

DOGS IN ORGANIZATIONS

“All knowledge, the totality of all questions and all answers, is contained in the dog. If one could but realize this knowledge, if one could but bring it into the light of day, if we dogs would but own that we know infinitely more than we admit to ourselves”. (Franz Kafka, 1971: 321)

ABSTRACT

What roles do dogs play in organizational life and formal organizations? Dogs are mostly ignored by organization theory despite the existence of a rich literature on human-animal studies that helps theoretical extension in the direction of organization studies. We discuss why and to what extent dogs are important actors in the lives of organizations and discuss reasons that explain such relevance in functional and symbolic terms. Overall we suggest that dogs can constitute another indicator of organizational diversity and explain why their presence in organization is more than just a fad.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to investigate the increasing role of dogs in the workplace and to challenge the dominant logic of human exclusivity which predominates the field of organization studies. Bringing animals to work is increasingly common in the United States and is seen by some as a right – with the presumed corresponding duty of organizations to substantiate such a right (von Begen and Bressler, 2015). The presence of dogs in organizations is in some cases regulated by established, formal policies (Kokalitcheva, 2016; von Begen and Bressler, 2015). Dogs have also been used by leaders in organizations to fulfill symbolic purposes, such as to convey an affable and more human profile; to intimidate opponents; to satisfy emotional needs, and so on (Coren, 2009; Stone, 2014; The Economist, 2016). Others

have remarked upon the fact that wherever humans have gone, “dogs have gone with them, even into outer space”, and that dogs are “unique among animals in sharing culture with humans; both species obey cultural rules and ritual behavior” (Helton, 2009a: 3). This relational singularity explains our focus on the case of dogs in the organizational context (Helton, 2009b; Hamilton and Mitchell, 2017).

Haraway (2003) has observed that dogs have co-evolved with humans, adapting themselves to live with humans in earlier forms of society and then being selected and bred by humans as part of a division of labor in agriculture, hunting, and other forms of work. Haraway (2008) has argued that dogs continue to play an important role in human society not merely as commodities but also as workers whose diverse canine skills are increasingly being used for their “trans-species encounter value” (Haraway, 2008: 46). Although a rich body of literature has developed in the humanities on the singular importance of dogs in the co-evolution of human society (e.g., geography, science studies, sociology, human-animal studies), the organizational context, with its hierarchies, rules, and formalisms, introduces a nuance that deserves to be studied in its own right. There is evidence that human-animal interaction is deeply entangled in several dimensions belonging uniquely to the organizational and institutional realm of formal organizations, and that dogs play important roles.

The dimension of plasticity in human-dog interaction in organizations takes multiple expressions, in some cases well beyond what is typically recognized in organization theory. Human-canine interaction within the workplace may include workers who are dog owners, others who are dog lovers, and others who dislike dogs and/or experience health problems when interacting with dogs. This multiplicity of forms of interaction raises idiosyncratic challenges and difficulties for organizational decision-makers and the adoption of dog-friendly organizational policies (Cole, 2014; Roepe, 2017; Wilkin et al., 2016). The depth and diversity of penetration of canine presence in formal organizations therefore constitutes the main

contribution of the paper. A second, parallel contribution, refers to the granular discussion of each of these expressions.

In spite of its relevance, the human-dog interaction is almost entirely absent from organization studies, as is the presence of animals in general (Hannah and Robertson, 2017; Labatut et al., 2016), the field of organization studies being mostly impermeable to the influence of the new discipline of human-animal studies (DeMello, 2012; Hosey and Melfi, 2014; Shapiro and DeMello, 2010). Organizations are mainly theorized and studied from the perspective of the humans who constitute and are constituted by them (Michel, 2014). However, non-human animals, including dogs, are still absent (Carlile et al., 2013), at least as living beings who develop profound bonds with humans (Nagasawa et al., 2009) and whose “points of view” (Bensky et al., 2013) are relevant in making sense of the human world. As a consequence, important aspects of organizational functioning have been neglected, especially the increasing integration of animals in general and dogs in particular into the workplace.

Gherardi and Strati (2017: 753) have pointed out that “The Other is usually considered a human being; but also, the non-human element sensed via touch, hearing, smell, sight and taste reveals its active involvement in the process of producing sensible knowledge”. We posit that the “Other” also embraces other animals, namely dogs. Considering dogs as material elements versus humans as human-social beings is being questioned by scholars of canine ergonomics (Helton, 2009b). Helton (2009a) has observed that although ergonomics (i.e., human factors) is the study of human work and interaction with work systems, and the term *human* is used in the definition and thus may disregard the non-human workers, this perspective is based on an excessive anthropocentrism.

This paper argues that much can be learned about organizations from overcoming this anthropocentric perspective, as is artfully suggested by Kafka at the start of our paper, whose story upends this way of seeing. As such, we study dogs as participants in the life of

organizations. We do not wish to compare their agency with human agency but we do not use “dogs” as a metaphor or a label (Kondra and Hinings, 1998). We also do not wish to convey the idea that dogs in organizations are a risk-free presence, even though we highlight the benefits of this relationship. We acknowledge that the presence of dogs in organizations may have negative consequences both for specific individuals (e.g., employees who are allergic or phobic to dogs) and the work environment.

