Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Science (JAHSS)

ISSN: 3006-9491 (Online)

Volume 2 Issue 3, (2025)

https://doi.org/10.69739/jahss.v2i3.945

https://journals.stecab.com/jahss

Published by
Stecab Publishing

Research Article

The Petriarchal Turn: Reassembling Domestic Life and Multispecies Families through Petriarchy on AI-Driven Platforms

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About Article

Article History

Submission: July 27, 2025
Acceptance : August 31, 2025
Publication : September 05, 2025

Keywords

AI-Driven Platforms, Digital Care Economies, Domestic Life, Multispecies Families, Petriarchy, Pets, Social Media

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual article theorises the *petriarchal turn*: the increasing role of companion animals as nonhuman actors who reshape power, care, and capital in platform-mediated domestic life. Drawing on Actor–Network Theory (Latour, Callon and Law), Bourdieu's theory of capitals, and Haraway's companionship, the article introduces *petriarchy* as a conceptual research tool for analysing how pets organise household routines while generating, accumulating, and converting economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital through social media platforms. Methodologically, it advances a theoretical framework, illustrated through vignettes from digital pet cultures such as petfluencers, which highlight how leads, feeds, algorithms, and veterinary protocols, to name but a few, enrol humans and animals alike into value-producing actor networks. Pets are described as obligatory passage points within domestic assemblages, reconfiguring schedules, spatial arrangements, and affective labour, while social media platforms translate their cuteness and care into visibility and revenue. These processes redistribute authority and resources within families, intersecting with class and gender, as access to breeds, training, time, and platform literacy determines who can capitalise on nonhuman charisma, a traditionally human attribute. The article argues that the contemporary family should be reframed as a multispecies, digitally AI-mediated, capital converting assemblage. It then proposes testable propositions for empirical research on platform pet economies and calls for a critical agenda that recognises both the agency and vulnerability of animals mediated online.

Citation Style:

Day, M. J. (2025). The Petriarchal Turn: Reassembling Domestic Life and Multispecies Families through Petriarchy on AI-Driven Platforms. *Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Science, 2*(3), 10-25. https://doi.org/10.69739/jahss.v2i3.945

1. INTRODUCTION

This article introduces a conceptual provocation informed by social theory. Notably, contemporary domestic life is increasingly organised by a *petriarchy*. This describes an analytic, not a gag. The term does not seek to displace or minimise the gendered structures named by patriarchy; nor does it suggest that animals rule households. Rather, *petriarchy* designates a specific configuration of multispecies domestic life in which companion animals, humans as co-habitants, and platform infrastructures jointly organise routines, redistribute labour, and convert forms of capital. The *petriarchal turn* therefore is a descriptive device for tracing distributed agency and value-flows across species lines, consonant with feminist STS and animal-studies commitments to situated, accountable relations (Walby, 1990; Adams, 1990; Birke, 1994). In short, then, describing *petriarchy* and the *petriarchal turn* strives to offer analytical map of how nonhumans become points and centres of calculation within digital domestic economies. It is not intended to be confused with the children's book *The Petriarchy* (Crawford, 2024), discussion of pets as surrogate children by the same name (Real Insurance, 2016), the rise in *petriarchy* products and thus trademarks (Sherson, 2023) or growing usage on Thai social media (NBT, 2025); this work is not endorsed nor affiliated by those uses, but their thought-provoking deployment illustrates a growing cultural conversation about the power of pets in human lives.

Hence, the concept in this article is a vehicle for a diagnostic mechanism useful for analysing multispecies households in which companion animals operate as consequential actors that have both agency and power over humans within networks of care. So, they focally dominate networks that are increasing entangled with platformed social media in the digital age. This concept, then, serves as a manifestation of Actor–Network Theory (ANT), proposed across work by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and John Law, reflecting also Pierre Bourdieu's capitals. Hence, this article affirms that pets participate in productive conversion of economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital, and that this participation reorganises domestic routines, redistributes decision-making, and re-values mechanical, social and productive labour economies within modern families (Latour, 2005; Callon, 1986; Law, 1994; Bourdieu, 1986). The paper proceeds by first reviewing relevant literature on multispecies families and platform economies, then outlining our conceptual methodology, before theorising the *petriarchal turn* through contemporary examples and deriving a framework for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pets increasingly occupy kinship-like positions that redistribute authority and intimacy in families. For example, in couples delaying or opting out of human parenthood, they become foci for biographical projects: travel choices, housing decisions, and social circles coalesce around animal-centred activities. Donna Haraway's notion of *companion species* captures this entanglement: lives become co-authored without collapsing species difference (Haraway, 2003). On social media platforms, kinship idioms are operationalised, then, as narrative assets: pet birthdays, adoption anniversaries, and recovery milestones punctuate content calendars, inviting audience co-celebration and reinforcing community ties. These rhythms stabilise cognitive attention (Low *et al.*, 2020) and provide low-friction opportunities for social media sponsorship placements that feel congruent with the pet's life course.

We know that, in modern society, across many household's pets needs delimit when people wake, where they live, how they furnish their homes, and how their money and time are spent. ANT offers a vocabulary for such power-making arrangements, rendering them analytically legible without presuming a human monopoly on agency (Day & Zhang, 2025). Pets, veterinary protocols, microchips, apps, leads, food brands, and platform algorithms are all actors and mediators that translate intentions, channel actions, and shape network outcomes (Latour, 2005). Following Callon (1986), we can, and must, treat the pet as an actor that can problematise (e.g. they create the need for daily walks), shape interest (e.g. mobilising children to play), and thus enrol humans into stable networks. Law's (1994) attention to ordering helps us see the home as an effect of multiple heterogeneous practices, such feeding, grooming, photographing, posting, rather than as a fixed backdrop. ANT's symmetrical attention to humans and nonhumans positions them as dynamic spaces.

Recognising, and perhaps organising, the power of the nonhuman over the human, for example, requires supplementation if we wish to account for stratification, advantage, and accumulation. Here Bourdieu's ideas on capital and its manifestations, alongside his logic of conversion, are indispensable. Certain pets confer, under his framework, cultural capital (e.g. training certifications, breed knowledge, ethical rescue narratives) shared between humans, social capital (e.g. access to social dog-walker communities at parks, clubs, and online follower networks), and symbolic capital (e.g. prestige, moral distinction, sense of pride/ownership). Under specific conditions these can be converted into economic capital, notably through the emergence of popular social media profile creation, which leads to the pets having humanised presence in the digital world, whereby their manifestations yield economic returns, such as gifted products, sponsorships, appearance fees, and merchandise. Whilst true, the humans must mediate that presence, the rationale for their inclusion may be economic and out of necessity; they monetise pet charisma and appearance to help pay maintain the network stability of the household. So, mediation is neither solely inherent nor purely projected; it is cultivated through practices, framed by devices, and validated by audiences, with humans and nonhumans co-producing the forms of capital at stake (Bourdieu, 1986; Waters & Day, 2022a; 2022b).

Social media intensifies these processes by offering infrastructures for visibility, metrics for value, and routes to monetisation. Companion animals have long circulated as objects of affection and exchange, but platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube commodify this as legible to algorithms and audiences at scale, thus translating aesthetic and 'a sense of taste' across human user affective judgements, which converts clicks, follows, and contracts. As Sianne Ngai suggests, cuteness condenses vulnerability and manipulability; in the pet context it becomes a strategic aesthetic that scaffolds attention and care while opening pathways to commodification (Ngai,

2012). The result is a 'digital economy of care' and emergence of non-human economic scale within the status quo of the modern family, in which the everyday reproductive labours of feeding, grooming, training, and soothing can become content production, and where the pet is positioned simultaneously as dependent, performer, and brand asset. Where this becomes concerning, of course, is with respect to animal welfare; in the Victorian Era, children were produced as labour assets, and filial piety is still practiced to this day. Indeed, Despret (2016) affirms that it is paramount we question the realities animals exist within, whilst Coulter (2016) equally discusses the role of interspecies solidarity, whilst Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) assert that animal rights infer political power in their agency, hence is relevant to Duffy's (2017) ideas about how social media production can impact labour norms, gender and class, suggesting framing is needed for how such key issues intersect with platform economies and digital care.

