ways in which individuals make life meaningful (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). According to Holstein and Gubrium (2000: 103) "narrators artfully pick and choose from what is experientially available to articulate their lives and experiences. Yet, as they actively craft and

inventively construct their narratives, they also draw from what is culturally available, storying their lives in recognizable ways." Families of choice, particularly those which include companion animals, are a theoretically ripe site to explore how and under what conditions individuals story their family lives to include these animal family members as a form of interpretive practice.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on families of choice, specifically the individuals who count companion animals family members. By companion animals, this dissertation is specifically regarding cat and dog family members. The research questions that guided the data collection and analysis for this dissertation were twofold. First, what are the socio-demographics of people in the United States who count companion animals to be family members? Second, what are the narrative strategies people who consider their companion animals as family members employ in telling these stories? To investigate these research questions, I relied on a mixed-method approach. Two research strategies were utilized including secondary data analysis and in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The rationale for using mixed-methods is to explore the overarching research question from two angles, which is, what does it mean for a pet to be a family member? The quantitative data method and analysis is discussed first and the qualitative data method analysis is discussed second. The data were also collected and analyzed in this order. The secondary data assisted in guiding me in certain directions in the semi-structured interviews.

<u>Secondary Data</u>

Secondary data analysis answered the first research question, what are the socio-demographics of individuals who consider companion animals family members in the United States? These data were from the Constructing the Family Survey, a phone survey conducted in 2003 and 2006 by Dr. Brian Powell of Indiana University in conjunction with the Department of Sociology and the Institute of Social Research at Indiana University. I was granted permission to

use these data for this dissertation. Chapter four: American attitudes toward pets-as-family, the first findings chapter of this dissertation, was approved by Dr. Powell in September 2015.

Of particular interest for the present study, Powell, et al. (2010) added the question "Should pets be counted as family members?" to the Constructing the Family Survey in 2006. This question was added to the end of the section on definitions of family. The question was added after open-ended survey questions from the 2003 survey revealed that people thought pets count as family members (Powell et al. 2010). Only data from 2006 were provided and analyzed for this reason.

<center>Secondary Data Measures</center>

The 2006 Constructing the Family Survey asked a random sample of American households a series of questions on how the family is conceptualized. Powell et al. (2010) used the Genesys list-assisted method which randomly generated telephone numbers. Marketing Systems Group generated the random telephone numbers. Sections on the survey included: definitions of family, rights and relationships, length of relationship and definition of family, single parent questions, maternal and paternal responsibilities, causes of child behavior and traits, gay marriage and gay adoption, marital name change, comfort with gay men and lesbians, and socio-demographic questions (Powell et al. 2010). Questions from the 2006 Constructing the Family Survey used in the present study were from the definitions of family section and socio-demographics section. According to Powell et al (2010: 221) "All analyses were conducted with and without sampling weights and yielded very few differences." The data were nearly identical to both Census and General Social Survey data, demonstrating that these data are representative

of the United States population. Weights were applied by Powell et al. (2010) to the socio-demographic characteristics reported in the book. Weights were not applied in the quantitative chapter of this dissertation. Salon, Haider, and Wooldridge (2015) highlight the main reasons social scientists weight data and conclude that weighting is not always best or necessary. Since no major differences were found between the weighted and unweighted data, I only point out the counting pets as family difference in my analysis with footnotes. These footnotes are found when the variable, counting pets as family, is first introduced.

Counting Pets as Family

The dependent variable for all bivariate and multivariate analyses was "Should pets be counted as family members?" Responses to this survey question included "yes," "no," "depends," "don't know," and "refused." This variable was turned into a dummy variable which included only two responses: yes (1) and no (0). "Depends" was the response for 2.59 percent of the sample but was ultimately dropped because I did not have access to the qualitative responses indicating what their response depended on. These "depends" responses were not included in any further analyses.

Participant Characteristics

Constructing the Family Survey contained questions about the participants' socio-demographics. The socio-demographics served as the independent variables in all analyses, excluding univariate analyses. There were 26 closed-ended socio-demographic variables used for the initial univariate analyses from the 2006 Constructing the Family Survey. All the socio-demographic variables were labeled and placed in one of four groups. The first group was

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participant characteristics. The second group was family characteristics. The third group was occupational characteristics. The fourth group was identity characteristics.

The participant characteristics included eight variables. Gender was dummy coded and measured as man (0) or woman (1). Year born was measured as a continuous variable. Sexual orientation was measured as categorical including heterosexual, gay or lesbian, bisexual, or something else. Race was measured as categorical including White/Caucasian, Black/African-American, Native American, Asian, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin was measured as a dummy variable with a yes (1) or no (0). Education was measured as a categorical variable including less than high school, high school diploma/GED, some college but no degree, completed Associate's or other technical degree, completed bachelor's degree, completed master's degree, or completed any doctorate degree. Marital status was measured as categorical including married, living with a partner, widowed, separated, divorced, or never married. Non-marital cohabiting was measured as a dummy variable including yes (1) or no (0).

The family characteristics included eight variables. Household income was measured as a continuous variable. I created a new dummy variable called "parent" which was measured as yes (1) or no (0). The "parent" variable was not originally a part of the original Constructing the Family data set. The variable parent was created from the already existing continuous variable "number of children." Number of children was measured as continuous. Married more than once was a dummy variable measured as yes (1) or no (0). Whether the respondent had ever lived with a partner without being married was named "cohabited with a partner" and was measured as a dummy variable including yes (1) or no (0). As previously mentioned, whether the respondent

thought pets count as family was the dependent variable in all bivariate and multivariate analyses. Again, pets count as family was dummy coded as yes (1) or no (0). Whether the respondent currently lives with their spouse was dummy coded and measured as yes (1) or no (0). The highest level of education respondent's spouse or partner earned was measured as a categorical variable with less than high school, high school diploma or GED, some college but no degree, associate's degree or other technical degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctorate degree. The year the respondent's spouse/partner was born was measured as a continuous variable.

There were five occupational characteristics. Whether the respondent is currently working for pay was dummy coded and measured as yes (1) or no (0). The number of hours the respondent works in a typical week was measured as continuous. Respondent's income compared to their spouse/partner was measured as an categorical variable with spouse/partner has no income, spouse's/partner's income is much higher, spouse's/partner's income is somewhat higher, spouse's/partner's income is about the same, spouse's/partner's income is somewhat lower, or spouse's/partner's income is much lower. Whether spouse/partner is employed for pay was dummy coded and measured as yes (1) or no (0). Number of hours spouse/partner works during a typical week was measured as continuous.

Identity characteristics included six variables. Political identity was measured as an ordinal variable including extremely liberal, moderately liberal, slightly liberal, middle of the road, slightly conservative, moderately conservative, and extremely conservative. The political identity scale ranged from "extremely conservative=7" to "extremely liberal=1". Feminist identity was measured as yes (1) or no (0). The religion respondent's identify with was measured

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as categorical including Protestant, Catholic, no preference/Atheist/Agnostic, other, Jewish, Latter-Day Saints/Mormon, Muslim, Eastern (Bahai, Hindu, Buddhist), Spiritual/Wiccan/Pagan/Existentialist/Unitarian/Universalist, or Orthodox (Greek, Syrian, Eastern, Quaker). Strength of religious beliefs was measured as an ordinal variable including very religious, moderately religious, slightly religious, and not religious at all. The strength of religious beliefs scale ranged from "very religious=4" to "not religious at all=0." Frequency of religious services attendance was measured as an ordinal variable including every day, more than once a week, once a week, two or three times a month, once a month, a few times a year, once a year or less, or never attend. Attendance coding ranged from "never attending religious services=0" to "attend religious services every day=7." Bible attitudes were measured as categorical including the inspired word of god, actual word of god ancient book of fables, can't choose or doesn't apply to me.

Some of the continuous and ordinal variables were converted into dummy variables during bivariate and multivariate analyses (e.g., Atheist and Christian). If the answer was "yes" to any of the questions, the variable is named after the "yes" and coded as (1) whereas the no was coded (0). If and when this occurred and a statistically significant relationship was found, it was denoted in the findings section where the relationship between the variables is discussed.

<u>Secondary Data Validity Check</u>

A data validity check was conducted before any analyses for the dissertation took place. I needed to ensure that the data provided by Dr. Brian Powell and his research team matched the data in their book *Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definitions of Family.* In

order to do this, frequencies were run and compared to the data presented in the book. Attempts to match the data failed, particularly when it came to the dependent variable. In *Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definitions of Family,* 51 percent of the sample said that they thought pets count as family. Forty-nine percent of the sample said that they did not think pets count as family.

At this point, contact was made with Dr. Powell who clarified that the reason for the discrepancy was due to weights he and his research team applied to the data. Specifically, Powell (2014) stated, "Nicole is correct about the numbers: her percentages are the percentages that we found in the sample. But the book uses numbers based on weighted data, most notably on age— i.e., weighting so that age distributions of the sample adjusted to be consistent with the U.S. population." Therefore, the discrepancy found was explained. Powell (2014) also mentioned, "However, if she is doing multivariate analysis and is mostly interesting in the relationship between variables, the weighting is not needed. The general line of reasoning is that weighted data do not necessarily provide better—or substantially different—correlations or regression coefficients." Past literature on weighting was also evaluated to determine whether weighting for this data analysis was best (see Solon, Haider, and Wooldridge 2015). It was determined that unweighted data would be used since the interest was in relationships between socio-demographic variables and counting pets as family. There were no other unexplained or unaccounted issues in the data set.

Secondary Data Analytic Strategy

The secondary data analysis was conducted in a number of steps on Stata 12, a data analysis and statistical software. First, univariate analyses were conducted on all variables. The univariate test used was for this step was frequencies. Second, bivariate analyses were conducted. The first set of bivariate analyses included cross-tabulations and chi-squares in order to make comparisons between all nominal variables in each of the participant, family, occupational, and identity level demographic variables with counting pets as family. The second set of bivariate analyses conducted were correlations. Correlations were conducted to measure the relationship between counting pets as family and all continuous variables. Third, multivariate analyses were conducted. The multivariate analyses conducted were logistic regressions. These logistic regression models were used to predict counting pets as family informed by past research on the topic.

Interviews

The qualitative interview data collection answered the second research question, which is what are the narrative strategies people employ when storying their cats and dogs as family members? To answer this question, semi-structured interviews with people who consider pets as family members were conducted from September 2014 – March 2015. These interviews were conducted with respondents found through non-probability sampling techniques in Central Florida. Pet owners are generally an open, easily accessible, and friendly community (Gorden 1980). I am also an "insider," in that I have grown up with a variety of companion animals and consider my companion animals family members.

Narrative analysis expanded into sociology around the 1990s (Franzosi 1998; Gubrium and Holstein 1997) and has continued since then (Gubrium and Holstein 2009; Riessman 2002; 2008). Put simply, stories are the chronological events that occurred, whereas narrative is how the author weaves them together. The narrative approach to interviewing suggests the prevalence of narrative collaboration between interviewer and interviewee. Gubrium and Holstein (1997: 153) find that "while stories have their tellers, storytelling unfolds in interactional context with audiences for whom narrative presentations must 'mesh.'" The interview process is a co-construction of narrative production, in which both participant and interviewer share information during the interview process. Active interviewing was utilized in order to activate narrative production (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Active interviewing is an interactional, narrative approach to gathering data with roots in social constructionism (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). In other words, I suggested different standpoints to speak from at various times throughout the interview (e.g., As a mother of human children, how does parenting compare to your relationship with your companion animal?). I also shared information about my own experiences as someone who has always and still currently considers herself as someone with nonhuman animal family members. I also narrated from my own standpoints (e.g., as childfree, as a woman, as a sister) in order to facilitate the conversation further and deeper into various dimensions of meaning.

Interview Sampling & Recruitment

I interviewed 39 individuals during 32 interviews. Interviews were always organized as one-on-one but people wanted to co-collaborate with the friends, partners, and children they call family and also just happened (or intentionally) were passing by the room during the interview. This was a pattern I was not prepared for but became accustomed to after it happened a few

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times. Navigating storytellers who disagree or who have points to make was quite challenging but ultimately enriched the data to a greater extent.

My initial goal was 30 interviews but I continued beyond 30 because it was important to continue data collection until theoretical saturation was reached. In other words, once I completed the interviews, there were not any new themes emerging. I do not believe this is because I found every possible narrative standpoint available, but based on the "local cultures" in which I was granted access, the themes were reemerging. I felt confident that I could end data collection.

Sampling was conducted in two ways. Both ways I sought participants was through non-probability techniques. Convenience and snowball sampling was the primary way I recruited participants (Berg 2009). Although I relied on these non-probability techniques, I hoped to achieve diversity in the sample by visiting dog parks in very distinct parts of Central Florida. I attended these dog parks numerous times. I also asked these dog park members for referrals of people who may consider their cat or dog family and would be interested in participating in the interview.

I visited three separate dog parks in the Greater Orlando area to find interview participants who consider their companion animals family members. Each of these dog parks was in a different city with varying social demographics. To paint the picture, I describe socio-demographics for the state of Florida at large before describing some of the characteristics of each of the cities. The United States Census Bureau predicted (2015) that in 2013 the median household income for the state of Florida was $46,956. The state of Florida has 14.9 percent of

households living below the poverty level. The state of Florida population is 80.8 percent White and 18.2 percent of the state of Florida identifies as Hispanic or Latino, based on race of householder data (United States Census Bureau 2015).

The first dog park I visited was in Winter Springs, Florida. According to the United States Census Bureau (2015) the median household income in the city of Winter Springs is $67,278. There were seven percent of households living below the poverty level within the past twelve months. The city is overwhelmingly White with 92.1 percent of the population's householders identifying as White. Finally, the Hispanic and Latino population in this city was at 13.2 percent (United States Census Bureau 2015). The second dog park I visited was in Winter Park, Florida. According to the United States Census Bureau (2015) the median household income in this city was $57,545. There were 10.5 percent of households living below the poverty level within the past twelve months. Most of the city residents identify as White with 89.1 percent of householders identifying this way. Finally, the Hispanic and Latino population in this city was at 8.3 percent. The third dog park I visited was in Sanford, Florida. According to the United States Census Bureau (2015) the median household income in the city of Sanford is $41,168. There were 19 percent of households living below the poverty level within the past twelve months. The city is more racially diverse than Winter Park, Florida with 64.2 percent of the population identifying as White. Finally, the Hispanic and Latino population in this city was at 20.3 percent (United States Census Bureau 2015). Visiting the dog parks in cities across Central Florida resulted in some gender, age, and ethnic diversity but the respondents predominantly identified as White and had higher than average household incomes, as seen in Table 1.

I approached individuals in the park and handed them a flyer. I attended parks in the morning, afternoon, and night. If dog park attendees were willing to listen, I told them about my study. I asked if I could interview them at their household at a time convenient for them. Most of the people I talked to were willing to be interviewed but fewer answered the phone or e-mailed me back once I contacted them after meeting at the dog park. For this reason and because I was seeking cat owners in addition to dog owners, I also told friends, family, acquaintances, co-workers and many others I came into contact with about my study and asked if they knew anyone who would be interested in participating. It was through these contacts that I connected with the remainder of participants. A full description of the participant characteristics are below.

Table 1: Participant Characteristics from Interviews

Name/ Pseduo	Age	Gender	Race	Hispanic or Latino	Marital Status	Household Income	Highest Education Earned	Dog	Cat
Ricardo	23	Man	White	Yes	Single	$30,000	Some College	Yes	No
Camilla	31	Woman	White	Yes	Married	$150,000	Master's Degree	Yes	No
Franco	33	Man	White	Yes	Married	$150,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No
Scarlet	31	Woman	White	No	Single	$80,000	Cosmetology License	Yes	No
Caroline	25	Woman	White	No	Single	$85,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	Yes
Ben	28	Man	White	No	Single	$85,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	Yes
Lucas	26	Man	White	Yes	Single	$60,000	Some College	No	Yes
Daphne	21	Woman	White	No	Single	$0	Some College	No	Yes
Anton	31	Man	White	No	Single	$30,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	Yes
Taylor	28	Woman	White	Yes	Married	$160,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No
Madison	23	Woman	White	No	Single	$10,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	Yes
Elijah	32	Man	White	No	Single	$53,000	Doctoral Degree	Yes	Yes

Name/ Pseduo	Age	Gender	Race	Hispanic or Latino	Marital Status	Household Income	Highest Education Earned	Dog	Cat
Isaac	32	Man	White	No	Single	$75,000	Doctoral Degree	Yes	Yes
Cesar	24	Man	Black	No	Single	$25,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No
Jacob	29	Man	White	No	Single	$30,000	Bachelor's Degree	No	Yes
Leah	28	Woman	White	No	Single	$30,000	Bachelor's Degree	No	Yes
Dara	29	Woman	Asian	No	Single	$47,000	Bachelor's Degree	No	Yes
Sandra	27	Woman	White	No	Single	$32,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	Yes
Adrienne	33	Woman	White	No	Single	$80,000	Master's Degree	Yes	Yes
Gabriel	28	Man	White	No	Single	$32,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No
Noah	29	Man	White	No	Married	$90,000	Bachelor's Degree	No	Yes
Sofia	53	Woman	White	Yes	Married	$75,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	Yes
Alice	33	Woman	White	No	Married	$116,000	Doctoral Degree	Yes	No
Alfred	85	Man	White	No	Widowed	$70,000	Master's Degree	Yes	No
Arthur	66	Man	White	No	Married	$75,000	Master's Degree	Yes	No
Charlotte	51	Woman	White	No	Married	$100,000	Associate's Degree	Yes	No
Penelope	60	Woman	White	Yes	Divorced	$37,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No
Pedro	30	Man	White	Yes	Married	$70,000	Master's Degree	Yes	No
Martina	30	Woman	White	Yes	Married	$70,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No
Isabel	26	Woman	White	No	Single	$50,000	High School Diploma	Yes	No
Javier	29	Man	White	Yes	Single	$50,000	High School Diploma	Yes	No
Ana	30	Woman	White	Yes	Married	$120,000	Bachelor's Degree	No	Yes
Rose	63	Woman	White	No	Married	$100,000	High School Diploma	Yes	No
Vincent	44	Man	White	No	Married	$90,000	Doctoral Degree	Yes	No
Melanie	33	Woman	White	No	Married	$90,000	Master's Degree	Yes	No

Name/ Pseduo	Age	Gender	Race	Hispanic or Latino	Marital Status	Household Income	Highest Education Earned	Dog	Cat
Sybil	46	Woman	White	No	Married	$150,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No
Oliver	65	Man	White	No	Divorced	$40,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	No
Valerie	41	Woman	White	No	Married	$250,000	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	Yes
Violet	52	Woman	White	No	Married	$77,000	High School Diploma	Yes	No

Interview Data Collection

Data collection started after securing University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board approval. All interviews took place in the homes of the participants. Each participant was provided a consent form and the opportunity to accept or decline participation in the study. The interview schedule included nine open-ended questions. Each question included a few probing questions or provided the participant a position to narrate from. Participants were asked about ways in which their companion animal are elevated to family member, the feelings and emotions the caretaker holds for the companion animal, the nature of the relationship and whether it resembles human parenting styles, the activities the caretaker does with the companion animal, and the care work associated with the caring for a companion animal. A list of interview questions can be found in Appendix C. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. An undergraduate research assistant assisted in the transcription process. Pseudonyms are used for participants and their family members. The transcriptions were typed into Microsoft Word documents. There were a total of 804 pages of transcribed audio. Audio files were destroyed after transcription.

Interview Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed through interpretive practice techniques (Gubrium and Holstein 1997). Holstein and Gubrium (2008) outlined how to analyze family as interpretive practice by identifying what interpretive practice specifically means for data analysis. Analyzing family as interpretive practice means, "the researcher must alternate between questions concerning *what* is going on, under *what* conditions and *how* that is being accomplished" (Gubrium and Holstein 1997, p.211). The interpretive constructionist approach does not analyze family as an objective reality. Rather, family is analyzed as a constellation of meanings accomplished through discourse and interaction (Gubrium and Holstein 2008).