We start by discussing the core characteristics of dogs with regard to organization studies as well as their limited, almost non-existent presence in organization theory (Hannah and Robertson, 2017). We do not give a detailed explanation of dogs, their evolution, or their diversity, as these are not goals of this article¹. Next, we explore the presence of dogs in organizations by composing a typology that extracts several distinct categories of a canine theory of organization. The typology renders a diversity of contributions salient, illustrating the multiple expressions of canine presence in organizations. We advance a research agenda on the theme of dogs in organizations, and discuss implications for organizations and their management.

It is important to note that we exclude from our discussion the commercialization of dogs or the commercialization of products for dogs, as in this case dogs are perceived not as part of the organization but as resources to be commercialized, temporary stock. In other words, we consider dogs as non-human organizational actors, with the capacity to influence, to a greater or lesser degree, interpersonal and organizational processes and outcomes. We represent them conceptually as involved in the organization’s material and symbolic existence. Before proceeding with a discussion on the presence of dogs in organizations, however, we

¹ We are also aware that the presence of animals in organizations extends well beyond the case of dogs. Without disputing the importance of other animals in organizations, we argue that dog human co-evolution represents an extreme case of human-animal interaction (Eisenhardt, 1989). As Masson (2012: 26) has observed, “although other animals have been domesticated – primarily the cat, the horse, certain birds, rabbits, cattle – no other animal (wild, tame, or domesticated) carries such meaning for humans as the dog”.

systematize some scientific findings about dogs that may be relevant to our organizational analysis.

HUMAN-CANINE INTERACTIONS

Scientific research indicates that dogs descend almost entirely from the grey wolf, the *Canis Lupus* or from some extinct relative of this. The common dog, *Canis Lupus Familiaris*, was one of the first animals to be domesticated, i.e. genetically changed, to adapt to human environments (Miklósi et al., 2005), in a process that started some 20,000 years ago (see Helton, 2009c for different chronologies), possibly in East Asia (Savolainen et al., 2002). The process of domestication has involved the mutual agency of both species (Bradshaw, 2011; Haraway, 2003). The evolution of dogs as quotidian partners of humans has resulted in distinctive cognitive and behavioral features (Bensky et al., 2013; Helton, 2009a; Miklosi, 2007) in which the oxytocin positive feedback loop between dogs and humans (Nagasawa et al., 2009, 2015) may in part help to explain this co-evolution. Oxytocin is a hormone that plays an important role in the development of human bonding especially between mothers and their infants, and has also been observed in human-canine bonding (Nagasawa et al., 2015).

Throughout millennia, dogs have acquired behaviors, abilities, and attributes that make them highly valuable for humans, assisting them in multiple activities and stimulating the acquisition of sophisticated forms of interspecies communication (Bensky et al., 2013; Hare and Tomasello, 1999; Helton, 2009a). Their trainability, playfulness and fit with human households earned them the qualification as man's best friend (McConnell et al., 2011) and in which they "occupy a unique ecological niche in the modern world." (Bensky et al., 2013: 210). According to the American Pet Products Association, in the US alone there are 77.8 million dogs (HSUS, 2016). Americans spent an estimated 58.81 billion dollars on their animals in 2014 (Bennett, 2015). Dogs are often considered natural or genuine members of the family (Wilkin et al., 2016), even by business leaders who are unsuspected of sentimentality

(Dowd, 2011; Stone, 2014; The Economist, 2016). For example, Al Dunlap, nicknamed “chainsaw” and “Rambo in pinstripes”, stated in the acknowledgements section of his book *Mean Business* that his family also included “our beloved dogs and constant companions, Brit and Cadet” (Dunlap and Andelman, 1996: 303).

The adaptive success of dogs results to some extent from their ability to assist humans in a number of activities. They are involved in police activities, in security operations in airports, in filmmaking, and in supporting people with disabilities (Bromwich, 2016). Recently, they have started to fulfill mostly companionship functions as pets, but organizations are discovering new uses for them as stress-busters. Dogs have been highly adaptable, fulfilling different human needs over time. Their role in organizational functioning is discrete but their presence is common in some contexts. Some organizations are redefining their roles with the creation of pet-friendly workplaces (Cole, 2014; von Begen and Bressler, 2015; Wilkin et al., 2016) and the definition of policies for dogs in the workplace.

Fast Company magazine featured “11 famous companies with enviable pet-friendly policies” (e.g., Google, Etsy, Amazon; Cole, 2014), and *Fortune* introduced the “12 most pet-friendly companies” (e.g., Salesforce, VMWare, Mars, Google, Autodesk, Activision Blizzard; Kokalitcheva, 2016). Martins, Dias, and Khanna (2016) noted that among the policies that make some Silicon Valley companies so successful, one is giving “employees (and their dogs) a long leash. (...). If that means being open to flexible work schedules and letting people bring their dogs or bikes to the office, so be it”. Even Amazon, sometimes described as a bruising workplace (Kantor and Streitfeld, 2015; see also Pfeffer, 2016), had an “official dog” (Rufus still has a webpage on Amazon’s site) apparently as a collateral effect of hectic schedules imposed on employees (Sherman, 2015).