2.1. Framing *petriarchal* thinking

Foregrounding *petriarchy* thus requires us to recognise three claims shared across the authors described. First, agency is distributed, and pets can function as obligatory passage points through which domestic decisions must pass (Callon, 1986). This does not anthropomorphise animals as intentional household heads; it recognises their capacity to reconfigure human projects, through embodied needs and learned routines, mediated by tools and norms (Latour, 2005). Second, capital accumulates and converts across multispecies lines. Households cultivate the pet's cultural capital (e.g. training, breed expertise), mobilise social capital (e.g. audiences, communities), and pursue symbolic distinction (e.g. ethical consumption, rescue status), potentially converting these lines into economic gains (Bourdieu, 1986). Third, social media platforms reweight domestic power by rewarding certain practices, aesthetics, and temporalities of care seen previously with regards to how people organise their lives, work and study modalities through formation of human and nonhuman networks (Wood *et al.*, 2017). This means as the agency of pets grows, the heterogeneous assemblage, so, the Latourian network which takes shape around them, grows and as it does, it requires human and non-human interactions.

Such mutual symbiosis can create outcomes that are visible, performative, and metrically validated, thereby reshaping who does what work, when, and for whose benefit. As such, a sociotechnical reweighting of this 'multispecies family' has implications for inequality, class and ethics alike. Not all households can equally invest in the time, training, veterinary care, and aesthetic staging that social media platform popularity, so audience/user visibility, demands; classed and gendered distributions of care work may be intensified as, for example, women and younger family members undertake the labour of content creation, community management, and algorithmic maintenance, as both groups are more statistically likely to be in the home, adding too to their labour. Likewise, some pet breeds and hence bodies are differentially legible to social media platform cuteness preferences, while others are stigmatised or rendered invisible. *Petriarchy* helps describe how advantage is reproduced through apparently apolitical practices of affection, even as it also illuminates sites where human–animal relations unsettle anthropocentric hierarchies. Donna Haraway's insistence that we live with companion species is instructive; we must trace the concrete, situated relations through which species meet, become, and do work together, to protect their welfare (Haraway, 2003).

The stakes are also practical. Policy debates about animal welfare, advertising standards, tax and labour law fail to intersect, presently, with social media platform governance, yet these values intersect frequently within household pet economies. Should paid pet advertising be labelled differently when the economic-generating talent is nonhuman? How might welfare frameworks account for the cumulative stresses of training and performance? What responsibilities do platforms bear for amplifying practices that may be detrimental to animal health? *Petriarchy* offers a lens through which to formulate questions empirically. In short, *petriarchy* names a configuration in which nonhuman companions do not simply ornament domestic life but actively pattern it, generating and redirecting flows of value through the conjuncture of affective ties and computational attention. To see this is to reassemble the domestic family as a multispecies, capital-converting assemblage, and to recognise both the agency and the vulnerability of the animals within it.

2.2. The foundations of *petriarchy*

Considerable literature precedes *petriarchy*. Where novelty is introduced, then, is to assemble this within a sociotechnical framework influenced by ANT. This framework, as described by Bruno Latour, enables an analysis of domestic life that accords agency to nonhumans, which in turn supports and demonstrates how Bourdieu's field and capital capture patterned pet inequality, accumulation, and conversion. However, the ontological and epistemological exploration of pets and their capital has several foundations, including Brooks *et al.* (2016) who explored the relationship between lived experience and wellbeing, Cattell *et al.* (2008) who explore how humans engage in everyday public spaces and their social realities, Cutt *et al.* (2008) who identifies how physical activity changes amongst pet owners, alongside Haraway's (2003; 2008; 2016) analysis of how species meet and form bonds. There are also efforts to trace such companionships across history and into modernity (Tague, 2015; Shukin, 2009; Dolan, 1994; Arseneault & Collard, 2023). Human-animal bonding is noted in Hunt *et al.* (1992). Likewise, pet's role in fostering human wellbeing (Rew, 2000; Schnieder & Harley, 2006; Zimolag & Krupa, 2009; Turkle, 2012). It is, however, across Wood (2005; 2009; 2010) and Wood *et al.* (2007; 2017) that we find a body of literature on pets and social capital accruement. These works position the extension of the human and their extension of sociotechnical capital through pets. Recent debates build on this across several conceptual works, for example, Vandenberghe (2025), whose discussion on human-animal relations positions interest on multispecies assemblages. Acknowledging this conceptual foundation is important, because it shows there is a growing body of interest. Meanwhile, scholarship on pets and social media explores how companion animals function as distinctive cultural producers and marketing assets in platformed environments, raising implications for their welfare. Studies of cute economies

highlight the affective appeal of pet content and its simultaneous commodification, where joyful, playful performances coexist with the monetisation of attention (Maddox, 2021). Within this commercial ecosystem, animal-centred influencer practices are studied regarding advertisement disclosures and brand partnerships families for pets (Jacobson *et al.*, 2022). Experimental field evidence suggests that pet-based influencers drive campaigns, with outcomes moderated by message appeal (e.g., informational vs. emotional) and by who narrates the story (e.g. human vs. animal) (Di Cioccio *et al.*, 2024; Zhang *et al.*, 2023; Vereshchagina & Dushakova, 2025).

Hence, if a *petriarchy* is a household regime in which non-human companions wield consequential influence, then social media is the contemporary relay through which that influence is amplified, monetised, and moralised. An ANT-inflected approach urges us to treat media platforms, devices, metrics and monetisation tools as actants, so 'actors with power', not backdrops to human–animal relations. As Latour (2005) reminds us, our task is to 'follow the actors' learning from their often-messy associations rather than imposing a ready-made sociology. Social media platforms recompose domestic multispecies life by funnelling attention and labour through specific interfaces. In Callon's view, successful account holders and creator-pairs work to establish themselves a stabilising passage of relationships, a movement he names problematisation (Callon, 1986). In concrete terms, the account, the pet's persona, the human carer, the smartphone, the algorithm, and the brand partner are knotted together in a stable way, intersecting that with a social media platform network, and their passages of audiences, sponsorships and care resources: creator tools, recommendation engines and commerce rails.

Pets as an obligatory passage point are not fixed; their lives are maintained through constant translation work. Here, we find Law's insistence that organisational operations are not nouns but verbs (Law, 2003). Social media platforms, for example, continually reorder what counts as valuable care, engagement and visibility, thus introducing new sounds, short-form formats, affiliate links, or disclosure rules. Akrich gives us the vocabulary to describe how platform architectures inscribe roles and expectations into technical objects; inscription, for the author, describes a produced outcome, as a 'scripted' scenario' (Akrich, 1992). On TikTok or Instagram, a pet-mediated display and the "script" is partly material (e.g. front-facing cameras, caption tools, duet features), partly procedural (e.g. content policies, music licensing), and partly metric (e.g. watch time, saves, shares). These scripts cue carers to present pets as narratable subjects with consistent traits: sleepy, chaotic, clever, needy. So, they cue pets to perform repeatable actions that fit the loopable, memeable grain/feed (e.g. the head tilt, the paw handshake, the talking button routine all demonstrate frequent online pet media). Scripts also reformat obligations. Law's point that scripted agency is 'materially heterogeneous' suggests that nonhumans and humans are distributed across 'documents, codes, texts, architectures and physical devices' (Law, 2003). In *petriarchy*, reminders to post daily, go live and affiliate dashboards re-specify the care tempo at home: feeding is synced to light; walks are timed to audience peaks; enrichment activities double as content.

2.3. Cuteness, pet labour and value conversion

Returning to Ngai's cuteness is indispensable for also understanding how pets attract attention and capital online; cuteness is a way of 'aestheticising powerlessness' (Ngai, 2012). Cuteness, then, makes dependence desirable; it solicits protective, caring responses that readily translate into follows, likes and purchases. What appears as an apolitical aesthetic becomes a political economy of feeling in which care is rendered visible/convertible. For Bourdieu, this is accumulated labour, which, appropriated, enables pets to appropriate social energy (Bourdieu, 1986). Pets, as Haraway insists, are not surrogates for theory, but living co-residents in households (Haraway, 2003). Taking that seriously means recognising animals as partners whose preferences and thresholds can redirect a household's schedule, budget and publicity, if it is socially mediated online. For example, platforms now host grief practices documenting companion-animal loss (Vitak *et al.*, 2017), inviting a public sphere into a private landscape. In welfare contexts, platform metrics and data play a role in how pets come to live in households motivated towards social media display; adoptable animals are shown, in studies, to correlate with social media visibility and engagement, informing shelters' outreach strategies and human adoption practices (Morrison *et al.*, 2024). Users have also been shown to turn to social media groups for health information, leveraging collective expertise while navigating credibility/risk (Kogan *et al.*, 2021). At a broader cultural level, viral pet media supports mood management and emotion regulation in particular populations (Myrick, 2015). Pet social popularity can even enter political discourse through visual semiotics that index identity and media manifestation (Caple, 2019). Taken together, literature positions pets online as actors whose affect, care, and commerce intersect, shaping multispecies sociality and sociotechnical economies (Maddox, 2021; Jacobson *et al.*, 2022; Di Cioccio *et al.*, 2024).