Data analysis using an interpretive practice approach means considering equally the artful side of interpretive practice, the conditions of interpretation, and deprivatization. The artful side of interpretive practice refers to the active, spontaneous, creative ways family is accomplished. Gubrium and Holstein (2008: 7) refer to this active construction as "family-in-use." The conditions of interpretation refer to the limits and circumstances by which the artful side is mediated. Gubrium and Holstein (2008: 8) refer to these parameters as "local culture." In other words, active, spontaneous, and creative family accomplishments are always embedded in local culture. Local culture does not dictate how family is accomplished but provides resources that may be used to interpret family life (e.g., interacting with other human-animal families at a dog park). Finally, deprivatization refers to how formal organizations and social institutions are increasingly influencing the interpretation of family life (e.g., legislating what legally constitutes family). Artful interpretative practice, conditions of interpretation, and deprivatization are the three theoretical components guiding the data analysis.

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Additionally, analytic bracketing is an interpretive practice data analysis technique which guides the researcher to bracket the whats (conditions of interpretation) and the hows (artful side of interpretive practice) separately (Gubrium and Holstein 1997). For instance, *how* members talk about their human-animal relationships were bracketed separately from *what* conditions (e.g., culturally, organizationally, structurally) are available for members to organize their family identity in whatever ways they do.

The first stage of analysis was conducted on each interview transcript. As previously mentioned, there were a total of 804 pages of transcriptions. This means that each interview was 25 pages on average. Each interview was coded separately at first. During this process, each interview was coded line-by-line. Each line was highlighted a certain color based on the content. There were six total thematic topics participants were interviewed on: becoming a family member (see interview questions 1-4), power and influence (see interview question 5), nature of relationship (see interview question 6), activities and time spent together (see interview question 7), carework (see interview question 8), and emotions (see interview question 9). After all text was highlighted based on the category, stage one was complete.

The second stage of the qualitative data analysis included placing each coded category into its own Microsoft Word document. So all content coded as "becoming a family member" and "nature of relationship" from each interview transcript were placed into their own respective documents. This was completed for all categories but as previously mentioned, the only two that went through the next stage were "becoming a family member" and "nature of relationship." Once these new documents based on theme were created "initial coding" began (Charmaz 2006).

These transcripts were coded line-by-line again but were coded using "in vivo codes." These codes bring to life what was going on in each sentence in a concise way (Charmaz 2006: 55).

After initial coding was completed, focused coding began. According to Charmaz (2006: 57) these codes are more directed, selective, and conceptual than word-by-word, line-by-line, and incident-by-incident." The line-by-line initial in vivo codes allowed me to move on to the next stage of focused coding. I could sift through larger chunks of data and assign them with a broader code. In "becoming a family member," the focused codes ended up becoming categories to understand how pets become family members through narrative: time-related narratives, timeless narratives, and patchwork narratives. The same process was conducted with the parenting, or "nature of relationship" document. The focused codes eventually turned into the categories for the parenting chapter too. In the pet parenting narratives of childless participants they were: teaching and training cats and dogs to behave in public and with others, training and practicing for potential future human children, and constructing family with traditional parenting language. Pet parenting narratives by parents of young human children included talk of difference. Parents of adult human children narrate parenting by comparing parenting kids and pets, but they emphasize similarities.

The "becoming a family member" theme was analyzed as the opening "how" category. In order to later determine the "what" or the conditions shaping the narratives, it was necessary to see how people started their narratives. This category provided the groundwork for all future analyses. For instance, were they narrated in the same way a sibling is narrated? Were they narrated as a daughter? This is the artful side of interpretive practice. The parenting, or "nature of relationship" theme was analyzed second for a number of reasons. Parenting was part of the

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"what." Parenting is a "local culture" that people belong to and draw narrative resources from. Parenting was also statistically important at a significant level in a number of the quantitative analyses and I wanted to make sure the important relationships between the variables in the quantitative analysis guided the qualitative analyses. Also, the narrative resources available within the various local cultures these participants occupy really become clear when hearing parents of human children and childfree adults discuss the ways they parent (or don't) all of their young ones (human and nonhuman).

Summary

In sum, quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data provided me the ability to analyze the question of what it means for a pet to be a family member for different angles. The quantitative portion provided an overview of who counts pet as family in the United States. The findings from the quantitative analyses gave me an idea of where to start win the qualitative interviews. The groundwork set by the quantitative analysis was the big advantage to using this mixed-method design. The disadvantage to using secondary data is that I was unable to construct my own survey questions. For instance, the survey shows that almost half of people count pets as family but the survey did not ask them if they ever or currently live with a pet they consider family. Spending too much time in either area limits the amount of time available to dedicate to the other method. However, I do think this dissertation is strengthened by the use of both methods.

Reflexive Statement

My interest in analyzing how gender organizes and shapes all aspects of social life brought me to graduate school. I wanted to understand my own life and everything I witnessed throughout it. My curiosity started at home in my own family. I wondered why and how so many of the mothers and women I grew up around were not employed for pay while many of the fathers and men were. I wondered why I never witnessed my dad cook and clean. I wondered why my mom made dinner for the family every night, sometimes requesting me and sister to help but never my brother. I wanted to know why it seemed like men had so much power in families. Discussing these examples of how I saw gender performed growing up is all to say that my own family experiences led me to question constructions of *the* traditional family as what is "right" or "best."

My gender observations moved from the private to the public sphere once I became employed. I was observing familiar patterns, but in different forms. The owners and managers of all the businesses I worked for were predominately men. However, within these organizations the occupations I worked in were predominately held by women: hair stylist, secretary, hostess, administrative assistant, waitress, and retail worker. Oddly, I even worked at a turkey hunters auction where I was paid to showcase expensive guns and hunting memorabilia while pacing back and forth on an aisle so potential buyers could view the merchandise. During those moments, I felt what Adams (2004) refers to as the sexual politics of meat, although I didn't formally learn about these types of intersections of inequality until much later. The turkeys and I were not that different; we were being objectified, fragmented, and consumed at that auction. In sum, what remained the same across many of these life situations was that the social world was

different for men and women, but it wasn't talked about openly until I was enrolled in gender studies courses. These courses would provide context for my earlier and continuing observations and experiences about gender, family, and animals.

While my scholarly interests were rooted in gender studies, my dedication to understanding the cyclical process of how animals impact and are impacted by humans kept me moving forward in research. My first graduate gender studies course was in sociology and I was fortunate that my professor encouraged me to do my course research project on the sexual politics of meat. It was at this time I was introduced to the field of human-animal studies.

My dissertation, which of course is situated within the sociology of families and human-animal studies, stems from experiences and conversations I had during my master's thesis research. I investigated the feminized profession of veterinary medicine to understand how people who work with animals think about them and the people attached to them. I learned how complex and complicated the relationships between animal caretakers and animals are and the ways those dynamics influence veterinarians' work (see Owens 2015). At the start of my doctoral studies, Dr. Brian Powell gave an invited talk in the Department of Sociology at UCF. He spoke about his research from *Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definitions of Family*, which was awarded the American Sociological Association Section on Family's William J. Goode Book Award and the 2011 Otis Dudley Duncan Award. During this lecture, he mentioned how they added the question about whether people count pets as family because it had been brought up a number of times during their first survey a few years prior. My dissertation chair and I discussed this exciting prospect of analyzing those survey data surrounding the pets-

as-family question as a framework for digging deeper into the topic through qualitative research. When Dr. Powell accepted our request, the dissertation began shortly after.

As a self-identified vegan-feminist qualitative researcher, it is important for me to acknowledge that I selected this topic because I care deeply about supporting animals and families of choice. I also experience great enjoyment when listening to people tell personal stories about how their lives impact and are impacted by animals. I would like to see all families supported and embraced. Despite my enthusiasm for the topic, there were unexpected ways this qualitative research challenged me throughout this process. Two of the ways include: when my insider status of "pet-parent" was invisible and when I felt completely vulnerable in stranger's homes.

First, my insider status was invisible when I was at dog parks. At the time, I lived with two cats and could not take these cats with me to the dog park. Walking into a dog park without a dog feels stranger than it sounds. When people are at the dog park they are often watching their dogs very closely. They are making sure their dog is safe, entertained, and not getting into too much trouble. Based on my interviews with people who consider their dogs family, most people enjoy watching their dogs play with others and playing with their dogs their selves at the dog park. I am essentially interrupting their quality time by trying to initiate contact with them.

This lack of a dog companion made me an outsider. I grew up with dogs and consider dogs family but nobody knows my personal history. I eventually ended up only going to dog parks when a friend with a dog could go with me. I still found myself accounting for my lack of a dog though, as people quickly found out the dog wasn't mine. As I grew up with dogs, we

never took them to parks. I found myself pretty unfamiliar with dog park culture. People knew each other at some of the parks. Even when I could not tell if they knew each other or not, I frequently found myself second guessing when it was appropriate to approach and talk to people. Eye contact was not always possible as people were always incessantly watching their dog(s). These situations peaked my social anxiety. I am sure this impacted my data collection because people may have been more comfortable speaking with me if I had a dog with me and if I had a dog with me maybe I would not have acted awkward at times.

Second, there were a few times when I felt completely vulnerable in stranger's homes. Most of the time I felt safe, rapport was generally established quickly, and I mostly enjoyed the conversations. To be on the safe side, I always texted my mom and sister the address of the place I was going and texted them when I left. These precautionary texts did not impede the occasional explicitly stated comments that my gender was causing me to be in potential danger. The most overt conversation I had about the level of danger I was putting myself in was with an older man I approached at a dog park. A week or two after meeting we scheduled an interview. He e-mailed me his address and I drove to his house. Here is an excerpt from my field notes about the encounter:

> I turn right into Arthur's neighborhood. There is a gate but Arthur has already sent me the code in our last e-mail exchange. I pull into this gated community and notice immediately that the houses are incredibly large and beautiful. One house on my left toward the front of the neighborhood has its own entire tennis court that I can see on the left hand side of the house. The tennis court is a full court. It is huge but doesn't take up the entire yard of the house. I pull around the bend, I must be getting closer as my gps tells me 400 feet,

300 feet, 200 feet. I wonder about Arthur's profession. "What is it?" "Is he still working?" I did meet him at a dog park on a weekday around 11:00 A.M. I think to myself that he must be retired or is married to someone who is still working. "What is wife's or partner's profession?"

Arthur's one-story house is yellowish orange and has a massive front yard and a long drive way on the left side. One of the garage doors is open and I see a black truck parked inside. I think, "Is that Arthur's truck?" "Is anyone else home?" I can't quite put my finger on it but his presence makes me a little nervous. I remembered that when we met he didn't smile and appeared to be the opposite of light-hearted. He didn't seem mean, he was just different…When he invites me inside, his black Labrador-mix jumps on me. She is a puppy but really tall…The living room is in front of me and there is a sliding glass door to a porch with a pool in the back. Arthur asks if I want to do the interview outside. I agree that it is a good idea. We go to the porch and there are three comfortable-looking wicker furniture chairs with blue cushions, technically one is more of a couch. They are all placed around a white table. There are lamps on the left and right side of the couch. With all the rain, I wonder why there are lamps on the back porch and how they manage to keep them dry and working. There is a clean glass ashtray faced upside down with a red lighter sitting on top on the left table by the lamp. The newspaper is placed down next to the ashtray with the crossword puzzle filled in. I sit down on the farthest chair from the door and Arthur sits on the couch…Before I turn my audio recorder on for the interview, Arthur makes a few comments related to my safety. First, he informs me that he would never let his twenty year old daughter go to strangers' houses. He tells me how surprised

he is that I would engage in such an activity. He asks me whether I take any safety

precautions. I tell him that my family lives in the Orlando area and that I inform them

where I am going, the addresses of the houses I am located, how long I should be inside,

and when to expect a call from me. Arthur continues on with his questions about my

safety precautions. He asks me whether I carry mace or pepper spray. I am honestly

getting a little freaked out and although I don't have mace or pepper spray, I tell him that

I do. He must've sensed my worry because he tells me that I won't need them with him. I

laugh awkwardly and feel that this is so inappropriate. "Why is he being so patronizing?"

He is so much taller and bigger than me. He is not my parent or loved one. He would be

the potential threat if there was one. Him asking questions about how equipped I am to

handle an attack, makes me wonder whether I should be worried for my safety.

Thankfully, most of my interviews did not include overt discussions about whether I was

prepared for an attack like the conversation above, but I still could not shake the thought that

maybe it was true. Perhaps I should not be entering these homes and putting myself in danger. I

continued to enter stranger's homes for many months after my interview with Arthur but I don't

know if I would design a study in that way again. I am sure the undercurrent of shallow fear I

had while sitting in stranger's homes impacted the data process in ways I am unaware of. There

were definitely people I met at the dog park who I hoped would say they didn't want to be

interviewed. These were always men that didn't appear "safe" and I didn't want to go to their

home.

I am sure my gender, age, education, race and other identities creating my social location

combined with some of the unexpected feelings and experiences I had in the field influenced the

narratives told during my dissertation. However, I believe that complete objectivity is not always possible and desirable. The narrative interview accepts as a premise that all the data are constructions. Just like I influenced the data, the data influenced me. Sometimes the participants influenced me to share stories about my own experiences with pets as family. We were always co-collaborating.

Findings data are presented in the next three chapters. The first findings chapter is titled, "American Attitudes toward Pets-As-Family." This chapter utilizes the quantitative secondary survey data from the 2006 Constructing the Family Survey. It provides a broad overview of the socio-demographics associated with counting pets as family, with gender and marital status playing a pivotal role. The second and third findings chapters stem from the in-depth qualitative interview data I conducted with people who counted their own cats and dogs to be family members. The first qualitative chapter titled, "How Pets Become Family Members" establishes the "how" of interpretive practice. I show how cats and dogs become family by analyzing the main ways participants narrated when and how they knew their animals became their interspecies family members. Cats and dogs become family members through time-related narratives, timeless narratives, and patchwork narratives. Once the groundwork of *how* pets become family is established in Chapter Five, Chapter Six titled "Pet Parenting and Interspecies Family Form" is described. Chapter Six focused on the "what" of interpretive practice. In other words, parenting is a "local culture," a "narrative resource," or a "condition" in which people are able to narrate their family life from in varying degrees. Additionally, Chapter Six's emphasis on parenting builds off of Chapter Four's quantitative analyses which show the statistically significant relationships between parenting and counting pets as family. Chapter Four

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underscores that the childfree/childless count pets as family more than people with children.

Chapter Four also points out that the fewer children Americans have, the more likely they are to

count pets as family. All of the people in the qualitative study counted their cats and dogs as

family members, but Chapter Six investigates the role of being a human parent on identifying

and narrating family life as a "pet-parent." Childless participants narrate pet parenting differently

than parents of young human children. Parents of adult human children narrate pet parenting

different than both the childless and parents of young human children, although there are some

similarities they share with both groups.

CHAPTER FOUR: AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD PETS-AS-FAMILY

Before investigating the in-depth ways Americans narrate cats and dogs as family members through open-ended interviews in the second two findings chapters, the overarching relationships that exist among socio-demographic variables and holding the attitude that pets count as family members were uncovered. This first findings chapter provides a broad overview of the attitudes associated and predictive of counting pets as family.

Chapter Four describes univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses conducted to determine which participant, family, occupational, and identity characteristics are associated with attitudes toward counting pets as family. The data used in this study stem from a random sample of Americans who were surveyed by telephone for the 2006 "Constructing the Family Survey." The survey was led by Dr. Powell of Indiana University in conjunction with the Department of Sociology and the Institute of Social Research at Indiana University. I was given access to these data by Dr. Powell in 2014. Questions about how family is conceptualized were asked to this sample of Americans. According to Powell et al. (2010) only small differences between this data set, census data, and the General Social Survey existed. The present study also compared demographics from the "Constructing the Family Survey" with past research on the demographics of Americans residing with pets. New models emerged providing fresh ways of understanding family change, specifically as it relates to interspecies families. These models are described last.

The first step in conducting the secondary data analysis included univariate analyses on all of the relevant study variables, presented in Tables 2 through 12. These frequencies include

participant characteristics, family characteristics, occupational characteristics, and identity

characteristics for the sample of Americans surveyed (N=815). The dependent variable for all

analyses were responses to whether participants counted pets as family. Participants were not

asked whether they count their own companion animal as family or whether they reside with a

companion animal at all. Instead, the survey directly gets at attitudes toward counting pets as

family. The second step was conducting bivariate analyses between all independent variables and

the dependent variable, presented in Tables 13-20. The bivariate analyses included chi-square

tests between all categorical variables and the dependent variable. The bivariate analyses also

included correlation tests on all continuous variables and the dependent variable. The third step

was testing past research on pets-as family utilizing logistic regression, presented in Tables 21-

22. Fourth, a model based on broader family change variables over the past few decades was

tested to determine whether these data could provide a new theoretical model for predicting

attitudes toward counting companion animals as family members, presented in Table 23. Finally,

an interaction effect between counting pets as family and gender was found using logistic

regression and then extensively examined using chi-squares, presented in Tables 24-28.

<u>Demographic Characteristics</u>

Participant Characteristics

Participant characteristics include gender, year born/age, sexual orientation, race, and

ethnicity. As seen in Table 2, the sample of 815 participants consisted of 38.4 percent men and

61.6 percent women. The year participants were born ranged from 1913 to 1988, with a median

of 1957. In other words, in 2006 when these participants were interviewed, participants were

between the ages of 93 and 18, with a median age of 49. Most of the sample identified as

heterosexual (96.42%), but a small number of participants identified as gay or lesbian (1.36%),

bisexual (1.23%), or "something else" (0.99%). Race was coded as White/Caucasian (85.71%),

Black/African-American (8.77%), Native American (5.39%), Asian (1.88%), and Native

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (1.25%). Race percentages do not add up to 100% because participants

were asked to choose the race or races that best describe them. Approximately 96 percent of

participants fit entirely into one of the race categories. Participants were additionally able to

identify as Hispanic/Latino/or Spanish origin, with 3.58 percent doing so.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Gender, Age, Sexual Orientation, Race, and
Ethnicity Characteristics

Variable	Frequency or Mean	Percent	Max/Min
Gender ($n = 815$)			
Women	502	61.60%	
Men	313	38.40%	
Year Born (SD) ($n = 805$)	1956 (17.03)		1988/1913
Sexual Orientation ($n = 810$)			
Heterosexual	781	96.42%	
Gay or Lesbian	11	1.36%	
Bisexual	10	1.23%	
Something Else	8	0.99%	
Race ($n = 798$)			
White/Caucasian	684	85.71%	
Black/African=American	70	8.77%	
Native American	43	5.39%	
Asian	15	1.88%	
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	10	1.25%	
Hispanic/Latino ($n = 811$)	29	3.58%	

Note: Sample size varies due to missing cases.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Education, Marital Status, and Current Cohabitation Characteristics

Variable	Frequency or Mean	Percent
Education (*n* = 814)		
Less than High School	56	6.88%
High School Diploma/GED	190	23.34%
Some College but No Degree	171	21.01%
Associate's or other technical Degree	83	10.20%
Bachelor's Degree	189	23.22%
Master's Degree	98	12.04%
Doctorate Degree	27	3.32%
Marital Status (*n* = 811)		
Married	479	59.06%
Living with a Partner	37	4.56%
Widowed	78	9.62%
Separated	5	0.62%
Divorced	93	11.47%
Never Married	119	14.67%
Non-Marital Cohabiting (*n* = 811)		
Yes	37	4.56%
No	774	95.44%

Note: Sample size varies due to missing cases.

Participant characteristics also included educational attainment, marital status, and cohabitation, as presented in Table 3. The participants' highest level of education included less than high school (6.88%), high school diploma/GED (23.34%), some college but no degree (21.01%), Associate's degree, community college, or nursing degree (9.46%), Bachelor's degree (23.22%), Master's degree (12.04%), Medical, Law, or other doctorate degree (3.32%), and vocational/technical school (0.74%). A majority of the participants were married (59.06%), followed by 14.67 percent of participants having never married, 11.47 percent divorced, 9.62 percent are widowed, 4.56 percent live with a partner, and 0.62 percent are separated. More

participants are not currently cohabiting (95.44%) than those who are currently cohabiting (4.56%).

