

Pets and their people: a sociological
investigation into the pet-keeping
practices of two demographically diverse
samples of South Africans



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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

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11th day of May, 2012.



Abstract

This study provides a sociological analysis of pet-keeping among two different samples of South Africans who display divergent tendencies. The demographic variables that shape attitudes, behaviour and practices towards pets such as age, gender, class, race and ethnicity, along with marital status, religion, area of residence and household type and structure are outlined. In addition, various other factors, such as past experiences with pets (particularly during childhood), emotional connections with other animals and the differential accumulation of 'animal capital' are explored. The objective of this thesis is to assess the ways in which pets are integrated into the lives of the two samples of pet owners. This research also examines diverse attitudes toward some important issues within animal welfare.

This thesis shows that pet-keeping cuts across social categories and that a complex interplay of factors influences perceptions of pets and pet-keeping rituals and routines. The growth and increased popularity of pet-keeping in contemporary societies can be linked to broader political, economic and social changes and cultural shifts. In particular, it is argued that postmodern conditions have facilitated the growth of pet-keeping as well as the increased emotional intensity associated therewith. Furthermore, an understanding of the motivations underlying pet-keeping and the different roles they play in people's lives reveal much about our views about one another as well as the broader dynamics characterising our unequal society.

Data were collected through a combination of a quantitative survey and qualitative interview methods. The findings of this study both contradict and confirm those made in previous studies. Data analysis shows that there is a correlation between the style of pet keeping favoured and the gender of the primary pet caretaker. It further demonstrates the impact that the participant's previous experiences, have on their current preferences for a particular type of pet, as well as their favoured style of pet-keeping.

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PHOTO CREDITS:

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1

Introduction: Towards a 'Sociology of Pets'

"We polish the animal mirror to look for ourselves".

Donna Haraway (1991:21)

Animals are fundamental to human society and we use them in a variety of ways. For many people, the most likely way they come into contact with living animals, is through keeping pets. In South Africa today, it is estimated that 5.3 million households have dogs or cats or both (Euromonitor International, November 2010).¹ For this reason alone, pet-keeping warrants investigation and it "...is worth long, careful study simply because of its ubiquity today" (Grier, 2006: 9). This thesis examines pet ownership patterns among two diverse samples of South Africans. It specifically focuses on the bonds and connections we have with dogs and cats, whose popularity in this country continues to grow. This dissertation empirically and theoretically examines pet owners and their attitudes and behaviour towards animals. This study identifies the sociological variables such as gender, age, marital status, family structure that can help to explain why South

¹ South Africa has no system in place to collect, store and analyse data related to pet-keeping. No detailed demographic data on the pet population, which is the equivalent of the Census exists. Current estimates on the number of pets are speculative. A study done by Collins in 1976, estimated that there were ten million dogs in South Africa. Odendaal (1994) surmised that there were thirty (30) dogs per one hundred (100) people among the white population in South Africa. Lower numbers were estimated for blacks and Mc Crindle *et al* (1999), approximated that there were eight (8.1) dogs per one hundred people in Soweto. According to a global marketing research company, Euromonitor International there are eight million dogs and two million cats currently kept as pets in the country (Pet Industry Report, November 2010). Similar figures are reported by the pet food industry and at the Institute of Veterinary Practice Development Congress held in 2009, the CEO of Royal Canin, Gregory Watin claimed that there are 7 million dogs and 1.5 million cats in South Africa and that 18% of households own dogs (www.ivpd.co.za). Stray and feral populations, though numerically significant, are extremely difficult to gauge and are not included in these figures. So, not only is it hard to establish the total pet population in this country because there is a lack of accurate statistics available, large numbers of stray dogs and feral cats exist, compounding the issue. NPOs working in the animal welfare field claim that feral cat numbers could be as large as seven million (www.catpals.co.za). Stray dogs and animals belonging to poor people, who are unlikely to purchase the luxury pet products manufactured by the companies who have conducted pet population studies are also not included in this number. Although pet population numbers are not known, current estimates have been extrapolated from human population figures by applying the appropriate ratio, viz., 3:1. In Khayelitsha alone, where interviews were conducted, the SPCA estimates that there are three (3) dogs for every person (Lewis and Kiewietz, Cape Argus, 31 July 2011). According to J. P. Smith, the Mayoral Committee member for Safety and Security in the City of Cape Town, "*Currently there are no accurate data available on the number of pets that reside in the city*" (Knoetze, D., Cape Argus, 12 March 2012). However, the City of Cape Town is in the process of conducting a pet census and 'owners' have until the end of August 2012 to register their pets. This registration drive is in line with the animal by-law of 2010 which prescribes the maximum number of pets allowed. The number is determined in accordance with property type and size.

Africans perceive and treat other animals, especially pets in different ways. Furthermore, it investigates what these, often contradictory, patterns say about us, our social interactions and the structure of our society.

The aims of the thesis are to detail and analyse the social forces, political dynamics, cultural factors and processes that shape and inform our interactions with and perspectives on pets in contemporary South African society. The underlying assumption is that our understanding of animals and our relationships with them 'mirrors' the social structure and is symbolic of how we view one another. *"Animals function as useful instruments through which humans can express their conflicted feelings towards other humans"* (Arluke and Sanders 1996: 186).

A central theme in this study is that animals play a role in constructing human social identities and the meanings assigned to them illustrate the organisation of our social world and our connection to other living beings. By making sense of our complex and multi-faceted relationships with non human animals in general, and pets in particular, we can uncover some of the social, psychological and political dynamics inherent in the South African historical and cultural context. Arluke and Sanders remind us that, *"the meanings of animals are not fixed because they are social constructions. How we think about animals, as well as ourselves, is bound to change as society itself changes"* (1996: 191). In a transitional society like ours that has experienced myriad social, political and ideological changes since the advent of democracy and the demise of apartheid in 1994, these insights can be used to help us understand ourselves and others. Animals are a register of social, political and environmental concerns and challenges and this thesis will demonstrate that our changing views about other animal species, particularly pets, are informed and shaped by broad social forces as well as individual factors.

The way we view animals, and the values and meanings we attribute to them, determines their status and ultimately our behaviour towards both them and other humans. The idea that race, class and gender are inextricably bound to and perpetuated by animal practices has been extensively explored within the nascent body of writing on human-animal relations. This study demonstrates the link between social stratification and animals and how the hierarchical notions converge in both past and present day South Africa. Animals and their bodies are 'sites of struggle,' which

this has become increasingly apparent in contemporary South Africa, as cultural differences and misunderstandings periodically erupt into widely publicised clashes over the appropriate treatment of animals. In the process, latent sentiments and hidden concerns are brought to the surface. At the core is the belief that the violence inflicted on animals, will be directed against the humans that oppose it. In the South Africa context, this most often translates into a racial issue. For example, the collective fears and feelings of vulnerability experienced by many whites is sometimes expressed when animals are cruelly treated. Whites are for the most part depicted as the champions and defenders of animals, unlike blacks who are usually the 'uncivilised' abusers. (See Box 1)

Box 1: Animal Activist's Open Letter

In a letter written to journalist, Justice Malala after the Zulu bull-killing in December 2009, and circulated via email, an animal activist sums up the fear many white 'animal lovers' have regarding being treated in a similarly brutal manner. In her words: "I have fought for the rights of animals in South Africa for a couple of years now and this particular issue left me angry and bitter. After watching a debate on SABC 1 last night about the ritual killing of the bull over the weekend, I swiftly moved past my anger into a stage of profound sadness and fear. I sat on my couch battling to breathe, my chest tight and my stomach a knot because it hit me as hard as a ton of bricks: there seems to be no place for white South Africans in this country anymore. I have become a pariah in my own country, the one which I call home. The Zulu's and Jacob Zuma made it clear that we are no longer welcome here. It scares me because they have taken away my voice and effectively told me to shut up. Failure to do so would make me an imperialist and a racist - an enemy of the State. Since I am now voiceless, will I be joining the fate of the millions of voiceless animals in this country? How long before they wrestle me to the ground and kill me too? Come 2010 they want to sacrifice more animals at the stadiums in the name of tradition and culture. Will there be any other ceremonies which represent all the other (different) cultures in South Africa? I doubt it; and thus it reinforces the idea that I have no place in South Africa today. I have lost my home, but I thank God for people like you."

These types of incidents show how our understanding of animal cruelty is linked to our own anxieties and thus reveal as much about ourselves as they do about animals and our ways of thinking about them. By interrogating our views and beliefs about the 'other's' treatment of animals, we can learn much about ourselves. Differently put, conflicts about animals are an incisive lens on the deeply embedded inequalities, prejudices and uncertainties inherent in our society. Animals provide us with the means to reflect on and ponder historical, cultural and political tensions.

1.1. Terminology Used in the Thesis

Before discussing the relevance of this study and outlining the social conditions and circumstances in which this research took place, (which is dealt with later on

in this chapter), it is imperative to briefly comment on the language of pets and pet-keeping.

The term 'pet' is contentious and the politically correct term is 'companion animal'. Pet has become a derogatory term as it has connotations of domination and of being a plaything. A pet is something that denotes ownership and exists for human entertainment (Tuan, 1984). Franklin (1999) argues that this new terminology can in part be attributed to the changes in attitudes towards animals that have taken place in contemporary society. This has resulted in increased emphasis being placed on the companionship function as opposed to the decorative and entertainment role of pets (Franklin, 1999). Despite these shifts, some authors choose not to use the words 'companion animal' and prefer 'pet.' Wells and Hepper, explain: "*it is debatable whether all types of domestic animals can act as companions*" (1997: 48). According to them, not all domestic animals can "*provide the psychological and social benefits associated with companionship*", which they maintain depends on the relationship between animal and 'owner' (ibid). The "*imbalanced relations inherent in pet-keeping*" referred to by Wendy Woodward, render retention of the term 'pet' appropriate (2008: 92). Pets remain subordinate and continue to exist for human use and pleasure. As Belk puts it, "*Yet these animals, even when we treat them as quasi-human equals, did not freely choose to be with us*" (1996: 123). He continues: "*They are more dependent on us than we are on them. Keeping the term pets recognises this hierarchy of ownership*" (1996: 124). Furthermore, the term 'companion animal' is not yet part of everyday language of most South Africans and the word pet remains widely used. I have at times used the terms 'pet' and 'companion animal' interchangeably throughout this thesis.

The terms 'caretaker', and 'guardian,' which have become the preferred terms in the literature on pet-keeping, are also employed in the discussion on pet-keeping. Although I am aware of the implications of using the term 'owner, which recognises animals as property, this term, like pet, remains part of the common lexicon in South Africa and has therefore been retained.

In this study, the term, 'pet' refers to non-utilitarian domestic animals, such as dogs and cats. However, at times the boundaries become blurred, particularly with animals such as feral cats, horses and hunting dogs who can all function as 'working animals' and perform utilitarian and instrumental functions for their caregivers. Broadly speaking, a pet is different from other animals because it is

often admitted into the household; it is given a personal name and although edible, is never eaten (Franklin, 1999: 86). Pets are treated differently from other animals and have special status as a household member and are emotionally closer to humans than any other animals (Serpell, 1996). Grier 'revises' historian Keith Thomas's (1983) basic and uncomplicated definition, that, "*the most important quality that pets share is that they have been singled out by human beings*" (2006: 8). She notes that not all pets are treated the same – for instance not all live indoors or have names and some are eaten eventually. For Grier (2006: 8), this "*reflects the contingent status of the designation,*" which is illustrated in the discussion that follows in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven of this thesis. But, first, the sociological significance of pet-keeping is explored.

1.2. Global and Local Pet-keeping Patterns

James Serpell (1996) notes that, even though what is a pet is defined in various ways, the human-animal bond and pet-keeping has a long history. People's attachment to pets has been a feature of ancient and modern cultures and "*pet-animals have been for millennia pampered in numerous societies around the world, especially by elites*" (Nast, 2006: 305). Heidi Nast observes that, "*what is different is the degree to which post-industrial humans are investing in pet animals—financially, emotionally, and culturally—and on a geographical scale and at a level of intensity unheard of even twenty years ago*" (2006:305). Pet keeping is a socially and economically significant phenomenon in many countries today, including South Africa.

Albert and Bulcroft (1987) comment that American pet owners spend more on petfood than parents spend on baby food. More people have pets than children in the United States of America (USA), and in Australia two thirds of the population have pets (Katcher and Beck, 1996). Similarly high rates are reported in the United Kingdom (ibid). South Africans are also spending more money on their pets and in 2003, the pet food industry was reported to be worth ZAR 900 million (Star Business Report 2003). It has increased considerably since then and according to global market research company and trend forecaster, Euromonitor International, a rapid growth in pet food and pet care products took place in several countries, including South Africa in recent years. A more recent, 2010 Euromonitor International report values the local pet food market at ZAR 4.7 billion (Supermarket and Retailer, September 2011: 39-43.)

Van Sittert and Swart (2003) report that the 1911 census indicated that there were 650 000 dogs in South Africa. They claim that a massive growth in pet-keeping among whites occurred after 1960, which is reflected in the expansion in the pet industry and market for products (2003: 158). This is similar to the expansion that took place in many other parts of the world around this time. According to Franklin, "*since the 1960s pet products and services have undergone radical alteration reflecting important changes between pets and humans*" (1999:90). In her study of "*Yappy Hour*" at Fido's Dog Bakery in America, Jessica Greenebaum observes that "*the marketplace has created a new way of thinking about pets and has responded to the shifting relationship between humans and dogs*" (2004: 132). Whereas a decade ago, only a small selection of pet products and services were available, a far wider range of options exists today. Pet owners can choose from a range of special diets and premium brands of pet food, healthcare products, designer clothing, spa treatments and grooming services. Pet-friendly cafes, restaurants, hotels, parks and other venues have sprung up in response to market demands and this trend is apparent in South Africa.² Our shifting relationship with pets has resulted in pets becoming integrated into the family unit and their new 'member of the family' status is reflected in the variety of products and services available to them. More money is being spent on the pets who are becoming increasingly 'humanised'. The latter affects the market place and consumer behaviour, and also attitudes towards and treatment of pets.

So, although these patterns are not universal and are more prevalent within certain communities than others, changing demographics have led to similar behaviour patterns emerging in several non western countries, such as India and parts of Eastern Europe. In an online article (published on 16 April 2012), titled, *A Sorry Tail: Dealing with India's booming dog industry*, Simon Harding of The World Entrepreneur Society writes that, dogs, particularly pedigreed foreign breeds have become extremely fashionable. Pedigreed dogs are popular among the growing middle class in India who are constantly looking for new ways to spend their increasing disposable income and convey their social status (<http://www.wessociety.com/News/WES%20News/Simon%20Harding/Middle%20class%20Dogs.aspx>). Over and above the thousands of stray dogs, India International Pet Trade Fair statistics estimate that there are 3.6 million pet dogs

² Developments within the local pet industry include pet travel options and venues such as pet-friendly hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, coffee shops and even an annual travel guide, *The South African Pet-friendly Directory* catering for this growing, but niche market. In addition, specialised vet shops (as opposed to traditional pet shops) have mushroomed countrywide. Existing retailers and supermarkets have also expanded, diversified and in some instances upgraded their pet care section.

in the six major cities alone (www.iiptf.com/). Eastern Europe is said to be one of the fastest growing pet food markets in the world today. From 2002 – 2007, sales increased by nearly 200% and Euromonitor projects it to grow another 56% by 2012. The reasons for this unprecedented growth include increasing levels of disposable income, changing perceptions of pets, increased demand for prepared pet food and rising urbanisation. Poland and Russia comprise 64% of the market, with Hungary and Romania following closely behind (<http://www.petfoodindustry.com/3873.html>).

Even in China, where pet keeping has been politically, ideologically and economically discouraged for decades, this practice has proliferated. The 2005 Euromonitor International report for China indicates, "*The rising popularity of dogs has triggered off the market boom in recent years. Dogs have become more common urban pets, hence leading to the greater demand for dog food and dog care products.*" In a study on attitudes towards animals conducted among Chinese students, Davey (2006) found that this younger generation seemed concerned about and increasingly interested in animal welfare issues. Although no country has ever done an official 'pet census', studies conducted in developing countries indicate that both the stray and owned dog populations in those countries have grown (Patronek and Glickman, 1994). A majority of households in the Western world keep pets. However, anthropologists have shown that the proclivity for pet-keeping is not limited to affluent western societies and this practice is also widespread in other cultures (Mullin 2002; Robinson, 1995; Serpell, 1995, 1996; Luke, 2007). Pet-keeping is not restricted to urban contexts, although several authors who link the growth of pet-keeping to urbanisation argue that city dwellers are more emotionally attached and sentimental about pets than their rural counterparts. Past and current research indicates that urbanisation leads to a growing need for animals as well as an increase in sentimental feelings for them. This, in turn, influences pet ownership patterns (Thomas, 1983; Kete, 1999).

It is essential to examine the human-animal bond overall and pet-keeping in particular through a sociological lens. This entails making connections between the way we treat other animal species and the broader social and cultural practices that we engage in. It is imperative to regard an understanding of the social construction of our attitudes toward animals and the impact of culture on the treatment they receive, as significant.

1.3. Bringing Pets into View

Pet keeping is thus flourishing in many societies and there has been a global shift in terms of attitudes towards animals, which are linked to broader welfare, social justice and environmental issues. The increase in the number of people owning pets in recent years has been accompanied by heightened interest in human-animal relationships (Barba, 1995). In his discussion of the changing nature of human-animal relations in the twentieth century, Adrian Franklin investigates the *"social and cultural context of pet-keeping"* (1999: 8). He argues that, *"broad social forces of change have brought about a wide range of industrial, ethical, conceptual and emotional changes in our dealing with animals"* (1999:3). This thesis concurs with Franklin and many of the changes he refers to, have impacted on pet-keeping practices in South Africa. Along with heightened levels of emotional attachment to pets there is evidence of increased interest in and concern for animals as a whole. Examples of improvements, albeit minor, for animals in this country include the increased availability of free range eggs and other animal derived consumer products.

Although animal concerns are often usurped by anthropocentric interests, usually of an economic nature, significant strides have been made in other parts of the world. Concrete achievements include the decline of the fur industry, the popularity of 'cruelty free' and vegetarian diets, legislative improvements in factory farming in western countries and the banning of fox-hunting in the UK. In addition, *"there has been a net increase in the number and intensity of interactions between humans and animals in the twentieth century"* (Franklin, 1999: 175). Combined with the growth of animal protection agencies; and a renewed interest in animal welfare and environmental concerns in the Western world, these developments have elevated the status and social relevance of what were once considered 'trivial' issues. Rollin (1992) observes how animal rights has evolved into a key global concern. Several authors have identified a fundamental shift in consciousness that is currently taking place and is reflected in moral concerns about the environment as a whole and animals in particular (Adams 1995; Franklin 1999; Rollin 1981, 1992).

Leslie Irvine, an American sociologist who has written extensively about animals and our relationships with them, comments that for the past decade the body of evidence that enables us to view animals as beings with a sense of self and consciousness has expanded (2007: 10). For her, *"the meaning of animals changes across history and across individual lives, revealing not only what we*

think about animals but also what we think about ourselves – as a culture and as individuals” (2004: 32). Heidi Nast (2006) elaborates on the central premise outlined by Yi Fu Tuan (1984) in his important book, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets*. She argues that, *“the creation of pets over the last two decades is linked to certain post-industrial processes and sensibilities that involve not only commodification, but love, dominance and affection”* (2006: 304).

This thesis contends that animals generally, and in this instance, pets specifically are essential to our understanding of various aspects of society. By focussing on animals and pets in our analyses, we can enhance our understanding of the situation at hand. Animals are central ‘agents’ in our social world and including them helps us to develop a more inclusive, holistic and broader perspective. The animals that share our lives and space, how they are regarded and what happens to them, can reveal much about human beings and society as a whole. Bringing animals into view, and making them visible, can hopefully also have the intended consequence of us taking their needs into account. By using a sociological framework to examine pet-keeping, this thesis attempts to address a disciplinary shortcoming. Despite significant inroads that have been made recently, there are still very few sociological studies that take issues relating to non-human animals seriously and this thesis applies a sociological analysis to an aspect of human-animal relations, viz., pet-keeping. Arluke and Sanders (1996: 167-169) propose that we use our ‘Sociological Imagination’ to examine animals and the complex and myriad relationships we have with them. Nibert (2002) agrees that this fundamental sociological conceptual tool enables us to link the ways in which other animal species are treated to how powerless human groups are treated within particular cultures and at different historical periods.

When examined sociologically, the exploitation of animals exists as one of many forms of oppression apparent in contemporary social systems. This unique sociological perspective renders it possible to compare institutional forms of human domination and to identify the linkages between animal and human cruelty and abuse. For Arluke and Sanders, (1996), it is essential to apply the ‘Sociological Imagination’ and cast the ‘sociological gaze’ in order to examine the previously unexamined. In the process our overall understanding of society and the discipline will be enhanced. By creating awareness around animals and making them less invisible, it is hoped that our understanding and their lives may be improved in some way.

Although animals provide a unique means of illuminating various aspects of our society, and this is extremely useful in a society in transition, where subliminal racial, ideological and other tensions threaten to explode at any point, this dissertation seeks to affirm that animals are a worthy focus of study. The researcher is strongly motivated to add to the body of knowledge that will hopefully challenge commonly held (often negative) perceptions about other animals. To concur with Leslie Irvine, just as knowledge has brought other forms of oppression to light, "*sociology has an obligation to challenge speciesism as part of a system of oppression*" (2007: 15). Changing stereotypical views about each other and the causes we support is also intended and anyone who embarks on a study that includes animals as subjects, will have to deal with questions such as, how can you justify engaging with 'trivialities' when there are 'real' issues like AIDS, poverty, woman and child abuse etc. to deal with? This dualistic approach assumes human and animal needs are in conflict and implies that human needs are paramount. In the introduction to *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, the editors, Adams and Donovan remind us that, "*Until the twentieth century this animality precluded women being granted the rights of public citizenship*" (1995: 1). Just as women's issues and children's rights were trivialised and seen as unimportant and in the case of South Africa, as counterproductive to the struggle for racial equality, justice for animals is 'the last frontier' in human liberation. In a column in the Cape Argus (06 July 2000), well known South African journalist Max Du Preez argued that it is the responsibility of government to care for people, animals (in this case penguins) and the planet. For him, "*the choice is not between caring for the people or caring for the planet. The one is the other.*" Similarly, on the same issue Natrass and Seekings (Mail & Guardian, August 11-17, 2000) question whether people have a fixed propensity for charity and if favouring one necessarily means disadvantaging another. In their view, with which I support, there is not necessarily a conflict between conservation or animal related concerns and human welfare.

1.4. The Historical and Social Milieu

Pets are a ubiquitous feature of the South African landscape. Despite the societal features distinct to South Africa, it seems that pet keeping patterns and trends comparable to those found in many western countries can be detected locally. As mentioned earlier on, apart from the information supplied by the pet industry and international market research reports, there are no official figures available on the number of households in this country that have some kind of pet. Animals rarely feature in official statistics, whether they exist for the national census, for

road accidents or for crimes. However, the considerable growth and rapid expansion of the 'pet-care' industry in this country demonstrates a heightened interest in pet-keeping as well as an intensification of the human-animal bond. The increased significance of pets in South Africa is further illustrated by the greater awareness of and media attention given to animals over the past decade. There has been extensive media coverage of and interest in animal and environmental related issues and over the past two decades, 'animal stories' have continued to capture the public's imagination.³

South Africa displays a similar pattern in terms of the proliferation of animal protection agencies and increased public sympathy for animal welfare, but has not kept abreast with regard to legislative improvements worldwide. The reasons for this are partly historical and also reflect the 'competing moralities' and the divergent economic, ideological and political interests in a multi-culturally and socially diverse society. The anti-apartheid struggle has overshadowed any other social and political aspirations and animal concerns barely feature on the current political agenda. South Africa is said to have one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, yet there have been no legislative improvements for animals since the advent of democracy. Despite the internal changes that have taken place since the demise of apartheid and the developments in other parts of the world, pets, and all other animals in South Africa continue to be defined as 'property' and as such still have no 'rights' allowing people to treat them as objects.⁴ There are laws related to animal welfare contained within the Animal Protection Act (71 of 1962), but these are inadequate in preventing animal suffering. This act, as with similar legislation elsewhere, is ineffective in protecting animals simply because its primary goal is not to do so (Lacroix, 1999: 68). Animals in South Africa are classified as property, as 'things' and this determines the amount of consideration given to their needs. This is compounded by political disputes around which government department should take responsibility for implementing animal protection legislation. Pickover (2005: 9)

³ These include the penguin clean up operation (1999); the Tuli elephant debacle (1998); the culling of the Table Mountain tahrs (2006); Tony Yengeni's cow slaughter (2007), the removal of the Robben island feral cats (2007-2009); the shooting of the rabbits on the island in 2010, the torturing of pets and farm animals and the decimation of wildlife in Zimbabwe; the proposal to legalise dog racing (2009); the amendments to the municipal by-laws in Cape Town (2009-2011), the culling of baboons in Cape Town (2009-2011), the *Ukweshwama* bull-killing ritual enacted by Zulus (2009-2011) and rhino poaching. All these incidents have not only caused a huge and unprecedented public response, but have enjoyed extensive media exposure, both locally and abroad.

⁴ The European Treaty changed the status of animals and they are now defined in law as 'sentient beings'. In Germany, the rights of animals have been enshrined in the country's constitution and Switzerland is having a referendum (2010), the outcome of which could see animal rights being significantly advanced, making this country a forerunner in this regard.

argues that, *"the government seems to be acting as a conduit for policies and legislation which allow exploitative industries to continue almost unhindered."* Pickover (2005:7) maintains that, *"the State is a formidable obstacle to those of us fighting for justice for animals."*⁵

Notwithstanding the lack of legal changes, the extent and voracity of public concern regarding animal welfare has been demonstrated repeatedly and the previous Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pallo Jordan commented in 1997, that his office received more letters from citizens on this issue than any other popular concerns, including the reinstatement of the death penalty. A similar pattern can be observed in the US, where Congress reported that during the 1980s, they receive more letters regarding animal welfare than any other issue (Fox 1990). Although animal groups in this country remain divided ideologically and animal issues have taken a back seat to the Liberation Struggle and the priorities associated with dismantling apartheid, the 'animal rights lobby' is growing in South Africa and elsewhere and even though the *"stereotypical profile of an animal rights supporter is female, well educated, upper middle class, middle aged and white"*, the findings of a study conducted by Colin Jerolmack (2003: 245) do not support this.⁶ However, in the Western Cape, where the interviews were conducted, animal activists are predominantly white, middle-class and female. They are convinced that this lobby played a part in securing victory for the Democratic Alliance (DA) in the province and anecdotal evidence obtained during conversations with individuals engaged in animal protectionism supports this claim.⁷

The notion of politicians using pets to aid their political campaigns is fairly common in the United States of America (USA) and a love of animals can be used

⁵ The administration of Act No. 71 of 1962 was reassigned to the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs in 1997 does little to improve the situation. The previous department responsible for this task was the Ministry of Environmental Affairs, which in many respects is more appropriate and serves animals more favourably.

⁶ Recent studies in the USA have shown that, minorities, the less educated, and the young are more likely to be supportive of animal rights (Jerolmack, 2003).

⁷ A Cape Town animal activist and African Nationalist Congress (ANC) member interviewed claimed that the Democratic Alliance (DA) was the only party that appealed to the animal lobby as they deliberately included this issue in their pre election agenda. In an attempt to secure votes from this sector, an email stating the DA's intention and policy on animals was widely circulated throughout the 'animal network.' The DA has also raised issues pertaining to animal cruelty such as the botched and drawn out slaughter of a goat by an inexperienced person during a 'cleansing ceremony' at Nyanga Police Station (2006) and the more recent and much publicised Zulu bull-killing (2009) in parliament. With regard to pets, the DA run Cape Town has taken the lead in amending the municipal by-laws regarding domestic animals. Most recently the Premier, Helen Zille, who is also a patron of the SPCA, has initiated a process facilitating collaboration between various animal welfare groups in the province to solve the pet over population crisis (Animal Welfare Forum Meeting, 01 March 2012).

to enhance a candidate's image and demonstrate their "softer, more human side." *The Animals in Society Institute Diary* quotes Leslie Bennetts, who writing in *The Daily Beast* about presidential candidates and canines, writes: "The evidence to date suggests that assessing the way a candidate treats his dog—not to mention other canines of his acquaintance—might be an edifying way to evaluate his character and fitness for office" (<http://www.animalsandsociety.org/blog/so-what-is-it-about-presidential-candidates-and-animals>). Pet owners are a numerically significant sector of the American electorate and the current presidential campaign is using modern technology and the social networks to appeal to them in this election year. According to ABC News, the campaign has set up Facebook groups and is currently selling car magnets featuring President Obama's dog, Bo and the slogan Bark for Obama (Parnass, 2012).

Although things are changing and more attention is being paid to animals, for the most part, their lives and the roles they play in ours, remain invisible. Animals feature in almost every kind of situation and human experience, which is generally not acknowledged. Animals are our partners and companions, they shape our environment and have cultural and personal importance to us, yet these components of social reality are often obscured and disregarded. Most people are unaware and rarely consider that, when someone's home burns down, their pets may burn too and when a husband beats his wife, the animals in that household may also be harmed or are at risk of being abused. When a person loses their job, has to move or gets divorced, the pets are the first casualties and suffer the consequences by being surrendered to a welfare society or they are simply abandoned and left to fend for themselves. Similarly, few people know that several pivotal moments in our national history involved animals, specifically dogs, whose killing preceded the main event.⁸

⁸ Van Sittert and Swart describe a version of the event that transpired on 16th June 1976 in Soweto, which was documented in a book by Brink *et al*, 2001, titled *It All Started With A Dog*. The killing of a police dog is said to have precipitated the revolt. According to a witness, "A police dog kept chasing the kids until they went inside the yard of the school. And then immediately they went in, turned and then the others just grouped against the dog. The kids started stoning this dog. Some with knives were stabbing the dog. Once the dog was dead, everything started, and there was fire all over, and there was teargas all over that is why I say it started with a dog" (2003: 165). In this instance, the police dog represented the oppressive apartheid system and the attack on the dog, sparked off the riot. Van Sittert and Swart refer to this unfortunate police dog as "the proxy of state power in the township" (2003: 166). After the assassination of ANC leader, Chris Hani by a rightwing supremacist in 1993, newspaper articles and witness accounts on television news at the time, alluded to the killing of dogs belonging to white residents who lived en route to Chris Hani's funeral at the FNB stadium (now known as Soccer City) situated just outside Soweto. These acts were allegedly perpetrated to avenge the murder of Hani. At the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) hearing of Griffiths Mxenge in 1996, a prominent human rights lawyer who was assassinated by apartheid death squads in November 1981, it was revealed that his bull-terrier guard dogs were poisoned with strychnine by apartheid assassin Dirk Coetzee beforehand.

In South Africa, people from all walks of life keep other animals as pets. Even though the keeping of pets, especially dogs in this country has a "*racialised colonial history*", (Tropp, 2002; Tiffin, 2009, Van Sittert and Swart, 2003) not only rich, white people keep pets as this would suggest. Interestingly, in South Africa, the escalation in the domestic animal population does not confine itself to middle class suburbia, and pets are not the exclusive domain of the privileged sectors of society. A survey conducted by the Animal Rescue Organisation in informal settlements in Cape Town, revealed that on average, residents own three dogs per household (Animal Rescue Newsletter, April 2001). Similar figures are cited by other welfare groups working in township areas.⁹ Jacob Tropp, comments that historically, "*dogs were a standard feature of most rural African homesteads*" and were valued resources (2002: 46). Franklin observes that, most people (regardless of income) have access to companion animals, which is not the case for other types of animals, such as farm animals or wild animals (1999: 253). Having a pet is an 'equal opportunity' exercise and no matter who you are and where you live (even if you do not have a home at all), acquiring a pet is relatively easy as they are 'cheap' and readily available.

Pet-keeping is yet another manifestation of cultural crossover taking place in this country. Activities, interests, tastes and lifestyles traditionally associated with 'whiteness' and the west are being embraced by the nascent black middle-class in South Africa. Along with golf, ballroom dancing, opera, whisky drinking, trout fishing, pet-keeping is actively being pursued. Black South Africans, who were once 'treated like dogs,' now also acquire dogs to convey their improved social position. Dog breeds that symbolise white power and oppression like German Shepherds and Boerboels are growing in popularity among township residents. These breeds are favoured for their guarding ability and serve as deterrents against crime.

There is widespread consensus that pets are being drawn closer into our society (Franklin 1999). The more animals are 'anthropomorphised'¹⁰ the more likely pet owners are to view pets as members of the family, albeit subordinate ones having inferior status. Unfortunately, this more intense and broader involvement with animals increases the likelihood of them being drawn into both social and

⁹ Oral presentations made at the Animal Welfare Forum Meeting, 01 March 2012, Civic Centre, Cape Town.

¹⁰ Barbara Noske defines anthropomorphism as the practice whereby uniquely human characteristics are attributed to non-human animals (1993).

domestic disputes. More and more animals are being mistreated and neglected and in terms of domestic pets, the high caseloads of SPCA inspectors and the overflowing animal welfare shelters are indicative of this trend. According to Tuan (1984), in the US, approximately 15% of dogs and cats are put to sleep annually. For Belk (1996), this demonstrates how we regard pets as disposable possessions that can simply be discarded when we grow tired of them.¹¹ A similar ambivalence exists locally and South Africans of all political and religious persuasions and socio-economic groups, both care for and maltreat pets. The current economic and political climate in South Africa contributes to the high level of animal neglect and abuse. Jacklyn Cock, a Sociology Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand (2007) reports that increased unemployment means that animal welfare shelters are full to capacity and that pets have become victims of the global recession.¹² But, since animal abuse is not considered a serious offence, incidents are not monitored in national crime reporting systems and the extent thereof remains unknown.

South Africa's economic downturn combined with emigration has resulted in increased numbers of pets being abandoned and surrendered to animal welfare societies for rehoming. At the same time, adoption rates at animal shelters have dropped. This pattern is in line with trends in other countries such as the United Kingdom. According to the South African Animal Anti-Cruelty League spokesperson, Heather Cowie, the organisation has noted a 25% drop in adoptions in the past three years, which they attribute to *"the economic downswing, people moving into places that are pet-unfriendly and emigration"* (Steyn, 2010). Similar trends are reported by other animal welfare societies in the country. In an article in The Big Issue, Alan Perrins, CEO of the Cape of Good Hope SPCA reported *"a significant increase in strays in Cape Town"* (Brein, 2010: 4). This, coupled with a rapid increase in the number of *"dangerous dogs"*, being bred (particularly Pitbull Terriers), is described as a *"ticking time-bomb"* (ibid).

There is growing evidence to support the theory that violent acts have common origins. Stronger scientific support for the links between the various forms of

¹¹ Local municipalities do not have records of the number of pets that are put down. But, in an article in the Cape Argus, Waste Care, one of several companies contracted to remove waste in the Cape Town metropole, claim to have disposed of 12 tons of euthanased dog and cat bodies in the first three months of 2002 (Yutar, D. and Sylvester, E. Cape Argus, 7 August 2002). According to them, the rate of disposal was increasing). A study done by Animal Voice in 2000, estimated that approximately 500 000 unwanted dogs and cats are euthanased annually in South Africa, at a cost of R37.5 million (ibid).

¹² Interviews and conversations with animal care workers and shelter managers confirm this trend and more and more animals are either being handed in at shelters or simply abandoned by their owners.

family abuse is shaping current perceptions about both violence prevention and animals (Arkow 1995; Adams 1995). Kalof and Fitzgerald note that, "*many now recognize the close link between our relationships with other animals and some of the most pernicious human social problems, such as slavery, sexism, and environmental degradation*" (2007: xiv). Dorian Solot's premise is that "*similar issues of violence, power and control exist in all violent situations*" (1997: 264). On the whole, there is a heightened global awareness and acceptance of the links between animal cruelty and human violence and between various forms of oppression. Michele Pickover argues that "*it does not help to look at the abuse of animals in isolation*" and that "*as South Africans we should be more acutely aware that we are not dealing with isolated abuse but a whole system of repression*" (2005:170).

In *Totemism*, Levi-Strauss postulates that, "*animals are good to think*" (1963: 89). They can be used as a conceptual tool and can help us to think symbolically (Mullin, 2002). This observation prompted anthropologists to look at how different groups think about animals (Arluke, 2006: 183). Keith Tester notes that, "*all cultures use animals to think through human conflicts and problems*" (1991: 6). In this way, animal practices and people's reactions to them, offer an opportunity for enhancing our understanding of the changes taking place in the realm of human-animal relations and within the broader social sphere. They demonstrate the dynamics of a 'society in transition' and show that concerns and conflicts involving animals often mirror broader social influences and processes. Pets thus reflect the 'zeitgeist' or 'spirit of the times' and the treatment of pets in South Africa signals the complexity of and inherent contradictions in our society. Phil Arkow (1995) contends that pets and other non-human animals are indicators and markers of the state of being of a group, community or society. This is extremely pertinent for post-apartheid South Africa, which is characterised by extremely high levels of violence directed at both humans and other animals. At the same time crime and poverty are endemic and racial, class and other tensions continue to simmer beneath the surface. When animals are involved, this often erupts in protest action and incidents of moral outrage, during which value judgements are made and animosity to certain groups is expressed. In other words, concern for animals may be a means of articulating racist and other derogatory sentiments. Several authors (Arluke and Sanders, 1996; Wolch and Emel, 1998; Tiffin, 2009) have analysed how animals (and treatment of them) play a key role in 'racialisation' and 'othering'. Arluke and Sanders explore how animal protection measures may have functioned "*as a legal vehicle*" to express

anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany (1996: 153). In the same way, views about and legislation regarding animals can be instrumental in communicating a group's moral superiority. Goffman's (1959) concept of the presentation of self is useful here and appearing to be compassionate towards animals is widely considered to be a positive trait and an indication of humanity. To treat animals well is the hallmark of civilization and decency and is an image that many people would like to cultivate for themselves. This sentiment is encapsulated by Gandhi's well known and frequently used quote, "*the greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the ways its animals are treated.*"¹³

1.5. Research Aims and Approach

The intention of this research was to examine some of the diverse practices associated with keeping animals as pets in contemporary South Africa and to consider the implications thereof on various aspects of social, cultural and political life.

The objectives of this thesis can be expressed in the following research questions:

- Which sociological variables, broader social dynamics and other factors inform and shape our relationships with pets?
- How are the ways that we treat pets (and other animals) symbolic of how we perceive one another?
- What do current pet-keeping patterns and trends reveal about us and our society?

These research questions can be broken up into further components, which will be discussed through primary material and literature. Some of the issues that will be investigated are:

- What influence do factors like socio-economic position, culture, religion, race, gender, age, marital status, area of residence, level of education, early exposure to and past experiences of pets, have on how we define, perceive and treat other animals?
- Are pets significant in the formation of the self and the constitution of human identity?

¹³ This quote was made by Gandhi in a speech, *The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism*, which he delivered at a Social Meeting organised by the London Vegetarian Society, 20 November 1931 (<http://www.ivu.org/history/gandhi/>).

- To what extent do emotional attachment and the intensity of the human-pet bond shape pet-keeping practices?
- What are the ideological, material and political circumstances in which pet-keeping flourishes?
- To what extent is the re-shaping of human-animal relations and the concomitant growth in pet-keeping linked to globalisation and social change?
- What do our relationships with various other animal species say about us, our perceptions of and interactions with one another, and of South African society as a whole?
- How can these understandings be used to develop policies and interventions aimed at fostering human and animal welfare?

The basic premise underlying this thesis is that the ways in which we treat and define animals and the meanings we attribute to them provides a distinctive insight into the nature of our society, the relationships we have with one another, the values we internalise and the fears and anxieties we harbour. Corwin R. Kruse maintains that "*the study of race, class and gender also has been enhanced by examining the role of animals in human society*" (2002: 376). This study is not only necessary in terms of addressing lacunae within the literature, it is extremely timely. The country is transforming and the information and observations generated by this research are especially pressing in the light of the wide range of social problems endemic in our society. The understandings that emerge from this study can also be used to develop a clearer comprehension of the different individual and collective concerns people have regarding various social practices and the construction of cultural difference. Pet-keeping and the treatment and status of animals are an effective barometer with which to measure and ultimately make sense of contemporary social dynamics. How we relate to our animal companions and the ways in which this changes over time is linked to systems of power and inequality. Considering the unequal nature of South African society and the salience of race and other inequalities despite the demise of apartheid, this knowledge is both useful and relevant.

It is hoped that the insights yielded by this research will provide an understanding of the often hidden dynamics and meanings underpinning our interactions with one another. The findings could also have a 'practical purpose' and application and apart from advancing animal rights, could be used to inform and guide policy formulation in related fields such as social welfare, violence prevention, education, public health, human rights, the environment and

agriculture. At present, animal groups remain ideologically divided from each other as well as from human orientated charities and welfare agencies. From time to time the hostility between them has been expressed openly. Despite this, there is considerable scope for collaboration between them and by identifying their common goals, shared history and similar objectives, this attitude can be changed. Although, the connections between human and animal welfare are crucial, it is imperative to caution against adopting an anthropocentric approach. Barbara Noske (1993) is critical of social scientists whom she claims have not shown concern for animal welfare. Another anthropologist, Molly Mullin (1999: 217) concurs that existing studies in the field of human-animal relationships have been more about humans and advancing their interests. Mullin does acknowledge that, although in anthropology, animals are still approached with an eye toward better understanding humans, there has been movement away from the more thoroughly anthropocentric approaches of the past — approaches that depicted animals as passive objects of human agency. For Noske, there is scope for social scientists to see animals *"as agents or subjects in their own right"* (1993: 185). The advancement of knowledge can have the effect of helping animals who we continue to treat inconsistently and improving our overall understanding of them. Janis Driscoll sums it up: *"by examining current attitudes toward animals, we may be better able to understand how experience and education affect perceptions of different kinds of animals, and gain better insight into how attitudes toward animals can be changed"* (1995: 149).

1.6. The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into eight sections. **Chapter One** introduced the study and 'set the scene.' It touched on the terminology associated with pet-keeping and the pervasiveness of this activity. Chapter One highlighted the growing sociological significance of pets, as well as the proliferation of pet-keeping both globally and locally. The research aims and objectives are briefly summarised in this introductory chapter.

The task of **Chapter Two** is to survey the primary and secondary sources and to review the literature. From a sociological perspective, diverse groups and communities have different relationships with pets, based on gender, class, occupation, ethnicity, nationality and region (Franklin 1999: 33). The reasons why we keep pets at all, why people love or abuse them, why they select particular species, the meanings and values of animals, the ways in which animals shape and construct our identities, how their bodies become sites of

struggle and human-animal relationships change over time has received very little attention, even though there are compelling reasons why these questions are of relevance to sociology (Arluke and Sanders, 1996; Franklin, 1999). This is discussed in greater detail as part of the literature overview. Despite advances, there are significant shortcomings in the academic literature focussing on human-animal relations (Cunningham, 1995; Noske, 1993). Within sociology, there are still only a few international studies that take this issue seriously and local, South African based sociological research in this field is virtually non-existent. Sociological contributions, as well as key texts from other disciplines are the focus of this chapter. The discussion of some of the lacunae within the existing body of literature further bolsters the idea that this study is important, well-timed and relevant. Notwithstanding the omissions and gaps in knowledge, animals, including pets, are not entirely absent from South African texts. The notion of pets, specifically dogs functioning as social metaphors, is well developed by Wendy Woodward in literature and Sandra Swart in history. But, the '*sociological gaze*' has not been cast on pets in the context of South African society. It is imperative to account for the presence of pet animals in various aspects of human society. We also need to bear in mind that this differs between and within groups and has changed over time. The gaps in the existing body of knowledge on the subject of human-animal relations illustrates that heightened awareness of animal issues and increased sensitivity toward them does not necessarily result in advances in scholarship or legal and other improvements for animals in all societies.

In **Chapter Three**, the methodological issues that emerged during the research process are described. The fieldwork process, the collection of primary material and the techniques used to gather data are dealt with in this chapter. The research instruments used, the motivations underlying their selection, as well as ethical concerns are all dealt with in this section of the thesis. This thesis draws on various sources and employs a combination of qualitative and semi-quantitative methods to obtain information pertaining to pets, from two distinct samples of South African pet 'owners'. Formal in-depth interviews, informal conversations and observations, as well as an electronically conducted survey conducted were used to gather data. In both samples, a similar research instrument administered and there are only a few differences between the two questionnaires used in this study. Participants differed in terms of various factors including socio-economic status, race, gender and geographical location. In

addition, key individuals in the pet care industry and animal welfare sector, and various pet 'experts' were consulted and conversed with during fieldwork.

Chapters Four, Five, Six, Seven and Eight present the findings of the research and analyse the data generated during fieldwork. In **Chapter Four** the role of sociological factors in shaping our beliefs and practices regarding companion animals is discussed. This chapter will provide an understanding of the demographic and other predictors and indicators of pet ownership in South Africa. This chapter ponders the relationship between social stratification and pet-keeping. The part played by key variables such as age, gender, race, and class is investigated.

Chapter Five discusses urbanisation, marital status and religion in the context of pet-keeping. The role of pets in the family and the influence of family type, marital status and household structure on pet-keeping is also discussed. The perception of pets as 'family members' is an important area of research in the study of human-animal relationships. The objective of this thesis is to assess the ways in which pets are integrated into the home, and to explore how pet owners regard their dogs and cats within their constructed circles of kinship and social bonds. Questions pertaining to relationships with and attitudes towards pets, as well as socialisation practices within the family are considered. In addition, to locating and discussing pet animals within the framework of the family and household, this chapter explores the impact of culture, religion and place of residence (rural or urban) on pet-keeping.

Chapter Six and Seven detail the practices of pet-keeping among the two samples of pet 'owners.' **Chapter Six** focuses on the types of pets kept. The methods of acquisition of pets, the animal's lifespan and 'owner's' lifestyle are all examined in this part of the thesis.

In **Chapter Seven**, the 'humanisation' trend and its effect on pet-keeping, as well as the various manifestations thereof is explored. Naming and feeding pets, pet sleeping arrangements and pet food, product and services consumption patterns are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Eight considers the multiple meanings that pets have and the diverse roles they play in people's lives. The motivations underlying pet-keeping and some of the explanations advanced to explain this phenomenon, in so far, as

these assist with advancing an understanding of the role of pets in the lives of the research participants are outlined. Broader opinions about animal issues and concerns among participants in both samples are also investigated.

Finally, **Chapter Nine** concludes the study and discusses 'the way forward.' It assesses the potential for cultural shifts and changes in attitudes about animals to occur in an ethnically diverse and multicultural society like South Africa. The broad implications and practical application that this research has for social policy in the fields of both human and animal welfare, is advanced in the conclusion.



2

Knowing Animals: Scholarly Works and Theoretical Writings

"Unfortunately, social scientists' study of the role of animals in human society has not yet kept pace with society's consumptive use of animals."

Paul Cunningham (1995: 89)

This chapter provides an overview of the existing literature in the field of animal-human relations in general and pet-keeping in particular. The theoretical perspectives framing the study are elaborated in this section. In order to deal with both the micro and macro components of social reality, two major theoretical orientations will inform the analysis of the role of pets in human society. Adaptations of both symbolic interactionism and postmodern theory will guide and inform this thesis. It is imperative to mention that even though neither of these theoretical traditions explicitly examined or considered animals in their analyses, the broad explanations they offer can be modified for the purpose of this study. In particular the works of Leslie Irvine (2004) and Adrian Franklin (1999), who have 'borrowed' from these perspectives, are heavily drawn on throughout this study and support the enquiry.

Although attitudinal and legal changes influencing the status of animals have taken place in society and research patterns have emerged within the nascent, but growing field of human-animal relations, on the whole there are significant lacunae in the prevailing academic literature. This literature review draws primarily on international sources due to the shortage of local academic writings on human-animal interactions. The gaps in terms of local, South African research and the lack of sociological studies is a reflection of the specific socio-economic, political and historical context in this country and is also indicative of the ideological biases inherent within the discipline. Factors like no available funding and/or local expertise exacerbate the situation. Sociology has tended to neglect 'animal issues.' Several theorists argue that, the overall paucity of sociological studies located within the realm of human-animal relations, is partly due to the inherently 'anthropocentric' nature of the discipline (Noske, 1990; Bain, 1929). The bottom line is that studying animals and their social role, function and

meaning, puts people in a moral predicament, thus social scientists examining aspects of human societies have tended to ignore animals and deny them subjectivity. Leslie Irvine (2007: 5) notes that "*Most mainstream sociological work does not consider animals at all*" and she suggests that "*It is time to revise the sociological understanding of the self away from the focus on language*" (2007:11). Irvine observes that the benefits to sociology to exclude animals are well documented despite the possibility that including animals in research can improve the discipline (2007: 13-14).

Notwithstanding the progress that has been made with regards to scholarship on human-animal interactions, there are gaps and shortcomings in the existing body of literature focussing on human-animal relations, especially within the discipline, sociology.¹⁴ This study seeks to address these lacunae and endeavours to add to the body of knowledge on the sociology of human-animal relations by providing an explanation of the structural forces, as well as the symbolic meanings and emotional connections that influence and shape interactions with pets. But, first, it is necessary to look at what other disciplines have to say on the topic.

2.1. Contributions from Other Disciplines

From the literature it appears that the disciplines that historically have had an interest in human-animal relations are the life sciences, socio-biology, psychology, philosophy and of course veterinary science. Offerings from the humanities, as well as geography, history and anthropology have increased recently. Gerbasi *et al* have observed that, despite recent developments, overall there was still a lack of support and recognition for animal studies amongst senior academics and within "*professional institutions*" and that the field had "*low status*" in academia (2002: 345).

On the whole, psychologists have shown more interest than sociologists in examining the nature of human-animal relationships (Katcher and Beck 1983). This is demonstrated by the large volume of books, other publications and dissertations within the discipline that discuss animal issues. Gerbasi *et al* looked at doctoral dissertations in human-animal studies in the US and found that the number submitted "*has been increasing annually for the past two decades*" (2002: 340). They assert that, "*the 1990s yielded 186 dissertations, more than*

¹⁴ The broad field of enquiry that includes animals in research agendas within social science and the humanities is referred to in various ways throughout this thesis. Some of these are: human-animal relationships or interactions, animal studies or the 'animal turn.' Podberscek, Paul and Serpell refer to this growing inter-disciplinary area of specialisation as *anthrozoology* (2000: 1).

double the seventy three (73) found for the 1980s" (ibid). Gerbasi *et al* also found that the majority of authors were female and the academic discipline that contributed the most was psychology. In addition, the most well known journal in the field of human-animal relations, *Society and Animals: Journal of Human-Animal Studies* originates from psychology.¹⁵ Even though psychology is well represented in the literature relative to other disciplines, Gail F. Melson (2002: 347) argues that, in psychology generally, "*The study of human-animal relationships historically has been ignored and continues to resist attention.*" Despite inroads that have been made recently, "*psychology as a field has been slow to develop an Animal Studies*" (Melson, 2002: 350). According to Melson, "*The historical roots of psychology work against a psychology on human-nonhuman animal relationships*" (2002: 348). Melson adds that: "*Nevertheless, exemplary studies in the last 50 years underscore the fruitfulness of such research*" (ibid). She identifies one of the key areas of current research as the stress-reducing effects of pets, especially dogs on different categories of people such as adults, the elderly and children. For Melson, "*these research directions suggest that human interactions with animals, particularly pets, affect human wellbeing and functioning*" (2002: 350).

Jonathan Balcombe (1999) conducted a survey that resulted in slightly different findings. His study confirmed that 'animals and society' courses were becoming more popular within academia (2002: 343). But, according to Balcombe (1999: 229) philosophy, rather than psychology was "*well represented*" in this growing field in terms of university courses on offer. Within the humanities, important texts have emerged. A philosophical contribution worth mentioning that deals with the role of animals is the collection of works, conceived by Derrida. Put together after his death, it is titled *The Animal that therefore I am (More to Follow)* and is based on his lectures and notes. In his words, "*the animal looks at us, and we are naked before it. Thinking perhaps begins there*" (2002: 397). According to Wendy Woodward, a Professor in the English Department at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), "*Jacques Derrida contradicts Cartesian philosophies of animals as creatures lacking sentience or feeling, and posits human ontologies or theories of being in response to the gaze of an animal*" (2008: 2). Derrida (2002: 400) argues that many philosophers (from Aristotle to

¹⁵ This key quarterly journal in the Animal Studies field has been in existence since 1983. Formerly known as PSYETA (Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), this journal focuses on peer reviewed studies concerning nonhuman animals from psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science and other social sciences and history, literary criticism, and other disciplines of the humanities (www.societyandanimals.org).

Lacan, and including Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, and Levinas) all say the same thing, viz., the animal is without language. He goes on to discuss Jeremy Bentham's proposal in 1789 to change "*the very form of the question regarding the animal that dominated discourse within the tradition, in the language of both the most refined philosophical argument and everyday acceptance and common sense*" (2002: 400). For Bentham "*the question is not to know whether the animal can think, reason, or talk, something we still pretend to be asking ourselves*", but "*can they suffer?*" (ibid).

The philosopher, Mary Midgley, writes extensively on animal rights and the barriers we erect between humans and animals. In *Animals and Why They Matter* (1983), she argues for the respectful treatment of animals and comments that we are 'animals' ourselves and that the similarities between ourselves and other animals are more important for our ethics and self-understanding than the often over emphasised differences between us. The most well known and indeed the pioneer of animal rights philosophy is Peter Singer, who in 1975 in his book *Animal Liberation*, presents a case for animals based on utilitarian considerations.

In *Animal Rights and Human Morality*, Bernard Rollin (1981) puts forward an argument in favour of elevating the moral status of animals and protecting their rights. In another article, titled *Animal Welfare, Animal Rights and Agriculture*, (1990: 3456) he argues that, "*the past decade has witnessed a major revolution, both in degree and kind, in social concern with animal welfare and the moral status of animals.*" For Rollin (1990: 3458), "*there are no rationally justifiable grounds for excluding animals from the moral arena.*" In *The Postmodern Animal* (2000), Steve Baker, an art historian, studies attitudes towards animals in art, philosophy and popular culture. He questions whether it is ethical to use animals in works of art and whether "*art can be used to advocate for animals*" (2000: 82). According to him, the animal body is increasingly becoming a focus in postmodern art. For Elisa Aaltola (1999: 3), Baker's ideas are part of "*a more positive strand in postmodern writing, which emphasises the value of animal otherness*". For her, "*the argument is that animals have to be accepted as they are, instead of demanding similarity in relation to humans; moreover, we are to cease trying to understand animals through human conceptions*" (ibid).¹⁶

¹⁶ Elisa Aaltola (1999) sees Derrida as being one of several postmodern theorists who have a more 'positive' view regarding animals.

Geography has also made inroads and through its unique and insightful approach has enhanced the available literature. Jody Emel, Chris Wilbert and Jennifer Wolch (2002: 408), point out that *"the term, animal geography had vanished from geographic discourse by the last quarter of the twentieth century"*. But, according to them *"in the 1990s, however, interest revived, inspired by the encounter between human geography and social theory, cultural studies, selected natural sciences, and environmental ethics"* (ibid). A significant text edited by Wolch and Emel, who are both core authors in this emerging field, titled *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands* (1998), comprises a collection of research based essays and case studies that compels us to rethink human-animal relations. Wolch and Emel, refer to the 'animal turn' that is taking place in their discipline. As human geographers start to recognise that society is populated by many different kinds of animals, more and more academic papers and books that pay attention to the non-human animals that occupy our spaces are being published. A fairly recent book edited by Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places* (2000), examines the various ways animals interact with people and uses examples to illustrate that there are many variations in the spatiality of human-animal orderings, within and across cultures and over time. Along with the contribution of Yi-Fu Tuan (1984), whose influential book, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets*, has substantially enriched current debates, the writings and analyses of all these geographers have been extensively used throughout this thesis.

Attitudes towards and treatment of animals are historically embedded and historians have started to engage with animal issues. The writings of Harriet Ritvo (1987, 2002) stand out and she is one of a growing group of environmental and other historians with a heightened interest in animals. Ritvo has studied the history of human-animal relationships and in her view the boundaries between what is 'wild and domesticated' or 'animal and human' are becoming increasingly blurred. According to her, this shift can be understood in many ways and in *"animals can be seen as the latest beneficiaries of this increasingly inclusive or democratic trend (sometimes called history from the bottom up) within the historical profession"* (2002: 404). She continues: *"historical attention to animals also has been encouraged by the vigorous growth of environmental history, another field that developed in tandem with an activist political movement. Environmental history currently is one of the most vital and attractive areas of historical scholarship"* (2002: 404). In *The Animal Estate* (1987), Ritvo uses human-animal relations as an analytical framework to construct her arguments.

The book examines how the ways in which animals were categorized and classified reflected social and cultural beliefs in Victorian England. Ritvo shows how animals cemented the boundaries between the various social classes. In another article, *The Emergence of Modern Pet-keeping*, published in the journal *Anthrozoös*, Ritvo discusses how throughout the nineteenth century, though pet-keeping increased in popularity in England, poor people's pets "were castigated as symbols of their owners depravity" and efforts, under the guise of humanitarianism were made "to deprive the poor of their pets"¹⁷ (Winter, 1987: 164). Apart from the seminal work done by Ritvo and her noteworthy publications, there are several other books written by historians that explore pet-keeping in various social contexts. Ritvo comments on the "inclination of historians who work on animal-related topics to present them as part of the general history of a given time and place" (2002: 405).

The writings of eminent British historian, Keith Thomas, in particular, his book, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (1983) stands out, as does Kathleen Kete's, *The beast in the boudoir: Petkeeping in nineteenth-century Paris* (1994). Thomas tries to trace the shifting perceptions and views English people had towards nature and animals. He shows how first The Enlightenment and then urbanization and the growth of pet-keeping led to a sentimental attitude towards animals in England. The estrangement from nature resulted in a longing for it. At the same time, closer relationships with pets and the subsequent emotional ties formed with animals became hard to reconcile with the exploitative animal practices that were dominant in society at the time. In her examination of pet-keeping among Parisians, Kete writes, "It was in the nineteenth century, after all, that the family dog became the cliché of modern life" (1994: 1). For her, "Petkeeping involves us in the culture of ordinary people" and that "...behind the striking development of petkeeping forms are the tensions within bourgeoisie culture that shaped them" (1994: 2). Kete argues that, "Petkeeping relieved the pressures of contemporary life" (ibid). A recent interdisciplinary compilation, edited by Dorothee Brantz, titled *Beastly Natures: Animals, Humans, and the Study of History* (2010) has a strong historical focus and explores some of the key debates surfacing within animal studies today, such as the notion of animal agency.

¹⁷ *Anthrozoös* is a key journal and is essentially a multi-disciplinary publication that focuses on the interactions of people, animals and environment.

In his doctoral dissertation, *Cows on the Commons, Dogs on the Lawn: A History of Animals in Seattle* (2010), Frederick L. Brown, straddles both history and geography. In his words, "...building on a rich literature at the nexus of history and geography, I am attempting something new: telling the history of one city in a way that takes seriously the role of animals of all sorts" (2010: 12). His study, uses the city of Seattle as a case study and it attempts to "bring animals into urban history" (2010: 11). Brown (2010: 9) acknowledges that, "The inclusion of animals in urban history complicates an urban history that assumes progress and human agency, a history that assumes a rational human mind standing apart from nature and shaping nature to its intended ends". For Brown, "the inclusion of animals in history forces us to ask whether animals themselves have agency" (ibid). His thesis, "integrates the focus on space and agency that geographers have brought to urban animal stories" (2010: 7). In Brown's view on animals, "given their ubiquity and their unique status in urban history, historians must begin to account for their presence and their role in the development of cities" (2010: 6). This is necessary in order to obtain a full understanding of a city, in this instance, Seattle. As Brown argues, "Animals and humans are woven into the same society so tightly, city dwellers cannot understand who they are or where they are without considering the animals who have accompanied them on the journey" (2010: 16). He concludes (2010: 242), "We cannot tell the history of Seattle or other cities without including animals".

In her book *Pets in America: A History*, Katherine C. Grier (2006) shows how animals helped urbanites elaborate their own identities and those of others. Grier identifies two distinct periods in American history to illustrate how pets and our treatment of them, are linked to consumerism and economic processes. She argues that the relationship between pets and people changed, first around the mid-1800s and then again just after World War 2. Grier shows how pet keeping is "an integral part of the history of everyday life in the USA" (2006: 8). Kathleen Kete makes similar claims and she writes that, "Petkeeping involves us in the culture of ordinary people" (1994: 2). In her book, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in nineteenth-century Paris* she discusses the pet-keeping patterns of Parisians during the nineteenth-century, and she remarks that this practice was very much part of French life at the time.

In addition to these print publications emanating from history, the H-Net Discussion Network can be accessed online. The H-Animal section deals specifically with animal related issues (www.h-net.org/~animal/). It is basically

comprised of an international consortium of scholars and teachers, who, through H-Net use technology to facilitate the free exchange of academic ideas and scholarly resources. Reviews of texts within the field of both history and human-animal relations can be read on this site (www.h-net.org).¹⁸

Anthropology has, despite various obstacles and disciplinary limitations, managed to add to the growing literature on human-animal relations. A key text, *What is an Animal?* (1988 [1994]) is edited by Tim Ingold, who is an anthropologist. Throughout this interdisciplinary collection of essays, which includes contributions from archaeology, biology, psychology and of course, anthropology, dominant assumptions made about animals are challenged and reframed. Ingold brings into focus the contentious question of animal awareness and in the preface to the book he reminds us that not everyone makes a clear distinction between human and animal. On the contrary, many non-western cultures, as well as western philosophers who are critical of dominant and mainstream views have a different worldview and to them, *"animals are not just like persons, they are persons"* (1988: xxiv). Ingold (1988) notes that although animals have longstanding relations with humans, this history is recorded by humans. But, academic offerings like Ingold's are still regarded as an exception and overall animals remain understudied in anthropology. Anthropology can be defined as the study of *anthropos* or humankind, hence the 'anthropocentric' nature of the discipline is understandable, says Barbara Noske, who has written extensively about including animals in anthropology study (2008: 185). Noske writes: *"Of course, animals figure in anthropological studies but they do so mainly as raw material for human acts and human thought"* (ibid). So, although anthropologists do engage with 'animal issues', *"animals tend to be portrayed as passive objects that are dealt with and thought and felt about. Far from being considered agents or subjects in their own right, the animals themselves are virtually overlooked by anthropologists. They and their relations with humans tend to be considered unworthy of anthropological interest. Most anthropologists would think it perfectly natural to pay little or no attention to the way things look, smell, feel, taste or sound to the animals involved. Consequently, questions pertaining to animal welfare in the West or in the Third World rarely figure in anthropological thought"* (ibid).