2.4. Capital, field, and pet conversion for *Bourdieu*

Bourdieu's sociology underpins such work, which often echoes his thinking on fields: relatively autonomous arenas (e.g. cultural field, a platform economy) with their own rules, valued resources, and struggles. Thus, the labour of training, filming, editing and community management accumulates as multiple capitals in the household field. For example:

- Cultural capital (e.g. the know-how to stage, narrate and ethically handle animals on camera);
- Social capital (e.g. a following that can be mobilised for sponsorships or advocacy);
- Symbolic capital (e.g. recognition as a "good owner," a responsible rescuer, an expert trainer).

Across a successful social media pet account, these forms convert/reconvert: symbolic credit (trust) increases social capital (reach), which can be exchanged for economic capital (ad revenue, brand partnerships), some of which is reinvested in pet welfare (insurance, enrichment, specialist food), sustaining the cycle. The pet is not a passive conduit here: their charisma, unpredictability and specific capacities (trainability, tolerance for novelty) co-produce value. Capitals, then, is something pets accumulate and convert to maintain/improve their position (Bourdieu, 1986). Expanding on the above, first, economic

capital, may describe monetary resources, such as social media income streams, including sponsorships, appearance fees, affiliate sales, and merchandise linked to pet personas. Second, cultural capital, embodies competences and dispositions (training skill, breed knowledge, grooming expertise), objectified forms (specialist equipment, books, certifications), and institutionalised forms (awards, qualifications). Third, social capital, positions networks of durable sociotechnical connections, be it neighbours at the park, breed clubs, rescue communities, veterinary ties, and, critically, follower publics online. Fourth, symbolic capital, determines recognition and prestige. So, "ethical" rescue stories, alignment with welfare causes, or the aura of a rare breed; the stamp of legitimacy conferred by media coverage or blue ticks. Capitals, for Bourdieu, are convertible: cultural capital (high-quality training, distinctive aesthetic) can become symbolic capital (reputational distinction), which can be monetised as economic capital through sponsorship. Social capital (follower networks) can amplify all other capitals by increasing visibility and endorsement opportunities. Importantly, conversion is field-dependent and contingent on meta-capital (Bourdieu, 1986). The power to set the rules of value within or across fields. In platformised culture, social media algorithms, moderation policies, and interface affordances function as meta-capital that reweights which practices are rewarded, and hence themselves are actors in the 'family' network when people post their pets online, and become passage points as and when they convert economic capital.

Bourdieu's habitus, embodied, historically formed dispositions, helps us track how families come to feel what "good care", "authentic content", or "responsible ownership" requires, and to act accordingly without constant deliberation. Habitus also anchors inequality: the capacity to stage clean, well-lit spaces, to afford regular grooming and vet care, to read and respond to platform metrics, to iterate content practices swiftly, are unevenly distributed across classed and gendered lines and inflect what kinds of pet visibility are possible, and indeed what forms of identity pets develop (Bourdieu, 1986). Symbolic power and doxa (the idea that 'what goes without saying') matter too: certain breeds or practices are rendered desirable or natural, others questionable, shaping both audience judgements and brand partnerships. Bringing Bourdieu to pets is not to anthropocentrically re-centre humans as the only strategists; discussions of their social capital are outlined in studies discussed above. Rather, it is to re-specify the social topologies within which human–animal networks are valued, legitimated, and sustained. It enables us to ask not only what networks exist but who benefits and how, as well as, crucially, how benefits are accumulated over time and stabilised as durable advantages.

2.5. Pets as actors: nonhuman agency in heterogenous actor-networks

Hence, to understand *petriarchy* we must first recognise that ANT begins from generalised symmetry: explanations of the world or relationships within it, should not grant a priori privilege to human intention over nonhuman mediation, according to Latour (2005). What we may call a 'familial' household, therefore, is not a backdrop but an outcome of translations among heterogeneous elements: a dog's embodied need to walk, a particular brand of lead, a door lock, a calendar reminder, a pram for canine transport, an Instagram reel that renders the performable and public (Callon, 1986; Law, 1994). As discussed above, ANT ideas are especially germane to multispecies home life. In translation, domestic arrangements stabilise after periods of transformation when actors align around problems and routes, forming and prioritising pets as obligatory passage points, through which action passes (Callon, 1986). For many families, a pet, so nonhuman, often constitutes such a passage point: decisions about waking times, housing, holidays, and expenditures are funnelled through their passage. The household thereby becomes a network ordered around animal care, itself a recurrent problem to be solved. Second, mediation and inscription. Nonhumans shape action by carrying scripts that invite or constrain behaviour (Akrich, 1992). A stair gate fitted in a house mediates a boundary that has agency. Likewise, a smart feeder expects timing instruction to deliver portions, and a social media platform's duet feature anticipates, in its code, replicable cuteness. These inscribe possibilities and redistribute competence: who can feed, who can post, who can manage a walk, and when. Hence, homes reflect ordering multiplicity of multiple co-ordinated practices, an assemblage (Law, 1994).

Moments of pet breakdown, be it behaviourally driven, illness, platform bans, or even a chewed camera cable, all reveal the networked labour needed to keep order in place. ANT's virtue here is it helps us to foreground their participation in practical arrangements, material infrastructures, and semiotic circulations. Put another way, it renders legible the mundane as having power: leads, litter trays, clickers, crates, cameras, editing apps, algorithms. These are actors themselves through which human–animal relations are stabilised and made economically actionable, a sociotechnical reality where one cannot be untangled from another (Latour, 2005; Callon, 1986; Law, 1994). Yet ANT's equalising impulse can struggle to account for structured advantage: why some households convert pet charisma into stable gains while others cannot; why some breeds and styles of care travel better across platforms; why labour falls unevenly by gender and class. For that, Bourdieu's ideas become paramount.

3. METHODOLOGY

This article adopts a postmodern conceptual methodology. Thus, it departs from modernist and positivist traditions of social science. Unlike modernist methodologies often seek linear causality, stable categories, and universal claims, this paper instead foregrounds conceptual multiplicity, partiality, and reflexivity. In doing so, it aims not to test hypotheses against measurable variables, but to develop a diagnostic vocabulary, *petriarchy*, which provide propositions that can be tested to render visible the dispersed agencies, inequalities, and ethical frictions of multispecies domestic life under AI-mediated social media regulated platformed conditions. In contrast to positivist approaches, which presume clear distinctions between subject and object, cause and effect, this methodology embraces the instability of categories such as family, care, labour, and agency. These are treated not as fixed entities but as contingent effects

of heterogeneous associations. This is consonant with Actor–Network Theory's principle of "following the actors" (Latour, 2005; Callon, 1986), Bourdieu's insistence that fields are stratified arenas of capital accumulation (Bourdieu, 1986), and Haraway's injunction to stay with the trouble of becoming-with (Haraway, 2003, 2008, 2016).

Such a stance aligns the theoretical vantage presented with postmodern methodological traditions that emphasise deconstruction, bricolage, and reflexivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Law, 2004). The postmodern orientation also acknowledges that concepts are not neutral descriptors but performative interventions. To coin *petriarchy* is not simply to report reality, but to produce an analytic lens through which particular relations, so pets as points of passage, platforms as meta-capital, cuteness as aesthetic labour, become thinkable. This contrasts with modernist claims to "mirror" social reality; instead, theory here is treated as generative, provocative, and provisional (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). Accordingly, the article proceeds through a threefold strategy:

i. Conceptual bricolage: weaving ANT, Bourdieu, and Haraway together, while retaining their tensions, as an intentional methodology that resists synthesis and instead treats theoretical friction as a productive resource.

ii. Illustrative vignettes, which highlight current digital pet cultures on platforms not as representative samples but as figures of thought that dramatise future theoretical dynamics.

iii. Propositional modelling, using the above to forge testable propositions and theoretical models that invite future empirical application, while refusing the positivist aspiration to closure, finality, or general law.