Family Characteristics

As seen in Table 4, family characteristics include household income, parental status, number of children, married more than once, cohabitation, and whether pets are considered family. The average household income was $71,078. The median household income was $60,000. The maximum household income was $500,000 and the minimum was $0. Most participants were parents (79.09%), whereas 20.91 percent were not parents. Participants had 2.17 children on average. The median number of children participants had was 2, with a maximum of 12 and a minimum of 0. About a quarter of all participants were married more than once (28.04%), whereas 71.96 percent were not married more than once. Over a third of participants lived with a partner without being married at some point in their life (34.49%), whereas 65.51 percent had not lived with a partner without being married. Participants were asked whether they count pets as family members. The variable initially included "yes, I consider pets family" (47.16%), "no, I do not consider pets family" (50.25%), and "whether I consider pets family depends" (2.59%)[3]. The "depends" category was not included in analyses. The variable was turned into a dichotomous variable using "yes, I consider pets family" (48.42%) and "no, I do not consider pets family" (51.58%). This variable was dummy coded, with counting

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[3] All descriptive statistics presented in this dissertation differ from descriptive statistics presented in Powell et al. (2010) *Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definitions of Family,* as the statistics presented here are unweighted unlike the statistics presented in the book. All analyses in the book were conducted with weighted and unweighted data but weighted data were reported. When very few slight differences between demographics emerged, they were documented in the Powell et al. book. In Powell et al.'s (2010) *Counted Out,* 51 percent of Americans are reported counting pets family. In the unweighted data presented in this dissertation, 48.42 percent of Americans consider pets as family.

pets as family as "1" and not counting pets as family as "0" for all bivariate and multivariate

analyses.

Family characteristics also included a number of partner/spouse demographics, as

presented in Table 5. Almost all of the married participants lived with their spouse (98.74%),

with just 1.26 percent living separate from their spouse. The spouses' highest level of education

varied including less than high school (3.93%), high school diploma/GED (34.97%), some

college but no degree (13.16%), Associate's degree, community college, or nursing degree

(8.06%), Bachelor's degree (22.40%), Master's degree (11.39%), Medical, Law, or other

doctorate degree (4.72%), and vocational/technical school (1.38%). The average year the spouses

were born was 1956. The median year the spouses were born was 1957. The maximum and

minimum years spouses were born were 1913 and 1984. In other words, the average spouse's

age in 2006 was 50. The youngest spouse was 22. The oldest spouse was 93, and the median

spouse age was 49.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Family Characteristics

Variable	Frequency or Mean	Percent	Max/Min
Household Income (SD) ($n = 624$)	$71,078 (61819.64)		$500,000/$0
Parent ($n = 813$)	643	79.09%	
Number of Children (SD) ($n = 813$)	2.17 (1.83)		12/0
Married More than Once ($n = 674$)	189	28.04%	
Cohabited with a Partner ($n = 777$)	268	34.49%	
Pets Count as Family ($n = 789$)	382	48.42%	

Note: Sample size varies due to missing cases.

Occupational Characteristics

Occupational characteristics include whether the participant is currently working for pay, the number of hours the participant worked per week, whether the spouse currently works for pay, the number of hours the spouse worked per week, and the income of the spouse compared the participant, presented in Tables 6 and 7. Most participants currently work for pay (66.13%), as opposed to 33.87 percent of participants who do not currently work for pay. Participants' hours worked per week varied from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 95, with an average of 41 hours.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Spouse/Partner Characteristics

Variable	Frequency or Mean	Percent	Max/Min
Living with Spouse ($n = 476$)	470	98.74%	
Spouse/Partner Education ($n = 509$)			
Less than High School	20	3.93%	
High School Diploma/GED	178	34.97%	
Some College but No Degree	67	13.16%	
Associate's or other technical Degree	48	9.43%	
Bachelor's Degree	114	22.40%	
Master's Degree	58	11.39%	
Doctorate Degree	24	4.72%	
Year Spouse/Partner Born (SD) ($n = 510$)	1956 (15.10)		1984/1913

Note: Sample size varies due to missing cases.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Occupational Characteristics

Variable	Frequency or Mean	Percent	Max/Min
Employed for Pay ($n = 812$)	537	66.13%	
Hours Work Per Week (SD) ($n = 532$)	41.05 (13.49)		95/0
Income Compared to Spouse ($n = 502$)			
Spouse has No Income	13	2.59%	
Spouse Income Much Higher	145	28.88%	
Spouse Income Somewhat Higher	81	16.14%	
Spouse Income About the Same	91	18.13%	
Spouse Income Somewhat Lower	65	12.95%	
Spouse Income Much Lower	107	21.31%	

Note: Sample size varies due to missing cases.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Spouse/Partner Occupational Characteristics

Variable	Frequency or Mean	Percent	Max/Min
Employed for Pay ($n = 514$)	357	69.46%	
Hours Work Per Week (SD) ($n = 351$)	44.03 (12.14)		95/0

Note: Sample size varies due to missing cases.

More spouses/partners are currently employed (69.46%) than not (30.54%). Participants report that spouses work more hours per week (44.02%) compared to themselves. Spouses are also reported as having much higher incomes than the participants (28.88%), followed by spouses with an income much lower (21.31%), an income about the same (18.13%), an income somewhat higher (16.14%), an income somewhat lower (12.95), and spouse has no income (2.59%).

Identity Characteristics

Identity characteristics include political, feminist, and religious identity. Political and feminist identity characteristics are shown in Table 8. Most participants stated that their political identity was in the middle of the road (43.13%), followed by slightly conservative (14.38%), moderately conservative (12.20%), extremely conservative (11.04%), slightly liberal (8.09%), moderately liberal (6.55%), and extremely liberal (4.62%). Over a quarter of participants identified as feminist (29.77%), compared to those who did not (70.23%).

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Political and Feminist Identity Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Political Identity ($n =$ 779)		
Extremely Liberal	36	4.62%
Moderately Liberal	51	6.55%
Slightly Liberal	63	8.09%
Middle of the Road	336	43.13%
Slightly Conservative	112	14.38%
Moderately Conservative	95	12.2%
Extremely Conservative	86	11.04%
Feminist ($n = 766$)	228	29.77%

Note: Sample size varies due to missing cases.

Four measures were used to capture religious identity. Religious identity measures include: type of religion, strength of religious beliefs, frequency of religious service attendance, and biblical attitudes. As presented in Table 9, the most common type of religion was Protestant (59.66%), followed by Catholic (18.70%), No Preference/Agnostic/Atheist (14.27%), Other (2.21%), Jewish (1.35%), Latter Day Saints/Mormon (0.98%), Muslim (0.62%), Eastern

(0.62%), Spiritual/Wiccan/Pagan/Existentialist (0.49%), Unitarian/Universalist (0.49%),

Orthodox (0.37%), and Quaker (0.25%).

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Religion

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Religion (*n* = 813)		
Protestant	485	59.66%
Catholic	152	18.70%
No Preference/Atheist/Agnostic	116	14.27%
Other	18	2.20%
Jewish	11	1.35%
Latter Day Saints/Mormon	8	.98%
Muslim	5	.62%
Eastern (Bahai, Hindu, Buddhist)	5	.62%
Spiritual/Wiccan/Pagan/Existentialist	4	.49%
Unitarian/Universalist	4	.49%
Orthodox (Greek, Syrian, Eastern)	3	.37%
Quaker	2	.25%

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Strength of Beliefs

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Strength of Beliefs (*n* = 799)		
Very Religious	151	18.9%
Moderately Religious	407	50.94%
Slightly Religious	155	19.40%
Not Religious At All	86	10.76%

As shown in Table 10, most participants rank their strength of beliefs as moderately religious (50.94%), followed by slightly religious (19.4%), and very religious (18.9%). A small group of participants (10.76%) are not religious at all.

Most participants attend religious services once a week (24.47%), followed by once a year or less (19.41%), a few times a year (16.81%), two to three times a month (14.83%), more than once a week (12.98%), once a month (5.69%), never attend (4.2%), and every day (1.61%). These statistics are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Religious Services Attendance

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Religious Services Attendance ($n = 809$)		
Every Day	13	1.61%
More than Once a Week	105	12.98%
Once a Week	198	24.47%
Two or Three Times a Month	120	14.83%
Once a Month	46	5.69%
A Few Times a Year	136	16.81%
Once a Year or Less	157	19.41%
Never Attend	34	4.20%

Finally, biblical interpretation attitudes were analyzed, with over half of participants (51.91%) stating that the bible is the inspired word of God, followed by actual word of God (32.18%), ancient book of fables (14.18%), unable to choose between answers (1.23%), and this question does not apply to me (0.49%). These findings are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Bible Attitudes

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Attitudes toward Bible ($n = 811$)		
Inspired Word of God	421	51.91%
Actual Word of God	261	32.18%
Ancient Book of Fables	115	14.18%
Can't Choose	10	1.23%
Does Not Apply to Me	4	.49%

Counting Pets as Family by Demographic Characteristics

Bivariate analyses were conducted to test the significance of association between counting pets as family and participant, family, occupational, and identity characteristics of the sample. Only the statistically significant relationships at the bivariate level are discussed below; all bivariate analyses results can be found in the Tables 13-20.

Counting Pets as Family by Participant Characteristics

Table 13 shows that counting pets as family varied across participant characteristics. Chi-square statistics were used to test the existence of the relationship between counting pets as family and participant characteristics. The null hypothesis that counting pets as family is independent of gender, race, educational attainment, and marital status was rejected. Counting pets as family is not independent of gender, race, educational attainment, and marital status. First, there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and counting pets as family ($\chi^2(1)=23.04$; $p<.001$), with women ($N = 269$, 55.12%) counting pets as family more than men ($N = 113$, 37.54%). Gender was dummy coded. Women were coded as "1" and men were coded

as "0." Second, there was a statistically significant relationship between race and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)=4.01$; $p<.05$), with Whites/Caucasians ($N = 314$, 47.08%) being less likely to count pets as family than all other racial identities including Black/African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders combined ($N = 61$, 57.55%). The race variable was dummy coded. White was coded as "1" and all other racial identities were coded as "0."

Table 13: Counting Pets as Family by Participant Characteristics

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Pets Don't Count as Family	$\chi2$	Φ
Gender			23.04***	.000
Women	55.12%	44.88%		
Men	37.54%	62.46%		
Sexual Orientation			2.37	.124
Straight	47.89%	52.11%		
Not Straight	62.96%	37.04%		
Race			4.01*	.045
White/Caucasian	47.08%	52.92%		
Not White	57.55%	42.45%		
Ethnicity			.29	.587
Hispanic/Latino	53.57%	46.43%		
Not Hispanic/Latino(a)	48.35%	51.65%		
Educational Attainment			9.22**	.002
Obtained Graduate Degree	35.59%	64.41%		
Not Obtained Graduate Degree	50.75%	49.25%		
Marital Status			8.75**	.003
Never Been Married	61.21%	38.79%		
Is/Has Been Married	46.34%	53.66%		
Currently Cohabiting			4.97*	.026
Yes	66.67%	33.33%		
No	47.66%	51.34%		

Note: *p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

As mentioned previously, there was also a third statistically significant relationship between educational attainment and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)$=9.22; p<.01), with people obtaining a "Master's degree" and "Doctorate degree" (*N* = 42, 35.59%) less likely to count pets as family than those with a "Bachelor's degree," "Associate's or other technical degree," "some college but no degree," "high school diploma/GED," and "less than high school degree" combined (*N* = 340, 50.75%). Educational attainment was dummy coded. Participants who had completed a master's degree or a doctoral degree were coded as "1" and everyone else was coded as "0."

Finally, there was a statistically significant relationship between marital status and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)$=8.75; p<.01), with never married participants (*N* = 71, 61.21%) counting pets as family more than participants who at some point in their life entered the institution of marriage (*N* = 310, 46.34%). Marital status was dummy coded. Never married participants were coded as "1" and everyone else was coded as "0." Statistically significant relationships also existed with cohabitation status located within the marital status variable. There was a statistically significant relationship between not being married but currently living with a partner and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)$=4.97; p<.05), with participants not married but currently living with a partner (*N* = 24, 66.67%) considering pets as family more than all other marital statuses (*N* = 357, 47.66%). Marital status also dummy coded a second time. For this analysis, participants who were currently living with a partner but not married were coded as "1" and all other marital statues were coded as "0."

Table 14: Correlation between Counting Pets as Family and Year Born

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Φ
Year Born	.28***	.000

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

The other type of bivariate analysis utilized between participant characteristics and whether pets are counted as family was a correlation test, presented in Table 14. The null hypothesis that counting pets as family is not related to participant's age was rejected. Counting pets as family is not independent of participant's age. Pearson's correlation test between year the participant was born (i.e., age) and believing pets count as family was statistically significant ($R=$ .28, p<.001). The effect was weak and positive. Younger people count pets as family more than older people.

Counting Pets as Family by Family Characteristics

Counting pets as family varied across family characteristics, as presented in Table 15. Chi-square statistics were used to test the existence of the relationship between counting pets as family and additional family characteristics. The null hypothesis that counting pets as family is independent of parental status, cohabitation, and spouse/partner education was rejected. Counting pets as family is not independent of parental status, cohabitation, and spouse/partner's education. First, there was a statistically significant relationship between parental status and counting pets as family ($\chi 2(1)=14.31$; p<.001), with parents ($N=279$, 44.93%) less likely to count pets as family than the childfree ($N = 102$, 61.45%). Parental status was dummy coded. Parents were coded as "1" and the childfree/childless were coded as "0." Second, there was a

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statistically significant relationship between whether a participant had ever cohabited without

being married and counting pets as family (χ2(1)=20.16; p<.001), with participants having

cohabited with a partner without being married ($N = 150$, 59.06%) counting pets as family more

than participants who had not ever lived with a partner without being married ($N = 208$, 41.77%).

Ever engaging in cohabitation without being married was dummy coded with cohabiting at some

point as "1" and never cohabiting at any point as "0." Third, there was a statistically significant

relationship between whether a spouse/partner completed graduate education and counting pets

as family (χ2(1)=8.38; p<.01), with spouses/partners without a graduate school degree ($N = 24$,

32%) counting pets as family more than spouses/partners with a graduate school degree ($N =$

210, 50.12%). Spouse/partner education was dummy coded, with spouse/partner completing

graduate school as "1" and everyone else as "0."

The other type of bivariate analysis run between family characteristics and whether pets

are counted as family was a correlation test. The results are presented in Table 16. The null

hypothesis that counting pets as family is not related to spouse/partner's age, household income,

and number of children was rejected. Counting pets as family is not independent of

spouse/partner's age, household income, and number of children. Pearson's correlation test

between year spouse/partner of the participant was born (i.e., age) and believing pets count as

family was statistically significant (R= .24, p<.001). The effect was weak and positive. Those

with younger spouses/partners count pets as family more than those with older spouses/partners.

Household income was correlated with counting pets as family (R= -.09, p<.05). The effect was

weak and negative. Participants with lower household incomes counted pets as family more than

participants with higher household incomes. Number of children was correlated with counting

pets as family (R= -17, p<.001). The effect was weak and negative. Participants with fewer

children counted pets as family more than participants with more children. Year spouse/partner

was born was correlated with counting pets as family (R= .24, p<.001), with younger

spouses/partners counting pets as family more.

Table 15: Counting Pets as Family by Family Characteristics

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Pets Don't Count as Family	χ2	Φ
Parental Status			14.31***	.000
Yes	44.93%	55.07%		
No	61.45%	38.55%		
Married More than Once			2.56	.109
Yes	50.56%	49.44%		
No	43.55%	56.45%		
Ever Cohabited			20.16***	.000
Yes	59.06%	40.94%		
No	41.77%	58.23%		
Living with Spouse			.039	.843
Yes	45.95%	54.05%		
No	50%	50%		
Spouse/Partner has Graduate Education			8.38**	.004
Yes	32%	68%		
No	50.12%	49.88%		

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 16: Correlations between Counting Pets as Family and Family Characteristics

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Φ
Household Income	-.09*	.027
Number of Children	-.17***	.000
Year Spouse/Partner Born	.24***	.000

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Counting Pets as Family by Occupational Characteristics

Counting pets as family varied across occupational characteristics. Chi-square statistics were used to test the existence of the relationship between counting pets as family and occupational characteristics, as presented in Table 17. The null hypothesis that counting pets as family is independent of currently working for pay, spouse currently employed, and income of spouse compared to self was rejected. Counting pets as family is not independent of these variables. First, there was a statistically significant relationship between participants currently working for pay and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)=10.88$; $p<.001$), with participants currently working for pay ($N=273$, 52.70%) counting pets as family more than participants not currently working for pay ($N=108$, 40.30%).

Second, there was a statistically significant relationship between having a spouse/partner currently employed and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)=13.56$; $p<.001$), with having a spouse/partner currently employed ($N=186$, 53.30%) counting pets as family more than participants whose spouses/partners are not currently employed ($N=53$, 35.33%). Third, there was a statistically significant relationship spouse/partner income compared to self ($\chi2(1)=21.01$; $p<.001$), with participants whose spouse/partner is earning a relatively higher income ($N=174$, 56.49%) counting pets as family more than participants whose spouse/partner earn relatively less ($N=63$, 35%).

Table 17: Counting Pets as Family by Occupational Characteristics

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Pets Don't Count as Family	χ2	Φ
Employed for Pay			10.88***	.001
Yes	52.70%	47.30%		
No	40.30%	59.70%		
Spouse/Partner Employed			13.56***	.000
Yes	53.30%	46.70%		
No	35.33%	64.67%		
Income Compared to Spouse/Partner			21.01***	.000
Same or Higher Income	56.49%	43.51%		
Less or No Income	35%	65%		

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 18 presents the correlation test between occupational characteristics and whether pets are counted as family. The null hypothesis that counting pets as family is not related to number of hours participants work per week and number of hours the spouse/partner of the participant works per week was rejected. Counting pets as family is not independent of number of hours participants work per week and number of hours spouse/partner of participant works per week. Pearson's correlation test between number of hours participant works per week and believing pets count as family was statistically significant (R= .-.10, p<.05). The effect was weak and negative. Participants who work more hours per week were less likely to count pets as family than participants who work less hours per week. Conversely, number of hours spouse/partner of participant works per week and believing pets count as family was also statistically significant (R= .15, p<.01), but had a weak positive effect. When the participants' spouse/partner works more hours per week, the participant counts pets as family more than participants whose spouses/partners work fewer hours per week.

Table 18: Correlations between Counting Pets as Family and Occupational Characteristics

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Φ
Hours Work Per Week	-.10*	.028
Hours Spouse/Partner Works Per Week	.15**	.007

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Counting Pets as Family by Identity Characteristics

Counting pets as family varied across identity characteristics, as shown in Tables 19-20. Chi-square statistics were used to test the existence of the relationship between counting pets as family and identity characteristics. The null hypothesis that counting pets as family is independent of feminist identity and two measures of religious identity was rejected. Counting pets as family is not independent of feminist identity, Christian identity, and religious identity.

Table 19 shows there was a statistically significant relationship between feminist identity and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)=4.21$; p<.05), with participants identifying as feminist ($N = 118$, 54.38%) more likely to count pets as family than participants who did not identify as feminist ($N = 243$, 46.11%).

There was also a statistically significant relationship between Christianity and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)=19.91$; p<.001). "Catholic" and "Protestant" were combined and coded as "1" and all other religions, including "no religion" were combined and recoded as "0," to generate a variable named "Christian." Christians ($N = 276$, 44.37%) were less likely to count pets as family than all other groups ($N = 106$, 63.86%). There was also a statistically significant relationship between not identifying with any religion and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)=11.01$;

p<.001), which was generated by combining all groups who identified with as "atheist," "agnostic," or "without religion" as "1" and participants identifying with a religion as "0." Participants with a religion ($N = 312$, 46.09%) were less likely to count pets as family than participants without a religion ($N = 70$, 63.06%).