Some animal advocates argue that pet-friendly organizations may gain a superior capacity to attract prospective employees (namely millennials; Zimmerman, 2016) who are pet

owners; others see pet-friendly policies as a way to improve productivity and competitive advantage (von Begen and Bressler, 2015; Wilkin et al., 2016). Dogs seem to be highly plastic in terms of their capacity to adapt to the demands of humans. They are social learners (Bensky et al., 2013), in that they are acute observers of other's behaviors and are more than reactive consumers who respond and learn only if they are rewarded (Pongrácz, 2009). This versatility means that even as human societies become more organizational, dogs were able to find new spaces for themselves both in society as a whole and in organizations in particular. In this paper, we focus on the latter, which constitutes the heart of the next section as well as the core of contribution of the paper, as formal organizations have features that are unique and that render this type of human-animal interaction different from other contexts. We will map out a typology for better understanding the adoption of dogs as workers with valuable canine skills including a range of manual, symbolic, and emotional skills (Haraway, 2003, 2008; Hochschild, 1985).

CANINE PRESENCE IN ORGANIZATIONS: A TYPOLOGY

Given the lack of research on the topic, we construct a typology with the intention of clustering different ideas and observations, to further stimulate the attention of organizational scholars and to design a configuration of profiles (Corneliessen, 2017). The typology is constructed according to the following conceptual logic. First, we distinguish *functional* (the actual use of dogs as sources of work, or as functional supporters of workers with disabilities; von Begen and Bressler, 2015) and *symbolic* considerations of the role of dogs (transmission of ideas and values through dogs). Our second conceptual line refers to the focus of research. In some cases, the focus is on the humans; in other cases, on the dogs themselves. By considering these two lines of thinking we derive the four categories (Figure 1): (1) dogs have unique skills, and organizations may take advantage of these skills by assigning dogs to work roles; (2) organizations use values commonly associated with dogs to perform expressive/symbolic

functions; (3) organizations use human-canine interactions to perform tasks beneficial to humans; (4) leaders and other organizational representatives use dogs to transmit specific ideas and convey values.

Before we proceed with the presentation of the typology, we clarify that the categories are not mutually exclusive: an organization can have a strong focus on dogs and humans, and dogs may have both functional and symbolic roles. For example, Metro Bank employs a combination of the forms “canine symbolism” and “leader values”, where its founder and chairman, Vernon Hill, brings Duffy, his Yorkshire terrier, to the office to instigate customer-friendly policies (Moules, 2017: 22).

Therefore, we use these four different categories to contrast the various roles that dogs may occupy in organizations, but naturally these four categories may coexist within a single organization. Future research is needed to study whether there is something theoretically different about an organization that focuses extensively on both humans and dogs, versus the one that focuses more on humans than dogs. Future studies may also consider positioning organizations in a continuum for each dimension. For example, different organizations may be characterized by different degrees, or levels, of functionality and symbolism.

Figure 1 about here

Canine skills

Helton (2009a: 1) has observed that working dogs have served as “flexible extensions of human senses and abilities” since ancient times. Historically, dogs were kept mainly because of their usefulness (Bradshaw, 2011). Today, dogs still assist humans in hunting, shepherding and guarding, but several other very important functions are assigned to them (e.g., avalanche victim search, cancer detection, epilepsy detection, drug detection, explosives detection, environmental remediation, emotional support to victims of massacres and their families,

forensic tracking, blind and hearing assistance, mobility assistance, scat searching, security, and detection of insect infestations and microbial growth; Helton, 2009a, 2009c).

Helton (2009a) also pointed out that, despite the progress in the fields of artificial intelligence and modern sensor technology, those engines are unable to match the operational effectiveness of trained dogs in several tasks. After reviewing definitions of expertise in the cognitive science literature, Helton et al. (2009) have argued that working dogs meet all the relevant criteria for the possession of expertise. For example, dogs are capable of acquiring knowledge (i.e., mental representations) and conveying it to others, and they have learned to communicate with humans to pursue their own behavioral goals (Bensky et al., 2013). Some organizations formally acknowledge the expertise of their highly trained dog members, such as the army, which has awarded military decorations to their dogs for exceptional performance (Helton et al., 2009).

Like humans, dogs differ in terms of personality and temperament (Bensky et al., 2013; Duffy and Serpell, 2012; Graham and Gosling, 2009; Robinson et al., 2016; Turcsán et al., 2012). These differences (in terms of, for example, sociability, affability, aggressiveness, submissiveness, self-confidence) can be measured as reliably as the corresponding characteristics in people (Graham and Gosling, 2009). Traits like emotional stability may be more important than physical abilities (e.g., olfaction) to perform detection tasks. Considering that different tasks may require distinct dog personality traits, organizations should use appropriate techniques (Duffy and Serpell, 2012; Weiss and Greenberg, 1997) to select the dogs fitting task requirements better.