This methodological stance is consistent with treating theoretical sociology as diagnostic rather than prescriptive. It does not claim to explain all multispecies households or predict social outcomes in determinate ways. Instead, it provides an analytic vocabulary for interrogating how power, capital, and care are reassembled across species and technologies. Following postmodern sensibilities, the intent is to expose the relational textures of contemporary domesticity while leaving open space for contestation, adaptation, and refusal in future scholarship. A postmodern conceptual methodology is valid here because the object of study, *petriarchy*, is not yet an empirically stabilised phenomenon but a theoretical provocation designed to draw attention to overlooked dynamics in multispecies domestic life. Conceptual research has a well-established place in the social sciences and humanities, particularly when existing vocabularies fail to capture emergent configurations of agency, care, and value (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013). Developing new concepts is itself a methodological act: it provides the tools with which subsequent empirical studies can be designed, tested, and debated.

This validity is reinforced by three considerations. First, the complexity of the field, families, pets, platforms, and AI systems, resists reduction to single variables or causal models. A conceptual approach allows us to keep these relations open, dynamic, and contested, consistent with Law's (2004) argument that social science must account for the "mess" of lived associations. Meanwhile, a postmodern epistemology accepts that categories such as "family" or "care" are not timeless, but historically and technologically reassembled (Lyotard, 1984). A conceptual methodology helps this article to foreground such contingency, treating such categories as effects of networks and power relations, not givens. Third, diagnostic rather than prescriptive intent makes this approach particularly valid: the goal is not to settle debates or impose fixed models, but to propose an analytic device open to critique and revision. In this way, the validity of a conceptual methodology lies not in generalisable findings, but in its heuristic power. It forges an ability to reframe the problem-space, generate new questions, and provide a vocabulary for empirical research that otherwise would not exist.

As Denzin and Lincoln (2018) emphasise, qualitative and postmodern traditions extend validity beyond replication or prediction, towards interpretive richness, theoretical innovation, and ethical attentiveness. This is the register in which the present work situates itself, aided by the process of deconstruction, which offers a further methodological anchor for this study. Following Derrida (1978/1997), deconstruction illuminates that concepts are never stable containers of meaning but are constituted through difference, deferral, and exclusion. To theorise *petriarchy* is therefore not to establish a new master-category, but to unsettle the assumed stability of domestic and familial power by drawing attention to the nonhuman relations that patriarchal analyses have typically elided. In this sense, the methodology adopted is explicitly deconstructive: it works by revealing how categories such as family, care, and agency are always already fractured, provisional, and open to reassembly across species and platforms. By foregrounding these instabilities, deconstruction encourages us to build a critical framework that both legitimises the coinage of *petriarchy* and situates it as a conceptual intervention that exposes the exclusions of anthropocentric social theory while refusing closure or totalisation (Derrida, 1978/1997). A limitation of this postmodern conceptual methodology, discussed subsequently, is that its insights remain provisional and interpretive, offering diagnostic lenses rather than empirically validated claims, and thus requiring future empirical studies to test, adapt, or contest the framework.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Tracing multispecies domestic life: pets as household actors

If the theoretical architecture and methodology proposes to outline *petriarchy* makes sense, for Latour (2005) it must also be perceptible in the everyday, hence traced through the temporal, spatial, and moral–economic orderings of domestic life (Latour, 2005; Law, 1994). Household time is thick with pet rhythms: feeding windows, toilet breaks, walks, grooming cycles, medication schedules, crate training, enrichment sessions. These routines exhibit what ANT calls translation: the pet's bodily needs are reframed as tasks, delegated to devices (timers, smart feeders), and distributed across humans according to availability, competence, and willingness (Callon, 1986). The dog's morning walk, for instance, often becomes an obligatory passage point through which multiple human agendas must pass; school runs, commute departures, and exercise plans hinge on that outing's timing and reliability.

Temporal reconfiguration also extends to anticipatory labour. Humans learn to read signals, such as pacing, yowls, posture, so that responses become pre-emptive rather than reactive, integrating animal cues into a habitus of care (Bourdieu, 1986). Platform participation intensifies this temporal density. For the socially mediated family, filming, editing, and posting of pet content are layered atop care routines; in households where pet content is monetised, schoolwork or paid employment may be sequenced around filming.

Homes are, through the lens of Law (1994), effects of practices and artefacts rather than static containers. Pet-keeping foregrounds this by making spatial arrangements a site of ongoing negotiation: the home becomes a studio whose design subtly reflects the inscription devices of the pet economy, ring lights, microphones, treat pouches that keep the animal in view of a camera. Home spatial order is therefore not merely about hygiene or comfort; it is also about legibility to audiences and algorithms, tying domestic arrangement to the production of symbolic and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Latour, 2005). Where social media is involved, then, an additional layer of representational and algorithmic labour emerges, for example caption writing, comment moderation, analytics tracking, brand correspondence. These tasks tend to be absorbed by the household member with the relevant digital literacy and temporal flexibility, likely women or adolescents, based on archetypical familial dynamics, expanding the scope of care work while rendering portions of it publicly visible, which positions interesting ramifications for how and where power exists within the household, and how pets shed light onto this (Bourdieu, 1986; Haraway, 2003).

Pets can of course also enrol humans, apps, and tools into a durable configuration where responsibility is distributed and renegotiated (Callon, 1986). These redistributions are not neutral: they shape claims to authority ("I do most of the work"), entitlement to resources ("I bought the food and the camera"), and the legitimacy to decide on training methods or partnerships, as well as expected rewards for participations. Money is never just money in pet households, as all pet owners are aware. Rather, it is symbolically saturated. Decisions about premium food, pet insurance, vaccinations, grooming, and accessories are moralised as signs of "good ownership", with classed inflections. A family mediating their home on platforms who invest in training classes and veterinary dentistry accrues cultural capital (competence, good taste) and symbolic capital (recognition by trainers, vets, online communities) that may or may not convert into economic capital later (Bourdieu, 1986). Conversely, visible frugality can be read as care or neglect depending on narrative framing; for example, rescue owners who upcycle bedding may accumulate ethical prestige, set against pedigree enthusiasts who purchase high-end gear may be cast as vain or responsible, hence contingent on the field's doxa.

Training exemplifies mutual shaping: humans shape animals, and animals shape humans. Clickers, treat pouches, and target sticks inscribe sequences of action through which both parties learn new habits (Akrich, 1992). Dogs acquire cues and confidence; humans, in contrast, acquire timing, observation, and patience. In such 'symbiotic dyads' training yields a repertoire of behaviours that travel well across contexts. This repertoire functions as embodied cultural capital that can be recognised by social media audiences ("well-trained"), brands ("reliable talent"), and institutions (certifications), smoothing the path to symbolic and economic conversion (Bourdieu, 1986). Crucially, failure is as instructive as success, as it is a focal point of ANT. A reactive dog or a chronically ill cat can become a point around which the household reorganises with greater intensity: avoidance of triggers, consultation with behaviourists, procurement of specialised equipment, adjustment of filming practices to protect welfare. Here, agency is visible in network breakdown, as it also can be if socially mediated online (Law, 1994).

Petriarchy helps us also to keep animal vulnerability in view. The pursuit of content can create friction with welfare: repeated takes of tricks, costumes that restrict movement, environments that overload senses. As pet-human households develop protective scripts, short sessions, consent cues, rest days, vet consultation, integrating welfare protocols into the production routine. Who decides training methods, diet changes, or whether to accept a sponsorship? In many families, decision-making is negotiated through the pet. The animal's preferences, for example refusal to eat a monetised brand on social media, stress signals around certain costumes, become actionable inputs that can override human disagreement. This is not anthropomorphic democracy; it is distributed governance in which nonhuman feedback, stabilised by artefacts (bowls, harnesses), expertise (vet advice), and publics (follower reactions), helps settle disputes (Latour, 2005). A disliked social media video that draws criticism for unsafe handling may shift household policy; conversely, community praise for enrichment routines can consolidate one member's authority. Across these domains, therefore, pets act not as sovereigns but as centres of calculation around which domestic arrangements are made and remade (Latour, 2005). Their agency can be seen as relational, so emerging from bodies, competences, and mediating artefacts, and their power is structural, hence anchored in routines that channel time, space, labour, money, and recognition. When social media becomes core to the assemblage, these routines are not merely private; they are performative infrastructures that generate and convert capitals under platform logics (Bourdieu, 1986).