¹⁸ It is imperative to mention that South African scholarship on human-animal relations lags behind international efforts. However, some progress has been made and historical studies in particular, as well as geography have made inroads into South African academia. These contributions are discussed later on in this chapter

Noske (2008: 186) observes that anthropologists for the most part assume that "*sociality and culture do not exist outside the human realm*" and this is something they share with sociologists, "*as well as scholars in the humanities.*" She argues that, "*there are few social scientists willing to ask what animal-human continuity might mean in terms of their own field. Thus sociologists do not bother about a sociology of animals*" (ibid). Despite this tendency, Barbara Noske, along with fellow anthropologist Molly Mullin (1999, 2002), continues to engage with 'animal issues.' In her paper, *Animals and Anthropology*, Mullin (2002: 388) writes: "*animals, however, have long been central to anthropological inquiry.*" In an earlier paper, *Mirrors and Windows: Sociocultural Studies of Human-animal Relationships*, Mullin (1999) asserts that in terms of the intellectual debates on human-animal relations that are surfacing in academia, sociology is lagging behind anthropology and far fewer publications have emanated from the former. For Mullin, regardless of the intellectual advances that have already been made, "*socio-cultural research on human-animal relationships will continue to be as much, if not more about humans*" (1999: 201). For Mullin, it is sociologists, who have not yet turned the 'gaze inward' or looked at the 'other'. She proposes that anthropologists have made more progress because they "*have a fascination with otherness*" (1999: 203). This concern with and interest in the 'other' has enabled them to make significant strides in terms of enhancing writings on animals in the essentially human orientated social sciences.

Although, as Barbara Noske (2008) reminds us, the approach of anthropologists remains anthropocentric, they have nevertheless included animals in their studies of totems and symbols. The well known anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss examined different ways of thinking and rejected the idea that so-called "primitive" or traditional societies were inferior to modern, "civilised" societies. In *Totemism* (1963), he suggests that "*animals are good to think*" and he elaborates on the unique ways in which humans think about animals. Willis quotes Levi-Strauss (1967) and remarks that, human-animal relations are "*a key to read off certain otherwise inaccessible information about the way human beings conceived of themselves and the ultimate meaning of their own lives*" (1974: 7). Boria Sax developed Levi-Strauss's idea that "*animals are good to think*" and in his introduction to, *The Mythical Zoo: An Encyclopedia of Animals in World Myth, Legend and Literature*, he argues that "*Every animal is a tradition, and together animals are a vast part of our heritage as human beings*" (2001: xx). Similarly, Mary Douglas (1966) recognised the symbolic and cultural value of animals. According to Sandra Busatta (2008:5), in her (1994 [1990]) article, *The Pangolin*

Revisited: A New Approach to Animal Symbolism, Douglas argues that the same principles used to order human relationships are extended to animals. Sandra Busatta, agrees and echoes Levi-Strauss who in *Totemism* explained that "*the animal world is thought of in terms of the social world*" (2008: 5).

Another bias inherent within this small, but growing body of anthropological literature is the tendency to concentrate on animals in non-western societies. "*Despite anthropologists' interest in animals, their work is limited because it addresses mainly traditional societies*" (Arluke and Sanders, 1996: 3). Consequently, they are unable to shed much light on the role of animals in industrial societies (ibid). In *Signifying Animals: Human Meaning in the Natural World*, (1994) [1990], edited by Roy Willis, he describes how non-western cultures view animals differently. In the preface to the book, Willis (1990: viii) writes: "*...there is no one human attitude consistently maintained towards a particular species of animal, and that similar human sentiments have been attached to a huge variety of different animals at different times and in different places.*" According to him (1990: ix), ecological; psychological; cultural and utilitarian considerations are all involved in people's attitudes to, and treatment of other species. These sentiments expressed by these social anthropologists are echoed by sociologists Keith Tester (1992) and Adrian Franklin (1999), who have made an important contribution to the field of human-animal relations.

Social anthropology, history and philosophy have a fairly well established track record in understanding human-animal relations, unlike sociology (Sanders, 2006). Yet, as Franklin points out, "*the scope for a sociology of human-animal relations is much wider than that stimulated by history or philosophy*" (1999:2). Several authors from different disciplines have commented on sociology's lack of offerings, despite the relevance of animal related topics of study to the discipline. But, changes have taken place in recent years and the intellectual contribution of sociology to the study of human-animal interactions warrants further investigation. Some of the important ideas permeating the sociological literature on 'animals and society,' along with the theoretical perspectives that provide the framework for this study are outlined in this next section.

2.2. Sociology and the Study of Non-human Animals

Sociology is a discipline with many branches and until fairly recently, few of these sub-fields have considered animals in any meaningful way. On the whole,

sociologists have remained silent on the subject of human-animal interactions since it was deemed an irrelevant or inappropriate topic for the discipline. The theoretical formulations, epistemological orientations and anthropocentric bias of most sociologists diverted the discipline's focus from animals. Classical sociological theorists tended to ignore animals in their writings or view their behaviour as '*devoid of meaning*' (Mead, 1962). According to George Herbert Mead, animals are "*incapable of having any meaningful social behaviour*" (Irvine, 2004: 121). Animals cannot be objects for themselves, for they have no reflective abilities. In another article, Mead provides an example of dogs' behaviour. Mead writes, "*But the animal does not have an idea of what he is going to do, and if we stopped with the child here we could not attribute to him any idea. What is involved in the giving of an idea is what cannot be stated in terms of this conditioning of a reflex. I have suggested that involved in such giving is the fact that the stimulus not only calls out the response, but that the individual who receives the response also himself uses that stimulus, that vocal gesture, and calls out that response in himself. Such is, at least, the beginning of that which follows. It is the further complication that we do not find in the conduct of the dog. The dog only stands on its hind legs and walks when we use a particular word, but the dog cannot give to himself that stimulus which somebody else gives to him. He can respond to it but he cannot himself take a hand, so to speak, in conditioning his own reflexes; his reflexes can be conditioned by another but he cannot do it himself*" (1932: 107-108).

Even though Max Weber was relatively 'open' to a 'sociology of human-animal relationships,' he never explored these ideas in any of his work (Sanders, 2006). Another classical sociologist, Harriet Martineau wrote a paper in 1865, titled, *Dogs: Unauthorised, Unclaimed and Vagabond* (ibid). Martineau argued that sociologists should do more than simply observe social phenomena and they "*should also act in ways to benefit a society.*" (Giddens, 2006: 20). Marx's work on the other hand was "*predicated on the opposition between humans and animals other than humans*" and he did not engage with animal issues in any way (Dickens, 2003: 69). In *Marxism and Animal Rights*, David Sztybel argues that, "*early in their collaboration, in the 1845 work, The Holy Family, Marx and Engels clearly imply a hostility to animal rights*" (1997: 169). Sztybel insists that it is necessary to revise Marxism "*in the direction of animal rightism*" (ibid). Ryder (1996: 167) observes that the Left has "*often shunned*" animal welfare and

animal rights ¹⁹ According to him, "*some Marxists reject the whole business of animal welfare; they tend to regard morality itself as a bourgeois defence of the status quo and the concern for animals as a distraction from the class struggle*" (ibid). ²⁰ In countries where Marxist ideology played an important role in shaping political policy, negative beliefs about animals and pets developed. For example, during the Communist era, these types of views regarding the welfare of animals were dominant throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In China, Mao Tse Tsung saw pets, especially dogs, as symbols of wealth and excess, which resulted in cruel treatment of the animals. In 1949, the Communist party banned dogs who they saw as 'symbols of decadence' and unnecessary extravagance at a time when there were food shortages. Police had orders to shoot any stray dog on sight, which led to near extinction of some breeds. As a result of past political policies, animal welfare is a relatively new phenomenon and remains at an early stage of development in China (Davey, 2006: 293).

The tendency to ignore or dismiss animal issues has thus been the norm for subsequent theorists influenced by the Marxist perspective and the only exceptions are Ted Benton (1993, 1996) and Peter Dickens (2003). Benton, in his attempt to apply Marxist thought to animal rights, critiques the "*liberal and individualist*" views on the topic (Dickens, 2003: 69). Dickens notes that although, "*much of Marx's own work was predicated on the opposition between humans and animals other than humans...many of his concepts and critiques are useful for addressing contemporary concerns*" (ibid). He suggests that "*a sympathy toward animals is developing, at least among certain classes*" and adds that, "*an historical materialist perspective helps demonstrate why the underdog of all kinds (including the working class) are still finding recognition and proper treatment so hard to achieve*" (2003: 72).

¹⁹ Animal welfare and animal rights are two distinct philosophical alternatives that have emerged within the field of animal protectionism. Although they differ, both positions have much in common in that they both reject Descartes's view that animals lack consciousness and are *automata*. Animal welfarists accept the human use of animals as a food source and in medical research as long as such use is carried out humanely. Animal rights proponents on the other hand deny the permissibility of such use, regardless of how humanely it is done. Central to their view is the Kantian idea that animals are never to be treated merely as a means to human ends, however good these ends might be. Whereas animal rights supporters call for a radical reassessment of how animals are treated and they advocate the total abolition of their use in human society, those who favour animal welfare, call for reforms within those human institutions that make use of animals.

²⁰ In similar ways the fight for gender equality in South Africa during the apartheid era was seen by some as deflecting interest from the primary struggle for racial equality.

However, the idea that sociology needs to embrace not only humans and their society, but the environment in general and animals in particular is gaining popularity in recent years. The growth of Environmental Sociology, as evidenced in the International Sociological Association conferences is an example of this tendency. Keith Tester examines the role of animals in contemporary culture and he argues that *"animal rights is a social construction and exclusively a social practice"* (1992: 194-195). Tester's contribution can be singled out and Franklin describes his book, *Animals and Society: The Humanity of Animal Rights* (1992), as *"the most fully developed sociological thesis on human-animal relations"* (1999: 192). However, Franklin disagrees with Tester's view that urbanisation provides a sufficient explanation for the changes to our views about animals that took place in modern society. According to Tester, *"People started to worry about the social treatment of animals to the extent that life was identified as the basis of knowledge and made the main principle for the order of things. Classification demanded behaviour which would respect the similitude of all living organic structures regardless of any visible distinctions, whilst also maintaining the privileged status of humanity as the only historical subject able to know life"* (1992: 88).

Aside from a few important works, animals remain understudied in sociology. In a paper titled, *The Sociology of Human-Animal Interaction and Relationships* (2006), Sanders claims that during the twentieth century, sociology has tended to totally ignore animal issues. This sentiment is echoed by Clifton Flynn (2001), who does however recognise the changes that are taking place within the discipline. In response to growing interest, in 2002, the American Sociological Association recently added 'Animals and Society' to the list of groups accorded full section status (Nibert, 2003). On their website they explain why this group is necessary and, according to their mission statement, *"the purpose of the Section on Animals and Society is to encourage and support the development of theory, research and teaching about the complex relationships that exist between humans and other animals. In the process, it is anticipated that the light we shed on these issues will increase the well-being of both humans and other animals"* (<http://www2.asanet.org/sectionanimals/>). The establishment of an 'Animals and Society' section, was intended to encourage research as well as lessen antagonism and give legitimacy to the study of animals in academia.

Clinton Sanders writes that sociology is busy extending its *"substantive and theoretical boundaries"* and is being enriched in the process (<http://www.h->

net.org/~animal/ruminations_sanders.html). Paul F. Cunningham reports that, *"Over the past decade several leading social science journals have devoted entire issues to the discussion of the role of animals in human society"* (1995: 89). As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, there are also two peer-reviewed scientific journals specializing in animal issues, viz., *Anthrozoös* and *Society and Animals*. Both of these journals feature empirical research on animal-related human behaviour from a wide variety of disciplines (Cunningham, 1995). Whilst the establishment of journals dedicated to animal issues, plays an important role in securing academic acceptance for *'animal studies'*, sociologists still fail to address Clifton Bryant's (1979) call for sociology to pay attention to what he termed, the 'Zoological Connection'. Bryant reprimanded his colleagues in sociology for failing to take the opportunity to study the role of animals in human society. His pleas were mostly ignored until the mid 1990s. According to Clifton Flynn, sociologists *"have often been myopic in their observations of human behaviour, cultural patterns and social relationships, and unfortunately have not taken into account the permeating social influence of animals in our larger cultural fabric, and our more idiosyncratic individual modes of interaction and relationships in their analyses of social life"* (2008: 8).

Alger and Alger (1999: 199), report that, in the first edition of the journal, *Society and Animals*, which was published in 1993, the editor, writes: *"the development of academic subfields often parallels progressive social movements, and he gives as examples Civil Rights, Feminism, and Environmentalism."* The authors refer to Jasper and Nelkin (1992), who claim that the Animal Rights Movement is *"rooted in the breakdown of the boundaries that humans perceive between themselves and other animals,"* which has inspired a significant body of writings on human-animal relationships (ibid). Furthermore, this social movement has *"brought about a re-evaluation of sociology's traditional assumptions about the relationship between humans and animals"* (Alger and Alger, 1999: 199-200).

The idea that sociology has a responsibility to expose the multitude of social inequalities that pervade most modern societies is widely held by scholars within the discipline. Although sociology has a long history of engaging with various forms of oppression, animals have not yet been included into their sphere of moral consideration. According to Irvine, the discipline of *sociology "has not yet challenged speciesism, which philosophers and others have compared to sexism and racism"* (2007: 15). Nibert (2003) also acknowledges that, despite sociology's reluctance to include other-animals in studies on inequality and

stratification, researchers in other disciplines have increasingly condemned 'specieism.' This thesis concurs with these authors, particularly Irvine, who argues that sociological research and knowledge has been instrumental in exposing many other forms of injustice and oppression, and "*Consequently, sociologists have an obligation to challenge speciesism as part of a larger system of oppression*" (2007: 5). Irvine (2007) refers to the work of Singer, 1975, 1985, 1990; Regan 1983, 2004 and Spiegel, 1988, 1996 to substantiate her argument. Arnold Arluke, notes that sociology's neglect of animals "*is strikingly ironic, given the discipline's willingness in recent years to consider the plight of virtually every human minority*" (Arluke 2003: 26). For Arluke, various factors have led to this, including the reluctance of sociologists to equate animals with humans (ibid). In another article, titled, *A Sociology of Sociological Animal Studies*, Arluke (2002) examines sociology's 'resistance' to embracing animals in their research and concludes that those sociologists who are engaged in studies focusing on oppressed human groups are the ones most likely to oppose this.

Even though we know enough about animals now to accept that they are entitled to some type of moral standing and ethical consideration, "*The increasing knowledge about the emotional and cognitive capacities of animals threatens the way sociologists have defined the social world* (Irvine, 2007: 15). For Irvine, the majority of sociologists share an attitude that conceptualises animal as 'different' from humans. According to her, "*the recognition that humans and animals are more similar than they are different challenges sociology's view that humans are sufficiently unique to merit their own field of study*" (ibid). Jacklyn Cock, agrees that "*Sociology as a discipline has a long tradition of exposing as well as analysing and explaining different forms of social inequality and the social worlds of different groups*" (2007: 216). David Nibert (2003) calls for the development of a wider definition of sociology with a more inclusive research agenda that takes into account the lives and experiences of other species.

In their study, *Cat Culture, Human Culture: An Ethnographic Study of a Cat Shelter* conducted in 1999, American sociologists, Janet Alger and Steven Alger use traditional ethnographic methods to examine "*human-animal and animal-animal interactions and culture*" in a 'No-Kill' cat shelter (1999: 199).²¹ Alger and

²¹ 'No Kill' is a label given to animal shelters that do not euthanase adoptable animals. In South Africa, there are numerous 'No Kill' animal rescue groups operating. Although there are a few exceptions, they tend to be mostly small and comprise a few individual volunteers. The largest and most well known animal welfare society in the country, viz., the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), as well as other established groups such as the Animal Anti Cruelty league (AACL) and Animal

Alger argue that participant observation is the most suitable and appropriate method for researching "human-animal intersubjectivity" (1999: 203). They apply the symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective to understand the relationships between humans and cats. This research has shown how cats manifest self-awareness and they argue that, "*within the cat community of the shelter, a distinctive cat culture has emerged, which represents the cats' adaptation to the particular conditions of shelter life*" (1999: 199). In their view, cats are able to make choices and adapt to certain conditions. The ideas they put forward challenge traditional assumptions held by sociologists regarding human-animal interactions and the nature of culture, which has long been thought to be an exclusively human construct. However, as the authors point out, "*this re-evaluation has even begun to find its way into introductory textbooks, some of which include sections on the culture and social structure of nonhuman animals*" (1999: 199).²²

2.2.1. The Theoretical Frameworks Underpinning This Study

Like Alger and Alger (1997, 1999), several other authors who have incorporated animal topics into their research, have deviated from George Herbert Mead and have questioned the hegemonic viewpoint, which excludes animals from sociological investigation (Flynn, 2001; Sanders, 1990, 1993, 1999, 2006; Arluke and Sanders, 1996; Arluke, 2006; Irvine, 2004, 2007). Since animals did not possess the faculties of language, which for Mead was a pre-requisite for symbolic thinking and subjective interactions, he denied that his theoretical perspective could be used to study human-animal relationships. According to Clifton Flynn "*the exclusion of animals in sociology has resulted largely from the influence of Mead (1962) who argued that they were incapable of taking the role of the other, and thus, of symbolic interaction, as they lacked language*" (2000: 100). Flynn (2000: *ibid*) claims, "*Mead's dualism has recently been rejected and research has*

Welfare Society (AWS) practice euthanasia and are seen as 'Kill' shelters. There exists a vast ideological divide between these two components of the animal welfare and rescue movement and they exhibit strong emotional responses and reactions to one another. Although the 'No Kill' faction claims the moral high ground and they muster widespread public support, traditional animal welfare organisations scathingly refer to them as 'Slow Kill.' Traditional welfares are also critical of the failure of No Kill shelters to admit all animals in need and turning them away when their facilities are full.

²² Alger and Alger (1999:199) cite examples of sociology textbooks that have done this such as Henslin 1995 and Stark 1992. These observations prompted me to check if any recently published Sociology textbooks followed this pattern and I noted that in *Sociology: A Global Introduction* (4th edition), by Macionis & Plummer, the authors do not refer to language as a purely human domain. They caution against humans laying exclusive claim to culture (2008: 133). Another example of the way animals are depicted in both sociology and anthropology texts is demonstrated by a review of the anthropology book, *The Comfort of Things*, written by Daniel Miller (2008). The publisher's review that appears in the Polity 2009 catalogue (page 34), reads: "*He places focus upon the things that really matter to people he meets, which quite often turn out to be material things: the house; the dog; the music, the Christmas decorations.*"

shown that animals have cognitive, emotional and social abilities." He contends that "according to symbolic interactionism, individuals actively construct reality through their interactions. To interact symbolically, actors must be able to imagine how others define the situation, including how others perceive them – they must be able to take the role of the other" (2000: 100). Similarly for Sanders (1993: 207), dog owners define their companion animals as "unique individuals who are minded, empathetic, reciprocating, and well aware of the basic rules and roles that govern the relationship." Leslie Irvine (2004, 2007), also uses the symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective to enhance her understanding of the relations between human and other animals. She comments that the discipline has traditionally tended to focus primarily on relationships between humans even though animals are "symbolically important in functioning as the other." For Irvine "Mead's logic is outdated" (2007: 14). She continues, "it is time to revise the sociological understanding of the self away from the focus on language" (2007: 11). In her book, *If You Tame Me: Understanding our Connection with Animals*, Irvine makes use of the interpretive approach to help forge "a theory of animal selfhood" (2004: 6). This reinterpretation of the symbolic interactionist perspective is used in this thesis to describe and make sense of how pets are defined. The ways in which humans use these definitions to shape identities for themselves and others are also addressed.

Nicola Taylor (2007) observes that, in the last decade, a number of authors have argued that "human experiences of, and interactions with, animals should be considered a legitimate area of study for sociology" (2007: 60). She continues, "For the most part these arguments draw on the rich traditions of phenomenological and ethnomethodological sociology which see the mind as a social construction rather than a biological given" (2007:60).

The above mentioned sociologists have all challenged Mead and they concur that, notwithstanding linguistic limitations, animals are social actors and are capable of interacting symbolically. It is thus necessary and justified to incorporate human-animal relationships into sociological analysis. This thesis applies the symbolic interactionist perspective to describe how pets are defined by research participants and how these definitions are used to shape identities for themselves and others. The concepts central to the symbolic interactionist perspective such as the self, meanings and identity are applicable to this study, since they are useful for examining human-animal relations.

This study concurs with Arluke that the meanings we attach to our companion animals are "*products of people's interpretations of them*" and are derived through social interaction (2006: 184). For him, "*the interpersonal context that embeds it*" is important for understanding our behaviour and attitudes towards other animals (ibid). In *Regarding Animals*, the American sociologists Arnold Arluke and Clinton Sanders (1996) conduct ethnographic research aimed at gaining insight into the social forces and sociological dynamics that underlie human relationships with other animals. By using the participant observation method they help us understand the different ways people come to view animals and the coping strategies employed by those directly involved with them on a day to day basis in locations like animal shelters and testing laboratories. Arluke and Sanders' (1996) central premise is that the ways in which we 'regard' animals have a great deal to do with how we view both ourselves and society. They question the contradictory way in which our society views and treats animals. The authors write: "*we take this ordinary ambivalence toward animals as a sign that social forces must be working successfully, so successfully that in modern societies many people do not experience these contradictions as a problem*" (1996: 5).

Adrian Franklin agrees with this assessment. In his words, "*for any one culture, the animal world is never an indivisible category, but a historically constituted and morally loaded field of meanings that derive from the human habit of extending or imposing social logics and conflicts on the natural world and onto animals*" (1999: 2). He posits that, "*different groups in society have quite specific relationships with animals, the principle lines of differentiation being gender, class, occupation, ethnicity, nationality and region*" (1999: 33). Franklin (1999) draws on anthropological insights that view animals as metaphors, whose symbolic meanings provide the means for humans to contemplate ethical conflicts in various historical eras and in specific cultural settings and locales. He argues that various factors have played a role in transforming relationships between humans and other animals in the twentieth century. For Franklin (1999), these include the decline in anthropocentrism and the emergence of zoocentrism.²³ For Franklin (1999: 35) these factors are intertwined with the more general tensions of late-modern or postmodernising societies and he argues that key features of postmodernity, viz., risk reflexivity, misanthropy and ontological insecurity have played a pivotal role in shaping contemporary human-animal relations.

²³ Zoocentrism has been defined as the recognition of animals as full or partial moral subjects. The concept recognises the intrinsic value and centrality of animals (Franklin, 1999).

Adrian Franklin's postmodern critique, *Animals and Modern Cultures. A Sociology of Human-Animal Relations in Modernity*, (1999) is an extremely important sociological text in which he examines and explains the changes in the key sites of human-animal relations in the twentieth century, which include pet-keeping. He argues that, "*pets are also important sociologically*" and "*they are an enduring and universal cultural manifestation and not the preserve of modernity*" (1999: 7). Franklin's postmodern framework accounts for the broader historical, cultural and political context as well as the various social processes and forces that have shaped human-animal relations. This study concurs with Franklin that, "*The most appropriate general framework for understanding twentieth-century changes in human-animal relations is a specifically adapted version of familiar theorizations of modernity and postmodernity*" (1999: 34). In developing his theoretical ideas, Franklin draws heavily on the work of prominent theorists like Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991) and Ulrich Beck (1992), who "*provide general accounts of social change in the twentieth century*" (1999: 34). He adopts their terminology, concepts and insights to explain and analyse the changes in human-animal interactions in contemporary societies. Franklin acknowledges that, "*Although these theorists provide general accounts of social change in the twentieth century, saying almost nothing about human-animal relations, their work is useful because it is to be expected that our relationships with animals are closely tied to historically specific social and cultural conditions*" (ibid).

According to Giddens, in modernity each individual faces choices in terms of lifestyle, which he defines as "*a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity*" (1991: 81). In relation to pets, lifestyle choices are reflected in the type of pet chosen by the individual. The risk and uncertainty associated with contemporary human relationships has affected our interactions with and attachments to pets and although Beck (1992) clearly never intended his ideas to be applied to the study of animals, they nevertheless provide a useful theoretical framework that can be used to explain these changes. Similarly, in his book *Liquid Love: The Frailty of Human Bonds*, Zygmunt Bauman (2003) discusses the lack of connectedness that defines our intimate relationships. This helps explain why for more and more people, pets, not fellow human beings, offer security and strong emotional ties. For many pet owners, pets offer company and "*in a world of growing global uncertainty and violence, and a trend towards increased prevalence of single occupant homes, household pets will potentially play an increasingly important*

role in many people's lives, providing company and respite from the outside world" (Wood *et al*, 2005: 1159). This sentiment is echoed by several authors, including Franklin, who argues that life today is riskier and less secure than ever, making it an environment in which pet-keeping thrives. "Pets are able to provide their keepers with many social benefits which are no longer guaranteed by society" (Franklin, 1999: 97). Franklin attributes the increased prominence of pets in modern societies to the breakdown in the family and changes in family structure and he argues that we substitute pets for human ties and relationships (1999: 5) ²⁴ Pets are becoming increasingly drawn into what were once exclusive human physical and emotional spaces (Franklin *et al*, 2001).

Pets have thus become increasingly popular in many societies today including South Africa. This can partly be attributed to a crisis in interpersonal relationships and the erosion of tradition, custom and family structure, brought about by globalisation (Franklin, 1999). In his view, postmodernism, which explains social change in the twentieth century, can be adapted and used as a theoretical framework to analyse the new ways that humans relate to animals in modern societies. Franklin's (1999) main premise is that, changing trends in pet keeping during the twentieth century can be understood in terms of the demise of ontological security in the lives of individuals. Ontological security is linked to family, friendship and community ties which are increasingly at risk of being dissolved and severed (Franklin, 1999). He stresses that 'ontological insecurity' is an important contributing factor defining modern relationships with non-human animals, who can provide 'emotional compensation' and are a means of dealing with the problems encountered when establishing and maintaining human relationships. The decline in ontological security is an enduring feature of post-modern societies and the resultant changes in domestic and familial relationships, impacts on the relationships we have with pets.

So, although neglected in the past, there has been a recent resurgence of interest in the relationships between humans and animals. The proliferation of international literature in this regard, prompted Franklin to conclude that " *the field of human-animal relations is fast becoming one of the hot areas of debate in the social sciences and is beginning to occupy the centre stage once held by the*

²⁴ South African film director, Sipho Singiswa, whose 2006 film *Inja Yomlungu (White Man's Dog)* questions why whites treat a dog better than another human being, contends that today relationships with dogs, "reflect a crack in the sociology of whites." In other words, the popularity of pets among white South Africans is an indication of dysfunction and of problems within the 'culture', social institutions and psyches of individuals (Screened at the 8th South African International Documentary Festival).

environment" (1999: 1). But, he goes on to say, "to date there is no text that draws this material together or reflects on its meaning, significance and future", and the range of disciplines with an interest in the subject has meant that there have been few common points of departure or common objectives (1999: 1). However, in 2007, a multi-disciplinary textbook *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings*, was published bringing together key classical and contemporary writings on animal studies with contributions from, amongst others, philosophy, law, anthropology and sociology. Edited by sociologists, Linda Kalof and Amy J. Fitzgerald, this multidisciplinary anthology, which broaches "the historically complex range of human cultural relations with animals," is described on the back cover as 'the first book of its kind' (2007: xi). The book is divided into six main themes, viz., 'animals as philosophical and ethical subjects'; 'animals as reflexive thinkers'; 'animals as domesticates, pets and food'; 'animals as spectacle and sport'; 'animals as symbols' and lastly, 'animals as scientific objects.' According to the authors, (2007: xiv), "this volume is a collection of essential readings in animals studies and was inspired by the stunning explosion in recent research and theory on the relationship between humans and other animals in both contemporary and historical contexts."

From this review, it is apparent that the body of literature dealing with human-animal relations is progressing and this reflects the myriad ways animals help make up the societies in which we live. Notwithstanding the advances that have been made, there is still a paucity of local studies. Despite these improvements, animal issues have still not permeated academic scholarship in the same way that concerns with other forms of social stratification like race, class and gender have. Regardless of the shortcomings in sociological studies, these categories and hierarchical arrangements overlap and a few authors have identified the connections and convergences between the various systems of oppression and domination. A discussion of the main topics featured in the writings on animals is presented below.

2.3. Key Themes in 'Animal Studies'

Despite the widespread consensus between anthropologists and sociologists that most sociological research is anthropocentric and that sociology is silent on issues involving non-human animals and society, several spheres of interest have emerged within academic literature. Those contributions pertinent to this study and which were drawn on extensively, require further scrutiny. The intellectual content of these writings and the topics that feature prominently include the

philosophy, politics and ethics of animal rights and its relationship to social justice; gender, feminism and animals and the link between animal and human abuse. The class basis of modern pet-keeping, the historical emergence thereof and changing role and status of pets are also important themes explored in the literature.

2.3.1. Animal Rights and Animal Welfare

Ever since the first publication of Peter Singer's seminal book, *Animal Liberation* in 1975, in which he ascribes moral status to animals, social theorists and philosophers, have increasingly started to debate these issues. Robert Garner refers to Singer's book as "*the pivotal intellectual contribution aiding the revitalisation of the animal protection movement*" (1996: xi). Another major animal right's theorist is Tom Regan, who in his 1983 treatise, *The Case for Animal Rights*, presents the argument that animals should be accorded the same moral rights as people. Numerous other authors have debated animal rights and have highlighted the ethical imperatives that emerge from this discussion. Some of these are: Tester 1992; Rowland, 1998; Hills, 2005; Jasper and Nelkin, 1992; Garner, 1993, 1996 and Wise, 2000.

A popular topic in the literature on animal rights is the critique of 'speciesism.'²⁵ The notion that the hierarchical positioning of non-human animals must be viewed in terms of broader power relations operating within society has gained popularity. Alger and Alger assert "*that speciesism is even more embedded in our society than is racism or sexism. As difficult as it has been to eliminate the latter two from our lives, the elimination of speciesism would leave no aspect of our culture or institutions untouched. Our major ideological orientations emphasizing the superiority of humans over nonhumans would be out the door with their powerful religious and secular defenders*" (1999: 201). Numerous authors have conflated animal rights with social justice and have denounced the speciesist narrative that humans are more important than other animals. They have identified a fundamental shift in consciousness currently taking place that is reflected in moral concerns about the environment in general and animals in particular, and our relationships and interaction with them both (Franklin 1999; Rollin 1981, 1989, 1990a, 1990b; Serpell, 1995).

²⁵ The term was coined by Richard Ryder, (1989), a well known figure in animal rights movement to describe the belief that we are entitled to treat other species in ways that would be wrong to treat members of our own species (Garner, 1996: 11.) For Jasper & Nelkin, (1992), the term reflects a hierarchical system with humans at the top.

Franklin observes that *"There has been a net increase in the number and intensity of interactions between humans and animals in the twentieth century"* (Franklin 1999: 175). Rollin asserts that, *"concern for elevating the moral status of animals and for protecting their rights as determined by their natures has become a major national and international issue"* (1992:42). He goes on to say, *"society is examining and effecting major changes in the treatment of animals in areas long taken for granted, from agriculture to zoos"* (ibid). James Serpell (1995, 1996) maintains that although Western culture has a long history of systematic animal abuse, this anthropocentric world-view is now being challenged.

Francione (1996) notes that due to the different strategies favoured and ideologies adhered to, animal welfare is situated at one end of the scale of animal protectionism with animal rights at the other.²⁶ He argues that the former, is based on the idea that animals have rights and that *"treating them solely as means to human ends violates those rights"* whereas the *"welfare position maintains that animal interests may be ignored if the consequences for humans justify it"* (1996: 42). Nicola Taylor suggests that *'The generic term animal protectionism perhaps is a more apt and relevant one to explain the vast numbers of people concerned today with animal abuse, cruelty, and rights issues, because often these people come from diverse ideological backgrounds'* (2004: 319). Taylor maintains that, *"sociologically and otherwise, much has been written on the rights of nonhuman animals and the animal rights movement. Animal welfare, on the other hand never really has had the same level of scrutiny from the social sciences"* (2004: 317). She does acknowledge however, that there are exceptions and that a few ethnographic studies have been conducted at animal welfare shelters and amongst workers at these facilities. The most notable studies of this nature were conducted by Arluke and Sanders, 1996; Alger and Alger, 1999, 2003, Irvine, 2004 and Taylor, 2004.

²⁶ Although both animal welfarists and animal rightists reject Descartes's view that nonhuman animals are *automata*, there are important ideological differences between these two factions within the animal protectionist movement. Animal welfarists find the human use of animals for food and biomedical research acceptable as long as such use is carried out humanely. They call for reforms in human institutions that make use of animals. Animal rightists, on the other hand advocate a radical reassessment of how animals are treated. They call for the abolition of all forms of exploitation of animals and deny the permissibility of their use regardless of how humanely they are treated in the process.

Apart from the growing number of academic books and scholarly articles debating the morality and philosophy of animal protectionism across the political and ideological spectrum, a growing body of work examines the relationship between demographic factors and attitudes toward animals. The concept of gender in particular, remains pervasive throughout the literature and needs to be examined in greater detail.

2.3.2. Women and Animals

Current research suggests that one of the most consistent findings in studies of attitudes about animal rights has been gender difference. The majority of exploiters and abusers of animals are male and most animal advocates are female (Luke, 2007). The most common explanation for this difference relates to women's inherent nurturing and 'softer' nature and/or gender socialisation. But, part of the reason for this gender differentiation can also be attributed to the common position that women and animals have shared. At different stages in history, both been precluded from being granted the rights of citizenship and were denied full membership of the human 'moral community.' Adams and Donovan assert that, "*historically, the ideological justification for women's alleged inferiority has been made by appropriating them to animals: from Aristotle on, women's bodies have been seen to intrude upon their rationality*" (1995: 1). In the preface to her book, *Neither Man Nor Beast*, Carol J. Adams argues that "*feminism does not solely address relationships between women and men, but is an analytic tool that helps to expose the social construction of reality*" (1994: 14). From this perspective, animal issues and concerns involving women often intersect and are not necessarily in conflict with one another. A growing and diverse body of work focusing on animals and gender exists. Key authors in this field include, Adams and Donovan 1995, 1996; Adams 1990, 1994; Donovan 1990; Birke, 1994, 2002; Driscoll, 1992, 1995; Gaard, 1993; Kellert, 1996; Haraway, 1989, 1991 and Peek *et al*, 1996. Despite the divergent responses within feminist thought regarding animal issues, several authors stress the interconnections between women and animals.

Carol J. Adams' writings straddle two focus areas, viz., feminism and animal studies. In the preface to *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Adams develops an argument that links animal oppression to patriarchal culture and adds a new dimension to conventional animal rights literature. She writes: "*Besides contributing to feminist theory, this book forms part of the emerging corpus of works on animal rights*" (1990: 13). Eco-feminists have started to recognise the

connection between the domination of both women and nature/animals and that *"animals have been largely absent from battering theory as much as women have been absent from conventional animal rights theory"* (Adams and Donovan, 1995: 80). For eco-feminists, the domination of nature (by men throughout Western history) is the underlying cause of the abuse of animals, the oppression of women and abuse and exploitation of the environment. Lynda Birke (1994) also discusses feminism in relation to animals and she views the oppression of both humans and other animals as inextricably linked. In her book, *Feminism, Animals and Science: The Naming of the Shrew*, she puts forward the view that *"the injustices that humans perpetrate against animals are themselves deeply embedded in the very same systems of domination that lead to injustices against humans"* (1994: 134).

In a more recent article, Birke observes that, *"the study of human-nonhuman animal relationships, like women's studies, is a relative newcomer to the academy. Both grew partly out of political movements of the 1970s, challenging different forms of oppression"* (2002: 429). Peek et al acknowledge that *"research on women's preponderance among animal rights advocates explains it exclusively as a product of women's socialization, emphasizing a relational orientation of care and nurturing that extends to animals"* (1996: 464). However, they *"propose a more structural explanation"*, and argue that the oppression and hierarchical domination women experience predisposes them to *"egalitarian ideology, which creates concern for animal rights"* (1996: 464 - 466).

Past studies have found that women are more likely to support the animal rights movement than men (Nibert, 1994, Gaarder, 2008). The prevalence of women in the animal rights movement and the prominence of women in animal rescue groups and other welfare causes demonstrates this. Brian Luke writes: *"A cursory glance at the membership of groups that exploit animals and groups that oppose such exploitation reveals a striking gender differentiation. Throughout its history, the large majority of activists in the animal protection movement have been female. Moreover, women have most often been the founders and leaders of animal protection organizations"* (2007: 11). This pattern can be detected in South African society as well.²⁷

²⁷ The majority of animal rescue workers, animal rights activists and animal welfare supporters in this country are female. This has been gleaned from anecdotal evidence as well as personal experiences and observations at meetings I have attended, including those of the Animal Welfare Forum (Cape Town, 2012).

A study conducted by Jasper and Nelkin, (1992), established that there is a connection between gender and support for animal causes. Adams and Donovan explain the dominance and omnipresence of women within the animal rights movement in terms of *"a sense of ethical responsibility, deriving from a historical praxis of care"* (Adams & Donovan 1995: 5). According to them, *"many women in the western tradition have an ethical history that is rooted in culturally prescribed practices of caring. Part of this history, is an active concern about animals"* (ibid.). It is thus not surprising that the great majority of nineteenth century activists involved in the anti-cruelty and anti-vivisection movement were women, and that the vast majority of animal rights activists in the modern world are also female (ibid.). Donovan (1990: 373) quotes feminist author Sara Ruddick, who in her paper titled, *Maternal Thinking* (1980), *"urges that a maternal epistemology, derived from the historical practice of mothering – that is, caring for another who demands preservation and growth – can be identified."* Donovan (1990: 375) argues that the *"basis for a feminist ethic for the treatment of animals"* is rooted in the inherently caring and empathic attitudes of women.²⁸ For Brian Luke the social construction of masculinity and femininity is directly linked with our social treatment of animals. Luke argues that, *"gender consistently emerges as the most significant factor underpinning attitudes toward animal exploitation"* (2007: 19). In his book, *Brutal: Manhood and the Exploitation of Nature* (2007) he argues that in Western culture, part of becoming a man entails distinguishing themselves from women by detaching themselves emotionally so that they do not have compassion and empathy for animals. Stephen Kellert was one of the first researchers to study American attitudes and practices regarding nature and animals and he found that: *"Women consistently express greater humanistic and moralistic sentiments toward nature – particularly strong affection and emotional attachment to individual animals, especially pets"* (1996: 51).

The existing literature suggests that women's issues and animal topics share a history of being marginalised and viewed as trivial. Although ignored in the past and relegated to the bottom level of importance in academic scholarship and intellectual engagement, both have made significant strides lately. At the same time, race, a category that often intersects with gender, has been incorporated

²⁸ Even though women have historically been less directly involved in abusing animals than men, Josephine Donovan (2007: 60) reminds us that *"they nevertheless have been complicit in that abuse, largely in their use of luxury items that entail animal pain and destruction (such as furs) and in their consumption of meat."*

into recent discussions on society and animals. Sexist and racist discourse relating to animals is becoming increasingly commonplace in South Africa and contemporary writings on these topics can help shed light on the dynamics underlying our social interactions. Lynda Birke (2002: 430) argues that “*several feminist theorists have analyzed the ways that gender, race, and animality are deeply entwined concepts in our culture—they are concepts that discursively construct one another*” (2002: 430). In particular the work of Donna Haraway, (1989) *Primate Visions: Gender, race and nature in the world of modern science*, stands out. The role played by race in the formation of attitudes toward other animals, as well as the ‘racialisation’ of human others is explored next.

2.3.3. Animals and ‘Racialisation’

A key theme that features prominently in writings about animals is the notion of race and the formation and establishment of ‘out groups.’ The contributions of Kellert, 1996, Plous, 1993; Elder *et al*, 1998, 2002; Taylor, 1989; Spiegel, 1986; Tiffin, 2009; Wolch and Emel, 1998; Wolch and Lassiter, 2004; Kruse, 2002 and Brown, 2002 are significant. Several of these authors also discuss how animals and our uses of them, contribute towards the “racialisation” of ‘others’ in society.

Previous data have thus suggested that when it comes to animals and the attitudes people have towards them, race is a variable that warrants consideration. One of the earliest studies that tried to measure racial differences between attitudes toward animals was done by Kellert in the 1970s and after interviewing nearly 4000 African Americans, he concluded that this group as whole displayed less appreciation, interest in or concern for animals and wildlife than people of European ancestry (quoted in Brown, 2002). Kellert found that African Americans in general were less interested in supporting the protection of wildlife and nature than whites and were more likely to have “*utilitarian, dominionistic and negativistic views of animals*”, than whites, who saw them in a more “*sentimental, humanistic way*” (Brown, 2002: 249). Amongst other things, Kellert’s research demonstrates that, as with gender, attitudes toward animals can vary greatly according to racial group. Subsequent studies done support Kellert’s findings regarding higher levels of attachment to animals in general and pets in particular among whites. In this view African Americans tend to own fewer pets and are either less attached to their pets than are whites or they express this attachment differently (Brown, 2002: 252). The reasons for these differences are partly historical and are explored further in Chapter Four.

In a later study conducted by social geographers Wolch and Lassiter (2004), based on focus group discussions with African American women, the authors argue that different cultures have different relationships to animals. Until recently, the majority of studies on attitudes toward animals have mostly focused on white, middle class adults, thus their focus group study which aimed to explore different ethnic attitudes towards animals, deviated from this pattern. Wolch and Lassiter (2004) found that, along with other factors, culture played a part in determining attitudes toward pets. The idea that pet ownership and attachment is shaped by race is supported by several authors. In the article, *Race, Place, and the Bounds of Humanity*, Elder *et al* argue that the human-animal divide, "has retained its power to produce and maintain racial and other forms of cultural difference" (1998: 183). They discuss how the 'animal practices' of subaltern groups are used to racialise, devalue and dehumanise them. The authors question what makes some animal practices acceptable and others savage and conclude that "*Humans define the boundary between themselves and other animals, in part, on the basis of their treatment of animals*" (1998: 195).

Another theme is the similarity between the enslavement of animals to that of people, particularly blacks. In her controversial book, first published in 1988, *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*, Marjorie Spiegel compares slavery to the oppression of animals. Spiegel remains aware that her idea could offend certain people and that it could be viewed as equating blacks with animals, as well as downplaying important 'human' issues. She is especially sensitive to the fact that blacks have long been compared to animals in a way that portrays them in an inferior, negative light and makes it clear from the outset that this is not her intention. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin pick up on this and they argue that: "*any direct or metaphorical connection between the treatment of Africans as slaves and the treatment of animals today is a politically dangerous one to argue, whatever the obvious analogies*" (2010: 136). The authors point out that Spiegel strategically selected the internationally renowned black author Alice Walker to write the foreword so as to try and circumvent the inevitable accusations of racism that would follow the publication of her book.

Franklin (1999: 2) refers to the "*contested and conflictual nature of human-animal relations*" and he observes how "*social differentials*" that stem from gender, race, ethnicity, religion, region and class compound the situation in modern societies. The construction of social status and the expression of class

conflict in relation to animals highlighted in the available literature requires further investigation.

2.3.4. Social Class, Status and Animals

Harriet Ritvo (1987) discusses the ways in which animals are used to show discontent and refers to the example of animals being used to express class conflict in nineteenth century England. In her influential book, *The Animal Estate: The English and other creatures in the Victorian Age*, (1987) Ritvo examines pet-keeping, which she argues, provides a "window on the world" being studied. Ritvo (1987) has shown how the emergence of new elites in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century, "was accompanied by a restratification of the canine order" and that by the early twentieth century "dogs were clear markers of a complex system of social identity based on class" (quoted in Franklin, 1999: 98). For Ritvo, pets play a role in affirming and conveying the status of their 'owners'. The breed of dog a person owns may be a projection of deeper needs and identifications.

Ritvo (1987) describes how throughout the nineteenth century, while pets were increasingly welcomed into domestic life, poor people's pets were disapproved of. Pet-keeping was indicative of poor people's depravity and immoral behaviour. At the time, pets were seen as unnecessary luxuries that poor people could ill afford to keep or control. In an article titled, *The Emergence of Modern Pet-keeping*, Ritvo argues that, "The underlying symbolism of domination may have defined pet ownership as the prerogative only of those whose social position justified some analogous exercise of power over their fellow human beings" (1987: 164). These ideas are supported by Thomas (1983), who found that during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, "pets, particularly high status pets, became important signifiers of rank" (quoted in Franklin, 1999: 88).

Serpell agrees that there are historical links between pet-keeping and wealth and he argues that have been class distinctions between those who did and those who did not keep animals as pets throughout European history (1987: 166). Serpell shows that the link between pet-keeping and the 'ruling classes' was not limited to western cultures and he cites examples from China, Japan and Africa to illustrate his argument. Although pet-keeping is "now fairly evenly distributed across all social classes", Serpell notes that, the "proliferation of pets in modern industrial societies has been accompanied by a steady increase in human living standards, and many would argue that this is sufficient evidence on its own that

pet-keeping is a mere by-product of Western affluence; a self-indulgent waste of emotional and material resources that would be better spent in service of underprivileged human beings" (1987: 166). This view of pets has been around for a very long time and is based on *"the assumption that petkeeping is a trivial and wasteful spin-off of material wealth and rests on the notion that poor or non-affluent people do not keep pets* (Serpell, 1987: 169).

Like Ritvo (1987) and Serpell, (1987), several other authors including Bryant, (1993) and Charles Phineas (1974) have emphasised the overlaps that exist between pet-keeping and social class. In his analysis of pet-keeping in modern society, Charles Phineas (1974) discusses these linkages. In his article, *Household Pets and Urban Alienation*, he argues that this pet-keeping is an expression of the need that the middle classes had to exercise *"control over a subject being to give them a sense of purpose"* (quoted in Menache, 1998: 81-82).

In *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (1985), the historian, Robert Darnton discusses events that took place in the 1700s where apprentice printers vented their anger on their employer's cats. The owner's wife was particularly fond of the cats and harming them would upset both her and her husband. Darnton (1985) describes these incidents as an early form of 'worker protest' or class warfare. He explains how the resentment felt by the employees toward the cats that their employers favoured resulted in the massacre and torturing of the cats. This was done to cause distress to their employers, who they believed were treating them harshly and unfairly.

Within the field of human-animal relations, many relationships and associations have been established. The confluence of class, gender and race with animal issues has been explored. However, another crucial connection, viz., that between animal abuse and human interpersonal violence warrants investigation. A plethora of publications have been produced within this growing field of study. Attention is now focussed on some of the research that emphasises what has become known as 'the link'. But, before discussing these connections, it is imperative to mention that considerable work has been done on various other manifestations of the 'dark side' of our relationships with animals. One such area that has received attention is the anti-social patterns of behaviour and psychological disorders involving pets like animal hoarding (Patronek, 1999,

2006; Arluke 2006).²⁹ Although these issues and concerns fall outside the parameters of this study, this burgeoning body of literature must be acknowledged. A substantial amount has been written about the link between animal cruelty and human interpersonal violence and key authors include Arkow, 1995, 1999; Ascione, 1993, 1997, 1999; Solot, 1997, 1999; Lockwood, 1999, Boat, 1995, 1999 and Fitzgerald, 2005. The link between animal abuse; domestic violence; sexual and child abuse; corporal punishment and other behavioural disorders is well-documented (Kellert and Felthous, 1985; Ascione, 1993, 1997, 1999; Flynn, 2000; Solot, 1997, 1999).

This increasingly popular area of focus within the field of human-animal interactions is still dominated by psychology, but some sociological contributions have surfaced recently. The sheer volume of work being produced and the far reaching implications that the findings have for broader social relations renders it necessary to highlight the key texts and theoretical ideas.

2.3.5. The Link Between Animal Cruelty and Human Interpersonal Violence

Contributions to the body of knowledge focussing on the connections between the various forms of violence and abuse that occur in our society in general and within the home in particular have increased significantly during the past few years. Although academic projects focussing on domestic violence tend to be very separate and insular, with little attempt to combine research findings, the situation is changing. Research into the links between animal abuse and human interpersonal violence is developing rapidly and one of the best known, comprehensive interdisciplinary texts, *Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse: Linking the Circles of Compassion for Prevention and Intervention* (1999), edited by Phil Arkow and Frank R. Ascione significantly expands the scope of former studies. In the same way, the pioneering work of the Latham Foundation, and Helen Munro's (1999) definition and typology of a 'battered pet', have contributed to this growing body of knowledge during the past two decades. Researchers have begun to understand the overlap between child abuse and

²⁹ According to the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium (quoted on the ASPCA website), animal hoarding involves keeping large numbers of animals as domestic pets without having the ability to properly house or care for them, while at the same time denying this inability. It is a "*complex and intricate public health and community issue. Its effects are far-reaching and encompass mental health, animal welfare and public safety concerns*" (<http://www.asPCA.org/fight-animal-cruelty/animal-hoarding.aspx>).

neglect and domestic violence between intimate adult partners and, these insights must be used to now consider the overlap between these forms of abuse with animal maltreatment.

There is growing evidence to support the theory that violent acts have common origins and influences (Arkow, 1995; Adams, 1995). Another commonality that can be identified within these distinct research areas is a shared basic premise and the use of similar concepts. According to Dorian Solot *"if we accept the premise that similar issues of violence, power and control exist in all violent situations, it stands to reason that concepts borrowed from research on violence toward humans would apply to situations involving violence toward animals"* (1997: 264). Although it is a pervasive social problem, animal abuse is largely under-researched. In comparison there is a vast volume of literature dealing with domestic violence, battered women and child abuse (Solot, 1997). When animal abuse is mentioned in a study it is usually in the context of it constituting an early warning sign for other violent tendencies. Those who have included animals in their studies appear to be primarily concerned with the links to human violence (Solot, 1997). Flynn (2001) reminds us that, the failure to study animals is not limited to writings on family violence, but typifies sociological research in general.

However, despite these shortcomings, it is widely accepted that an understanding of animal abuse can provide insight into all forms of human interpersonal violence, especially domestic violence, and crime. Arkow, (1999) argues that, animal cruelty needs to be viewed in terms of the broader picture of anti-social and criminal behaviour. The famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead (1964) understood the potential anti-social implications of children harming animals and expressed the view that torturing or killing animals during childhood can be a precursor to violence behaviour during adulthood if left untreated.

Similarly, the writings of early philosophers, artists, psychiatrists and novelists like Edgar Allan Poe (*The Black Cat*) and William Golding (*Lord of the Flies*), *"illustrate the ways animal abuse might presage human violence"* (Ascione 1999: 53). One of the first studies on the topic of animal abuse was conducted by Fernando Tapia (1971) who highlighted the often violent and abusive homes that children who abused animals came from. Ascione notes that retrospective studies done by Kellert and Felthous, 1985 and Felthous and Yudowitz, 1977 on adult criminals and psychiatric patients and FBI research by Ressler, Burgess and Douglas (1988) corroborate these findings (1999: 53). Other noteworthy studies

were done by Deviney, Dickert and Lockwood (1983), Ascione (1993, 1997), Arkow (1995), Ascione and Arkow (1999), Boat (1999), Loar, (1999), Lacroix (1999). All these authors are in agreement that when perpetrated by children, *"Aggressive acts against animals are an early diagnostic indicator of future psychopathology, which if unrecognized and untreated, may escalate in range and severity against other victims"* (Arkow, 1999: 20).

Animals are a significant variable in human socialisation and a child's early experiences of animals, especially pets, shapes and influences future disposition and behaviour towards animals and other people. Flynn argues that *"as with violence against humans, children may learn to abuse animals partly because their socialization experience has included violence in the family"* (2001: 76). In their attempt to develop a 'typology' for children who abuse animals, researchers have identified varied motivations: exploratory / curious animal abuse, pathological and delinquent animal abuse, each of which requires distinct types on intervention (Ascione and Arkow, 1999). A multitude of factors have been associated with increased levels of animal abuse including, physical abuse, sexual abuse of children and bestiality. The findings of De Viney, Dickert and Lockwood, (1983), confirm higher rates of animal abuse have been found in homes where child abuse has been reported than in the overall American population. Lagoni *et al* note that *"Animal, child and spouse abuse are prevalent and inseparable"* and, *potent statistics support this statement"* (1999: 212). Ascione (1999) contends that there is a strong possibility that youths who are cruel to animals are themselves victims of violence and abuse.

Other contributing factors include parental attitudes toward animals and violence as well as peer group pressures. Carol D. Raupp contends that, *"violent childhood socialization increases the risk of adult abuse of animal companions"* which is *"part of the interlocking forms of violence in the family system"* (1999: 141). Recent research findings demonstrate that animal abuse is more common in families in which domestic violence exists (Ascione, 1993; Deviney, Dickert and Lockwood, 1983; Fitzgerald, 2005). Studies conducted among 'battered women' in shelters have found that partners have actually harmed or threatened to harm pets. In other cases, their children abused pets and the women's concern for the pet often prevented her from seeking assistance sooner (Ascione *et al*, 1997; Ascione 1998, Flynn 2000b). Flynn reports that Ascione (1998) conducted a study in a shelter for battered women in Utah and discovered that 72% of the abused women who had pets had experienced situations in which their spouse either

threatened to harm or actually did harm their pet (2001: 81) As with women battering, harming a family pet serves as a warning, aimed at instilling terror. Killing the animal is a sign that the violence is intensifying and that the situation is becoming increasingly dangerous and life-threatening. Despite this recognition, most places of safety for battered women continue to refuse entry to four-legged family members. In an article published in 2007 in the *Electronic Journal of Sociology*, titled, *Animals as Disregarded Pawns in Family Violence: Exclusionary Practices of Feminist Based Refuge Policies*, Sharon Brennan critiques "the feminist ideals on which many Australian refuge policies are based, which ultimately limit the inclusion of nonhuman family members" (2007: 1). At these shelters, pet animals are not allowed to accompany their battered women 'owners'.³⁰

The correlation between animal cruelty and spousal abuse has been well documented. For Lisa Lembke "The elements of the tangled web of spousal abuse, child abuse, and animal abuse share an etiology of conscious behaviour and are all permutations of the same social ill, the same crime. The social status and value of the victims differ greatly, but the root cause does not" (1999: 239). According to Lembke, abuse ultimately results from the perpetrator's misuse of power and control over the victim/s and the psychological and the socio-cultural factors that lead to violence are similar regardless of type of victim whether child or adult, human or animal.³¹

According to Flynn "One of the most consistent factors associated with the perpetration of animal abuse is gender. Almost all abusers are males" (2001: 74). Age is also important and the perpetration of animal cruelty displays a similar pattern to other forms of criminal behaviour. Youth (late adolescence and early adulthood) are more likely to be involved in and prosecuted for these types of activities (Flynn, 2001). Differences in the type of animal that is abused as well as the method or cruelty used, "in part, reflect different age statuses in society" (2001: 75). Factors such as educational level, type of job and the area of residence influence one's lifestyle, which helps shape attitudes and behaviour.

³⁰ Although a Cape Town based shelter for battered women called the Saartjie Baartman centre recognizes that, "while the acute incident is often a physical assault of some kind, the use of threats or the destruction of pets or property can also be effective ways of instilling fear and establishing control", they do not have the facilities to accommodate women's pets (<http://www.saartjiebaartmancentre.org.za>).

³¹ Serial killers, Ted Bundy, David "Son of Sam" Berkowitz, Albert "The Boston Strangler" de Salvo and Jeffrey Dahmer, all have childhood histories of repeated cruelty to animals. More recently, Columbine High School students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, tortured animals as a form of "dress-rehearsal", before they killed 12 classmates and then shot themselves (Beirne, 2004: 50).

Flynn observes that *"as with other forms of family violence, the abusive treatment of animals occurs at all socio-economic levels. As with child abuse and wife abuse, however, the perpetrators may be represented disproportionately among lower socio-economic individuals"* (2001: 75). He goes on to argue that the father's educational level and the occupational status of the mother are related to the perpetuation of animal cruelty. The types of animals that are abused (in terms of both species and relationship), who abuses them and how it is done are all reflections of other social relations such as inequality, social power and patriarchy. Several studies that examine the importance of species type as a determinant of a particular attitude toward animals have been conducted (Driscoll, 1992, 1995). Flynn notes that, *"Some animals are perceived more negatively than others and thus are more likely candidates for abuse. Cats, second only to dogs as the most commonly owned pets, are victims of cultural prejudice"* (2001: 79). This is verified by Felthous (1980) and others, who have found that criminals who committed animal cruelty during childhood were more likely to have abused cats than any other animal.

The psychopathological approach dominates the existing body of literature on the subject. This individualistic approach assumes that animal abuse is an indicator of some mental defect or personality disorder and on the whole the psychopathological explanatory model tends to ignore the issues that are of interest to sociologists. The social and cultural factors that can help explain why people abuse animals and why they select particular species have received very little attention, even though there are compelling reasons why these acts are of relevance to sociology. Beirne makes reference to *"the yet un-constituted sociology of animal abuse."* (1997: 318). Although the entire field of 'animals in society' has been neglected by sociologists, significant inroads into academia have recently been made by researchers highlighting the role of social, cultural and structural forces in perpetuating violence against animals. In his book *Just A Dog: Understanding animal cruelty and ourselves*, (2006) Arnold Arluke provides a sociological account on the nature and impact of animal cruelty. According to Flynn as with other forms of human violence, animal abuse can be better explained in terms of a sociological model because, *"The context of animal cruelty is invariably a social one. Abusive treatment of animals usually results from our relationships with other humans"* (2001:74). He goes on to say, *"our attitudes about violence, families, and animals influence the societal response to animal cruelty and tell us much about ourselves. In short, animal cruelty is a social phenomenon"* (2001: 74).

Although numerous case studies exist and psychological and sociological research linking childhood histories of animal abuse with contemporary patterns of criminal violence has already been done, this burgeoning field is dominated by contributions from the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK). At this stage, any parallels with the South African situation remain speculative and to date only one study has been based in this country. This is the survey conducted by Schiff, K., Ascione, F. R., and D. Louw (1999) at Pollsmoor Prison,³² which focussed on violent prisoners in South Africa in order to ascertain whether they had histories of animal abuse. As with other research of this nature, this study focuses on criminals. Smaller studies have been completed by the non-profit organisation (NPO), The Humane Education Trust, which developed various resource materials that they make available to teachers and educators. These include informational pamphlets and booklets, DVDs and school workbooks, which are designed to facilitate the integration of humane education into the formal school curriculum.³³ They also have their own publication called *Animal Voice*. There are thus signs that local researchers are starting to become aware of the link between animal abuse and human violence. According to Dr Mark Welman, of the MTN Centre for Crime Prevention Studies at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, "...child abuse has reached horror proportions in South Africa ... evidence shows that the perpetrators of child abuse often start off by maltreating animals, and the scores of abused animals in our society are the overt symptom of the child abuse and other acts of violence which are hidden behind closed doors" (quoted in *Animal Voice*, January-April 2000).

Another theme permeating the body of literature that links animal and human welfare, emphasise that these protection organisations share a history. The origin of child protection work in the USA can be directly traced to the Animal Protection Movement and, ironically, the first child abuse case in that country in 1874, was brought forward by the American Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA).³⁴ This was done because the laws protecting animals predated those

³² Pollsmoor is a maximum security prison located in the suburb of Tokai, about 25 km from central Cape Town. Nelson Mandela spent some time incarcerated at Pollsmoor.

³³ Jorge Belloso-Curiel (2000, 2002), a proponent of Humane Education argues that this educational intervention is effective at improving behaviour. For him, "*children's attitudes about the care and treatment of non-human animals have a significant impact on their human interpersonal relationships*" (<http://www-mcnair.berkeley.edu/2000journal/Belloso-Curiel/Belloso-Curiel.html>)

³⁴ This was the case of an eight year old child named Mary Ellen Wilson who was severely abused by her stepparents (Arkow, 1999: 19).

protecting children (Arkow, 1999: 19). These efforts culminated in the formation of the American Humane Association in 1877, which remains the federation of both animal welfare and child protection organisations (Arkow, 1999: 20). Although no similar organisation exists in South Africa, and as was alluded to in the previous chapter, while there has been conflict between human and animal welfare groups in the past, evidence of collaboration can be detected today.³⁵

Phil Arkow (1999) who has written extensively on the topic puts forward a strong argument in favour of taking the link between animal and human abuse seriously. Although several authors share this sentiment, these issues have not yet infiltrated mainstream academic debates. Flynn claims that *"the link between interpersonal violence and violence to animals has been suggested, but rarely studied empirically, especially by family scholars"* (1999: 971). Boat (1995, 1999) agrees and she maintains that there is a dire shortage of empirical research on the association between violence toward children and violence toward animals. For Boat, this 'link' is generally ignored in the field of child abuse and neglect.