Table 19: Counting Pets as Family by Identity Characteristics

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Pets Don't Count as Family	$\chi 2$	Φ
Feminist			4.21*	.040
Yes	54.38%	45.62%		
No	46.11%	53.89%		
Christian			19.91***	.000
Yes	44.37%	55.63%		
No	63.86%	36.14%		
Atheist			11.01***	.001
Yes	63.06%	36.94%		
No	46.09%	53.91%		

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Correlation tests were conducted to test the existence of the relationship between counting pets as family with political identity and two measures of religious identity (i.e., strength of religious beliefs and attendance of religious services). These results are presented in Table 20. The null hypothesis that counting pets as family is independent of political identity, strength of religious beliefs, and frequency of attending religious services was rejected. Counting pets as family is not independent of political identity, strength of religious beliefs, and frequency of attending religious services. Political identity was negatively correlated with counting pets as family (R= -.16, p<.001). Conservative participants were less likely to count pets as family than liberal participants. Strength of religious beliefs was correlated with counting pets as family ($R =$

-.15, p<.001). The effect was weak and negative, with very religious participants less likely to count pets as family than participants who were less religious. Attendance of religious services was correlated with counting pets as family (R = -.18, p<.001). The more participants attend religious services the less they count pets as family.

Table 20: Correlations between Counting Pets as Family and Identity Characteristics

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Φ
Political Identity	-.16***	.000
Strength of Religious Beliefs	-.15***	.000
Attendance of Religious Services	-.18***	.000

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Logistic Regression Models for Counting Pets as Family

Logistic regression analyses were conducted for two main reasons. First, variables identified in past research (see Marx et al. 1988 and AVMA 2007) on the demographic composition of families living with and without companion animals were tested to determine whether these same demographics could predict the Americans who do and do not count pets as family members. Living with animals and counting animals as family are not the same phenomenon. One could live with animals and not count them as family or not live with animals and count animals as family generally, and so on. Second, logistic regression was utilized to examine whether broader patterns of family change (cohabitation, child-freedom, etc.) in the 21st century predict counting or not counting pets as family.

Table 21: Logistic Regression Coefficients Predicting Whether Marx et al. (1998) Findings Predicting Counting Pets as Family

Variable	Count Pets as Family
Women	.82(.18)*** [2.27]
Currently Married	.11(.20) [1.17]
White	-.27(.27) [.76]
Year Born	.03(.01)*** [1.04]
High School Degree or Less	.43(.21)* [1.54]
Household Income	-3.76e-06(1.67e-06)* [.10]
Number of Children	-.10(.06) [.90]
Constant	-68.10
Model $\chi 2$	80.17***
Pseudo R^2	.10
N	593

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Note: Table includes unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Exp(B) is displayed in brackets

Marx et al.'s (1988) study aimed at understanding the demographic profile of pet owners compared to non-pet owners in the United States. A logistic regression model was estimated to assess the effects of those demographics on American attitudes toward counting pets as family. The results are presented in Table 21. The overall model was statistically significant, $\chi 2$=80.17, (p<.001), indicating that the set of independent variables including gender, marital status, race, age, education, household income, and number of children have an effect on attitudes toward counting pets as family. The odds for counting pets as family are 2.27 higher for women than men, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.001). The odds for counting pets as

family are 1.04 greater with every year of age decrease (or year born increase), controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.001). The odds for counting pets as family are 1.54 greater for Americans with a high school degree or less education than for Americans with some college or more, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.05). [4] The odds for counting pets as family are .10 lower with every one unit increase in household income, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.05).

The American Veterinary Medical Association's (2007) findings on the demographics of households with and without companion animals was also tested using logistic regression. A logistic regression model was estimated to assess the effects of those demographics on counting pets as family. The results are found in Table 22. The overall model was statistically significant, $\chi2=56.69$, (p<.001), indicating that marital status, race, ethnicity, age, household income, number of children, and self-employment as a set have an effect on attitudes toward counting pets as family. The odds for counting pets as family was 1.04 greater with every one year decrease in age (or one year increase in year born), controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.001). The odds for counting pets as family was .10 lower with every one unit increase in household income, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.01).

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[4] This education variable was dummy coded. Completing a high school degree and anyone completing less than a high school degree were coded as "1" and everyone else was coded as "0."

Table 22: Logistic Regression Coefficients Predicting if AVMA (2007) Findings Predict
Counting Pets as Family

Variable	Count Pets as Family
Currently Married	.07(.19) [1.07]
White	-.27(.26) [.77]
Hispanic/Latino	-.07(.48) [.94]
Year Born	.04(.01)*** [1.04]
Household Income	-.4.82e-06(1.68e-.06)** [.10]
Number of Children	-.07(.05) [.93]
Employed for Pay	-.10(.22) [.90]
Constant	-68.77
Model χ2	56.69***
Pseudo R^2	.07
N	592

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Note: Table includes unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Exp(B) is displayed in brackets

A third logistic regression model was estimated to test whether participants who fit

within larger family change trends (e.g., cohabiting, never married, childfree, nonreligious

families, feminist families) predict counting pets as family. The results are found in Table 22.

Model 1 in Table 23 includes all of the family change independent variables. Model 1 was

statistically significant, χ2=42.31, (p<.001), indicating that cohabitation, marital status, parental

status, feminist identity, and religious identity as a set have an effect on attitudes toward

counting pets as family. The odds of counting pets as family are 1.91 higher for Americans who

ever cohabited with a partner without being married than for Americans who have not ever

cohabited with a partner without being married, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.001). The odds of counting pets as family are 1.67 higher for the childfree than parents, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.05). [5] The odds of counting pets as family are 1.73 higher for atheists than all other religious identities, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.05).

Model 2 includes all of the family change independent variables, in addition to the control variables. The results are presented in Table 23. Model 2 was statistically significant $\chi 2$=71.60, (p<.001), indicating that cohabitation, marital status, parental status, feminist identity, religious identity, gender, race, age, and household income as a set have an effect on attitudes toward counting pets as family. The odds of counting pets as family are 2.50 higher for atheists than all other religious identities, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.01). The odds of counting pets as family are 2.29 higher for women than men, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.001). The odds of counting pets as family are 1.03 higher with every one year increase in year born (or decrease in age), controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.001). The odds of counting pets as family are .10 lower with every one unit increase in household income, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.05).

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[5] This variable was dummy coded with having no children coded as "1" and having children coded as "0."

Table 23: Logistic Regression Coefficients Predicting Whether Broader Patterns of Family Change Predict Counting Pets as Family

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Ever Cohabited	.65(.17)*** [1.91]	.19(.20) [.83]
Never Married	.18(.28) [1.20]	-.11(.33) [.89]
Childfree	.51(.25)* [1.67]	.37(.29) [1.45]
Feminist	.27(.17) [1.31]	.19(.21) [1.21]
Atheist	.55(.24)* [1.73]	.92(.30)** [2.50]
Woman		.83(.20)*** [2.29]
White		-.20(.30) [.82]
Year Born (Age)		.03(.01)*** [1.03]
Household Income		-4.12e-06(1.36e-06)* [.10]
Constant	-.58	-56.41
Model χ2	42.31***	71.60***
Pseudo R^2	.04	.10
N	703	538

Note: *p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table includes unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Exp(B) is displayed in brackets

Moderating the Relationship between Gender and Counting Pets as Family

In this section, logistic regression and chi-squares were utilized to examine the

relationship between gender and counting pets as family. Four models are presented in Table 24.

The first model shows the independent variables impact on the dependent variable, without any

control variables. The second model shows the independent variables impact on the dependent variable, with control variables. The third model shows the independent variables impact on the dependent variable, without the control variables, but with a moderator. The fourth model shows the independent variables impact on the dependent variable, with the moderator and the control variables.

A logistic regression analysis was conducted to predict counting pets as family using gender and marital status as predictors, as Model 1 shows in Table 24. Consistent with the rest of the bivariate and multivariate analyses conducted, counting pets as family was dummy coded as "yes=1" and "no=0." Gender was dummy coded as "man=1" and "woman=0." Marital status is dummy coded as "Is currently or has been married=1" and "never married=0." A test of the full model against a constant only model was statistically significant, indicating that the predictors, as a set, reliably distinguished between attitudes counting or not counting pets as family members ($\chi2=36.18$, p<.001). The odds of counting pets as family are .45 lower for men than women, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.001). The odds of counting pets as family are .47 lower for people who have at some point or another entered into marriage than never married people, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.001).

A second logistic regression analysis was conducted to predict counting pets as family using gender and marital status as predictors, and race, age, and number of children as control variables as Model 2 shows in Table 24. Race is dummy coded as "White=1" and "Black/African-American, Native American, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander =0." Number of children is a continuous variable. Model 2 was statistically significant ($\chi2=98.48$, p<.001). The odds of counting pets as family are .41 lower for men than women, controlling for

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all other variables in the model (p<.001). The odds of counting pets as family are 1.03 higher for

every one year born increase (i.e., or one year age decrease), controlling for all other variables in

the model (p<.001). The odds of counting pets as family are .90 lower for every one child

increase, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.05).

Table 24: The Moderating Effect of Marriage on the Relationship between Gender and Counting Pets as Family

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Men	-.79(.15)*** [.45]	-.89(.16)*** [.41]	.04(.38) [1.04]	-.16(.41) [.85]
Is/ Has Been Married	-.75(.21)*** [.47]	-.06(.25) [.95]	-.25(.29) [.78]	.39(.33) [1.47]
Men X Currently or Has Been Married			-.99(.42)* [.37]	-.87(.44)* [.42]
White		-.26(.22) [.77]		-.27(.23) [.76]
Year Born (Age)		.03(.01)*** [1.03]		.03(.01)*** [1.03]
Number of Children		-.11(.05)* [.90]		-.11(.05)* [.90]
Constant	.88	-63.03	.44	4.56e-28
Model χ2	36.18***	98.48***	41.80***	102.25***
Pseudo R^2	.03	.09	.04	.10
N	785	760	785	760

Note: *p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 23 includes unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Exp(B) is displayed in brackets.

A third logistic regression analysis was conducted to predict counting pets as family

using gender and marital status as predictors, and gender multiplied by marital status as a

moderating variable, as Model 3 shows in Table 24. The moderator variable included men who

are or had been married coded as "1." Never married men and women in all marital statuses were coded as "0" in the moderator variable. Model 3 was statistically significant ($\chi 2$=41.80, p<.001). The interaction term "gender x currently or has been married" made gender and marital status no longer statistically significant. The interaction term is statistically significant (p<.05), although gender and marital status are not. This means that marital status moderates the relationship between gender and counting pets as family. In other words, the effect of identifying as a man on counting pets as family is different depending on whether the man has been or is married compared to men who never have been married. Never married men and women from all marital statuses count pets as family. Men who are or have been married do not count pets as family as much as all other groups.

A fourth logistic regression analysis was conducted to predict counting pets as family using gender and marital status as predictors, gender x marital status as a moderating variable, and race, age, and number of children as control variables as Model 4 shows in Table 24. Model 4 was statistically significant ($\chi 2$=102.25, p<.001). The odds of counting pets as family are 1.03 higher for every one year born increase (i.e., or one year age decrease), controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.001). The odds of counting pets as family are .90 lower for every one child increase, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.05). The interaction term is statistically significant, controlling for all other variables in the model (p<.05). The effect of identifying as a man on counting pets as family is different depending on whether the man has or is married or not. Never married men count pets as family more than men who are or have been married. Men who are or have been married do not count pets as family as much.

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The interaction between marital status and gender showed that married men were less likely to count pets as family than all other groups. In order to investigate differences among men further, chi-square statistics were used to test the existence of the relationship between counting pets as family with men's marital and parental status, as presented in Table 25. The null hypothesis that counting pets as family is independent of men's marital and parental statuses was rejected. There was a statistically significant relationship between married men's parental status and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)$=42.98; p<.001), with married men without kids (55.44%) counting pets as family more than married men with kids (29.05%).

Table 25: Differences in Counting Pets as Family by Men's Marital and Parental Status

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Pets Don't Count as Family	$\chi2$	Φ
Married Men[6] with Kids			42.98***	.000
($n = 789$)				
Yes	29.05%	70.95%		
No	55.44%	44.56%		
Never Married Men with Kids			2.95	.086
($n = 789$)				
Yes	83.33%	16.67%		
No	48.15%	51.85%		

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 26 shows the null hypothesis that counting pets as family is independent of men's marital and employment statuses was rejected. Counting pets as family is not independent of men's marital and employment statuses. There was a statistically significant relationship between married men's employment status and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)$=17.51; p<.001), with

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[6] When describing or presenting information in Tables 24-27, "married" men refer to men who either are currently or have been married at some point in their lives. It is abbreviated as married to make the table cleaner and easier to interpret.

unemployed married men (52.24%) counting pets as family more than employed married men (33.94%). There was also a statistically significant relationship between never married men's employment status and counting pets as family ($\chi 2(1)=4.16$; $p<.05$), with employed never married men (62.50%) counting pets as family more than employed married men (47.50%). There was also a statistically significant relationship between the amount of hours married men worked and counting pets as family ($\chi 2(1)=36.15$; $p<.001$), with married men working fewer than 20 hours per week (55.28%) counting pets as family more than married men working over 20 hours per week (31.74%). There was also a statistically significant relationship between the amount of hours never married men worked and counting pets as family ($\chi 2(1)=4.67$; $p<.05$), with never married men working more than 20 hours per week (62.07%) counting pets as family more than never married men working fewer than 20 hours per week (47.33%). Additionally, a statistically significant relationship existed between larger amounts of hours worked by married men and counting pets as family ($\chi 2(1)=25.98$; $p<.001$), with married men working more than 40 hours per week (31.43%) less likely to count pets as family than married men working less than 40 hours per week (53.26%).

Table 26: Differences in Counting Pets as Family by Men's Marital and Employment Statuses

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Pets Don't Count as Family	$\chi 2$	Φ
Employed Married Men			17.51***	.000
(*n* = 789)				
Yes	33.94%	66.06%		
No	52.24%	47.76%		
Employed Never Married Men			4.16*	.044
(*n* = 789)				
Yes	62.50%	37.50%		
No	47.50%	52.50%		
Married Men Working 20 Hours Per Week or More			36.15***	.000
(*n* = 789)				
Yes	31.74%	68.26%		
No	55.28%	44.72%		
Never Married Men Working 20 Hours Per Week or More			4.67*	.031
(*n* = 789)				
Yes	62.07%	37.93%		
No	47.33%	52.67%		
Married Men Working 40 Hours Per Week or More			25.98***	.000
(*n* = 789)				
Yes	31.43%	68.57%		
No	53.26%	46.74%		
Never Married Men Working 40 Hours Per Week or More			.55	.458
(*n* = 789)				
Yes	55.17%	44.83%		
No	48.16%	51.84%		

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 27 shows the null hypothesis that counting pets as family is independent of married men's spouses' employment statuses was rejected. Counting pets as family is not independent of married men's spouses' employment statuses. There was a statistically significant relationship between married men's spouses' employment status and counting pets as family ($\chi 2(1)$=38.74;

p<.001), with men whose spouse works at all (31.67%) less likely to count pets as family than married men whose spouse does not work (55.74%). There was also a statistically significant relationship between hours married men's spouses work per week and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)=29.96$; p<.001), with men whose spouse works over 20 hours per week (33.19%) being less likely to count pets as family than married men whose spouse does not work over 20 hours per week (54.64%). Similarly, there was another statistically significant relationship between hours spouses of married men work per week and counting pets as family ($\chi2(1)=31.20$; p<.001), with men whose spouse works over 40 hours per week (29.09%) less likely to count pets as family than married men whose spouse does not work over 40 hours per week (55.53%).

Table 27: Differences in Counting Pets as Family by Married Men's Spouses' Employment Statuses

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Pets Don't Count as Family	$\chi2$	Φ
Married Men Whose Spouse Works At All (*n* = 789)			38.74***	.000
Yes	31.67%	68.33%		
No	55.74%	44.26%		
Married Men Whose Spouse Works More than 20 Hours Per Week (*n* = 789)			29.96***	.000
Yes	33.19%	66.81%		
No	54.64%	45.36%		
Men Whose Spouse Works More than 40 Hours Per Week (*n* = 789)			31.20***	.000
Yes	29.09%	70.91%		
No	55.53%	46.47%		

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Although race was significant in almost every other bivariate test, there were no racial differences between married men and counting pets as family, indicating that not counting pets as family transcends race for married men. Results are presented in Table 28.

Table 28: Differences in Counting Pets as Family by Men's Marital Status and Racial Identity

Variable	Pets Count as Family	Pets Don't Count as Family	$\chi2$	Φ
Non-White Married Men			1.45	.229
($n = 789$)				
Yes	37.04%	62.95%		
No	48.82%	51.18%		
Non-White Never Married Men			1.03	.309
Yes	63.64%	36.36%		
No	48.20%	51.80%		

*p <.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of American attitudes toward counting pets as family using Powell et al.'s (2010) 2006 data from "Constructing the Family Survey." First, frequencies for participant, family, occupational, and identity characteristics were reported. Second, chi-square associations and correlations between participant, family, occupational, and identity characteristics and counting pets as family were reported. Third, past research (see Marx et al. 1988 and AVMA 2007) showing the composition of families living with and without companion animals were tested with "Constructing the Family" data. Fourth, demographics representing broader patterns of family change were tested with "Constructing the Family" data. This model was statistically significant before and after controlling for other social demographics known for being associated with counting pets as family. Fifth, a moderator of the relationship between

gender and counting pets as family was found. Statistically significant logistic regressions were tested with the moderator. Dimensions of the moderator were examined and reported using chi-square analyses.

Statistically significant associations between counting pets as family and gender, race, educational attainment, marital status, parental status, cohabitation, spouse/partner education level, employed for pay, spouse/partner employed, income of self compared to spouse/partner, feminist identity, Christian identity, Atheist identity existed. Women, Non-Whites, not obtaining a graduate degree, never having been married, not having children, cohabited at some point in life, spouse/partner having less than a graduate education, being employed for pay, having a spouse/partner employed for pay, having the same or higher income from spouse/partner, identifying as feminist, not identifying as Christian, and identifying as Atheist were all associated with counting pets as family.

Statistically significant correlations between counting pets as family and year born, household income, number of children, year spouse/partner was born, number of hours participant works per week, and number of hours spouse/partner works per week, political identity, strength of religious beliefs, and attendance of religious services were reported. Being younger was correlated with counting pets as family. Lower household incomes were correlated with counting pets as family. Having fewer children was correlated with counting pets as family. Younger spouses/partners were correlated with counting pets as family. Participants working fewer hours per week was correlated with counting pets as family. Spouses/partners of participant working more hours per week was correlated with counting pets as family.

Identifying as more politically liberal, identifying less strength of religious beliefs, and attending fewer religious services were correlated with counting pets as family.

Marx et al. (1988) and the AVMA (2007) showed the composition of families living with and without companion animals. "Constructing the Family" data were analyzed to test whether the demographics identified in the past would predict counting pets as family. Both logistic regression models were supported and found statistically significant at the .001 level.

Broader patterns of family change were tested with "Constructing the Family" data. These variables representing broader family patterns include cohabitation, never been married, being childless/childfree, identifying as feminist, and identifying as Atheist. These logistic regression models were statistically significant before and after controlling for other social demographics known for being associated with counting pets as family at the .001 level.

Gender is one of the strongest associations with counting pets as family. However, marital status moderates this relationship at a statically significant level. Never married men count pets as family more than men who are currently or have been married. Chi-squares were conducted to explore this interaction further leading to further insights about the complex relationship marital status and men have with counting pets as family. Married men with kids were associated with counting pets as family less than all other groups. Married employed men were less likely to be associated with counting pets as family than all other groups. Employed never married men were associated with counting pets as family more than all other groups. Married men working twenty hours or more per week were less likely to be associated with counting pets as family than all other groups. Never married men working twenty hours per week

or more were more likely to be associated with counting pets as family than all other groups. Married men working forty hours per week or more were less likely to be associated with counting pets as family than all other groups. Men whose spouse works at all were less likely to be associated with counting pets as family than all other groups. Men whose spouse works more than twenty hours per week were less likely to be associated with counting pets as family than all other groups. Finally, men whose spouse works more than forty hours per week were less likely to be associated with counting pets as family than all other groups.