The skills of working dogs also come with their own specific limitations. Police dogs may attack the wrong people, and detection dogs sometimes give false alerts. In 2002, although bomb-sniffing dogs indicated the presence of explosives in the cars of three medical students, who were detained by the authorities, no trace of explosives was found in their cars (Derr,

2002). A possible explanation for the mistake was ascribed to the dog-human interaction, rather than simply to the dogs' incompetence: when dogs' handlers are excited and stressed, the animals may overreact and wrongly suggest that explosives are present, when actually they are not.

Canine symbolism

Dogs are often associated with such qualities as loyalty and devoted work, and those qualities are revered by human collectives. An example is Hachikō (1923-1935), known in Japanese as “faithful dog Hachikō”, whose remains were cremated and his ashes buried in Aoyama Cemetery, Minato, Tokyo beside those of his master. Hachikō, who waited for his deceased master, Professor Ueno, at a Tokyo railway station for nearly a decade, was held up in Japanese culture as embodying the values of loyalty and fidelity. His inspirational example continued to be remembered in popular culture through statues, movies, and books. Each year, on March 8 (the anniversary of his passing), a solemn ceremony of remembrance is held at Tokyo's Shibuya railroad station. Skabelung (2011) wrote that Hachikō shaped and reflected Imperial Japan. In his view, the processes of colonialism and imperialism were facilitated, both symbolically and physically, by the presence of dogs (see also Trefalt, 2013).

Organizations may use these and other expressions of canine symbolism to convey their collective identity (see, e.g., the Metro Bank's illustration above). Some organizations adopt pet-friendly policies as a workplace perquisite that is consistent with the values of millennials (Zimmerman, 2016). Pet-friendly policies may represent cultural informality (Daft, 2008) and this may explain why several tech companies adopt such policies (Cole, 2014; Jacobs, 2016). For example, Google includes dogs in their Code of Conduct (“Google's affection for our canine friends is an integral facet of our corporate culture”; <https://abc.xyz/investor/other/google-code-of-conduct.html>) and Meghan Casserly, corporate

communications manager, stated that dogs at work embody the features of loyalty, tenacity, and playfulness that characterize the company's culture (Cole, 2014).

Dogs and other animals are often used as corporate logos (e.g., Camel, Dove, Firefox, Jaguar, Lacoste, Lamborghini, msn, Peugeot, Playboy, Puma, Red Bull, Swarovski, and Twitter). Fedex Home Deliveries, Fidelidade, Greyhound, Hush Puppies, Netto Supermarkets, and RCA Entertainment, all use or have used dogs as their corporate symbols. In all the above cases, the dogs perform expressive functions (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). Animals are frequently used by advertisers, with the expectation that they will evoke positive feelings (Lancendorfer et al., 2008). However, for those who are less inclined to appreciate dogs, these associations may be devoid of positive content.

Human-canine interactions and social capital

The close, special, symbiotic, and profound relationships that canines have developed with humans (Nagasawa et al., 2009) are well reflected in the idea of dogs as man's best friend (McConnell et al., 2011; von Begen and Bressler, 2015). Cognitive science has suggested that dogs may have acquired superior cognitive abilities to communicate with humans, and that socio-emotional bonding developed between humans and dogs (e.g., dogs' capacity to "catch" human yawns may have empathic and emotional bases; Silva et al., 2012; see also Madsen and Persson, 2013) during evolution may have biological roots (Bensky et al., 2013; Nagasawa et al., 2009). Specifically, the oxytocin positive feedback loop between dogs and humans (Nagasawa et al., 2009, 2015) may explain such development, oxytocin being both cause and effect. Nascent research on this relationship has advocated that it can be used strategically to facilitate interpersonal cooperation, to create high trust corporate cultures, and to reduce the transaction costs of business (Kosfeld et al., 2005; Zak, 2017; Zap and Knack, 2001).

Such social bonding can have a positive impact on human physical and psychological health and well-being (Nagasawa et al., 2009). Studies have suggested that dogs have calming

effects and reduce stress, contribute to emotional and social well-being, provide comfort during distressing times, reduce feelings of loneliness in times of adversity, may be compensatory or supplementary attachment figures for individuals whose human bonds are lacking, and provide an opportunity to nurture others (Amiot and Bastion, 2015; Barker et al., 2012; Bensky et al., 2013; McConnell et al., 2011; Rockett and Carr, 2014; Wilkin et al., 2016).

Dogs may even help to develop social capital (Colarelli et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2007). Some months after Nestlé allowed its employees to bring their dogs into its City Place headquarters, Odette Forbes, head of media relations at the company, observed (in Fergusson, 2016) that the atmosphere in the office had turned warmer and more sociable. Experimental research by Colarelli et al. (2017) has found support for this anecdotal evidence: the presence of a dog in a group elevates positive emotions, which gives rise to more prosocial behaviors and makes the group environment socially and emotionally warmer.

In an extreme case, victims of Stalin's Gulag mentioned that the lack of human warmth was sometimes offset by developing bonds with animals, including dogs (Figes, 2007). Discussing the findings of a study which suggested that the presence of dogs make people collaborate more effectively (Honts et al., 2010), *The Economist* (2010) recommended that there ought to be more dogs in offices and fewer in police stations. Dogs and other pets may also have positive ripple effects on developing neighborhood interactions and a sense of community (Wilkin et al., 2016; Winkle et al., 2011; Wood et al., 2007). Skabelung (2011) has argued that the dogs of war had an important role in binding Japanese citizens to the state, and that some individual animals were elevated to the status of national war heroes.