Franklin observes that, *"even though there has been a trickle of studies that emphasize the function and importance of domestic pets in the household, pets have never made it into texts on the sociology of the family"* (1999: 98). The low status still accorded to animals in our society and the failure to view animal abuse as anti-social harmful behaviour is reflected in the lack of academic attention paid to issues concerning animals (Franklin, 1999; Arkow, 1999). The exclusion of pets and their social significance from debates dealing with both the family and the violence prevention constitutes a lacuna in both bodies of literature. Despite these gaps, a large volume of writings on pets exists. These contributions need to be discussed as they are central to this study. This thesis will present some exploratory paths for further academic inquiry into pets and pet-keeping.

2.4. Pets and Human Society

Since the main focus of this thesis is relationships and interactions with pets, writings across the spectrum from various disciplines, have been reviewed. The

³⁵ Although local child and animal welfare societies generally do not co-operate with one another, this may occur unintentionally. For example, animal welfare inspectors called out to rescue stray animals, sometimes find abandoned babies instead, which they take to children's homes. Community Led Animal Welfare (CLAW) and many other groups working in townships such as *Four Paws* in Johannesburg and *African Tails* in du Noon and *Mdzananda Animal Clinic* in Khayelitsha (both in Cape Town), are examples of animal welfare charities that help human township residents as well. They do this in various ways, such as providing food parcels for people (especially child headed households and for people infected with AIDS), assisting with accessing social grants and even fencing properties and upgrading their homes.

main themes that feature prominently in the literature on pets include: the cultural understandings and symbolic meanings of pets; pets, selfhood and the construction of identity or pets as *"extensions of the self"* (Alger and Alger 1997, 2003; Sanders, 1991, 1999; Irvine 2004, 2007). Sophia Menache writes: *"In recent years, the various attitudes of human beings toward the keeping of companion animals have received much attention, especially as forms of a psychological projection mechanism"* (1998: 67). She continues: *"people attribute their own expectations and desires to animals, including those natural impulses they most fear in themselves"* (ibid). Similar views are held by anthropologists such as Geertz, 1971; Douglas, 1966, 1990, 1994, Willis, 1974, 1990, 1994 and Levi-Strauss, 1967. Menache quotes Phineas (1973) who commented that: *"there is a general consensus that the history of pets remains too much the history of their masters, revealing more about the owning society than the owned"* (1998: 68). She concludes her paper by stating that, *"petkeeping did not result from a market society, but from the tendency of human beings, whether in a framework of traditional societies or industrial cities, to project onto their pets – dogs being perhaps the most important members in this category - their most cherished values and expectations"* (Menache, 1998: 82).

The social role, function and historical evolution of pets also features in the literature and some of the key contributors to these debates are: Serpell, 1986, 1988, 1991, 1995, 1996, Lorenz, 1973; Arluke, 2006; Tuan, 1984; Grier, 1999, 2006; Kete, 1994; Ritvo, 1987; Phineas, 1974; Menache, 1997, 1998; Veevers, 1985, Nast, 2006; Wood *et al*, 2005; Al-Fayez *et al* 2003, Irvine, 2004, 2007 and Franklin, 1999. Another popular focus area discusses the therapeutic and other benefits of pet-keeping for individuals (Katcher and Beck, 1996; Franklin, 1999; Sanders, 1991; Veevers, 1985; Wilks, 1999), and for communities (Wood *et al*, 2005).

A cursory examination of the literature thus indicates that one of the most popular research topics in animal issues is the study of pet ownership. Heidi Nast comments that the *"most popular and academic writing on the animal-human interface deal primarily with: cultural histories of pet or non-pet/human interactions; the various placements and meanings of pet or non-pet animals in different societies, locations, and times; the ethics of various human-animal encounters; or human-non-pet-animal ecologies"* (2006: 304). However, others disagree and maintain that pets are often ignored in the literature. According to Alison Hills *"Although many books on animal ethics discuss hunting, eating*

animals and experimenting on them, few devote attention to pets" (2005: 220). She finds this surprising as there is a moral dimension that characterises the relationship between pet and owner. Interestingly, in the only South African text dealing with animal issues, viz., Michele Pickover's (2004), *Animal Rights in South Africa*, the author does exactly this and she fails to discuss pets, other than allude to her decision to exclude them from her book.³⁶

Regardless of these omissions, pets are increasingly being viewed as quasi or pseudo family and this is reflected in the attention given to them in the various aspects of our lives. According to Franklin, *"the relationship with pets is the closest and most humanised of human-animal relations, and the changing nature of pet-keeping can be related to important social and cultural transformations in modernity, particularly those affecting the individual and household"* (1999: 84). Important social and cultural transformations in modernity, such as the fragility of the domestic unit, social isolation and alienation have influenced our attitude and behaviour towards pets. Franklin argues *"that while pets may be kept as companions in lieu of a variety of human relations this only takes us so far in explaining recent changes in the composition of pet keeping"* (1999: 86). He adds *"it is not at all clear that the extension of greater care and humanity towards pets is simply because they are fulfilling surrogate human roles"* (ibid). New attitudes towards animals have also emerged and in the process the human-animal boundary is challenged and blurred by our changing relationships with them.

Arguably the most popular position in the literature on pets attributes the emotional bonds between humans and their pets to individual personality (Katcher, 1989). More and more research undertakings focusing on the relationships between people and pets have been designed and conducted. Several authors view pets as therapy for human physical and/or emotional problems and the therapeutic and the physical and psychological health benefits associated with pets is widely acknowledged. In a study presented at the Urban Animal Management Conference (1999), Kathryn Wilks argues that the beneficial effects of pets, (especially dogs) are of a physical and a psychosocial nature. Pets can play a useful role in combating depression and loneliness and can contribute positively to the development of children (Wilks, 1999). Wilks (1999) concludes that preserving and cultivating the human-pet bond is in the best interest of

³⁶ In my view, this is a serious omission considering the central role that pets play in many people's lives and their growing significance in contemporary South Africa.

public health. Within the literature, emphasis is thus on the positive effects of pets on the physical and emotional well-being of adults as a whole or amongst specific groups such as children, disabled, elderly and the institutionalised for whom pets may serve as companions and provide stimulation and emotional support. The role played by pets has also received considerable attention in the media, as have studies of the use of pets in hospitals, nursing homes, and other care facilities (Katcher and Beck, 1996).

Sociologists have also started to consider the role of pets in facilitating interaction between humans (Veevers, 1985) and pets as family members (Sussman, 1985; Katcher and Beck, 1983; Blouin, 2010). According to Jean E. Veevers, (1985) in her article titled, *The Social Meaning of Pets: Alternative Roles for Companion Animals*, the roles pets play may be categorised in terms of three major functions, viz., as a symbolic extension of the self, as social lubricants or social catalysts and as surrogates. In the case of the latter, interaction with pets may go beyond merely enhancing human relationships and pets may take the place of human companions.

Wood *et al* (2005) argue that, for more and more people living in a world of increased global uncertainty, household pets are likely to play increasingly important roles in their owner's lives. These authors argue that pets are essentially a "conduit for social capital" (2005: 1162). They observe that although "there is a burgeoning body of literature and research relating to social capital and specifically to social capital and health, the possible connection with pets has not yet been made" (ibid). Pets (whether they are dogs, cats or other animals kept as human companions) are seen as "facilitators of social contact and interaction" and can operate as "catalysts for the exchange of favours" (2005: 1162). Pets also help motivate people to walk and make use of parks and open spaces and can facilitate community participation around activities involving pets like dog-walking (ibid).

From the currently available literature, it can be deduced that more and more sociologists who are interested in the human-animal connection are writing about issues that are of general concern to the discipline, such as selfhood and identity (Irvine, 2004). In her book, *If you tame me: Understanding our connection with animals*, (2004), Irvine examines human-animal subjectivity. She challenges dominant views about our relationships and interactions with pets. In her view, companion animals have a 'sense of self.' Irvine argues that personal experience

of animals and their behaviour tells a different story to what the majority of social theorists have claimed. In another paper, Irvine (2007) questions whether it is moral to keep pets. She observes that there is no one single reason why people form relationships with pets and she explores the various reasons why people have pets and discusses the 'deficiency argument'; the 'affluence argument', the 'biophilia hypothesis' and the 'dominance argument' (2004: 18-23).³⁷ The latter idea was developed by Yi Fu Tuan in his widely acclaimed and influential book, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets*. He argues that the "making of pets" is "aesthetically-driven" and is both cruel and affectionate (quoted in Kalof & Fitzgerald, 2007: xv). Yi-Fu Tuan (1984) traces the history of male domination over women, children and animals and the ways in which we treat animals as 'playthings' that exist purely for our entertainment and amusement.

Russell W. Belk investigates the metaphors associated with pets. In his paper, *Metaphoric Relationships with Pets*, he uses a combination of qualitative research methods, viz., in-depth interviews and participant observation to identify "the predominant metaphors that emerge in pet owners' relationships with their animals" (1996: 121). He concludes by arguing, "Thus, if pets act as part of our extended self, they represent a divided self that is both civilized and tame, well-behaved and animalistic, controlled and chaotic. If this is a mixed metaphor, it reflects the way we view ourselves in the contemporary world" (1996: 140). The idea that people identify with their pets is widely held in the literature and the strong emotions we attach to our animal companions are demonstrated in situations where our pets are praised or criticised. In these situations pet owners can feel pleased or offended and often see a criticism of pets as a criticism of ourselves (Veevers, 1985; Sanders, 1993; Belk, 1996). According to Sanders (1990), if someone's pet is unfairly criticized it angers the owner, whereas if it was deserved, they often feel shame.

Several theorists associate the variation in the level of attachment between pets and human beings with demographic factors such as gender, race/ethnicity and income or class.

Contrary to commonly held assumptions, pet keeping is also not restricted to the more affluent Western societies, but is widespread in many other cultures, including those found in Africa. Although very little research has been done to establish African views on pets or the historical role of pets in African social

³⁷ These explanations of pet-keeping outlined by Irvine (2004) are discussed in Chapter Eight.

systems, it cannot simply be assumed that they share the pragmatic, utilitarian and instrumental attitudes commonly found in rural communities all over the world. The relationship African people have with pets, is determined by a multitude of factors including the social status of and roles played by these animals. The ways Africans relate with animals, especially those that are considered pets, warrants further investigation. In the South African context, wherein this study is based, this is especially significant, since many inaccurate claims and unfounded assumptions have been made about blacks and animals. The findings of this study contest some of these ideas and misconceptions. In particular, the notion that blacks do not care about animals or form emotional bonds with their pets, is questioned.

Despite these diverse contributions, there are gaps in the existing body of writing on pets. Wood *et al* argue that, "*Much of the literature relevant to pets and health focuses on the direct physical or psychological benefits for individuals in contact with pets, or on the mediating role of pets in relation to other known individual risk or protective factors, such as stress or anxiety. There has been less consideration to date, of community benefits that might accrue from pet ownership, although the role of pets as a social lubricant has been identified in a number of studies*" (2005: 1161). Wood *et al*, conclude that, there is "*preliminary evidence to suggest a potential relationship between pets and social capital, and between pets and some community level influences on health that merit further investigation*" (2005: 1169).

As previously mentioned, another omission is the failure to include pets in discussions on the family and domestic abuse. In addition, there is a shortage of studies that explore the factors associated with pet ownership among communities in developing countries in general (Knobel *et al*, 2008). However, one article by J. Olowo Ojoade titled, *Nigerian Cultural Attitudes to the Dog* (1994), stands out. Ojoade (1994) starts off his paper by arguing that the role of dogs in Nigerian culture is 'considerable' compared to European culture, which generally lacks 'dog lore'. In Nigeria, dogs perform a variety of functions and are used as guards and for hunting. They are also eaten. In addition, dogs often act as 'nursemaids' for young children and dogs lick the children clean after they have defecated (Ojoade, 1994: 216).

South African writings dealing with human-animal relations have followed the pattern of mostly ignoring pets in their analyses. The omission of pets from

locally published texts on animal issues is out of line with research conducted in many western countries, and internationally, the changing ways in which we perceive and treat pets is clearly reflected and well represented in contemporary writings on human-animal relationships. The increase in the domestic pet population globally has played a part in changing attitudes towards animals as a whole. Serpell (1995) argues that the more people that keep pets in a society, the greater the concern with animal welfare issues. Similarly, alongside increases in the pet-keeping population in many countries, including the UK, the USA, and many parts of Western Europe in recent years, there has been heightened concern for human-animal relationships in these countries (Barba, 1995).

There is a broad consensus that keeping pets is an increasingly popular activity worldwide and making sense thereof helps us understand various aspects of our social system as well as the relationships we have with one another. For Savishinsky (1983) *"petkeeping patterns illuminate aspects of. . . the nature of status systems, the dynamics of child socialization, the process of human bonding, and the roots of cultural symbols and metaphors"* (quoted in Menache, 1998: 67). Finally, attention is now directed at Southern African contributions to 'animal studies.'

2.5. Southern African Texts

This thesis aims to extend the insights gleaned from the mostly international literature to the South African context. Not much attention has been given to pets in particular or animals in general in local academic writings. Despite the inroads that have been made, on the whole sociologists in this country continue to dismiss animal concerns as being academically insignificant and as detracting from important issues that affect humans. In a country like South Africa, where there are numerous social problems, this attitude remains fairly widespread. Concern with animal issues may even be seen being in opposition to human concerns. For example, in situations where communities are dependent upon animal based economies such as hunting, fishing and agriculture to sustain their human existence, activists, conservationists and the political left may come into conflict with those who consider the position and interests of non-human animals as well.

The relative shortage of research in general and the dearth of sociological studies in particular focussing on animals in South Africa must be understood in the context of the socio-economic and political challenges facing our society. It is also

indicative of the 'specieism' that is prevalent in mainstream academic discourse. Much of this stems from the feelings of discomfort that thinking about other animals evokes. Whether it is the recognition that many people starve and live in squalor, while some domestic pets live in absolute luxury, and are fed premium foods, or the fact that humans claim to care about and even love animals, yet happily eat them. Thinking too deeply about other animals, unsettles many people. Regardless of this uneasiness, it falls within the ambit of sociology to examine all forms of interaction and inequality, even if non-human animals are involved. This view is further supported by Jacklyn Cock. In her book, *The War Against Ourselves: Nature, Power and Justice* (2007), she questions our relationship with nature and her core premise is that "*nature is a site of struggle*" (2007: 1). For Cock, "*Environmental Sociology has a special capacity to address the current crisis of nature, by exposing its social causes and consequences*" (2007: 2).

All in all, there is an absence of South African based studies that focus on our current and historical relationships with nature, the environment and animals. Apart from Cock's book, above mentioned, one of the few earlier local endeavours on the issue is Michele Pickover's pioneering work, *Animal Rights in South Africa* published in 2004. Pickover's book is well researched and timeous, despite her failure to include pets and the ethical issues that derive from our interactions and relationships with them in her discussion.

Most of the South African work on animals emanates from history and key studies include Lance Van Sittert and Sandra Swart's (2003, 2008) discussions on dog breeds as a '*window on social history.*' In *Dogs and Dogma*, Swart argues that "*dogs provide a lens into understanding human society and culture*" (2003: 4). Swart concludes that: "*A dog is thus a bundle of fur, teeth, hereditary characteristics, social symbolism and cultural attributes. In essence, a dog is social history that can bark*" (2003: 31). In *Canis familiaris: A dog history of South Africa*, a collection of papers edited by Swart and Van Sittert, two main themes in local dog history are identified, viz., extermination and domestication. Jacob Tropp analyses the conflicts that emerged when colonial authorities poisoned African hunting dogs in the former Transkei during the 1890s and 1900s as a way to control their "*environmental activities and mobility more thoroughly*" (2002: 451).³⁸ He explains how the killing of dogs became linked to rumours about other attempts by officials "*to poison and bewitch Africans, their animals*

³⁸ Tropp's article is republished in *Canis Familiaris* (2003).

and their landscapes" (ibid). Similar types of conflicts have taken place in South Africa and African hunting dogs are often shot by farmers (Mail & Guardian, 19 August, 1998). Another essay in this volume by anthropologist, Rob Gordon examines the social history and cultural role of dogs in Namibia. In the article, *Fido: Dog Tales of Colonialism in Namibia*, Gordon argues that "dogs are important for understanding the socio-dynamics of Namibia" (2003: 173). He continues: "A focus on dogs provides one with a convenient analytical tool to get round the problem of how cultures naturalise themselves. Moreover, it allows one to centre on the interconnections between real and symbolic issues in how humans deal with animals" (ibid). But, despite their ubiquity, dogs are mostly unnoticed and their role in human history and culture is ignored. Gordon notes: "Dog stories are pervasive although they have not been the subject of serious analysis" (2003: 173). He comments on the tendency of Namibian historians and sociologists to focus exclusively on humans and their accomplishments in their writings. However, this is not peculiar to Namibia and similar research patterns are followed in South Africa.

Historian Jane Carruthers' books, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History* (1995), *Wildlife and Warfare: The Life of James Stevenson-Hamilton* (2001) and her (2005) paper *Changing perspectives on wildlife in Southern Africa C.1840 – C.1914* constitute significant contributions to the considerable body of local literature dealing with 'wild' animals. Rob Gordon confirms this and maintains that "Wildlife takes pride of place in discussions of animals in African environmental history" (2003: 173).

Within the humanities, Wendy Woodward, in her latest book, *The Animal Gaze: Animal subjectivities in southern African narratives* (2008) encourages us to think differently about non-human animals and to reflect on our relationship with them. Woodward discusses literary representations and ways of interpreting these representations of animals (2008: 166) and she develops an argument that encourages us to acknowledge animals as subjects. She observes that: "texts, both fictional and non-fictional, both southern African and international which depict close human-animal relationships are burgeoning. This is partly because we are losing, irrevocably, the diversity of animal life and it is now, belatedly, being more valued, and partly because the kind of Derridean attention paid to the animal gaze and its significance is becoming more common as human and non-human identities are constructed, both by science and the humanities, as more fluid and even overlapping" (2008: 167). The observation that dogs "follow the

gaze of their human companions" (Irvine, 2007: 9) is extensively explored in recent writings (Sanders, 1999; Irvine, 2004, 2007). Sanders points out, dogs *"display considerable interest in human facial expression and direct their own gaze in the directions indicated by human attention"* (1999: 144).

Johannes Odendaal, a well known South African ethologist has written extensively about human-animal relations. In his book, *Pets and Our Mental Health: The Why, the What, and the How* (2002), he explores the underlying physiological basis of the relationships between people and their pets.

Geographers in South Africa are following international trends and have started to contribute to the debates around animals in society. Roger Ballard (2009) discusses the contestations regarding ritual slaughter in the suburbs during the post apartheid period. In his doctoral thesis, titled, *Desegregating Minds: White Identities and Urban Change in the New South Africa* (2002), Ballard explores *"white responses to this particularly visible aspect of black culture"* and he shows that a *"great diversity of discourses [are] deployed by whites in response to otherness, ranging from conservative rejections of ritual cattle slaughter on the basis of its barbarism to progressive discourses seeking to accommodate it in an urban environment"* (2002: 242). He also *"examines the impact of the history of western urban conceptions of animals, resulting in the paradox that, while many white people eat meat, they seldom encounter the process which converts a living animal into meat."* He concludes that *"some white people's concerns about the practice of cattle killing go far beyond the presumed cruelty of the custom and extend into the very identities of people and places"* (2002: 252).

The issue of cattle-killing, specifically ritual slaughter, is controversial and has received much media focus recently. As conflicts of this nature emerge, underlying tensions and social dynamics are brought out into the open. These incidents and 'animal practices' reveal much about the state of the nation and the racist discourse that surfaces in their wake remind us of the hidden racial, gender and class tensions that simmer beneath the surface. Throughout this thesis, it will be argued that incidents involving animals can shed light on the often hidden dynamics underlying our interactions. By analysing these disputes when they arise, we are able to explore the real meanings thereof. This will be discussed in greater depth in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the major texts and contributors to the debate on human-animal relations. It also set out to highlight the main themes and areas of focus that can be identified within the current writings on this broad and increasingly popular topic. Fundamental to this thesis is the assumption that myriad factors, viz., historical, social, cultural, economic, political, environmental and psychological combine together to influence people's beliefs about and attitudes towards pet animals. For the purpose of this thesis, I drew on a small number of studies that addressed the topic in specific ways. The work of Leslie Irvine (2004) and Adrian Franklin (1999) and their respective symbolic interactionist and postmodern theoretical approaches, have been drawn on to frame and analyse the findings of this study.

From the literature it can be seen that for several reasons, scholars in various disciplines, especially sociology, have historically tended to ignore animal issues in their discussions. Several authors have observed that we know a lot about our attitudes toward animals (Driscoll, 1992; Hills, 1993; Kellert, 1996), but not much about the sociological variables behind our behavior and experiences of animals or how we learn to apply different standards in different situations. Even though animals are ubiquitous and we rely on them to meet all sorts of needs, from food and clothing to entertainment and security, our interactions with animals are only now becoming a topic of interest in the social sciences and humanities. Although neglected in the past and notwithstanding the shortcomings, animals are increasingly being seen as a worthy topic of academic study. There has been a recent resurgence of interest in the relationships between humans and animals. Despite the lacunae that still exist, it appears that the body of literature dealing with human-animal relations is advancing on several fronts. This increased academic focus on non-human animals reflects the countless and diverse ways in which they help make up the societies in which we live. The proliferation of literature within the field of human-animal relations that has taken place internationally since the 1990s has not occurred locally and this remains an extremely under-researched, but socially significant area of study.

According to Lynda Birke (1994), new ideas regarding the character and status of animals are emerging and this change has taken place due to environmental movements and anti development organisations and politics. Another contributing factor is an increased interest in "other" forms of knowledge that have been devalued during imperialism and neo-colonialism. Birke (1994) argues that, as

with other aspects of society, ordinary people's understandings, which may oppose scientific findings, needs to be considered and this lay or indigenous knowledge regarding animals, need to be revisited. Our beliefs about animals and the meanings we attach to them shift, which in turn affects their status and how we treat them. We need to situate our current cultural understandings of animals historically if we are to make sense of them. A common thread running throughout almost all the literature is the inherently contradictory nature of human beliefs about and attitudes and behaviour towards other animals. Several authors have noted that ambivalence is a key factor shaping social relationships with and human treatment of animals (Arluke and Sanders, 1996). This is demonstrated by us treating pets as 'quasi family' and as 'fur kids' on the one hand and eating farm animals and hunting wildlife on the other. Tuan observes: *"while in art and religion humans show an enduring tendency to see animals as the embodiment of power and as larger than life, in day-to-day existence they unhesitatingly dominate and exploit animals in myriads of ways"* (1984: 72). Francione (1996) and Pickover (2005) both comment on the *"moral schizophrenia"* we have in terms of animals, which makes it possible for us to prize and become attached to some animals and totally abandon, neglect or abuse others.

Society's attitude is contradictory and ambiguous and *"the powerful institutions of religion, science and government support the cultural exploitation of animals"* (Flynn, 2001: 78). Various authors examine the role played by religion in shaping our views about other animal species and they argue that religion reinforces cultural understandings.³⁹ In a culturally diverse society like South Africa, correspondingly diverse attitudes toward the treatment of other animals, including our pets, can be detected. Making sense of these differences in opinion and the values and beliefs that motivate them and the meanings we attach to animals could help shed light on the ways in which we perceive and treat one another. It could also help to increase our understanding of the social structure and of the different cultures that make up our society. Although these insights are potentially useful, very little academic research of this nature has been done in South Africa. An analysis of the attitudinal differences that various ethnic and racial groups have towards animals as a whole and pets in particular could enhance our comprehension of the dynamics that underlie our interactions with

³⁹ For example, the Judeo-Christian tradition view animals as inferior to humans, who have dominion over them (Singer, 1990; Serpell, 1995, 1999, Menache, 1998). Serpell argues that Christianity has played an important role in *"providing the ethical justification for ignoring animal suffering"* (1999:48) Similarly, Islam has been criticised for failing to accord animals the proper moral status given to them in the Koran.

one another. It is hoped that this study will in some way add to the newly emerging and relatively small body of South African academic literature on society and animals, particularly pets.

In the next chapter, the research process, the methods used to collect data, problems experienced and ethical concerns are dealt with extensively.



3

Researching Pets: The Fieldwork Process

"The purpose of empirical enquiry is to settle disagreements and doubts about facts, and thus to make arguments more fruitful by basing all sides more substantively." (C. Wright Mills, 1959: 226)

This study was conducted in order to establish the significance of social, cultural, historical and personal factors in shaping pet-keeping patterns within two samples of South Africans. This thesis argues that although pet-keeping is a practice that cuts across social boundaries and is almost culturally universal, differences in attitude and behaviour emerge over time and in different contexts. It is part of the objectives of this research, to show that these diversities, if understood, can illuminate broader social processes and can help to explain our interactions with and perceptions about one another.

In order to answer these research goals, the researcher opted to obtain the views of pet owners and to observe their behaviour in various settings and locations in and around Cape Town over an extended period of time. Different types of data on the same issue were collected, which is referred to as 'triangulation' (Arluke and Sanders, 1996: 34; Boeije, 2010: 176). The authors argue that this approach increases the validity and accuracy of the findings. In this study, views were obtained through a combination of face to face interviews and an email based survey. Specifically, a total of fifty (50) participants living in various sections within Khayelitsha township, just outside of Cape Town, were selected to make up the interview sample. The reasons for the selection of this research site are elaborated later on in this chapter. In addition, five hundred and two (502) email responses were received, of which four hundred and fifty six (456) participants residing in various parts of South Africa, formed the survey sample.⁴⁰ Furthermore, informal conversations and discussions with various individuals such as veterinarians, animal welfare workers, animal activists and ordinary pet

⁴⁰ A total of forty six (46) of the responses received in the email survey were not used for this study as the respondents did not 'qualify.' Either they kept pets other than dogs or cats, lived outside of South Africa or they were not born here.

'owners', as well as observations at events, meetings and public spaces visited by pet lovers informed the understandings reached.

This chapter describes the research process and provides an overview of the inquiry methods used during fieldwork. The techniques and research instruments used to gather, code and analyse primary material and the rationale underlying their selection are discussed in detail. The key sociological methods, including the use of structured interviews, surveys and observations, along with the advantages and disadvantages of these various methods of social inquiry are outlined. Furthermore, various methodological issues, the challenges faced when conducting fieldwork, as well as ethical considerations form part of this section of the thesis.

Two types of data, viz., primary and secondary were drawn on in this research undertaking. The former were derived from the answers the participants gave during the formal interview and survey processes, while the latter were obtained from academic literature, newspaper articles and other publications that were deemed relevant to this study. These resources were used to support the interview and survey results. In the previous chapter an overview of the sociological literature as well as contributions from other disciplines in the field of human-animal relations in general and pets in particular was provided.

This study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the different attitudes that two distinct samples of South Africans have towards their pets. While the interview questionnaires were scrutinised, coded, sorted, processed and analysed manually, the 'Statistical Package for Social Sciences' (SPSS) was used to analyse the survey data. A model that comprised several elements, viz., 1) demographic indicators, 2) current pet-keeping patterns, 3) prior knowledge and previous experiences and, 4) general views about animals, was developed for the purpose of data gathering.

This chapter, through describing the different phases of my research, necessarily deals with questions of methodology. Methodology is concerned with the practical ways in which we develop an understanding of our society and reality. It relates to the steps we follow to obtain the information needed to help us understand a particular issue. But, it is linked to epistemology, or "*the philosophy of how we come to know the world*" (Henning *et al* 2004: 15). In terms of the interpretivist theory of knowledge, "*Knowledge is constructed not only by observable*

phenomena, but also by descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding" (Henning *et al*, 2004: 20). Researchers in this paradigm are "*extremely sensitive to the role of context*" and interpret issues and events in terms of the meanings and understandings they have for social actors (*ibid*).

This study acknowledges that researchers are social actors and as such the observations they make are contingent on some framework of understanding or theory. The expectations of the researcher can result in bias and preconceptions. The researcher can influence the production of information and it is thus imperative to recognise and accept these influences in the data gathering process. Mouton and Marais write: "*from research which has been conducted over a broad spectrum it is possible to conclude that the eventual observations are clearly influenced by the prejudices, expectations, attitudes, opinions and beliefs of the researcher, and that applies equally to an interview, a laboratory, or a field situation*" (1989: 84-85). As social actors, it is difficult for researchers to make observations that are not in some way structured and shaped by some framework of understanding. From the outset, researchers need to recognise their personal and ideological biases, as well as their potential to influence the information that is produced through their interaction with participants. The data gathering process is affected by them and unless they are aware of their impartiality, their views may impinge on the findings as well as the interpretation of the data. During interviews, I did not try to hide my views from participants although I was acutely aware at all times about the danger of imposing my own beliefs and personal theories on them.

The methods used to gather information require a theoretical application in order to make sense of and understand the findings. Henning *et al* write: "*Research cannot be conducted in a theoretical vacuum...*" and "*When a researcher sets out to investigate an issue she does so from a position of knowledge and this knowledge can frame her inquiry*" (2004: 12). Coffey, Holbrook and Atkinson (1996) agree and for them, regardless of the methods used for the collection and analysis of data, any research undertaking needs to be grounded in a broader theoretical structure. Theories explain why things happen and they outline the connections between various aspects of social reality. The theoretical framework selected for research 'positions' or 'frames' the inquiry and "*is like the lenses through which you view the world*" (Henning *et al*, 2004: 25). Theories are ways of seeing the world and a researcher's theoretical orientation structures how s/he

looks at and thinks about their topic. Theory also provides the concepts needed to make sense of the data (ibid). A theoretical framework "*is primarily a place where the ideology inherent in qualitative research can be addressed*" and "*it provides a space where vested interests can be made explicit*", because "*there is no value-free or bias-free research design*" (Holliday, 2001 quoted in Henning *et al*, 2004: 26).⁴¹ As was previously mentioned, more than one theoretical perspective was drawn on in this study.

3.1. The Research Design

The research design or plan entails a series of steps, with the first being topic selection and the concomitant narrowing down and focussing so that specific research questions are formulated. In this instance, the questions addressed are "Do social, economic, political, cultural and individual factors shape and influence pet-keeping in South Africa?," "Does demographic profile affect emotional bonding and attachment to pets?," "Does it impact on attitudes to animals generally?," and "What do these patterns reveal about broader social forces and cross cultural interactions?"

The research design used for this dissertation is essentially a 'hybrid' one (Henning *et al*, 2009: 39) that combines mostly qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, with survey questionnaires, which are generally used in quantitative studies. The use of a combined methodology was deemed appropriate for various reasons. According to Boeije, "*The purpose of such a design is often to generalize findings from the quantitative research to the entire population by means of a large sample and to understand the mechanisms that underlie the outcomes at the local or micro-interactional level by means of the qualitative research*" (2010: 160). A qualitative research design was used for the interview sample. Qualitative research is concerned with human beings – their relationships, values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts and feelings. For Coffey *et al* (1996) a range of different methods and techniques can be utilised by qualitative researchers to gather and evaluate empirical information. Qualitative methods are highly flexible in terms of gathering the data, as well analysing the material. This means that if important new issues and questions arise while the study is being conducted, further investigation is possible. In addition, qualitative methods provide rich descriptions, in-depth explanations and interpretations of

⁴¹ The theories drawn on in this study – adaptations of symbolic interactionism and postmodernism are elaborated in the preceding chapter and are used to guide the analysis and discussion of the findings throughout the thesis.

their findings that cannot be obtained from statistical analysis and numerical data. For Herzog (1993), qualitative methodology can enable us to understand areas of research such as the psychology of human-animal relationships, which is complex and where there are shortcomings within the body of existing knowledge. Knight *et al* (2003) argue that since people often lack insight into their attitudes and beliefs about animals and their use, it is essential that the research methods used influence and encourage them to ponder their views. According to Knight *et al* people can be "*naïve about animal use*" and they may even refuse to be informed about procedures and activities that they consider unpleasant or cruel (2003: 324). Qualitative methodology contributes towards developing an explanation of why diverse groups of people display varied attitudes and behaviour patterns towards animals such as pets, which has not been the subject of much academic scrutiny in South Africa.

Although this study is predominantly a qualitative one, based primarily on in-depth interviews, informal conversations, discussions and observations, it has been complemented by the inclusion of four hundred and forty six (456) completed questionnaires. These responses, returned by email, surveyed the attitudes of South African pet 'owners'. As mentioned, Triangulation, which entails using a combination of research methods and data gathering techniques to examine social phenomena was used in this study. This type of 'methods triangulation' is useful in revealing different dimensions and aspects of the same issue, incident or viewpoint.⁴² Employing a medley of methods and multiple data gathering strategies makes it possible to obtain a more complete understanding of complex issues (Boeije, 2010). Apart from enabling the topic to be investigated from different angles, thereby broadening and deepening the overall comprehension thereof, this approach also ensures that a wider audience can be reached, by increasing the sample size. In this study, quantitative methods enhance and support what is essentially a qualitative study. The advantages and strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research can be harnessed when using a combined 'mixed methods,' approach. The limitations of either approach can be easier overcome if both strategies are used to gather data. Furthermore, the academic and applied aims of this study can be more readily achieved and realized if the research design makes use of mixed methods. The next section

⁴² Theoretical triangulation, which "*requires that more than one theory is used to interpret the data*" flows from method triangulation in this study (Boeije, 2010: 160). A combined theoretical approach is necessary since no single perspective is able to adequately explain the micro and macro components of the issue being investigated, viz., patterns of pet-keeping among diverse groups in contemporary South Africa.

details this process and thereafter a discussion of the questionnaire - its design and validity follows. But first topic selection is dealt with.

3.1.1. Formulating and Refining a Research Topic

Bailey observes, "*Social researchers often choose problem areas that they feel are of particular relevance for their own lives*" (1982: 20). For Bailey, this explains why blacks are likely to study race relations and women tend to research gender issues. Several authors agree that in addition to a review of the literature and prior sociological training, the researcher is influenced by their personal experiences when a topic is selected for study (Arluke and Sanders, 1996). While, a host of reasons and motivations underpin a researcher's selection of a topic their personal beliefs and values dictate what is important and significant. C. Wright Mills (1959) pointed out that the things that concern an individual and the desire to understand how these 'personal troubles' manifest in the broader social environment may inspire a research undertaking. Research topics may thus emerge from the 'sociological imagination' defined by Mills. I concur with C. Wright Mills, who in *The Sociological Imagination*, advises, "*you must learn to use your life experiences in your intellectual work: continually to examine and interpret it. In this sense craftsmanship is the center of yourself and you are personally involved in every intellectual product upon which you may work*" (1959: 196).

Arluke observes that, "*Sociological research in animal studies has been driven by our own research agenda rather than by the needs of animal advocates and non-scholars who work directly with and for animals*" (2002: 372). In my case, Arluke's observation is only partly true. Although this study responds to the lacunae within sociology of pets and pet-keeping and is an attempt to add to the body of academic knowledge on the topic, I also have another agenda. The issues dealt with in this study reflect my personal values and are of significance to my everyday life. It is hoped that the research findings can be used to facilitate understanding about pet-keeping in this country and that it will inform various stakeholders, such as the animal welfare/rights movement, government departments and legislators, so that they are better able to devise strategies, programmes and policies that benefit animals in general and pets in particular.⁴³

⁴³ At the time of writing, Democratic Alliance (DA) has expressed interest in developing policies and programmes aimed at improving animal welfare in the Province. The researcher has been requested by the Department of Agriculture to assist them with information on the social aspects of pet overpopulation strategies, which is necessary to ensure community participation.

My primary motivations for topic selection are a mixture of academic merit and necessity, personal interest and the desire to ameliorate injustices in the treatment of other animals. It is hoped that the new information yielded will in some way help to inform policies that improve the position of other animals in our society and that ultimately the findings of this can be applied. Other factors that motivated this research include the manageability of the proposed study and the relative lack of research on the subject. Practical issues thus also played a part in influencing the topic selected as well as the methods used to study it. Easy access to participants and the availability of opportunities to conduct the study facilitated the research design and process.

Once a problem has been selected, the next step is to formulate a suitable research design, which is basically a plan of action that is used to investigate certain social phenomena. The questions to be addressed (that ultimately shaped the research design and research instruments) include: what and who to study, how to do the study and how to present and analyse the findings (ibid). After selecting the research problem and stating the hypothesis, the next task was to address the practical aspects associated with conducting the study. At this stage decisions were made regarding how the research will be done and what methods will be used to gather data. According to Henning *et al*, (2004: 36), "*The philosophy and study of methods of different ways of doing research all have an impact on the design and execution of a study.*" The research design and the methods selected, emerge from the hypothesis and the key concerns identified at the outset. For Mouton and Marais (1990: 32), "*the aim in research design is to align the pursuit of a research goal with the practical considerations and limitations of the project.*" They (1990: 33) argue that "*The aim of a research design is to plan and structure a given research project in such a manner that the eventual validity of the research findings is maximized*" and "*[r]esearch design is synonymous with rational decision-making during the research process*" (ibid). The methods selected for this study were motivated by both intellectual and logistical concerns.

3.1.2. The Methods Used for the Study

Primary material for this dissertation was collected in two main phases during 2009 and 2010, each lasting around three months. Although an attempt was made to incorporate quantitative methods (in the form of an email survey conducted in 2009) into this study, for the most part, the research methods employed are of a qualitative nature. I am personally most comfortable and

familiar with using qualitative methods, which are best suited to the topic I have selected. According to Henning *et al*, "*qualitative studies usually aim for depth rather than quantity of understanding*" (2004: 3). Since this research aims to apply and enhance theories that can be used to explain the relationship (if any) between variables and focuses on behaviour, attitudes, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs, qualitative methods were deemed most suitable. When a study entails exploring diverse social practices and the researcher aims to enter the world of the participants, qualitative research methods are most appropriate and useful.

The next section discusses the rationale for selecting the methods used and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses and the appropriateness of each. However, before any fieldwork was conducted a suitable questionnaire that would serve as the research instrument had to be designed and attention is now focussed on this initial and crucial stage of the research process.

3.1.3. The Research Instrument

Questionnaires were used for both the interviews and the email survey and the design and structure thereof warrants further discussion. The motives and objectives underlying this research were considered when the questionnaire, which reflects the research goals was constructed. Simply put, "*A questionnaire consists simply of a list of pre-set questions. In questionnaire research the same questions are usually given to respondents in the same order so that the same information can be collected from every member of the sample*" Haralambos and Holborn (2008: 822). A questionnaire guides the researcher and the research process and helps to ensure that the topics s/he is interested in exploring are covered and should the participant go off topic, the questionnaire can be used to focus the discussion. Questionnaires are "*a practical way to collect data*" but some social scientists, such as interpretative sociologists question their validity (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008: 824-825). The objectivity valued by positivists is less important to them than the potential understandings and insights that research can generate.

Although similar questionnaire were used for both the interviews and the survey, there are a few differences. The former was more open-ended, so as to facilitate more in-depth discussion. The questionnaires were modified in accordance with the different samples and target groups selected as well as the different methods used to obtain data, viz., interviews and a survey. Feedback received from participants after conducting a 'pilot study' resulted in changes and the original

questionnaire was amended accordingly. Confusing or ambiguous questions were changed and to obtain additional information, more questions were added to the final questionnaire. During the pilot phase, a minor typographical error and a problem with numbering was brought to my attention and rectified accordingly. A pre-designed questionnaire comprising thirty four (45) questions was used during the interviews conducted with pet 'owners' living in Khayelitsha (See Appendix D). The first part of the questionnaire, Section A comprised eleven (11) questions aimed at obtaining biographical information about each participant. The research instrument administered to the survey participants had forty seven (47) questions (See Appendix C). Of these, the first eleven (11) questions in Section A focussed on their demographic profile.

The questionnaires or research instruments used for this study are broadly based on what is known as the Boat Inventory on Animal-Related Experiences (BIARE). A modification of this 'scale' which was developed by psychologist Barbara Boat in 1994 was deemed appropriate as data gathering instruments.⁴⁴ These questionnaires are slightly modified versions of Boat's inventory and these research instruments focused primarily on animal related experiences and perceptions. Although many of the questions used in this study were borrowed from the BIARE, which is a 'tried and tested' instrument, it was modified so that questions relevant to my particular study and target group were developed and included. In order to render the instrument more sociological, additional questions pertaining to the background and demographic profile of participants were added to the questionnaire and formed Section A.⁴⁵ Subsequent sections (B & C) followed. Section B focused on pet-keeping practices and behaviour patterns as well as past experiences with pets. And Section C dealt with general attitudes to animals and their welfare. The demographic profile dealt with in Section A, included questions pertaining to the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the participants such as their age, gender, marital status, occupation, religion, race, area of residence etc. The next sections – B & C, followed the demographic background and incorporated questions that were structured by several choices. A decision was made to use closed-ended rather than open-ended questions for the electronic survey. The former limits the participant's answers and they were required to choose from a set of pre-determined answers. Options such as yes/no, true/false,

⁴⁴ The BIARE "was developed to elicit information about a wide range of events to determine if animal-related trauma, cruelty, or support are part of the history" of an individual. Some of the areas appropriate to this study are: pet ownership history, experiencing animals as a source of support, loss of animals, animal-related fears (Boat, 1999: 89).

⁴⁵ See Appendices C & D for examples of the BIARE inspired questionnaires disseminated for the survey and used during interviews.

or multiple choice with an option for "other" could be selected for most of the questions.⁴⁶ Although a similar instrument was used for the interviews, it was possible to request that the participant expand their answers and elaborate on their views and explanations within the framework of the structured questionnaire. To facilitate this, the questionnaire used for interviewing participants was therefore somewhat more open-ended than the original version. But, despite these divergences, the questionnaire was standardised and a similar number and type of question was asked to participants in both the electronic survey and during the face-to-face interviews. By standardising the questionnaire researcher bias can be reduced and comparable data can be collected from different groups for interpretation.

An advantage of closed-ended questions is that they are easier to analyse and each answer can be given a number or value so that a statistical analysis can be made. Although open-ended questions can also be analysed quantitatively, it means that qualitative information is reduced to coding and in so doing the answers provided by respondents tend to lose some of their initial and intended meaning. Unlike closed-ended questions that are more specific and uniform, open-ended questions allow respondents to use their own words, which makes it difficult to compare the meanings of the responses. But, this is one of the clear advantages associated with open-ended questions – they enable respondents to offer more information and their feelings, opinions, beliefs, attitudes and understandings of an issue or topic can be obtained. During interviews, even though a similar questionnaire in terms of both structure and content was administered, face to face contact made it possible to probe issues further and for meaningful discussion and conversations to take place, thereby generating 'richer' data than from the survey alone and respondents could explain their answers to the researcher. Instead of ranking answers, the question could be posed differently and respondents could be asked: "What do you think is the most important issue relating to domestic pets in South Africa at the moment?"

The two types of questions are not necessarily mutually exclusive and both can be incorporated into a questionnaire, as they were in this study. During the

⁴⁶ Another type of instrument favoured by researchers uses ranking questions to measure attitudes. For example, in the well known and popular Likert scale questionnaire, participants are asked to consider a statement such as "*the most important issue relating to domestic pets in South Africa at the moment is over-population,*" and then they 'rank' the statement according to the degree to which they agree or disagree with it. Options include: "I strongly agree, I somewhat agree, I have no opinion, I somewhat disagree, I strongly disagree".

interviews conducted for this study close-ended questions were combined with open-ended ones. Starting off with close-ended questions in the beginning of a survey or interview and then building up to allow for more expansive and candid answers is an effective way of getting the respondent to open-up and offer more information. The researcher started off with what can be referred to as 'warm-up questions' which were essentially closed-ended. Sensitive questions or controversial issues were placed towards the end of the questionnaire and followed an open-ended format in some instances.

The wording of the questionnaire is very important and to avoid potential problems emerging, the researcher should bear certain things in mind. It is widely recommended to use straightforward, clear and direct language that does not use slang or dialect. These recommendations were taken into account and great care was taken with regard to the types of questions asked, as well as the content, wording, order and format of the questionnaires. Questions should be specifically tailored for each group of respondents and these were modified for each sample. It is suggested that the researcher pretest the questionnaire and in this study, this was done in the initial phase of research. In order to test the suitability, validity and appropriateness of the questions used for the study the researcher tested the questionnaire on ten (10) participants. Although used for testing purposes, these participants as well as their responses were included in the study. Questionnaires were emailed to the ten 'pilot' respondents and once the completed questionnaires were returned, they were asked for any suggestions that could further improve the overall quality, relevance and validity of the instrument. The survey questionnaire was modified using suggestions received from these respondents. At the same time, irrelevant questions were excluded, a 'leading' question was reworded and vague or difficult terms were simplified in order to ensure comprehension. Apart from the changes made to the questionnaire in the wake of the 'pilot' study, it was once again altered for the interviews. This rendered the research instrument more appropriate in terms of both the method used and the target population under investigation. The selection of samples, the actual fieldwork process, each of the methods used, and their strengths and limitations, are discussed next.

3.1.4. Sample Sizes and Selection

Sampling is a procedure used in research by which a small segment of the whole is studied in order to analyse and make inferences to a larger population (Hagan, 2005). According to Henning *et al*, "*sampling is vital, not only for practical*

reasons, but also as part of the process of delineating the inquiry – setting the delimitation posts clearly. Sampling entails scientifically selecting a microcosm of a larger population to which one wishes to infer” (2004: 71). Although it is generally agreed that qualitative research requires numerically fewer participants than quantitative studies, there are no clear-cut guidelines as to what constitutes an appropriately sized sample for a study of this nature. Since qualitative research entails detailed examination of questionnaires and interview transcripts, too many respondents can mean that meaningful analysis is difficult as there is too much information to work with. Kvale (1996) suggests that a modest number of 5-25 interviews are sufficient for a qualitative study. However this seemed far too little as I wanted to elicit as many outlooks and opinions as possible in order for my findings to somehow be more ‘representative.’ The attitudes and views of pet ‘owners’ who are a numerically significant sector of the population, yet are ignored by researchers, further motivated my decision to increase my sample size to fifty (50) pet ‘owners’ living in different parts of Khayelitsha.

Sampling refers to the way in which participants for the study were selected. A sample is a smaller number that is drawn from the whole population and it attempts to be as representative as possible. There are several sampling techniques available and for the purpose of this study, non-probability samples were used in both the survey and interviews. Several different techniques are associated with this approach (Davidson, 2011). In the survey, the sample was not random, but a non-probability volunteer sample. In the interviews, a non-probability quota sample was used. Respondents were selected as a result of snowball (referral), purposive and haphazard sampling to fill the desired quotas.

Fricker (2012: 199) states that, *“non-probability samples, sometimes called convenience samples, occur when either the probability that every unit or respondent included in the sample cannot be determined, or it is left up to each individual to choose to participate in the survey.”* Unlike probability sampling, which involves random selection of respondents, non-probability sampling does not (Trochim, 2006). When using random selection, every member of the population has an equal chance of selection (Davidson, 2011). However this does not mean that non-probability samples are not representative of the population being studied. Although non-probability sampling (as was used in this study) does not adhere to probability or random methods, it still aims to achieve a degree of representativeness (Davidson, 2011). Even though many researchers prefer probabilistic or random sampling methods over non-probabilistic ones, which they

consider to be more reliable, accurate and scientifically rigorous, they recognize that in certain situations this type of sampling is appropriate (Trochim, 2006). Factors such as limited resources (person power, finances and time) also influenced the decision to employ non-probability sampling methods.

In this study it was not feasible to do random sampling. From the outset, the inherent limitations of this approach were recognized and steps were taken by the researcher to eliminate as many sources of bias possible. Although reliability cannot easily be measured in non-probability sampling, there are other ways of ensuring that data quality is assured. For example, the results can be compared with available information about the population under investigation to see if they are consistent. In this survey, the findings were in line with previous studies conducted within similar populations.

When attempting to sample, researchers tend to have a specific aim in mind and in this study, purposive, haphazard or 'convenience' and snowball sampling methods were used to fill the desired strata quotas. As the name suggests, in purposive sampling, we know what we want in advance and thus we 'sample with a purpose.' The researcher deliberately seeks out specific groups. In this particular instance, pet owners were targeted and asked to participate. The process of determining whether they met the predefined requirements for being included in the sample, as well as reaching the desired quota, was brief and this stage of the overall research process was accomplished within a relatively short time, which is a major advantage of this sampling method. The disadvantage of this type of sample, where available respondents are used, is that there is no evidence that it is representative of the population to which the researchers wish to generalize (Davidson, 2011).

As mentioned, haphazard, accidental or 'convenience sampling' was also used in this research undertaking. In the survey component of this study, as in many other research contexts, samples were drawn from a pool of volunteers. The researcher was aware that this type of samples may not be representative of the sector of the population under investigation. Once again, as the names imply, in this method, sample units are selected on the basis of accessibility and convenience. By sampling voluntary participants the research runs the risk of being biased and those individuals who feel strongly about an issue, in this instance, animals or pets, are likely to respond. This assumption is validated and demonstrated by the nature and scope of the responses received. Survey participants expressed themselves in very emotional terms and they responded

speedily and willingly. In the survey, the researcher had very little control over the selection of participants and 'snowballing' occurred.

In the interviews, participants were selected as a result of purposive and haphazard sampling. In order to locate additional research subjects to be interviewed, snowball sampling was also used. Many of the pet owners interviewed were asked to recommend and refer others who they may know who also meet the criteria for inclusion in this study. Notwithstanding its limitations, in this study it constituted an effective method as other pet owners within the geographical area could easily be located this way. This was the only way of ensuring that sufficient people with the characteristics required for the study could be found within in short space of time. According to Biernacki and Waldorf, (1981), although referral sampling has been widely used in qualitative sociological research, the problems and techniques involved in its use have not been adequately explained. For them this "*methodological neglect*" needs to be addressed (1981: 141). To ensure reliability and quality assurance of data, the results were once again evaluated in terms of existing information about the population under investigation. In this study, the interview findings were compared with the anecdotal and written reports compiled by Mdzananda Animal Hospital, who provide veterinary services for the population under investigation, viz., pet owners.

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According to Trochim (2006), we can select the target samples non-randomly according to assigned quota. Sampling was thus done with quotas in mind, which ensured that the sub-groups that were of interest to this study were included in the interview sample. Participants were selected non-randomly according to fixed quotas and proportional quota sampling helped ensure that the major characteristics of the population being studied was represented by sampling a proportional amount of each. In this technique, the composition of the sample must reflect the same proportion of individuals as the population as a whole with respect to specific characteristics and criteria. The participants are selected into a sample on the basis of specified characteristics identified in advance, so that the sample has the same distribution of characteristics as in the population being studied. The population was divided into sub-groups, with gender, class and age being key variables. Once the sample was marked out and the approximate sample size decided, the next step was to recruit participants from within the target population. A conscious effort was made to recruit participants residing in various parts of the township so that various socio-economic segments were

represented. Where possible, the same proportions of these sub-groups in the general population, was applied in the sampling process, thereby helping to render the sample representative. In this sense, quota sampling is useful when you are unable to obtain a probability sample, but you still want to create a sample that is as representative as possible of the population being studied. A disadvantage of quota sampling is that the sample has not been chosen using random selection. This means that there is a strong likelihood of sampling bias. It also means that it is not possible to make statistical inferences from the sample to the population, which can lead to problems of generalization (Davidson, 2011).

It was relatively easy to find people eligible and willing to be interviewed. The only criteria for participation was that they were South African nationals and they kept at least one pet (dogs or cat) at the time of the study.⁴⁷ The first stage of the interview process involved *"finding the respondents and setting up the interview in accordance with the overall research design"* (Warren, 2002 quoted in Henning, 2004: 70). Multiple strategies were used to find and recruit participants who collectively made up the Khayelitsha interview sample. Participants were found by 'cold-calling' and in these instances we simply knocked on the doors of homes where there were dogs or cats outside, explained our purpose and requested an interview. Fourteen (14) respondents were recruited in this way and all of them agreed to the interview when approached. When there was no pet visible on the property, we relied on information obtained from neighbours and community members to identify the 'owners' of dogs we had previously seen roaming the area. Four (4) participants were tracked down through their dogs and all agreed to be interviewed. Remarkably in most instances, neighbours seemed to know who a free roaming dog belonged to. Although at times people did not know who the dog's owner was, interestingly, no dog was ever identified as being a 'stray' or as having no owner.

One (1) participant was seen walking his pack of dogs completely untethered in an orderly formation along the N2 highway near Khayelitsha.⁴⁸ When we found out that he lived in the area, an arrangement was made to interview him a few days later at his home. Since my assistant lives in the township, he was able to recruit six (6) family members, friends and neighbours who kept pets. Another

⁴⁷ Two (2) interviews were discarded when it was discovered that the participants were not South African citizens and another two (2) participants were then found to replace them.

⁴⁸ The N2 is a National Route in South Africa and is a main highway. The N2 travels past Khayelitsha township en route to Somerset West, which is located about 50kilometres (or 30 miles) east of Cape Town.

strategy employed was to randomly select clients of the *Mdzananda Animal Clinic* while they were queuing to receive treatments for their pets. This was arranged beforehand and permission was obtained from the director who I have known for more than a decade. A total of twenty five (25) interviews were done with people waiting in the queue, and at the suggestion of the director, Saturday mornings were selected as this is the busiest day at the clinic, which meant there were many potential participants available. In addition to ordinary pet 'owners', there are the 'hunting men.' In areas like Khayelitsha these 'hunting men' who use their dogs to hunt small game for their own consumption, can own large packs of up to thirty (30) dogs. The most popular breeds kept are greyhounds or greyhound crosses and indigenous *Canis Africanis* dogs.⁴⁹ Two (2) of these 'hunting men' were selected to form part of this sample and were interviewed at the clinic.

Although it is not possible to have a representative sample as one would in a purely quantitative study, the following categories were taken into account when selecting participants, viz., age, gender, race, level of education and the type of pet owned. Since dogs and cats are the most popular pets in this country, both dog and cat owners were selected for this study. In line with the general breakdown of pet species favoured, more dog owners than cat owners were interviewed. In order to obtain the opinions of a broad spectrum of pet owners, a conscious effort was made to find participants residing in different parts of Khayelitsha. This was not possible for the email survey and this part of the study did not allow much control in terms of the sample and its constitution. It was not possible to factor in elements like the gender or geographical distribution of participants, as it was during the interview phase. As a result, the survey participants are spread across provinces, with the greatest percentage residing in the Western Cape and Gauteng respectively. The overwhelming majority of respondents are female and some of the possible explanations for this blatant gender bias are advanced in Chapter Four of this thesis.

In the next section, the methods used to gather data are discussed, starting with the interviews which were briefly touched on in preceding paragraphs. As mentioned, the research design used for this dissertation is essentially a 'hybrid' one, but before this is detailed, a description of the research setting is required.

⁴⁹ Africanis is a generic term used to describe aboriginal or indigenous dogs in southern Africa. Dog expert, Johan Gallant (2002) coined the name *Canis (dog) Africanis (of Africa)* to describe these animals.

3.1.5. The Research Setting

Fieldwork entails speaking to and observing people in social worlds or settings that may be familiar or unfamiliar. For the purpose of observation, a range of locations such as private homes, veterinary clinics, animal welfare societies, dog and cat shows and various other animal related events and pet-friendly venues were visited. In *Regarding Animals*, Arluke and Sanders remark that "*Fieldwork begins long before researchers enter their chosen worlds*" (1996:19). Fieldwork is preceded by a series of steps during which the execution of the study is planned. Before entering 'the field' for the purposes of conducting this study, suitable sites first had to be identified and thereafter access had to be obtained. The latter was accomplished by requesting permission from 'gatekeepers' who have the authority to control entry into the sites.

Sometimes fieldwork can be stressful or even dangerous, but in my case it was neither.⁵⁰ Due to the non-controversial nature of my topic and the extensive personal connections and contacts I have made within the broad animal related field over the years, gaining entry to various research sites was a relatively simple process.⁵¹ I was able to immerse myself in the social worlds of the participants I elected to interview or observe, since these settings were familiar to me and I felt comfortable in surroundings which included veterinary clinics, animal welfare shelters, animal related events and functions and pet-friendly spaces, such as dog parks and beaches. Fieldwork entailed observing and speaking to numerous pet owners. Although respondents from a cross section of cultures and socio-economic categories were selected for this component of the study, white, middle class women dominated.

As previously mentioned researchers are social actors and as such are unable to make observations that are not in some way structured and shaped by some framework of understanding. Researchers need to recognise their personal and ideological biases as well as the ways in which they influence the information that is produced through their interaction with participants. The data gathering process is affected by them and unless they are aware of their impartiality, their views may impinge on the findings as well as the interpretation of the data.

⁵⁰ I had originally planned to examine 'negative' views about animals and intended to investigate pet abuse, but decided against this because of the emotional and psychological trauma this would cause.

⁵¹ Since the survey was electronically based, the research setting was 'virtual' and not geographically defined. Participants from all over South Africa responded to the survey and the breakdown in terms of provinces is described later on in Chapter Five.

The research setting for the part of the study based in Khayelitsha, differed somewhat from the locations where observations occurred. But, there was still a familiarity since I have previously conducted fieldwork in this area in the past and have also visited the Mdzananda Animal Clinic, in both its previous and current location many times.⁵² In addition to the interviews conducted with pet owners visiting the clinic, I also had numerous conversations with the clinic manager, which often helped clarify matters that were raised during interviews. This process and the outcome thereof is discussed in detail further on in this chapter, but first it is necessary to try and 'set the scene' and describe the area, viz., Khayelitsha where the interviews were conducted.

This particular township was selected for several reasons: it is close to the University of the Western Cape (UWC), where the researcher and student assistant are based, making it easily accessible. The student assistant has relatives living in the area, which proved helpful when recruiting participants. Khayelitsha is also one of the largest townships in the country with one of the biggest domestic pet populations. In addition, Khayelitsha is the only township in Cape Town that has a permanent and established veterinary clinic for the local community to use. Since I had a contact at the Mdzananda Animal Clinic who could grant access and facilitate the process, it seemed to be the perfect location in which to conduct this study.

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⁵² Mdzananda Animal Clinic, (a flagship project of The International Fund for Animal Welfare - IFAW in South Africa) is the only daily service offering primary vet care to dogs and cats in Cape Town's most populous settlement. According to their website, the name of the clinic means "*distemper*" in the local Xhosa dialect) and it has developed to become one of Cape Town's best-known animal welfare institutions (www.mdzananda.co.za). The organisation provides basic veterinary services from three donated shipping containers on an allotted piece of land in the Mandela Park section of the township. All clinic services are provided free of charge to clients, and the staff of three and volunteer helpers are mostly drawn from the local community and black veterinarians and nurses are employed where possible.



Photo 1: Mdzananda Animal Clinic, Khayelitsha

Khayelitsha is a vast, sprawling township just outside Cape Town that runs alongside the N2 for several kilometers. The township is divided into several sub-sections and for the purpose of this thesis, several different areas were selected for interviews. This was to ensure a spread in terms of housing type (formal and informal) and socio-economic categories. Although various sections were visited, most interviews were concentrated in the newer parts of the township. These include A Section, Site B, Site C, Green Point, Litha Park, Makaza, Harare, Enkanini, Driftsands, Kuyasa, Town Two, Harare, Griffiths Mxenge Section and Mandela Park (where the Mdzananda Animal Clinic is located). With the exception of Litha Park, where residents seem somewhat materially better off, these areas tend to contain a high number of informal settlements with shacks, RDP houses, and informal backyard dwellers.⁵³ Very few participants in this sample live in formal bank bonded homes. Interviews were conducted in different parts of the township and this process is described in the next section.

3.1.6. The Face-to-face Interviews

Atkinson and Silverman (1997) make reference to 'interview society'. They observe that, "*Interviewing has become a way of life in our society. Research interviews are but one of many types of interviews – all of which assume that the individual's perspective is an important part of the fabric of society and of our*

⁵³ The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is a socio-economic policy framework implemented by the African National Congress (ANC) government of Nelson Mandela in 1994. Part of the RDP entailed building affordable houses for the millions of South Africans without proper shelter.

joint knowledge of social processes and of the human condition" (quoted in Henning *et al*, 2009: 50-51).

An interview can take on various forms and can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. In the former, the interviewer sticks closely to the pre-designed questionnaire and does not deviate from it during the interview. On the other end of the scale there is the unstructured interview which closely resembles a conversation that flows between people and respondents can answer questions in their own words. An unstructured interview simply means a face-to-face interview that uses an interview schedule with the topics listed but with few specific and/or fixed questions. Even though the interviewer does not make use of a questionnaire with predetermined questions and responses, the interview is carried out in-depth.

Then there is the semi-structured interview format which is somewhere in between these two extremes. When specific questions need to be answered, this method enables the interviewer to guide the interview on the topic of interest by asking specific, open ended questions. By using a questionnaire (with predetermined questions), which is not rigidly structured and is fairly open-ended, the interviewer is able to facilitate conversation. Furthermore, it enables the researcher to deviate from the schedule in order to gather additional information that may otherwise not have been obtained. At the same time, a pre-designed question guides the interaction and ensures that some form of schedule is adhered to, thereby facilitating the consistency, reliability and validity of the study as a whole. Qualitative researchers aim to describe, analyse and interpret the meaning of a certain phenomena in specific social contexts (Boeije, 2010). In order to assess feelings of attachment, emotional bonds, and attitudes toward pets specifically and animals generally, qualitative interviews were conducted in order to answer my research questions. Qualitative, in-depth interviews were the best choice in conducting this particular study, as they enabled the informants to speak freely.

Though the interviews were semi-structured, other related issues came up that were important to discuss, so my interviews were also open-ended, allowing participants to express any opinions they had on various subjects. Conducting interviews also made it possible for the participant to speak about their personal experiences with acquiring and caring for their pet, their relationship with their pet/s, their association with their veterinarian and their interactions with other

pet owners and animal welfare organisations. They also relayed some experiences and views held by their friends and family. Interviews proved to be an effective way of getting a section of the local pet owning community to voice their views and detail their experiences in an uninhibited and non-threatening manner. During my investigations, most interviewees were remarkably open and communicative. On the whole, participants were extremely willingly to be subjects for extensive interviews. Interviews took place in different settings such as private homes and at the local animal welfare clinic. All of the interviews were done face-to-face. No one approached refused to be interviewed, which may be considered unusual. However, this high response rate can be attributed to the fact that the subject matter of this study is not controversial or personal. Gauging from the fieldwork as a whole, it appears that most people who keep pets really enjoy speaking about them.