4.2. *Petriarchy* and capital conversion in multispecies families

Haraway's (2003) ethics and ontology adds weight because if ANT shows how care is network-platformed and Bourdieu explains how advantages accumulate, Haraway reminds us that the human–animal dyad is co-constituted, and co-constructed, because their being does not pre-exist their relationships (Haraway, 2003). In other words, there is no pre-given "pet" or "owner" outside the practices that knit them together; what counts as skill, virtue, or, when present online as a social media persona, marketableness of the partnership, that emerges from a state of what Haraway terms 'becoming-with' – so built from training, touch, devices, and publics that bind lives and interests in common projects. Such conversion begins in a contact zone; for Haraway, training is a contact zone in which species educate one another; training becomes a communication act across multispecies language, which each partnership actor can

barely understand. Hence, symbolic interaction underscores that both form an operational relationship and both are made and remade in that (Haraway, 2003). Read alongside Bourdieu, this is a mechanism for capital formation, as it is for Latour that nothing precedes the network assemblage. Put another way, the back-and-forth through which a pet, such as a dog, learns impulse control and a human learns timing and successful training mechanisms produces embodied cultural capital legible to, when shared online via social media, audiences (competence), to institutions (certifications), and to brands (reliability). Those competences can convert into symbolic capital (reputation for ethical, informed care) and thence into economic capital (sponsorships, fees), which can be reinvested in welfare and further training. The loop is not linear, but recursive and relational.

Haraway's notion of significant otherness also suggests that relations matter in their difference; this helps us specify what kind of symbolic credit circulates in *petriarchal* households. Symbolic capital is not merely prestige for owning an attractive breed; it is recognition for attentive, situated response to a particular animal. In *When Species Meet*, Haraway (2008) suggest partnerships do not pre-exist their constructive interactions, which outlines why reputations stick to relationships, recognising that it is the networked social media users who create the 'whole story' and determine its actors, who cease to have individual essences (Haraway, 2008). On social media, then, platform audiences reward the fit between an animal's dispositions and a household's care scripts, as well as are enrolled by their relational interactions as displayed on the curated media: a reactive dog whose humans 'model' desensitisation may accrue symbolic capital as responsible educators; a driven working breed whose guardians provide appropriate outlets is recognised as competent; a cute but chaotic smaller pet and their humans overreactions creates entertainment value. Such recognition builds social capital by fostering communities of practice, follower publics and thus, under platform conditions, the public then itself becomes part of the home network, and indeed multispecies family - a disembodied online presence, where such users become principal patrons and mediators of conversion to income.

In *Staying with the Trouble*, Haraway (2016) thus urges us to cultivate response-ability, so to be 'answerable-with' others that become 'unexpected company' in our homes and lives (Haraway, 2016). Folded into domestic social media practice and its marketisation, hence labour, of pets, response-ability functions like a governor on pet-media conversion: it, in theory, limits monetisation that would compromise welfare, and it reorients value towards practices that sustain pets by creating a wider sense of familial regulation. Media consumers are invited into the homes of humans and pets, thus can account, mobilise and justify change (e.g. posting comments about rest days, demanding consent cues, suggesting adapting routines to ageing or illness). Paradoxically, response-ability can increase conversion in the longer run, since ethical credibility stabilises symbolic capital and lowers reputational risk, thus making users feel engaged as if not family members themselves, at least community participants in the network built around the pet displayed online. The household that declines an ill-fitting sponsorship or posts a candid welfare protocol can converts ethics into audience trust, which may in-turn convert into better-aligned partnerships.

4.3. Family habitus meets *Haraway*'s becoming-with

Bourdieu's habitus names the sedimented dispositions that make practices feel obvious and observable. Haraway's becoming-with names the ongoing co-formation of those very dispositions across species lines. The upshot is that a pet household's habitus is intraspecies as well as multispecies: what feels natural (morning enrichment, muzzle training, filming only in low-stress setups) has been learned with the animal and the devices and the humans that mediate care. This reframing matters for inequality. Classed access to time, space, and training resources shapes whose becoming-with stabilises into a habitus legible to platforms and brands, so a stable network of actors capable of enrolling others, be them social media hashtags, users, media platforms. Families able to invest in training and kit are more likely to produce smooth, algorithmically friendly demonstrations of care, then, which are then rewarded as competence and authenticity, precisely the traits that convert best. Haraway (2008) reminds us, of course, that pets are here to live with, not surrogates for theories. Thus, Haraway (2008; 2016) asks us to engage with the trouble of such asymmetries, not by retreating from technoculture but by crafting practices that keep flourishing agency in view. *Sympoiesis*, so the process of making-with, is her ecological counter to autopoietic individualism, an ongoing 'Chthulucene'. Applied at household scale, the presence of users and social platforms as gatekeepers to economic gain, means a process of care conversion is created as a pathway attuned to Haraway:

i. Contact-zone labour → Embodied cultural capital. Co-training yields competencies on both sides (becoming-with), recognisable to publics and institutions.

ii. Situated ethics → Symbolic capital. Demonstrated response-ability (adapting routines to the animal; refusing harmful trends) accrues credibility.

iii. Community pedagogy → Social capital. Sharing protocols and failures builds durable networks (followers, clubs, rescues).

iv. Aligned partnerships → Economic capital. Ethics and competence constrain and enable monetisation that funds further care.

v. Reinvestment → Reinforced becoming-with. Income and gifts translate into equipment, time and welfare, strengthening the capacities that began the loop.

Each arrow is reversible under stress (e.g. illness, platform changes, user community backlash), because, as Haraway, Latour, Callon, Law and even Bourdieu never tire of reminding us, partners are made in relation. There is no capital without care, no revenue without routines that hold interspecies life together. The network, then, is stable based on humans and nonhumans, each with power determined by their proximity and focality in stability-creation within the network itself, as conceptualised in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A model describing a Haraway informed process of Pet care conversion and capital pathway accrument.

Haraway (2008) also re-values the idea of success. Rather than celebrating viral reach or sponsorship totals, it asks: Which historically situated practices of multispecies living and dying should flourish? (Haraway, 2008). In sum, a Haraway-inflected *petriarchy* reframes capital conversion as co-constitution. Values do not attach to isolated beings; they inhere in the patterned relations that make those beings possible. That is why becoming with is not a slogan but an analytic: it explains how competence, credibility and cash are braided through the mundane, 'sticky work' of living with animals, both on and off the camera. Figure 1, therefore, affords a diagram that shows how everyday care with pets can circulate through different forms of capital in a loop: training and shared routines produce cultural capital (skills recognised by audiences and institutions); acting with care and refusing harmful trends builds symbolic capital (credibility and prestige); sharing practices with others generates social capital (networks and followers); these together enable ethical monetisation as economic capital (sponsorships, gifts, fees); and that income is then reinvested into welfare and equipment, reinforcing the partnership and starting the cycle again. Importantly, each stage can collapse or reverse under stress (illness, backlash, platform change), reminding us that capital is only durable when sustained by care, accountability, and the co-making of humans and animals

4.4. Exemplifying the *petriarchal turn*: reassembling the domestic

To ground the argument, we can look to social mediated pets to see how they practically re-order domestic life and convert capitals under social media platform conditions. Latour's injunction to follow the actors, Bourdieu's reminder of capital as accumulated labour and Haraway's insistence that pets are co-situated partners in multispecies homes are felt as analytic touchstones (Latour, 2005; Bourdieu, 1986; Haraway, 2003). For example, Grumpy Cat (Tardar Sauce) dramatised how household routines, brand licensing, intellectual property and platform publics can crystallise into durable economic flows. The death announcement, 'Grumpy Cat died in May 2019' matters because it marks a transition from living animal to posthumous brand stewardship, an inflection point in the network's composition (Washington Post, 2019). Furthermore, the widely repeated '$100 million' earnings claim was publicly denied by the owner as inaccurate; this underlines how symbolic capital (media hype) may inflate perceived economic returns, while families must navigate reputational expectations and legal realities (Joyce, 2019). Crucially, Grumpy Cat's household exercised formal rights to defend conversion channels. In 2018, a U.S. jury awarded around $710,000 in damages to Grumpy Cat Limited in a dispute over unauthorised roasted coffee products, which shows how inscriptions (licence agreements, trademarks, product packaging) stabilise value across media and merchandise.