These findings paint a more complete picture of how interspecies families have emerged as a major family trend in the 21st century. They also show more nuance in the relationship people have with the animals sharing their lives. Although almost half of Americans count their pets as family, slightly over half do not. Learning more about these relationships inform the sociological literature on family trends and human-animal interactions. In the next few chapters, in-depth qualitative interview data shed light on these quantitative findings in greater detail.

CHAPTER FIVE: HOW PETS BECOME FAMILY MEMBERS

Chapter 4 showed American attitudes toward counting pets as family. Those secondary data demonstrated that attitudes toward pets-as-family vary by a range of socio-demographic factors. The second half of this dissertation includes analyses of qualitative interview data with people living in interspecies families. All 39 participants interviewed considered their cats and dogs to be members of their family. All participants were asked when their pet became family and how they realized their cat or dog was a family member. Almost all the participants interviewed responded to the question highlighting the process of how their pets became family. However, a few respondents did not address the question asked. These responses are excluded from the analysis. Thirty-two narratives were analyzed for this chapter.

In Chapter 5, interview data were analyzed to show *how* people narrate the process of cats and dogs becoming family members. Before analyzing the conditions in which this type of interspecies family narrative is made possible, this chapter establishes the artful creative ways this is accomplished. These findings show the main ways cats and dogs become part of the interspecies family narrative. Although time is evoked in some way during all semi-structured interviews, only one type of pets-becoming-family narratives frames the process exclusively using time-related wording. Therefore, the three main subthemes included in the pets-becoming-family theme are (1) time-related narratives, (2) timeless narratives, and (3) patchwork narratives. The process of narrating the inclusion of new animal family members are detailed below. These stories resemble other narratives of family integration, particularly narratives of how members of families of choice form.

<center>Time-Related Narratives</center>

As previously mentioned, participants were asked when their cat or dog became a family member and how they realized this change had occurred. The first way pets become family in interspecies family narratives is through the use of time. Participants discussed chronological time in their pets-becoming-family narratives. The immediate family narratives and gradual family narratives became the first sub-theme due to this pattern. Twelve narratives of pets becoming family were time-related. Both time-related strategies are detailed. First, the immediate family member is discussed. Second, the gradual family member is discussed.

<center>*Immediate Family*</center>

Immediate family narratives emerged when participants explained that their cat or dog became a family member "immediately," "instantly," "always" or "right away." Examples demonstrating each of the narratives fitting the immediate-family process are included.

As the sub-theme suggests, some participants claimed their animals became a family member immediately. Scarlet, a 31 year old hair stylist purchased her Boston terrier while on vacation in Georgia with her ex-boyfriend's family. When asked when she knew the dog Bella had become a family member she claimed, "She was my baby immediately, my child, like as soon as I got back in town my sister immediately came over to see my new little puppy." Scarlet not only described her dog as an immediate family member but also included another family member in the story. As stories are told, what the storyteller elevates and how details from the past are pieced together shed light on what is important. Through Scarlet's narrative we learned that her sister is an important character. Scarlet's sister serves to underscore how important the

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adoption of Bella was in this interspecies narrative, given that her sister "came over" "as soon as I got back in town."

The second way immediate family narratives were identified were through describing the process of pet-becoming-family as instant. Javier and Isabel are restaurant servers cohabiting with their newborn baby in their mid-twenties. When asked when and how they realized their dog Buddy became a family member a conversation ensued. Their story was completely congruent with one another:

> (Javier): We just took him in right away. (Isabel): He was so little. (Javier): Yeah. (Isabel): We had to take care of him like a baby. (Javier): Yeah. He was awful for eight weeks. (Isabel): Yeah. (Javier): He was very tiny. You could fit him in your palm. (Interviewer): Really? (Javier): He slept in something like a shoe box. He needed to be nourished and I think we just naturally were just instantly attached to him. (Isabel): Yeah. (Javier): We both, we felt like we had a baby. (Isabel): All love kind of takes getting to knowing each other but it's kind of like we chose to do this. (Javier): Yeah. (Isabel): Do you know what I mean? I don't know, I guess I'm like that with all the animals that are sick. You have to love them. (Javier): As soon as we took him out of his environment he kind of went like a week where he was a little depressed, wasn't super eager towards us or anything. We just kind of showered him with love and affection. (Isabel): Yeah. (Javier): It just makes him warm towards us. (Isabel): He was spoiled. [Chuckles]. (Javier): Yeah, he was spoiled. He came around in the end. I would say it was pretty instant. (Isabel): Yeah. (Javier): As soon as we had him. (Isabel): Probably overnight. (Javier): Yeah, he was part of the family.

Similar to the way Scarlet described her dog as becoming a family "immediately," this couple described their dog becoming family as "instant" or "overnight."

The third way the immediate family member narrative emerged was by discussing the cat or dog as "always" being a family member. Dara, a 29 year old restaurant manager discussed her narrative of how animals become family pretty intricately. First, she talks about her two cats who currently live with her: "Yeah, they've always been family to me. I am such an animal lover that any animal who comes into my house, even if I rescue them, they're part of my family." At this point, I asked Dara to elaborate on how the rescues become family members:

> If I see a stray animal, or not even a stray, but an animal that got lost and doesn't have its home - it has tags on it - I try to catch it, and find the owner and contact them. This happened on many incidents. I try to keep it or I try to ask around with my friends and family, and ask for a good home, someone that I can trust and know that they'll go to a good home if I can't keep them. Yeah, they're like little adopted children. I'm adopted, so I just consider them like part of my family too. They're still a part of my life. I love all the animals. They're still a part of my family, but they don't stay with me.

Dara explained this process by tying in her own identity as someone who was adopted with feeling like many of her rescue animals are her adopted family members. In this example, the process does truly seem quick as she claimed to have found the original homes of many of the animals she finds. They do not all ultimately live with her.

A fourth way an immediate family narrative was identified was through describing the process as occurring "right away." Noah, a married 29 year old marketing strategist, with two cat

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family members was also asked when and how he realized the cats became family members. He stated, "Yeah, pretty much as soon as they get in the house, they're family. Pretty much right away. I don't think there is a specific time that I can think of." In this narrative there is not a specific story that comes to mind other than the realization that once the animal is inside the designated home, he or she is automatically family.

<div align="center">*Gradual Family*</div>

Gradual family narratives emerged when participants discussed the gradual process of their cat of dog becoming family. Although this happened at different rates for people, it was not "immediate" like those described above. The process took a little more time for various reasons. When expressed as gradual, participants' narratives included phrases like, "developed over time," "comes as it goes," "happens slowly," and "it takes time."

The first type of gradual family narrative included participants describing the process of a cat or dog becoming a family member as something that developed over time. When Cesar, a 24 year old gardener, was asked how and when he realized his pit bull became a family member he stated:

> It developed over time…In the short time I've had her we've been through a lot. It's been a difficult year. I can say that for sure. It's been one of my most difficult years. She's one thing that I can be 150% sure that I did the right thing, in 2014.

Cesar's neighbor bred pit bulls and was consistently trying to sell him one of the dogs for a high price. Cesar connected with one of the dogs and eventually purchased her from the neighbor. Shortly after, all the neighbor's dogs died from parvo. Cesar's dog was diagnosed with parvo too

but survived. This process was incredibly difficult and wasn't the only obstacle in his life at the time:

> The first time I heard mentioned the word Parvo I was just like, "Whatever." I remember I was going to get Stella her first round of shots. That was $76. I was going to get paid. We get paid per weekly periods. I was like, "I don't have the money." So, I need to get the cash because I couldn't wait to get the shots anymore. It was a very interesting day too because I got hit by a car that day.

The work involved with caring for a dog with parvo is outside of the scope for this particular theme but is mentioned because Cesar intertwined and referred to the difficulties experienced when narrating how Stella became his family member over time. Much of the time involved consisted of Cesar caring for a dog thought to die of a very deadly, and excruciating virus.

Another way the gradual family member narrative emerged was "it comes and goes." Gabriel, a 28 year old working in park and recreation management, answered the question by explaining how complicated or messy the process can be. While he definitely considered his dog family, he described the back-and-forth that goes on when his dog was becoming family:

> I think it's kind of hard because it kind of comes and goes. I think that attachment is definitely there. It is the same thing in a relationship. You have that kind of puppy love, so to speak. But, you start to grow and grow after you really get to know that person or get to know that animal and with him, it was like, "Oh, I really love this dog, but there is another accident on my floor." This is going on. "Why is he misbehaving?" I'm second guessing this and then you're like, "Okay, well, is this really [gives a defeated facial

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expression]?" It's the same thing with parenting. It's great to have a kid, but then you

realize all the responsibility that comes with it and it's the same with him. So it was kind

of a learning curve at first, having to take care of something besides yourself. So I think

as far as being family, I think it came relatively quickly because once you see this dog is

depending on you, then, yeah, this is family because you have to take care of it. You care

for its well-being. If he gets fleas, most likely it's your fault because you didn't get him

the right medication or you forgot to get him the medication, or you let him roll around in

the grass all day, stuff like that. But yeah, I think it relatively came kind of naturally that

when you knew that you picked him out, this is your family. You're going to have this

dog and it's not like you can just go and get rid of him if you felt it's not right.

Gabriel's narrative resembles Cesar's because they both describe how the dog became family as a gradual process and hinted at some of the struggles that occur.

The third way the gradual family member narrative was showcased was by discussing the process as one that develops slowly. Rose, a 63 year old married homemaker, has a very strong relationship with her rescued West Highland White Terrier, Shelby. According to Rose, the tight-knit bond observed during the interview was one that was not immediate, "Because you're busier and probably it happens slowly, that it's not even noticeable. Because when they're [her adult son] little, your kids take up all your time. You're watching them really carefully. As they get older and drift away, maybe you start paying the dog more attention. Maybe it's just something that happens. I think it does because they're the ones sitting at home with you every night, not your kids."

The last way the gradual family member was found was when the narrative included language such as "it takes time." As Taylor, a 28 year old married social worker, states verbatim, "It takes time." When asked to elaborate on the process of how her two dogs became family Taylor gives more detail:

> Rocco was a puppy so I think puppies attach to you very quickly, but he wasn't so crazy about Elliot [husband]. So it was not immediate. It probably took them five or six months. He's weird in that, until he really liked Elliot and knew Elliot. So, no for him it probably took a month or two. I knew I loved him and he's very cute and I was dedicated to the relationship, but he kind of at first he was scoping Bruno [older dog] out. He would just stare at him and just like watch him. It was so weird. I was like, "It looks like you're hunting him like a lion hunting a gazelle or something." And he would just watch him…At first I was like, "Who is this devil dog? This is not the dog I thought I met."

In relation to this story, Taylor also discussed how it was critical that they reverse which dog is the dominant one and once this occurred the situation fixed. However, similar to the other gradual family member narratives, it is a longer process with a few bumps in the road.

<u>Timeless Narratives</u>

In contrast to time-related narratives, timeless narratives include strategies which were not easily quantified. They are not told in terms of moments, days, weeks, months, and so on. Instead, they are told in terms of personality, temperament, closeness, connection, and attraction. Twelve participants told timeless narratives to discuss how their cats and dogs became family members.

Personality & Temperament

When participants discussed how their cat or dog became family in terms of personality and temperament, they referred to the personality of the cat or dog. At other times, this strategy is activated to discuss the fit between their own personality with the personality of the cat or dog. Anton, a 31 year old aspiring film maker, included many different people and species in his family including cats, dogs, turtles, birds, and fish. However, most of our conversation focused on his close relationship with an orange cat named Chester. When asked how Chester became family he explained, "I mean, it was pretty obvious that he was becoming, he was going to be the next part of our family." Anton was asked to elaborate on what made it obvious to him. He replied by elaborating on Chester's "friendly" and "charming" personality:

> We just loved him. It was obvious to me because he was such a friendly cat. He has cat-dog characteristics. He has a little bit of the dog thing where he'll greet you at the door. He brings calmness around the house when he's sleeping. I don't know. Some of it is hard to put into words. You just love something. I mean, he's usually the first thing I give attention to when I come home from work because he brings an immense amount of joy. Giving him attention, and when he comes up and sits on your lap and wants you to rub him he definitely brings joy. I think when he jumped up on my lap and fell asleep...He's a charmer. I kind of think he found us.

Elevating Chester's personality was a strategy used by Anton to highlight the way his cat became a family member. Other participants also relied on personality to elevate their pets to family

members. Franco, a 33 year old married accountant, described how the dog he and his wife adopted, Max, became family:

> I don't know if there was any definitive moment where I was like, [snaps his fingers] "Can't go without him." But, I remember when we got him and I first saw him. I got a sense for his temperament. I'm a little picky so I was like this, this is the one right here. I got a sense that he would make sense for our lifestyle. I think it's an accumulation of all the little things. It comes out as you start learning those personality traits and he starts doing all these little things that are funny and cute. Now it's at the point where I just think everything he does is cute. My phone is full of pictures of him doing interesting little goofy things.

Pets become family members through a number of strategies. Elevating the temperament and personality of cats and dogs is one way the process happens. The fit between the personality and temperament of both human and animal may also be a way the process is narrated.

<div align="center">Close & Connected</div>

Another way pets become family members are through narratives elevating feeling close and connected to cats and dogs. When Caroline, a 25 year old social worker, described how her two dogs, Lucy and Molly, and cat Angel, became family members she talked about how close she feels with them. Without probing Caroline to compare her connection or level of closeness with other human family members, she decides to elevate that dynamic in her pets-becoming-family narrative:

I would say it's more like them [cat and dogs] being my support system. I have a bad day, all I want to do is come home and lay with my animals. "You know?" I don't have close friends. I don't have a big family that I'm close with. I'm really close with my mom and I talk to her every day but sometimes that doesn't help. "You know?" For me I think that's what it is.

For Caroline, it is important for her to compare how close she is to her cat and dogs in comparison to her lack-of closeness to friends and family. Although she feels close to her mother and talks to her every single day, there it is her cat and dogs that make her feel comforted after a bad day. As she described, her cat and dogs are where she finds support. Isaac, a 32 year old attorney, also elevates how the connection he feels to his cat family member when he tells his pet-becoming-family narrative. Actually, Isaac simplifies the process to four words when he responds to the question of how he knew his pets became family with, "It is that connection."

Attraction

The third major timeless strategy participants employed when narrating how their cat or dog became family was through what is called attraction. It included a visual component but moves beyond just the visual for some participants. For some participants, it begins with being attracted to a particular breed. For other participants, they mention the breed but to describe how it actually moves beyond the breed to something deeper. Sybil, a 46 year old married homemaker always had golden retrievers growing up. As an adult, she knew that she wanted to have golden retrievers. Before she and her husband had children, they adopted a golden retriever. That golden retriever was a part of their family for many years until she recently passed away of old age. The

grief expressed for this dog's passing was palpable. When it came time to getting another dog, Sybil and her family knew they wanted another golden retriever. When I asked her to describe the process of the new puppy becoming family, she talked about the impact of visually observing the golden retriever before becoming the family of four's next addition:

> She was one of two. The mom only had two puppies, a male and a female, which is unusual. We got to see her the first time when she was three weeks old. She had just started walking. We always looked forward to going to visit and couldn't wait to get her home. I don't know. I'd say we spent a little over an hour each time, getting to know Claudia, the breeder. Then spending time with the pups, and then interacting with the other dogs. We probably saw her four times, I would say, because she was three weeks. We got her at eight weeks, so there might have been a week in there that we missed. It was really cool to watch the progression. We videotaped it and she was mentally part of our family at that point.

For Sybil, visually discussing how the family watched the puppy progress over a couple months was a strategy elevated to narrate how their puppy Simba became a family member. Sybil's family is attracted and always purchases golden retrievers. Violet, a 52 year old married energy healer, also told her dog-becoming-family narrative by emphasizing attraction. In her pets-becoming-family narrative she states:

> I think you're just attracted to them on some other level, because we did not know the breed Rottweiler. We didn't know anything about that. We saw her with her brother, and someone else adopted the brother. There were all puppies. Those adoption things, there's

a lot of puppies, and we were just drawn to her. I can't say, "Because we wanted a Rottweiler." We didn't even know the breed Rottweiler. We didn't know anything about it. So we just were attracted to, and then when we picked her up we were like, "That's it." We knew that it was her.

The attraction strategy was created to showcase how participants narrate their pet-becoming-family narrative based on attraction to a particular breed, being visually taken with a particular animal, or feeling attracted to an animal for an unexplainable reason.

All of the timeless strategies are elevated when participants do not use time-related criteria to describe how their cats and dogs became family members. Instead, they elevate personality and temperament, feeling close and connected, or the attraction they have for a particular dog or breed.

<u>Patchwork Narratives</u>

Patchwork narratives are the third type of pet-becoming-family narrative. These narratives stand out as their own sub-theme because they combine one of the established narratives above (e.g., immediate family member) with some other process, hence "patchwork" narrative. In these narratives, a participant typically has one type of becoming family narrative for one animal family member and a different becoming family narrative for others. The two situations which give rise to patchwork narratives are when participants narrate blending families or when narrating pet siblings. Eight participants told patchwork narratives to describe how their cats and dogs became family.

Blended Families

The challenges families face when integrating with other families is well established in the sociology of families literature. Less understood are the complications in blending interspecies families. Some participants who had been a part of blending interspecies family discussed how the process can be slightly different process than simply adding a cat or dog to an already established single or multiple person home. Cats and dogs might immediately or gradually becoming a family member when they enter an establish household or family. When a romantic partner moves into a home with a partner who has a cat and/or dog family member, or when both humans have cat or dog family members and move in together to cohabitate, there might be a different process involved. Adrienne, a 33 year old certified public accountant had two elderly dogs at the time her fiancé moved into her house with his indoor/outdoor cat and hen. Her narrative begins by resembling an immediate family member narrative:

> No, pretty much always [considered dogs family members]. I've always been like that, even when I was younger and had a dachshund. I always would let them sleep with me and they were with me all the time. And so they were always right there, part of the family. I didn't really ever treat them like just an animal.

Adrienne's narrative becomes a patchwork narrative by expanding on the process with her new family members. When asked whether her fiancé's cat and hen were always her family members from the first instant she adds a more nuanced description:

> Probably more after they moved in with me, because I would go over to his [fiancé] house and stuff but they weren't like my animals. "You know?" Like, I'm an animal lover

and I love all animals. I love to pet them and love on them and everything, but I guess not

really until they moved in with me did I more consider them my family. Because then,

we're all living here. Kind of all under one roof. So at the time it was just like, his pets.

Jacob, a 29 year old restaurant server, also is currently living in a blended interspecies family

with his girlfriend, and their two cats. His partner Leah already lived with and considered one cat

her family member before she and Jacob started cohabiting. Jacob knew he was entering into a

family and household where those dynamics were already existing. This is how Jacob narrated

his blended pet-becoming-family narrative:

Immediately I had unconditional love for them. He [points to the cat sitting on the

windowsill] is a bitch. He is one of the worst cats you can have, but he is also adorable

and she [points to other cat sitting on the cat stand] is not very affectionate. My older cats

would come up to you and snuggle with you. Just jump on your lap and lay there all day

long. She doesn't do that and he doesn't do that but I think the moment you adopt a pet it

becomes a family member.