Once contact was made (through various means described earlier), and a measure of rapport had been established, all participants were given a covering letter (written on an official university letterhead), which stated the purpose of the study as well as the assurance of confidentiality. With the exception of individuals interviewed in their official capacity as heads or representatives of organisations etc, anonymity was given to each research participant and pseudonyms are used when extracts are reproduced. Amongst other things, the interviews dealt with demographics, their personal history, style and pattern of pet-keeping, perceptions of animals in general and their views on animal welfare.

Each interview lasted between thirty (30) – sixty (60) minutes, resulting in around forty (40) hours worth of transcripts. Although parts of the questionnaire could be filled in by the researcher and participant's responses could be recorded in writing during the actual interview, conversation that took place outside of the parameters set by the semi-structured questionnaire, had to be noted. During the interview, notes were taken and to quote Henning *et al*, "*These notes are intended to harness some of the contextual factors that are not in the talk, such as gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, change in tempo of speech and general body language*" (2004: 73). Where possible, interviews were taped, translated, transcribed and then coded into detailed topic headings for future retrieval and analysis.⁵⁴ This was possible when interviews took place at private homes whereas the clinic environment made it impractical to tape-record

⁵⁴ Most of the interviews were done in English. However, a few participants struggled to understand some of the questions, which were translated into Xhosa by the student assistant. Their responses were then translated back into English during the transcription phase.

interviews. Each interview participant was given a 'pseudonym', usually a letter of the alphabet, as well as a number. Throughout this thesis, whenever they are referred to or quoted verbatim only their 'pseudonym' and demographic details, such as gender, age and occupation are mentioned.

The advantage of the interview method is that the interviewer is at hand to administer the instrument and to make sure that questionnaires are understood and answered. Should any of the questions be ambiguous or confusing, the interviewer can explain their meaning to the participant. According to Ackroyd and Hughes, *"Using as data what the respondent says about himself or herself potentially offers the social researcher access to vast storehouses of information. The social researcher is not limited to what he or she can immediately perceive or experience, but is able to cover as many dimensions and as many people as resources permit"* (1981: 70). The interviewer is thus able to extract additional information from the participant when this method is used to gather data. Since a measure of flexibility is possible during interviews, the researcher can decide which issues to explore at length and which are dealt with superficially. If rapport is established with the participant it becomes possible for information to be obtained that was not initially required or anticipated and through the interview process knowledge can be imparted and generated. In this particular study, it is the stated intention of the researcher to not only investigate existing attitudes and behaviour towards pets but also to facilitate changes which, in the researcher's view, are ethical and socially beneficial. During interviews, exchanges and conversations and sharing of information took place, which could result in new understandings and shifts in opinion.

The main disadvantage relates to possible interviewer bias and in this situation the mere presence of the interviewer influences the responses given by the respondent. Other limitations associated with conducting interviews is that they are time-consuming, emotionally draining and can be expensive. In terms of the former, this became apparent during interviews and in some instances the researcher suspected that a participant may have answered certain questions inaccurately so as to 'impress' the interviewer and/or to create a particular impression about themselves. Some respondents may have selected the answers that they thought would cast them in a good light and which would give them status. For example, in the Khayelitsha sample, very few participants would admit to obtaining their pet from within the township and it became very apparent that there was a certain status attached to buying a dog from a pet-shop rather than

acquiring it locally. Only after probing, did some admit that they had actually obtained their pet within the township – usually from a neighbour or family member.

Two phases of interviews took place among the target population (pet owners living in Khayelitsha), during the fieldwork stage of this dissertation. A total of fifty (50) participants were interviewed. Firstly, twenty five (25) pet 'owners' of both genders living in different parts of Khayelitsha were interviewed at their homes. Thereafter an additional twenty five (25) pet 'owners' were interviewed on site at the Mdzananda Animal Clinic, where they were 'clients.' Those who did not speak English or Afrikaans and preferred to do the interview in Xhosa, were interviewed by a trained student assistant. Some participants were spoken to more than once and on eight occasions interviews were conducted with more than one person present, which generated interesting discussion and raised issues that would not have been brought to light during one-on-one interviews.⁵⁵

This study used in-depth interviews because they allow participants to explore their views with greater freedom than is possible in questionnaire studies. In order to address why people have different views and display different patterns of behaviour toward pets, this method was deemed suitable and useful. Throughout this thesis, qualitative interviews are referred to as either "semi-structured," "unstructured", "in-depth", "informal" and/or "focused" interviews (Kvale, 1996). Although no one specific label is consistently adhered to, they are all conversational. The interviewers asked the same questions using the same wording to each participant, but there was scope to include issues not formally aired in the questionnaire that was administered. In this sense the interviews were closer to everyday conversations and enabled the participants to express their views in their own words. Allowing the participant to chatter and converse freely in this way, brought many issues to light and generated much useful material. These informal conversations can be seen as a window into the participant's 'reality' and constitute a means through which they could articulate their views and beliefs about animals in an honest and open manner. This flexibility is one of the advantages associated with interviews and it meant that issues raised could be followed up later on and interviewers can probe and/or repeat questions in order to obtain suitable responses from participants (Bailey,

⁵⁵ These were not pre-arranged focus group discussions, but were ad hoc incidents where neighbours and community members simply joined the interview.

1982). For Marshall and Rossman flexibility of design allows the research to "unfold, cascade, roll and emerge" (1989: 52).

Interviews thus do not just function as a way of collecting material but also generate material that would otherwise never have been produced. The research methods used helped to encourage the participants to think about and articulate their views and opinions. The responses to question forty two (42), which was deemed problematic and biased by a few survey participants reflected this.⁵⁶ However, it is important to emphasise that even though participants were encouraged to converse freely and rambled on at times, the interviews were not entirely unstructured and the interview schedule that had been drawn up in advance guided the discussion and at all times the interviewer controlled the process. Henning *et al* write, "Research interviews are but one of the many types of interviews – all of which assume that the individual's perspective is an important part of the fabric of society and our joint knowledge of social processes and of the human condition" (2004: 50). They continue: "This is the main aim of interview data – to bring to our attention what individual's think, feel and do and what they have to say about in an interview, giving us their subjective reality in a formatted discussion, which is guided and managed by an interviewer and later integrated into a research report" (2004: 52). The authors caution that it is necessary to "engage with the interview data at a deeper level" and we should be aware of "how the interviewees communicated these thoughts and how their role in society and their cultural knowledge featured in the interview" (ibid).

The second method of data gathering used, viz., the email survey is the focus of the next section.

3.1.7. The E-mail Survey

With the growth of the internet and the expanded use of electronic mail for communication, the electronic survey has become more widely used as a survey method. Electronic surveys can take many forms and routes. I elected to send emails requesting assistance to a few key individuals, who had access to large data bases of potential participants, rather than posting the survey on websites on the internet. To complete the electronic survey participants basically filled out

⁵⁶ Question 42: Which statement best describes your feelings?

- a. Animals are for our use
- b. Animals should have the same rights as humans
- c. Animals need more rights and consideration, but humans come first
- d. Animals don't matter

the questionnaire on their computer rather than on paper. They are therefore not required to print out their responses, which can simply be emailed back to sender.

In May 2009, the questionnaire was designed and disseminated. As mentioned earlier on, I initially made use of personal and professional contacts to accomplish this. It is crucial to mention that I intended this to be a small email survey, which could complement the interviews conducted for this study. This technique had previously been employed for the 'pilot study' aimed at testing the questionnaire. The survey's purpose was not to generate statistics, but rather to add to the qualitative data, which is of primary importance to this study. However, the researcher opted to integrate elements of the quantitative approach in this study due to its advantages, which in this instance includes convenience, speed and affordability. Sending emails to key individuals in my extensive, personal data base of pet owners and animal lovers was a relatively simple and easy process, which yielded a huge volume of overwhelmingly positive responses within a short period of time. After making changes to the questionnaire, a second batch of emails was sent out to another ten (10) potential respondents. They were asked to forward the email to known pet owners in their personal data bases. This simple action elicited an incredible response (502 responses in twenty two days) and in many ways, I was quite unprepared for it. The rate of responses received to the survey exceeded expectation and coping with the rapid influx of emails in my inbox over a three week period created an administrative nightmare and almost crashed my computer. In retrospect this high response rate should have come as less of a surprise considering that, eight (8) out of the ten (10) questionnaires emailed out for the purposes of the 'pilot' study were completed and returned to me within a few days.

In order to interpret and analyse the huge volume of data obtained as a result of the email based survey, information had to be sifted through and organised, which entailed coding. Depending on the type of study and the instrument used, codes can be numerical or can comprise a word or even a short sentence. The words selected should give an indication of how the data obtained informs the overall research objectives. After the coding process has been completed, it becomes possible to analyse the data and in so doing to provide an overall impression thereof. Any patterns and relationships that emerge within the content are identified and discussed. Initially, some basic coding (which is discussed at length later on in this section) was therefore necessary to get a sense of demographics as

well as patterns which may be evident. The data was analysed mostly by summarising the responses and patterns that emerged from this. Although numerical data and statistics comprise the core of quantitative instruments, at the same time key statements in the form of quotations made by participants were highlighted and recorded. These are used later on in this thesis to present and expound on the findings of this research undertaking.

Unlike other methods such as participant observation and in-depth interviews, surveys require "*relatively little personal involvement, or danger or sacrifice on the part of the researcher*" (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008: 824). Furthermore, the results can be quantified and analysed quite quickly. Using computers and specially formulated statistical packages like SPSS, means that several variables can be examined (ibid). Since the volume of data gathered was too huge to be analysed manually, the data gathered from the survey was computed for interpretation.⁵⁷ At this stage, I would just like to briefly refer to a minor problem encountered during fieldwork. Since I had initially not planned to do a quantitative survey type of study, I did not pre-code the questionnaire. Responses snowballed quickly and an avalanche of emails that filled my inbox daily presented me with an administration nightmare and I soon realised that there was no way I could deal with it manually. The situation was compounded by the fact that even though closed-ended questions were posed, several respondents added extra information onto their questionnaire, making coding difficult. On a positive note, many respondents indicated their willingness to be involved in any further research required and they offered to answer additional questions, be interviewed and/or participate in discussions. I received very encouraging comments and copious requests for access to a summary or report of my findings. Many of the participants responded very enthusiastically to this study. They identified themselves as 'animal lovers' and expressed an interest in promoting animal welfare, which they hoped this research would help accomplish.

Each research method has its own strengths and weaknesses and another advantage of the survey method is that it is inexpensive, especially if the questionnaires are emailed. If the survey is self-administered, the project costs are reduced even further. Surveys can be administered from remote locations using surface mail via the postal service. They can also be done telephonically or by email. The latter method makes it possible for large samples to be selected,

⁵⁷ The data was captured and then analysed by a statistician using SPSS. A research grant from the Arts Faculty enabled me to make use of the expert services of a statistician.

which can help to make the results 'statistically significant.' Having responses available electronically makes it easier to change and to edit, copy, sort and retrieve data. The time factor is worth mentioning as this method is considerably faster than traditional mail and both the distribution of questionnaires and the return of filled in responses can take place within very limited time periods. This was demonstrated in this study and the entire process from sending out questionnaires to receiving hundreds of responses took place over a period of twenty two days. Finally a high response rate is received from electronic surveys as opposed to paper surveys or even interviews and this study once again reflects this tendency. Martin Opperman (1995) concedes that response rates for electronic surveys are higher, but he cautions this is true only during the first few days of sending out the questionnaire. Similar observations were made during this study and I was flooded with responses at first and after a few weeks things petered out significantly. Research has shown that participants tend to answer questions posed electronically more candidly and honestly than with conventional paper surveys or interviews. Electronic surveys also make it possible for the researcher to reach a wide audience and a national or even global spread is possible. However this can be a bit of a disadvantage especially when trying to select a sample within a specific area or location.

The disadvantages of electronic surveys relate primarily to the depth of information obtained and the lack of 'context' since there is no direct observation and contact between the researcher and the participant. It is also difficult to guarantee anonymity and assure confidentiality for participants when they fill in questionnaires and email them as email programmes generally identify the sender by name to the recipient. For this reason, Goree and Marszalek (1995) discuss the ethical considerations relating to electronic surveys. They insist that researchers are ethically required to guard the confidentiality of their respondents and to assure respondents that they will do so. Sometimes researchers receive email responses from unknown sources and they do not always know who has responded to their survey. This is the case when the person has set up their email account so that it doesn't show their name or location.

Another major weakness of electronically administered surveys is that the population size and sample is limited to those who have access to computers and the internet. It is thus not representative of the pet-owning population of South Africa as whole. For this reason, the interview sample specifically targeted socio-economic and cultural groups that are under represented as computer owners and internet users. This limitation was consciously addressed and steps were

taken to be more inclusive and to counteract the clear demographic bias that emerged from the results of the electronic survey. As was expected, the vast majority of responses received in the electronic survey were from middle class, white women of all ages. Not only is this demographic group characterised by having a high level of online access, they have a marked interest in animal welfare and pet related concerns.⁵⁸

As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, wherever possible observations made over an extended period of time were used to enhance understanding of the issues being investigated. Although this is not a major component of this research, this part of the fieldwork process needs to be briefly highlighted.

3.1.8. Observations and Informal Interactions

There are two types of observation, viz., participant and non-participant and the former technique was used in this study. As the names suggest, non-participant observation entails observing human subjects from a distance and in participant observation, the researcher is actively involved in the activities of the group or individuals being studied. Non-participant observations took place at various meeting places, key events and other spaces used by pet owners and animal lovers, over an extended period of time (2000 – 2011).

Contact with pet owners at these various sites often resulted in informal conversations and discussions, during which a rich collection of data was gathered. I managed to observe and engage with a wide spectrum of pet 'owners' in a diversity of contexts and settings. This also resulted in numerous conversations with 'experts' in the pet industry and animal welfare field on a wide range of topics relevant to this study. Conversations with the former group were mostly about product innovations and consumer buying trends. Discussions with animal welfare personnel and volunteers centred around pet adoption and relinquishment patterns, fluctuations in dog breed popularity, by-law concerns and recent cruelty cases they had investigated.

Interactions between pet 'owners' and their pets and amongst one another, as well as exchanges between animal welfare volunteers and staff were observed.

⁵⁸ To redress this imbalance, the sample selected for interviews was not entirely random and was stratified so that various categories of people are represented in proportions relative to their presence within the general population. The racial imbalance was addressed by selecting Khayelitsha as a research site. Almost equal numbers of males and females and a majority of 'youth' (people under the age of thirty five) were included in the interview sample. Participants from various socio-economic groups and residential sections were targeted for interviews.

Despite the 'detached' nature of my 'involvement' with them, being perceived as an 'insider' meant that they openly expressed views and attitudes about a wide range of issues not commonly discussed. These included, but were not limited to, racist and sexist assumptions made about animal practices.

Another method of research that facilitated data gathering entailed studying documents and various print and online publications.

3.1.9. Newspaper Articles and Other Publications

Along with the interviews with pet owners and with various key individuals and organisational representatives, the email survey and observations made, I also conducted an extensive examination of newspaper articles, letters to the editor and other forms of responses published in newspapers. Internet postings and email campaigns around topical issues relating to animals were also monitored. I have been collecting news articles about animal issues since 2000 and, at times, these were drawn on to corroborate my findings.

Letters to the editor, SMS messages and articles in the *Cape Argus*, *The Star* and the *Mail & Guardian*, all of which are major newspapers, have been a valuable source of material. A clear pattern emerged whereby each time there was an incident involving animals (usually involving perceived cruelty), it would be followed by a barrage of responses and a public outcry and thus the letters and SMS columns provided an up to date and easily accessible register of public opinion regarding animal practices. Along with articles that sometimes accompanied them, these written records formulated by the newspaper reading public, were potentially useful in the discourse they used to present these issues. I do not claim that the letters, SMSs and articles represent general opinion and no doubt many people would disagree with the often reactionary (and even blatantly racist) statements. Despite this, they are therefore indications of some of the issues concerning people, which they clearly feel very strongly as they elicit extremely emotional responses. Since newspapers both inform and reflect people's opinion, newspaper articles and letters and SMS messages sent to newspapers by members of the public were used extensively as a source of primary material.

Once the data gathering process was complete, the next phase of research, which involved coding and analysing the information resumed.

3.5. Coding and the Interpretation of Data

Before data can be analysed, the information needs to be sorted, ordered and grouped. In order to separate the data into themes or categories and to identify patterns that reoccur, coding is required. Data are grouped together under a code name or phrase. To quote Boeije: "*A code is a label that depicts the core topics of a segment*" (2010: 95). Codes connect the information derived through interviews and observations which is recorded in fieldnotes and transcripts to the concepts employed in a specific study. In this sense, coding involves thinking about the data and finding appropriate ways to categorise and organise it. A range of factors influence the choice of concepts to be used as codes. These include: pre-existent knowledge, theoretical frameworks, the research question and the actual data derived through fieldwork (Coffey, Holbrook and Atkinson, 1996).

Coding helps to organise data and the researcher coded the interview responses manually. Short notes were scribbled in pencil on the actual questionnaires, post-it stickers were attached and lengthier memos were written on the phrases and terms used as codes. Boeije notes that "*A code enables the easy retrieval of the fragments that have been assigned a specific code*" (2010: 98). In order to code the interview material, each document (consisting of a filled in questionnaire, additional answers and fieldnotes), was read through thoroughly. Any meaningful phrases were underlined or highlighted and code words were assigned to identify and retrieve them later on. Some of these code words or phrases include: demographic indicators, pet type, breed and number, pet acquisition, pet care, role of pet, pets seen as family members, level of attachment, past experiences, views about animals etc. These phrases corresponded with certain questions and responses were clustered together given codes.

Codes were thus attached to the main ideas or patterns that emerged from fieldwork. In the process of coding the information, the data are read, systematically reorganised and interpreted. In this way the significance and importance of the data is established (Coffey, Holbrook and Atkinson, 1996). In the process some data may be expanded, but other data may be lost or discarded, which like segmenting the data into categories or themes is some ways is essential to developing focus and ensuring that the research questions are addressed.

I went through each of the questionnaires systematically and firstly recorded, then counted responses. Each questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A incorporated each participants demographic details, Section B focussed on past and present experiences with pets, as well as the participant's behaviour in terms of pet-keeping and Section C dealt with their attitudes towards animals as a whole and also explored their views on and involvement in animal welfare and other animal related activities, groups and causes. These smaller chunks or sections were examined until similarities, differences and relationships became apparent. Throughout the process, comparisons were made between responses and I was constantly aware of identifying those aspects that are relevant to this study and the theoretical framework that underpins it. Once all the interview questionnaires were coded and responses were noted and categorised, the data was analysed. To facilitate this, detailed notes were kept at every stage of the research and a 'paper trail' from data collection to data analysis exists. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant during the transcription process. The transcribed data was arranged and ordered and sections of data which pertained to the research objectives were selected and grouped according to themes.

Boeije succinctly defines analysis as "*segmenting the data and reassembling them with the aim of transforming the data into findings*" (2010: 94). Jorgensen expands her definition and explains that, "*The analysis of qualitative data is dialectical: data are disassembled into elements and components: these materials are examined for patterns and relationships, sometimes in connection to ideas derived from literature, existing theories, or hunches that emerged during fieldwork or perhaps simply commonsense suspicions. With an idea in hand, the data are reassembled, providing an interpretation or explanation of a question or particular problem; this synthesis is then evaluated and critically examined; it may be accepted or rejected entirely or with modifications; and, not uncommonly, this process is then repeated to test further the emergent theoretical conception, expand its generality, or otherwise examine its usefulness*" (Jorgensen, 1989: 111, quoted in Boeije, 2010: 94).

Throughout the analysis stage, I read through the interview and survey transcripts several times in order to get an overall feel for the responses and to try and detect any patterns or themes that emerged. My data comprised two sets of questionnaires, as well as a profusion of notes made during and after interviews and in the course of the numerous 'observations' that I made. The first

set of fifty (50) questionnaires were conducted with individual pet 'owners' in Khayelitsha and the second were comprised of the four hundred and fifty six (456) returned questionnaires from the email survey. While the latter was analysed using SPSS, the qualitative data obtained from interviews were analysed manually.

Qualitative data analysis involves looking for and identifying key themes and patterns from the data and interpreting what is going on. Before the primary material was analysed, it had to be organised into sections or topics. In the process, the issues of meaning and context were addressed and considered and although connections between demographic and social groupings, and particular beliefs and attitudes were made, it must be noted that these connections are complex and are not always clear cut. For example, being a member of a particular demographic grouping does not simply mean that the individual concerned will necessarily behave in a specific way or hold certain opinions and adhere to certain beliefs just because s/he belongs to the group in question. In other words, even though white middle class females in general tend to be sympathetic to animals and actively promote their welfare, this is not true for all individuals who share this profile. This dissertation does not use 'discourse analysis' as a technique to make sense of findings, but, where possible, comments on the way in which language functions to create specific meanings. In this research undertaking, identity and difference are assumed and assigned by separating society into those who care about pets and other animals and those who do not. When exploring the accounts of research participants and letter writers, these divisions emerge and it is apparent that racial and gendered patterns can be identified.

At one level, the task of interpreting accounts is basically descriptive and entails examining the responses to the questions posed by the researcher. What are the various ways in which diverse groupings of South Africans talk about and interact with animals in general and pets in particular? What are the categories people use to describe them? What meanings do animals, especially pets have for different people and what do the relationships we form say about our society as whole?

When reading the extracts on various topics, it became apparent that certain words were favoured by participants to describe pets and divergent attitudes towards them. Terms like "civilised and uncivilised", "caring and cruel", "humane and barbaric/savage" "us and them" were used to describe various situations and

groups of people. By critically examining the words participants use to describe people and animals we are able to consider the way they construct their identities, as well as the identities of other humans.

Although people derive their identities in various ways and from various sources, it usually embodies their ideologies and values. They also attempt to exclude those ideologies, values and 'others' that could threaten their sense of identity. In the process of establishing one's own identity and demarcating the parameters that separate "us" from "them", certain discourses are favoured. By making use of these discourses, a sense of self emerges and a process of "othering" occurs. Participants associate certain types of people and symbolic meanings with particular animals. When a white South African expresses revulsion at the "cruelty" and "savagery" of blacks who in their views mistreat animals, they are separating themselves from the 'other' who is different. Similarly, humans generally create boundaries between themselves and 'other' animals, which makes it possible to abuse them and not consider their needs. Seemingly neutral terms are often ideologically and politically loaded terms and are used to achieve certain ends and wherever possible; this thesis attempts to go beyond what is directly said to work out structures and relations of meaning not immediately apparent in a text.

This study takes into account the different words used by people to make sense of themselves in relation to both human and non-human "others." Identity is thus a social construction and language can be examined as a manifestation thereof. Many of the participants surveyed, interviewed or observed viewed themselves as 'animal lovers' and this label was important to them – they were especially concerned that others viewed them as such. For some participants, the identity of 'animal lover' was inextricably bound to demographic categories. In this study, identity is also articulated through pets. The type of pet selected, the pattern and style of pet-keeping practiced and the meanings derived through interactions with pets, all play a pivotal role in the construction of identity among pet 'owners.'

In any research undertaking, regardless of the topic, aims and methodologies employed, moral issues always need to be considered.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

Since this study required the participation of human subjects, specifically pet 'owners', certain ethical issues were addressed and considered. The privacy of the participants had to be assured and the main ethical issues that were taken into account during this study include consent and confidentiality. Participants in both samples were assured of confidentiality and that their names or personal details would not be used nor made public. In order to secure the consent of participants, all important details of the study, including its aim and purpose were explained to them. In the survey this was done in writing. Verbal explanations were accompanied by a covering letter in Khayelitsha. This was translated into Xhosa by the research assistant. In one instance, the letter was read out to a participant who was unable to read it himself.

While there were no anticipated risks to participants they were kept fully informed about the nature and purposes of the study. Although the topic under investigation is not of a sensitive or controversial nature and the research did not compromise or endanger subjects in any way, the researcher was aware that animals and pets can be an emotional and personal subject. Guilt and other unpleasant feelings might emerge, which could make the participants uncomfortable. Participants were fully informed of their right to withdraw from the study and terminate the interview at any time. They were also told that they could refrain from answering any question. Interviews were conducted in their homes where they were comfortable and at an animal clinic, where they had time available to be interviewed as they were waiting in a queue. Participants (in both samples) were thanked afterwards and given feedback asking if they would like a summary of my study at the end of its writing.

3.4. Conclusion

The research process and methods used to gather data was described in this chapter. Two main research techniques were selected, viz., interviews, and an email survey. Additional information was obtained through observation at various pet related events, places and organisations as well as document analysis. The next five chapters present the findings of this study. Collectively their focus is the 'sociology of pet-keeping' in South African.



Social Stratification, Inequality and Pet-keeping

"Pets are a great leveler, transcending racial, cultural, age, gender and socio-economic boundaries". Wood et al (2005: 1159)

This chapter is one of five that presents the results and discusses the findings of this study. A number of themes have emerged during fieldwork and the data analysis process and these are outlined in this and subsequent chapters. Wherever possible, Chapters Four, Five, Six, Seven and Eight follow a similar sequence to the questionnaires that were administered to participants. The items are listed and discussed in the same order as the instrument used for both the survey and in-depth interviews. However, some related responses are grouped together and in these instances their sequential arrangement deviates somewhat from the questions posed to participants. As with the questionnaires, the chapters

start off by mapping the demographic profile of the participants from both samples.⁵⁹

Sociologists have only recently begun to explore the origins of attitudes towards non-human animals, including pets. The demographic variables that are known to influence individual differences in attitudes toward animals include, gender (Adams, 1990, 1994; Adams and Donovan, 1995; Driscoll, 1992; Nibert, 1994; Wells and Hepper, 1997; Peek *et al*, 1997; Luke, 2007); age (Driscoll, 1992), race (Kellert, 1996); income, marital status (Wells and Hepper, 1995, 1997); educational background, geographic region, area of residence (Wells and Hepper, 1995, 1997), religion (Driscoll, 1992; Menache, 1997, 1998; Al-Fayez *et al*, 2003, Sax, 2000, 2001) and early experience with pets (Serpell, 1995).

To fully understand pet-keeping in South Africa within different communities, the demographic variables and indicators that produce uneven and diverse patterns of behaviour must be unpacked. Throughout this chapter, the role played by age, gender, class and race and ethnicity is discussed. The impact, if any, of occupation and level of education on pet-keeping is touched on. To demonstrate the complex interplay between these various factors and pet-keeping patterns, the findings of this study are incorporated into the overall discussion. An attempt is made to link these categories to the attitudes and behaviour towards pets expressed by participants, so that an understanding and explanation of the predictors of pet ownership in South Africa can be provided.

The thesis argues that several factors, including demographic profile affect the attitudes and level of attachment pet owners have to their pets. Along with demographic variables and historical forces, cultural and environmental factors combine with contemporary socio-economic, political and ideological forces to shape and influence our beliefs and behaviour towards pets. Later on, in Chapter Eight, the individual experiences of participants, particularly their childhood socialisation and past pet-keeping experiences, which are instrumental in shaping their views and relationships with other animals, are highlighted.⁶⁰ This thesis

⁵⁹ The next chapter looks at the role played by area of residence, religion, marital status and household structure in influencing pet-keeping. Thereafter, in Chapters Six and Seven, the actual practices associated with pet-keeping are described. Chapter Eight examines the role and function of pets in their lives of participants, the reasons why they care for them, as well as how this has changed over time.

⁶⁰ Past experience, the amount of 'animal capital' (inherited or acquired), as well as emotions help to shape our relationships and interactions with pets (Irvine, 2004). These factors are dealt with in detail in Chapter Eight, which continues discussing the findings of the study. This chapter also examines the attitudes participants have regarding broader animal welfare issues and concerns.

concur with Al-Fayez *et al* (2003), who in their paper on pets in Kuwait, conclude: attitudes to animals are determined by a multitude of cultural, psychological, economic, historical factors as well as experience. The emotional closeness to animals is multidimensional and differs from person to person and from culture to culture.

In this study, the cultural and social meanings of animals are revealed through interactions, observations and anecdotes, as well as through interviews and an email survey. This thesis illustrates how pet-keeping and the beliefs, attitudes and set of behaviours associated with it, in many respects reflect broader social divisions and cultural processes. Data analysis in this study suggests that there are indeed associations between the composition, structure and characteristics of groups or populations and pet-keeping. The level of attachment between pet and owner and the style of pet-keeping practiced has definite correlations with the age, gender and socio-economic status of pet caretakers. However, some of the findings of this study contradict commonly held ideas and dominant views about the nature of pet-keeping. In particular, assumptions about the relationship between class, gender and race and the treatment of animals in general and pets in particular, are challenged and interrogated. Although some racial differences are apparent, for example, almost all black participants and virtually no white participants articulated utilitarian views of pets, on the whole, race does not seem to be a major influence.⁶¹ No connection between race and views on animal welfare and legislative improvements for animals in general were found, which is dealt with later on in this thesis. Unlike gender and class, race is not an important determinant when it comes to forging emotional connections with animal companions. Overall, it is hoped that by examining the findings, which suggest that multiple factors determine how people perceive and treat pets, and by describing the main pet keeping styles favoured by participants, a snapshot of pet ownership in South Africa will be provided.

On the whole, the data collected in this study is supportive of positive relationships with pets and the extremely high rate of return for the survey questionnaires and the willingness to be interviewed, shows how important pets are to people. A consideration of the data reveals similarities and differences between the samples of pet owners. Notwithstanding the differences in pet-

⁶¹ The researcher recognises that a limitation of this study is it focused primarily on two of the four race groups in South Africa, viz., black (African) and white. Coloureds and Indians, for the most part fall outside of the ambit of this particular study, and only a numerically insignificant number of participants from both these population groups are included in the survey sample.

keeping practices as well as views about animals that exist among diverse groups of people as is demonstrated by the findings of this study, there are commonalities, which need to be identified and discussed. Convergences across groups occur, and the parallels that exist between young and old, male and female, black and white, are more striking than divergences in attitude and behaviour. The data shows that despite variations, shared ideas and patterns of behaviour toward the animals, mostly dogs and cats, that we keep as pets, can and often do transcend socio-economic divisions and cultural differences. In particular, the growing tendency to 'anthropomorphise' and humanise pets, which translates into regarding them as family members, is increasingly evident among all social groups in this country.

In short, some of the more general findings are:

- There is a high prevalence of pets in South African households. Dogs are the most popular pets, followed by cats.
- The human-animal bond is pervasive and even though it is often more pronounced and attachment levels are higher within certain groups, it cuts across social categories.
- Pet-keeping reflects social stratification and reinforces various social hierarchies and inequities. Various social roles and stereotypes are performed and bolstered by pet care and consumption practices.
- Cultural, religious and individual differences are indicated in pet-keeping.
- Past experience, especially childhood socialisation, shapes current relationships with pets.

Demographic patterns emerged within and between samples and:

- Most of the survey participants were aged 30-59 years, with a concentration in the 30-49 age category. However, in the Khayelitsha interview sample, the participants were younger and the highest concentration is in the 18-29 age group.
- A solid majority of those who responded to the survey were female, whereas in the Khayelitsha interview sample, both genders were well represented, with males in the slight majority.
- Overall, the survey participants displayed higher levels of education than the Khayelitsha sample.
- With regard to occupation, the vast majority of participants surveyed are professionals, followed by self-employed. A relatively small number are retired and a few identified themselves as 'housewives.' Only a very small percentage

of participants in this sample are unemployed. Among interviewees, only two participants, a teacher and a social worker identified themselves as professionals. A few are self-employed small business owners and a number are unemployed. Two are retired and the rest work in various fields. Unlike those surveyed, no one interviewed referred to themselves as 'housewives' or similar.

- Those surveyed generally earned competitive salaries and for the majority, their earnings and/or total household income exceeded R20 000 per month. A minority earned less than R5000 per month and even fewer lived on less than R3000.00 per month.⁶² Among interviewees, only one person (or 2%) earned in excess of R20 000 per month and a few earned between R10 000 – R15 000. Some participants lived on around R5000 per month, with some surviving on R1000 – R2000 and/or less per month.
- Most of the survey participants are white and speak English. The next biggest language group is Afrikaans and the remainder of the sample either failed to provide this information, or they speak other languages, which were not specified. As can be expected, an overwhelming number of the Khayelitsha interview participants are black Africans who speak Xhosa.

Throughout this and subsequent chapters that present and examine the findings of this study, more than one theoretical perspective is used to frame the discussion. Theory is used to substantiate and analyse the empirical research that has been conducted for the purpose of this thesis. An attempt is made to link the findings to previous research and the theoretical insights offered by theorists like Franklin (who applies the ideas of Giddens, 1990, 1991; Bauman, 1993 and Beck, 1992 to human-animal relations).

In line with Jennifer Wolch's (2002) proposal that we adapt existing theories so as to take non-humans seriously, this thesis draws on the insights offered by postmodernism and symbolic interactionism, (specifically the recent adaptations thereof), to outline and explain changing pet-keeping patterns in contemporary South Africa. Although, the traditional symbolic interactionist position within sociology as developed by George Herbert Mead (1934, 1962) reserves selfhood for humans due primarily to our ability to use language and decipher symbols, post-Meadian sociologists like Irvine (2004); Alger and Alger (1997, 1999, 2003) and ethnographers Arluke and Sanders (1996) all explore animal self-hood. They

⁶² Those participants willing to share this information did not specify whether these approximate amounts reflect only their monthly earnings or the total household income. But, it can be surmised that in some cases it is the latter as unemployed participants interviewed indicated earnings.

agree that Mead's insights can shed light on animal subjectivity. According to this view, a sense of self is also influenced by non-verbal interaction with humans as well as with other non-human animals. The notion of the socially constructed self, a central element in this theoretical tradition, can thus be used to illuminate human relationships with their pets.

Irvine (2004) challenges dominant views about our relationships with animals and uses symbolic interactionism to demonstrate animal subjectivity and that they have selves. According to her, even though animals have no language, they have selves and exhibit agency and express emotions like humans. Alger and Alger's cat shelter studies (1997, 1999) demonstrate that animals have agency and are not restricted by the constraints of language (or lack thereof) as Mead contends. In *Regarding Animals* (1996), Arluke and Sanders explore the conflicting attitudes of people who work in animal shelters and primate testing laboratories, as well as the ways in which they interact with the animals there. They question what the contradictory way society treats animals reveals about humans. By observing the socially constructed view of animals they shed light on those (humans) doing the constructing and they demonstrate how easy it is for people to separate themselves from animals and dominate and exert power over them. For Arluke and Sanders (1996), the ways in which we 'regard' animals have a great deal to do with the ways in which we regard ourselves and the social contexts in which we live.

Many participants in this study would concur with these observations and numerous examples of 'animal agency' were cited by them during fieldwork. Although these views were expressed more frequently by those surveyed, some interviewees cited similar experiences and perceptions. They spoke about dogs who "were jealous" or "spiteful," cats who sprayed indoors, sat on computer keyboards, "just as you need to use them" or shredded "really important" papers and books, or simply nudged humans to give them attention or food. As, with pet owners everywhere, quite a few participants in this study claimed to know what their pet was thinking and what they intended by their actions. Examples of pets hiding when it was time to go to the vet or receive medication abound. But, despite the inroads that this adaptation of Mead's theory is making into academia and the widespread acceptance of animal agency by pet owners themselves, this idea remains controversial. According to Wolch "*Granting animals subjectivity at a conceptual level is a first step. Even this is apt to be hotly contested by human social groups who have been marginalized and devalued by claims that they are*

closer to animals, and less intelligent, worthy, or evolved than, say, white males" (2002: 203).

Before examining the findings and exploring the demographic determinants of pet-keeping, it is important to reiterate that social, economic and political forces influence pet-keeping and are responsible for the far-reaching changes regarding how we perceive and treat pets witnessed in many contemporary societies, including South Africa. This thesis concurs with Franklin (1999) who argues that varied and widespread processes like the global spread of capitalism, westernisation, urbanisation, and the emergence of what Ulrich Beck (1992) has termed, 'risk society', along with the concomitant decrease in 'ontological security' all contribute to the rise to the strong desire to keep pets as companions that is increasingly prevalent today. For Heidi Nast (2006) factors like the changes in the family, particularly, the tendency toward smaller families combined with an enormous drive towards consumerism play a part in shaping pet-keeping in various geographical locations. In post-industrial society, pets have been 'socially re-situated' and their value has been reassessed. Pets have been reconsidered as being worthy and deserving of human attention affection. Nast comments on the "*mainstreaming of commodified pet-culture*", which she argues "*means that persons across a broad economic spectrum can also invest in the petanimal commodity world*" (2006: 322). One of the key trends in pet-keeping globally is 'humanisation.' For Nast, "*as humanisation becomes more entrenched, improving the quality of life of pets will likely become a more dominant factor behind the purchase of products*" (Nast 2006: 325).

This thesis argues that our current lifestyles and prevailing social conditions strengthen the bonds we have with pets and are indeed conducive to pet-keeping. People have different reasons for keeping pets and the role that pets play, the needs they meet and the extent to which they are integrated into the home and family varies according to a range of factors. Broader social condition, cultural beliefs and individual experiences combine with various demographic variables such as the stage in an individual's lifecycle or their age, as well as their gender, class position, household structure, marital status and area of residence or region to formulate and shape our attitudes and behaviour towards pets. A consideration of the data reveals similarities and differences between the different participant samples, in terms of various demographics. In the discussion that follows, the findings of this study are unpacked and analysed.

As mentioned earlier on, there are no recent surveys or census to gauge the extent and form of pet-keeping in contemporary South Africa. Up to date and accurate statistics on the total pet population are therefore hard to come by. Notwithstanding these limitations, pet-keeping in South Africa is widespread and fairly ubiquitous and the practice is not limited to elites or to specific racial and ethnic groups. In all groups and within all demographic categories, there are individuals who form deep emotional bonds with and strong attachments to the animals they keep as pets.

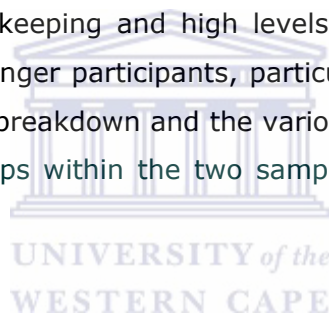
As with other aspects of our society, pet-keeping has undergone massive changes and numbers have grown to such an extent that an overpopulation crisis is said to exist at present. There are multiple reasons for the pet population growth and the shifts in pet-keeping practices that have taken place recently. To make sense of this, socio-economic and cultural differences, along with past experiences need to be considered. But, first it is necessary to examine some of the demographic variables that influencing pet-keeping that are evident in the findings. When these patterns are analysed, social stratification and the unequal position and ranking of pets and their owners become apparent. Attention is now turned to age, which is an important variable in pet-keeping. The extent to which it plays a part in shaping attitudes and behaviour towards pets warrants investigation and is the primary focus of this next section.

4.1. Age

All powerless and oppressed groups, both human and animal, have at some point been subjected to what Tuan (1984) describes as 'dominance and affection'. Arluke and Sanders point out that in Western societies like America, the very young and the very old are "*treated like pets*" (1996: 172). Not only are children treated as pets, pets are increasingly been treated like children. The elderly, are "*infantilized*" and portrayed as dependent and helpless and not quite "*full-fledged family members*" (Arluke and Sanders, 1996: 173). Like pets, these two age groups are vulnerable to abuse and family violence (Ascione, 1999).

Age also plays a part in determining both the likelihood of an individual owning a pet as well as the level of attachment they have to their pet (Reid and Anderson, 2009). This is not limited to the USA, where most studies have been conducted. Generally speaking, persons over the age of sixty-five (65) years and young people were much less likely to own a pet than middle aged adults, which could be partly attributed to lifestyle issues such as the type of accommodation they

live in, as well as the particular demands of each stage in their life cycle. Even though retired people (of both genders) have the time to spend on pets, are more likely to report on the health, psychological and social benefits associated with pet-keeping and form high levels of attachment to pets when they have them, other factors may mitigate against pet-keeping for this age group. Like young people, elderly, retired people tend to live in accommodation that is unsuitable for pets or doesn't allow pets, such as flats and retirement complexes or old-age homes.⁶³ The more stable and sedentary lifestyles of adults who are economically active, may own their homes and who are mostly married with children, lends itself to pet-keeping.⁶⁴ Delaying the age of marriage and 'empty nest syndrome' also encourage pet-keeping. Middle aged people in general focus more on home life and in the process develop higher levels of attachment to pets. This is especially true of women. In general, young people (who are often single) move around more and spend less time at home, which is not conducive to pet-keeping. However, things are not always clear cut and numerous examples of caring and responsible pet-keeping and high levels of emotional attachment to pets were found among younger participants, particularly among those who took part in the survey. The age breakdown and the various factors that contributed to the distribution of age groups within the two samples as revealed in this study and are now outlined.



⁶³ There is a dire shortage of pet-friendly rental accommodation in this country and this is one of the key reasons why many people relinquish or abandon their pets. There are also very few accommodations for the elderly that permit pets and the few that do tend to be upmarket and cater exclusively for wealthier people (www.petfriendly.co.za).

⁶⁴ Having children especially for first time parents often mitigates against pet-keeping and the arrival of the new baby frequently results in people getting rid of their once beloved pets.

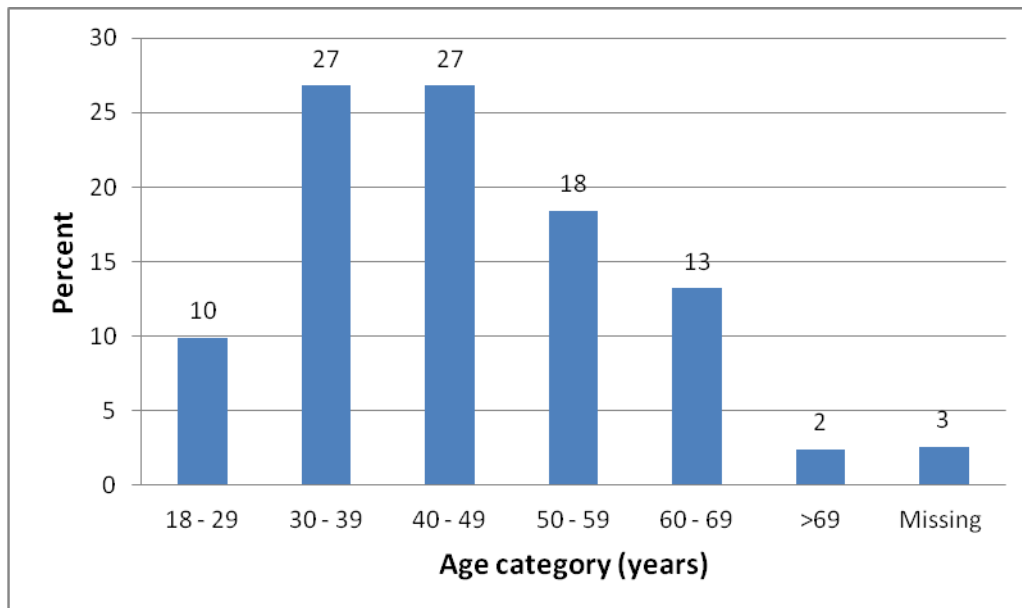
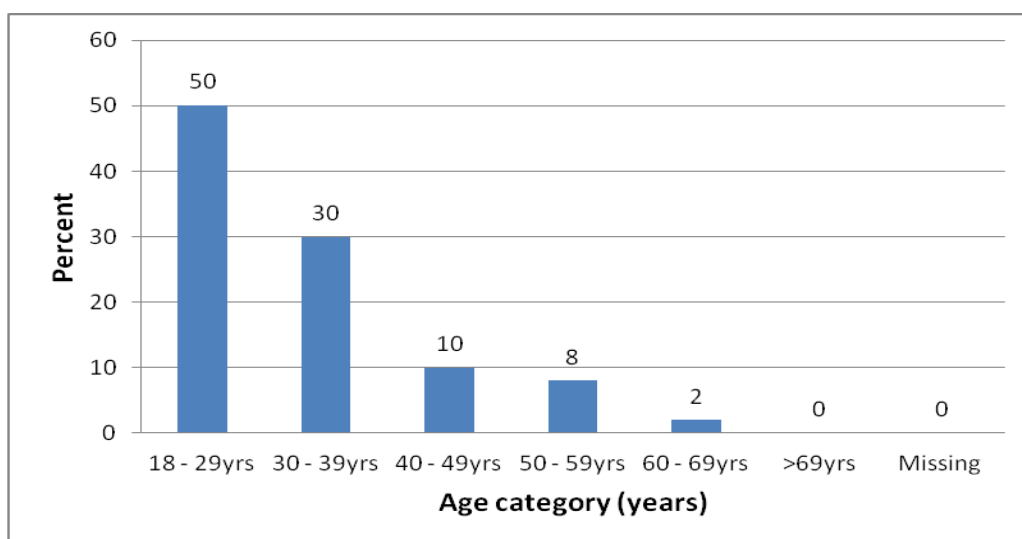


Figure 1: Age distribution in percentages - survey sample

As is shown in Figure 1 above, most of the participants surveyed for this study, are older than thirty years, with a concentration in the 'middle age' groups. The 30-59 years age group comprises three hundred and twenty eight (or 72%) of this sample. Of these, 244 (or 53.6%) are aged 30-49 years. Broken down further, equal numbers, 122 (or 26.8%) are located in each of the age categories 30-39 and 40-49 years. Eighty four (or 18.4%) are 50-59 years old. Only a small number were located on the two extremes – 45 (or 9.9%) are aged 18-29 years and 72 (or 15.5%) are older than 60 years. Of these, a mere eleven (or 2.6%) are older than 69.⁶⁵



⁶⁵ In instances where the total number of participants does not add up to 100%, the discrepancy is due to the 'missing' responses that were not recorded on the questionnaire by participants.

Figure 2: Age distribution in percentages - interview sample

Exactly half, twenty five (or 50%) of the interview sample were younger than 30 years (Age category 18-29 years). Fifteen (or 30%) are between the ages of 30-39. Only 5 (or 10%) are 40-49 years old and four (or 8%) are aged 50-59. Only one (or 2%) participant in this sample was older than 60 years. (See Figure 2) Differences between the two samples can be detected in terms of age distribution and on average the survey participants are older than the interview participants. (See Figure 3)

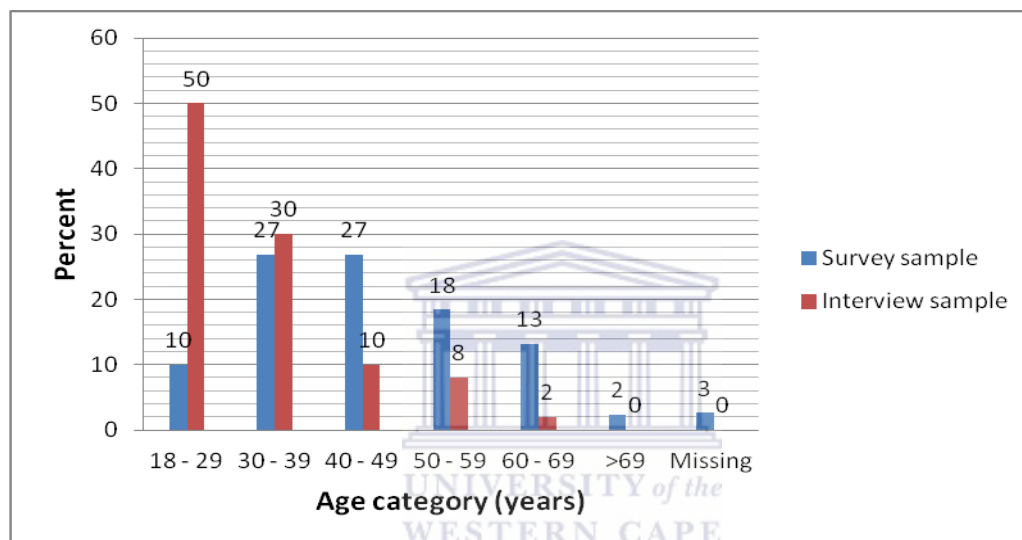


Figure 3: Comparison of samples in terms of age distribution

In many respects this divergent age distribution among the two samples is unsurprising and is in line with previous research as well as current population dynamics in South Africa. Middle aged (especially white middle class) women in this country have strong feelings about pets and are most likely to keep them and take responsibility for their day to day care. Reid and Anderson (2009) note that older people, especially women aged 35-49, display higher levels of emotional attachment to pets than other age groups, particularly the 18-24 group that has the lowest attachment. It can thus be expected that among whites (who comprised most of the survey sample), individuals aged between thirty (30) and sixty (60), who are also more likely to have access to email and thus partake in a survey of this nature, are the group most inclined to express views about and have an interest in pets. The interview sample on the other hand is considerably younger, which reflects wider age demographics. Among black South Africans, especially those living in urban areas, there is a preponderance of youth (defined

as people aged 18-35 years), thus a random sample is likely to include a high percentage of younger people ⁶⁶ For this reason, the sample was deliberately stratified, so as to include 'older' people as well. As mentioned, previous research has shown that younger people are less attached to their pets than older, middle aged groups and retired people exhibit the most attachment to pets.

In some respects, this study made similar findings, but others were unfounded. These discrepancies may be due to other intervening variables like class and race. In line with prior research, the younger participants interviewed definitely appeared to be less attached to their pets than older age groups within that sample. But, they are mostly poor and all are black. The younger participants surveyed on the other hand (predominantly white and middle class), did not seem to follow this pattern and high levels of attachment to their pets was indicated. Furthermore, the younger participants surveyed, specifically those under thirty, seemed to have more progressive views and were far more willing to grant animals similar rights to humans than were the older age groups.

On the whole, in both samples, the participants in the older age groups treated their pets very well and were emotionally attached to them, as was clearly demonstrated in the Khayelitsha interviews. The three participants who demonstrated the greatest attachment to their pets and who spent the most time and money on them were drawn from the older age categories and two of them said that they are retired. A sixty six year old male pensioner living in Site C, said that even though he did not have a lot of money, he was willing to spend some of it on his German Shepherd dog, *Puppy*, who kept him company and also protected his home. He said that he initially acquired the dog "*for security sake*" but "*later on the dog became part of my family, as everyone fell in love with the dog*". Now that his children are at university, *Puppy* is "*the only family [he has] in town*." *Puppy* is walked, has photos taken of him that are pasted on the wall of the living room and he is fed *Husky* dog food, is given "*lots of water during the day to prevent dehydration*," taken to either the animal hospital or the mobile clinic and although he has a wooden kennel for shelter, mostly sleeps indoors, sometimes "*on top of the sofa*".

A fifty eight year old married woman from Makhaza has a small male black cat called *Lucky*, two cross-breed 'normal' dogs called *Bova* and *Tshomi* and four

⁶⁶ According to Census 2001, fewer than 7% of the residents in Khayelitsha are older than fifty years and over 40% are under nineteen. Two thirds of the population of this township are younger than thirty years of age (<http://www.statssa.gov.za/census01/html/default.asp>).

ducks that she keeps strictly as pets. She feeds her animals on food bought from the supermarket, buys them gifts, provides shelter, has photographs of them all and takes the dogs out to visit friends and when they have a "*closing function at church*." She openly admitted that animals, especially dogs have given her emotional support throughout her life. During childhood, when her mother beat her and she would cry, "*they [the dogs] would not let me cry alone*." Her dogs are her security and help ward off thieves and attackers and the cat "*protects her groceries from rats*." She repeatedly stated that she was an animal lover. Serpell (1999) found that people tend to keep the same kinds of pets in adulthood that they had when they were children and the previously mentioned respondent seems to have replicated her childhood experiences regarding pets. In her words, "*Tshomi reminds me so much for the dog I had as a girl...he even looks the same*."

Another fifty nine year old female, a small business owner from Makhaza pampers her cat *Nono*, who "*scared the mouse away from her shop*." She says that "*Nono is helpful because mouse spoils your food and this will ruin my business*." But *Nono's* status and position within her household goes beyond her use value and she is loved as a child, companion or family member. This is clearly demonstrated by the blankets, food and other comforts provided for her by her owner. According to her, "*Nono is my child and we all love her*." *Nono's* owner had photographs taken of her after she saw this being done in *People* magazine. *Nono* is sterilised and is taken to the mobile clinic when ill.

Even though all three of these participants initially acquired their respective pets for utilitarian reasons (security and rodent control) and in all instances the animals continue to perform these roles, a shift took place and they developed an emotional connection with their pets, which extended beyond the animal's usefulness. This change from working animal to family member, translated into better treatment and a higher quality of care and more consideration and regard for their respective pets than is generally found within this sample as a whole.

None of the younger participants that were interviewed displayed such attachment and level of commitment to their pets as these two older participants did. They did not demonstrate the same levels of care and were generally not as willing to spend time and money on their pets. One of the younger participants, a thirty year old female single parent and shebeen owner living in Kuyasa, repeatedly called herself an animal lover, yet between the end of 2008 and the

start of 2009 six of her previous dogs starved to death because "*there was a shortage of leftovers*" with which to feed them. Only one dog, called *Pep* survived. To her credit, she said that the death of the dogs still bothered her and she cooks for *Pep* and feeds him "*twice a day.*" She bought *Pep* from a petshop nine months ago. She appreciates the 'support' the dog gives her by protecting her property and "*when there are disturbances and problems at the shebeen*". When probed about her love for animals and about her knowledge of them, she said: "*I learned how to treat animals from my grandmother*". She also insisted that, due to the caring nature of women, they tend to care more for dogs than men do.

A young male interviewed, a twenty eight year old UWC student who owned his own house, showed no attachment whatsoever to his dog, called *Bova*, which he inherited from a neighbour who returned to the Eastern Cape two years ago. Apart from feeding the dog leftovers, *Bova* receives little else and has no shelter and doesn't get treated if ill. He claimed to not care about the dog at all and he said that needed nothing from the animal. He went on to say that he also did not care if other people "*beat or abuse animals*", as it was "*their choice.*" Another, an unemployed 25 year old male from Makhaza also did not attach much importance to his dog, which was not regarded affectionately. He too, had inherited the dog – from a neighbour who was "*always drunk*" and neglected the animal. Although he let the dog sleep on his front stoep and fed him leftovers sometimes, he had not given the dog a name, which is highly unusual. He says he doesn't care about animals generally and is not bothered at all by seeing dead animals on the road or if animals are hurt and abused on television and in movies.

The researcher acknowledges that these are generalisations and that only a few examples have been used to make inferences about the relationship between age and pet-keeping styles. However, they are corroborated by the findings made in various other studies of this nature and in these instances, the older people who comprised part of the interview sample enjoyed various social and psychological benefits associated with pet-keeping that were generally not shared by younger participants. Among those surveyed, older people, who were the majority indicated high levels of concern and attachment to pets, but so did a significant number of younger participants. So, in the survey sample, age is less of a factor in forging strong bonds with pets than it is in the interview sample. Attention is now turned to gender, which is widely regarded as a key factor in determining differential attitudes and behaviour toward other animals.

4.2. Gender

As shown earlier on in the summary of findings at the start of this chapter, overall most of the participants from both samples, four hundred and eighteen, are women and eighty eight are men. In the survey, women dominated and three hundred and ninety eight (or 87.2%) of those who responded to the survey are female and only fifty (or 11%) are male. (The remaining, eight (or 1.8%) did not specify their gender on the questionnaire they filled in.

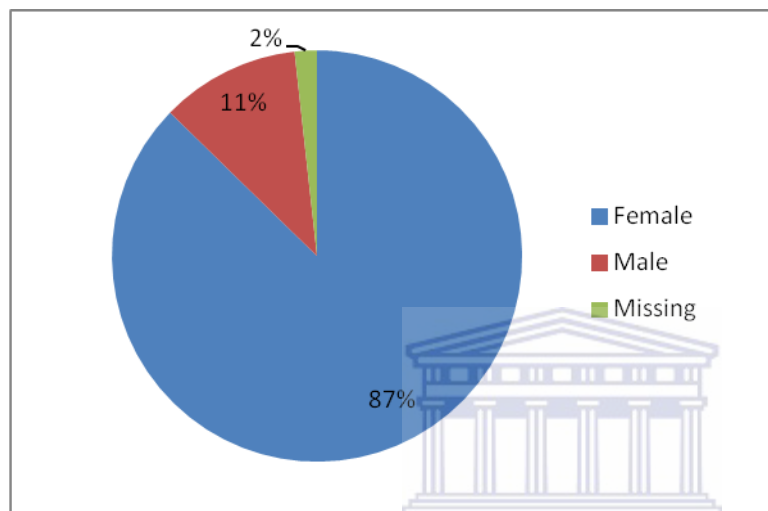


Figure 4: Gender distribution - survey sample

A clear difference emerged in terms of the two participant samples and unlike the survey, where the vast majority of responses were received from women, in the Khayelitsha interview sample, both genders were well represented. However, men dominated, making up thirty (or 60%) of the sample. The remaining twenty (or 40%) interviewees are female. (See Figure 5)

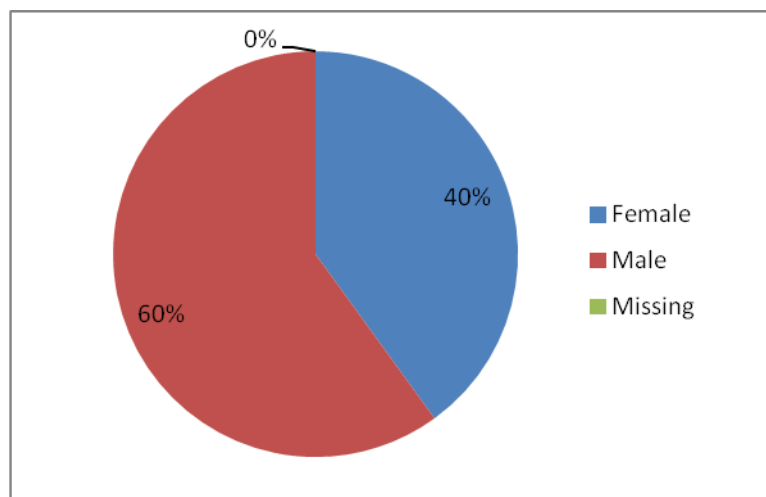


Figure 5: Gender distribution - interview sample

The differences in gender distribution between the two samples was anticipated. (See Figure 6). It is in line with the general demographic pattern found among pet owners in these diverse population samples. In retrospect it is unsurprising that the majority of people likely to respond to the survey would be women. Not only are women within the socio-economic and racial groups dominant in the survey more likely to own pets, they are also more likely to respond to studies of this nature where communicating their often sentimental and strongly emotional views regarding animals, particularly pets, is required.

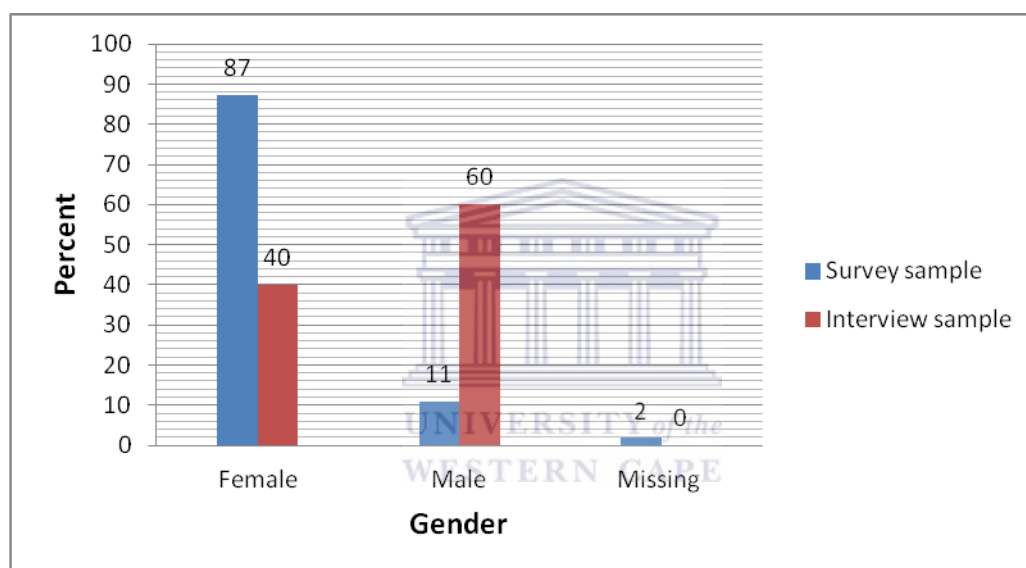


Figure 6: Comparison of survey and Khayelitsha interview samples in terms of gender

Since, women are the primary caregivers within most households, it was anticipated that among those surveyed, this nurturing role is extended to pets. Staats *et al* (2008), argue in most households women are more involved in looking after pets than are men. Staats *et al* speculate that, "*internalizing pets as selfobjects would occur more frequently as contact with pets increases. In many households, because women frequently are more closely involved in care of pets than are men, opportunities for internalizing aspects of the pets would be greater for women than for men*" (2008: 288). In her thesis, Jill Johnson (2009) argues that the extent to which pets are integrated into the home and family and the kind of relationship an individual has with a pet, has some correlations with the gender of the primary caretaker. Peek *et al* (1996) argue that women identify more strongly with domestic animals like pets, and are more sympathetic and disposed toward showing them affection, because of their position as mothers,

nurturers and carers, within the household. Luke (2007) points out that for feminists this position, which often results in oppression and abuse, leads to greater empathy for animals who also experience this under patriarchy. However, in his view, gender socialisation and structural position of women albeit being significant factors, do not provide an adequate explanation of differentiated levels of support for animal welfare issues.