In consonance with this evidence, pet-friendly policies allow employees to take their dogs to work (Dholakiya, 2014; Fergusson, 2016). Some hotels of the Kimpton chain have a "Director of Pet Relations", an employee-owned dog that helps greet guests at the front desk (Kokalitcheva, 2016). These policies and programs are variously oriented to stress reduction

or to the creation of good workplaces (Goffee and Jones, 2013). They are based on scientific evidence showing that petting animals increases satisfaction and reduces stress (Barker et al., 2012; Wells and Perrine, 2001; Wilkin et al., 2016), that informal, relaxed policies can be fruitful to retain employees, especially in the more relaxed context of information technologies and to increase creativity (Barker, 2005; Wilkin et al., 2016). The previous effects are partly explained by the strength of human-canine bonds (Barker and Barker, 1988; Keeler et al., 2015; Nagasawa et al., 2015).

Dogs, being catalysts for social interactions (McNicholas and Collis, 2000), can thus be used, wittingly or unwittingly, in the construction of personal relationships to foster better workplaces. At the most superficial level, dogs wandering about the workplace can act as triggers for employee interactions. At a deeper level, positive relationships between humans and animals may have positive effects on the humans' well-being and oxytocin levels (Campbell, 2010; Nagasawa et al., 2009, 2015; Tops et al., 2014). These effects, in turn, enhance social motivation to approach and affiliate with others (Carter, 2014; Romero et al., 2014; Wilkin et al., 2016), thus giving rise to more positive social relationships and well-being, including in the workplace (Fredrickson, 2013). Dogs play an active role in team building and stress management. These canine skills are not simply a natural capacity of dogs, but are a consequence of co-evolution between the two species (Haraway, 2008).

As our mode of production and organization has changed, so too has the role of dogs in this new division of labor, in which they are being increasingly used in forms of emotional labor in the workplace. Studies of emotional labor have neglected the role of animals in this particular labor process (Hardt 1999; Hochschild 1985; Wharton 2009). Hochschild's (1985: 7) pioneering study of emotional labor defined this as "the management of feeling to create publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and thus has exchange value". This definition clearly excluded any work done by animals. However,

Haraway (2008: 46) has moved beyond the traditional description of the labor process in order to include work performed by animals in terms of a “trans-species encounter value”. Haraway (2008) explains how “encounter value” is an overlooked aspect of work involving the interaction between humans and animals, for instance when they are used in teams to improve human cooperation, the quality of care, quality of security and so on. Building upon Haraway’s work (2003, 2008), we argue that animals in general, and dogs in particular, are playing an increasingly important role in the continuing development of hybrid emotional labor with their human co-workers, in supporting cooperation, caring, therapy and so on. Hybrid emotional labor acknowledges the fact that emotional labor not only involves the extraction of surplus value from the interactions of human beings but may also involve the extraction of “encounter value” from the interactions between human beings in cooperation with dogs in order to improve the quality of their work (e.g. care, security, team building, and stress reduction).

In spite of all the potential benefits of human-canine encounters, it may be argued that pet-friendly policies disregard the rights of those who are less favorable to pets in the workplace. And encounters can go wild. Home Depot revised its pet-friendly policy after a customer service employee was bitten in the face by a customer’s Shih-Tzu dog, leaving her with permanent scars (Hasham, 2011). Similar risks concerning the role of dogs in the workplace were clear in another incident when an emotional support dog severely bit a passenger during the boarding of a Delta Airlines flight (Appelblum, 2017).

Leader values and messages conveyed through dogs

Another area of the organization studies in which dogs matter refers to leadership and symbolism: dogs can play a role in the construction of leader identities and in conveying non-verbal messages, at both the corporate and government levels. This may explain why leaders (including “the toughest and meanest of America’s corporate leaders”; Kellerman, 2004: 133) often like to be seen and photographed with their dogs.

The presence of dogs has a long tradition in the US presidency, and several Presidents have used dogs and other pets to convey political messages (Skoglund and Redmalm, 2017). For example, President Garfield named his dog “Veto”, the most important of presidential powers (Maltzman et al., 2012). Fala, the famous Scottish terrier of Franklin Roosevelt, immortalized in the Roosevelt memorial, was the target of intense politico-electoral debate, epitomized in the famous Roosevelt’s “Fala speech”. Mutz (2010) pointed out that canines have played an important role in presidential politics, affecting both the politicians’ image and their effectiveness. In contrast, the association with dogs may express humanity but also the notion that obedience is expected. Leaders may even represent animals as “possessions” (Ronson, 2011), with slave-like qualities, a problematic message: canine obedience is expected, regardless of dignity and the moral status of dogs (Louv, 2016; Zuolo, 2016).