Courts, contracts and counsel thus join cameras and audiences as actants in the pet economy (Brown, 2018). This embodies networked capital conversion: cultural capital (e.g. a memetic aesthetic and competent brand stewardship) becomes symbolic capital (e.g. ubiquitous recognition), then is secured as economic capital through licensing and legal defence. Read through ANT, we follow the actors from a viral image to retailers, from an LLC to a courtroom, from veterinary care to PR statements, each an actor with power in a network that shows how domestic concerns (health, grief, privacy) remain braided with commercial infrastructures. The case also displays platform volatility: posthumous accounts must continually re-earn legitimacy from publics; hence symbolic capital remains contingent on trust or care.

Similarly, Jiffpom, a Pomeranian, exemplifies the highly routinised end of pet influence where training, aesthetics, and scheduling produce attention. As of August 2025, Jiffpom's Instagram profile lists roughly 9 million followers; his TikTok account shows approximately 20 million followers and over 500 million likes. These figures indicate a cross-platform social capital reservoir and a substantial network. The point is not to treat Jiffpom as a symbol, as per Grumpy Cat, but to trace actors such as care protocols and consent cues that make such production sustainable and the community satisfied: short takes, frequent rests, positive-reinforcement training, and avoidance of stressful environments are features of Jiffpom's brand and of how those in the community champion the network, and reward evidence of this response-ability. Jiffpom also featured in a music video with singer-songwriter Katy Perry, suggesting that multispecies focal networks can intersect around celebrity, furthering capital (Khalil, 2018). According to Khalil (2018), a dog with 20,000 followers can make around $283 per post, while accounts with over a million followers can earn about $14,000 per post; their industry reporting in 2018 suggested that Jiffpom's sponsored posts were valued at approximately $17,500, when he had 3.6 million followers. Based on follower growth, a hypothetical extrapolation from that earlier reporting may place potential earnings today closer to $35,000 per post, illustrating the scale of economic capital that can accrue.

Doug the Pug illustrates how symbolic capital, prestige and moral recognition can be converted not only into economic gains but also into philanthropic infrastructures. Doug's team established The Doug the Pug Foundation, a registered charity that provides support to children and families. In 2025, Doug received an honorary degree from the University of New Haven, an event widely covered in U.S. media and framed by follower counts of around 18 million that consecrate existing multispecies recognition into symbolic capital that stabilises partnerships and grows publics, which also adds presence in familial households

that must remain attentive to welfare expectations, since increased public scrutiny can shape reputation in ways that affect symbolic capital (Bender, 2025). From a *petriarchy* perspective, the domestic implications include charitable commitments that generate schedules, travel, and content that reorganise family time; they also bring new actors, hospitals, universities, journalists, into the network. Haraway's idea of becoming-with helps to name the ethic: animals and humans make each other capable in contact zones, so shape networks of actors where vulnerability is acknowledged and sustained. The recognition flows both ways; philanthropic visibility confers symbolic credit that often converts into a more durable social capital (a trustful following) than social media spectacle alone could generate.

Of course, not all pet households seek, want, or achieve macro-scale fame. Many operate in the micro-influencer band (e.g., a few thousand to tens of thousands of followers), where gifts-in-kind, such as food, toys, or vet-adjacent products, offset care expenditures and subtly redirect budgets. These flows are more modest but no less structurally interesting: they formalise the pet as a household contributor and they re-weight decisions (which food to feed, which harness to buy) towards brand partners. In a growing pet economy, where in the U.S. alone pet industry expenditures are predicted at $157 billion for 2025 and global pet services are forecast at $60 billion over 2025–2032, such micro-conversions scale into meaningful market segments (Fortune Business Insights, 2025). Here Latour's and Akrich's vocabulary is diagnostic. Gifts and agreements with other actor-networks, such as brands, typically arrive with scripts (e.g. to include hashtags, disclosure language, posting windows) that inscribe new routines into the home: baths happen before unboxings; walks shift for better footage; vet consults are timed to campaign calendars. The implication, of course, is that ethical guardrails emerge within this newly reassembled multispecies contributor-family. As popularity grows for pet influencer accounts, the labour required can increase, raising welfare concerns and showing how classed and gendered distributions of space, time, and digital literacy condition who can play, and win, this game of conversion.

ANT's methodological discipline is our first anchor to understand this: follow the actors. The 'family' appears a socially mediated network effect. So, a provisional ordering of heterogeneous elements that must be continually redone. Callon's vocabulary sharpens this: pets frequently become points of passage, hence themselves decision-makers. As economic motivations increase, so does *petriarchy* serve as a description of how nonhumans help organise domestic life under specific material–semiotic and economic conditions. Bourdieu's analytics specify why some pet-centred networks accumulate advantage for such nonhumans, because he positions capital as accumulated labour, which, when appropriated enables social energy and hence control. For families engaging social media, conversion rates are field-dependent: platform affordances and policies (recommendation systems, disclosure rules) alongside extended familial actors, so users in their networked communities, become focal points of meta-capital that reweight what counts as valuable care, competence and authenticity (Haraway, 2003).

However, despite this, Haraway (2003) guards against instrumentalising animals as mere conduits of value; whilst her analytic unit is the relation, in *petriarchal* households focused around social mediation online, then, the most durable forms of symbolic capital are ethical credit; pet followers tend to be pet advocates, hence create public recognition of response-ability that potentially protects welfare and yet, paradoxically, stabilises conversion over time, which can also create new challenges for pet wellbeing as popularity grows and their labour increases. Haraway's paradox then is described as unfinished in configuration, a normative horizon for domestic practice and platform governance alike. This suggests that families, brands and platforms, as those capitalising upon living beings, prefer practices that sustain ongoingness over extractive spectacle, as do humans and nonhuman pets themselves, but this is not guaranteed, as explored in Figure 2. Figure 2 shows that success in pet-based social media is not guaranteed by followers or likes alone, but by building ethical credit through visible care and responsibility toward the animal. When families refuse harmful trends, prioritise welfare, and show accountability, they gain symbolic trust. This in turn stabilises their reputation and makes audiences and brands more willing to support them. Potentially, this means the most durable economic successes often comes not from maximising short-term exposure, but from demonstrating sustainable, ethical care that reassures communities and protects the multispecies partnership in digitally-mediated families.

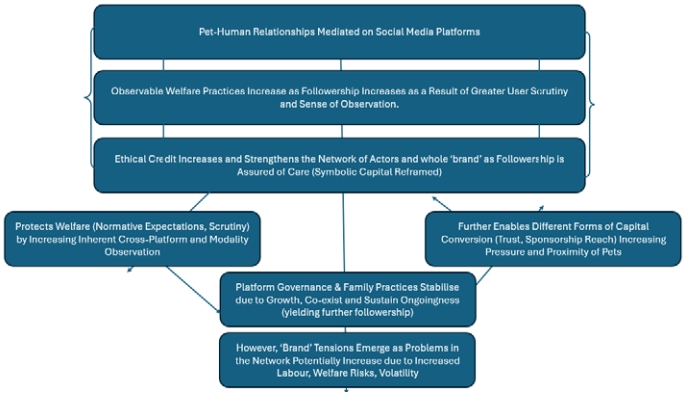

Figure 2. Ethical credit conversion model in *petriarchy* (*Haraway's* paradox applied to success in social-mediated pet households)

4.5. Artificial intelligence as a multispecies family decision-maker

Artificial Intelligence (AI) increasingly re-configures the relationships between humans, pets, and platforms. Social media algorithms and users are now mediated by AI nonhumans who determine how the most successful accounts can form inscription devices (Akrich, 1992; Day, 2025b; Low *et al.*, 2022), thus shaping which companion species relationships are visible and, within platforms, valued. Pets become not just actors, but 'datafied' companions: their images run through algorithmic filters, producing symbolic and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986), while less "marketable" lives remain obscured, enhancing both classism and exclusion, and sometimes equality. Seattle Humane, for example, TikTok to leverage storytelling to accelerate adoptions, including for senior dogs who might

be overlooked (Clarridge, 2025). Similarly, a video of Ravi, an 8-year-old cat that was 'too affectionate' which went viral with over 12.6 million views and 3 million likes, led to hundreds of adoption applications (Longmire, 2025). These examples highlight how digital affection can also mobilise real-world welfare, but also underscore how certain narratives, so those cute, quirky, or emotionally compelling, are algorithmically rewarded. AI algorithms and users thus favour animals that conform to platform aesthetics and hence are youthful, photogenic, emotionally compelling. Older less socially-desirable animals risk exclusion. In this sense, AI algorithms have power in the *petriarchal* home (Callon, 1986).