The findings of this study and the available literature seem to indicate that gender is an important variable in shaping and understanding attitudes towards animals, including pets (Driscoll, 1992; Reid and Anderson, 2009; Wells and Hepper, 1995, Peek *et al*, 1997).⁶⁷ According to Reid and Anderson (2009), pet ownership is associated with human demographics such as the stage in the life cycle. Older people and women generally display higher levels of attachment to pets than young people and men (Reid and Anderson, 2009). Middle aged women in particular see more value and benefits (health and other) associated with keeping pets than most other groups (*ibid*). It is generally agreed that gender is the most consistent factor underpinning the treatment of animals and research has shown that for the most part women show more concern and empathy for animals than do males. As mentioned earlier on in Chapter Two, females care more than males and are more likely to join animal welfare groups, rescue strays or be vegetarians (Adams, 1990; Luke, 2007). Throughout history and in many contemporary societies, the majority of people involved in animal advocacy and in the animal protectionist movement are women (Luke, 2007: 11). This is consistent with my own personal experience and when volunteering at animal welfare shelters or attending animal rights meetings and protests, the majority of those present are always female. Similarly, most animal welfare staff and people who adopt pets are also women. Taking it a bit further, we see that the majority of people who harm and exploit animals, rather than protect and care for them are male (Luke, 2007). This includes hunters, vivisectionists, abattoir workers and animal abusers.⁶⁸

Due to their different emotional and cognitive orientations toward animals, women tend to hold more 'anthropomorphic' views (Kellert and Berry, 1987). Differently put, women are more moralistic and humanistic regarding animals,

⁶⁷ The term pet is not gender neutral and there are sexual undertones and innuendos associated with its usage.

⁶⁸ Luke (2007) acknowledges that women are often indirectly complicit in animal suffering, which is demonstrated by the cosmetic and fur industries where they are the main consumers. It is also noted by the researcher that women may not directly abuse animals but readily relinquish or abandon pets.

whereas men lean towards utilitarian and dominionistic outlooks (Kellert and Berry, 1987). Those who care deeply for animals and identify with them are often seen as emotional or hysterical, which are generally considered to be 'feminine' traits. It is thus widely agreed that gender underpins our dealings with other animals and that differences in attitude and behaviour are learnt as part of our social and cultural conditioning. Different social groups keep pets for different reasons and women, particularly older women, are more likely than men to admit keeping pets to counteract loneliness and for support during difficult periods in their lives (Staats *et al*, 2008).

The findings in this study are consistent with the notion that pets provide social support, particularly for many women, when faced with challenging circumstances. Several female participants surveyed expressed views that confirmed the important and beneficial role played by their pets. According to a participant in the survey, a 40-49 widowed female, who breeds dogs, *"When my husband died – without my dogs I would have died too!"* When asked whether her pets had given her emotional support, another participant surveyed, (a forty seven year old married woman), explained: *"Yes, certainly. I went through a traumatic divorce many years ago – and my golden old boy did not leave my side. He was my "shoulder" to cry on, and because of him, I knew I had to carry on. I was diagnosed with breast cancer six years ago – again, this dog refused to leave the side of my bed during treatment – he only went out to be fed and to go to the loo, and came straight back in again. The dog pined terribly when I was in hospital – so had to be put on medication from the vet. My mom came up from Cape Town to look after me and the animals, and she was really stressed, she did not know what to do with my dog!"* She continued: *"I thought another interesting thing for you to read would be regarding the diagnosing of my tumour. I rescued Cleopatra my cat from the river bed – she was starving and half dead. Not four months after that – she starting kneading my one breast, and sometimes even drew blood – she would not leave my breast alone – I eventually chucked her out the bedroom and closed the door so she could not come in – she would then scratch the door all night! That is eventually how I found my lump, after her scratching my breast! My oncologist thinks that maybe it was the heat of my breast – especially with the tumour which was quite large that attracted her to it? How will we ever know? How come only Cleo – who I just rescued did that, and not any of my other cats that I had for several years?"*

Another way in which gender roles are perpetuated in pet-keeping pertains to the parental roles assumed which conform to child-rearing patterns. Several participants surveyed explained that they took on traditional mother and father roles when looking after their pets. This was also reflected in their language usage and references made to *"mommy's little girl"* and *"daddy's darling."* In these instances, the animal's genders are sometimes reaffirmed by the names and the type and colour of accessories they are given, which can be masculine or feminine in nature. The type or breed of animals selected can denote masculinity or femininity and some dog breeds (like Pitbulls, Boerboels and Rottweilers) are decidedly more macho than 'lapdogs' and toy breeds like Yorkshire Terriers, Pomeranians and Poodles.

Notwithstanding the gendered nature of animal practices like pet-keeping, clear differences between the survey and interview samples emerged. This study shows that these gender differentiations are specific to certain racial and ethnic groups and there is a class bias. In this study it is predominantly white women who fit the profile previously described. From observations, discussions and interviews done in Khayelitsha, it seemed that, on the whole, more males seem to own or take responsibility for pets (especially dogs) than did females. Even though in rural and sometimes in urban areas women and children take responsibility for puppies, once the animals reach adulthood, men often take over (Gallant, 2002). According to Gallant, in many rural areas, *"Pups are customarily the responsibility of the women and the children. Teenage boys especially will take young dogs on their first trips outside the homestead territory, often when they round up cattle in the late afternoons"* (2002: 30). In urban townships like Khayelitsha a similar pattern can be observed and children and young boys can often be seen doing things with their dogs, walking on the roads, looking for firewood, hunting or rounding up livestock. It is a rare sight to see young girls out with dogs in these communities. The responsibility of bringing dogs to the clinic when ill also rests with young boys and even women and adult men – rather than young girls. Most of the men interviewed agreed that males took better care of animals, such as dogs in their community.

One interviewee, a married thirty six year old man from Makhaza who has two dogs *Bova* and *Mary*, proudly informed us that he has had both dogs for more than ten years (since 1998). Like many of the men interviewed, he claims to have learnt about caring for animals from his father. In his view, *"women can never care for animals more than men"* and *"most men will sacrifice everything for*

animals." A few women disagreed and said that females, who were natural caretakers and mothers and were *"more patient"*, took better care of animals than men. Another issue worth mentioning is the association of particular animals with gender and cats tend to be seen as *"women's animals"*, whereas dogs are often linked to masculinity. One man, a dog owner from Town Two, said that, *"women have a very soft spot for cats"* and another, said women *"like cuddly things like cats."* A female cat owner from Harare section agreed and said that, *"women don't care more about animals than men, but they care more for cats. They see cats as lovely and innocent creatures"*. These perceptions, though widely held are not entirely accurate. Many of the women interviewed claimed to dislike and fear cats. Even though men who are fond of cats and who prefer them to dogs are sometimes viewed as being unusual and even effeminate, most cat owners in the interview sample were male.⁶⁹

To some extent the gender distribution in the interview sample was anticipated. This coheres with prior personal experience and observations over the years, both in the campus based feral cat charity (www.tufcat.co.za) I am involved in, as well as prior experience within several animal welfare groups based outside the university. It is mostly black men rather than women that offer to help and volunteer on the TUF CAT project and whenever blacks are involved in animal related work (on a salaried or volunteer basis) that involves rescuing and caring for animals, they are usually male. A comparable gender bias among black pet owners was predicted by the researcher and was substantiated by the findings of this study.

Before entering the field and interviewing pet owners in Khayelitsha, I envisaged that relatively few women living in the area (as compared to men) kept pets (especially dogs), which was more of a male activity. In retrospect, I now realise that I was thinking stereotypically, and the image of Xhosa speaking males who kept packs of hunting dogs dominated my thoughts at the time. Nevertheless, in many respects, my assumptions were correct. In South Africa, it seemed that black women often felt hostility to animals like dogs (particularly free-roaming and/or stray dogs) because of the threats these animals posed to them and their

⁶⁹ Relatively few South Africans are aware that Nelson Mandela is fond of cats. It was reported in the *Cape Times*, 22 June, 2007, when Michelle Obama was visiting, that Mandela recorded this in his diary while at Pollsmoor, where a black cat visited him in his cell. Mandela's diary entry for Friday, February 26, 1988, reads: *"Black cat visits the cell. Very cute and playful. Sleeps alongside me on the bed. The following morning, owner claims it."* (<http://www.iol.co.za/news/special-features/nelson-mandela/michelle-meets-madiba-1.1086533>) This love of cats continues at the prison and a cat care programme has been running for many years.

families. Studies done on stray dog populations in urban areas suggest that women feel most threatened by free-roaming dog populations, who limit their mobility. A female interviewed in Site B confirmed this. Although she has owned dogs for the past six years, she is afraid of the other dogs roaming the streets as she had been bitten on her arm by a dog two years ago.

Packs of hungry stray dogs can also attack young children, as was recently demonstrated in the Sweet Home Farm, incident (<http://www.sPCA-ct.co.za/newsarticle.asp?id=1578>). This informal settlement in Philippi, near Cape Town has a high density and over-population of dogs is a characteristic of many townships and informal settlements countrywide. The burgeoning stray dog population in *Sweet Home Farm* indicates that where dog-keeping is a predominantly male activity, the continuance of male migration, which has strong historical roots, exacerbates the stray situation, as dogs are simply abandoned and left to fend for themselves when their (mostly male) owners go elsewhere. According to media reports and the Cape of Good Hope SPCA website, a man allegedly locked his seven dogs up in his shack and went to the Eastern Cape. The hungry dogs eventually broke free and attacked and killed a toddler (<http://www.sPCA-ct.co.za/newsarticle.asp?id=1578>). The community responded by hunting down and killing dogs. The media reported that dogs were stoned and beaten to death. Puppies were put into plastic bags and left on the train lines for passing trains. Throughout the next few weeks, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Animal Welfare Society (AWS) and Animal Rescue Organisation (ARO) and a host of smaller groups removed unwanted pets and trapped stray dogs, most of whom were taken away and humanely euthanased. Anecdotes and verbal communications with animal rescue groups that went into the area to help the dogs, informed me that it was primarily male members of the Sweet Home Farm community that helped them to round up and rescue dogs.

What is significant and surprising to many is that it was mostly women who wanted the dogs removed and they were directly involved in the dog killing that ensued. Although men were involved, women were at the forefront and this could be related to their ability to identify with the mother whose child was killed. As mothers themselves, they are protectors of the domestic realm and an attack on a small child requires them to act. The home is in feminine space and in this instance the perception was that it (and the occupants) were being threatened and attacked by marauding dogs. Another reason why the women may feel antagonistic to dogs and lack sympathy for them relates to their traditional role as provider of food within the household. Part of their responsibility as women

and/or mothers, is making sure that the family has enough food to eat so they would be reluctant to share it with dogs. The reasons could be because dogs have even lower status than they do and therefore do not deserve such consideration, or simply due to the shortage of food available to them. During interviews two male participants said that they thought that women were hostile to dogs (as their wives were) because, "*dogs have to eat.*" When food is scarce, as it often is in their households, they felt that the women resent dogs, as they are yet another mouth to feed. One of the men said that his wife complained that the dog "*was a waste of money.*" For many women, getting their fair share of food, especially when there are men in the household is already a struggle and in these situations, dogs represent further competition for an essential resource. In cases where women do deliberately hurt dogs, they often throw boiling hot water on them, it is often directly linked to food and the perceived threat that they believe dogs pose. In many townships for example, many women run small businesses involved in preparing food, which attracts dogs. To chase the dogs that gather around the food, they sometimes throw hot water on them, which inflicts serious and painful injuries. But, then there are those business owners who feed dogs. Female meat sellers found near taxi ranks in most townships, including Khayelitsha, sometimes throw bits of meat and bones to the numerous dogs drawn to their stalls on a daily basis. For many of these free roaming dogs (many of whom are owned), this is their daily meal. A female meat seller who was interviewed said that one particular dog (belonging to a neighbour) followed her to her stand every morning and back home again in the evening. He (the dog) did this of his own accord and in return for providing her with security, was given meat (mostly organs, bad bits and bones) to eat. His owner was aware of this 'arrangement' and did not feed his dog himself. She emphasised how safe the dog's presence made her feel.

This study has found that pet-keeping is not a gender neutral activity and that, along with age, gender is a key factor that needs to be considered when trying to understand the types of relationships people have with pet animals. This study concurs with Reid and Anderson (2009) that older, higher income, more educated women in present or past relationships are the demographic group that exhibited the greatest amount of pet attachment and were the most willing to spend time and money on pets. This accurately describes and provides a clear profile of most of the survey participants, who undeniably demonstrate higher levels of pet attachment than do other groups whose views were elicited. Unlike the survey sample, the interview sample consisted of several unemployed, single, young

people – the groups least likely to reflect intense emotional relationships with pets. Class is clearly another factor that plays a part in shaping and differentiating human-animal interactions and its role in influencing attitudes and behaviour towards pets warrants further consideration.

4.3. Social Class

People in power have always kept pets. In many ways, pet-keeping reinforces social stratification, particularly class distinctions and can be linked to prestige and status. Pet-keeping has long been associated with wealth, primarily because pet animals have no use value, and cost money to maintain (Serpell, 1996). Serpell, maintains that, "*The recent proliferation of pets in modern industrial societies is regarded by many as the direct product of western material affluence*" (1996: 54). Unlike, livestock, which Arluke and Sanders (1996: 171) term "*instrumental animals*", pets do not produce but consume resources, thus in theory, surplus money (and time) is needed to care for them. Pets are thus linked to affluence and class has long been considered to be an indicator in pet-keeping. Ritvo (1986) traced the development of modern pet-keeping and found that having pets only became widespread among 'ordinary people' in the UK and the USA towards the end of the eighteenth century. In her analysis of the social and historical forces that resulted in the middle classes taking to pet-keeping as a pasttime, Ritvo (1987) observes that pet-keeping was previously restricted to elites, viz., the clergy and aristocracy. The belief that second class citizens or the 'underdog', are unable to care for pets properly, because feelings for animals and the knowledge of how to care for them is the exclusive domain of the privileged classes dominated western thought for centuries. Flynn (2008) agrees that historically, social class has played a key role in pet-keeping and notes how during Victorian times the poor were prohibited from keeping dogs. Pet keeping was once the preserve of the privileged and the sole prerogative of those whose social position justified them having power over others (2008: 106).

Podberscek (2000, 2009) studied pet-keeping in both the United Kingdom and China. He concludes that pet-keeping, despite its long history in the United Kingdom, initially was the exclusive domain of the aristocracy. But, towards the end of the seventeenth century, this practice became more commonplace throughout all strata of society.

Pet-keeping is often regarded as a western, mostly middle class peculiarity and is seen as an expression of economic prosperity, privileged circumstance and

"immoral extravagance" (Serpell, 1996: 58). Pet keeping is also associated with misplaced emotions and *"bourgeoisie sentimentality"* (ibid). This particular pattern and style of pet-keeping is manifest in several other Western countries. In some respects, a similar trajectory was followed in South Africa (Van Sittert and Swart, 2003).

While emphasising that *"people who liked animals and enjoyed the company of pets appeared in all classes, regions, and ethnic groups"*, Grier (2006: 11) acknowledges that class identity is a significant factor in pet-keeping in the USA and that it helps to explain the increased interest in and consumption of pet food and other products. She points out that information about the pet-keeping practices of poor people are not readily available and there is a shortage of studies focusing on this topic. There are overlaps with South Africa and Grier's study can shed light on the local situation. As in the USA, the main consumers of pet food, accessories and services in this country are the middle classes and information about poor people's concept of pet-keeping, as well as the practices they engage in on a daily basis, is not readily available. Today, it is the middle classes that are most readily associated with pet-keeping and their preferred practices and views dominate. Much of our knowledge about pet-keeping is informed by the activities and opinions of the middle classes. Charles Phineas (1974) argues: *"it was the growing role confusion of the middle classes in a maturing industrial economy that drew them to pets. Cut off from the bases of economic and political power, their essential functions gone, the middle class required control over a subject being to give them any sense of purpose"* (quoted in Menache, 1998: 82). Although Serpell (1996) notes that the increased popularity of pets coincided with the growth of an economically better off middle class in urban areas, he cautions against assuming that keeping pets was limited to affluent societies. He refers to the pet-keeping practices of hunter-gatherers to illustrate his point. In her historical study of pets in America, Grier agrees and writes, *"European settlers carried cats and dogs as workers and companions to the North American colonies, where indigenous people already enjoyed complex relations with their own dogs"* (2006: 11).

Although the socio-economic background of participants was not examined in-depth, it can be deduced that most of those who responded to the survey were middle to upper middle class. This is indicated by three factors, viz., highest level of education achieved, occupation and income. Overall the survey participants had achieved higher educational qualifications than those interviewed. Most of the

participants in this sample were well educated and one hundred and eighty nine (41.4%) had a university degree or diploma, seventy nine (17.3%) had additional post-graduate qualifications and one hundred and twenty two (26.8%) had a matriculation pass.⁷⁰ Only sixty one (or 13.7%) had high school or less indicated as their highest educational achievement.⁷¹ (See Figure 7)

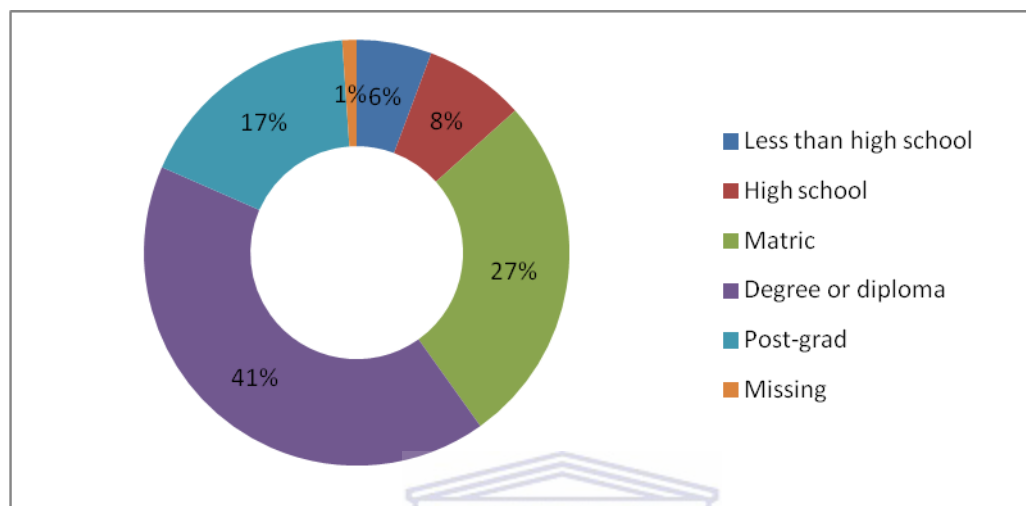


Figure 7: Educational attainment distribution - survey sample

Unlike the survey sample, those interviewed generally did not have much education beyond schooling. Twelve (or 24%) had degrees and one participant (or 2%) had completed post-graduate study. Sixteen participants (or 32%) had obtained a matriculation pass, seven (or 14%) had not finished high school and the rest, fourteen (or 28%) either did not go to high school at all or they did not answer the question.⁷² (See Figure 8)

⁷⁰ Matriculation (or matric) refers to the qualification received on graduating from high school. It is currently known as Grade 12.

⁷¹ Five responses (or 0.8%) are 'missing' and this information was not supplied by participants.

⁷² The 2001 Census data from Statistics South Africa showed that the community of Makhaza (a section of Khayelitsha where several interviews were conducted), had less than five people with post-graduate qualifications, less than one percent with degrees, and only 1.6% of people had other qualifications such as diplomas and certificates.

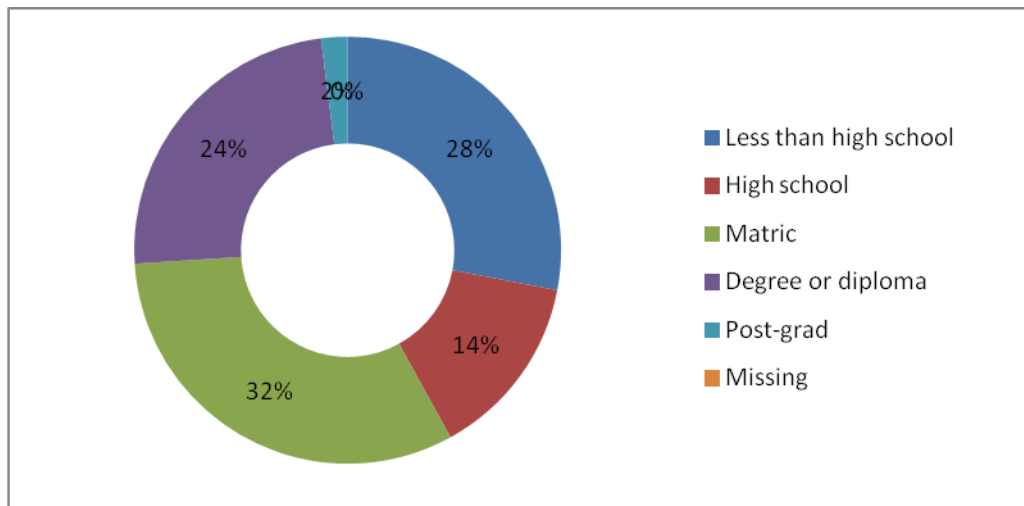


Figure 8: Educational attainment distribution - interview sample

A range of occupations are indicated among participants and occupational differences between samples are apparent. Three hundred and eighty five (or 84.4%) of those surveyed are professionals and forty (or 8.9%) are self-employed. A small minority, eighteen (or 3.9%) are retired and eleven (or 2.4%) referred to themselves as housewives, home executives or stay-at-home moms. Only two participants (or 0.4%) of the survey sample indicated that they were unemployed.

Once again, divergent patterns emerged between samples and only two (or 4%) of the participants interviewed worked as 'professionals', viz., a teacher and a social worker. Eight (or 16%) are self-employed small business owners. Fourteen (or 28%) of the total interview sample are unemployed. Two (or 4%) are retired and the rest, twenty four (or 48%) work in various, mostly manual fields and are employed on either a part-time or casual basis. Some of these jobs are street cleaners, security guard, car guard, gardener, driver, domestic worker / cleaner. Unlike those surveyed, no one interviewed referred to themselves as 'housewives' or similar. Even if they were women who stayed at home while their husband's worked in the formal sector, they did not use this term to describe themselves and they identified themselves as unemployed, self-employed or (partly) employed instead.

On the whole most of those surveyed are materially well off and the total household income or earnings of three hundred and twenty three (or 70.8%) participants is in excess of R20 000 per month. A significant number, seventy one (or 16.6%) earn R10 – R15 000 per month and only a few, seven (or 1.5%) earn

less than R5000 per month. The remainder, five (or 1.1%) of the sample earn less than R3000.00 per month. The earnings for the remaining fifty (9.8%) could not be established as this information was not supplied on the returned questionnaire. The total percentage for the survey participants in Figure 9. thus does not add up to 100%.

A different picture emerged during interviews and in this sample, only one participant (or 2%) earned more than R20 000 per month. The individual concerned owned two businesses. Two (or 4%) earn between R10 – R15 000 a month - one (or 2%) works as a professional and the other one (or 2%) owns a small business. Twenty six (or 52%) earn up to R5000 per month and twenty one (or 42%) have a monthly income of less than R3000. Broken down further, ten of the twenty one interviewees earning less than R3000 per month actually earn R1000 – R2000 and seven earn to less than R1000.

From Figure 9, it can be seen that participants in the interview sample earned far less than those surveyed. In some respects these findings are predictable since interviews were conducted within an area in which a particular demographic is dominant. The interviewees were predominantly drawn from the lower to middle classes. As mentioned, only a few of the respondents interviewed had a degree or diploma and only one person (or 2%) had a post-graduate qualification. She worked as a teacher, owned her house and had a car.

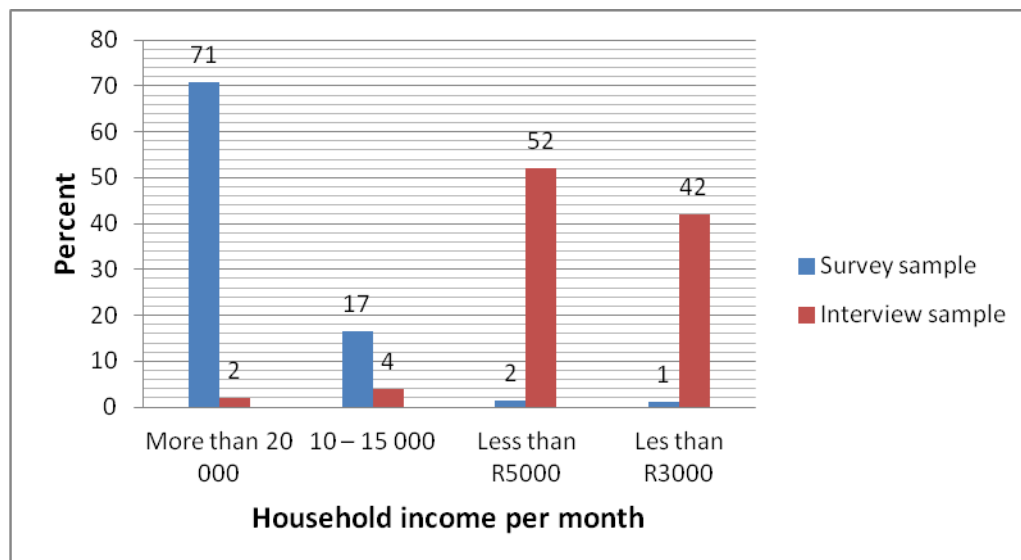


Figure 9: Comparison of survey and interview samples in terms of income

Only three interviewees owned their houses and two had cars – one of them owned a whole fleet of taxis. The types of businesses owned by the self-employed participants ranged from spaza shops, shebeens, an informal meat cooking stand and a taxi business.⁷³ Only one person, the owner of the taxis, could be considered 'wealthy' as he owned both the taxi business and a shebeen and lived in a much bigger house than everyone else in his neighbourhood.

While common sense assumptions may lead us to believe that poor people do not care as much about animals, including their pets, as do their wealthier counterparts, the findings of this study suggest that this is not an accurate assessment. During fieldwork many participants (in the survey, but especially in the interviews) stated this. Some even argued that rich people (because of their better access to resources and higher level of education) treated their pets better than did poor people. Furthermore, in poor communities human needs are barely met and thus animals are deprived. According to Al-Fayez *et al* "*In poor countries feeding humans is a more important priority than the indulgence of companion animals*" (2003: 26). Despite the reality that humans are disadvantaged in poor communities like Khayelitsha, this assumption was often contradicted and disproved and people with very few resources, demonstrated a commitment to animals and cared for them in ways that were comparable to the most caring and responsible pet owners found among more privileged people. Boris Levinson (1972) argues that companion animals are not just a luxury for rich people - a dog may also be an important source of comfort and affection in a poor family. This was apparent with a few of the interview participants, who alluded to this role played by their pets.

Tuan (1984) reminds us that pet-keeping is inextricably connected to dominance and power. People in power have always kept pets, but this does not imply that they are the only ones able to care for and derive joy and pleasure from pet-keeping. Sexism, racism and class distinctions are inherent in pet keeping. Second class citizens or human 'underdogs', are unable to care for pets properly, because feelings for animals and the knowledge of how to care for them is thought to be the exclusive domain of privileged individuals and groups (*ibid*). Tuan describes the kind of affection we reserve for pets as "*a warm and superior feeling one has towards things we care for and patronize*" (1984: 5). But pet-keeping is essentially a 'power play'; thus all humans, by virtue of their

⁷³ A spaza shop is an informal business that is usually run from home. Originally a shebeen was an illicit bar or pub where alcohol was sold without a licence. However, these days, many shebeens operate as legal businesses.

dominance over animals, are capable of and in a position to keep animals as pets. This study has found this to be an accurate assessment and since all people have some measure of power over animals, pet-keeping cuts across social and cultural boundaries. In South Africa, pets are not the sole preserve of white middle class suburbia and can be "*dominated, even humiliated under the guise of affection*" (Tuan, 1984: 130). Doting pet owners who pamper and indulge their animals are most likely found among the 'powerful' and economically self-sufficient members of society. The upper classes may be more inclined to take this tendency to the extreme and clothe and bejewel pets - as they did to their servants in the past (Tuan, 1984). In this sense, having a pet is about excess, abundance and consumption. Although the idea of dressing pets in clothing and indulging them in this kind of way is anathema to most of the Khayelitsha sample, it was observed that several dogs and one cat wore a collar. One participant interviewed expressed her desire to dress her dog in clothing.

Pet-keeping has always been subject to fashion and embodies particular configurations of social class (Ritvo, 1986; Kete, 1994; Grier, 2006). Pet-keeping plays a part in the formation of class identity and certain dogs, usually pedigreed breeds, confer more status than do mongrels. Ritvo contends that the emergence and increased popularity of pets towards the end of the nineteenth century was related to social status and pets reflected class and social standing. She argues that, "*By the end of the Victorian era, the English were regarded as a nation of dog-lovers, but not all dogs were equally cherished, especially by members of the urban middle classes who kept pet dogs rather than working animals*" and to keep a dog that was not a pedigree, "*might compromise its owner's social status*" (1986: 227). Ritvo and others have pointed out that this type of thinking is permeated by "*ideologies of pure blood*" and thus strays (who are mostly mongrels), threaten the social order (ibid).

In the past, owners of purebred animals often did everything possible to prevent their dogs being mated by cross bred mongrels. Kete notes, "*as there were social classes, so there were canine ones*" (1994: 25). She describes the fear that wealthy Parisian dog owners had that their dogs and their 'pure' bloodlines would be contaminated or polluted by poor people's mongrels. According to her, "*other dangers also demanded vigilance; the fear of lower-class contagion inspired prescriptions of isolation. A chance encounter with a mongrel could soil one's pet and the benefits of an education might be shaken in a thirty-second encounter with a beast. It takes only a half-minute in the street, when your maid is walking*

the dog, for a dirty dog to contaminate your pet (votre favori) with mange. In a universe fraught with invasions, lower-class people could spread fleas to upper-class pets, in a significant collapse of categories” (1994: 77).

The status of certain breeds is linked to history and fashion and in South Africa, the prevailing colonial attitude towards the *Canis Africanis* – an indigenous breed viewed by many as simply a mongrel or cross breed demonstrates this hierarchy within dog breeds. In the South African context, class and race intersect and dogs kept by blacks were viewed in the same disparaging ways that elites regard the mongrels owned by the poor in other Western countries. Dogs (and indeed other animals) are powerful symbols and throughout our racialised history, black people’s dogs have been stigmatised and seen as inferior in the same way that poor people’s dogs were. Every attempt was made to prevent them mating with ‘white’ dog breeds and these ‘Kaffir dogs’ as they were called, were treated as vermin (Gallant, 2007: 76).⁷⁴ In *The Animal Gaze*, Wendy Woodward writes: “Dogs, as social subjects, also convey much about their ‘owner’s’ class status. In southern Africa with its histories of racialised inequities, dogs denigrated as kaffir dogs embodied negative colonial perceptions of their owners” (2008: 92). Dogs can operate as extensions of our identities thus pedigreed (white) dogs are highly sought after in black communities, who generally do not see the value and worth of mixed breed indigenous dogs (Van Sittert and Swart, 2003). Although the *Canis Africanis* has enjoyed a recent surge in popularity (among whites), it has long been held in contempt (ibid). Elder, Wolch and Emel (1998, 2002) refer to this tendency to view the animals that belong to blacks as inferior as ‘animal-linked racialisations’. This, along with the racism inherent in pet-keeping, which reinforces class distinctions is highlighted and discussed next.⁷⁵

4.4. Race and Ethnicity

A breakdown and brief analysis of the racial and ethnic groups of the survey and interview samples that were included in this study is necessary. Without it being the researcher’s intention, the vast majority of people who participated in the survey are white and English speaking. A total of three hundred and thirty eight (or 74.1%) of the survey participants are white. Two (or 0.4%) are black / African, three (or 0.7%) Indian, one hundred and ten (or 24.1%) identified their

⁷⁴ Kaffir is a racially offensive term used for a black person.

⁷⁵ Other animals traditionally owned by blacks such as Nguni cattle were also viewed in negative ways and judged as being inferior and substandard in the past due to the tendency to identify the animal with the owner.

race as 'Other' and the remaining three (or 0.7%) did not indicate which race group they belonged to. (See Figure 10)

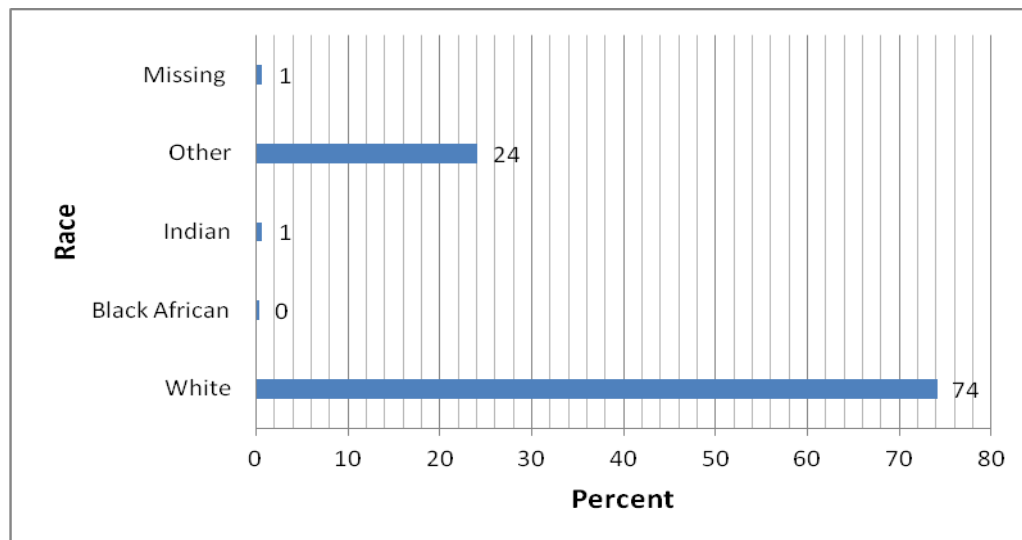


Figure 10: Race distribution - survey sample

Three hundred and forty eight (or 76.3%) of the survey participants stated that English is their home language. Ninety five (or 20.8%) speak Afrikaans and thirteen (or 1.9%) did not provide this information or they speak other languages, which were not specified. (See Figure 11)

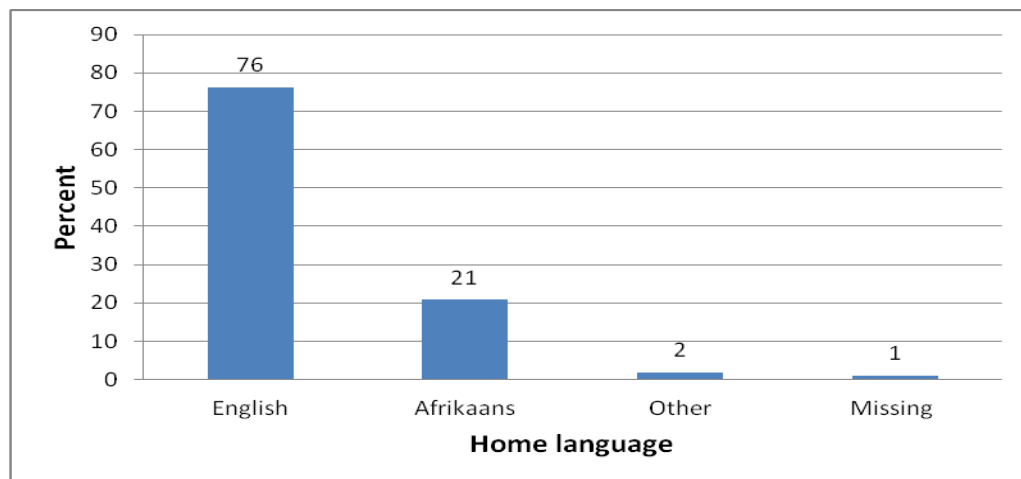


Figure 11: Language distribution - survey sample

This 'ethnic' bias could partly be attributable to the fact that it matches the demographic profile of both the researcher and as well as the key respondents who circulated the survey to their data base, as requested by the researcher. This

concentration could also be due to this group's heightened propensity for pet-keeping generally, combined with their high levels of emotional attachment to their pets, which is likely to motivate them to participate in this study.

Because of the specific geographical location where the interviews took place, viz., Khayelitsha township, all of the participants are black. (See Figure 12)

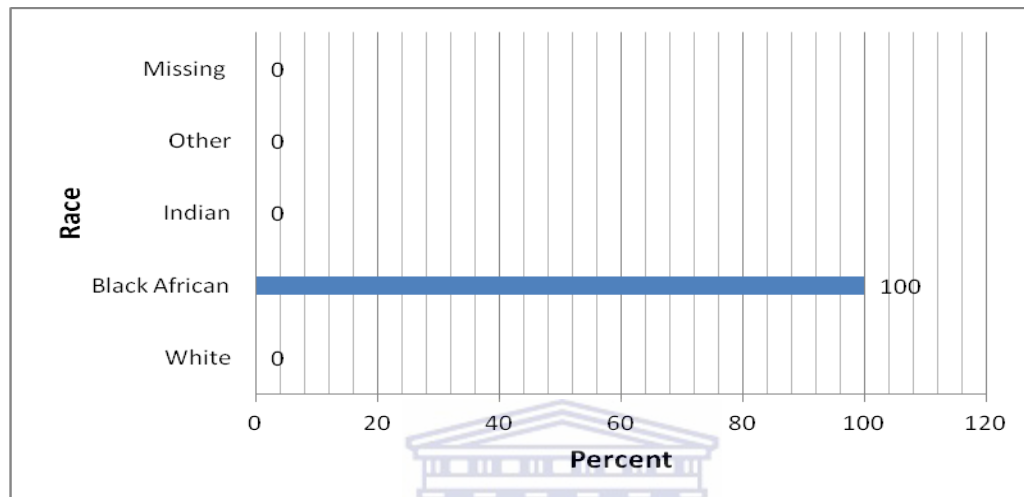


Figure 12: Race distribution - interview sample

Almost all of the interview participants, forty nine (or 98%) speak Xhosa as their home language. Only one person (or 2%) spoke Zulu. Almost all of the participants interviewed spoke languages (including English) in addition to their primary language, viz., Xhosa or Zulu. (See Figure 13)

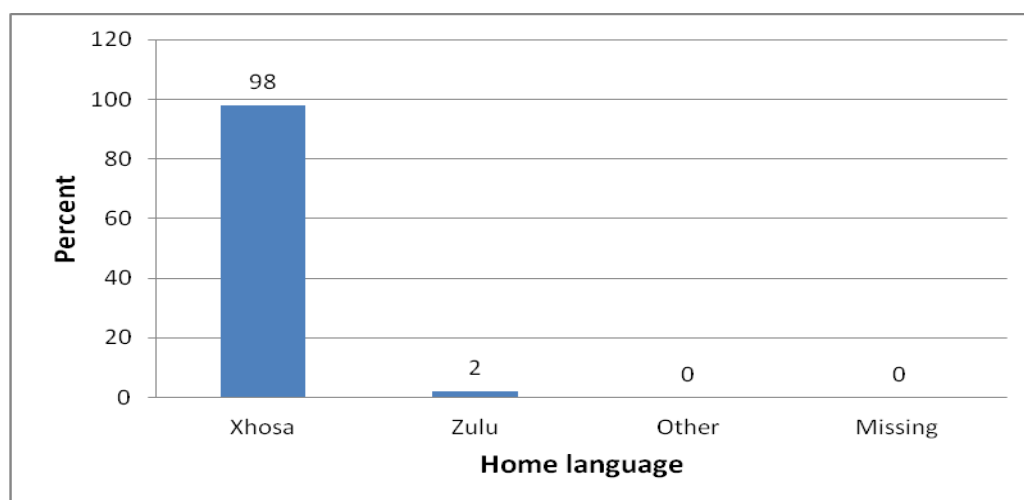


Figure 13: Language distribution - interview sample

Although no in-depth attempt is made to compare samples in terms of race and ethnic differences and how this shapes interactions with pets, Franklin's view that *"different groups in society have quite specific relationships with animals, the principal lines of differentiation being gender, class, occupation, ethnicity, nationality and region"* underlies this investigation (Franklin, 1999: 33).

Only a few studies that measure and assess racial and ethnic variations in attitudes to other animals, including pets have been conducted. The most well known were done by Kellert, 1996; Wolch *et al*, 2001; Brown, 2002; Lawrence, 1995; Siegel, 1995; Anderson, 1990; Taylor, 1989. These studies have all found that cultural histories played a part in determining views about pets as well as the depth of the bond people develop with them. These authors agree that blacks for the most part, even those living in urban areas, tend to have more pragmatic and instrumental attitudes towards pets, who are often required to perform a working function. This approach to animals is commonly found in many rural communities and developing societies all over the world, including Africa and South Africa.⁷⁶ Kellert (1996) conducted some research to measure racial differences in attitudes toward animals. He found that African Americans in general were less interested in supporting the protection of wildlife and nature than whites. Even educated and wealthy African Americans felt this way and for the most part held *"utilitarian, dominionistic and negativistic views of animals"*, whereas whites saw them in a more *"sentimental, humanistic way"* (Brown 2002: 250-251). According to Sue- Ellen Brown, Kellert's research shows that *"attitudes toward animals can vary greatly according to racial group, region of the country, gender, socioeconomic level, urban versus rural background, or educational level."* (ibid)

In his most recent book, *Nature and Social Theory* (2002), Franklin argues that: because of poverty and the different aesthetic sensibilities of their cultures, inner-city black Americans are low consumers of wildlife and nature. Kellert (1996) suggested that blacks and whites have different values regarding animals. Taken further, blacks generally score low on the pet attachment scale and appear to be less sentimental about pets than are whites (Brown, 2002). Brown concludes that, *"although keeping pets is a universal cultural phenomenon, how that*

⁷⁶ Although there are commonalities between African Americans and black South Africans regarding pet-keeping, there are key differences that warrant attention. Unlike African Americans, black South Africans tend to keep larger numbers of pets than their white counterparts. Even though proportionally more whites than blacks own pets, blacks demonstrate a greater propensity to owning numerous pets. This is confirmed by newspaper reports, anecdotal evidence from animal welfare workers and the researcher's own observations. This may partly be due to the purposes for which pets (mostly dogs) are kept, viz., hunting or guarding, as well as active by-law enforcement in 'white' suburbs, which prevents people from keeping large numbers of companion animals.

attachment is expressed may vary from culture-to-culture" (Brown, 2002: 249). Taylor (1989) outlines some of the possible reasons why African Americans appear to be less interested in animals than whites (quoted in Brown 2002; 261).

Even though this is based on African-Americans, these motivations accurately describe the situation and views of most black South Africans. For example, African Americans have more pressing priorities such as personal survival and racial discrimination. He argues that African Americans (like black South Africans) have been fighting for basic civil rights while White environmentalists (who already have these basic needs met) were seeking to satisfy aesthetic or luxury needs, hence the latter's heightened concern with nature and animals. Unlike whites, many more African Americans (and black South Africans) have limited economic means and therefore have to prioritise for basic social needs. In addition, human-animal relations among African Americans have been influenced by folktales passed through the generations that have stressed ferocious and threatening animals living in the forests of deep, dark Africa. In South Africa, blacks living in rural areas sometimes have to compete directly with wild animals for space (e.g., the establishment of game reserves on tribal land) and they deal directly with the chaos caused by wild animals like elephants that trample crops and/or lions that eat livestock. These encounters shape their attitudes towards animals, often in negative ways. Other reasons include the historical and pervasive discrimination against African Americans seeking recreation in parks and other natural facilities, which served to limit their contact with wildlife. Similarly, during the apartheid era, black South Africans were excluded and barred from entering national parks and reserves, making it unlikely that they develop an interest in and concern for their preservation. Blacks were also discouraged and prevented from partaking in pet-keeping in various ways, including legislative prohibitions.⁷⁷

Elijah Anderson (1990) claims that blacks see dogs as protectors rather than as pets and they struggle to understand white people's behaviour regarding dogs. He argues that, "*In the working-class black subculture, 'dogs' does not mean 'dog in the house', but usually connotes dogs tied up outside, guarding the backyard, biting trespassers bent on trouble. Middle-class and white working-class people*

⁷⁷ Blacks were also discouraged and even prevented from owning certain kinds of animals and their attempts at pet-keeping were thwarted by state policy. There is clearly demonstrated a ruling by the apartheid government in 1973, that prevented the SPCA in Cape Town from accepting the pets of 'non-whites' in their boarding kennels. (www.southafrica.to/history/Apartheid/apartheid.htm)

may keep dogs in their homes, allowing them the run of the house" (1990: 222). Although his research was based in America, there are parallels with South Africa in that there are local variations in the symbolic meanings of dogs and cats, which are in line with those found in the USA. So, in some respects, the findings of this study confirm previous research that suggests blacks are more likely than whites to have utilitarian or instrumental views about animals and pets. But, in addressing these widely held perceptions, this study found that even though the pattern of pet-keeping in South Africa is partly, racially structured, in many respects the boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred and there is clear evidence of blacks treating pets in ways traditionally associated with 'whiteness.'

⁷⁸ This is largely due to changes in the class structure of society combined with tendency to "humanise" pets that is taking place globally, albeit unevenly. Contrary to popular belief (widespread among both blacks and whites), whites do not have the monopoly on animal welfare and exceptional animal guardians and caretakers can be found in black households and communities. On the whole, very little is known about black people's views about and behaviour towards animals, including pets and much of what we know is based on assumptions. For instance, just because blacks are generally not directly involved in animal activism and animal welfare charities, doesn't mean they do not care about animals. Although prior studies indicate that whites are generally emotionally more involved with pets than blacks, it has been suggested that blacks are no less attached, but they express this attachment differently (Brown, 2002: 252). Brown makes a very valid point and suggests that research instruments used to measure pet attachment, *"have not been widely used with minority groups. The expressions of pet attachment measured by any instrument may be biased toward White, middle class populations"*. She continues: *"Minority populations may have feelings, beliefs or expressions of attachments toward pets not measured by any standard pet attachment scale"* (2002: 261). Some interviewees claim that white people's concern for animals is limited to pets, since farm animals are barely considered by many animal welfare supporters, who are drawn mostly from the ranks of the white middle classes. This dualistic separation and contradictory attitude towards different types of animals is typical of this demographic and a Khayelitsha respondent (a twenty four year old unemployed woman) explained this position: *"white people only know about pets, not other animals."* Another young male from Kuyasa, emphasized that, even though

⁷⁸ These changes can be seen when examining adverts and marketing campaigns aimed at black middle class consumers, which increasingly include dogs who are portrayed as 'members of the family.'

whites may take better care of pets, blacks have more experience in taking care of other animals like sheep and goats.

Many of the black interviewees agreed that white people are more concerned about animals and are more inclined to indulge their pets, with whom they form close bonds. One woman from Makhaza, explained: *"white people care a lot about animals because you often find them having a close relationship with their pets."* A forty four year old unemployed male agreed, *"white people care most as they even sleep with animals. They can afford to do more for their animals."* And a forty year old married female from Mandela Park said: *"whites let animals sleep with them, they buy shelters and good food, while blacks like me let the pet sleep outside and feed with leftovers often."* According to a twenty four year old male student, *"it is obvious that whites care a lot for animals. You'll find them having a close relationship with them and they even sleep with their pets."*

However, some interviewees disagreed and in their opinion, love for animals and caring for pets depended on the individual and had little to do with race. They also commented on the species specificity of this affection and a female student from Kuyasa, observed: *"white people do not care about the entire family of animals, they only care for pets."* A few interviewees conceded that income and being able to afford to buy things for pets played a part, but they were not convinced that race shaped pet-keeping practices and/or people's attitudes to animals. Others mentioned the lack of time as a factor that impacted negatively on pet-keeping and several mentioned gender. There was no agreement as to whether men or women cared more about animals generally and pets in particular and some participants believed that woman's 'mothering' and nurturing role made them ideal pet-carers. However most thought that men were best suited to care for animals, and for some, this is consistent with their traditional roles. A shebeen owner from Makhaza kept five dogs and he firmly believed that *"black traditional old-fashioned men"* (like him), were the best caregivers for dogs. The view that men were better at feeding animals, especially dogs, than women was articulated by numerous participants interviewed in Khayelitsha and they were generally less inclined to link differences of opinion as well as treatment of pets to race, than those surveyed.

Notwithstanding the broad socio-economic and attitudinal changes taking place that are helping to redefine pet-keeping, clear evidence of utilitarian and instrumental attitudes towards pets was readily found among the participants

interviewed. Almost everyone spoken to in Khayelitsha mentioned the usefulness of their pet, whether dog or cat. As can be expected in an area characterised by high levels of crime, the main roles performed by dogs are security and guarding of property and one participant called his dog the "house-police." A fifty six year old, married, male street cleaner from Site B, has a dog called *Fox*, which he regards as his "*left-hand soldier*." According to him, Fox is "*my security guard in the day when I am not around, and again at night when I am sleeping*." Dogs are also used for, ' hunting and in one case, herding. Cats were valued because of their rodent catching abilities. A forty four year old male with a cat called Penny, said that he kept her "for house mouse reduction" and a twenty year old male from Site B kept his cat *Pinky* for "*rat management*."

Only a very small minority of participants interviewed said that their animals functioned as companions and a minority regarded them as family members. In these instances, the animals were sometimes seen as both working animals and as part of the family. An employed male living in Enkanini, demonstrated this. He claimed that his dog, called Bin Laden, is "*my first baby*" and also said that the dog "is a hero" and a "twenty four hour security guard." A thirty six year old female single parent from Town Two said that she kept her dog, *Fluffy* because she "*loves animals*." She believes that dogs have to get a lot of love and can be "*compared to babies*." Similar sentiments were expressed by a twenty two year old female from Griffiths Mxenge section who has a cat called *Lulu* that she loves and sees as "her first born baby" and a female who has two dogs, named Stash and Robbie, who are seen as "*helpful*" because they "*act as security*" and are seen "*as part of the family*."

Contrasting patterns were found among those surveyed and almost everyone said that their pets (both dogs and cats) were primarily companions and were considered to be family members and/or 'children.' Participants in this sample frequently called their pets as "*my boys*", "*my girls*" or "*my babies*", as one would when speaking about human children. In this study, white participants were thus more likely than blacks to demonstrate high levels of attachment to pet animals, which functioned as companions and offered support. But, this difference is less about race and ethnic origin, than historical factors combined with cultural values and current socio-economic realities. The concept of race is inexorably linked to notions of animality and racism informs many commonly held beliefs about black people's attitudes and treatment of animals. In this country and elsewhere, there is a widely held perception that concern for animals in general and pets in

particular is more prevalent among whites than it is amongst other racial and ethnic groups. Although similar beliefs are held about the poor in general – like everything else in this country, our views about pets and ownership patterns are highly racialised. On the one hand, whites often regard blacks as lacking the capacity to care about or emotionally connect with other animals. For some, this is because they see blacks as being animals themselves and they believe that only civilised (white) people can appreciate and take an interest in domestic pets. Caring for pets properly, along with strong feelings for animals is regarded as the exclusive domain of the privileged groups and can be regarded as a way of reaffirming whiteness. Pet keeping shows breeding, culture and economic superiority (Tuan, 1984).

Wolch and Lassiter (2004) held focus group discussions to examine the attitudes of African-American women to animals. They found that class position, age (generational position) and their marginality and oppression and 'racialisation' played a part in shaping their views and actions relating to animals. The authors argue that, "*These socio-cultural contexts shaped personal identities, everyday practices, and values/attitudes, including their perspectives on animals and appropriate human-animal relations*" (2004: 260). According to the authors, America is a culturally diverse country with correspondingly diverse attitudes toward the treatment of other animals. But very little research has been done to understand variations amongst ethnic and racial groups, even though these cultural variations could have far reaching implications for animal welfare and human health. They note that, even though previous studies focusing on African-Americans indicated they were more utilitarian and anthropocentric in attitudes towards other animals than whites, these attitudes reflect "*socio-economic and cultural factors*" rather than a lack of concern for animals and also that these attitudes are changing over time (2004: 258-259).

Brown's study concludes that the whites surveyed held strong 'anthropomorphic' views regarding pets. This she attributes in part to economics, "*because keeping a pet as a companion requires money above and beyond resources for survival.*" She does acknowledge the possibility that "*these differences are cultural customs passed down from one generation to the next*" (2002: 260). Elizabeth Lawrence (1995) supports the idea that the worldview of a particular culture determines the treatment of various animal species. She suggests that whites may be less inclined to separate themselves from their pets whereas blacks may be more disposed to reinforcing the human-animal boundary. This is partly historical and

can be attributed to the widespread dissemination of the colonial idea that blacks are closer to or are even part of nature. Combined with the reality of their everyday lives which often brings them in direct contact with various animal species (pets, farm animals and wildlife), blacks in this country, and elsewhere, may well seek to establish a measure of distance between themselves and the animals they have long been compared with. Val Plumwood (2002) links anthropentrism to Eurocentrism and argues that the former underlies the latter, thereby enabling the justification for the colonial notion that indigenous cultures are primitive, irrational and closer to children, animals and nature. She argues that racism, sexism, colonialism all support each other and are key concerns of animal studies. She comments on the ways that 'other' cultures have been seen as part of nature and have been treated as 'animals' – either callously or indulged as 'pets.'

Elder *et al* agree, and for them, "*The idea of a human-animal divide as reflective of both differences in kind and evolutionary progress, has retained its power to produce and maintain racial and other forms of cultural difference. During the colonial period, representations of similarity were used to link subaltern groups to animals and thereby racialize and dehumanize them. In the postcolonial present, however, animal practices of subdominant groups are typically used for this purpose*" (1998: 183). Women, children, the elderly, blacks (slaves, servants), pets have all been subjected to the same treatment in different historical contexts (ibid). Blacks have long been regarded as animals and as sub-human, which influences their views and behaviour. Tuan comments that: "*The association of dark skin with animality or childishness is a familiar one in western culture*" (1984: 133). He notes that although dark skinned people have been seen as barely human, if they happen to be young, attractive and entertaining, they could be treated as an exotic 'pet.' For Tuan, "*comely and talented slaves were luxury goods but because they were also human, could be thoroughly pampered or sexually abused as pets*" (1984: 138). At different times in history, in various geographical locations, human beings of subordinate status have been treated and regarded as 'pets' by those individuals and groups that wield power over them. Tuan (1984: 132) argues that, the "*domination of one group over another is inescapable in any large and complex society*" and blacks and other dominated groups, including women have been kept as 'pets' and 'playthings' (1984: 144). In China, young women were the preferred 'pets' of wealthy women, whereas in western society from ancient Rome right up until the eighteenth century, black Africans were chosen as curios or playthings. (1984: 141). Tuan (1984: 10) also

notes that pets are a 'form of extravagance' and are common to all civilizations, but they are denounced and disapproved of in situations where there is widespread deprivation.

If these insights are extended to the South African context, we are able to understand why blacks may view pets and other animals in negative ways, since they believe that whites "*treat animals better than they treat us*" (Interview with a twenty two year old male student). In some ways, the historical tendency of blacks to downplay animal concerns is unsurprising since the intentions and effects of racial discrimination were to relegate blacks to the level of 'animals.' The idea of being seen as and treated like 'dogs' themselves permeated black consciousness and signified the racial abuse they suffered at the hands of whites. This idea has found expression in both newspaper articles and local literature. Wendy Woodward has written extensively about the roles and meanings of dogs in South African literature and she refers to Rob Gordon's work on Namibia (2003) in which he shows that "*the lives of cosseted pets or colonial hunting dogs were often accorded more value than those of indigenous people*" (Woodward, 2008: 106). Dogs have and continue to play a symbolic role in how black and white South Africans view each other. Woodward (2008: 112) observes that dogs can be "*emblems of hated racialised privilege*" and "*dogs function metonymically as markers of white uncaring insularity*" (2008: 110). She refers to Mphahlele's writings that are critical of whites' relationships with dogs (2008: 111) and in which the domestic worker regards the dogs as extensions of her employers. According to Tiffin (2009), history, particularly the colonial experience has shaped black views of animals. In contemporary South Africa, black perceptions of pet animals are resonant with meanings that are entrenched in colonialism. The imperialist male aggression directed at subalterns is signified and symbolised through animal images and metaphors (ibid). Tiffin, comments that 'other' cultures were treated as animals - either brutally or as 'pets,' hence any animosity toward animal or pets could stem from the past and may be a remnant of colonialism.

In his 2006 documentary, *Inja Yomlungu (White Man's Dog)*, director Siphosiso Singiswa observes how during the apartheid era, dogs were used by whites to instill fear amongst blacks. The documentary also focused on the difference in treatment administered by black and white owners to their dogs. Singiswa reflects on his own relationship with dogs, one in particular called *Duke* that he had before being imprisoned on Robben Island but doubts whether the devotion

and affection he felt for *Duke* was as deep as the bond some of his white friends share with their dogs. In his film, he explores the human-dog relationship and focuses on the attitudes different races seem to demonstrate. The common understanding or belief is that white people's dogs were treated better than black people's dogs. Some respondents also expressed that they felt that white people treated their dogs better than they did their workers. He concludes that although whites kept dogs for more 'sinister' reasons in the past – to guard against blacks – today their close relationship with canines reflects 'a crack in the sociology of whites.' In terms of this assessment, unlike whites, blacks are more connected to other people, community minded and family orientated than whites, thus there is no need for them to form relationships and bond with non-human animals or shower pets with affection. Black attitudes to pets are also shaped by their perceptions of themselves and their needs. They may see themselves as requiring nurturing, care and feeding and could resent it when this is given to other animals, especially pets instead.⁷⁹

Interviews in the media with prominent black South Africans and a review of autobiographical works by African writers generally demonstrate this tendency of a lack of affection for pets. According to Njabulo Ndebele (2006), dogs in particular often bear the brunt of these negative attitudes and during times of unrest or conflict, opposing groups or individuals are regularly referred to as 'dogs'. Dogs have long been used as a metaphor for the oppression of certain groups or individuals and the term is frequently used as an insult. Furthermore, in popular language and culture and in the political arena, the term dog is used to refer to the enemy. In an article published in the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper in September 2006, with the title, *Let's Declare 2007 The Year of the Dog*, Ndebele writes: "*the word dog is never far from the imagining of violence and abuse in our society. Njamgodoyi (starving dog) is an insult that lays the ground for a beating of someone.*" He continues: "*dog is a pervasive metaphor habitually used to justify righteous brutality.*" Ndebele questions how dogs came to be viewed in this negative way – considering the qualities like loyalty, empathy, dependability, courage and caring they possess. He ponders why so many Africans own dogs, when they seem to be so despised at the same time. Ndebele asks: *How did the dog become "a pervasive symbol of our own violence?" and "How did we turn it into a symbol of abuse?"* Ndebele goes on to call for a change in attitude to dogs

⁷⁹ I have experienced this personally when feeding cats at UWC. Female students (never males) have often commented and made disparaging remarks when we do this, especially if they think we are feeding food that humans could eat. A favourite question asked is, "*How can you feed animals when there are hungry humans?*"

who have been "*denigrated*" to become "*a national symbol of the humanity for South Africans*" (Mail & Guardian, September 1-7, 2006: 8-9).

Historians, Lance Van Sittert and Sandra Swart have argued that pet-keeping and devotion to pets, specifically dogs, has a long history and that the emotional investment people made in their dogs in pre-colonial and colonial times has not disappeared in "*hyperstratified and globalised modern South Africa*" (2003: 169). Dogs, today, are still "*integral to identity politics and the political workings of society*" (ibid). For them, two themes animate the dog history of southern Africa – extermination and domestication. They attempt to uncover the social role of various dog breeds and posit that "*Each epoch of human-canine interaction produced its own peculiar animal, literally a pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial dog, as well as its dark doppelganger, the wild 'Kaffir' or stray dog*". (2003: 139).

For much of our history, an uneasy relationship has existed between black South Africans and previous governments with respect to dogs. In particular, hunting with dogs was the main cause of tension. As part of a strategy to curtail these activities, various measures were introduced, ranging from preventing blacks from owning certain breeds, specifically greyhounds, to enacting laws prohibiting them and their dogs from forests, to introducing dog taxes and even deliberately killing their dogs on a mass scale.⁸⁰ Conservation and wildlife preservation authorities targeted the dogs belonging to blacks and poisoned and shot them at various times and locations. This formed part of a broader conservation plan, which aimed to manage the activities and movement of Africans. Subsequently, in the 1890s and 1900s, colonial officials in the former Transkei embarked on state-sponsored dog-killing (Tropp, 2002). African people were suspicious of the government's motives, accusing them of "*colonial malevolence and sorcery*" (Tropp, 2002: 467). These attacks on their animals were seen "*as concerning much more than dogs or hunting*" and they believed that the government

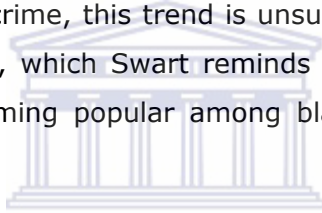
⁸⁰ Historically blacks in South Africa have been prevented from owning certain types of animals, especially those that have economic value and confer status like thoroughbred hunting dogs, specifically greyhounds and race horses. In 1975, during the apartheid era, the Jockey Club in this country ruled that 'non-whites' couldn't own registered race horses, even though they had previously been allowed to own them in both the Free State and Eastern Province. This practice is not limited to South Africa, and ruling groups in many different historical eras and geographical locations have attempted to control and limit the hunting activities of oppressed and marginal people. One of the ways that they have done this is by preventing them from owning hunting dogs like greyhounds. This took place in Nazi Germany, where Gypsies were prohibited from keeping any dogs to stop them from hunting. Jews (who were seen as animal torturers because of kosher requirements) had even more restrictions placed on them and in 1942 a decree was pronounced preventing them from keeping any animal species as pets (Sax, 2000; Arluke and Sanders, 1996).

intended to harm them, their livelihoods and their landscapes (Tropp, 2002: 452). The attacks on their dogs was seen as part of an overall plan to undermine them and the conflicts that ensued must be understood in terms of the *"policies of exclusion within broader popular experiences of political, economic and ecological subordination"* (Tropp, 2002: 471). Unfortunately these practices are not relegated to the past and similar attacks took place in the 1990s, mostly on white owned farms in KwaZulu-Natal (Gallant, 2002). As with all incidents involving animals, an understanding of these incidents and their meaning, can shed light on myriad contemporary conflicts and contestations.