It can thus be hypothesized that dogs are used to communicate about leaders, possibly on the basis of the assumption that dogs resemble their owners and have similar personalities (Levine, 2005; Ragatz et al., 2009; Roy and Christenfeld, 2004, 2005; Turcsán et al., 2012). For example, the strife between US and Russia regarding the invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent US sanctions against Russia gave rise to a symbolic animal’s battle around the US and the Russian presidents. Dmitry Rogozin, the Russian deputy prime minister, ridiculed Obama in a tweet by juxtaposing a picture of Russian president Vladimir Putin with a cheetah and another of US President Barack Obama holding a fluffy poodle. “We have different values and allies”, the tweet read (Worland, 2014). Even the most radical dictators sometimes want to communicate their humanity through dogs. Hitler was known to be very fond of his dog Blondi, a German shepherd, and the Nazi propaganda machine conveyed the image of Hitler as a dog lover (Dowd, 2011).

It is possible, in other words, that leaders want to speak through their dogs, or that dogs “speak” about their owners’ temperament. Dogs can thus assume a symbolic value.

Symbolism, as a distinctly human dimension (Gherardi and Strati, 2017), can be conveyed by cultural signs but also via other means, including dogs.

A RESEARCH AGENDA

After having elaborated a typological classification of dogs in organizations, we now advance topics for a research agenda. Animals have been left out of organizational theorizing even when theorizing from an ecocentric paradigm (Shrivastava, 1995). Dogs can be the most obvious starting point to explore the relationship between organizations and their environments, and the crucial role of animals in this relationship. Before proceeding, it is important to note that at least two interrelated reasons explain why the theme may merit the attention of managers and policy makers. First, canine skills and labor are being increasingly integrated into a range of modern workplaces. Although traditional forms of dog labor are on the decline, notably in agriculture, others are on the rise across a range of organizations. Specifically, the emotional labor of dogs is being employed for stress management and team building in information technology and the health care sectors.

Second, in a world in which organizations go digital and increasingly adopt non-human contributions as their normal *modus operandi* (Ford, 2015), some organizations seem to prize the role of dogs to mitigate against depersonalization and the loss of humanity. In managerially pioneering companies such as Google, Zynga, and Ben & Jerry's, among others (Ayyar, 2014; Cole, 2014), dogs are expected to bring positivity to the workplace and to mark it as an authentically human space. This can help to explain the increasing adoption of formal policies for dogs and other pets in the workplace by many major corporations (von Begen and Bressler, 2015; Wilkin et al., 2016).

In light of the preceding typology, our research agenda sets out how dogs are integrated into modern forms of organization in terms of the main following themes: (a) Dogs as laborers, (b) Canine symbolism in organizational leadership, (c) Antecedents of dog-friendly policies

(d) Impact on external stakeholders, and (e) Risks of canine labor. The theme “dogs as laborers and implications for organizational functioning” involves both canine skills and social capital. “Canine symbolism in organizational leadership” involves both forms of canine symbolism and leader values. “Antecedents of dog-friendly policies” focuses on aspects related to the four forms: dog-friendly policies may be adopted to benefit from canine skills, to promote social capital, to use canine symbolism strategically, or as expressions of leader values. The theme “Impact on external stakeholders” is mainly associated with canine symbolism, but it may also emerge in association with canine skills and social capital. The theme “Risks of canine labor and potential negative effects” tackles a potential dark side of the four forms. These themes are complemented with the discussion of organizations as spaces where humans and non-canine species interact, and dogs as endowed with rights, an issue that has consequences for what the organizations are allowed to do with their canine members.

Dogs as laborers and implications for organizational functioning

Both applied and academic literature has suggested that dogs may produce a positive impact on employees’ well-being and productivity and other aspects of team/organizational functioning. The distinctive qualities of dogs are even being used for therapeutic purposes across a range of organizations from corporations to hospitals and even prisons (Haraway, 2008). Empirical studies are necessary to investigate the nature and effects of the use of dogs as emotional laborers in a variety of work and welfare organizations. Research to date shows not only that canine skills are used in a diversity of organizational contexts, but that these skills can be expanded and refined with new forms of training (e.g., using a computer keyboard system; Rossi and Ades, 2008). Do the effects of such collaborations in terms of stress reduction, improving employees’ well-being and productivity, fostering cooperation and social capital really work? Are companies with pet-friendly policies more creative? How do dogs

affect the experience of space? What are the aesthetic implications of the presence of dogs? What happens when a dog leaves the organization together with the owner?

Another possible research line thus consists of studying the effects of dog-friendly policies for prosocial and ethical behavior via a sense of moral purity (Gino and Desai, 2012; Garner, 2004; Rowlands, 2012; Zhang et al., 2014), although the effects may be moderated by individual values and religious beliefs (e.g., dogs are considered impure in some religions; Wilkin et al., 2016). The expression of emotions by dogs within organizations can positively affect a number of dimensions related to their involvement in fostering team relationships, reducing stress and fostering certain moral and symbolic associations, and the integration of these forms of hybrid emotional labor requires further investigation.