AI has the power to shape structures that funnel followership visibility in selective, unequal ways (Day, 2023; 2025a). The *petriarchal turn* helps make visible how these algorithmic economies are steeped in classed and gendered inequities. Yet, generating compelling petfluencer content, such as stylish interiors, professional grooming, enriched environments, requires resources: time, disposable income, and digital literacy. In this landscape robotic and AI-driven pets are increasingly nonhumans that could potentially disrupt pet-familial traditions; Sony's Aibo, for example, has been employed in therapeutic contexts to evidence robotic pets can reduce loneliness (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2024; Hudson *et al.*, 2020). These AI rooted robotic devices offer low-maintenance emotional support, suited to individuals excluded from live pet companionship due to housing restrictions, financial shortfalls, or health constraints. Yet they also represent a future of entrenched and deeply stratified pet welfare futures. So, live pets become aspirational commodities for the affluent, while robotic and AI surrogates may serve as consolation for those excluded from multispecies care. The implications for shelters and welfare systems are profound. For example, will AI-driven companionship dampen demand for live adoptions, or will it paradoxically reinvigorate desire for embodied multispecies lives?

AI algorithmic adoption campaigns deliver tangible impacts, yet they also reshape expectations of care, and fortify cuteness. Therefore, AI is shown to be reconfiguring human–animal relations in domestic, platformed contexts, but also reshaping the temporal and spatial rhythms of post-domestic life. Day (2024) shows how young people increasingly negotiate the constraints of time and space by turning to AI-enabled infrastructures, and highlights how AI tools are embedded in culturally situated practices, altering how actors allocate time, mobilise networks, and structure interactive modalities. Read alongside the *petriarchal turn*, these dynamics underline that AI itself operates as a nonhuman actor across multiple domains: it redistributes agency, enforces temporal regimes, and re-weights access to visibility and success. Hence, welfare and research must better reframe across human, nonhuman, and machinic assemblages. The infrastructures of algorithmic visibility and robotic substitution redistribute care and companionship. They do so across unequal terrains of class, gender, and species. Far from neutral, digital and AI systems are nonhumans (Day, 2024b) who shape familial lives, help them flourish and, for some, including pets, determine whose lives remain unseen, as explored in Figure 3.

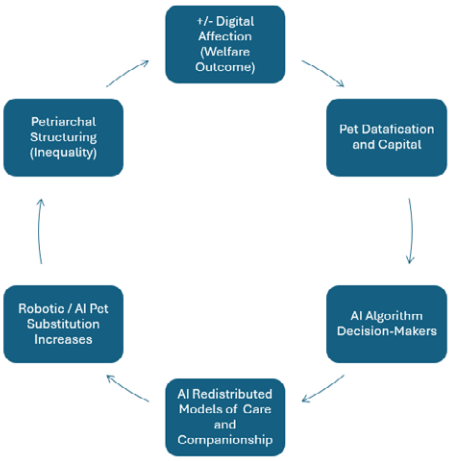

Figure 3. A model of AI algorithmic welfare loops for pets, platforms, and robotic surrogates

Figure 3 shows a conceptualisation for how AI and platform algorithms now act as powerful gatekeepers in multispecies households existing with digitally mediated lifestyles, demonstrating how key agents, such as AI algorithms, can use popularity and certain attributes to determine what will 'land' most well socially, hence be engaged, which determines what accounts gain visibility and which animals remain hidden. Pets that fit platform aesthetics, then, such as cute, young and emotionally engaging are rewarded with attention and opportunities, while others risk exclusion, creating a cyclical loop. At the same time, robotic and AI-driven pets are theorised to emerge as substitutes for those unable to keep live animals, raising questions about welfare and inequality. In this way, success and even companionship are reframed in modernity to show they are no longer guaranteed by care alone, but are shaped by algorithmic systems that redistribute power across humans, animals and machines.

4.6. Towards a *petriarchal* research framework

Such welfare concerns highlight why study through *petriarchy* is needed to describe, and analyse, the socially-mediated households as a multispecies actor network (Latour, 2005) operating within and across stratified fields (Bourdieu, 1986), in which capitals are generated, recognised, and converted through media platform practices of care, visibility and enrolment, demonstrating what has been described above as a relationally-driven intraspecies sociolinguistic display. Five conceptual moves are discussed, across this article, then, that consolidate to form a foundational research framework for studying the *petriarchal turn* on social media:

- **M1:** Pets act as network anchors and capital attractors; as anchors they organise routines (feeding, walking, play), infrastructures (fencing, flooring, smart devices), and relations (neighbours, vets, social users/followers). Through these orderings, households cultivate pet-related capitals that may include training skill (cultural), community ties (social), reputational narratives (symbolic). Within social media platforms, these capitals are made visible thus priced for and empowering of economic conversion (Callon, 1986; Law, 1994; Bourdieu, 1986).
- **M2:** Infrastructures serve care as inscription devices; the

material culture of pet care, so leads, crates, toys, grooming tools, feeding technologies, functions as a distributed nonhuman apparatus of inscription that stabilises animal behaviour and makes care legible to distant social media audiences via images and metrics (Akrich, 1992; Latour, 2005). What counts as "good ownership" is partly scripted by these devices and their circulation online.

• **M3:** Platforms form meta-capital; algorithms, affordances, and policies constitute meta-capital that sets conversion rates among capitals. For instance, short-form video tools and augmented reality filters amplify certain aesthetics of cuteness and competence, as they may do for 'owners' presented alongside pets, tipping symbolic capital into social and economic capital more readily for those who can align practice with affordance (Ngai, 2012; Bourdieu, 1986).

• **M4:** Habitus and unequal conversion is 'followerable' as are followers; families' capacities to recognise and play the game of platform pet culture vary. Tracing the acts of translation, so time for daily filming, space for clean backdrops, money for training and vet care, literacy in editing and analytics, identifies ties of confidence in public self-presentation: all shape whether pet-related capitals accumulate and convert. Gendered labour patterns thus become salient where women and young people, for example, disproportionately undertake affective, representational, and algorithmic labour (Bourdieu, 1986).

• **M5:** Ethical and welfare externalities must be recognised; conversion is not costless, as outlined. The labour of training, repeated takes, costume changes, or adherence to breed standards may carry welfare risks; the networked pursuit of visibility can foreground performative care over less visible forms. A *petriarchal* analysis helps focus animal vulnerability on view, even as it recognises animal agency (Haraway, 2003).

To crystallise the framework, the article infers testable propositions that guide focus and analysis for future research, which is encapsulated in (Figure 4) and described as:

• **P1 (Network Ordering):** The stronger the pet's role as an obligatory passage point (e.g. centrality of routines, embeddedness in home infrastructure), the greater the redistribution of human schedules and expenditures towards pet-aligned activities and thus the stronger the multispecies family (Callon, 1986; Law, 1994).

• **P2 (Inscription–Visibility):** Households with more developed care inscription apparatuses (training artefacts, routinised settings, filming equipment) produce content that garners higher, more stable attention (Akrich, 1992; Latour, 2005).

• **P3 (Capital Synergy):** Cultural capital (training, breed expertise) interacts with symbolic capital (ethics, narrative) to predict growth in social capital (followers), which in turn mediates conversion into economic capital that empowers a multispecies family to change their social status (Bourdieu, 1986).

• **P4 (Meta-Capital Moderation):** Platform affordances and policies moderate capital conversion rates, such that shifts in recommendation systems or rules alter value of specific pet aesthetics and practices over time and in followership on social media (Bourdieu, 1986; Ngai, 2012).

• **P5 (Inequality of Conversion):** Classed and gendered distributions of time, space, and digital literacy condition who can convert pet-related capitals into economic returns, net of animal characteristics, and often may influence choices in choosing pets and their aesthetics.

This is then outlined in Figure 4, which conceptualises a research framework that outlines a series of testable propositions for analysing the *petriarchal turn*. It shows how a researcher can navigate, using the theory outlined in this article, pets anchor routines, how care tools and devices make practices visible, and how digital social media platforms act as meta-capital gatekeepers that sets the rules of value. It also proposes that families with greater time, money or digital skills are more likely to convert cultural, social and symbolic capitals into economic returns, while others may struggle. Finally, it highlights that these conversions always carry welfare risks, meaning that success is contingent not just on visibility and resources but also on ethical care, hence provides a shape and structure for examining forms of digital reproduction and socially-mediated content on platforms, which can thus be modelled and 'traced' by following the actors and reporting their dynamics under these criteria.