At this point, Jacob's narrative also strikes a resemblance to an immediate family member

narrative, but just like Adrienne's narrative, it becomes more complex as it continued:

I mean at first she's [cat who already lived with Leah prior to the cohabitation] crazy. I

didn't even know if Leah and I were going to date or anything. We were seeing each

other for a while at first, obviously a very short period of time. I immediately like cats. It

does not matter. Like, we visited her friends a few weeks ago and their cats are adorable

so I immediately got not attached but connected to them. So, the more time I spent with

him [Leah's cat] and I guess when we moved in [together]. Because, then you actually

have to start taking care of them. Before that, she took care of them. He was not really

my cat. It's like, I went with her to the vet once but just because she asked. It wasn't like

I am taking him to the vet. On Thursday I'm taking them to the vet and she is not going

because she is working. Now they are more like our cats, before it was my girlfriend's cat

who I like. I think it's the point where you move in together that changes it. When you

sleep with them in the same bed or you have to take care of them and feed them and

make sure they are well off. That's when it changes I think. There is no definite line for

sure. It's a very vague line that you finally cross at some point.

Both of these blended family narratives were patchwork because they included different

elements of time-related narratives within their story. These stories also always emphasized

cohabitation as what initiated or enhanced the process of considering the cats or dogs family

members.

Sibling Stories

The other patchwork pet-becoming-family narrative emerged when participants discussed

pet siblings. Although examples existed of participants discussing pet siblings outside of

patchwork narratives, they did not explicitly combine one established narrative (e.g., immediate

family member) with another process like patchwork narratives do. Alice, a 33 year old married

assistant professor, uses a patchwork narrative to describe how her two dogs became family

members:

Bandit definitely was immediate because he was my first dog and it was like as soon as I went to their house and met him, I was like I love this dog. He is my dog. I don't know. It was very immediate. Lulu was a very difficult puppy so it took a lot more time. We kind of felt like, I kind of felt like, she was Bandit's dog for a while. It kind of took her more time to become part of our family. But, yeah. So it was a little bit different for both of them. I got her [Lulu] because I felt like Bandit needed a friend and they like got along immediately. When she was a puppy she was very scared and shy and she was not very close to you. She was just afraid of people but she loved Bandit. So she would sleep with him every night and she was always trying to be near him. I felt like he got a dog in a way [laughs]. So it took a little bit longer for her to trust me enough that I felt like she was part of my family.

In Alice's patchwork narrative, Bandit became a family member immediately. However, her second dog Lulu, who she adopted to become a friend to Bandit, took a longer time to become family. Interestingly, it wasn't solely about Alice's emotions or feelings for Lulu. Instead, it was much more of an interplay between Alice and Lulu. In order for Alice to feel like Lulu was family, she needed to feel like Lulu trusted her, which could likely only result from Lulu feeling trust from Alice, at least at some level.

Ricardo, a 23 year lab assistant, also describes his dogs becoming family by using a patchwork narrative. It was important for him to discuss both of his current dogs and how they became family members to them. It was clear that they were narrated in different ways. Similar to Alice, one of Ricardo's dogs was immediately family whereas his second adopted dog became family through a more gradual process.

I've had dogs for my entire life. They were my father's dogs, but family. They were family as well. We've had three previous dogs that passed away in my lifetime. So I really missed the dogs. I got Lady [one of his current dogs] as a small pup, and that was fantastic. Then I got Pepper a year later to accompany Lady and because I felt like Pepper would be a great addition to the family. So that's how I got these. For Lady, my smaller dog, I had her as a puppy. So I kind of forced that one because I really wanted a dog and I was excited to get this puppy. I think I made her my family. Then Pepper I didn't consider family at first just because I didn't raise her. I didn't know what kind of tendencies she had. "You know?" If I could even work on that and take on the responsibility of a dog with a little bit more work. But I went for it. We grew together. She started changing, and she changed a lot about me. So that was more of a gradual family building.

In Ricardo's patchwork narrative he combines two previously discussed becoming family narrative strategies: the immediate family member and the gradual family member. This narrative about the dog siblings also included the interplay between dog and caretaker to build up the family member status. Ricardo discussed how not only Pepper changed in order to fit into and become family, but Ricardo also changed too as a result of Pepper facilitation.

Patchwork narratives are pets-becoming-family stories which include more than one strategy. In many cases, it includes both an immediate family member narrative with a gradual family narrative. However, examples in the data also included mixes of timeless narratives and rime-related narratives patched together. The two most common ways these narratives were used in conversations of blending families and conversations of pet siblings.

Summary

Chapter 5 examined the strategies used to document *how* exactly cats and dogs become family members within interspecies family narratives. There were three distinct types of narratives: time-related narratives, timeless narratives, and patchwork narratives. Time-related narratives included the immediate family member strategy and the gradual family member strategy. Timeless narratives included personality & temperament strategies, close & connected strategies, and visual attraction strategies. Patchwork narratives were strategies commonly found when narrating blended families and pet sibling stories. The strategies included combining more than one narrative strategy, and are predominately told about different animal family members. This chapter contributes more broadly to the sociology of families scholarship on family integration. In Chapter 6, pet parenting is examined.

CHAPTER SIX: PET PARENTING AND INTERSPECIES FAMILY FORM

In Chapter 4, parental status was identified as a statistically significant predictor of considering pets as family, with parents less likely to consider pets as family than the childless. There was also a statistically significant correlation demonstrating that the fewer children a participant had the more they considered pets to be family. All 39 participants interviewed for the qualitative portion of this study considered their pet(s) family. However, it was previously unclear whether something unique existed about parenting human children which makes their narratives of pets-as-family different than narratives of pets-as-family constructed by the childless. In other words, do narratives differ between parents and the childfree? In this chapter, I tease apart what it means to parent, particularly as it relates to cats and dogs.

All participants were asked if they felt like pet-parents. Not all participants identified as pet-parents. Eighteen participants were parents of humans and 21 participants were not. The findings are presented by interspecies family form to illustrate whether and how family form impacts the construction of pets-as-family narratives. First, I start with narratives of childless participants. In this section there are two groups: childless participants who consider themselves pet-parents and childless participants who do not consider themselves pet-parents. Second, I discuss the narratives of human parents. In this section there are three groups: parents of young human children (e.g., infants, children in grade school) who consider themselves pet-parents, parents of adult human children (e.g., children in high school, college, or working adults) who consider themselves pet-parents, and parents of humans who do not consider themselves pet-

parents. Although all participants considered their pets family, only some considered themselves to be pet parents, an important distinction.

Narratives of childless participants highlight pet-parenting in three ways: teaching and training cats and dogs to behave in public and with others, training and practicing for potential future human children, and constructing family with traditional parenting language. Parents of young human children narrate pet-parenting by comparing parenting pets to parenting children. These narratives included talk of difference. They also included narratives of guilt over how their relationship has changed with their pet since their family grew to include children. Parents of adult human children narrate parenting by comparing parenting kids and pets, but they emphasize similarities. They also include narratives of finding joy in providing for pets both physically and emotionally. Finally, these pet-parents also merge narrative strategies resembling the childless narratives (e.g., discussions of training and/or discipline) and the narratives of parents of young children (e.g., parenting children requiring more involvement).

Narratives by participants who consider pets family members but do *not* identify as pet-parents are included for contrast at the end of each family form sub-section. These contrasts at the end of the sub-themes are included purely to highlight the differences between framing the pets-as-family relationship as a parenting dynamic versus framing the pets-as-family relationship as something different than a parenting dynamic.

People living with pets hold one or more orientations toward their pets. Blouin (2013) found three orientations people have toward pet dogs: "humanistic," "protectionistic," and "dominionistic." These orientations are not mutually exclusive, are able to be switched, are

historically situated, and are based within a broader cultural context. The humanistic orientation stems from the widespread adoption of pets in the middle-classes beginning in the nineteenth century (Irvine 2004). Dogs' status is elevated to equivalent with humans in this orientation. The protectionistic orientation grew out of the animal rights movement. Dogs were elevated to equivalent or superior to humans within this orientation. The dominionistic orientation is rooted in the Judeo-Christian religion which holds that all animals are beneath humans. Based on the narratives, I determined which orientation the participants primarily belonged within. Most participants in the present study had a humanistic orientation. A few participants had a protectionistic orientation, and even fewer had a domionistic orientation toward their dogs and cats (Blouin 2013). Participants with protectionistic and/or dominonistic orientations also largely fit within the humanistic orientation overall. In the following analysis, I point out when orientations slightly differ from the commonly found humanistic orientation.

Narratives of Childless Interspecies Families

In order to picture how each interspecies family form is arranged, I begin each section by providing some demographics about the families. Twenty-one participants were living in childless interspecies families. Ten were women and eleven were men. Six participants identified as Latino(a). One participant identified as Asian. One participant identified as Black. All other participants identified as White. All participants had at least some college. Four participants had earned a graduate degree. Ten participants were single. Four participants were married, and seven participants were cohabiting with a romantic partner. Most single participants were also living with other people (e.g., parent, sibling, or roommate). Eight of these participants were

interviewed with someone they lived with: one set of married participants, two sets of romantic partners cohabiting, and one set of platonic roommates.

Not everyone identified as a pet-parent, although most did in this group. Sixteen participants considered themselves pet-parents. Three participants did not consider themselves pet-parents, and two participants somewhat considered themselves pet-parents. Sixteen participants fell into a humanistic orientation, one participant fell into a protectionistic orientation, and four participants carried elements of humanistic and protectionistic orientations. All participants with traces of a protectionistic orientation were men. Identifying oneself as a pet-parent is typically found in humanistic orientations.

Parenthood is often considered the keystone of family legitimacy. Powell et al (2010) found that Americans considered parenthood more important than any other factor in deciding what counts as a family. Single, cohabiting, and married participants without human children don't have access to the legitimizing parent-of-a-human claim so they must rely on other cultural and linguistic resources available to construct family in other creative ways. Childless participants accentuate their understanding of parenting in order to narrate their family life. This accentuation of parenting occurs in three main ways: teaching and training cats and dogs to behave in public and with others, training and practicing for potential future human children, and constructing family with traditional parenting language.

Teaching and Training Pets to Behave

Childless participants overwhelmingly consider themselves pet-parents. The first way they construct pet parenting is by discussing teaching, training, and socializing their cats and

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dogs to behave in public and with others. When Adrienne, a 33 year old engaged accountant living with her fiancé, was asked whether she described herself as parenting the dog and cat, she said, "Yeah. Yeah." To describe why she felt like she was parenting she claims that it is, "Like teaching them what they can and can't do, and right from wrong. Or, if they do this, they're gonna get in trouble." When Daphne, a 21 year old college student, was asked if she felt like she was parenting her cat, she replied, "I would definitely describe it that way." Daphne's narrative demonstrates how training a cat to behave is still a salient part of pet parenting. In other words, it is not a narrative exclusively available to dog parents. She describes the challenges in training a cat to behave compared to a dog:

> One thing I don't really love is I'm not sure if cats can be trained as much. With dogs…you can use a stern voice, stomping, positive, and negative reinforcement. They tend to pick up on things like that. But with cats, I don't know if they care at all whether I'm like, 'don't do that' or 'stop.' Tigger will come up on the counter and he will put his face into your water, like your cup of water. He has a tendency to knock it over and spill water everywhere. Whenever he does that, I try to splash water on him to get him to associate that negatively…I might get frustrated but at the end of the day, I care about him a lot. I would assume that is close to parenting.

Participants living in interspecies families with cats and dogs considered themselves pet-parents. Both pet-parents of cats and dogs narrate pet parenting through discussions of training, teaching, and or socializing their pets.

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When it comes to teaching dog family members right from wrong, there is one behavior that reoccurred throughout many narratives. Jumping stood out as a behavior childless pet-parents wanted to teach their pets as wrong, for dogs in particular. To be a well-trained dog is to not jump on people. Camilla and Franco, a Latino married couple in their early thirties, described their parenting in terms of training and how it relates to jumping. Franco says, "You want to make sure that he's well trained and he deserves this. At least for me, I feel a sense of responsibility to make sure that he is well-trained and that he gets enough exercise. We go on a walk together and you know, just the importance of socializing with other dogs." Camilla adds:

> Max is a dog, but to me it's like, 'oh no,' let me make sure I have something to distract him because I don't want Max to misbehave while we're doing this interview, and so I know I planned to have things in advance to distract him as if you're distracting a child…because I don't want him to jump on you. We're still training him. He still doesn't know a lot of things. We're still trying to get him to not jump on people and biting all of that.

Although jumping was the most common behavior pet-parents discussed in regard to training their pets, socialization also seems to be an important part of narrating training as well. Camilla and Franco mentioned socializing above, but Caroline and Ben, a late 20s couple cohabiting, also mention socialization when discussing pet parenting:

> Lucy doesn't really get in trouble either. If she's chasing Molly around or chasing Angel, 'Lucy, okay quit it.' I use a tinfoil cardboard to spank her on her behind when she's bad,

if she's a bad puppy…She's just a puppy, you know? Whereas, Lucy didn't get the right socialization, Molly's not fearful at anything…So, it's totally different.

Socializing dogs with other animals is an important part of training pets to behave because when they are socialized, they respond to parents discipline more effectively, they interact with their siblings in more appropriate ways, and they play well with other dogs and those dogs' family members.

When highlighting parenting in pets-as-family narratives, training pets to behave is an important way to apply cultural resources. Teaching, training, and disciplining human children are commonly accepted as typical parenting practices in Western culture. Jumping may be an important part of these narratives because it resembles how human parents teach their children appropriate physical boundaries when interacting with other children and adults. Socializing dogs with other animals is almost identical to the way human parents discuss the importance of socializing their human children. School is one place where primary socialization occurs and pet-parents do not shy away from employing this resource. Surprisingly, it wasn't only dog parents who accessed this narrative tool. Anton, a 31 year old bartender, states, "Yeah, I'm his dad, definitely. I mean, I take care of him, whatever he needs. Take him to the doctor, feed him, water, let him out. If there was cat school I'd take him there."

Training and Practicing for Future Human Children

Some participants did not want or plan on becoming parents to human children at any foreseeable time in the future. However, many participants discussed pet parenting as training and practicing for potential future human children. Interestingly, most of the participants who

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discussed practicing parenting with cats and dogs as a way to prepare for future human children did not mention being pregnant, trying to get pregnant, adopting, trying to adopt, and many were not in committed relationships. Of course, others were in committed relationships and practiced for the future, even though they were also not currently trying to grow their family.

Participants prepare for human children by parenting cats and dogs. Some participants knew this was the experience they were looking for when they integrated their family life with a cat or dog. It was unimportant to some participants that they did not have romantic partners or immediate plans to have children in the near future. Cesar, a 24 year old, single, Black gardener, mentioned, "I want kids, but I want them later on in life. I've gotten the opportunity to be prepped in some regards, being alone on my own in adulthood. Responsibility for life was something I'd not yet had. In that regard, I really wanted to get a dog for training purposes. I don't know who said it, but it was probably somebody who said, 'Before you have a child, get a dog.' That's a good step to go about it. From the initial moment, I knew it was a commitment."

Other participants were in committed relationships when they decided to prepare for human children by parenting cats and dogs. Madison, a 23 year old graduate student who cohabits with her boyfriend, said, "We've talked about this because we do plan on having children one day…I feel like we've made this progression. Shadow [a cat] took about this much responsibility [hands facing each other, about 6 inches apart] and Charlie [a dog] takes about this much responsibility [hands facing each other, about 12 inches apart]. We always joke that since we've already planned a budget, feeding schedules, taking them out, and things like that, it's almost like we've been training to have children." In these cases, integrating current pets with potential future human babies is an ongoing conversation. Madison continues her narrative, "So,

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we've already thought about how to integrate human babies with our fur babies. We watch the puppy crawling up into their little playpen or whatever. We totally intend on letting them play. I'm sure the puppy is going to cuddle with them…It'll be different but I feel like it won't change that much." Some participants have even practiced what they would tell their future children in the event that they wondered why their pet children were able to sleep with them when their human children were not allowed. Taylor, a 28 year old, Latina, married social worker, explains:

> I teach parenting, and I read about the stuff and have to. Even though it's not really what I specialize in, or want to specialize in social work, I have taught parenting. I don't really believe too much in your children sleeping with you but with my dogs, it's different…I wouldn't do that so much with our children, which is something I thought about. Our children might be like, 'well the dogs get to sleep with you,' and, we're like, "but that's different.' I think it is okay sometimes for children to sleep with their parents but I don't think it's a good idea to do it all the time.

Similar to single childless participants, participants in committed romantic relationships also construct their relationship with pets as parenting. As shown above, these participants also believe it is important to discuss how the current family will be integrated with future human children.

Constructing Family with Parenting Language

All realities are constructed and maintained with language, and family identity is no exception. The names assigned to objects and subjects allow actors to act based on the meanings assigned to those names (Berger and Luckman 1966). Language, and in this case words, provides

participants with tools to construct their family identity with names that hold shared meaning. Childless participants who consider themselves pet-parents talk about their family lives using shared language on parenting. Words like "mom," "dad," "son," "daughter," and "baby" were brought up throughout the interviews. Below is a word cloud with the most common words in the document with the theme "parenting."
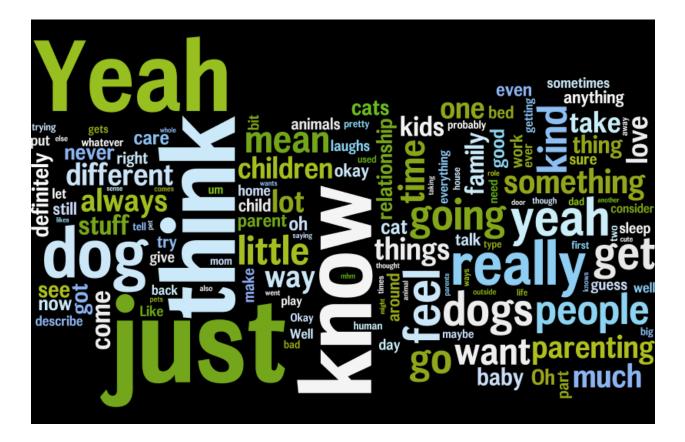

Figure 1: Interspecies Parenting Word Cloud

The interview transcripts were coded for many themes, as mentioned in the methods section. The overarching section coded as "parenting," which included all conversations exclusively on parenting was 108 pages. Just to demonstrate how prevalent this language was within the

parenting theme document, a quick word search reveals that "baby" was used 78 times in the entire parenting document. "Baby" was the most common parenting name used to construct family identity.

Although parenting language was common throughout the entire parenting document, it stood out as a major theme within childless interspecies families' narratives of pet parenting. Unlike, parents of human baby who mostly refer to their human children when using the word "baby," childless pet-parents use the word "baby" to discuss their cats and dogs. Scarlet, a single, 31 year old hair stylist, discussed how she felt when other family members minimize her parental relationship with her dog:

> It makes me sad almost. I'm like, 'How could you say that?' I love my dog…It's sad, like she's not good enough or something compared to kids, having a baby. Which I get it, but she is my baby.

In addition to "baby, "children" was used 93 times and "child" was used 32 times. When Dara, a 29 year old Asian restaurant manager cohabiting with her boyfriend mentioned her cats were her babies, I questioned whether she thought of herself as a pet-parent. In her response, Dara used "baby" and "children" interchangeably, "Absolutely. They are my babies. They're my children and they come first." Interestingly, the more gendered version of children "daughter" and "son" were only used referring to a cat or dog one time each and both times they were uttered by each member of one cohabiting couple. First Ben calls the cat his son, "He's better known as the son" and then almost immediately after Caroline (his girlfriend) calls the dogs her daughters, "I totally call my cats my daughters." The frequency of "baby" and "children" over "daughter" and "son"

may be due to the more widespread use of these words in general, making it much easier for pet-parents to access them for making claims on family identity.