A related research avenue involves a neurobiological approach to studying the effects of dogs on human interactions and social capital. We see here a possible research bridge between two literature streams. On the one hand, dogs and their owners secrete oxytocin when they interact with each other (Nagasawa et al., 2015; Thielke and Udell, 2017). On the other hand, oxytocin in humans is positively associated with higher social capital, including generosity and a greater propensity to trust (Kosfeld et al., 2005; Nave et al., 2015; Zak, 2017; Zak et al., 2004, 2005, 2007; Zap and Knack, 2001). Future research may test if there is a neurobiological base for the effects of dogs over the social capital of teams and organizations.

Canine symbolism in organizational leadership

At the leadership level, one possible research avenue refers to the motives, conscious and unconscious, that explain leaders' love for dogs, and the reasons that dispose them to be seen with their dogs. Considering that it is possible that pets are framed as extensions of the leaders' self (Dotson and Hyatt, 2008), one relevant research question is what images and goals do leaders try to convey and pursue. Skoglund and Redmalm (2017) have already shown the way in which different US presidents have used their dogs as key symbols in expressing their

leadership role with respect to the republic. A different research line relates to how dogs are used to represent leader personality and temperament. The literature suggests that owning high-risk dogs may be indicative of deviant behaviors (Barnes et al., 2006; Ragatz et al., 2009). Are leaders who love those breeds and like to be portrayed with them (e.g., Hitler and Dunlap and their German shepherds) dispositionally and behaviorally different from leaders who love other breeds (e.g., Obama – waterdog; Hillary Clinton – toy poodle)?

The issue is complicated considering that dogs of the same breeds are owned by very different leaders (Rachman, 2008), thus requiring the inclusion of moderating variables. As breeds have different personalities and temperaments (Graham and Gosling, 2009; Jones and Gosling, 2005; Turcsán et al., 2012), leaders may use different breeds to strategically convey specific images and reach defined goals. A range of research methods and approaches can be used to explore the theme of canine symbolism in organizations, especially anthropological and psychoanalytic approaches that explore the symbolic and totemic roles of human-animal relations within society (Hamilton and Taylor, 2011). Future research may also explore how dogs are used by leaders for emotional manipulation and public relations purposes.

Antecedents of dog-friendly policies

A possible research question relates to the predictors of dog-friendly company policy adoption. For example, pet-friendly policies can be more prevalent in some industries than in others, an observation that deserves to be tested and theorized. Anecdotal evidence suggests that tech companies are more likely to adopt such policies (Cole, 2014; Jacobs, 2016; Stone, 2014). However, some companies from other sectors have also adopted pet-friendly policies. It is possible that organizations are prizing the role of dogs to mitigate the effects of depersonalized and alienating forms of work.

Another relevant question relates to the purpose and consequences of adopting pet-friendly policies. For example: (a) Do organizations aim to persuade employees to accept hectic

schedules by letting them bring their dogs (Sherman, 2015)? (b) Do they aim to develop better social capital at the workplace? (c) Do they envision the production of calming and stress reduction effects? Also worth studying is the role played by leaders as triggers or facilitators of pet-friendly policies. Kratz & Jensen, a PR company, started allowing employees to bring their dogs to the office as a consequence of David Kratz, the founder, having himself started bringing Derby, his poodle, to the company (Foderaro, 1999). Research may also investigate the role played by the specificities of some employees, the idiosyncrasies of the community in which the organization operates, or the power of some animal protection societies (and other external stakeholders). The sector (e.g., pet food) in which the organization operates is a possible instigator, but antecedents in other sectors are also worthy of study.

Impact on external stakeholders

Studies may explore the impact of pet-friendly policies on external stakeholders. How do customers and visitors react to the presence of dogs in an organization? Are image and effectiveness improved when a company adopts pet-friendly policies (Wilkin et al., 2016)? Do pet-friendly companies express idiosyncratic identities and are such identities positively acknowledged outside the organization? Are companies with pet-friendly policies seen as being more human, and does this perception have a positive influence on attracting applicants and on the perceived legitimacy of the company within the community? Do companies with pet-friendly policies attract and retain applicants with specific values (e.g., millennials)? Are there mimicry effects (Galaskiewicz and Wasserman, 1989), in that companies tend to imitate policies of pet-friendly organizations that operate in the same industry? Does such an effect explain why pet-friendly policies are apparently more common in tech companies?

Risks of canine labor and potential negative effects

We have accentuated mostly the positive. However, research is inconsistent regarding the positive effects of dogs on human health and well-being, some studies indicating negative

effects (Amiot and Bastian, 2015's literature review). Moreover, our "best friends" may be dangerous (like humans, one might reply). Police dogs have attacked innocent bystanders (Sanders, 2006) and veterinary workers must routinely deal with difficult and aggressive canine patients (Sanders, 1994). There are, therefore, significant risks associated with canine labor (e.g., Ayyar, 2014, Wilkin et al., 2016) with literature pointing out possible negative effects of dogs in organizations, including (a) safety problems caused by dogs, (b) fears, phobias or allergies, (c) dirtiness, (d) noise and other distractions negatively affecting the workflow and productivity, (e) damage of property and expensive equipment, (f) lawsuits due to personal injuries caused by pets owned by employees, (g) and negative reactions of some customers. Ayyar (2014) has observed that dogs can be distracting, dangerous, and pathogenic. Some people dislike them or are afraid of them. Their presence can be legally problematic on several grounds (in case of attacks and rental agreements, among others). Research may explore whether, and under what conditions, these potential problems are offset by the positive impacts.