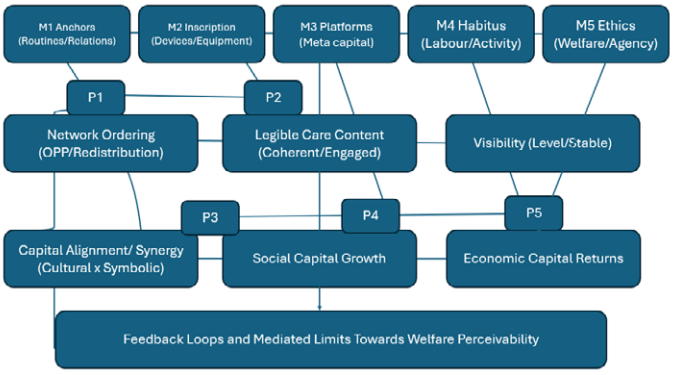

Figure 4. A model framework for testing the *petriarchal turn*

Operationally, a *petriarchal* study asks the analyst to follow the actors (Latour, 2005) and map the fields (Bourdieu, 1986). This requires tracing the routines and artefacts through which pets reorder domestic life; so, to identify the platforms, brands, and publics that recognise and reward particular practices; to specify how capitals are accumulated and converted; and attend to who bears which costs and enjoys which benefits. It invites mixed methods: ethnography of household routines; interface analysis of platform affordances; network analysis of follower publics; and economic tracing of sponsorships and in-kind flows. In sum, *petriarchy* is not a metaphor word, but an analytic lens: it names the conjuncture in which nonhuman companions, material infrastructures, and platform architectures together recalibrate domestic power and re-route capital flows. ANT supplies the grammar of mediation and ordering; Bourdieu specifies how value is recognised and hoarded. Bringing them together under Haraway explains why some cross-species homes become capital-converting assemblages while others remain affectively rich but economically unleveraged.

Households that reliably align care, competence, and visibility, this article contends, tend to stabilise favourable conversions (relating to P1–P3), while shifts in platform affordances or community norms can revalue practices overnight (P4). Classed

and gendered distributions of resources and literacies condition who can play this game, and are observable and a point of analysis (P5). In short, then, the multispecies home is actor–network in which capital is produced and routed. To recognise this is to move beyond sentimental portraits toward a granular sociology of how animals make families work, materially and symbolically, in the age of AI-mediated platforms. Policy and welfare improve, *petriarchy* contends, when we can identify this all clearly. Advertising standards could require animal-welfare disclosures (e.g. work–rest ratios; training methods) for monetised pet content; platforms could amplify care-forward formats (e.g. desensitisation, enrichment) and demote risky trends; tax regimes might clarify the status of pet-generated income relative to household costs; and animal-welfare bodies could publish best-practice guidelines for content creation that recognise the pet as a labouring, vulnerable partner, much the like child many such pet influencers script them as.

5. CONCLUSION

Petriarchy is not a solution. It does not explain non-platform households where pets nevertheless organise care and meaning, nor does it settle debates about animal agency. It is diagnostic: it reassembles the multispecies home as a capital-converting assemblage and keeps both agency and vulnerability in view. Or, to borrow Latour's sensibility, it is about describing a longhand of associations rather than the shortform of the social in isolation. This article has argued that pet-homes are understood as *petriarchal* assemblages: multi-species networks in which companion animals, humans, technologies and platforms co-produce domestic order while generating and converting capitals. Thus, becoming-with and response-ability affirm that value inheres in home relations and that animals are partners, as explored in Figure 5.

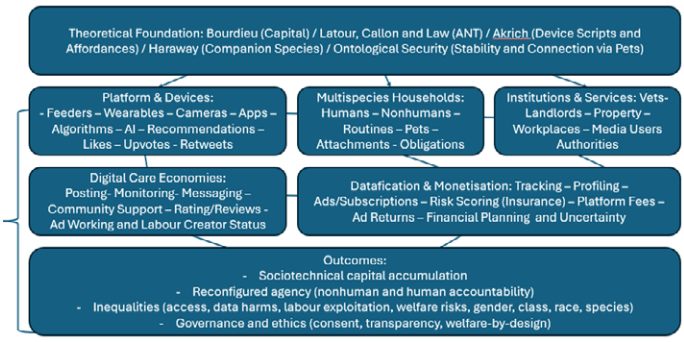

Figure 5. A conceptual model summarising the *petriarchal turn*

Figure 5 summarises the *petriarchal turn* by suggesting that families are multispecies networks where pets help organise routines and enable the flow of different forms of capital. It highlights three key points: first, household power comes from human, animal and technological alignments rather than humans alone. Second, inequalities of class, gender and digital skills shape who can benefit. Third, ethical care is essential, since welfare practices sustain both reputation and community, as well as engage well with AI mediated gatekeepers and user fandoms. Overall, the figure captures how animals actively co-produce domestic order in the family home, and add value in the age of platforms.

LIMITATIONS

Petriarchy has its limitations. For one, it is not tested, in this article, nor applied to households that are not connected to platforms, where pets also play important roles in caregiving and shaping meaning. Nor does it frame that meaning in relation to how pet's social media presence can be visible only to small groups, such as friends or parents. Even though it highlights animals as active participants, it has further scope to address the ethical issues surrounding their care or the unequal access to platform resources, which affects how animals are seen, valued, and empowered. Ultimately, *petriarchy* opens the door for further research to explore the differences across species, breeds, and socio-economic backgrounds. It does this while also calling for policies that can address these inequalities and improve animal welfare.

Bringing Actor–Network Theory, Bourdieu, and Haraway into the same frame inevitably raises tensions. ANT's methodological commitment to symmetry risks underplaying structured advantage: if all actors are equal, then the patterned inequalities of class, gender, and capital conversion can be obscured. Bourdieu, by contrast, insists that social fields are stratified. Hence, forms of capital are differentially distributed, accumulated, and converted according to entrenched structures of power. Reconciling these approaches requires acknowledging that ANT makes first visible the distributed agencies through which networks hold together, while Bourdieu thus sharpens our analysis of which actors benefit from those networks and why. Haraway adds a new dimension, reminding us that relations across species are not reducible to either flat agency or capital logics, but must be understood as ethical projects of becoming-with. Taken together, these approaches offer a productive if uneasy synthesis. *Petriarchy*, then, is best understood not as a seamless theory. Rather, as a diagnostic lens that sits at the intersection of these perspectives, asking us to see networks, inequalities, and ethics at once.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Hence, the theoretical pay-off of this article is threefold. First, domestic power appears as an emergent effect of alignments among bodies, artefacts and rules, rather than as a purely interpersonal hierarchy. Secondly, inequality is rendered in concrete terms: who has time, space, training access and platform literacy to play the game of conversion; whose animals are legible to the aesthetics that AI algorithms reward. Thirdly, ethics becomes infrastructural: practices that safeguard animal welfare (short sessions, consent cues, fear-free handling, breaks from filming) are not only right, they are visible to the network and may stabilise reputations and communities over time in those most visible, but may not in those more invisible. Empirically, this invites analysis of *petriarchy* by species, breed, class fraction, platform, and national welfare regime, are scoping conditions that can be added, and identify failure cases where conversion falters or turns toxic. Finally, *petriarchy* points to actionable levers. AI driven platforms frequently encode care-by-design (down-ranking risky formats; promoting cuteness;

up-ranking pedagogical care); regulators can extend labour and advertising standards to nonhuman talent, the pets; brands can adopt welfare clauses and longer lead times that fit animal rhythms; educators and shelters can circulate open protocols for ethical content creation. What *petriarchy* proposes, is that we exist a world where multispecies ongoingness dominates. It is not a metaphor equating pets with male authority; a claim that animals intentionally "dominate"; a minimisation of patriarchal harm.

Rather, it is an analytic lens for first mapping pets as obligatory passage points within household networks, second tracing capital conversion (cultural/social/symbolic/economic) co-produced by humans, nonhumans, and platforms, and third diagnosing how platform meta-capital (algorithms, affordances, policies) reweights domestic labour and visibility under conditions of classed and gendered inequality. If *petriarchy* begins as a provocation, it ends as a research and policy agenda: reassemble the domestic home; make visible its multispecies labour; map the conversions; and design for relations that let humans and animals flourish, on and off the camera.

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