Any attempt to understand black attitudes to dogs, their treatment of them and the meanings that various dogs have in contemporary South African society, must thus consider the past. The policies of first colonial administrations, followed by the apartheid regime impacted directly on the formation of beliefs and practices regarding dogs among many black South Africans. For instance, in black popular consciousness images of dogs are still strongly linked to apartheid. As Swart and van Sittert maintain, *"Given its prominent role in the defence of white power and property, the dog became an easy metaphor for apartheid"* (2003: 166). From the guard and security dogs in white suburbia to the attack dogs of the South African Police Services (SAPS), for many black South Africans, dogs, especially breeds like German Shepherds (GSD) and to a lesser extent Rottweilers, Dobermans and Boerboels are associated with the apartheid regime and white dominance. These animals thus continue to instil fear and evoke negative reactions among many black South Africans. Many black South Africans have historically associated dogs, particularly certain breeds like the German Shepherd Dog (GSD), which has been widely used in police and security work in a negative light. Throughout the apartheid era, attack dogs were used against black South Africans. As late as 2000, six white policemen were video-taped laughing after setting their patrol dogs on a group of black men suspected of illegally entering the country via Mozambique (Van Sittert and Swart, 2003). This attitude is not peculiar to South Africa and in several other African countries dogs are seen as instruments of colonial domination.⁸¹ Images of dogs used by whites

⁸¹ For example, in his autobiography, *Mukiwa*, Peter Godwin describes a huge bronze frieze commemorating the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe that was built in Harare. The *"centrepiece [is] a white policeman encouraging the German shepherd on the end of his leash to sink its teeth into the forearm of a cowering black woman with a baby on her back"* (1996: 343). Another incident that revealed African feelings about German shepherds was the famous fight known as *Rumble in the Jungle*, between George Forman versus Muhammad Ali which took place on the 30th of October 1974, in Congo. This legendary fight between two Americans became more than just a boxing match, with each fighter representing something to the Africans watching them. Foreman, the favourite and then champion came to represent America, the 'institution' and Ali, the underdog,

against blacks remain deeply etched into the collective memory and psyche of many blacks in Africa and elsewhere. This view is supported by Skabelund who outlines how the German Shepherd breed, "*became a pervasive symbol of imperial aggression and racist exploitation*" (2008: 354). Skabelund argues that, "*Due to its unprecedented worldwide diffusion, the Shepherd Dog became the epitome of the colonial dog in the early twentieth century*" (2008: 358). These dogs are both feared and revered and are often seen as symbols of racism and colonialism (ibid). Ironically, despite this, or maybe because of their notorious history in this country, German Shepherds are popular among township dwellers requiring dogs for security purposes. In this study, the majority of participants interviewed who had pedigreed dogs, kept this particular breed. One participant referred to his German Shepherd as the "*house police.*"⁸² German Shepherd and Rottweiler breeds are still popular in many white homes in this country and the Boerboel is becoming increasingly sought after among black township residents. Despite the historical associations and symbolic meanings of these types of dogs, in context of high levels of crime, this trend is unsurprising.⁸³ The Boerboel, the quintessential Afrikaner dog, which Swart reminds us was bred for "*homestead security,*" is now also becoming popular among blacks looking to protect their properties (2003: 200).



Dogs (and other animals) can be targeted by those who are hostile to their owners or handlers. In these situations, the dogs are seen as an extension of their owner or handler. There are several examples of this taking place in modern South African history and as mentioned in Chapter One, two critical moments, viz., the 1976 Soweto uprising and the funeral of Chris Hani in 1993 exemplify these sentiments. In the former incident, which has been documented in the book by E. Brink *et al* (2001), titled, *Recollected 25 Years Later: Soweto 16 June 1976, It all started with a dog*, the authors describe how the killing of a police dog, who represented the apartheid system, sparked off the riot. Van Sittert and Swart

represented Africa, 'the people'. Foreman confirmed his 'Americanness' by bringing his German Shepherd dog called *Dago* along, which offended and alienated the people of Zaire (now called the Democratic Republic of Congo) as the breed was used by the Belgians to keep order during colonialism. Foreman was unaware of the stigma of this particular dog breed and was booed by locals because of his choice of canine travel companion (Didinger and Macnow, 2009: 102). These dogs were also used to guard slaves in America and hostility and mistrust of the breed remains prevalent among African Americans.

⁸² In popular dialect, German Shepherds are often simply called police dogs.

⁸³ According to Van Sittert and Swart, these dogs, known for their fierceness, were "*kept as deterrent to the real and imagined threats of black revolt and redistribution*" (2003: 165)

(2003: 166) refer to this police dog as "*the proxy of state power in the township.*" After the assassination of ANC leader Chris Hani, mourners that were en route to his funeral at the then, First National Bank (FNB) stadium just outside Soweto, attacked properties of whites living in a suburb they passed through. Dogs were also attacked and along with homes, dogs were also set alight and burned alive by the mob. This attack on white people's dogs at a time of intense emotions served to 'avenge' the murder of Hani, who was killed by a white.

Animal practices are bound up with various social and cultural identities. There are numerous examples that can be drawn on to illustrate how non-western and other marginal groups use animals as 'weapons' in their struggle to affirm their cultural distinctiveness as well cause distress to those who criticise and undermine them. According to Anthony Podberscek (2009: 628), the Oglala Sioux, a well-known Native American tribe, keep dogs both as pets and as "*sacrificial food*". Although many other customs have been lost, they see this particular practice as something "*which differentiates them from Whites*" and as such it has become increasingly important to them and their attempts at reasserting their cultural identity (ibid). In South Korea, eating dogs is an important part of their culture and is intricately bound up with notions of identity and national pride. Studies suggest that the majority of South Koreans see nothing wrong with eating dogs (Podberscek, 2009: 627) and campaigns against this practice, spearheaded by westerners have had the opposite effect to what was intended. When Brigitte Bardot campaigned against dog-eating, it led to increased consumption of dogs in that country, and dog soup was renamed "Bardot soup" (Podberscek, 2009: 627).

In Zimbabwe, farm invasions were characterised by extreme levels of violence perpetrated against family pets and livestock and for many, this was indicative of the hatred felt for the animal's owners. By harming and mutilating the animals, the veterans impacted on the emotions and psychological well-being of farmers, many of whom were deeply affected by this. The Zimbabwe Pet Rescue Project reported that mutilating domestic animals left behind serves as a warning to farmers not to return. Hanging dogs alive from farm gates, chopping off the hooves of children's pet ponies and farm animals relays the same message (<http://www.cathybuckle.com/animalrescue.htm>). Many commentators in the media claimed that, even the decimation of wildlife that has taken place in Zimbabwe, "*has less to do with hunger than hatred*" and that there is "*a psychopathic and sociopathic cruelty to these attacks,*" on animals, that includes

cows eyes gorged out, legs severed while alive, pets skinned alive (Allen, 2004). In another article in *The Star* newspaper, titled, *Unspeakable cruelty on Zimbabwean farm*, journalist Peta Thornycroft describes how on a previously white owned farm that was invaded in Chinhoyi, 100km north of Harare, cows, pigs and crocodiles were left without food or water. According to the report, "hundreds of piglets were eaten by crazed sows denied food and water by a central bank chief" (Thornycroft, 2008). The ZNSPCA (Zimbabwe National SPCA) had failed to persuade him or the district police to allow them access to feed and water the animals (ibid).

In her analysis of J. M. Coetzee's novel, *Disgrace*, Woodward discusses the killing of kennelled German Shepherd dogs and makes the point, "In South Africa this killing of German Shepherd dogs is racialised by the history of white privilege being protected by guard dogs such as these" (2008: 131). In this instance, the Xhosa gunman takes revenge by shooting the trapped animals. Swart and van Sittert, sum it up and argue that dogs: "thus serve as a proxy – and a blow against them therefore serves as a blow against their owners" (2008: 34). This analogy is applicable to all animals in situations where they are harmed to make a political statement or punish or manipulate the humans that care about them.⁸⁴ Ballard maintains that politicised animal maiming occurs all over the world (2004: 54).

During discussions with predominantly white animal activists, welfare workers and pet owners, these types of race based views were sometimes expressed. Some attitudes were fairly mild, but others were somewhat more extreme and overtly racist. Admittedly these conversations often took place in the wake of some animal issue that had been reported in the media and had captured the public imagination. Quite often the incident, which usually provoked an outcry, was racialised in the media and by the public who responded vociferously. Similarly, some of the survey participants indicated that they thought whites cared more about animals generally and took better care of pets than their black counterparts in this country. Even though they were not specifically asked any questions pertaining to race and animals, a few specifically commented on the perceived lack of attention given to animal concerns and attributed this to the current (black) government, who are seen as unsympathetic to animals and

⁸⁴ Animal rescue volunteers in Cape Town report that people (mostly black and coloured males) stand at robots in the southern suburbs and try to sell (mostly underage) puppies to concerned motorists (mostly white women). At times they have resorted to threatening to harm the animals to elicit a response in the form of money.

unconcerned about their welfare. A fifty five year old divorced office administrator saw black people as being incapable of caring about animals since *"they live such hard lives – this makes you different."* Another wrote on her email response: *"Education is the key. We need to teach the youth about animals and instil values like kindness, which they tend to lack."* She continued: *"look at this government - at the drop of a hat they slaughter innocent animals and they feel nothing for it. Every time they do anything, they slaughter something and they are our leaders"*

Finally, no discussion pertaining to animals, cultural identity and racialisation in the South African context is complete without considering the controversy surrounding ritual slaughter. In these instances, blacks are accused of harming animals because of the cultural attributes associated with their race. Plumwood (2002) points out that those who are themselves viewed as animalistic, savage and bestial are the groups likely to engage in animal sacrifice and ritual killings, which powerful groups view as barbaric, primitive and cruel practices. By 'killing the beast' they assert their dominance over nature and other animals and in so doing reclaim their 'humanness.' This need may not be as pressing for those who have power and already feel a sense of entitlement hence they are unlikely to engage in such animal practices (ibid). Similarly, the resurfacing of a practice that had been ignored for decades, viz., the Five Fruits festival which is held in December every year and basically entails Zulu 'warriors' killing a bull with their bare hands, demonstrates this. Despite objections from (mostly white) animal lovers, interventions from the SPCA and attempts to get the courts to ban the practice have failed. The proponents of this custom and ritual slaughter in general, maintain that they have a constitutional right to practice their culture, which they believe is being unfairly criticised by 'whites and westerners'. As Podberscek (2009) has shown, harmful animal practices also serve as a means for certain groups to distinguish themselves from whites and western culture. Whites, it can be argued, do something similar when they take it upon themselves to 'protect' animals, thereby separating themselves from those who are barbaric and uncivilized and abuse them. In the process their moral superiority and ethical advancement is reaffirmed. As mentioned, caring for animals and being concerned about their welfare has long been seen as a hallmark of civilization and throughout history philosophers have emphasised this.

In the wake of disputes over animals, like when Tony Yengeni slaughtered a bull at home after his release from jail in January 2007, emotional levels run high and

the incident is usually followed by a spate of letter writing and petitions. Yengeni was condemned and criticised and the moral outrage this incident incited reveals much about the underlying and often hidden fears and prejudices that characterise our divided society. In SMS columns in many daily newspapers like *The Argus* and *The Star* and in the letters to the editor, blacks alleged that animal activism is basically "veiled racism" and is merely another, disguised attempt at ensuring white dominance. It is a way for whites to 'destroy' their culture and take them "back to apartheid."⁸⁵ By practicing ritual slaughter and other cultural traditions that involve animals, they manage to resist attempts at control and reaffirm their cultural identity, which they believe is being attacked and threatened by whites, under the guise of concern for animals.

In his MA thesis in the Humanities Kevin Gary Behrens writes: "*In South Africa, with its colonial past, it is understandable that those whose culture was once denigrated, treated as inferior and 'primitive', would believe that for their dignity to be restored, their sense of cultural identification now needs to be affirmed and recognised*" (2008: 31). On the other end of the spectrum are the (mostly white) animal activists, who believe they are merely protecting animals from cruel and unnecessary treatment. They believe that only brutish, barbaric and uncivilized people engage in these kinds of acts. Even though they are quick to deny any racist undertones, our tainted history and the historical association of blacks with animals and savagery, gives credence to this. The claim that blacks harming animals is done to 'spite' whites was repeatedly made in these communications. In this version of events, hatred (of whites) can serve as a rationalisation for the violence inflicted on animals. The responses of those whites who reacted so strongly must thus be seen in terms of their fears, specifically the fear that blacks will treat them in a similar brutal and barbaric fashion. Identification with the animal being killed and its suffering, informs their views. When the bull is killed (in what is thought to be a cruel manner), this act unleashes these hidden fears, hence the emotive responses to it. This belief was encapsulated by a thirty five year old female single participant surveyed, who said: "*when you see what they [blacks] do to defenceless animals, it gives an idea what they can do to you.*"

⁸⁵ According to [Mail & Guardian](#) columnist Fikile-Ntsikelelo Moya, the NSPCA response "came over as a knee-jerk reaction, inspired by a colonial desire to educate the brutish natives." He continues by adding that, "a bit of South African history would tell them that among black South Africans there has always been a perception that whites care more about animals than they do about black people" ([Mail & Guardian](#) Online, 26 January 2007).

Another sixty four year old married female alleged that "*malice toward the owner*" is the motivation behind these incidents. In her words, "*blacks deliberately harm animals to upset whites – just look at what they did to people's pets in Zimbabwe...they took out their anger on people's animals and helpless livestock.*"

In all the instances cited, non-western cultures respond to perceived attacks on their way of life by harming animals, who in these situations operate as substitutes or stand-ins. These animal practices serve to assert their cultural hegemony, despite the objections of minorities who label them "*cruel and barbaric.*" In this way, claiming cultural rights is a way of 'getting back at' those who try to suppress and subjugate. The resentment that blacks may feel toward whites, (who they believe care more about animals and who they think treat them like animals) can result in the perpetration of violence against their animals. An examination of incidents involving animals and the conflicts that ensue as a result thereof take on racial overtones in this country and an analysis thereof can help shed light on the broader inter-group dynamics underpinning our society. Although in some ways the findings of this study are in line with previous research, which suggests that, on the whole, blacks are less concerned with animals and protecting their welfare than whites, this is not the full picture.

Lawrence (1995) argues that social, cultural and environmental conditions all affect our worldview which determines our attitudes towards animals. So, although race may well be an indicator in terms of low levels of attachment to and empathy for animals, including pets, along with socio-economic factors and environmental conditions, culture and the internalisation of particular values is pivotal and overrides other considerations. For example, a young black South African who subscribes to a middle class lifestyle and who has been educated at a private school, thereby exposing him or her to a specific set of cultural norms and values, is likely to treat their pet in a similar way to their white counterpart. The only difference is that black South Africans, for a variety of mostly historical reasons, are unlikely to be exposed to these cultural ideas; thus their view of animals in general and pets in particular, differs from that of whites. Pets are the animals most readily encountered in everyday life and they feature prominently in our consciousness. An awareness of their needs and an unprecedented level of concern with their well-being is taking place in South Africa. This shift has been promoted by the various media and a clear pattern is discernible wherein members of the middle classes within all race groups are adopting pet-keeping

styles consistent with those traditionally associated with whites. Although not the norm, it is no longer that uncommon for black South Africans to care for their pets in similar ways to materially better off groups both in this country and in other western societies.

The human-animal narrative is changing and consequently animals are increasingly being included in our (human) moral community all over the world. These ideas are filtering down and slowly gaining popularity within communities that have not traditionally supported animal causes and/or interacted with them emotionally. Up until recently, whenever animal cruelty issues are reported in the local media, it has mostly been whites who have become 'outraged' and who speak out on behalf of animals. The language of moral outrage expressed when condemning animal abuse demonises the 'other,' who is constructed as a 'savage and violent barbarian.' Whites present themselves as the last bastions of civilization and as the protectors of animals and fighters of injustice. In the process, blacks and whites become increasingly polarised and accusations of racism abound. Tiffin (2009) argues that the idea that westerners or whites are proponents of animal rights and care about animals whilst blacks or 'others' violate their rights depicts the former as superior morally. But, things are changing and more and more blacks, many of them prominent and respected public figures have spoken out and have taken a stand against cultural practices which promote animal cruelty, despite the fact that this position brings them into conflict with traditionalists.⁸⁶ It is no longer only whites (and Westerners) who concern themselves with animals, and the Zulu bull-killing was criticised by Maneka Gandhi, an Indian animal rights activist. Gandhi appealed to President Zuma to stop the ritual, and wrote: "While I respect culture, this bull-killing ritual causes extreme suffering to an innocent creature and has no place in the modern world" (<http://mg.co.za/article/2009-11-05-zuma-asked-to-end-bullkilling-ritual>).

Powerful black individuals like Oprah Winfrey who are animal lovers and keep expensive, pedigreed dogs and are actively involved in animal welfare concerns. Black South Africans have also increasingly become associated with pet-keeping and it is no longer unheard of for public figures to keep dogs and other pets, but to also become identified with them through their writing and in photographs.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Fred Khumalo, Justice Mahala, Zakes Mda, Joanthan Jansen and Njabulo S. Ndebele have all made comments in the media that condemn the perpetration of violence against other animals.

⁸⁷ Marianne Thamm in her column (*Sunday Times* Lifestyle supplement 2009) refutes the stereotypical "perception among some paler South Africans that black people don't like dogs." According to Thamm, this is not true. To back up her claim she describes a photograph she saw in the recently-launched

Several black journalists, radio DJs, musicians, and actors have engaged with animal issues and are avid pet lovers.

4.5. Conclusion

From the discussion thus far, we have seen that overall pet-keeping has increased, but some cultures are less susceptible to the advances of Western culture and current fashions regarding pets. Regardless of these different patterns, a range of reasons exist as to why people choose to keep other animals as pets, which will be discussed later on in this thesis

Throughout this chapter, variables like age, gender, class, occupation, level of education, race and ethnicity were considered and an attempt was made to link these categories to attitudes and behaviour towards pets. Pet-keeping and the beliefs, attitudes and set of behaviours associated with it, in many respects reflects broader social divisions and cultural processes. However, some of the findings of this study contradict some commonly held ideas and dominant views about pet-keeping. In particular, assumptions about class, gender and race and their relationship to pet ownership and broader views about animals have been challenged and interrogated. The findings of this study suggest that although there are indeed correlations between demographic factors such as gender and the way pet animals are perceived and treated, categories such as race are less important in terms of shaping human interactions and forging emotional connections with their animal companions.

The next chapter continues discussing the demographic factors that influence pet-keeping and particular attention is paid to area of residence, marital status, household structure and religion.

collection by Alf Khumalo: *Through My Lens*. The photo is of a young Nelson Mandela and his dog, Khrushchev, taken on a veranda somewhere during a break from the Treason Trial in 1956. In her words, "*The photograph speaks volumes. Mandela, in his double-breasted blazer, is resting both of his boxer's hands tenderly on Khrushchev's "shoulders" while the dog lovingly nuzzles his master.*"



5

Urbanisation, Marriage, Religion and Pets

"The relationship with pets is the closest and most humanized of human-animal relations, and the changing nature of pet keeping can be related to important social and cultural transformations in modernity, particularly those affecting the individual and household" (Franklin, 1999: 84).

Chapter Four examined the salience of the major demographic indicators and sources of social inequality, viz., age, gender, class, and race in shaping individual orientations to pet animals. Attention is now turned to some of the other variables that shape pet-keeping. This chapter reflects on the role played by region or area of residence, religion and marital status. Other factors that affect emotional bonding with pets, (such as the presence of children in the

household) as well as the types of pets kept are discussed. Childhood socialisation and past experiences which mould future attitudes towards pets as well as the depth of attachment to them experienced in adulthood are also highlighted in this chapter.

Data gathered in this study revealed the differential nature and scope of pet care practices among two demographically diverse samples of South Africans. Although several of the findings of this study are consistent with studies conducted by researchers in other geographical locations, key differences are apparent. Any attempt to understand and explain these variations needs to consider the specific socio-economic and cultural context in which this study is based.

In general, the findings of the study indicate:

- All participants included in this study (both samples) are South Africans and presently reside in this country. All fifty participants interviewed (or 100% of this sample) live in an urban area, viz., Khayelitsha which is located in Cape Town in the Western Cape. Most of the participants that responded to the survey live in urban centres, but some are rural based. They are spread across various provinces.
- The majority of participants in both samples identified themselves as Christians. Other religions are also represented, albeit in very small numbers. These include Judaism or Muslim (survey sample) and Rastafarian and African traditional beliefs (interview sample).
- Differences in household structure and living arrangements are evident and all interviewees shared their homes with children. However, only a minority of the pet owners surveyed have children living in their homes. Most of the participants (in both samples) indicated that they had positive interactions with pets during childhood.
- The majority of participants in both samples are (or have been) married or presently co-habit with a partner. A significant number are currently divorced or widowed. A key difference between samples is that although many of the interviewees are single, none of them lives on their own.

5.1. Regional Distribution of Participants

All participants selected for this study are South African citizens and currently reside in this country. As mentioned during the methodology discussion in the previous chapter, those who lived outside of South Africa at the time of the study

or who were not born here were not included in the samples. A total of forty six (46) survey responses received via email were discarded and two (2) interviews were not used once it was established that the respondents were foreign nationals.

Although the majority of those surveyed live in urban areas, the exact number could not be established. Some participants did indicate which town or city they lived in on the research instrument, which was then manually recorded. Almost everyone specified which province they lived in and the breakdown follows.

Most of those surveyed, one hundred and sixty six (or 36.4%) are based in Gauteng, followed by one hundred and seventeen (25.7%) in the Western Cape. Forty eight (or 10.5%) participants that responded to the survey live in KwaZulu-Natal. The rest of the sample, one hundred and twenty four (or 27.4%) reside in the remaining provinces, viz., Free State, North West province, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. Only a small percentage of the survey participants currently live in each of these provinces and there is a definite concentration of participants living in Gauteng and the Western Cape. (See Figure 14)

Since the sample was fairly random and was constituted by means of an email based survey, it could be argued that this regional discrepancy is coincidental and that no inferences can thus be derived from it. However, it is worth bearing in mind that regardless of the research design, the findings reflect broader patterns. These provinces are generally the most densely populated in the country; hence it can be inferred that the majority of pet owners in the country live there, specifically in the major urban centres, viz., Johannesburg and Cape Town. The greatest number of pet services and pet-friendly venues can also be found in these areas.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ While Gauteng and the Western Cape are in the lead, the number of pet-friendly services and venues in the country as a whole is growing steadily. These include, dog parks, beaches, restaurants, wine farms and even hotels and other holiday accommodation where pets (mostly dogs) are allowed (www.petfriendly.co.za).

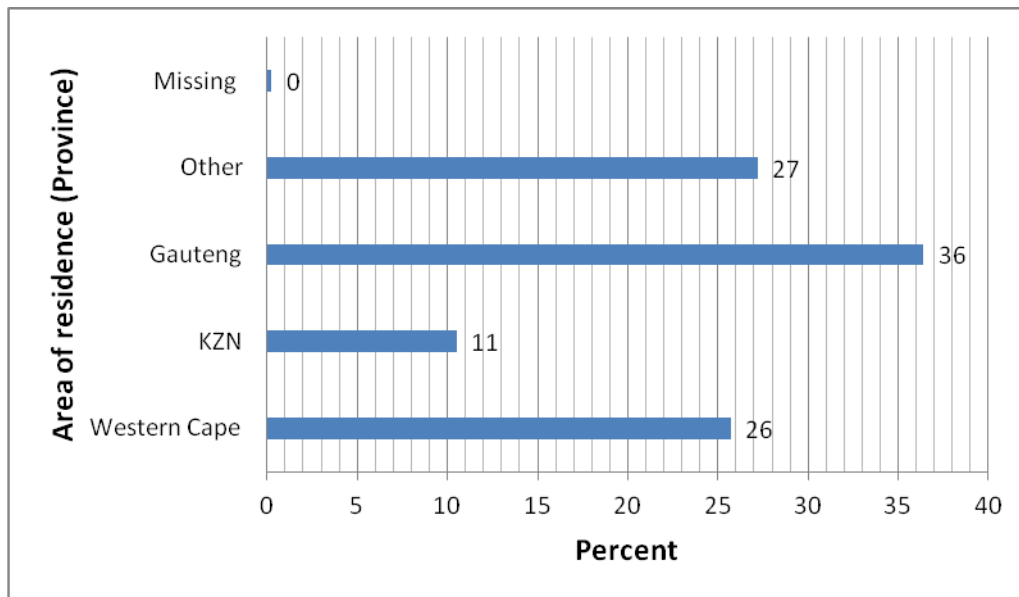


Figure 14: Regional distribution - survey sample

The interview sample is clear cut and homogenous with regard to region and area of residence. All fifty (or 100%) of the participants are urban based and live permanently in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. (See Figure 15)

This huge, sprawling township is divided up into several sectors and participants were drawn from both the formal (brick houses) and informal (shack) sections. The interview participants reside in various parts of Khayelitsha. The various sections are mentioned and discussed in Chapter Three.

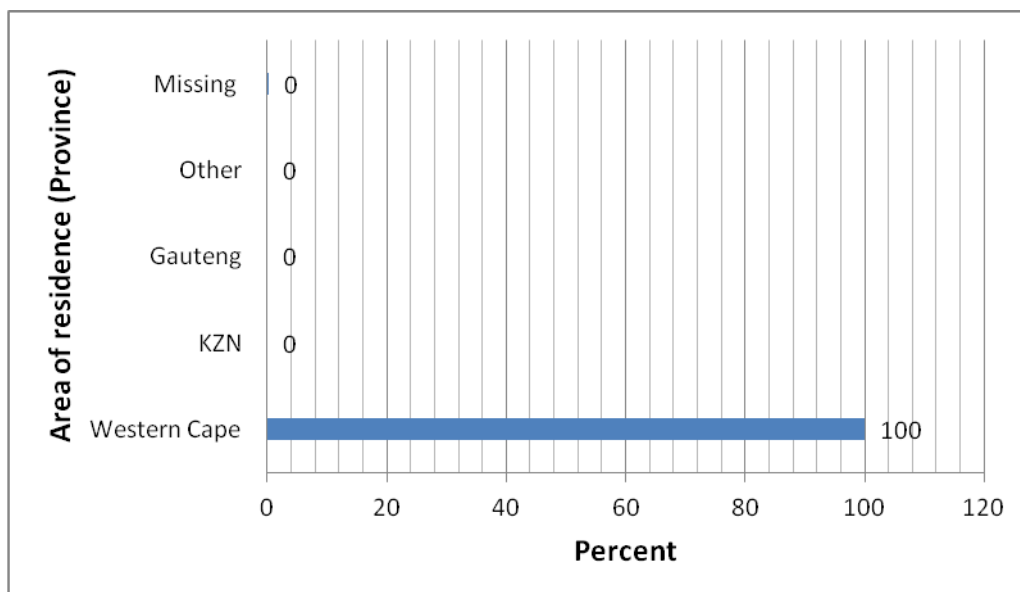


Figure 15: Regional distribution - interview sample

5.2. Urbanisation, Housing and Pet-keeping

As mentioned, the number of participants in the survey that live in urban and suburban as opposed to rural areas has not been numerically calculated, since many respondents did not include this information on their questionnaires. It was thus not possible to numerate and statistically analyse the rural/urban breakdown of participants. However, when reading through each questionnaire and extracting the information manually, it became apparent that even though the research instrument did not specifically ask for this information, a considerable number of participants mentioned the town or city in which they lived. This information was then coded and recorded. Based on this, it seemed that the majority of participants in the survey live in urban areas, mainly Johannesburg and Cape Town, followed by Durban.

The overall high level of attachment to pets demonstrated by participants in both samples, particularly the survey, could partly be attributed to this concentration of respondents in urban areas. Urbanites are generally thought to be more sentimental about animals, especially pets, than rural dwellers, who tend to be more pragmatic and instrumental in their attitudes. Research indicates that urbanisation leads to a growing sympathy for animals and this in turn influences pet ownership patterns and attachment levels. Thomas (1984) identified the origins of middle-class sentiments towards animals with urbanisation, which along with intellectual developments and consequent shifts in attitudes towards animals, were the key catalysts that promoted modern pet-keeping practices. Whereas in the pre-modern era, animals had to be productive and useful, this utilitarian role was no longer required of pets. He writes: *"The growth of towns had led to a new longing for the countryside. The progress of cultivation had fostered a taste for weeds, mountains and unsubdued nature. The newfound security from wild animals had generated an increasing concern to protect birds and preserve wild creatures in their natural state. Economic independence of animal power and urban isolation from animal farming had nourished emotional attitudes which were hard, if not impossible, to reconcile with the exploitation of animals by which most people lived. Henceforth an increasing sentimental view of animals as pets and objects of contemplation would jostle uneasily alongside the harsh facts of a world in which the elimination of 'pests' and the breeding of animals for slaughter grew every day more efficient"* (1984: 301).

Menache refers to Clark, (1977) and posits that "*There is a broad consensus that attachment to dogs – with all its emotional strength – seemingly results from the previous divorce of humankind from nature and the encroachment of modernization, especially the urbanization process*" (1998: 68). The separation between humans and nature was transformed and when people moved to cities, pet animals become "substitutes" for the world they left behind, which was essentially rural and thereby closer to nature (Menache, 1998). She traces the development of modern pet-keeping and links it to the development of capitalism and she concurs with Thomas (1984) that the "*commercial revolution*" which led to increased prosperity in Western Europe influenced people's ideas and beliefs about animals, especially pets. For many urban dwellers, cats and dogs represent their only connection to the natural world and the heightened interest in pets that accompanied urbanisation and industrialisation must thus be seen in this context.

This view is echoed by sociologist, David Blouin in his doctoral thesis, titled: *All in the Family? Understanding the Meaning of Dogs and Cats in the lives of American Pet Owners*. Blouin found that urbanites had more intense relationships with pets than their rural dwellers (2008). According to him, people living in rural areas tend to have utilitarian relationships with a range of different animals, including pets. Rural dwellers thus have more dominionist attitudes towards pets, whereas those in cities are slightly more likely to hold a humanist view and report closer attachment to their pets (2008: 172). Blouin also comments on 'switches' in attitude to pets and several respondents indicated that they had changed their attitudes to pets when they moved to urban areas. Similar findings were made by Wolch *et al* (2004) among their sample of African-American women, some of who claimed that their views about pets and animals generally had shifted when they moved to America. Evidence of this 'switch' was found among participants in this study. One person surveyed, a fifty two year old married woman working in the insurance industry explained: "*I grew up on a farm and lived on farms for most of my life. We always kept dogs and cats as pets, but I never gave them much thought and did not really bother with them much. They were just there. But, then we moved to Johannesburg and things changed somewhat. I started seeing the animals in different ways and became more emotionally attached to them than before. I am not sure what brought this on, but can definitely say that I feel differently about my pets now than I did in the past – they mean so much more to me now.*" An interview participant, a thirty five year old female single parent who ran her own small business, expressed a similar view and she claimed that, "*the dogs are our protectors and they look after us here. They came with us from*

the Eastern Cape, but we did not worry much with them there. Now we live in the location and we need them to look after our place, so we give them more of everything." Another interviewee, a twenty nine year old female from Site C, had two dogs. She said that she watched television programmes, in particular National Geographic to learn more about caring for animals and this, along with being able to afford to spend more on her pets, translated into the animals being indulged. She emphasised that she *"was not always like this"* and *"back home in the rural areas I never really worried much about animals."*

In most parts of the western world, urbanisation and increased industrialisation, which made it possible for people to afford pets, led to widespread pet-keeping, specifically among the middle classes in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Ritvo, 1987). Ritvo argues that pet-keeping is symbolic of people attempting to dominate the natural world and that this is the only way that they can feel affection for nature. This view is similar to that advanced by Tuan (1984), who suggests that our relationships with pets are as much about power and domination as they are about love and affection. Tuan argues: *"Cruelty to animals is deeply embedded in human nature. Our relation to pets, with all its surface play of love and devotion, is incorrectly perceived unless this harsh fact is recognized"* (1984: 89). In an urban context, the increased physical separation from animals, led to heightened emotional attachments and sentimental feelings towards pets, who shared our homes and living spaces. But, this 'closeness', also resulted in human beings having supremacy over and ultimately exerting control over other animals, including pets who are often the ones physically and emotionally closest to us. The negative effect of this 'closeness' within the home has resulted in pets being abused in similar ways to other members of the household (women and children and the elderly) and to them becoming caught up in the cycle of domestic violence that is endemic in many societies including our own.

In cities all over the world, as they became increasingly industrialised, working animals such as livestock and horses were forced out of urban areas and legislation was enacted to enforce these restrictions. In South African cities including Cape Town, where many participants in this study are based, similar changes took place and it ultimately served to widen divisions between pets and farm animals. This dualistic way of seeing other animals serves human society and enables us to pamper and care for one type of animals, viz., pets, while using the other, viz., farm animals, for food. This is made easier if there is a physical

separation between the different types of animals, which serve different purposes. No longer would people have to rear animals that would be slaughtered afterwards. In the process, many city dwellers became 'softer' and more sentimental towards animals and sensitive about meat production. Van Sittert and Swart note that "A new sensibility towards animals emerged among the urban middle class modeled on Victorian Britain" (2003: 144). Anti-cruelty laws were enacted during this time and the first Society for the Protection of Animals (SPCA) opened its doors in Cape Town in 1872. Animal welfare societies like the newly formed SPCA "sought to civilize the towns by eradicating the innate brutality of the underclass and the countryside from their public thoroughfares" (ibid). At the same time that attempts were made to improve the welfare of animals, specifically pets, the efforts of the authorities at the time were equally devoted to preventing and prohibiting blacks from having dogs. As mentioned, various measures ranging from the introduction of penalties such as dog taxes and licences, to the banning of blacks from owning certain breeds, notably greyhounds which are used for hunting and the deliberate killing of dogs or "canicide" all served this purpose (2003: 146-147).

The process of separating town and countryside, which resulted in more controls over and exclusions of animals from urban space, continues today. For more and more city dwellers, an issue that is increasingly being contested is that of the control of and appropriate spaces for animals, especially pets and farm animals to inhabit. In his doctoral dissertation, titled, *Cows in the Commons, Dogs on the Lawn: A History of Animals in Seattle*, Frederick L. Brown (2010) describes how the removal of certain kinds of animals (livestock) and the increased confinement and limiting of the movement of others (pets), shaped urban space and helped construct the city as 'modern'. Free roaming dogs represent "backward rural living" and, along with the keeping of livestock was a feature of a multitude of poor neighbourhoods in Seattle (2010: 177). Brown argues that, "benevolence toward and control over animals helped city people, especially the white middle class, draw lines between their neighborhoods and other neighborhoods, between themselves and other people" (2010: 155).

Urban space in this country has been shaped in similar ways. In working class neighbourhoods (which due to historical circumstances in South Africa, are also predominantly inhabited by blacks), the separation between farm animals and people and the confinement of dogs is not as important or as rigidly enforced as it is in mostly, white, middle-class suburbs. In terms of the latter, in the City of

Cape Town for example, the Democratic Alliance (DA) controlled municipality has recently introduced the controversial *Animal Control by-law* that, amongst other things, places limitations on the movement, activities and access to public spaces by dogs. This policy makes provisions for and sets limits on the number of pets allowed per property as well as the number of minutes per hour (six) that a dog may bark. Leash laws, the reintroduction of dog-licensing and most recently, the proposal to eliminate and/or sterilise thousands of free-roaming (stray or feral dogs) living in township areas, are all part of this policy. If we accept Brown's argument, then this initiative can be seen as being part and parcel of a process of redefining the city of Cape Town as a modern and respectable place.

Taken a step further, it could be argued that these types of policies can be seen as attempt to structure the city in ways consistent with notions of "Whiteness." This idea is explored by Wendy S. Shaw in her (2007) book, titled *Cities of Whiteness*. Shaw explores the link between urban transformation and racialisation, and although her focus is on Sydney, Australia, this process is clearly evident in South African urban planning (both past and present). Despite these attempts at constructing a 'City of Whiteness', enclaves of 'blackness' characterised by, amongst other things, less of a separation between farm animals and people, and contrasting pet-keeping practices, have endured. In his paper examining the antagonistic response of many white suburbanites to the spread of informal settlements and homeless people infiltrating their areas, Ballard (2004) argues that they believe these developments constitute threats to their lifestyles. In the suburbs, which are still mostly inhabited by whites, "separation" is preferred and encouraged, whereas in townships and informal settlements, more "mixing", between people and polluting matter (which in the minds of many suburbanites includes refuse, excrement and other waste materials), takes place (2004: 62 - 63). This can be extended to certain kinds of animals, notably livestock as well as those seen as vermin such as rats. For Ballard, anything that challenges "separation" and "segregation" threatens their values and "*suburban sense of place*" (2004: 49). The peace and quiet and privacy provided by these types of predominantly middle class residential areas is assured by the absence of certain types of sights, smells and noises (ibid). Just like noisy badly behaved vagrants and traditionalists who ritually slaughter cattle, "*bring Africa into the suburb*", keeping pets in particular ways and legislating to ensure compliance helps keep things respectable and orderly and modern (Ballard, 2004: 67). While pets are undeniably an acceptable part of suburbia, they must be kept under control to continue being welcomed into this space.

Having too many, noisy, free roaming, unvaccinated and unsterilised animals is far too 'African' and chaotic for those concerned and tasked with securing social order and creating a particular type of ordered and bounded city.

It must be pointed out that not all middle class and/or white residents agree with these by-laws and the creation a 'City of Whiteness', which encompasses certain animal practices and the exclusion of others, is not unanimously accepted. For many suburbanites these by-Laws are hypocritical since they are aimed primarily at pet owners living in (mostly white) residential areas. For them, the proposed regulations are unenforceable in townships and informal settlements where the separation between livestock and pets is not as clear cut and where dogs are often allowed to roam free, even when they are belong to a specific individual or household. Other restrictions placed on pet owners, such as the number of animals allowed on the property, are not implemented in all areas. Seemingly people living in poorer areas are also more tolerant of dogs barking. It was reported in the *Cape Argus* on 8 July, 2011, that the least number of complaints about barking dogs received during 2011 originated from the Cape Flats,⁸⁹ a vast area which includes Mitchell's Plain and Khayeltisha (Jooste, 2011). In these areas, many people still keep farm animals, such as goats, pigs, cows and chickens as well as working 'carthorses.' The separation between rural/urban, human/animal is less clear cut and elements of both 'worlds' are retained when urbanised communities continue to live in close proximity to other animals in ways that are reminiscent of their rural past.

Animals, particularly share our social and cultural space and they can be "in place" or "out of place" (Jones, 2000: 270). Their position in the spatial structure of society and whether they transgress boundaries or not influences how they are perceived and treated. An animal located within the appropriate space means something different to one whose position has disturbed the spatial ordering. With regard to dogs, the most favoured pets in this country, the type, condition and location of the animal can take on different meanings. A well-fed, expensive, sterilised pedigreed dog sitting on manicured lawn in a neat garden, safely enclosed behind a wall in a middle class suburb has the opposite effect and symbolises something quite different. It evokes an image of middle class respectability, progress, order and civilization, which are requirements for the development of a 'modern' city. It is a sign of care, concern, affection and

⁸⁹ The Cape Flats is an expansive, and as the name suggests, flat area that is home to many poor and previously disadvantaged communities in Cape Town.

responsible behaviour and also denotes status and reflects the elevated social position of the dog (or home) 'owner.' A well cared for dog being walked on a leash has a similar meaning. Brown sums it up: "*Depending on what dog was where, urban dogs could take on very different meanings. The pampered pure-breed on its owner's lawn bespoke middle-class respectability. The independent mutt wandering far from home marked a neighborhood as rural and poor*" (2010: 154).

The image of (unsterilised) crossbred dogs roaming free and scavenging in garbage and breeding prolifically is a negative one for many middle class South Africans. It represents poverty, backwardness and a lack of civilization. These dogs, whether owned or not are like strays who threaten the social order (Van Sittert and Swart, 2003: 146). It threatens the orderliness and social control required by many urban planners and municipal authorities. It is in this context that the numerous by-laws aimed at restricting access of animals in urban spaces in many different geographical locations today, including South Africa, must be seen. According to Van Sittert and Swart (2003: 144), in the second half of the nineteenth century in this country, "*The separation of town from countryside was achieved through the ever more extensive control and ultimately exclusion of animals from the new urban spaces.*" Only some animals, notably pets, can be incorporated into the 'civilised' world (Arluke and Sanders, 1996: 170). However, not all pets are equally welcome and to be acceptable, pets must 'behave' and conform, which entails not barking too much. In addition, their numbers must be limited so that they can be kept under control.

Yi—Fu Tuan's (1983) argument that dominance and affection define our relationships with pets must be seen in this context. Controlling pets (whether physically confining them behind walls or sterilising them) is seen as a sign of caring about the animal and those who make no attempt to curb their pet's behaviour, movements and sexuality are thought to lack concern for their animals.

Studies have shown that during their historical development, many cities have followed the route of limiting a pet's activities and access to public space or have excluded certain animals entirely. Contemporary urban developments in this country are continuing with the trajectory of shaping urban space so as to restrict or ban animals and in the process reinforce middle class values. Nowhere is this

more evident than in the built environment, particularly government residential developments such as *The N2 Gateway Project* in Cape Town.⁹⁰ In this new housing project, the dwellings are relatively small and some of them are flats, which demonstrate the failure of planning authorities to take cultural considerations and value systems into account. In terms of size, these houses cater for nuclear families, but present problems in terms of accommodating large, extended families. Apart from cultural issues pertaining to the dwellings themselves, the tendency of all populations, including the black urban working and middle classes to keep domestic animals, including pets, has not been factored in.

Not only does this exacerbate the stray problem in this city as people would have had to leave their pets behind when they moved into the new units, it fails to consider the propensity people from all communities have for keeping pets (and to a lesser extent chickens and other farm animals) and the significant role that these animals continue to play in many people's lives. An article that appeared in the *Cape Argus*, titled, 'Not without my pooches' focused on a group of shackdwellers living in Rietvlei Bos, just outside Melkbosstrand some of whom shunned the free homes offered to them in Melkbosch Village since they were not allowed to take their pets along with them. Residents gave many reasons why they were reluctant to move to a place that did not permit their dogs and cats to accompany them. One woman said they needed "*protection*" from the animals and another, Emily Smit, a local community leader who runs a primary school said: "*there are a lot of dogs and cats here and they are family to us...[t]hey are our children*" (Hillel Aron and Vuyo Mabandla, *Cape Argus*, 29 June, 2010).

Similar examples can be found countrywide. Every time a community is relocated, animals are left behind. A recent example that was given extensive coverage on television and other media was the moving of the entire community living in the Bapsfontein informal settlement in 2011. Due to logistical and other factors, people's pets were left behind to fend for themselves. Fortunately a Johannesburg based animal welfare group, viz., *Four Paws* moved in and rescued many of them. As mentioned in Chapter Four, this practice of people abandoning their pets when they move for various reasons, including political unrest has a long history in this

⁹⁰ N2 Gateway is a flagship housing project. The project aimed to replace informal settlements along the N2 highway with formal houses and flats, but its success was hindered by controversy.

country. In areas, such as KwaZulu-Natal, where this was rife, feral dogs and the problems associated with them, such as the spread of rabies and attacks on people proliferate. In her book, *Mad Dogs and Meerkats: A History of Resurgent Rabies in Southern Africa*, Karen Brown (2011), links the increase of rabies in parts of South Africa to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.⁹¹ Brown's study shows that in addition to various other factors such as the lack of education or financial means to inoculate and generally care for pets, has led to a rise in feral and stray dog populations in certain areas, which results in the spread of rabies. The high mortality rate of the human population due to AIDS, especially in rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal, where the disease is endemic, not only aggravates the rabies problem, it also adds to the stray problem as domestic animals are once again left to their own devices when their owners die (Le Roux, 2008). Strays were viewed as a manifestation of uncontrolled nature and deadly diseases and as part and parcel of the attempt to control Africans, colonial powers, targeted their dogs (Tropp, 2002). As mentioned earlier on in this chapter, stray dogs are still viewed as constituting a threat to the urban order and their existence compromises and challenges the ideal of the "*modern and respectable city*" referred to by Frederick L. Brown, in his doctoral thesis (2010).

The tendency of many workers to move between urban and rural areas also exacerbates the problems associated with leaving pets behind to fend for themselves. Along with forced removals and relocations, political unrest, healthcare inequalities, 'cyclical migration' has roots in the past.⁹² The impact that this has on pet animals is one of several negative outcomes that can be associated with the segregationist policies of the previous government. However, notwithstanding the limitations and challenges imposed by the apartheid system, not all pet owners simply abandon their animals when they leave town. A fifty nine year old male spaza shop owner living in Site C in Khayelitsha took his animals (1 dog and 2 cats) with him back to his rural homestead in the Eastern Cape at the end of every year when he went back there. He had been doing this for years – even when "*I did not have a car and had to pay the taxi extra.*" There is also evidence of people bringing their pets with them from rural areas when

⁹¹ According to Karen Brown (2011), the spread of rabies reflects class tensions and also has a racial dimension. She notes that the poor (who neglect their dogs and let them fight) have always been blamed for outbreaks of the disease. In South Africa, blacks and their dogs are often blamed as they "*couldn't look after their pets in a civilised manner*" (2011: 6).

⁹² Cyclical migration refers to the continuous movement of workers back and forth between urban and rural areas.

they move to cities and the spread of rabies in the Western Cape, which has long been relatively free of the disease, has been attributed to this.

The issue of housing that accommodates pets is not unique to Cape Town or to the poor. The middle classes countrywide, particularly those renting property are often faced with this dilemma. There is a nationwide shortage of pet-friendly rental accommodation, which can be gauged from the number of adverts in the classified section of various daily newspapers that specifically indicate that pets are not allowed. Anecdotal evidence provided by estate agents and animal welfare workers, as well as statistical records kept by animal organisations indicate that moving house is one of the main reasons why people give up or simply abandon their pets. Although the type of housing (whether a flat or house with a garden) may influence whether or not someone gets a pet or what type of pet they choose or how many pets they keep, this study has found that the type of residence occupied is not an overriding factor in determining the nature of the relationship between an individual and their pet. On the contrary, some of the most dedicated pet owners have no homes at all. The homeless in this country and elsewhere often keep dogs for protection, company and as 'begging aides.' Since, this study did not include any homeless people in the sample, not much can be inferred about this as a variable in shaping pet-keeping. However, extended observations, direct involvement and encounters with homeless people and their pets suggests that having a home does not necessarily make one a better pet owner. One homeless man living on Main Road in Diep River, a middle class suburb in Cape Town, affords his dog a level of care that is far superior to that provided by many pet owners who have homes. He is assisted by animal lovers and the local veterinary clinic, who ensure that his dog, *Snowy* (who is spayed) receives annual vaccinations, medical care when required and proper food. Unlike many pets, whose owners have houses to live in, *Snowy* even has her own wicker basket to sleep in and rain jackets to keep her dry during winter. They live outside the *Seven Eleven* shop and day or night, *Snowy* is given shelter and comfort. She can be seen sitting in her basket with a cushion, wearing one of her two raincoats and under a plastic sheet when it is wet weather, while her owner and other homeless people brace the elements.⁹³ According to her

⁹³ Unfortunately *Snowy's* owner has since died and it is hoped that, along with the veterinarian and animal lovers living in the area, she will still be given the same amount of care (personal correspondence).

homeless caretakers, *Snowy* is the main reason that they choose not to sleep at the shelter, since they do not permit pets.⁹⁴

So thus far we have seen that, in addition to race, ethnicity, culture, gender and class, which are all contributing factors, area of residence and the type of dwelling/property also play a part in influencing pet-keeping practices. Another way in which they converge to influence pet-keeping relates to the 'freedom' given to a dog. Collectively, all these factors ultimately determine whether a dog is allowed excessive freedom or if his or her movements are severely curtailed. In South Africa, the two extremes of behaviour, i.e., chaining or tethering a dog or allowing it to roam free are favoured by poorer and less educated classes.⁹⁵ Area of residence also plays a part and this practice is rife in households located in economically disadvantaged suburbs. Culture also plays a part and although dogs are chained in many poorer areas, it is not as widely practiced among black South Africans as it is among working class white and coloured communities. The former prefer to let their dogs live 'free-range' and in those instances where dogs in townships are chained, it is often primarily due to the lack of adequate fencing available.⁹⁶ If this is the primary reason for tethering the dog, then it could stem from concern for the dog. An elderly male interviewee, who ranked high in terms of attachment to his pet, a German Shepherd dog, was extremely proud of the fact that he had, amongst other things, bought his dog a "*necklace and belt*," so that the animal could be safe when he was not home.⁹⁷ In all communities, the breed of dog is another factor that determines whether a dog is chained up or not. Fighting breeds like Pitbulls, who are prolific in certain areas, specifically, but not exclusively in historically working class coloured areas like Mitchell's Plain, Lavender Hill and Ocean View in Cape Town, where they are favoured by young males and gangsters, are most often kept tethered.

It is not inconceivable, but highly unlikely that you see dogs chained in wealthy and middle class suburbs. This is partly because neighbours are likely to report this to the SPCA and other animal welfare authorities. Furthermore, people living

⁹⁴ Several homeless and other shelters in the USA allow pets to accompany their owners, but at the time of writing this thesis, none in this country permit pets. Local shelters for battered woman and victims of domestic violence adhere to the same 'No Pets' policy.

⁹⁵ In various social formations in the past, allowing dogs to run free was a sign of status and privilege and indicated that the dog's licence had been paid (Brown, 2010)

⁹⁶ It is important to mention that this is not always a deciding factor and many dogs are chained up even though the owner's property is adequately enclosed, making it impossible for them to stray.

⁹⁷ Several participants drawn from the Khayelitsha sample referred to collars as "*necklaces*."

in traditionally white middle class suburbs are more likely to encounter potential legal problems and incur penalties if they contravene by-laws, which tend to be enforced in these types of neighbourhoods. Moreover, practical matters such as whether a property is enclosed or not must be taken into account. Suburban properties are generally enclosed; thus the likelihood of having a fenced or walled property is far higher among the survey participants than it is for township residents, especially those living in informal settlements. The human-animal relationship is a contributing factor and the deeper the bond, the greater the chance of the 'owner' understanding and responding to the pet's needs. In other words, the more the person cares about the animal, the less likely they are to chain them up for extended periods of time or let them roam free unattended. In addition, the role played by the dog, whether they perform "working" functions like security, herding or hunting, rather than being kept as companions, will play a part in determining how they are treated. So, coming back to Yi-Fu Tuan (1984), domination and control along with affection and concern define our relationships with pets, but too much of the former, is cruel and inhumane.

According to Masiga and Munyua (2005), in many African countries, dogs and cats do not have the cultural value and status of other animals like livestock and there is no close relationship between them and their owners. A basic level of care and disregard for their welfare is often present. This view is supported by Maggs and Sealy (2008) who note that dogs have low status in most African countries and this is demonstrated by the fact that they are not used in cultural ceremonies and customs such as sacrifice and payment of bridewealth or *lobola*. They are also not named after people that their owners admire or respect (2008: 49). Although these observations are fairly accurate and were partly supported by the interview findings, I am not convinced that race or ethnicity is a significant factor in shaping attitudes to animals. Extremely caring sentiments were expressed and strong emotional bonds demonstrated by several of the pet owners interviewed in Khayelitsha. Some of these views were discussed in the previous chapter. However, this was not the dominant viewpoint gauged from the interview sample and these participants did not seem to be as attached to their pets as the survey sample participants. On the extreme end of this scale, an interview participant, a twenty six year old unmarried male from Kuyasa who sometimes worked as a casual labourer on building sites said that it did not upset him at all if he lost a dog as he could simply "*get another one*". To him the animal had no individual or monetary value and his dog was both dispensable and easily replaceable. Although only one participant surveyed, a thirty three year old male,

explicitly expressed a similar attitude, it was implied in a few of the responses to the survey. He explained how he had lost two Labrador dogs in one day to baboons while hunting bush pig. Even though the dogs had monetary value and were useful since they had been trained, he was rather nonchalant about the incident and was focussed on their replacements, which he had already ordered from the breeder.

Several others surveyed mentioned that when their pet died, the animal was often replaced with puppies of the same breed and in some instances the new animal was given the same name as his or her predecessor. One family favoured Border Collie dogs and always kept one called *Shadow*. Since they got married in 1962 the couple had reared several collies and were currently on their seventh sheepdog, named *Shadow*. This is not entirely unusual and during fieldwork, which included informal conversations and observations, many pet owners revealed that they preferred certain breeds and tended to stick to them when selecting a pet. In some ways this creates continuity and also mediates the loss of the original animal, making it easier for the person to cope. But, it also reflects the disposable nature of pets as well as our consumerist tendencies. Like cars and other forms of property and status symbols, pets can simply be replaced by a newer model, and in the process their individuality and subjectivity is completely denied. This tendency is often reinforced by the belief systems adhered to by participants. In the next section, the role played by religious beliefs in shaping ideas about animals in general and pet-keeping practices in particular are highlighted.

5.3. Religion, Secularisation and Changing Attitudes Towards Pets

Although this study did not explore the correlation between religion and the treatment of animals in any meaningful way, prior research suggests that religion does play a part in shaping attitudes to animals as well as informing and influencing pet-keeping practices (Driscoll, 1992; Menache, 1997, 1998; Al-Fayez *et al*, 2003). Menache (1997) describes the complex and sometimes conflicting attitudes toward dogs in monotheistic religions and argues that negative and hostile attitudes toward dogs can be found in pagan, Christian, Muslim and Jewish traditions. She suggests that "*warm ties between humans and canines have been seen as a threat to the authority of the clergy and indeed, of God*" (1997: 23). Christianity, along with the other monotheistic religions, assumes the supremacy of human beings over other animals, which is fundamental to these belief systems. All animals, including pet dogs and cats are part of the animal world and

as such are submissive to humans (Menache, 1997). Christianity does not have a long history of extending compassion to animals and many Christians continue to believe that God gave humans "*dominion over animals*," which meant that humans have the right to treat animals as we wish. Animals, in this view do not have souls and are not worthy of the same consideration as humans.

Menache (1997) argues that hostile attitudes towards certain animals, including dogs were prevalent among Muslims in the past. She speculates that the widespread religious antagonism toward them may be linked to the presence of large packs of pariah or stray dogs combined with the spread of rabies in the Middle East (1997: 35). In their paper on pet-keeping in Kuwait, Al-Fayez *et al* observe that, companion animals are "*less common in Muslim countries than in the United States and other Western countries*" (2003: 18). They also suggest that regarding companion animals as family members may be primarily a European phenomenon and more commonly found among persons of European descent. In Islam dogs are permitted for hunting and the guarding of fields and herds. Although companion animals are not forbidden in Islam, for Moslems non-human animals have an economic rather than emotional value (ibid).⁹⁸ Muslims are not permitted to keep dogs in their home; thus it can be expected that most devout and practicing Muslims (if they have dogs at all) prefer to house them outdoors. So, although dogs are often considered to be part of and included in family life in many western countries, they are generally regarded as "dirty" in Islamic culture. Unlike dogs, cats are commonly kept in Muslim countries like Kuwait (Al-Fayez *et al*, 2003). In many Muslim countries and communities worldwide, cats are favoured, considered 'clean' and often fed, even when they are strays. The teachings of the Koran support this and Mohammed is said to have loved and considered the needs and feelings of his own cat.⁹⁹

Judaism also regarded some animals, including dogs, as "unclean" (Menache, 1997, 1998; Sax, 2000). Even though dogs were useful for security functions, these monotheistic religions did not favor them and their status was generally low. Menache contends that in these religions, dogs are seen as "*the embodiments of the impure and the profane*" (1997: 37). However, socio-economic changes are often accompanied by shifts in belief and worldviews and

⁹⁸ Mohammed initially said all dogs should be exterminated, but later changed it to only black dogs. (Al-Fayez *et al*, 2003)

⁹⁹ Mohamed loved cats and cut off the sleeve of his robe so as not to disturb his cat *Muezza* who was sleeping on it.

"secularisation" helped change dominant views about animals, including dogs (Menache, 1998). As religion declined in influence, attitudes towards pets were transformed, so that they came to be viewed with less hostility than previously. In her words, *"When western society freed itself of the protective bounds of ecclesiastical repression, the canine species was liberated from its religious image and the negative connotations inferred thereby"* (1997: 39). It must however also be recognised that within all major monotheistic religious traditions, including Christianity, animals are increasingly being considered and viewed in a positive light (Menache, 1997, 1998). In this study, no negative views about pets that emanate from religious doctrine were evident among participants, who are predominantly Christian. On the contrary, several participants attributed their love of animals to Christianity and a 46 year old married female, 'housewife' summed it up: *"God made the animals and as Christians it is our moral duty to love and care for his creatures."*

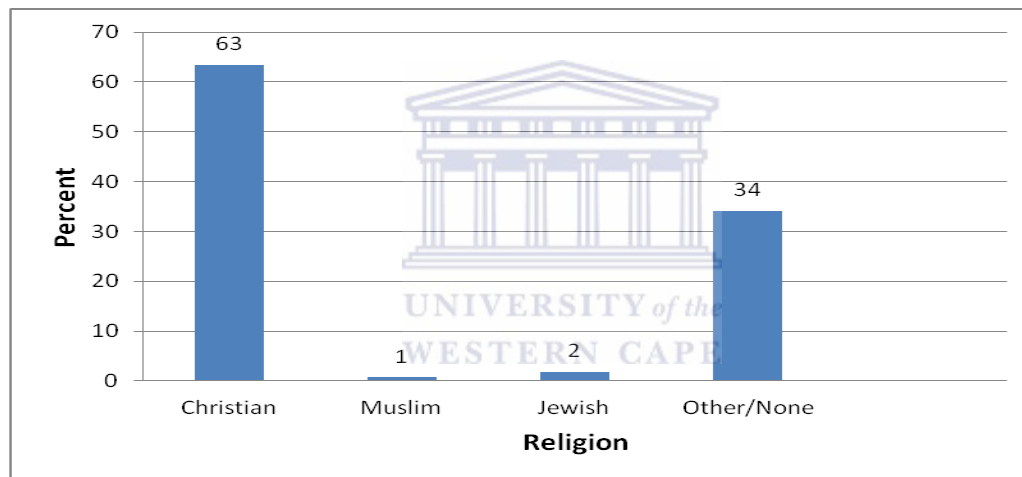


Figure 16: Religion- survey sample

The overall majority of participants identified themselves as Christians. Two hundred and eight nine (or 63.3%) of the survey sample and forty (or 80%) of the interview sample are Christians. Eight (or 1.8%) of those surveyed are Jewish and three, constituting a mere 0.7% of the sample, Muslim. In the survey sample, ninety four participants (or 20.6%) selected 'None' for religion and sixty two (or 13.6%) selected 'Other' when asked which religion they subscribed to. (See Figure 16)

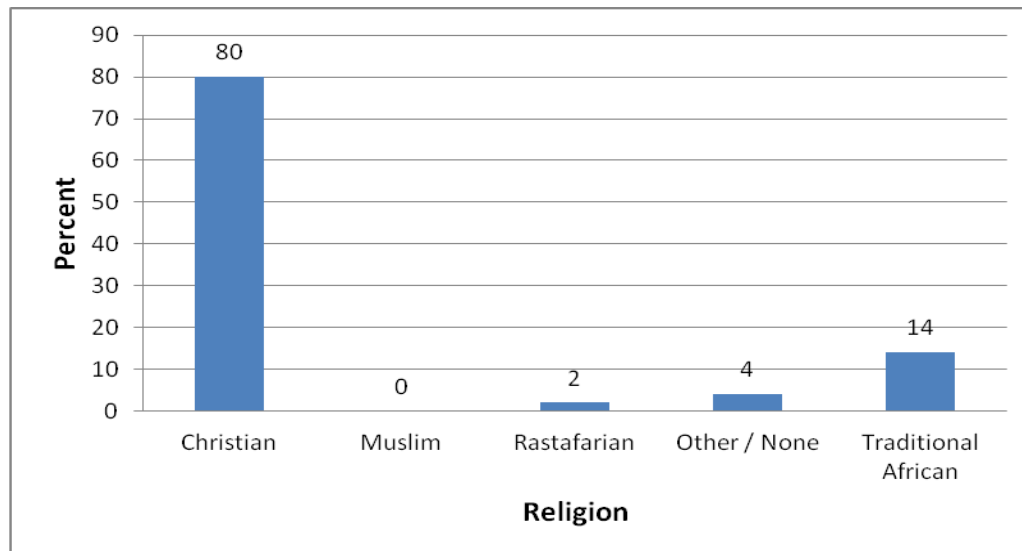


Figure 17: Religion - interview sample

Among interviewees, as mentioned, the vast majority indicated that they were Christian and only one individual (or 2%) identified himself as a Rastafarian. Two (or 4%) selected 'None' as their religion and seven (or 14%) said that they adhered to African belief systems and traditional customs. (See Figure 17)

One participant repeatedly emphasised that he was not religious at all. The Rastafarian held extremely positive beliefs about animals and the views he expressed were dissimilar to those held by the majority of participants interviewed. As expected, the Rastafarian participant showed great respect for animals and followed a vegetarian diet. He also demonstrated a high level of emotional attachment to his pets and willingly spent considerable time and money on them. Several of the participants who claimed to have traditional African beliefs said that the values and customs of their 'culture' prescribed behaviour and that this prohibited them from sterilising their pets. This is not unique to African traditional belief systems and not all religions condone sterilisation of pets. During fieldwork, which included visits to places frequented by pet owners like animal welfare societies, private veterinary clinics and dog shows, several Muslim pet owners stated that their religion prohibited them from sterilising their dogs and cats.