Other relevant research questions include: (a) What kind of relationship unfolds between pet owners and those employees who do not like dogs or some breeds? (b) What kind of problems may emerge when cat (or other pet) lovers claim the right to bring their pets to work? (c) What conflicts may emerge when dogs and other animals (including other dogs) share the same workplace? (d) Can an organization's reputation be damaged if it uses dogs in ways that contradict animal rights, at least those espoused by animal protection societies? (e) Do organizations take insurance issues into account when adopting pet-friendly policies (Coren, 2014)? (f) Does the "graduated humanness" of dogs imply a corresponding "doglinquency" (Sandoval-Cervantes, 2016)?

In addition to these issues, research in the social sciences has also considered the potential for exclusivities and hierarchies of difference in organizations. These hierarchies and differences may themselves play out in terms of important differences by gender, class,

ethnicity and sexuality, for example. Works in community studies (e.g., Tissot, 2011) have indicated that dogs can render certain public spaces more exclusive and exclusionary, banishing the poor and non-white populations especially. In organizations, the same may mean that bringing dogs to work may be more accepted at some strata than others, which would mean in turn that power differences would be accentuated rather than mitigated. And political pressure may mean that the presence of dogs would be imposed on those organizational members who would favor their absence.

Other animals

Research may also consider organizations as spaces where human and non-human species coincide and perform different forms of agency as well as how the forms of actorhood present in Figure 1 apply to other species. We focused on the case of dogs, but other animals have revolutionized human practices and possibilities as well: consider, for example, the role of horses in farming and war, and the historical role of camels on agricultural activities, transportation, and military service (Pigière and Henrotay, 2012), and more recently on tourism. This would help transcend the notion of organizations as purely human spaces in which animals perform functions that bring improvement to human lives. In this perspective, the role of dogs transcends and enriches the more restrictive discussion of this paper.

From the dogs' perspective

Before we conclude, it is important to note that it is easy for humans to objectify dogs and neglect the negative effects of human practices on their physical and mental conditions (Ziv, 2017). The contribution of the field of critical animal studies (Best, 2009) should be considered in any research agenda on dogs (and other animals) in organizations. The notion that dogs are endowed with rights has consequences for what (and how) the organizations are permitted to do with their canine “members” (Rollin, 2006), because even when moved by good intentions, humans can do harm to dogs (Frommer and Arluke, 1999). Finally, although

the moral status of dogs and other animals is debatable (Zuolo, 2016), it is important to recognize the moral importance of animals (Harvey, 2017; Overall, 2017; Rollin, 2006) and defend it on the ground of other normative concepts. Such a perspective has implications for the organizations' conduct and their codes of ethics (Overall, 2017).

CONCLUSION

In organizations dogs tend to be taken so much for granted (Bradshaw, 2011) that they are ignored. Organizations have fundamentally been approached from the perspective of the humans that constitute them. Animals have played a fundamental role in the evolution of human societies throughout history (Diamond, 1998; Haraway, 2003, 2008). Other branches of the social sciences have begun to investigate the increasing role of dogs in the workplace, including psychology (McNicholas and Collis, 2000), ergonomics (Helton, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d), health management (Barker, et al., 2012; Wilkins et al., 2016), and sociology (Haraway, 2003, 2008). However, in organization theory, animals have been kept at the margins, with a few exceptions. Organization theory is mostly or almost an exclusively human discipline. In this article, we challenge the logic of human exclusivity and discuss the canine presence in organizations. Dogs may be secondary actors in the life of organizations, but they are important enough to be considered as a deserving object of study. The use of dogs in the workplace should not be understood simply as a management fad (Ayyar, 2014; Cole, 2014; Jacobs, 2016; *The Economist*, 2010), but as part of a broader historical process of mutual co-evolution in which humans and dogs are bound together as companion species in changing divisions of labor and forms of leisure (Haraway, 2003, 2008).

We contribute to organization theory by bringing the logic of human-animal interaction to the field of organization studies, in the process showing that organizations mold the nature of the interaction by infusing it with institutional and power dimensions. In organizations, dogs are engaged in power plays and in the institutional functioning of organizations, gaining

symbolic power and even co-leadership actorhood. We also call scholarly attention to the presence of dogs in organizations and to the roles they perform in four keys areas: the use of canine skills in organizations, the role of human canine interactions in the performance of tasks, the role of canine symbolism in organizations, and the use of such symbolism in the transmission of leader values. We have outlined a new division of labor centered upon human-canine interactions in the contemporary workplace (see Figure 1), which reveals how dogs are not only valued for their distinctive manual skills but are now being enrolled into a far broader range of symbolic and emotional tasks within the workplace. Building on the work of Haraway (2008), we argue for a broader appreciation of dogs in the workplace and for further research in this area. Overall, we conclude that dogs can be the next indicator of organizational diversity. They may be both “agents” and beneficiaries of the “human revolution” (Kristof, 2016) aimed at a stronger respect for the *non-human* animals.

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