Two more parenting words were expressed almost as commonly as "baby" and "children." "Mom" was mentioned 69 times. "Dad" was mentioned 50 times. Adrienne names herself "mom" but her cohabiting fiancé "guy" instead of "dad," "I'm like, "When we have kids, you're gonna be the nice guy, and I'm gonna be the mean mom." Although Dara has only been dating her boyfriend a few months, she succinctly calls herself "mom" and her boyfriend "dad," despite not initially identifying her boyfriend as a member of her family at the start of the interview. I asked Dara to clarify how their family was constructed. In other words, could Blake be a daddy to the cats when Dara was the mommy, and Dara did not include Blake in her family? Did this resemble some other family arrangement, more like a step-family? She states:

> That's a good question. I do call Blake their daddy because I'm their mommy. I guess Blake would be a part of my family. Our relationship is still pretty new. It's less than a year, but he's a very, very important to me. He's a really great friend, a great partner. He's amazing. But I don't think that we necessarily have to be in a relationship in order for him to be their daddy. He's interacted with them. He's been with them. If Blake and I were to ever break-up and we're in a situation where I needed someone take care of them, and I know he would help me out, I would still consider him their daddy.

It appears that pet parenthood may be much more fluid than what was currently understood. Most of the time, it is clear that when couples live together, pet parenthood could easily be claimed by both parties. "Mommy" and "daddy" were most frequently used once couples

romantically involved were living together, married or not. These specific parenting words were not used to describe partners who did not live with the participant, or to describe other family members or roommates who lived with the participant.

A majority of childless participants construct their family identity as pet-parents. Naming dogs or cats "baby," or calling oneself "mom" or "dad" of a pet is a family identity announcement. These participants receive family identity placement when others act toward them with the shared meaning behind that family language. Although obstacles may occur when family claims are not accepted, the word "pet-parent" is widely used and accepted throughout contemporary culture (Schaffer 2010).

Childless Interspecies Families that Did Not Include Pet-Parents

All participants that consider pets as family do not identify as a pet-parent or believe they are engaging in parenting practices with their cats and/or dogs. There were childless participants that held humanistic and protectionistic orientations. Narratives of pets as family by childless participants include platonic friends living together, married people, single people, and romantically cohabiting people.

Many of the childless participants who do not identify as pet-parents were involved in the animal rights movement. Isaac and Elijah are grade school friends who grew up together in Jewish households, went away to college together, attended law school together, and now live together. They consider each other family but it gets complicated with all the animals living with them. They consider all of their cats to be family members, but only one roommate considers the dog a family member. The dog is a heated topic. To make matters more complex, Isaac considers

himself a pet-parent to one of the cats but not to any of the others and Elijah mostly does not consider himself a pet-parent to any of the cats or dog. When asked if they consider themselves pet-parents, here is the conversation that followed:

Isaac: I do. Again, that's the difference between Elijah and me. I consider myself, I don't know. A cat, I'm not going to say it's a child. But again, I feel like I'm applying the same nurturing, loving things. I don't know. The way I pick up a cat. The way I handle it. I know that I feel like no one else could make Molly feel as good as I make her feel. He's on the other side there.

Interviewer: How about you Elijah? Do you see yourself parenting Cooper, or any of the other animals in your life?

Elijah: Yeah, somewhat. On some levels. Yeah. It's weird. Sometimes I will find myself saying, "Come with dad." Sometimes I say, "Come with brother," or just friend. But, yeah.

Isaac: Brother? Brother? (Laughs). I don't feel like that's weird, to say, "Come with dad." I mean, I consider myself to be Molly's dad.

Elijah: Well, yeah. There's definitely a level of care-taking and all that. I mean, I'm not a parent.

One roommate is clear that he is "dad" to one cat in the family. The other roommate, Elijah, goes back and forth. At first Elijah obliges and says he is a pet-parent on some levels, but then backtracks and changes his mind. Elijah, but not Isaac, has more of a protectionist orientation

overall. Elijah is a member of the animal rights community, is vegan, and holds animals in a higher status than most people with a humanistic orientation. Jacob, a 29 year old Israeli-American server cohabiting with his girlfriend, also has a protectionist orientation, and does not consider himself a pet-parent. When asked the question, he replies:

> She talks about it like that [his girlfriend Leah]; I am more of a roommate/caretaker. I don't consider saying I am a father as it gives some entitlement over pets. I hate it when people say they are an owner of an animal because you don't really own it. It is rather a part of your life, a companion. I don't like the connotation. I am more of a caretaker. We just share each other's life and I provide for them. That's how I see it. I just have a different view on it. Most people think about it in a way that they own that animal. I don't see it that way though. That just means that you come first. If he bites or scratches me I look at it from the point that I annoyed him. He was letting me know that he does not want me to do that anymore.

Another participant, Lucas, a single Latino senior in college says, "I would say more we're just cohabitating." Like the other two men above, Lucas also held more of a protectionist orientation and he identified as vegan. All of these men regard all animals as having more agency than most humanistic pet-parents.

Not all childless participants who did not identify as pet-parents held solely protectionist orientations. Noah, a 29 year old, married, marketing strategist, represents a unique type of pets-as-family narrative. He is not a pet-parent, but he is does not necessarily express any other

sentiments representative of the animal rights movement. When asked if he considered himself a pet-parent, he claims:

> I don't do that, no. They're cats. I don't think I've ever used that language. I don't think Jamie [wife] has either, that I can think of. We don't talk about them as kids, I guess. No, I don't think we do that. It's just not part of my lingo, I guess. I would never refer to myself as the dad or something. I just can't see a situation where I would do that. No. It's just not my personality, I guess. I almost think of it like I'm one of them, I guess. Because I don't treat them as pets, but I make sure they have food and everything. I'll get down here and roll around with Oreo and play with them. He has little soccer balls that he plays fetch with, and things like that. I try to interact with them on a cat level, rather than just an adult, I guess. So I just try to be one of them. So it's not really a parent thing, I just happen to be the one that can pour the food for them.

Noah, like other childless participants who do not consider themselves to be pet-parents, does consider pets to be family members. He describes this difference as a personality issue. In some ways, he seems to walk the line of the humanistic and protectionistic orientation. Blouin's (2013) three orientations are not meant to be mutually exclusive, and Noah may be an example of that.

Narratives of Parents in Interspecies Families

Eighteen participants were living in interspecies families and parents of human children. Nine were women and nine were men. Six were Latino(a) and the rest were White. Three participants had a high school diploma. Six participants earned a graduate degree, and the rest of the participants completed at least some college. Thirteen participants were married. One

participant was widowed. Two participants were divorced, and two participants were cohabiting with a romantic partner. Eight of these participants were interviewed with someone they lived with: two sets of married couples and one set of romantic partners cohabiting. Nine participants considered themselves pet-parents. Five participants did not consider themselves pet-parents, and four somewhat considered themselves pet-parents. All parents of adult children considered themselves pet-parents entirely or somewhat. Sixteen demonstrated a humanistic orientation, one participant had both protectionistic and humanistic orientations. One participant had both dominionistic and humanistic orientations. Both participants that showed elements of protectionistic and domionistic orientations were women. Similarities and differences existed among pet-parents of human children.

Pet-Parents of Young Human Children

The parents of young human children narrated their pet parenting differently than pet-parents without children. There were also some differences between parents of young children and parents of adult children. Four participants considered themselves pet-parents and two somewhat considered themselves pet-parents in the pet-parents of young children group. When these participants were asked whether they considered themselves pet-parents, they frequently compared parenting pets to parenting children. These narratives included talk of difference – different investment and different level of work. They also included some talk of guilt over how their relationship has changed with their pet since their family grew to include children.

The parents of young human children narrated their pet parenting differently than pet-parents without children or pet-parents with adult children by using comparisons that emphasized

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difference. Isabel and Javier, a cohabiting inter-ethnic couple, compared their parenting of their dog with parenting of their newborn son. They felt like their dog Buddy helped prepare them to parent their baby Liam, but Isabel quickly points out just how different parenting an infant is than parenting their dog, "We would compare. We felt like we were good parents for Buddy, therefore we felt like we could be good parents for Liam as well, obviously on a different level." Javier agrees and adds, "Although in retrospect it's a very, completely different experience." They both agree that, "It's not the same." Javier claims:

> I used to view it the same before Liam. I was so proud about how we raised Buddy and just showed so much pride towards it that I felt, "No problem, we can raise a baby." It was definitely an eye opener, but it did help.

When asked to explain why they said it was a completely different experience, Isabel states, "Your son never leaves your mind, ever. Buddy you can put to the side because, I don't know, I feel bad saying that but, you can just separate it." The participants who somewhat considered themselves pet-parents also emphasized differences between parenting children and parenting pets. When Ana, a Hispanic, married, stay-at-home mother of three children under 6 years old, was asked whether she considered herself a pet-parent to her three cats she explains:

> Sometimes I do that. You know, especially before I had children, I was their mom. I think maybe now because I have children of my own, and they [the cats] know that and they [the cats] know our lives and our house is so crazy with the boys and stuff…Once I had my first son, I mean, everything changed. I never knew I could love someone so much, "You know what I mean?" I love my parents. I loved other family members. I kind

of loved his [points to one of her sons] dad [an ex-boyfriend] at some point. Never had a good relationship, but you know, I cared for him on some level. I mean, I never really loved him, but I knew when Alexander was born and then when Dylan was born and Layla, every time, all three times has been a new, "Oh my gosh, I can't believe I love someone so much." Whereas I absolutely 100% love animals and I love my pets, it's very different. My children, yeah, the love is so different. My children are my children.

To Isabel and Javier, parenting was described as different between pets and children because of cognitive differences. They could stop thinking about Buddy at times if necessary. For Ana, although she also describes difference when discussing parenting pets and parenting children, she emphasizes an emotional difference. Every time a new child entered her family, the love was incredibly different. The love was stronger for her human children. In contrast to the mostly humanistic orientations illustrated in the narratives above, another married mother of two children uses a combination of dominionistic and humanistic orientation to narrate herself as somewhat of a pet-parent. This is Sybil's response when asked whether she was a pet-parent:

I guess, but not to the extreme. I know that there are people that are just all-consumed with their pet. No, I still know she's a dog. So, I'm a pet owner, but it goes a little beyond that, if that makes sense. She's not just here. She's much more than that…I would say being a parent is a constant. You're dealing with emotional growth, physical growth, and spiritual growth, all of those things; making sure their needs are met. Obviously you do that with a kid, but talking to them about different challenges different joys, it's so much more involved than having a pet. Your pet can give you love, but they don't understand everything that you need to do to raise a child…It's a totally different dynamic.

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Parents of young children who completely and somewhat considered themselves pet-parents compare parenting children with parenting pets when asked about this identity. Based on these narratives, it appears that parenting children is constructed as more cognitively involved and emotionally satisfying than parenting pets for these participants.

Another sub-theme which emerged when pet-parents of young children were asked about pet parenting, was guilt. These discussions of guilt and negative emotion were brought up when these parents discussed how parenting pets has changed since having children. They no longer have as much time or energy to care for the cats and/or dogs. Ana explains:

> When I just had Alexander it wasn't crazy, we just had one, but now the boys are older, and Layla's older and walking around, it's so much to take care of them. It takes so much of my time and energy and I think the cats know that and there have been times where I have felt bad because I felt, look, I'm so tired by the end of the day or during the day when the two little ones are napping and Alexander's in school that I just want to sit in quiet for a few seconds, and then they come to me. I feel like they need love because they haven't got much time and attention from me or Rick [husband] or whatever, and I feel bad and I try to love them, and that's why we try to make a nighttime as much about the cats as we can.

Isabel and Javier also discussed the guilt they felt over not having as much time for their dog. Isabel says, "He wasn't getting enough attention. I felt so guilty. I was so busy with the baby, but he is a dog. He can for a while be by himself. Javier tacks on:

It's just that dogs mature a little quicker. Within a year or two years they can be almost fully trained and they can comprehend and fully understand what you're trying to get across to them. But, with a child…it's more of a time frame, even longer time than a dog of course. It's a lot more intensive. The baby wakes up, you have to tend to him. It's very labor intensive. With a dog, they are walking on their own automatically.

As demonstrated, integrating a new child into a family can take some adjusting for everyone. In addition to the parents feeling sad, some of the animals were constructed as depressed, sad, and/or understanding about these changes. Although these pet-parents feel bad for not having as much time for their pets, they are confident that parenting a child is different cognitively, emotionally, and demands more involvement.

Pet-Parents of Adult Human Children

Pet-parents of adult children have different narratives than childless pet-parents and slightly different narratives than pet-parents of young children. For the most part, these pet-parents aren't overwhelmingly discussing training and disciplining animals to behave, practicing for children, the differences in pet parenting versus parenting children, or feeling guilt over the amount of time they do or do not spend with their pets. Instead, they compare parenting kids and pets, but they seem to find more similarities than differences. In many ways, they have also discovered that being a pet-parent is about the joy in providing for one another. They also merge narratives resembling the childless (e.g., discussions of training and/or discipline) and parents of young children (e.g., parenting children requiring more involvement).

Pet-parents of adult children (e.g., children in high school, or adult children) also tend to compare parenting their pets with parenting their children. However, these pet-parents are using the language of similarity as opposed to difference. When I asked Rose, a 63 year old, married mother of a mid-thirties married son, if she parented her dog differently than she parented her son she said, "No. I told Elliot [her son], 'We spoil the dog just like we spoiled you.' I said, 'We never left you alone and we never left the dog alone.' Then he just laughs, 'But she's a dog!'" Rose tells this story which emphasizes sameness in a playful way but when I asked her if she thought her son was joking when he laughs because his mother is comparing parenting him to parenting a dog, she replied: "No, he's serious." She is serious too though. She claims, "People that don't feel that way think you're nuts, but we're entitled. I'm old now and if we want to spoil our dog, we can. Oliver, a 65 year old, divorced, jeweler who also considers himself a pet-parent also compares his dogs to kids, "They're like kids. When I say it is bath time, Kiki will actually go in the bathroom, jump into the tub and get in the tub. Buster goes and hides under the couch or the bed. I have to drag him out to give him his bath." Parents of older children construct their parenting in different ways than parents of infants, although they both fall back on comparisons to make their points.

Parents of adult children also discuss the joys of providing physically and emotionally for their pets in their pet parenting narratives. Sofia, a 53 year old Latina mother of 3 adult children shows how parents of adult children emphasize sameness between pet parenting and adult parenting but also how both she and her pets receive benefits from providing for one another:

First thing in the morning I peel carrots, and I give them [the dogs] carrots. They love carrots. And in the middle of the day I'll cut an apple because they love apples. If my

animals look like they missed a meal, they haven't. It's that I feed them so much because

I love them so much and I figure it's not going to hurt them that much. I enjoy, like this

morning I made eggs for them. I enjoy cooking them food. Where like now, for my other

kids, I don't have to cook them anything, except for Lance. Kristen and Jake take care of

themselves. I enjoy when they have joy of food. It makes me happy. When I get them a

new toy, it makes me happy. When I can do things for them and it brings them joy, it

makes me happy. When they have an itch and I take them to the vet and stop it, it makes

me happy.

Sofia compares preparing food for her children with preparing food for her dogs. She also

discusses the joy she feels when her dogs feel joy. Oliver, who has two daughters in their thirties,

discusses how after the kids are grown, there is more time to be a pet-parent, "Like I said, you're

busy raising the kids. You're feeding them or changing their diapers and doing all that. So, it's a

whole different ball game. Once they're grown up and gone out, then you have a pet and you're

nurturing the pet now." Oliver compares the carework investment made with children and how

when they're older, there is more time to spend caring for the pet.

As previously mentioned, narratives sometimes blend or merge themes from the childless

(e.g., disciplining) and the parents of young children (comparing parenting pets and parenting

children). Charlotte, a 51 year old, married, mother of two blends talking about discipline and

comparing pet parenting with parenting children. She also points out the unconditional love her

dog provides:

I don't think it's like, you don't have to worry about them going out and getting into stuff, but you also have to be firm with them…That's what is funny about dogs. They do still act like little kids. They don't grow up to become bad, old, mean angry adults with a lot of issues. They're always there. They can't run away from you. They're there. They can't talk back to you. They can't be mean like that to you. They can't have an attitude. They totally love you, unconditionally. You could be whatever, fat skinny, black, white, purple, whatever. It doesn't matter. I think they stay innocent and sweet and always have that little kid in them.

When comparing parenting dogs with parenting children Oliver also brings up that dogs can be less stress, "Well, dogs don't talk back so it's a little easier, especially during my youngest daughter's little adolescent period there." These narratives show that the narrative of providing includes physical components like carework, including feeding children and pets, but also emotional components, like unconditional love and not "talking back."

Interspecies Families with Children that Did Not Include Pet-Parents

Just as not all childless interspecies families had pet-parents, not all interspecies families including parents of humans had pet-parents. Unlike the childless interspecies families not including pet-parents, most of these participants held humanistic orientations. The participants were living in different types of family forms including married couples with young children and a widowed man with an adult child.

Alice, a married, college professor with an infant has had two dogs for a long time. They became her family members before she met her husband and had a baby. When asked whether the identified as a pet-parent, she explained:

> I don't really think of them like that. They're more like friends or something. I don't really think of them that way. Yeah, not really. I don't know. I just don't think of it that way. I don't know. I definitely feel like I've taken care of them and nurtured them and watched them grow up, but I don't think of it in like a parenting way really.

Alice distinguishes between nurturing and parenting. Nurturing is a behavior and it is possible to act this way toward any being, but parenting is reserved for children in this family. Martina, a 30 year old, Latina, interior designer feels the same way as Alice. When asked if she felt like a pet-parent, she said:

> I personally don't. I don't think I mothered. I'm more of the cat person but I definitely have a routine. I still love them. I get them but I don't treat them like I treat my baby.

Both of the women in the narratives above demonstrate how parents of human children can consider their cat or dog family without identifying as a pet-parent.

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Summary

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In this chapter, I investigate how family form impacts pet parenting narratives. Parenting serves as a unique narrative resource for people to construct their interspecies family identity. Chapter Four established that Americans without human children count pets as family more than people with human children. Chapter Four also showed how the fewer children American's had,

the more they were associated with holding the attitude that pets count as family. Chapter Six demonstrated how pet parenting narratives also vary and are shaped by whether participants have human children or not. Pet parenting narratives are also influenced by the life stage in which human parents are at with their children (e.g., adult children versus young children).

There are unique narrative strategies all the various family forms access to narrate their family identities. Most similarities existed between the parents of adult human children and each of the other two groups. There were fewer similarities between the childless and the parents of young human children when narrating themselves as pet-parents. Teaching and training cats and dogs to behave in public and with others, training and practicing for potential future human children, and constructing family with traditional parenting language were the most common ways childless interspecies pet-parents narrated their family identity. Comparing parenting pets to parenting children by emphasizing difference, as well as narrating guilt over how the relationships have changed with their pet since their family grew to include children were the two ways pet-parents of young human children narrated their family identity. Finally, comparing parenting kids and pets while emphasizing similarity, finding joy in providing physically and emotionally, and merging narratives strategies of the childless and parents of young children were the ways pet-parents of adult human children narrated their family identity. These narratives represented mostly the humanistic orientation, with small exceptions for both the protectionistic and dominionistic orientations (Blouin 2013). These findings have implications for the broader doing family literature and is elaborated on in the discussion.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

This dissertation used a mixed methods approach to study interspecies families, especially focusing on individuals who considered their pets to be family members. Findings from the quantitative and qualitative data shed light on the types of Americans most likely to consider their pets to be family, as well as the precise ways interspecies families are constructed through narrative. In the following discussion sections, I discuss each set of findings. All findings were grounded in a constructionist framework. I highlight how these findings correspond to previous research in the family change and human-animal studies literatures.

Quantitative Findings

The quantitative findings for this study originate from data collected for the Constructing the Family Survey, which was completed with a random sample of American households. I analyzed the data specifically around one item which asked participants whether pets count as family members. Several themes emerged considering all of the comparative analyses conducted. First, almost half of participants (48.42%) counted pets as family. To my knowledge, no previous published studies in sociology had asked a random sample of American households this specific question and thus, in many ways, doing so makes this is a groundbreaking finding. Using these data, Powell et al. (2010) compared Americans' attitudes on whether gay couples and pets count as family and found that among the group they define as "exclusionists" (e.g., people who were most traditional in their attitudes toward family) more Americans count pets as family (51%) than gay couples (32%). This finding may challenge current socio-legal definitions of family as same-sex marriage is currently legal across the country, whereas pets are predominately

considered property by law. These findings support arguments for using more of a

constructionist definition of family (Holstein and Gubrium 2008).