Thus far, the findings confirm Menache's (1998) view that urbanisation and secularisation both contributed to the development of increasingly positive feelings about animals and the emergence of modern pet-keeping. Next, it will be contended that concomitant changes within social institutions such as the family further fostered these ways of thinking about pets, especially dogs, who Menache

(1998) argues were often despised in ancient and medieval societies due to the religious beliefs that were prevalent then.

5.4. Household Structure, Family Composition and Marital Status

An array of broad socio-economic processes including urbanisation, industrialisation and secularisation all led to transformations within the family and household, which in turn impacted on pet-keeping. Phineas argues that, "*The disappearance of the extended household unit created the need for additional family members, but these must be docile, not demanding, if the nuclear family was to fulfil its function as a haven from the stresses of the industrial city. Pets were the answer....The final step was the limitation of births in the middle-class household. Pets served as surrogate, and less expensive, children....For the worker, the pet was long a symbol of a different sort, the free spirit strong enough to live on his own. The pet was also valued as a marauder and a defender of property and long after overt violence declined, the working-class pet served as a veiled tool of class warfare*" (1974: 340).

This tendency to treat pets as members of the family or as '*surrogate children*', can be found in many different societies and communities and there is compelling evidence that this trend is growing. Franklin, Tranter and White, have pointed out, that, "*As neighbourhood, community, family, and friendship relations lose their normative and enduring qualities, companion animals increasingly are drawn in to those formerly exclusive human emotional spaces*" (2001: 127). However, certain groups are more inclined than others to treat their pets in this way. Those who have the requisite time and money needed to spend on pets are often childless young couples or single adults, for whom "*the dog becomes a trial for parenthood*" (Greenebaum, 2004: 121). Albert and Bulcroft (1988) hold a similar view and they note that, 'empty nesters' and young couples without children have a propensity to treat pets as child substitutes. However, it will be shown later on that the latter groups may well dote on their pets while they have no children of their own, but many simply give them up or banish them outdoors, no longer giving them as much attention as before, once their first baby is born. Although, as Arluke and Sanders observe, as a result of their physical dependency, "*there are times when the treatment of children and pets is indistinguishable,*" the latter have far fewer rights and are not given the same measure of consideration (1996: 172). Unlike human children, pets can be legally disposed of if unwanted.

This study established that current pet-keeping practices and perceptions thereof are often linked to children and childhood. Melson (2003) argues that companion animals (including dogs and cats) are more common in households with minor children than in any other household type. Although there is some evidence of this locally, the situation is always not clear cut. Previous research conducted in other societies suggest that pet-keeping tends to be more prolific in homes in which there are children, yet the majority of participants surveyed for this study did not have children living at home. Unlike the Khayelitsha sample, where all fifty households occupied by interview participants (100% of the sample) had 1-10 children living in them, only a minority, ninety eight (or 21.5%) of the survey participants had 1-4 children living at home. Just under half of this sample two hundred and seventeen (or 47.6%) is childless and the rest, one hundred and forty one (or 30.9%) either had grown up children or their children were not living in their homes.¹⁰⁰

With regard to the inclination of parents to acquire pets for their children, as has been argued in several studies, some of the survey participants volunteered additional information on this issue even though it was not specifically raised on the questionnaire. For example, several survey participants actually wrote on their questionnaires that having young children at home prompted them to acquire pets. One woman (forty year old divorced lawyer) explained: "*I have always thought pets are good for kids, so as soon as they were old enough we got them a dog and cat.*" Another (thirty five year old, married stay-at-home mom) said: "*if it wasn't for the children, we wouldn't have them [the dogs].*" Even though having young children living at home increases the likelihood of keeping pets, the level of attachment and the depth of the bond between humans and pets is often less intense than it is when there are no children in the household. In other words, while young children motivate people to keep pets, stronger emotional connections with pets are formed when there are no young children living at home.

The belief that pets are beneficial to children and their development is fairly widespread and in her paper, *Childhood Socialization and Companion Animals: United States, 1820-1870*, Grier observes that in the mid nineteenth century, "*socializing children to be kind to animals thus became an important task of*

¹⁰⁰ In both the survey and the interview samples, the number of children living at home doesn't always correlate with the number of children in the family.

middle-class parenting. Pet keeping, an activity long interpreted and tolerated as a personal indulgence, was transformed into a morally purposive act" (1999: 96). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, these ideas gained acceptance in South Africa at the time and culminated in animal protection legislation and the founding of the first the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), which promoted essentially middle class values pertaining to compassion and kindness.¹⁰¹

No one interviewed in Khayelitsha expressed similar views, but a number of interviewees said that they had kept animals in the past because of their children, who had brought animals, which were subsequently kept as pets, home. One woman, a thirty six year old unemployed single mother from Site B, explained how her "*animal loving*" son had brought home an array of creatures, including a sick puppy that followed him home from the nearby taxi rank. It can be assumed that this pattern is replicated by children everywhere and demographic factors alone do not determine how children respond to animals, particularly strays. In a study conducted in Cato Crest, a poor mostly African informal settlement near Durban, researchers found that among all sectors of the community, "*tolerance is shown toward children's interest in cats, and children's efforts to invite them into yards or into homes*" (Leclerc-Madlala and Janowski, 2004: 20).

Another factor related to children and childhood that influences pet-keeping is the parent's socialisation regarding pets. The majority of participants in both samples indicated that they had positive interactions with pets during their childhoods. The decision to adopt or purchase an animal for their own children, as well as the type of pet acquired is often affected by past encounters. According to James Serpell, (1981), childhood experience regarding pets is a significant factor in shaping attitudes. Several participants in this study made reference to the positive role that pets played in their lives while they were growing up. This, they claimed, enabled them to form meaningful relationships with pets as adults. The type of pets kept during childhood (particularly if the experience thereof was positive) greatly influences the type of pet selected in adulthood. The preference for certain species or breeds is often related to childhood and participants from both samples indicated that the selection of their current pet was influenced by

¹⁰¹ This belief is still prevalent and many animal welfare societies continue to focus on the educational component, which is largely directed at children. The Cape of Good Hope SPCA has an Ani-Pals programme and they visit schools to teach children how to care for their animals (<http://www.spcact.co.za/education.asp#anipal>). Then there is a Somerset West based NPO, The *Humane Education Trust* which dedicates itself to the task of instilling values such as compassion, kindness and empathy for animals among mostly previously disadvantaged youth, particularly young children via the school curriculum (<http://humane-education.org.za>).

their memories and experience of their childhood pets. This mostly influenced breed choice, but in one instance, (a dog belonging to a fifty eight year old married pet owner from Makhaza in Khayelitsha) it was the shared characteristics (appearance and personality) of her current dog, that reminded her of the dog she had when growing up. Past experience and the quality and intensity of one's previous relationships with pet animals impacts on current pet-keeping practices. A retired female survey participant said: *"I have boxers my whole life. Had them as a child – my parents loved the breed – and throughout my marriage. I just love them. My kids have them too."*

In line with past research in a number of western countries which has associated the presence of a child in the home with pet ownership, these findings suggest that although pets are sometimes bought specifically for the children, the situation may not be that straightforward. As mentioned earlier on, children are often the reason why people decide to give up their pets. Blouin (2008) has pointed out, that having children can negatively alter the nature of a person's relationship with pet animals, and can result in them relinquishing the animal. Just as rural dwellers can 'switch' when they become urbanised and people can 'switch' when they relocate to westernised animal loving countries, 'animal lovers' can 'switch' and readily give up their once beloved pets when they become parents. Even those pet owners who displayed the highest levels of attachment to pets, changed when they had children of their own. Once their children were born, they were less likely to view the pets as family members or as their 'children' and negative views about their pets emerged. A thirty year old married woman with two young children explained: *"The dogs were everything to us – we treated them like they were our kids. But, once we actually had children of our own, things changed and the dogs became a nuisance. We constantly worried about them biting the children as they had been spoilt by us and were quite snappy. We decided to give them [the dogs] away."* Another, a thirty four year old stay-at-home mom said, *"I feel a bit guilty about my cat who now has to live outside"*. She explained that the cat had been pampered and lived inside until she had her baby. Once the baby was born the cat was banished outdoors, *"in case it tries to suffocate the baby as people warned me it would."* Fear that an animal may harm a child was also cited as a reason why a dog was given away and a forty year old married female sale representative for a pharmaceutical company blamed her husband for "bringing home an aggressive dog." She claimed that the dog, a Staffordshire Bull-terrier cross, gave her young son *"funny looks."* This scared her, so she decided to hand him in at an animal welfare society so they

could find him another home without children. Another participant surveyed, (a forty eight year old male lawyer) said that, "*once the kids came along, we no longer spent as much time with the dog.*"

While several survey participants indicated that having children sometimes impacted negatively on pet-keeping, those interviewed did not mention having similar experiences and sentiments. No one interviewed claimed that having children changed their views about their pets, which could be due to two factors. Firstly, people in this sample were less likely to dote on pets and form close emotional bonds to them initially and secondly, they tended to have children living in their home at all times, so having children of their own was unlikely to influence their relationship with their pets, which was emotionally distant and instrumental from the outset. Thirdly, this group is less likely to allow pets to live inside their homes and limiting access from the outset means that many of the concerns people have about pets and babies and small children are not as important or relevant. Some of these concerns are related to hygiene and safety and even though they are more often than not based on popular myths and superstitions, these ideas and beliefs endure and ultimately play a part in influencing people's decisions to relinquish their pets when they have young children living in their household.

Along with the number and age of occupants living in a particular household, marital status also has implications for pet ownership. Wells and Hepper (1997) contend that, married individuals were slightly more likely to own a pet than persons of other marital status. This they attribute to the propensity for this group to lead a settled and secure lifestyle which is conducive to pet-keeping. As mentioned earlier on, similar patterns are reported by Albert and Bulcroft, (1988) who studied pets in American society. They concluded that the key variables that influence the way we feel about pets are marital status, stage in the life cycle, presence of children in the household and the type of pet. Albert and Bulcroft argue that recently married couples are more attached to pets than people in the 'middle stages' of the life cycle. Pet attachment was found to be high among people without any children or without children living at home. They speculate that pets will become increasingly important in urban households in the USA (where their study is based) since the demographic shifts that are taking place are resulting in the growth of single, divorced people and childless people, who all demonstrate high levels of pet attachment.

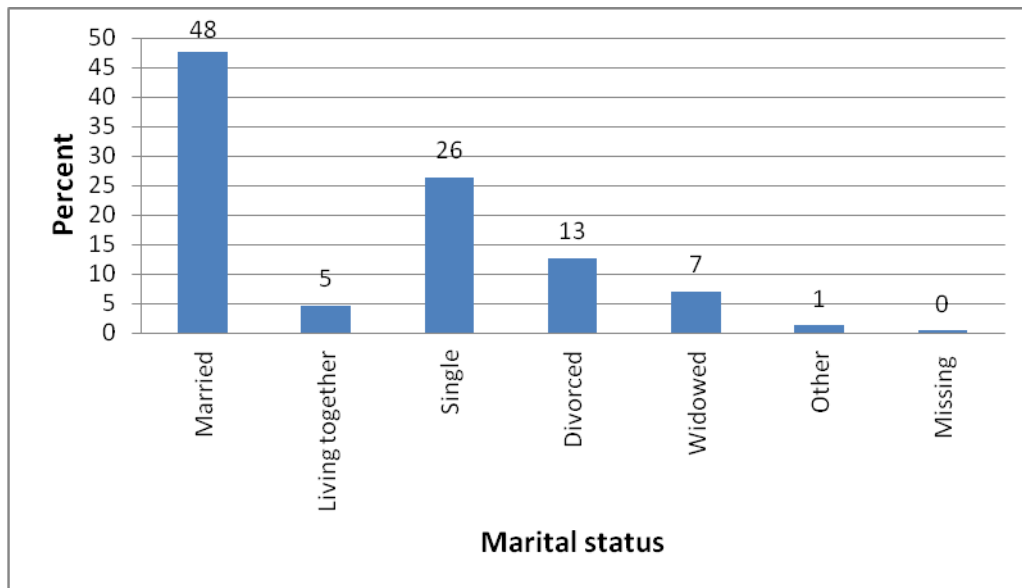


Figure 18: Marital status - survey sample

Most of the pet owners who participated in this study are married or co-habiting with a partner or have been in previous relationships and are currently divorced or widowed. The largest category indicated in the survey is Married. This applies to two hundred and seventeen participants (or 47.6%). Twenty one (or 4.6%) are living together, fifty eight (or 12.7%) are divorced and thirty two (7.0%) are widowed. One hundred and twenty (or 26.3%) are single. (See Figure 18)

Twenty (or 40%) of those interviewed are married and one participant (or 2%) is living with her partner. Three participants (or 6%) are widowed. Half of the sample, twenty five participants (or 50%) are single. The remaining, one participant (or 2%) of the sample did not answer the question and hence her marital status could not be established. (See Figure 19)

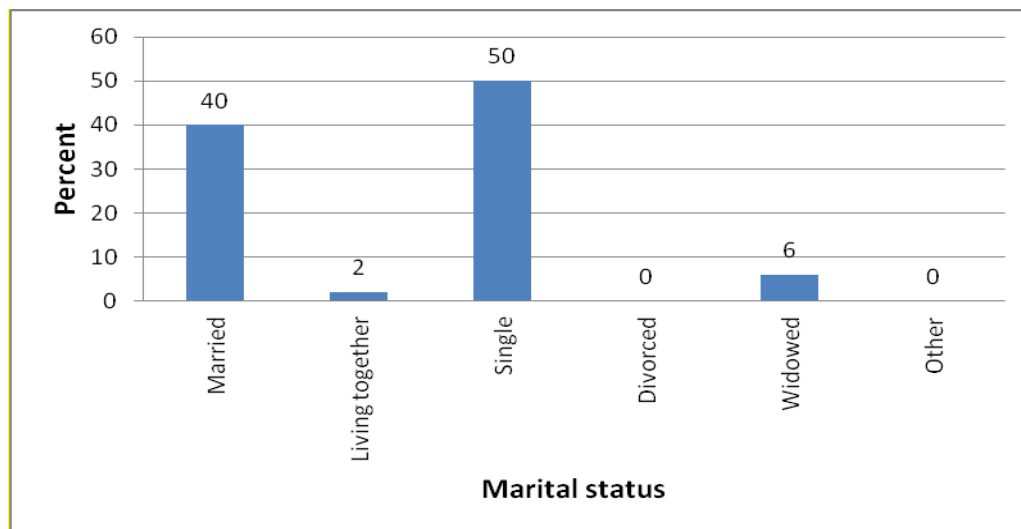


Figure 19: Marital status - interview sample

A significant number, one hundred and twenty participants (or 26.3%) in the survey and twenty five (or 50%) of those interviewed, are single. A key difference between samples is that while most of the single survey participants lived alone, those interviewed all shared households with numerous other adults and/or children. However, when examining the broader racial and class demographics of each sample, this difference is unsurprising and general household structures and patterns are reflected. In short, black South Africans (regardless of age, class and gender differences) are less likely than are whites to live entirely on their own, especially if they live in a township or informal settlement as do all the participants interviewed in Khayelitsha.

Several of the participants that were surveyed provided additional information pertaining to their relationship with their pet/s that was not specifically asked for on the questionnaire. This was only accessed when going through each questionnaire manually – a process that took place independently from the statistical analysis which only recorded and analysed the questions that appeared on the research instrument. Some of the single (and living alone) participants offered insight into their relationships with their pets and the meaning of pets in their lives. In most cases, a high level of attachment was present and a number of individuals expressed emotionally intense feelings about their pets, who clearly provided significant meaning in their lives. A fifty three year old single female business owner who lives alone with two dogs and two cats, exemplifies an extreme example of this tendency. She explains: *"These animals are everything to me – without them I wouldn't be able to get out of bed [on] some mornings.*

They are my reason for living and if they were not around, there would be nothing to stop me driving my car over a cliff."

These findings are in line with previous studies which suggest that the majority of pet owners are married (Wells and Hepper, 1997). Researchers have found that married people are more likely to own pets due to their lifestyle which is for the most part, more settled than that of single people. Interestingly several of the married women surveyed, stated that they would love to have more pets but their husbands prevented them from doing so.

5.5. Conclusion

A consideration of the data reveals that the demographic profile of the majority of respondents to the survey is English speaking, white South African females between the ages of 30-49 years. They are mostly married, Christian and live in Gauteng and the Western Cape predominantly. The average level of educational achievement is high and most are professionals. A significant number of participants in the survey sample speak Afrikaans. The interview sample comprised mostly Xhosa speaking, young black South Africans living in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. The vast majority were aged 18-39 years, with twenty five (or 50%) of the sample, concentrated in 18-29 years age category. Overall, most participants have children living at home, with a greater number residing in the homes of interviewees.

Despite the clear differences that have emerged and the patterns that can be identified from the analysis of the findings, it is apparent that considered in isolation, demographic variables cannot adequately shed light on the relationships human beings form with other animal species (Wells and Hepper, 1997). Numerous other factors shape adult's attitudes toward animal use; thus a more fruitful approach is to combine information about contributing demographic factors with broader explanations that encompass social and cultural shifts and transformations (Franklin, 1999). Political and ideological issues, economic circumstances and geographical and environmental factors must all be considered. In addition, the nature of an individual's relationships with animals (Paul and Serpell, 1993), past experiences, especially during childhood (Serpell, 1981) and consequent differing levels of emotional attachment and bonding with animals are important issues. These myriad factors collectively determine the

amount of 'animal capital' an individual has access to.¹⁰² But, before this concept is examined, the next two chapters look at the diversity of patterns and styles of pet-keeping that were revealed during fieldwork. Analysis of the data indicates considerable variation among the two different samples of pet owners selected for this study, which is explored in depth in Chapters Six and Seven.



¹⁰² This term was coined by Leslie Irvine (2004). She expands on Bourdieu's (1986) idea of the various forms of 'capital.' Animal capital is a type of knowledge. For Irvine, it refers to resources that enable the development of meaningful and non-exploitative relationships with animals (2004: 65-66).

6

The Selection and Acquisition of Pets

"Behind every dog breed we find an ethnography and a social history as well as a genealogy – its cultural, as well as its genetic, heritage" (Sandra Swart, 2003: 191).

This study looked at two very different samples of pet owners and as was highlighted in the previous two chapters, a wide assortment of demographic variables play a part in patterning the attitudes, practices and behaviours associated with pet-keeping. Although the structural location of participants is an important determinant of attitudes and behaviour, these influences are often over emphasised and various other factors have to also be taken into account if a full understanding of the different styles of pet-keeping is to be attained. Some of these contributors are further explored in subsequent chapters. This chapter is one of two that focuses on the diverse ways in which people look after and care for animals. It investigates the practices, rituals and attitudes associated with pet-keeping. But first, the acquisition, kinds and numbers of pets kept are discussed.

This study has found that:

- Dogs are the most popular pets and cats are the second most popular pets kept by participants from both samples. In both samples, the majority of participants kept multiple pets (mostly dogs and cats or a combination of these species), and only a small minority kept only one animal as a pet.
- On average, the Khayelitsha interview participants kept more pets than those surveyed.
- Only a small number of participants overall kept animal species, other than dogs and cats as pets.
- In the survey sample, more participants kept pedigree dogs than cross-breeds. However many kept a combination of pure and cross breed dogs as pets. The most popular large dog breeds are German Shepherds, Labradors (and retrievers) and Rottweilers and the most preferred small dogs are Jack Russells, Dachshunds, Schnauzers, Poodles (including maltese) and Yorkshire

Terriers. Only a few participants kept pedigreed cats. The most popular breeds being Siamese, Persians, Burmese and Abyssians.

- In the Khayelitsha interview sample, only a few people kept pedigree dogs - German Shepherds and Boerboels were favoured and one participant had a Bulldog. Cross breeds, mostly Africanis type dogs were the dogs most commonly kept by this sample.
- With regard to the acquisition of pets, just more than half of the participants surveyed bought pets from breeders (if pedigreed) and numerous others adopted their pets from animal welfare societies. A small minority bought their pets from pet-shops, unlike the Khayelitsha interview sample, where most of the participants claimed to have bought their pets from pet-shops. The rest acquired them as puppies from friends, family members, neighbours or employers.

6.1. Pet-keeping Behaviour Patterns

Pet keeping is a widespread activity in many societies, but the basic pet-keeping style favoured by the pet owner differs within groups and between individuals. From the number and types of animals kept as pets, how and why they are acquired, to the way they are cared for and treated, pet-keeping in South Africa and elsewhere, is characterised by differences. But, there are also similarities that can be detected and examples can be found in all communities of individuals who behave in comparable supportive ways towards animals. Although important, demographic factors alone cannot account for this and people who identify with, feel empathy for and emotionally connect with other animals can be found in any type of social organisation and location.

Several authors (Ritvo, 1987; Driscoll, 1995) contend that the species of animal plays a part in determining the way we perceive and treat that animal and that this varies within and between cultures. In South Africa, as in many Western countries, dogs tend to have higher status than cats. However, as in many other African countries, dogs are frequently viewed with contempt. In the previous chapter, Ndebele's essay, *The Year of the Dog* (2007), in which he ponders how the dog came to be despised is highlighted. Ndebele writes that the dog is a symbol of abuse and is a pervasive metaphor that is regularly used to justify righteous brutality. As previously mentioned, in African communities, companion animals like dogs and cats do not receive the same consideration and care as livestock, which are valued and have more status (Masiga and Munyua, 2005). The type (breed) and colour of an animal (mostly dogs) also play a part in

conferring status and traditionally “white” and purebred dogs are held in higher regard and are valued more than ‘black’ and/or mixed breeds or mongrels.¹⁰³ The reason for this hierarchy of preference is historical and is linked to understandings of class, race and gender.

Although these factors formed the basis of Chapter Four, this next section touches on some of these concerns and outlines some of the common pet-keeping patterns found among the two demographically distinct samples of South Africans that formed part of this study.

6.1.1. The Types and Number of Pets Kept

Although current figures to gauge exactly how many pets there are in this country are not readily available, it has been established that the keeping of animals, especially dogs, as pets is fairly widespread in South Africa. Cats are the second most popular pet, which is in line with many other societies all over the world, including those located in Africa (Masiga and Munyua, 2005). Luke comments that, *“The variety of species kept as pets is extensive. Dogs and cats are most common in rich countries, but all of the following are also kept as pets in substantial numbers: horses; various species of birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles; insects; and many small mammals, such as rabbits, gerbils, hamsters, mice, rats and raccoons”* (2007: 39).

This general pattern of pet-keeping identified by Luke (2007) is confirmed by this study. To be included in the study, participants had to currently keep pets in their home and in both samples dogs are by far the most popular pets, followed by cats. However the most popular pattern among survey participants was keeping a combination of dogs and cats as pets. While one hundred and eighty five (or 40.6%) of the survey participants kept only dogs as pets, a further one hundred and ninety nine (or 43.6%) kept both dogs and cats. A mere thirty seven (or

¹⁰³ Several studies have been done and have found that people prefer to adopt white, brown and lighter coloured dogs than darker coloured black or brindle dogs. Anecdotal evidence based on conversations with animal welfare employees and direct observations during my time as a volunteer dealing with adoptions, confirms the existence of the “Black Dog Syndrome.” The only time people want black dogs is when they want to scare others and use the animals for security purposes. One further point needs to be made regarding this matter and this relates to the deliberate targeting and scapegoating of black dogs from Francois Duvalier (Papa Doc) the Haitian dictator to Mao Tse Tsung and the prophet, Muhammad. All three of these historical figures ordered the killing of black dogs. A study published in the Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science found that black cats are also stigmatised (mostly because of their association with witchcraft) and in many Western societies like the USA, they struggle to be adopted (Neidhart and Boyd, 2002). Similar findings can be expected in South Africa, where both western and African belief systems continue to link cats, especially black ones, to witchcraft and even Satanism.

8.1%) kept only cats. However, they tended to keep multiple cats, usually ranging between 2-12 animals. (See Figure 20)

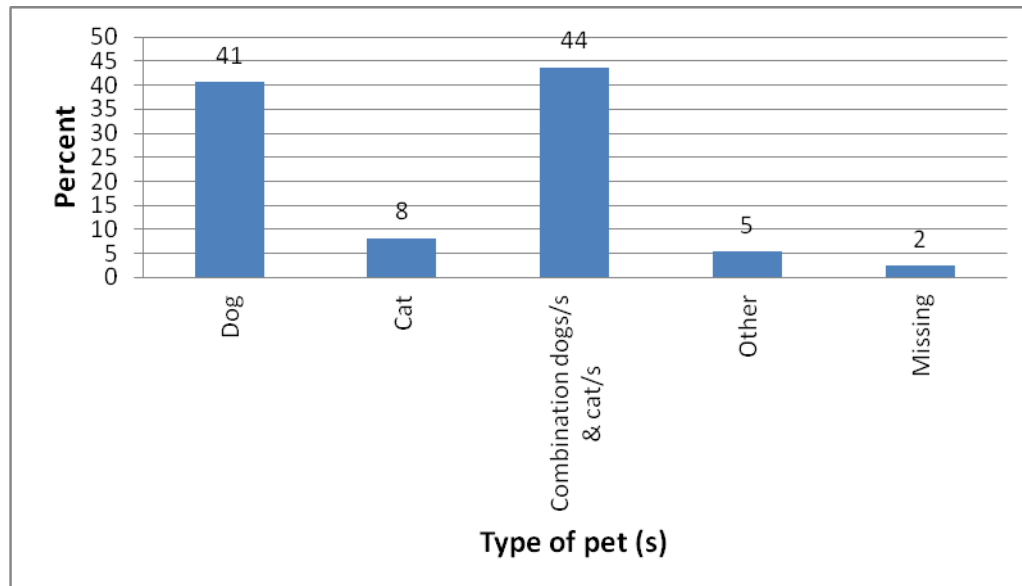


Figure 20: Types of pets kept - survey sample

Although it falls outside of the ambit of this study, it must be noted that, eighteen participants (or 5.3%) of the survey sample indicated that they kept pets other than dogs and cats. In these instances, the most popular species are birds (especially parrots and cockatiels), fish, hamsters, snakes, rats, geese, ducks, rabbits and horses. One survey participant was unusual and kept three *blesbokke* (bushbuck) as pets and another kept an Australian Bearded Dragon along with the obligatory dogs and cats. Other unusual pets include an iguana and an Indian mynah bird and one participant surveyed had a crow and a meerkat.

Information on fifty participants and their pets living in Khayelitsha showed that dogs were once again the most popular pets, kept by forty five people (or 90%) of the interview sample. Of these, four participants (or 8%) kept a combination of dogs and cats. Three participants (or 6%) of the sample, i.e., one man and two women, kept a cat as their only pet. (See Figure 21) One participant, a 58 year old married and retired woman from Makhaza, is unusual since she kept a small black cat, two crossbreed dogs and four ducks as her pets. Another woman kept a both a rabbit and a dog as pets.

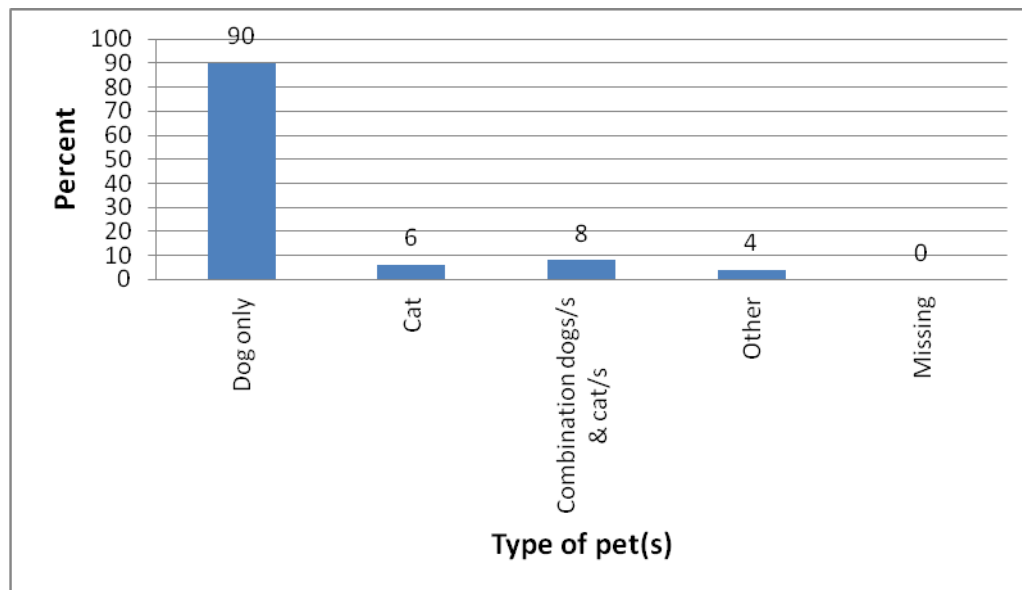


Figure 21: Types of pets kept – interview sample

It is important to reiterate that the type of animals kept as pets is culturally and historically bound. Any attempt to explore pet-keeping in South Africa thus needs to consider which animals are considered to be appropriate to domesticate and keep as pets. In African culture, for instance, this is tied up with beliefs about witchcraft and cats are seen as accomplices of witchdoctors and symbolise evil. In a piece titled *Witches at Work*, former *Drum*¹⁰⁴ journalist, Casey 'Kid' Motsisi recalls an experience he had where his wife informed him about a neighbour who had returned home "from the farms" and that "They brought a tortoise along with them." He knew that she was implying that they were involved in witchcraft and advises: "If you're Black, you'll want to choose your pets with discretion" (1980: 123). He continues: "Some pets – ranging from cats to crocodiles; blue monkeys to white mice – can place you under all manner of suspicions. Either you will be suspected of being a witch or someone aspiring to swell the ranks of this shady profession, or of not being of stable mind" (1980: 124). Although he understands why some animals are regarded as taboo and should not be kept as pets if you want to avoid being the target of such suspicion, he fails to comprehend "why some people have a horror of keeping cats," which he considers "the most ideal pets to keep" because they catch rodents and "are very clean animals" (1980: 124-125). In this particular study, the research participants interviewed in

¹⁰⁴ Established in the 1950s in apartheid South Africa, *Drum* magazine was an important platform for Black writers and photographers.

Khayelitsha did not share the prevailing attitudes toward cats and like Motsisi, stressed their usefulness as rodent catchers. Only one participant expressed a dislike of cats and regarded them as linked to witchcraft. He stated that he did not approve of animal abuse, *“unless it was a cat involved.”*

With regard to pet-keeping in Khayelitsha, it was directly observed and confirmed during interviews that while some cats and dogs are claimed as pets and animals of the household by individuals, many roam freely, constantly looking for food and shelter. Generally, it appears that the participants view the dogs and cats in the area (whether owned or not) as an inevitable part of township life and for the most part their presence is tolerated. Another finding is that, in areas like Khayelitsha, mixed breeds are more frequently found than pedigree dogs. In particular, the *Canis Africanis* (African hunting dogs / hybrids) and “mixed” dogs (of no identifiable cross) are prolific and ubiquitous. (See Photos 2 & 3)



Photo 2: Africanis dog and puppies



Photo 3: More Africanis dogs

Only a few, five people (or 10%) of the interview sample had pedigreed dogs. Of these two (one man and one woman) had German Shepherds, one man had a Boerboel and another man had a Greyhound. Both the Boerboel and Greyhound owners also kept other crossbreed dogs. A young woman had a Bulldog, which she was very proud of.¹⁰⁵ A female participant, who currently had a cat, said that she aspired to have a Bulldog in the future. When probed about this choice, she said that Bulldogs were “so cute” and other people will “admire me for having one.” Clearly a Bulldog is a high status breed and this is reflected in the cost of acquiring one, which ranges from R3000-R5000. In her article *Dogs and Dogma*, which discusses the socio-political construction of dog breeds in southern Africa, Sandra Swart notes that, “black societies increasingly tend to prefer western breeds, regarding them as status symbols” (2003: 198). During the interviews, when asked what type of dog they had, several of the interviewees said they did

¹⁰⁵ The Boerboel is a large, mastiff type dog that is popular in South Africa. It is the only dog that was bred primarily for the purpose of guarding the homestead. The word “Boerboel” derives from “boer” the Afrikaans word for farmer, thus the Boerboel is the “farmer’s dog.” According to Swart, “The Boerboel has a strong Afrikaans following, and was purportedly first promoted by the *Herstigste Nasionale Party* as a protector of white homes” (2003: 202). Like the German Shepherd, Boerboels are a dog breed that has been long associated with white supremacy. They are used for security purposes, making it both ironic but also understandable that they are gaining popularity among urban blacks concerned with increasingly levels of crime and violence in their communities.

not know what breed the animal was. But, quite a few described their dogs as 'straight-up', 'straight' and/or 'normal' dogs. It was only later on during the transcription and preliminary analysis that I understood what these terms meant. The former are pedigreed dogs or breeds and the latter are mongrels, specifically Africanis type dogs. Swart (2003) remarks how these dogs were disparaged in the past. Amongst other names, they were referred to as 'township specials.'

On average, the Khayelitsha participants kept more pets than those surveyed. The average number of pets kept by survey participants is 2.6 and among the Khayelitsha sample, it is 4.5. Three participants interviewed kept dogs for hunting in packs of four, five and twelve respectively. One of the respondents hunted regularly with his pack and even made some money from this. He had invested a considerable amount of money in buying a pedigreed Greyhound to enhance his hunting pack. Hunting with dogs, which is illegal, takes place primarily in the open veld near the airport, in surrounding wetlands and amongst the Macassar sand dunes. Another favoured hunting location is the Wolfgat Nature Reserve, which is near to the township, such as the one along the scenic Baden Powell Drive in Cape Town. In these areas they target mostly small buck and birds, which are eaten. However, some hunters are contracted by farmers to clear their land of 'problem' animals like jackal and even caracal and can earn some income this way. Although it does occur, in these interviews there was no indication of hunting with dogs for gambling purposes, which is rampant in provinces like KwaZulu-Natal.

Participants in the survey sample owned both pedigreed and cross-breed dogs. The majority owned at least one pedigree dog and many kept mixed breeds alongside the 'breed' dog. Others kept mixed breed dogs only, but they were in the minority. The most popular pedigreed large dog breeds are German Shepherds (GSD), Labradors (and Retrievers) and Rottweilers. Huskies, Border Collies and Belgian Shepherds also feature prominently among survey participant responses. The most popular smaller breeds (in no particular order) are Cocker Spaniels, Jack Russells, Dachshunds, French Poodles, Yorkshire Terriers and Miniature Schnauzers. Maltese poodles, though not a breed, are ever-present and are clearly a firm favourite as numerous participants surveyed kept them as pets. A few participants that responded to the survey kept pedigreed cats, including being Siamese, Persians, Burmese and Abyssinians. However the majority of cats kept were of no particular breed.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, breed selection is influenced by previous experience, particularly encounters and interactions with specific types of animals and socialisation during childhood. Various other factors such as social position, concept of self and sense of identity, fashion, culture and the current socio-economic milieu all play a part in influencing the choice of pet.

In the interview sample, dogs were far more commonly kept than cats or any other animal species, and only a minority of people interviewed, seven (or 14%) had only one dog or one cat. On the other hand, only three (or 14%) participants surveyed kept large numbers of dogs: seven, fourteen and thirty-eight respectively. The first, a single, retired female business owner had been a breeder of Airedale Terriers. The second, the 'owner' of fourteen dogs, is a thirty eight year old unmarried female who rescues unwanted strays and at least three of the pack were 'foster' dogs, who may be adopted. The third participant, is, a fifty two year old widowed female, who also used to be a dog breeder. She kept thirty eight dogs, one Samoyed, thirty six Siberian Huskies and one Weimeraner as her pets.

Despite the fact that those surveyed were generally wealthier and had access to more resources than those interviewed, the latter tended to keep greater numbers of pets, particularly dogs. This is not unique to Khayelitsha and is typical of many townships and informal settlements where there is an overpopulation of dogs. This could partly be attributed to the fact that dogs living in these types of areas were generally not sterilised so people ended up with litters of puppies. This, combined with the lack of welfare societies or other means of rehoming the animals, means that many people just keep the dogs that they cannot not find homes for. In many instances, where interviewees kept multiple dogs, the animals tended to be related and were usually the offspring of the original pet. In addition, the lack of law enforcement in these areas with regard to dog licencing etc. could also explain the proliferation of pets kept by residents when compared with middle-class residential suburbs. According to Allan Perrins (CEO of the COGH SPCA), "*In Khayelitsha, the dogs outnumber the people by three to one*". He added that, "*Many of these, were, however, pets*" (Lewis and Kiewietz, 2011). Despite the absence of accurate and sufficient data on domestic pet population in this country, the preponderance and over population of dogs can be directly observed by simply driving around areas like Khayelitsha. Sweet Home Farm, an informal settlement in Philippi, is another example of an informal settlement, where material conditions have little impact

on the number of pets kept by residents. According to the Cape Of Good Hope SPCA, despite the extreme poverty and deprivation that characterises the area, some residents have more than ten dogs. Although owned, many of the dogs, "lead a feral existence and have to scavenge for food" (www.sPCA-ct.co.za). After the child killing and dog stoning incident, (discussed earlier in Chapter Four), one woman interviewed, told Eyewitness News that she had 18 dogs (Malungelo Boo, Eyewitness News, 7 July, 2011). The controversial municipal by-laws that limit the number of pets that may be owned that has recently come into effect in Cape Town, will impact on those who have more pets than legally permitted. But, the logistics involved in enforcing these laws are complex and identifying which dogs are owned and which are stray, is no easy task. In the wake of the killing of a child by a pack of dogs in Sweet Home Farm, Philippi, authorities have taken action and gave residents one week to tag and identify their dogs before impounding the animals (Lewis and Kiewietz, 2011).

6.1.2. Pet Ages and Lifespan

For pet animals, their longevity and quality of life is determined by myriad factors, including the social position, attitudes, behaviour, personal preferences and past experiences of their 'owners.' Factors beyond our control sometimes impose and impact on the duration of the lifespan of our animal companions. But, more often than not, it is the action and conduct of human beings that profoundly affect the lives of their animal companions.

The average age of pets was not established in either the survey or interview samples. However, responses to questions dealing with pet loss revealed that most of the survey participants had at some stage in their lives lost pets of an advanced age. Of the three hundred and twenty five (or 71.3%) participants surveyed who had experienced the loss of a pet, one hundred and forty two of them previously had pets that died. Sixty one (or 43%) had pets that died from old age and thirty four (or 23.9%) had their pets put to sleep by a veterinarian due to them suffering from various illnesses.¹⁰⁶ Only a small minority, seven (or 4.9%) of the participants surveyed had pets (mostly cats) that were run over. A slightly larger number, twenty three, (or 16.5%) of the survey participants had pets who were deliberately killed.¹⁰⁷ One survey participant's dog died from

¹⁰⁶ These include cancer, (both dogs and cats) and Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) or Feline AIDS (cats). One dog died from distemper and two from biliary (a tick borne disease).

¹⁰⁷ One was a small cross breed dog that was killed by the ex-boyfriend of a survey participant and the rest were all poisoned by neighbours or burglars.

kidney failure after ingesting pet food contaminated with melamine during the 2007 global pet food recall.¹⁰⁸ The fact that most pets owned by participants in the survey sample died of old age and/or were euthanased because of terminal illnesses offers insight into the pet-keeping practices of their human caregivers. It was gleaned from the additional information that several participants included in their survey questionnaires that many of their current pets were aged 3-6 years. A few stated that they had recently acquired puppies and/or kittens and numerous 'owned' elderly pets, the oldest of which was an eighteen year old Siamese cat and a fourteen year old maltese poodle, both belonging to the same household.

During interviews, a different picture emerged. Many of the participants volunteered information about the age of the pets, both past and present. But, many did not know how old their pets were. Unfortunately a median age could not be established, but it is expected that the average age for pets in the area is fairly low. Approximately half of the sample had pets that were 1-3 years old and only a few pets are seniors (aged seven years upwards). One man proudly informed us that his dogs were ten and eleven years old, which was exceptional. Another man interviewed, had two dogs aged, five and eight years. All the cats were young adults, aged between six months – two and a half years old. Judging from the comments made by interviewees and anecdotes shared by animal welfare workers in the area, the survival rate of dogs aged one year or more and the duration of pet ownership in Khayelitsha is fairly low. Mdzananda Animal Clinic cites malnutrition as a key contributor to high mortality rates among puppies in the area (www.mdzananda.co.za).

There are no statistics for number of animals killed on South Africa's roads, but if the number of dead animal bodies lying on highways and other roads are anything to go by, this is a huge problem. Animal lovers are deeply disturbed by the daily carnage of animals on our roads. During fieldwork, participants from both samples (whether they viewed themselves as animal lovers or not) alluded to this issue, which they claim causes them distress. The huge volume of animal (mostly dog and cat) carcasses collected off our roads every year is staggering and until all communities are compelled to keep their animals confined within

¹⁰⁸ Tests confirmed that Vets Choice and Royal Canin dog and cat dry pet-food products sold in South Africa at the time contained corn gluten contaminated with melamine (<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Pet-food-poison-from-SA-firm-20070419>).

their properties, the slaughter of domestic pets on South African roads will continue unabated.

Another related issue that is cause for concern is the apparently high turnover of pets among interview participants. When probed about their 'pet-keeping history', most of the participants stated that they had numerous pets in the past and that most had been killed by cars as they were not confined to their properties. One participant said that he has witnessed a truck kill his dog right outside his home and several others had either actually seen dogs being run over or saw their dead bodies on a daily basis. One woman said that four of her previous dogs were "*smashed by a car right outside my house.*" Although most people said that this affected them negatively and they "*felt bad*" about it, one man differed and stated that he did not care much about this, as he could easily replace them. Another felt it was an indication of the "*carelessness of the owner*", so it did not affect him. Dogs also died as a result of starvation and one woman lost seven dogs over a relatively short period (2008-2009) due to starvation. She currently owned a nine month old dog, which hopefully will make it into adulthood as she is better off financially than she was previously. Two participants interviewed had lost dogs because their neighbours had deliberately poisoned them and another's dog died because he ate poisoned meat left out for rats. Several participants said that their dogs (and cats) died after being ill. In most cases, they were unable to identify the illness, but distemper, biliary and parvo virus for dogs and respiratory infections such as cat flu for felines are the most likely causes.

Unlike the survey sample, very few animals belonging to interviewees died of old age and/or were put to sleep when injured or ill. Two interviewees recounted their experiences with pet euthanasia, which they found extremely traumatic and stressful. They explained how they struggled to accept that, "*the doctor put my dog to sleep forever*" and could not help feeling that this was somehow "*wrong.*" Although on the whole, the pets (past and present) kept by the majority of the survey participants lived longer than those kept by the participants interviewed in Khayelitsha, this is not always the case. As reported earlier, upon closer inspection, the findings indicated that quite a number of pets currently owned by survey participants were still young and that not all of their previously owned pets fared well. In some instances, probing, further communication and re-examination of the questionnaires revealed that some survey participants had relinquished their animals and many had been put to sleep for various reasons, other than old age, injury or illness. One woman, a divorced forty-nine year old

lawyer with no children, currently kept four elderly Dachshunds and a cat, but her previous dog, a large young crossbreed had been 'given away' when she and her ex-husband relocated to another province. Several others admitted to rehoming pets when they moved home and only one person, a fifty-two year old married woman, acknowledged that she gave her three cats to the SPCA when her child developed allergies. In all these cases, the participants chose to mention their previous pets, hence my decision to ask them more questions and thereby further the discussion so as to obtain more information about their pet-keeping history.¹⁰⁹ Regardless of their claims that they loved the animals they gave up, the decision to do so demonstrates the ability to 'switch' and turn emotions 'on and off' when it comes to animals as Blouin (2010) expounds in his dissertation.¹¹⁰ In his book, *Man Meets Dog*, Konrad Lorenz (1954) reflects on "*the lingering tendency to treat even a valued pet as a convenience*" (Tuan, 1984: 114). Lorenz writes: "*If I ask a man who has just been boasting of the prowess and other wonderful properties of one of his dogs, I always ask him whether he has still got the animal. The answer is all too often...No, I had to get rid of him – I moved to another town – or into a smaller house*" (quoted in Tuan, 1984: 114). Tuan goes on and comments that the mean age of household pets in California is a mere "*4.4 years, with more than half being under three years.*" So even though pets may be well cared for, they are not always kept until they are old.

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6.1.3. Methods of Acquiring Pets

There are various ways that people acquire their pets, ranging from buying them to receiving them as 'gifts' from family, friends and neighbours, to adopting them from animal welfare societies or rescuing them. The findings of this study indicate that different communities, groups and individuals opt for diverse methods of acquiring pets and that the way in which a pet is obtained provides insight into the 'owner'. How the pet is acquired, the source and method, as well as the type of pet selected reflects the 'owners' socio-economic position and status.

¹⁰⁹ Notwithstanding slight variations in the research instruments used, questions 13, 14, 19, 20, 32, 33, 34, which dealt with, animals as a source of support and past pets that have been 'lost' for various reasons elicited this information.

¹¹⁰ People can 'switch' towards individual animals or to entire breeds or species. An extreme example of the latter is provided by the situation in England during the Second World War, when, as a result of growing anti-German sentiment, the public turned against once loved Dachshund dogs. These dogs were dumped *en masse* and were attacked by the same people who once loved them. German Shepherd dogs were also targeted, but fared slightly better due to their usefulness. The "*re-branding of German Shepherds as Alsatians*" in order to distance them from their German origins demonstrates this (Swart, 2003: 192).

When asked how they acquired their pets (past and present) a very different picture emerged between the two samples of participants. The majority of the participants surveyed bought pets from breeders (if pedigreed). A sizeable number adopted pets (mostly cross breed animals) from various animal welfare societies and shelters. The rest either rescued their pets (former strays) from the streets and other undesirable circumstances, responded to good home wanted adverts (seen in newspapers, on websites or displayed in shop windows) or obtained them from friends, family, neighbours or work colleagues. Only a small minority claimed to have bought their pets from pet-shops.¹¹¹ Of those who adopted animals from friends or family members etc, a significant number did so because the animal's original owners were emigrating. (See Figure 22)

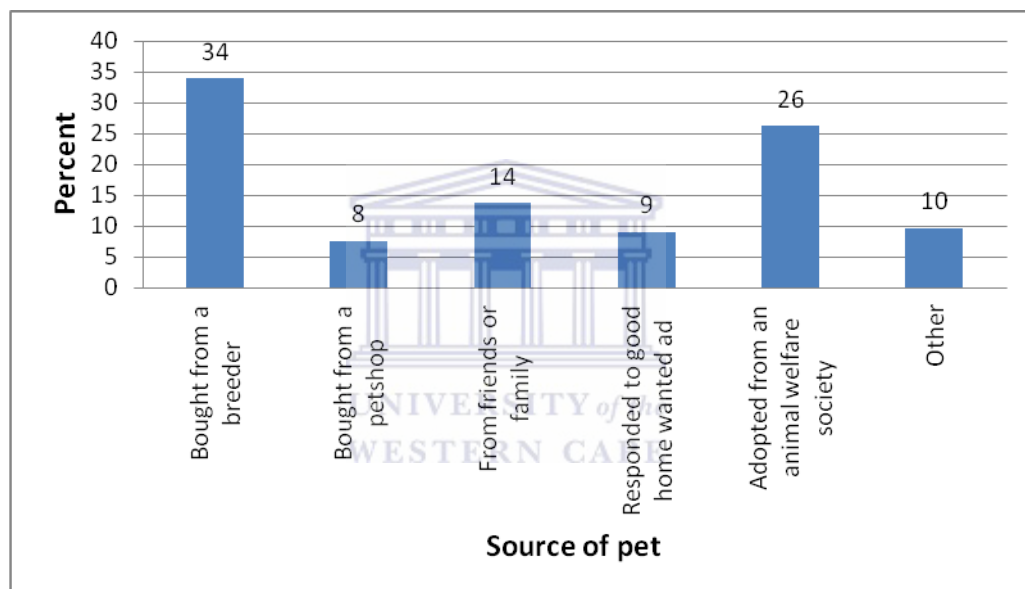


Figure 22: Acquisition of pets - survey sample

With regard to the acquisition of pets, a somewhat different pattern thus emerged among the Khayelitsha participants. In this sample, the majority of those interviewed, thirty four (or 68%) said that they bought their pets from pet-shops. A further eleven (or 22%) obtained their pets from people they knew, mostly their friends, family members or neighbours, when their dogs or cats had litters. Two of the participants who acquired dogs from the neighbours, 'inherited' them as adults (one because s/he neglected it and the other neighbour returned to the Eastern Cape and left the dog behind). Only one person interviewed in Khayelitsha (or 2%) 'rescued' his dog as a stray off the street and another (2%)

¹¹¹ The total percentages do not add to 100% as most participants had multiple pets and not all of them were acquired in the same way).

kept a dog that followed her child home. The rest, three (or 6%) obtained their dog from their employers. No one from this sample had ever adopted a dog from an animal welfare society or had successfully responded to a 'good home wanted' advert. Once again, these patterns are not surprising and amongst other things are a reflection of the uneven structure of our society and its skewed historical evolution. (See Figures 23 & 24)

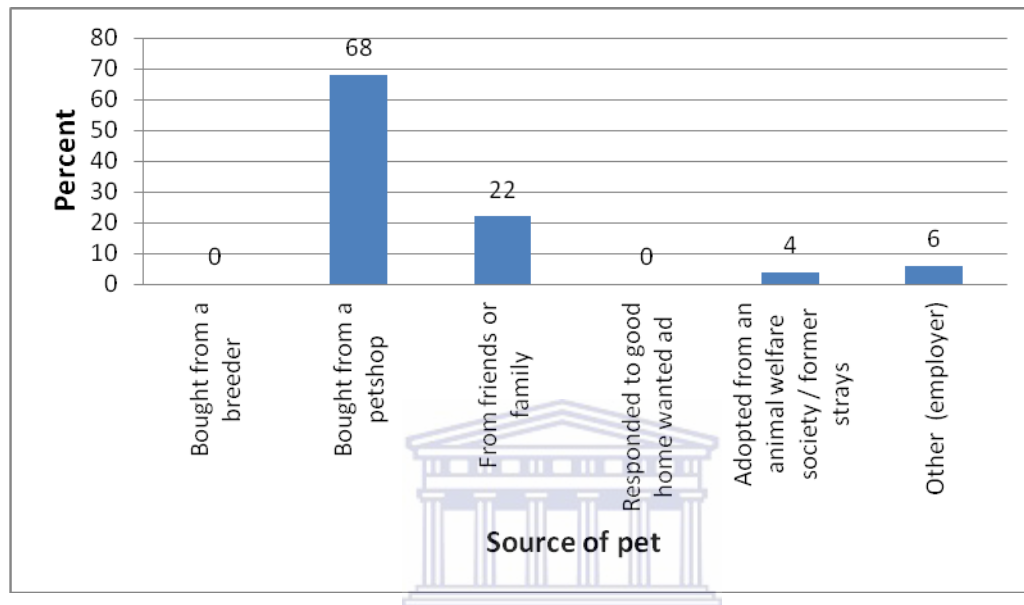


Figure 23: Acquisition of pet - interview sample

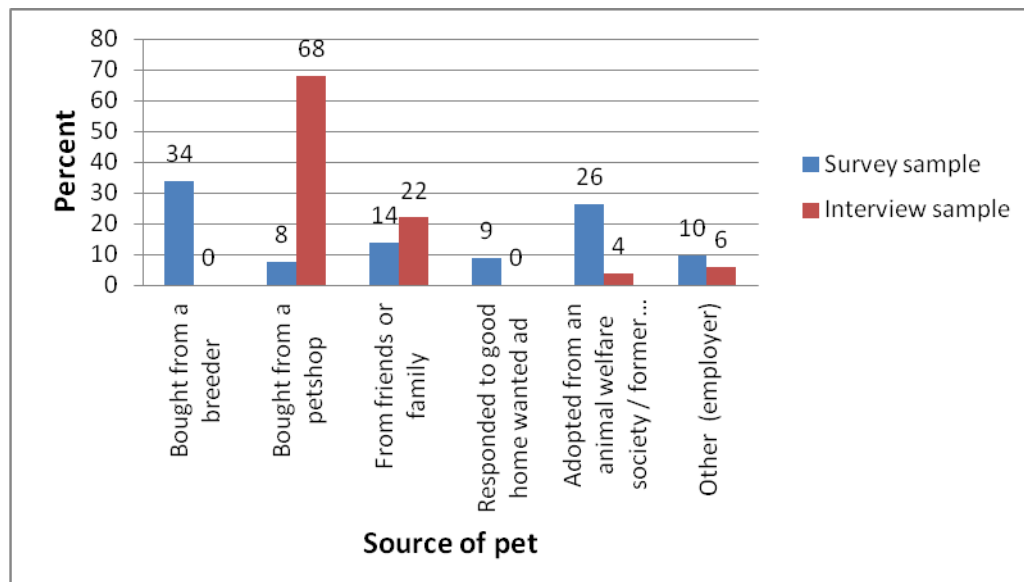


Figure 24: Acquisition of pets – comparison of samples

A quick scan through the growing number of magazines, websites and other publications focusing on pet-keeping in South Africa indicates that the breeding of pedigreed animals (primarily dogs, cats and horses) continues unabated despite the pet over population crisis. Some breeds are clearly more popular than others, which is indicated by the number of adverts for these animals and is affirmed through local acquisition patterns. But, unfortunately, this method of acquiring a pet (buying from a breeder or pet shop), rather than adopting from a shelter may exacerbate the pet overpopulation problem. Since not everyone is inclined to 'rescue' animals from the streets or adopt strays (usually adults) from animal welfare societies, the number of unwanted and stray animals in the country continues to grow. There are several reasons why many people prefer to buy pets, such as preference for a breed and/or a puppy. However, the unwillingness or the inability to meet the requirements needed to make an adoption application at an animal welfare organisation can play a part in influencing this decision. In this study, white middle class participants (who formed the bulk of the survey sample) were also more inclined than blacks to adopt or rescue strays and less inclined to buy from pet shops.

Other preferences and patterns in pet-keeping have their roots in or are perpetuated by historical factors and the current social context. For example, the acquisition of pets and the preference for certain types and breeds is part of the narrative of our society and many of its quintessential attributes are thereby reflected. As discussed in Chapter Five, the tendency of urban shack dwellers (in provinces like the Western Cape where the interviews were conducted), to return to rural areas, especially the Eastern Cape is widespread and this 'cyclical migration', is a remnant of the previous era. It results from the implementation of the Pass Laws ¹¹², but continues today. This two-way migration often results in pets being left behind to fend for themselves, and numerous strays wandering in townships today are 'victims' of this process. Two dogs currently owned by participants interviewed in Khayelitsha, had been abandoned in this way.

A similar process occurred in KwaZulu-Natal, and during the 1970s and 1980s, the apartheid government's policies such as forced removals combined with political conflict forced people to evacuate their homes, particularly in the rural areas, which resulted in scores of domestic pets being left behind and abandoned (Bateman, 2005; Brown, 2011). In her discussion on the emergence and spread

¹¹² The Pass Laws aimed to racially segregate the South African population during the apartheid era. These laws curtailed the movements of blacks, who were legally required to carry Pass Books with them.

of rabies in South Africa, particularly KwaZulu-Natal, Karen Brown (2011) traces the resurgence of the disease during the 1970s and links it to poverty, political unrest and the high concentration of domestic dogs living in both urban and rural areas in that province. She explains how it became difficult to vaccinate dogs in many areas *"as inoculators were identified as agents of the apartheid regime and were subjected to attacks"* (2011: 81). Brown argues that the lack of veterinary and other services available in urban centres were a direct consequence of the state's policy of discouraging black urbanisation and settlement. She explains, *"The make-shift informal settlements became home to hordes of dogs that moved with people. Many could not afford to feed their dogs, so pets mixed with strays and together they scavenged for food, mingling around rubbish heaps, swapping the virus through communal feeding and dog fights. The close proximity of these dogs to human habitation increased the likelihood of contracting the disease"* (2011: 96).

This scenario described by Brown, which has its origins in the past, is still applicable today. In contemporary South African society, population relocations due to fires and floods, combined with 'cyclical migration' and annual trips to the rural areas of the Eastern Cape by many township residents exacerbates the stray problem and increases the threat it poses to human health and welfare as well. The consequences of this are starting to become known and the Sweet Home Farm incident mentioned earlier on in Chapter Four, has brought to the fore the risks associated with uncontrolled breeding and high incidences of abandonment of domestic pets, especially dogs. From attacks on people, mostly children, to the spread of zoonotic diseases, the failure to address basic animal welfare concerns has serious implications for people living in townships countrywide.

White South Africans and suburbanites on the other hand, have also become more geographically mobile and along with immigration, relocate to other towns and cities or move home within the same town. But, very few of them make proper provisions for their pets and most resort to various other means to *"get rid of"* their pets. As this research undertaking has confirmed, giving unwanted pets to employees, such as domestic workers and gardeners, is not unheard of. In this study, two of the employers were emigrating and the other was moving to *"a small place with no garden"* in another suburb in Cape Town. This is also a fairly common scenario and animal welfare groups, as well as adverts posted on websites and in newspapers, confirm that the increased emigration by whites has

resulted in many animals becoming homeless. However, simply handing over family pets to employees is not always the best decision, particularly when they have few resources. One of the interviewees who had received a pair of unsterilised small dogs from his employer had experienced numerous problems since he brought the dogs home with him. He lives in a shack with no fence around it. The female dog keeps coming on heat and attracts large numbers of male dogs who surround the shack and create a disturbance. The neighbours consider his dogs to be a nuisance and have demanded that he get rid of them. Another, a female domestic worker was given a small Dachshund cross called *Bob* by an employer that left the country. *Bob* slept outdoors at night as there is "no space inside – even on the floor." The little dog was unaccustomed to this and during the wet Cape winter in 2009, became very ill. Soon thereafter, she decided that it would be best to give him to another "white lady" she worked for, who took him to a veterinarian to be treated then found a home for him with one of her friends.

As mentioned, none of the participants interviewed had adopted an animal, either from a welfare organisation or a private individual. This is primarily due to the fact that most of the interview participants do not qualify to formally adopt a pet from an animal welfare society for various reasons. They are often unable to meet the basic requirements for adopting such as adequate fencing and securely enclosed properties. Another condition that most animal welfare groups insist upon is that pets must sleep indoors. This stipulation automatically disqualifies those who for practical (no space) or religious/cultural reasons cannot adhere to this. Some animal rescue groups are unable and/or unwilling to do home-checks in certain areas, notably townships and informal settlements. Those groups that work in these communities generally offer primary veterinary healthcare services and tend to not run adoption programmes, making it difficult for someone living in these areas (often with no transport of their own) to even visit centres where pet adoptions take place. Another way of acquiring a pet is by responding to the assortment of 'Free to Good Home' adverts placed in newspapers and on websites. No one interviewed had obtained a dog in this way and the participants were generally not inclined to go this route. From my experience, observations and conversations with pet owners and animal rescue workers, it has been ascertained that it is mostly whites who place these types of advertisements (for both their own dogs and rescued strays) and for the most part, are unlikely to give pets to blacks whom they do not know personally. During interviews, one Khayelitsha participant mentioned that he had answered adverts of this nature

before, but had never been given the animal he applied for. In his view, this was due to racism on the part of the person advertising the pet.

At this stage, it is imperative to state that in the past, "*it was considered improper – even unethical – to sell dogs to 'non-white' population groups*" (Gallant, 2002: 76). Gallant attributes the lack of pure-breed dogs and their negligible influence on rural African dogs to this belief. Regardless of this, one breed, viz., the Greyhound has made its mark among Africans and their dogs, despite the concerted and deliberate attempts by colonial administrations to prevent them from owning them. In order to curb black people's hunting activities, they were banned from owning this breed, long favoured by the aristocracy and elites involved in hunting in Europe and elsewhere. But, this did not stop black South Africans from owning Greyhounds and migrant workers, who were fascinated by the resemblance these dogs had to their own traditional hunting dogs, were willing to pay large sums of money to acquire them as breeding stock (Gallant, 2002: 77). Today it is the black middle classes that favour the breed and they are often kept alongside traditional hunting dogs. Unfortunately this new form of hunting has become common practice and just like Europeans before them, 'taxi-hunting' is more about gambling than subsistence. In KwaZulu-Natal this has resulted in landowners killing dogs en masse as recently as 1998 (Gallant, 2002: 80).¹¹³ Similarly, in Cape Town, the *Cape Times* reported that an illegal hunting syndicate was implicated in poaching incidents involving packs of dogs (Gosling, 2009).

As mentioned, during interviews, one owner of a pack of twelve hunting dogs, comprising a pure-bred Greyhound, various Africanises and two small terriers, explained how and why he acquired them: "*these dogs cost me a lot of money, more especially the Greyhound. My brother imported one a few years ago, and bred from her. But, they bring me money as well and I have always had dogs like this.*" Landowners and farmers in the Helderberg region hire the handler and dog pack to clear their land of unwanted animal species, such as jackals. The hunting party is sometimes allowed to catch rabbits, guinea fowl and other wildlife for subsistence purposes and to feed the dogs.

¹¹³ This term was coined by D. MacFarlane *et al* in *Traditional Hunting with Dogs: A Contemporary Issue in KwaZulu-Natal*, 1999 (Gallant, 2002). Gallant explains that, "*It refers to the hunting practices whereby the hunters (many of them taxi owners) travel in groups by Combi or 4 x 4 vehicles to the targeted hunt location*" (2002: 80).