Family change has taken shape in a number of ways including delayed marriage,

increased cohabitation, childless coupling, the growth and acceptance of families of choice, and

more pathways to parenthood. Pets as family is one more way family change is occurring in the

21st century. Examining the data on who viewed their pets as family provided interesting

findings, most prominently around gender and marriage. To reiterate some of these results noted

in chapter four, women were more likely to count pets as family (55.12%) than men (37.54%).

Never married people were more likely to count pets as family (61.21%) than people who

currently or had ever entered the institution of marriage (46.34%). Ultimately, marital status

moderated the relationship between gender and counting pets as family. Women counted pets as

family often despite marital status, but marital status significantly impacts this relationship for

men. Men who have never been married were substantially more likely to count pets as family

than men who are currently or had been married at some point. Married men were less likely to

count pets as family.

The findings that showed women counted pets as family often, regardless of marital

status, provided more support for what has long been established in the many sub-areas within

the gender studies literature - that there is a connection between women and animals (Adams and

Donovan 1999). These connections range from the similarities between the way their bodies are

objectified and consumed (Adams 2003; 2004; Grauerholz 2007), to the feminization of

veterinary medicine (Irvine and Vermilya 2010) and the skewed gender distribution of animal

rights movements (Gaarder 2011), to the link of violence perpetrated against women, children, and animals (Flynn 2011).

There were statistically significant differences even among married men in their attitudes on whether they counted pets as family (see Tables 25-27). Men who are or had been married, employed, a father, worked more than 20, 40, or more hours per week, were all less likely to be associated with counting pets as family. The employment statuses of married men's spouses also impacted their attitudes on whether they count pets as family. For married men, being married to a spouse who works at all, and being married to a spouse who works 20, 40, or more hours per week were are all less likely to be associated with counting pets as family. For comparison, statistically significant differences did not exist for never married men counting pets as family based on parental status or working more than 40 hours per week. These findings may be one more iteration of the stalled or continuing revolution (Hochschild and Machtung 1989; Sullivan and Coltrane 2010). In 2006 when these data were collected, if men are or were married to women who were working, these men may have been responsible for more of the physical and emotional work associated with maintaining pets' needs (Carrigan 1999). There may also be fewer narrative resources for men to rely on when constructing pets as family overall. Past research has documented how men can be averse to owning/living with cats because of the cultural association of cats with femininity (Ramirez 2006; Serpell 1988).

Findings also demonstrated that beyond gender, marital status, and employment status, additional identities and statuses associated with broader patterns of family change also predicted counting pets as family. Past family change literature led me to investigate whether cohabitation and parental status would also be related to counting pets as family. People who had cohabited

without being married at some point in their life were associated with counting pets as family. Also, number of children was negatively correlated with counting pets as family, meaning that the fewer kids someone had the more likely they were to count pets as family members. Being a parent was associated with counting pets as family. Parents were less likely to count pets as family members than childless participants. The following family change variables were able to predict counting pets as family as well as models I created based on past research showing characteristics of households with pets. These "family change" variables include: if people had ever lived with a partner without being married (i.e., cohabitation), were never married, and were childless, feminist and atheist. This model was significant when controlling for gender, age, income, and race (see Tables 23). This signifies that constructing the family in broader ways that capture interspecies families may be much easier for people who are already used to accounting for their family identity in creative ways. Due to past and current social and legal restraints, many "untraditional" families have had practice narrating their family identities in order to have their claims accepted and recognized. I'm not sure these findings suggest that pets-as-family contribute to the deinstitutionalization of marriage. However, pets-as-family do resemble other families of choice in that they are discursively maintained rather than biologically formed.

Results from these analyses also contribute to the human-animal studies scholarship. Findings show that people associated with "owning" pets differ from the people who count pets as family in some ways. On the one hand, I found that variables used by past researchers studying demographics of pet "owners" could be turned into a model to predict counting pets as family (see Tables 21 and 22). However, these two groups are often treated and discussed as they are interchangeable in the literature. In this study, family was the central focus and the findings

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underscore that these can be different from merely residing in a home with an animal. For instance, this study on counting family shows that non-white, never married, younger people, who are not parents, or who have fewer children, were all more likely to count pets as family. There was also a negative correlation between household income and counting pets as family. In the study Marx et al. (1987) conducted on characteristics of pet owners, the most common characteristics were defined as: white, married, between 41 and 50 years of age, have less than a high school diploma, earn more than $40,000 per year, and have children living in the home. In other words, while all of these variables predict considering pets as family in a logistic regression model, the specific level within the category is not what would have been expected when thinking about characteristics of living with pets. As these numbers show, being a pet "owner" or living in a household with a pet is not the same as counting pets as family. Frequently, these categories were opposites of each other.

Overall, these results suggest that counting pets as family is very common in American society and are consistent with broader patterns of family change. Unlike marital and parental status, large quantitative studies in the social sciences (e.g., the General Social Survey) have not asked Americans whether they count pets as family every few years throughout contemporary history, despite the increasing numbers of animals sharing our homes and lives. To my knowledge, this study is the first large-scale survey conducted in the 21st century that examined whether American households count pets as family. These findings delineated the research on households with pets or pet "owners" from people counting pets as family. Also, the gender and family change literature is now updated by highlighting another way the stalled or continuing revolution may be occurring within families who do and don't count pets as family, particularly

as it relates to married men. Finally, a predictive model based on past family change literature was developed to predict counting pets as family demonstrating that interspecies families are much more likely to be counted as family by other people who count other "untraditional," "alternative," or "families-of-choice" family.

<center>Qualitative Findings</center>

The two chapters with qualitative findings complement the quantitative findings chapter. The qualitative findings focused exclusively on people who count their cats and dogs as family members. This dissertation set out to understand how pets-as-family narratives are constructed generally and the conditions and resources available for people to make this family identity possible. The first qualitative chapter established "how pets become family members." "How pets become family members" provided the groundwork for the second qualitative chapter "pet-parenting and interspecies family form". "How pets become family" is more illustrative of the artful side of interpretation, whereas "pet parenting and interspecies family form" shows how this artful side of family construction is restrained and/or situated within certain conditions and resources.

"How pets become family members" demonstrated how cats and dogs become a part of family narratives. These narratives take three main forms: time-related narratives, timeless narratives, and patchwork narratives. Interestingly, although time was evoked during all interviews, one theme did not rely on time at all. These narratives were called "timeless narratives" because they were focused more on personality and temperament, connection, and attraction. Patchwork narratives included both time-related and timeless elements. Ramirez

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(2006) found that when people are selecting and adopting pets, men and women emphasize what researchers find in mate selection. Men emphasized attraction and appearance, whereas women emphasized personality and connection. These findings complement and challenge Ramirez's (2006) interpretation of traditional heteronormative dating patterns reflected in the search for a companion animal. Although similar narratives were found, they were not gendered in the ways that Ramirez (2006) described. Findings from this study show that men discussed personality and connection and women discussed appearance and attraction. Again, Ramirez's (2006) sample and most other samples from past research on related topics do not exclusively include participants who count their pets as family. Perhaps more rigid gender binaries occur when pets are not already considered family. However, these findings show that when cats and dogs are already counted as family, the way that process occurs is not able to be reflected through heteronormative dating patterns (e.g., men focusing on women's appearance; women focusing on men's personality). These interspecies families counted their pets as family, but there are still approximately half of Americans who do not count pets as family (see chapter 4). In this context, it makes sense that these family narratives may be similar but not identical to family narratives reflecting traditional gender binaries.

"How pets become family" narratives more closely resemble families of choice, particularly in time-related narratives. Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan (2001) interviewed gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, queers, and other self-identified non-heterosexuals living in Britain in the 1990s and throughout these narratives time is often referenced. For instance, there is a section on the "friendship ethic" in families of choice that includes discussions describing the

process as "automatic" at times and "gradual" at others. Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan (2001: 62) discuss one woman's narrative:

> The gradual process through which someone becomes a 'family member' might only be realized in retrospect. Jenny, as a parent, describes one way in which this happens: And it's sort of just automatic…for instance, it's one of the kid's birthdays or something, those are the people who get rung up to say, 'Do you want to come over for birthday cake?'' and things.

So while the above narrative is a unique situation in which one person telephones another person to come over, which could not be replicated with one of my participants and their cat or dog for obvious reasons, the narrative tools were similar. Time was emphasized, including language of "automatic" family and "gradual" family, like the participants interviewed for this dissertation narrated during their becoming family narratives.

The influence of the quantitative data on the qualitative chapters was most apparent when discussing pet parenting, as parental status was statistically and narratively important. The "pet-parenting and interspecies family form" chapter documented how the interspecies family form positions people to narrate their family in different ways. Comparisons were made between childless participants, participants with young children, and participants with adult children. Each of these positions influenced the way pet parenting narratives were told. There continues to be some debate over whether pets are surrogate children and human replacements (Beck and Katcher 1983; Serpell 1986), as many studies show that animals are sometimes considered

surrogate children (Gillespie, Leffler, and Lerner 2002; Greenebaum 2004). These findings take a slightly different angle on this discussion by focusing more on parenting than children.

Chapter 6 "pet parenting and interspecies family form" focused on pet parenting as a narrative process. By focusing on parenting as narrative process, new insights into this debate were made. This study shows that interspecies family form does influence how narratives were formed. The conditions of interpretation under which these varying groups narrate is qualitatively different. Some participants were able to narrate from a place of currently caring for their own young children in the home. These participants often emphasized differences in parenting children and pets. The parents with young children were narrating from a place of being deep in the trenches of dealing with diapers, breastfeeding, and a lack of sleep, for instance. They were often exhausted and expressed some guilt over not having as much time for their cats and dogs. Parents of adult children were able to narrate from a place of retrospection as their children had grown into adults. Most adult children of participants I interviewed had moved out of the home. These participants emphasize similarities between parenting children, cats, and dogs. At the end of one interview, I asked a participant to describe why he thought parents of young children emphasized pet parenting using language of difference and parents of adult children narrated pet parenting emphasizing similarities. Oliver, an older, divorced, gay man with two grown daughters, told me:

> They're so busy parenting the real kids. The pet is probably just the sidebar. The energy involved in that, and the attachment, because you're nurturing something like that and you're raising them. Like I said, you're busy raising the kids. You're feeding them or changing their diapers and doing all that. So it's a whole different ball game.

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Although Oliver primarily discussed pet parenting emphasizing similarity throughout most of our interview, it was easy for him to narrate from the position of being a parent of young children. He had been in that place a few decades earlier when his own children were younger. It wasn't that he didn't consider himself pet parenting back then, he actually did. The "what" or the conditions of interpretation in which he narrated from have just shifted. He is at a different place in his life and was able to narrate from his current social location, while switching back to narrate from other moments and positions during his life when prompted.

The pet parenting narratives of the childless or childfree emphasized teaching and training cats and dogs to behave in public and with others, training and practicing for potential future children, and constructing family with traditional parenting language. This entire sub-section of the "pet-parenting and interspecies family form" chapter is what I would describe as a new pathway to parenthood. In the 21st century, childlessness has increased (Cherlin 2010). Parenthood is increasingly being seen as a choice and women are having children at later ages (Smock and Greenland 2010). When and how women and men choose to parent is increasingly diverse, adoption and new reproductive technologies being some of less common pathways to parenthood discussed in the marriage and families literature. I argue that pet parenting may be one more strategy available to people to engage in parenting. Women, and men to a lesser degree, are pressured from many different angles to have children. When women do not fill their "moral mandate" to have children by a certain age, they face being seen as deviant (DeOllos and Kapinus 2002). Following in the footsteps of Holstein and Gubrium's (2008) social constructionist approach to family, I propose a social constructionist approach to parenting based on these findings.

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Constructionists have argued that instead of thinking about *the* family as a monolith, researchers should consider how the family is used narratively to accomplish particular goals (Holstein and Gubrium 2008). The same could be said for parenting. Similar to the "family-in-use," there could be a "parenting-in-use" approach to understanding these new pathways. The foundations are already in place. Researchers have shown how parenting styles are socially constructed (Ambert 1994; Schaub 2010), how motherhood is socially constructed (Fonda, Eni, Guimond 2013; Rousseau 2013), and how fatherhood is socially constructed (Jordan 2014; Lupton and Barclay 1997). Researchers have also documented how the transition to parenthood is constructed (LaRossa and Sinha), focusing on participants who identified as expecting parents. Motherhood and fatherhood are largely treated as narrative realities instead of an objective one by many gender and family scholars, but constructions of parenting are still largely based on an assumption that children are involved. I argue based on the findings presented in this dissertation that the production of parenting should be approached conceptually as a narrative construction. This study documented how people are able to "do" and accomplish parenting without having children at all.

This study differs from what many past qualitative researchers have done in interviews with people living in interspecies families. Typically, researchers interviewed Americans who "own" pets and then ask if they consider them family with varying results (see Blouin 2013; Ramirez 2006). In this study, inclusion criteria was counting their pets as family. Therefore, findings from this study provide a deeper understanding of not only who counts pets as family but how pets become family members through narrative. These findings also show how pet

parenting is constructed and the ways interspecies families could be conceptualized as a new pathway to parenthood.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study sought to explore what it means for a pet to be a family member by analyzing survey and interview data. The survey data shed light on who counts pets as family. Although these findings led to many new insights, there were still some limitations to the study. First, because I analyzed secondary data, I was not able to write my own survey questions. I would've been interested to understand if the people who count pets as family themselves had pets. However, I was able to connect this through comparing my data with other sources of data. Second, it would've been helpful for the survey to ask whether all or only some animals count as family. Third, the survey was conducted twice, but the question about counting pets as family was only asked on the second survey. It would've been interesting to compare longitudinal data to see how counting pets as family changed over time. I am not aware of plans to conduct the Constructing the Family Survey again, but hopefully the researchers will be able to do so.

The interview data explored the narratives people who count pets as family tell when pets are counted as family. These findings added to the family change and human-animal studies literatures but there are a few ways this study could have been improved. First, there could have been more racial diversity in the sample. While I was successful at achieving some ethnic diversity, there was virtually no racial differences as most of my participants identified as white. The lack of studies on people of color in human-animal studies broadly and on people of color with pets specifically is problematic. The stories may be similar but if these voices are missing, it

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is unknown. Second, participant observations of families would've been able to triangulate the study. Not only would have I been able to document who counts pets as family, and the narrative strategies used to elevate pets as family, but I could've spent more time seeing the interactions among the entire family which would've surely brought an even deeper level of analysis and understanding.

There are a number of directions I would like to go in terms of future research. First, I will analyze the other four initial categories in the current interview data I collected: narrating power and influence, narrating emotions, narrating activities and time spent together, and narrating carework. Second, I would like to essentially repeat the qualitative study I just conducted with families of color. Since I set out to do interviews and participant observations in the homes of individuals in this study, I was really limited to stay within the Greater Orlando area and find people at dog parks. In the next study, I would conduct interviews again but without the intent of including participant observations. With interviewing, and not participant observations, as the main goal from the start, I could recruit online and talk to people over the phone. I think it could be much easier to broaden the sample and less time consuming overall to do the interviews in this way. Third, I would like to investigate how pet parenting is socially constructed in other contexts (e.g., with other types of interspecies families and in other forms of narrative). If people without children engage in parenting, I would like to investigate other ways parenting is constructed without children. I am interested in determining whether similar narrative strategies are used in other types of interspecies relationships.

APPENDIX A: CHARACTERISTICS OF PET OWNERS AND NON-PET OWNERSHIP IN 1987

Characteristics of Pet Owners and Non-Pet Ownership in 1987

Source: (Marx et al. 1988)

		Pet Owners		Non-Pet Owners		Total
		N	%	N	%	
Total		816	62.8	484	37.2	1300
Gender						
	Male	417	61.6	260	38.4	677
	Female	399	64	224	36	623
Marital Status						
	Married	582	66.1	298	33.9	880
	Separated	28	56	22	44	50
	Divorced	70	54.7	58	45.3	128
	Widowed	26	50	26	50	52
	Never Married	108	57.4	80	42.6	188
Age						
	21-30	204	64.2	114	35.8	318
	31-40	271	65.6	142	34.4	413
	41-50	179	67.8	85	32.2	264
	51-64	162	53.1	143	46.9	305
Education						
	0-11 Years	117	65.7	61	34.3	178
	12 Years	311	65.2	166	34.8	477
	13-16 Years	283	58.7	199	41.3	482
	17 Years	102	63.8	58	36.2	160
Family Income						
	Under $20,000	191	57.9	139	42.1	330
	$20-$40,000	309	62.3	187	37.7	496
	Over $40,000	242	67.6	116	32.4	358
Children in household						
	No	353	57.1	265	42.9	618
	Yes	460	67.9	217	32.1	677
Race						
	White	733	65.3	390	34.7	1123
	Nonwhite	79	46.2	92	53.8	171

APPENDIX B: CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH AND WITHOUT PETS IN 2006

Characteristics of Households with and without Pets in 2006 (N= 47,842)

Source: (American Veterinary Medical Association 2007)

		Households with Pets	Households without Pets
		%	%
Life stage			
	Singles	42.1	57.9
	Couples	59.8	40.2
	Parents	70.5	29.5
	Roommates	67.8	32.2
Size of Household			
	One Member	42.1	57.9
	Two Members	59.8	49.8
	Three Members	69.3	30.7
	Four Members	71.7	28.3
	Five or More Members	72.5	27.5
Household Income			
	Less than $20,000	51.3	48.7
	$20,000 to $34,999	57.3	42.7
	$35,000 to $54,999	60.6	39.4
	$55,000 to $84,999	64.2	35.8
	$85,000 or More	63.6	36.4
Type of Residence			
	House	63.4	36.6
	Apartment	39.5	60.5
	Mobile Home	68.5	31.5
	Condominium	41.7	58.3
	Twinplex/Duplex	55.7	44.3
	Other	47.6	52.4
Head of Household Education			
	High School or Less	60.3	39.7
	Attended College	60.8	39.2
	College Graduate	60.2	39.8
	Advanced Degree	54.7	45.3
Head of Household Employment Status			
	Full-time	66.5	33.5
	Part-time	55.5	44.5
	Retired	45	55
	Not Employed	61.3	38.7
Marital Status			
	Married	65.9	34.1
	Never Married	50.7	49.3
	Divorced, Widowed, Separated	51.3	48.7
Race and Ethnicity			
	White	63.1	36.9
	Spanish/Hispanic	57.5	42.5
	Black/African-American	26.6	73.4
	Asian/Pacific Islander/American Indian/Aleut Eskimo	49.4	50.6

APPENDIX C: GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Guiding Interview Questions

Becoming a Family Member

1. Tell me about your family.

2. How would you describe your relationship with your companion animal?

3. Tell me about how/when you realized you considered your companion animal a family member.

4. Compared to any human family members, do you feel closer, the same, or a weaker connection/attachment to your companion animal?

Power

5. Does your companion animal influence your decisions? If yes, how?

Nature of Relationship

6. Do you consider yourself a parent? If yes, describe your parenting style.

Activities

7. Do you ever engage in activities with your companion animal? If yes, what are they?

Carework

8. Describe how your household manages the work associated with the upkeep of your companion animal.

Emotions

9. How would you describe the emotional side of your relationship with companion animal?

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
         FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Nicole Owens**

Date: **July 28, 2014**

Dear Researcher:

On 07/28/2014, the IRB approved the following human participant research until 7/27/2015 inclusive:

Type of Review:	UCF Initial Review Submission Form
Project Title:	Narratives on the Emergence of the Companion Animal as Family Member
Investigator:	Nicole Owens
IRB Number:	SBE-14-10415
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

The scientific merit of the research was considered during the IRB review. The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form cannot be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at https://iris.research.ucf.edu .

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 7/27/2015, approval of this research expires on that date. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s).

All data, including signed consent forms if applicable, must be retained and secured per protocol for a minimum of five years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained and secured per protocol. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Kaniella Chap

IRB Coordinator

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