In the above mentioned case, the interviewee's dogs were clearly acquired for hunting purposes and for earning an income. However the majority of participants interviewed said that they acquired their dogs for security purposes and their cats for rodent control. Only a few stated that they acquired the animals for companionship. Once again, those surveyed differed and only a small number of them had acquired pets for their 'use value'. Those that did had acquired the animals (mostly dogs) for security and protection. Only a tiny minority appeared to acquire their pets primarily for breeding and/or show purposes. The vast majority of those surveyed were motivated by non financial reasons and the most common response selected as to why they acquired their current pet/s was 'companionship'. Their answers ranged from replacement of previous pet or replacement of a significant person that died etc. They used words like 'fun', 'entertainment' and 'company' to describe why they acquired their current pet/s. Quite a few mentioned that they found or rescued their pets and thus did not actively choose them according to specific predefined criteria. Some of the key reasons participants in this study cite for keeping pets, the roles the animals play in their lives and the different meanings they have for them, are outlined and explored in Chapter Eight.

6.2. Conclusion:

From this discussion, we have seen that overall pet-keeping has increased, but that poorer communities are more likely to keep large numbers of pets, mostly dogs, than their wealthier counterparts. The types and number of animals kept is historically and culturally contingent. Variables like race and class also play a part in the process of pet selection and acquisition. The next chapter examines the everyday practices and different styles of pet-keeping evident among participants. Explanations of these variations are offered.

7

Pet-keeping Styles and Practices

"Now he is one of the family, he needs his picture too."

(Kete, 1994: 54)

The previous chapter focused on the various ways in which participants acquired their pets. The factors motivating pet selection were also touched on. The actual practices and daily routines and activities associated with pet-keeping are described next. Participants were asked questions about pet care ranging from who feeds the pets, to what they feed them, where pets sleep, and whether they have been sterilised or receive veterinary care when required. Luke proposes that: *"The practice of pet keeping, in its cross-cultural prevalence and its frequently avid pursuit, demonstrates the strength and depth of human interest in and affection for nonhuman animals"* (2007: 39).

When asked about their practices and specific 'style of pet-keeping' pursued, clear differences between participants emerged:

- Almost all the pets whose caretakers participated in this study had been given names. Only one dog (in the Khayelitsha sample) was nameless. However the tendency to 'anthropomorphise' and give pets human names was more pronounced among participants in the survey than in the interview sample.
- Only a small minority of pets whose carers formed part of the survey sample slept outside (in a kennel or other shelter). Most pets slept inside in their own beds and a significant number (mostly cats), slept in their owner's beds. In the Khayelitsha interview samples, a minority of pets slept indoors. Many participants provided outdoor shelter for their dogs, but some had no shelter at all for their animals.
- More than half of the participants surveyed bought specially formulated and expensive pet food from the vet. The rest either fed supermarket brands or fed their pets cooked meals as well as leftovers. Several participants surveyed fed their pets with a combination of vet and supermarket bought food. A very small minority fed their pets on raw food. In Khayelitsha on the other hand, the majority of those interviewed, fed their pets leftovers and/or cooked for

them. A minority bought well known brands of pet food from supermarkets for their animals. Although most people interviewed stated that they did feed their pets, two participants (both female), thought that dogs and cats should be able to provide for themselves.

- Most participants in the survey took responsibility for feeding the household pets. Of these, the majority were women, many of whom fed pets during childhood. However, in most instances their mothers fed the pets while growing up. Unlike the survey sample, most of the participants interviewed were males and almost all of them took responsibility for feeding their pets. Many of them had taken on this role at some stage when they were growing up.
- Overall it seems that the pet owners who were included in this study generally try and keep their animals as healthy as possible. Depending on their social position and other factors, they use various means to do so.
- The vast majority of survey participants took their pet to private vets when they were ill, whereas only a tiny minority within the interview sample claimed that they did this. However, several interviewees took their animals to either the local animal welfare clinic or the mobile clinic that visited the area when they were ill or injured. A few treated their animals themselves.
- The vast majority of the survey sample's pets were sterilised, compared to just under half in the interview sample.¹¹⁴ In both samples, cats of both sexes and female dogs are more likely to be sterilised than male dogs.
- The majority of the survey participants take their pets on outings such as visits to friends and relatives. Some also take them on walks, on holiday and/or to petfriendly restaurants. Only a very small minority of participants interviewed in Khayelitsha took their pets out, mostly for a walk in the area. Two interviewees said that they would like to be able to take their dogs more places, like beaches and parks, but could not afford to do so.
- Most of the survey sample bought their pets gifts like chew treats, toys, beds and accessories. Almost half the sample did this all year long, while others limited their purchases to pet birthdays and other special occasions like Christmas. Although only a few of the Khayelitsha participants did this, some indicated that economic factors prevented them from doing so.
- Finally, almost all of those surveyed had photos of their pets, while only two Khayelitsha participants had photos of their pets.

¹¹⁴ This number might be fairly inflated when compared to other townships. This could be due to the fact that there is a permanent animal clinic located in Khayelitsha and mobile and ad hoc veterinary services are also offered by other animal welfare organisations.

In her thesis, Jill Johnson notes that: "*Pets are given names, photographed in family portraits, brought to the doctor for checkups, given toys, treats, protection, and usually grieved when they pass away*" (2009: 20-21). She continues: "*... pets are thrown birthday parties, given elaborate funerals, and even participate in weddings. There are now clothing and accessory stores for pets that go beyond a winter coat; some provide animals with swimsuits, leather jackets, tuxedos, evening gowns, jewellery, and nail polish*". And, "*when human owners are away or busy, pets can be enrolled in day care, hotels, and summer camps, with descriptions and services that would attract human occupants as well*" (ibid). But, not all pets enjoy this level of care. The differences in pet-keeping styles and techniques practiced, as well as the diverse consumption models used by the two samples of participants, is discussed in detail in the next section. It must be emphasized that, despite these variations, clear trends are emerging that in many respects cut across demographic distinctions. One of these overriding patterns is the increasing propensity for pet owners to 'anthropomorphise' or 'humanise' their pets, which manifest in myriad ways including the products they buy and the names they are given. Attention is now directed to discussing these developments and tendencies.

7.1. Patterns of Care and Consumption

According to van Sittert and Swart, "*Anthropomorphism and commodification helped consolidate the dog's place as an integral member of the white middle class household*" (2003: 159). This increasingly popular tendency to treat pets in similar ways to humans, especially children though commonly found among pet owners everywhere, is a pattern most readily identified among particular groups. There are many ways that this manifests and we 'humanise' our pets by mimicking cultural practices and customs like naming them, feeding them human grade food, dressing them in clothing, letting them sleep in our beds and taking them on holiday, to events and on outings to restaurants, just as one would with other family members. When they die, we mourn them and some of us even give them funerals and bury or cremate them. In this study, anthropomorphic behaviour towards pet animals is demonstrated in a number of ways and is evident to differing degrees, in both samples of pet owners. The consumption of pet products and services and the type of goods preferred, has amongst other things, associations with socio-structural position and material circumstances. Similarly, naming a pet reflects broader social and cultural patterns.

7.1.1. Naming Pets

The naming of a pet is a way of humanising or anthropomorphising an animal, so as to give it a unique, individual identity. It is common practice among pet owners everywhere and in this study, only one dog (in the Khayelitsha sample), had not been given a name. Various authors make similar observations. Arluke and Sanders (1996: 10-11) trace the process whereby dogs are transformed into 'family members' within American households and they argue that part of this entails naming the animal, thereby giving it an identity and conferring status. For Beck (1983) giving animal's names reflects the individuality and personality of the pet and that the act of naming implies that these animals are going to be given special treatment and that individual attributes or personalities are likely to be claimed for them. Thus, in giving one's animal a name, one is attributing personality traits and individualism.¹¹⁵

Menache suggests that we take note of Claude Levi-Straus (1967), who observed: *"Dogs do not form an independent society; as domestic animals they are part of human society. We design them by metaphorical names. Consequently when the relation between (human and animal) species is socially conceived as metaphorical, the relation between the respective systems of naming takes on a metonymical character....The names of dogs in effect reproduce in its entirety a portion of names formally similar to human Christian names although rarely borne by ordinary human beings....It will readily be agreed that the metaphorical names given to dogs place the role of the figure of speech at the level of the signifying"* (1998:79).

Pets are anthropomorphised even further when they are given human names - a tendency, which in this study, is more prominent within the survey sample than amongst interviewees. Thomas notes that giving animals names is a relatively 'modern' phenomenon. He writes, *"But there was a recurring tendency, which in the eighteenth century became very pronounced, to give pets human names; and the shift was indicative of a closer bond between pet and owner. When we find Christopher Smart's Lucy and Gilbert White's tortoise Timothy, and Southey's old spaniel Phillis, we know that we are confronted by a relationship of altogether greater intimacy"* (Thomas, 1983: 114).

¹¹⁵ Animal welfare groups have found that when trying to find an animal a home, it is important for potential adopters to 'make a connection' with the animal and giving him or her a name, helps do this. I have personally observed this during my many years of animal rescue work. People often respond to adverts for animals that need homes because of that particular animal's name.

In her study based at an animal sanctuary, Nicola Taylor (2007) found that naming patterns at the shelter conformed to conventional patterns, which included giving pets human names or else names which reflected a particular characteristic (either physical or psychological) of that animal. Examples of the former are Spot or Scruffy, and Tyson (so named because he liked to fight) exemplifies the latter. Alexa Albert (1987) conducted a survey of three hundred and twenty (320) pet owners in the USA and found that naming a pet is not a random occurrence and that pet names are an indicator of their status in the household. Those respondents who considered their pets to be important family members were significantly more likely to give the pet a human name than those who did not view the pet in this way. Albert's study did not find evidence to support the idea that pet names are indicative of pet attachment. According to Albert (1987), forty-five percent (45%) gave their pet(s) human names such as Ben, Kelley, Leo, Luke, Leslie, Jill, Cleo, etc and forty-one (41%) named their pet(s) after objects. Examples of the latter include: Brandy, Snowflake, Pumpkin and Peanut. The remaining fourteen percent (14%) selected adjectives such as Misty, Rusty etc as pet names. Albert (1987) also found that dog owners were more likely to give their pets human names than cat owners.

This study concurs with these findings and among survey participants, popular names for dogs include Gemma/Jemma/Emma, Jake, Charlie, Bella, Ben, Lily, Jessie, Jamie, Jasper, Roxy, Rory, Roger, Abby/Abigail, Chloe, Samantha (or derivatives, Sam, Sammy), Sophie, Storm, Shadow, Skye, Timothy, Oliver, Oscar and Diesel. Many of these dog names are also human names and several are popular names for children (Schaffer, 2009). Notwithstanding cultural differences, most of the participants who responded to the survey indicated that they regarded their pet as a member of the family, which is in line with the findings of Albert and other authors. Today's dogs are not likely to be named Spotty or Fifi or even Wagter or Fluffy, as they would have been in the past. Some of the survey participant's dogs had also been given African names such as Thulani, Thandi, Thabo and Thembani. This study also found that, even survey participants, who generally demonstrated a strong tendency to give their dogs human names, were less likely to follow suit with their cats. Common names given to cats by survey participants include Tigger, Sylvester, Felix and Tommy or Thomas. Several cats (and also a few dogs) were named after edible food and drink like Biscuit, Fudge, Cupcake, Jelly, Milo, Brandy, Pickle, Pumpkin, Marmite and Whisky. However a few cats were given human names and these include: Molly, Tabitha, Penny, Jenny.

Several survey participants gave their pets mythical or historical names like Socrates, Rommel, Churchill, Napoleon, Josephine or Cleopatra (often shortened to Cleo). Several dogs were called Tyson. Musicians also feature and one pair of Yorkshire terriers were named Johnny Cash and June Carter, another dog was called Jimi Hendrix, another Elvis, and there were three animals – two dogs and one cat who were called Ozzy (as in Osbourne). One survey participant, (a 46 year old, widowed female) who kept a large number of fairly rare pedigreed dogs, said that she "named [her dogs] after gods and lucky or magical themes." Another pattern detected among survey respondents, notably those who had taken on 'rescue' dogs, is that they were often named after where they were found or given names that somehow marked or alluded to their ordeal. Names like Freeway, Lucky and Warrior are examples of this type of naming process.¹¹⁶ (See Figure 25)

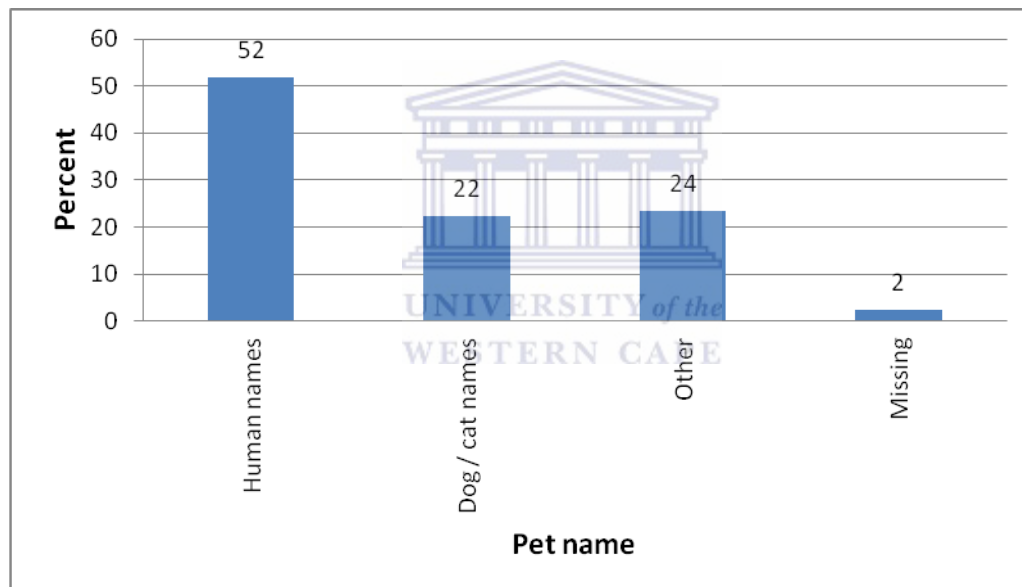


Figure 25: Pet's names - survey sample

Fogel (1983) suggests that the type of name given to a pet signifies the type of role the owner wants the pet to assume within the household. Names like *Danger* or *Killer* given to dogs kept primarily for security purposes signifies this tendency. Other than human and traditional pet names, names are often derived from physical or behavioural characteristics or are given because they are considered to be funny. Evidence of all these categories of pet names were found in both

¹¹⁶ The name, *Warrior* was initially given to a dog who survived being buried alive at a school in Khayelitsha. She was rescued by Mdzananda staff, who dug her out of a 1.5 metre deep pit thirty minutes afterwards. Extensive news coverage, in local and international media was given to the dog, who was subsequently adopted by Helen Walne, a well known [Cape Argus](#) journalist. The court case of the two janitors responsible has been postponed to April 2012.

samples, with a preponderance of human names among survey participants. Pets are also named after people or things that their 'owners' think are important (Katcher and Beck, 1996). It is important to mention that while this may be true in Western cultures where dogs are generally favoured and viewed in a positive light, in those cultures where dogs do not accorded similar status, including many African societies, the naming process is less influenced by this.

In his article, titled, *Nigerian Cultural Attitudes to the Dog*, J. Olowo Ojoade (1994), argues that attitude towards dogs are manifest in the names they are given. According to him, "*many such names are determined by prevailing sociocultural factors*" (1994: 209). Although Nigerians may in rare instances give their dogs human names, he notes that, "*Nigerian dog names are more fanciful and varied than their European counterparts*" (ibid). He cites examples such as: "*the Yoruba Lekewogbe ('He who drives away liars into the bush')* and the *Igbo Dike Ogu ('Great man of war')*, *Omeihe Usu ('Troubleshooter')*, and *Obagidere Agu ('Conqueror of lion')*. Other names may refer to the owner rather than to the dog, such as the *Yoruba dog-name Tanifekani ('Who wants us to be rich?')* and *Tanitolorun ('Who can claim equality with God?')*, while yet others invoke proverbs or refer to deities" (ibid).

Maggs and Sealy (2008) point out that Africans generally do not name their dogs after people they admire. In this sample, pets (especially dogs) were sometimes named after people who were well known, but not necessarily liked such as Bin-Laden. Interesting, in both the survey and the Khayelitsha interview sample, at least one dog was called Zille!¹¹⁷ A female UWC student living in Litha Park, related how her family kept many animals, most notably a white dog named TerreBlanche, who scared the neighbours.¹¹⁸ Gallant (2002: 12) maintains that traditionally, Africans give their dogs "*descriptive category names*" as well as "*individual call names.*" The former is a way of categorising (Africanis) dogs according to their external physical appearance and mental disposition (2002: 10). The latter resembles the name giving of Western societies and the choice of dog name also "*has a socio-cultural dimension*" (Koopman, quoted in Gallant, 2002: 12). He adds, that, "*it has become customary to adopt names from the English language, for example uRex, uSmash and uDanger.*" In the Western

¹¹⁷ This refers to the politician Helen Zille, who is the Premier of the Western Cape and the leader of the Democratic Alliance (DA), which is the official opposition party in South Africa.

¹¹⁸ Eugene TerreBlanche is the ex-leader of the extreme white rightwing organisation, the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB). He was murdered on his farm on 3 April 2010. Two former farmworkers are currently on trial for his murder.

Cape, where Afrikaans is widely spoken, call names such as Vegter and Wagter feature (ibid).

This study found that the respondents that formed the Khayelitsha interview sample were less likely to give their pets human names than those surveyed. Popular names include: Bob or Bobby, Bullet, Box, Bhova, Bubbles, Danger, Eddie, Fluffy, Gili, Raff, Tshomi, Fox, Puppy, Tiger, Twiggie, KC, Stekana, Spider, Siby, Spotty, Sportie, Nonjana, Mnyamna, Meyer, Mandy, Mercy, Pikkie, Pep, Vuvu, Brakkie, Snoopy, Volly, Raff, Hlahlagabanye, Kiki, Small, Sexy and Penny. Cat names include: Lulu, Lucky, Joyi, Javala, Pinky, Nono and Kitty. (See Figure 26)

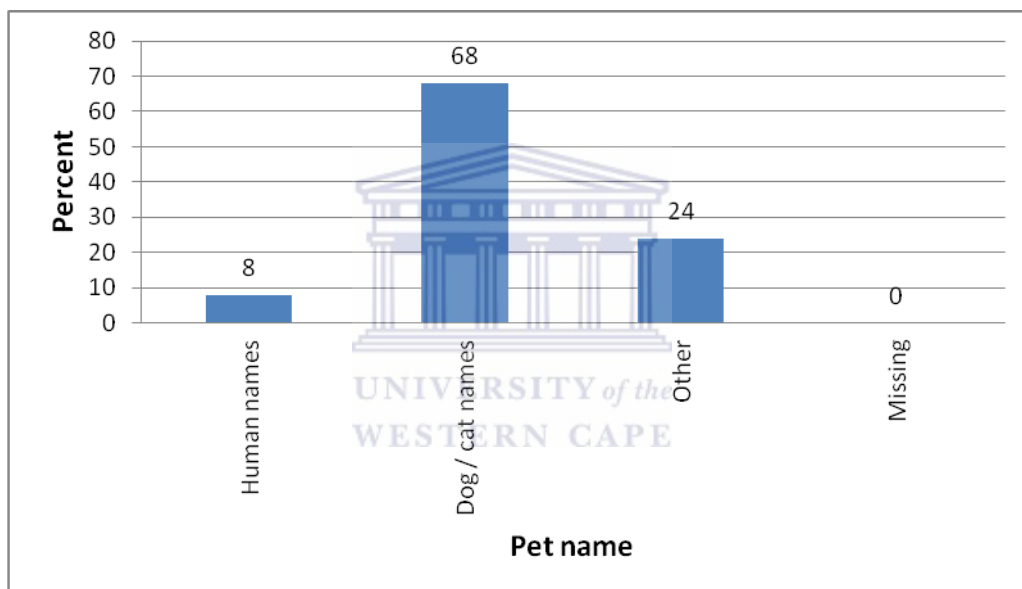


Figure 26: Pet's names – interview sample

Clearly pet naming patterns are culturally and class specific, but regardless of the variations that occur along these lines, with only a single exception, all of the participants (from both the survey and interview samples), had given their pet a name. Although this was not statistically measured, an examination of the data showed that there is a correlation between the pet's status and the name they are given - those pets perceived to be family members are most likely to be anthropomorphised and given human names. Dogs are more likely than cats to be regarded in this way, which is illustrated by their names.

7.1.2. Pet Sleeping and Living Arrangements

Another way that pets are treated like humans is illustrated by including them and granting them access to what was previously considered to be 'human space.' Sleeping arrangements have changed and more and more pets are allowed indoors. Research shows that right up until the middle of the twentieth century, pets were mostly kept outdoors (Franklin, 2007: 12). Franklin argues that this "*spatial shift*" registers increased closeness between humans and their animal companions (ibid). Interestingly, this study found that participants from both samples allowed their pets to sleep indoors. Although, as can be expected (due to limitations in the facilities available and house size and other practical considerations), those situated in the upper socio-economic brackets, were more likely to allow their pets to sleep inside and thereby reaffirm their 'closeness' to them. Anecdotal evidence and information gleaned from magazines and newspaper interviews with black 'celebrities' or other high profile people, indicate that this tendency cuts across racial boundaries. Patterns and styles of pet-keeping more commonly associated with whites, such as allowing pets free access indoors and even onto the furniture can be detected among a diversity of South African pet 'owners' whose lifestyles and socio-economic status falls within the upper earning brackets.

In his investigation into the changing role of dogs, Shaffer (2009) tries to understand our sudden need to treat pets as children and comments on the fact that many people allow pets to sleep in their beds. In this study, the overall majority of participants surveyed or 78% allowed their pets to sleep indoors. While most pets (44%) slept in their own beds indoors, a significant number (34%) were allowed to share their owner's bed. Some pets had the choice of their own bed or they could share their 'owner's' bed if they preferred. However, it was mostly cats, rather than dogs, that were permitted to do so. Only a small minority, (or 12.8%) of the participants surveyed let their pets sleep outside. In all instances, some form of shelter, usually a wooden kennel was provided. The rest (9.2%) either did not indicate or their animals sleep in outbuildings and garages.

Although a minority of interviewees allowed their pets into the house and onto the furniture, no one in this sample allowed their pet to share their bed. A male pensioner let his German Shepherd called *Puppy*, sleep inside "*on the sofa*", even though he has a kennel outside. Twelve participants (or 24%) allowed their pets to sleep indoors. A few of these, three (or 6%) of the interviewees provided their

pets with blankets and other comforts, in addition to letting them sleep indoors. While all interviewees allowed their cats to sleep indoors, for dogs, this practice was sometimes restricted to winter. A thirty eight year old male interviewed in Makhaza, 40 section, explained that his house was very cramped and small, making it difficult for his dog to sleep indoors. But, despite these spatial limitations, he let his dog, *Bullet* sleep inside *"during the rainy season"*. Many dogs belonging to interviewees were 'free-range' and not confined to their owner's property, yet the majority of participants, twenty seven (or 52%) still provided kennels and other home-made structures for their dogs to sleep in. A small business owner who has four dogs that he uses for hunting, acknowledged that during winter, the weather in Cape Town *"was not good,"* so he *"built a shelter with two different doors that allows the dogs to share the shelter fairly."* A retired, married woman from Makhaza who kept multiple pets, had placed an old bakkie canopy outside her house for her two dogs to sleep in. Two participants let their dogs sleep in the garage. But, twelve participants (or 24%) stated that their dogs slept outside *"no matter what the weather"* with no shelter at all.

Overall, the participants interviewed in Khayelitsha did not indulge or spoil their pets as much as some of the participants in the other samples did and some pets were definitely more fortunate than others. One woman said that she felt bad that her dogs had no shelter and she promised to *"build a house for them."* Cats fared slightly better and all the cats whose owners were interviewed were allowed to sleep inside. A spaza shop owner, who really valued her cat called *Nono*, let her sleep *"on a special couch"* and she bought the cat *"a small fleece blanket for the winter season."*



Photo 4: Homemade kennel being constructed at Mdzananda Clinic

As previously discussed, another key difference between the two samples of pet owners relates to confining pets to the owner's property. With cats, there is no question and in townships and many suburban gardens, they roam free. With dogs, two extremes exist – letting the dog roam free and chaining the animal and limiting the animal's mobility completely. Both extremes can be found among all populations to differing degrees, with a greater concentration in the interview sample. Although keeping your dogs inside an enclosed property (without necessarily being tethered) is the norm for the survey participants, a different pattern can be observed in Khayelitsha, where free roaming or 'free-range' dogs are a feature of the area. It is not immediately apparent whether dogs are owned or stray as both categories can, and often do, live a completely 'free-range' existence. According to Margaret Slater (2001) the definition of free-roaming dogs must include both stray dogs as well as those that are owned, yet are not confined to their 'owners' property. There are numerous dogs in Khayelitsha that fit this description. Interestingly, one man living in Mandela Park, attributed his dog's free-range existence to his home security requirements. In his words: *"If my dog is free, he can protect me better. No one is allowed to even walk past my house at night when I am sleeping."* In his view, a free range dog offered better security than one who was confined inside his property, or worse, indoors.

When asking people living in the area, they can often tell you who a dog belongs to or if there is no owner. This tendency is replicated in townships countrywide, in other African countries and in rural communities in the former homelands. Maggs and Sealy (2008), note that, the Africanis dog in rural African homesteads is not a pariah, and that people living in the area generally know who dogs belong to. This has a long history and Swart refers to the writings of Casalis, who in 1861 noted *"the widespread presence of free-ranging, self-supporting, almost quasi-feral dogs among the Sotho"* (2003: 198). Similar patterns are reported in poor communities all over the world, from the ghettos of North America to the *colonias* or unserved, informal Hispanic communities located near the US-Mexico border (Poss and Bader, 2007; Beck, 1973, 2002).

In South Africa packs of dogs with no apparent owners continue to roam free in many townships and informal settlements. Some of these animals have been abandoned by their owners, who have moved away or died. Most township pet owners do not have private transport to take their pets out of the area and abandon them elsewhere, so they simply leave them behind when they leave the area for various reasons, as was described earlier on in this chapter.

Participants from both samples demonstrated a range of tendencies with regard to naming their pets and providing them with shelter. But, the provision of food is even more fundamental than these practices and the next section shows how historically, culturally and economically contingent this can be.

7.1.3. Food and Feeding

An essential component of pet care entails feeding the animal/s and similarities and differences between the samples can be detected. One key variation is in the type and quality of food fed on a regular basis. Another relates to the gender of the person who feeds the pet.

Most of the survey participants are female and are the primary caregivers who take responsibility for feeding the family pets. During the childhood of two hundred and sixty one (or 58.9%) of them, it was primarily their mothers who took on this role. One hundred and eight (or 24.4%) of the survey participants had the responsibility of feeding pets when they were growing up, thereby demonstrating that past experience within the family plays an important part in shaping and formulating future attitudes and behaviour towards pets.

A sizeable number of survey participants, two hundred and seventy nine (or 40.3%), fed their pets with imported, premium brands of pet food which are expensive and only available from vets and vetshops. The favoured brands specifically mentioned by participants in their responses are Hills, Royal Canin or Iams for cats and Hill's, Vet's Choice and Eukanumba for dogs. These specially formulated petfoods confer status among the mostly middle class pet owners who purchase them. Breeders and owners of pedigreed animals who are involved in showing and the world of 'cat and dog fancy' often align themselves and their breeding kennels with one of these reputable and high status brands.

A further, one hundred and sixty one (or 23.2%) fed their pets (both dogs and cats) supermarket brands (both wet and dry). *Whiskas*, *Friskies*, *Lucky Pet*, *Pamper* and *Fancy Feast* are the brands favoured for cats and *Pedigree*, *Husky* and *Bobtail* for dogs. A few respondents mentioned that although they fed their pets veterinary pet foods most of the time, towards the end of the month, when they had less money available, they often resorted to buying cheaper brands. It is important to mention that the findings of this study suggest that cats are more likely to be fed veterinary foods than dogs, whose diets are generally more

varied. A few survey participants indicated that they fed their cats exclusively on veterinary bought dry pellets, but were less rigid when it came to their dogs and they tended to supplement their diet with leftovers.

A number of pet owners surveyed, one hundred and thirty three (or 19.2%), feed their pets (mostly dogs) primarily on cooked food (combined with their leftovers). In these instances, human grade foods (sometime organic and free range) were frequently used to prepare pet meals. Commonly used ingredients include brown rice, vegetables, various types of meat, garlic and herbs. Ready made meals consisting of combinations like chicken or beef with rice and vegetables are also readily available and there are several different brands on the market at present. A few favoured feeding their pets raw food consisting of mostly meat, combined with fresh (often organic) vegetables and selected fruits and herbs.

Growing numbers of pet owners and veterinarians advocate feeding pets according to the BARF and other similar 'natural' diets and once again this demonstrates pet care mimicking human trends.¹¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, raw food is becoming an increasingly popular choice among health conscious humans as well. Kete remarks that, "... *in the modern world, the lives of the most important of companions had changed with those of their owners*" and with regard to food and feeding, what this meant is, "*people were omnivores, so too were pets*" (1994: 92).

Petindustry.com identifies humanisation as a major feature of the current pet food market. According to their homepage, "*the humanization trend of companion animals is a strong driver in the way consumers perceive pet products and pet brands globally.*" The pet food industry is changing in ways that mimics human health trends and developments and products are being developed accordingly. For example, the preparation of healthy food (low fat, organic and to a lesser extent vegetarian), that is good enough for human consumption is gaining popularity in many western countries. Although the organic pet food industry is mostly burgeoning overseas in industrially developed western nations, there is evidence of this trend emerging locally, among more economically privileged pet owners. When it comes to food quality and safety, pet owners are increasingly giving the same consideration to their pet's diets as to their own. The concern

¹¹⁹ This diet was popularised by raw food proponent Dr Ian Billinghurst, who argues that the dog has evolved over many million years on a natural raw diet and logically, this is the ideal food source. He claims that foods similar to those eaten by the dog's wild ancestors are more biologically appropriate.

with food safety was exacerbated by recent food contamination scares and incidents (which killed pets worldwide) and resulted in recalls of certain pet food products (www.euromonitor.com).¹²⁰

Another manifestation of the 'humanisation' trend is demonstrated by the growing number of eating establishments that cater for gourmet pets and/or allow them to dine with their owners. In the USA and France there are specialist bakeries and delis that sell this gourmet pet food and treats and all over the western world, restaurants and hotels have pet menus. A host of pet recipe books have been published and magazines often publish recipes for pets. South Africa is not immune to these trends and the local travel and hospitality industry has responded positively to the changing demands of pet owners, more and more of whom are insisting on including their four-legged, predominantly canine companions in all activities and outings. Today, pets in this country are welcome to eat alongside their owners at outdoor tables at the growing number of restaurants, coffee shops and guesthouses that market themselves within this 'petfriendly' niche (www.petfriendly.co.za).

As can be expected, in terms of feeding pets, a somewhat different pattern was detected among the Khayelitsha participants. Only five of the participants interviewed (or 10%) said that they bought pet food from the supermarket. Their preferred brands are *Whiskas* for cats, and *Purina One* or *Husky* for dogs. All three of these are well known and relatively expensive brands, with Purina One being almost on par with important veterinary foods in terms of price. All the cats owned by interviewees were given milk. One cat was also given raw fish off-cuts and chicken heads.

The pet feeding pattern found among interviewees is probably in line with what is happening in many poorer households in South Africa. In this sample, an overwhelming majority of participants, forty two (or 84%) fed their pets leftovers and/or sometimes cooked for them. Cooked meals differed from those prepared by the survey participants and were mostly made up of maize porridge (mielie

¹²⁰ In South Africa, many pet food manufacturers were implicated including reputable brands like Royal-Canin. To prevent a reoccurrence, some pet food manufacturers, like Hill's Pet Nutrition have relocated their entire operation from the USA to Holland, where stricter EU controls and safety standards are adhered to.

meal), rice, potato skins, vegetable off-cuts and peels, bones or bonemeal.¹²¹ Although it is common practice, maize porridge, if burned, can be harmful to animals. According to an article in *Pet's Health*, a local magazine that focuses on veterinary issues, "*starch rich foodstuffs and especially porridge prepared from maize meal is a staple diet for people in South Africa and the burnt remains are often fed to household pets. The possibility of acrylamide toxicity occurring in these animals, in particular younger animals, should not be ignored*" (*Pet's Health*, Spring 2011:11). It is important to bear in mind that leftovers are not always available and thus many dogs did not get fed at all by their owners and were sometimes expected to fend for themselves when food was scarce. A male street cleaner living in Site B has a five year old dog called Fox, who he personally feeds on a combination of leftovers and cooked mielie-meal. He said that there were sometimes food shortages at his home, which impacted negatively on the dog. Only three participants (or 6%) interviewed said they did not feed their dogs regularly. One attributed it to the fact that, they "*were struggling for food at home*" and another said she relied on the meat sellers to throw pieces of meat and bones to her dogs. Since the animals were not confined to her property, they spent most of their time hanging around the meat sellers in the hope of receiving food. Disturbingly, one participant admitted that her previous dogs (six of them in one year) had died due to starvation because she could not feed them. One woman fed her neighbour's dog and another dog was fed by various members of the community and did not have an individual 'owner.'

Another key difference between samples pertains to who takes responsibility for feeding pets within a household. Clear gender distinctions can be detected, and among those surveyed it is predominantly women who feed pets (and it was their mothers who did so during childhood). Those interviewed in Khayelitsha were mostly males, thirty participants (or 60%) and nearly all of them said that they currently took responsibility for feeding their pets, and many of them had taken on this role at some stage when they were growing up. Several claimed that their fathers, uncles other male relatives had also fulfilled this function while they were growing up. A business man (taxi and shebeen owner from Makhaza) has five dogs who he feeds daily on meals cooked for them by his staff. In two instances (4% of the sample), male children living in the household took responsibility for

¹²¹ This diet is confirmed by the autopsy reports for the dogs that were beaten to death in Sweet Home Farm, which revealed that their stomach contents included rice, chicken bones and beetroot. (Cape Argus, 5 July 2011).

caring for pets, which includes feeding the dogs. One woman interviewed had a cat, but also fed a dog belonging to her neighbour. She claimed to do so because *"the dog is always hungry and looks after me."* According to her, the neighbour *"spent all his money on booze"* and he *"doesn't feed his children either."* She operated a small meat cooking business near the taxi rank and was willing to feed the dog as he sat at her stall all day and provided *"protection from tsotsis."*¹²²

In this study, almost all participants (from both samples) fed their pets regularly. However, two interviewees admitted that they did not do so, and one of them believed that dogs and cats should be able to find their own source of food by whatever means such as hunting, scavenging, stealing, begging etc and should not have to rely on people to do this for them. In their Soweto study, McCrindle *et al* (1999) found that numerous dogs have to forage for food as they were not fed regularly by their owners. This is supported by local literary writings and Wendy Woodward refers to Es'kia Mphahlele's short story, in which he derides the dog-loving Mrs Plum and 'white dogs' who, unlike 'African dogs' cannot find their own food. African dogs on the other hand, *"should provide, participating in their human's economy and not expect to be provided for, like pets"* (Woodward, 2008: 110). Different images and perceptions of animals are mirrored in the social imagination in South Africa and an examination thereof can help shed light on current social dynamics as well as ways of imagining (human) 'others.' White people's dogs are seen as pampered, weak and dependent – they are a drain on resources, whereas 'African dogs' serve a purpose – they hunt and offer protection. 'African' dogs can often take care of themselves, thereby requiring minimal effort and means.

Beck (2002: 24) argues that the presence of large numbers of free roaming dogs (especially strays) suggests that the area is characterised with excess garbage, which aids their survival. Observations made in Khayelitsha indicate that many free-roaming dogs living in the township do a reasonable job fending for themselves and scavenging for something to eat, even though there is a general food shortage in the area. All forms of human waste and discarded garbage (of which there is plenty) are consumed by starving animals, including dogs and cats. These animals seem to survive on very little and even cow dung, which is readily available, provides a viable source of food. In urban areas, these dogs resort to eating whatever is on hand, viz., garbage and human faeces. For many canines, their day to day survival is directly linked to the lack of proper toilets and

¹²² A tsotsi is a criminal in the local dialect.

sanitation infrastructure in townships. This can be witnessed when driving on the N2 from Somerset West to Cape Town. Passing motorists can literally see people squatting down on the grass verge on the left-hand shoulder of the highway and hungry dogs waiting close by for their next meal. As unpalatable as it sounds, this is what happens to the human excrement that is deposited daily alongside the N2. One vet (in private practice but who regularly conducts clinics in Khayelitsha) commented that the stomachs of many suburban dogs have become "*too sterile*, making them prone to infections. Although this type of behaviour, is seen as revolting and unpalatable by humans, it is fairly typical of canines.¹²³ In an animal cruelty incident that took place in the township in November 2011, a dog was stabbed and hit on the head with a hammer by an irate neighbour because the animal has pulled a disposable nappy from his bin, which further illustrates that human waste is often a canine food source in this area.¹²⁴

J. Olowo Ojoade, confirms this tendency and he maintains that, "*among some Nigerians, dogs are also commonly employed as nurse-maids to small children. Their main assignment here is to lick the anuses of babies after defecation and clean the ground in the same way. Thus in some Nigerian carvings dogs are depicted eating excreta. We have a proverb to the effect that 'one does not have one's own dog and then remove the child's excreta with one's hand', which is used in the sense of 'why keep a dog and bark yourself?' Exceptionally, some also eat the excreta of older people*" (1994: 205). Cats, in many respects are better equipped to fend for themselves as they can scavenge as well as hunt small rodents, which are often in plentiful supply in poorer areas. In fact, they were expected to do this and in some instances were kept and valued for this very purpose.

According to James Serpell in most advanced western societies, pet-keeping is still seen as a leisure activity or as a "*lifestyle choice*" (1986: 19), Part of this 'choice' entails a closer relationship and more intense interactions with pets. As more and more people come to regard their pets as companions, they invest in them emotionally and economically by amongst other things buying them expensive food and paying for veterinary care. But, as with everything else, two distinct patterns of consumption and care are evident and this is reflected in the contrast between dogs living in different circumstances. On the one hand you have animals eating organic, free-range and imported, high quality food and on

¹²³ Personal correspondence, April, 2011.

¹²⁴ Mdzananda newsletter, 22 November 2011.

the other you have those who starve and have to eke out a daily existence by scavenging human waste. This mirrors the broader socio-economic and lifestyle patterns and inequalities that define our society. Another way in which this disparity is manifested is in the provision and availability of healthcare. For pet animals, access to veterinary treatment varies according to the social position, geographical location and attachment level of their owners.

7.1.4. Veterinary Care for Pets

Pet owners in both samples expressed concern about the health of their pets and various steps were taken to ensure that their animals were healthy. The course of action embarked on depended on the resources and facilities available and the specific affliction that the animal had. As always, the social position as well as the personal inclination of the owner is a decisive factor. Some participants use their own knowledge and self-medicate their animals, or they rely on the skills of others, such as traditional healers and/or veterinarians. Broader developments also play a part, and regardless of the variations in behaviour, pet owners today are far more likely to take their animals to veterinarians than in the past. This may partly be attributed to changes in the profession combined with the ready availability of private veterinary practices in many countries, including South Africa. There are also significantly more welfare orientated veterinary services available today and the number of organisations offering treatments for animals grows steadily. At the same time, health products, remedies (both traditional and alternative/complementary/holistic), practitioners and services have proliferated and multiplied. Medical aid, massages, acupuncture and specialist surgeries for animals are all accessible today. For Schaffer (2010), an examination in the changes that the veterinary profession has undergone further demonstrates the growing tendency toward increased devotion to pets.¹²⁵

While this may generally be the case, it is important to reiterate that this study found that certain groups and individuals are more likely to express the attitudes and act in the ways that reflect this change, than are others. The findings of this research indicate that in many ways, this difference reflects social class. It also demonstrates that race, particularly when this category overlaps with class distinctions, can be linked to utilitarian views about animals. A clear difference between the survey and interview samples emerged and the correlation of

¹²⁵ Veterinary medicine and the profession as a whole has undergone numerous and far-reaching changes. In *One Nation Under Dog*, Michael Schaffer (2009) comments on how a profession that once mostly dealt with farm and working animals has become increasingly focused on pets. It has also become increasingly specialised and female dominated (Schaffer, 2009).

attitudes with race and class was dealt with in Chapter Four. Almost all the participants from Khayelitsha, (who were all black and mostly from the working and lower middle classes), articulated 'utilitarian' views about animals, including their own pets. Several participants that were interviewed made direct reference to the usefulness and functions performed by their pets, both dogs and cats. Before elaborating further on the reasons motivating pet-keeping among participants, some of the most common pet healthcare practices, viz., sterilisation and vaccinations, and other basic veterinary treatments sought and administered, are briefly examined.

a. Sterilisation

The vast majority, three hundred and seventy five (or 82.2%) of the survey sample's pets were sterilised. (See Figure 27) The extremely high percentage of sterilised pets kept by survey participants is typical of their class position. Unless they use their animals for breeding purposes, middle class (white) South Africans generally opt to sterilise their pets. Van Sittert and Swart (2003) discuss the growth of private veterinary clinics, which proliferated alongside increased pet-keeping. They comment that, *"The urban middle class also extended birth control to its pets - sterilisation becoming routinised and a mainstay of private veterinary practice - as prophylactic and more humane alternative to canicide. Vaccination also encouraged a new affection for and anthropomorphism of dogs among the middle class"* (2003: 159).

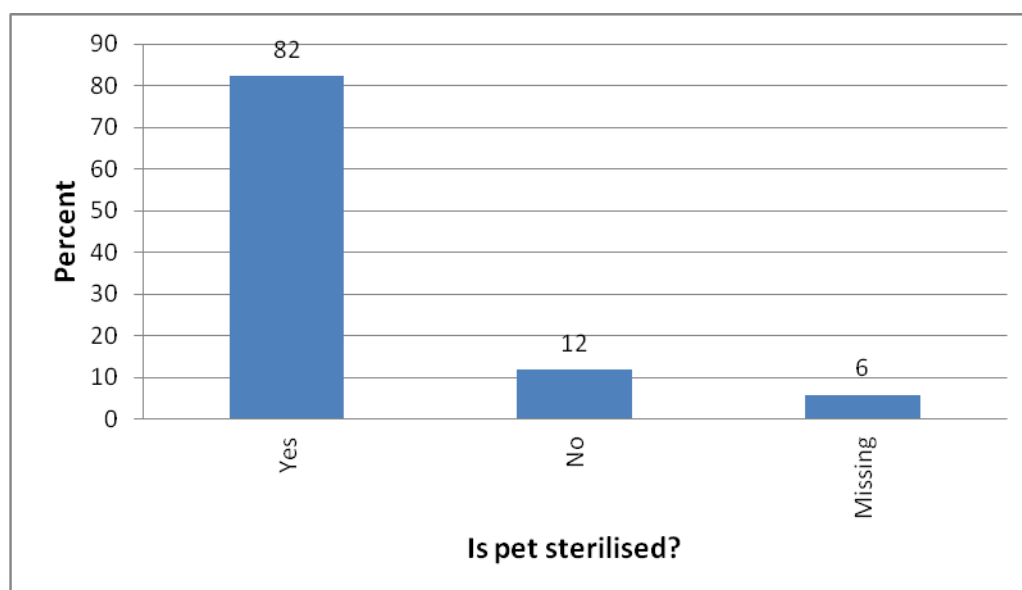


Figure 27: Pet sterilisation - survey sample

Although pet sterilisation is fairly widespread within certain groups, it must be noted that the considerable costs associated with these veterinary procedures preclude many other social groups from doing so. However, cost is not the only factor and religious, cultural and other forms of opposition to surgical procedures of this nature abound in certain areas.

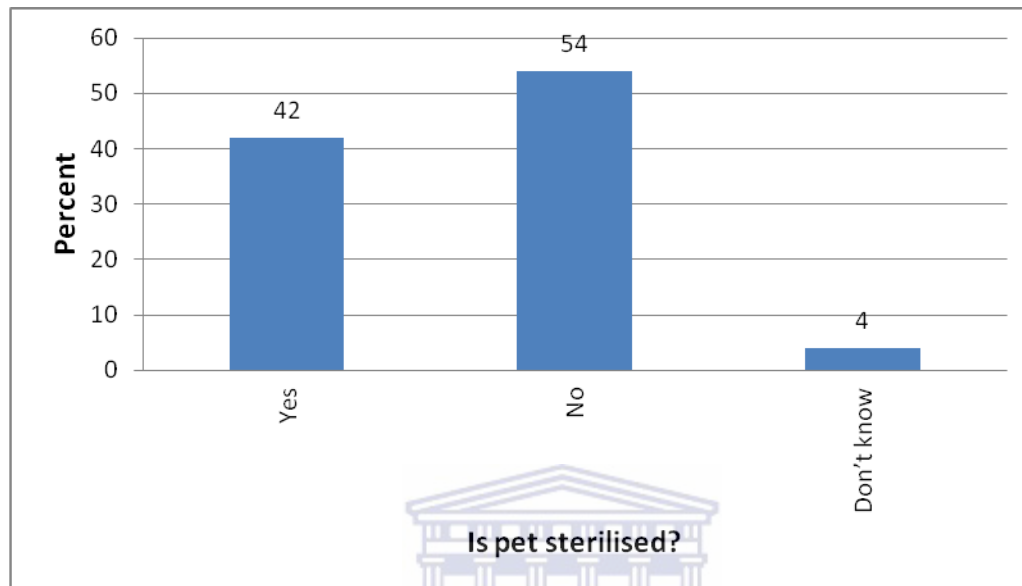


Figure 28: Pet sterilisation - interview sample

Apart from differing cultural values and belief systems which do not approve of or mistrust pet sterilisation, practical considerations such as the lack of access to veterinary services, unaffordability and having no transport are key reasons for the large numbers of unsterilised pets found in poorer communities. In the Khayelitsha interview sample, twenty one (or 42%) of the participants had sterilised their pets. Two (or 4%) did not know if their pets had been sterilised yet. (See Figure 28)

The number of sterilised animals belonging to participants in this sample might be fairly inflated when compared to other townships. However, the relatively high percentage of sterilised animals in the areas visited for this study could be due to the unique situation in that township, which has a permanent animal clinic located there, viz, Mdzananda. In addition, mobile and ad hoc veterinary services are also offered by other animal welfare organisations, including the Cape Of Good Hope SPCA. There is thus an availability of veterinary services in the area, which is generally not found in other similar locations. Nevertheless, with less than half the pets in the area sterilised, the population grows rapidly. Mdzananda

Animal Clinic point out that despite their presence, the general lack of veterinary services available to residents "occasionally leads to cruel and inhuman methods of population control" (www.mdzanada.co.za) This observation recently proved prophetic in October 2011, when they managed to save the dog, called *Warrior*, who had been buried alive in a nearby schoolyard because she had been hanging around and was considered a nuisance.

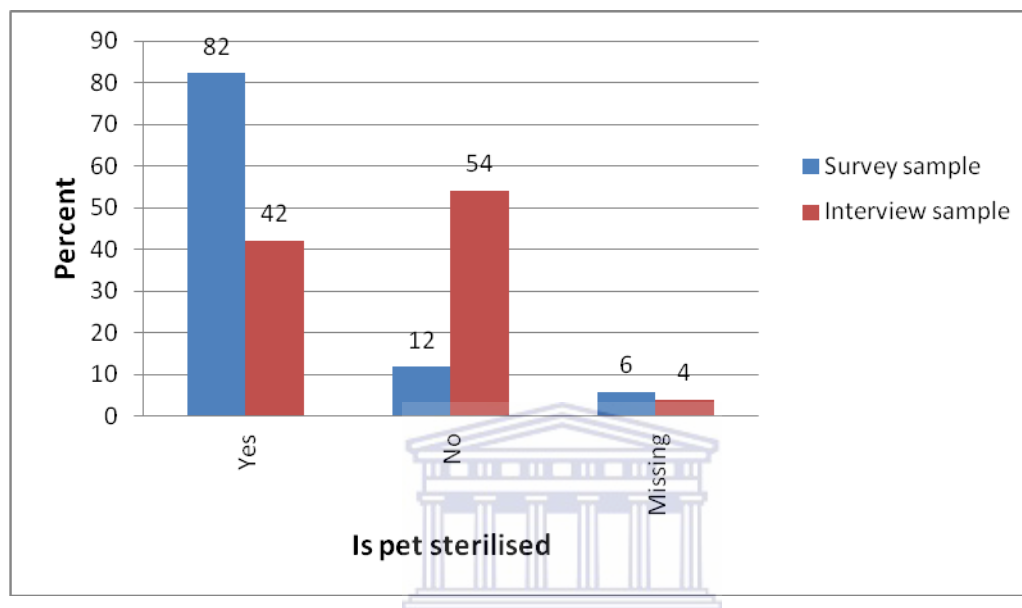


Figure 29: Pet sterilisation – comparison between samples

This study found that pet 'owners' in both samples were more likely to sterilise females rather than male animals. Female dogs and cats (both sexes) were more likely to be sterilised than male dogs. Only one cat (male) owned by a Khayelitsha resident that was interviewed was unsterilised. Several participants (all of them male) said that they were unwilling to neuter their male dogs. The reluctance of mostly male pet 'owners' to neuter male animals is widely expressed and the development of prosthetic testicles to replace those that are surgically removed demonstrates their concerns about castration. Although these 'fake' testicles are expensive and may need to be imported into South Africa, some (mostly male) pet owners opt to go this route. ¹²⁶

Issues and insecurities pertaining to masculinity and threats thereto are implied and assumed in these instances. Once again this imitates human behavioural and healthcare patterns and social norms which readily advocate sterilisation for

¹²⁶ Personal correspondence with veterinarians, 2009 – 2011.

women, but not for men, despite this being a medically simpler procedure. Female pets, or 'feminine' animals (like cats), are required to be and more often are sterilised, even though male animals display more anti-social and negative behaviour, such as territorial aggression and urination.

b. Vaccinations and Treatments

Although cats are more likely to be sterilised than dogs, studies done by the American Veterinary Association indicate that, on the whole, they are less likely to receive any other forms of veterinary care such as vaccinations. Anecdotal evidence obtained from local veterinarians and animal welfare personnel reveal similar patterns in this country. There are multiple possible reasons for this – cats are hard to transport and treat. Many people also value their dogs more, who they see as being dependent and thus less able to cope without human intervention when they are injured or ill.

Vaccination against diseases including rabies is one of the key methods that pet owners use to ensure that their pets stay healthy.¹²⁷ Although numerous pet owners that were surveyed indicated that they vaccinated their animals on a regular basis, those interviewed were less likely to do so. The reasons are twofold, lack of knowledge and education, combined with lack of access to veterinarians and affordability.



Photo 5: Animal welfare assistant in consult – Mdzananda Clinic

¹²⁷ Although rabies is not endemic in the Western Cape and the first rabies case in the area in seventeen years was reported in 2007 (<http://mg.co.za/article/2007-02-10-rabies-claims-yearling-in-western-cape>).

From the interviews it appeared that very few pets were vaccinated or dewormed, rendering the human population at risk from parasitic infestations and disease. Mdzananda Animal Clinic attribute the fact that puppies and young animals often die of preventable diseases to the general lack of access to veterinary support available to the community (www.mdzananda.co.za).

Some of the most common, but potentially deadly diseases found among dogs in Khayelitsha are biliary, parvovirus and distemper and Feline Aids and cat flu are prevalent among cats (ibid). Dogs (and to a lesser extent, cats), potentially constitute a threat to the public health. The dense dog population in Khayelitsha is largely unrestrained and free to roam the streets, even though dog ownership is high. Some common, but less serious animal health problems encountered in townships like Khayelitsha, from where the interview sample was drawn, are mange and parasitic infestations. One of the dogs belonging to an interview participant appeared to have mange. We advised her to take the dog to Mdzananda Clinic for treatment, as this commonly found skin disease could be contagious to other animals and humans. Dog bites are a further cause for concern. However, rabies is not a major threat in the Western Cape and it seems that most dogs living in Khayelitsha have not been vaccinated against this potentially deadly zoonotic disease. According to Mdzananda Animal Clinic, there are *"large numbers of owned roaming dogs as many homes and shanties are unfenced, and the clinic therefore regularly treats pets hurt in motor vehicle accidents"* (www.mdzananda.co.za). Other common injuries result from knife wounds, burns and even gunshot.

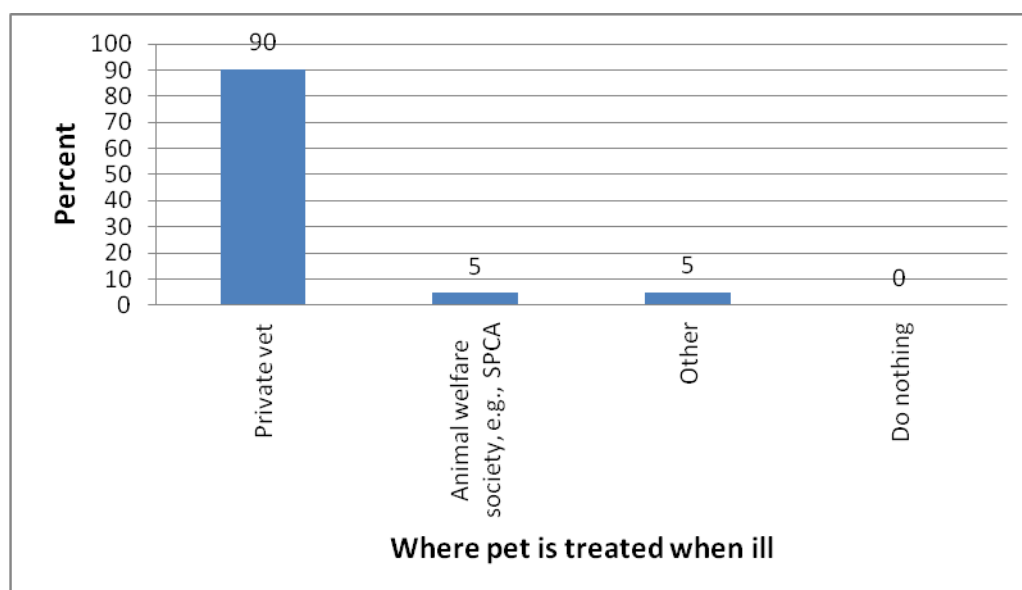


Figure 30: Where do you go when your pet is ill – survey sample

A staggering 90.4% (431) of the survey sample took their pet to private vets when they were ill. Twenty two (or 4.6%) went to animal welfare societies and the rest, a minority, administered their own treatments. (See Figure 30 & 32)

While the overwhelming majority of the survey sample took their pet to private vets when they were ill, only two participants (4%) in the interview sample said that they did this. This is partly because veterinary care is inaccessible to township dwellers and treatments are often very expensive. Combined with transportation shortages, the critical scarcity of vets, particularly black veterinary professionals, and the complete lack of private veterinary clinics operating in townships and informal settlements, exacerbates the problem.

Twenty three (or 46%) said that they took their animals to either the local animal welfare clinic or the mobile clinic that visited the area when they were ill or injured. Nine participants (or 18%) treated their animals themselves. Of these, four (or 8%) bought over the counter medication such as deworming pills, tick & flea dip, Dettol disinfectant, Panado and Dispirin and five (or 10%) consulted traditional healers or other knowledgeable people in their community, and/or made use of traditional medicine, herbs or muti if their pets became ill. Sixteen (or 32%) interview participants claimed that they did nothing at all to assist their pets and aid their recovery. (See Figure 31 & 32)

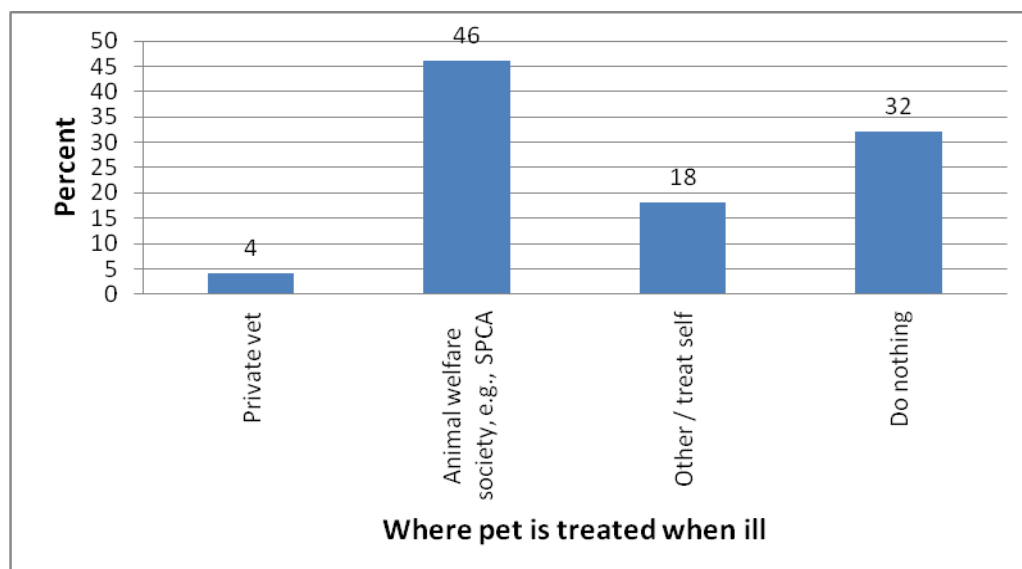


Figure 31: Where do you go when your pet is ill – interview sample

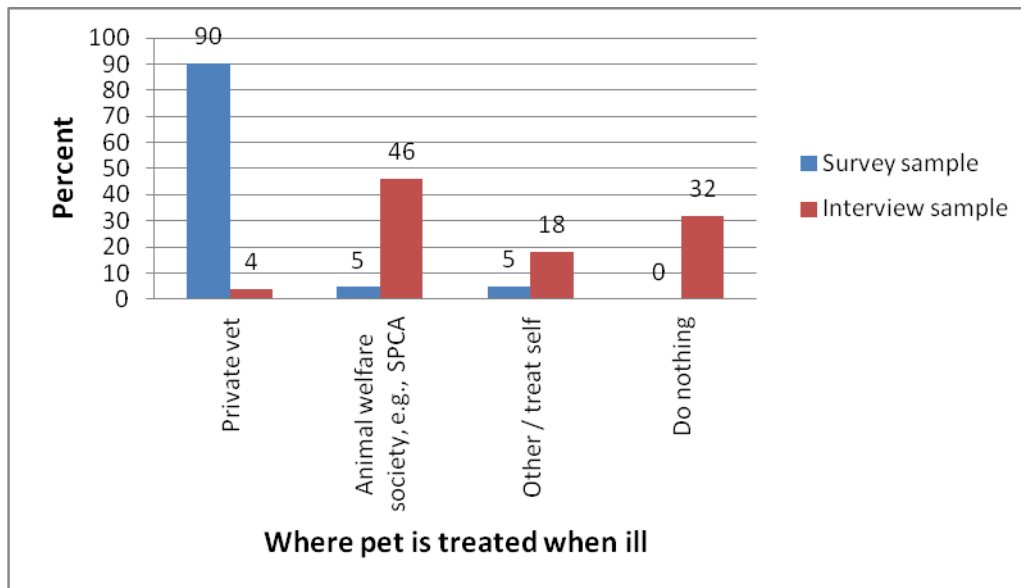


Figure 32: What do when pet is ill – comparison between samples

Although lack of transport is a key factor mitigating against pet owners seeking veterinary care for their animals, the SPCA operates a mobile clinic in the area. In addition, Mdzananda have a mobile unit and trailer in which to transport dogs and do conduct outreach work in Khayelitsha. (See Photo 6) As highlighted previously, Khayelitsha is unique in that it is better resourced from a veterinary perspective.



Photo 6: Mdzananda Mobile Unit and Trailer

Just under half of the total sample of participants interviewed, both at the clinic premises and at their homes, said that they took their sick or injured pets to either Mdzananda, the local permanent animal welfare clinic or to the mobile unit. With regard to transport, all sorts of 'alternative' methods are used by pet owners visiting the clinic. (See Photos 7, 8 & 9)



Photo 7: Pet Transport 1

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Photo 8: Pet Transport 2



Photo 9: Pet Transport 3

With regard to pet care, behaviour is not always consistent and, one woman interviewed, a single parent and shebeen owner from Makhaza washes her dog, *Pep* every week, yet he is not sterilised, nor does she take him to the vet when ill. If the dog becomes ill or is injured, she says that she "*just hopes for the best.*" Her views are contradictory - she claims that animals deserve better treatment and that she loves them, yet let six dogs starve to death and doesn't provide veterinary care for her current surviving dog, *Pep*. Similarly, a male street cleaner from Site B washes his dog *Fox* once a month with soap and water and he "*fumigates*" him twice a month.¹²⁸ But, he says that he does not take his dog anywhere when it is ill. *Fox* is fed daily, but has to sleep outside without any shelter "*no matter what the weather.*" However, unlike these two participants, some of the pet owners interviewed do take their pets for treatment when injured. These seemingly contradictory attitudes demonstrate the gap between views expressed and actions taken, which were encountered on numerous occasions during interviews and is discussed throughout this thesis.

¹²⁸ The respondent was probed about 'fumigation' and it appears that this refers to the anti-flea spray and dip that he administers to the dog to control external parasites.

The growth and diversification of the pet industry and the different forms of consumption of goods and services among participants in this study is explored next.

7.1.5. Pet Products and Services

In the South African context, broader socio-economic and cultural patterns impacted on pet-keeping to the extent that pets (specifically dogs) came to be seen as members of the family.

Pet owning consumers in South Africa tend to be mainly from the middle and upper classes. Even though poorer people in South Africa own large numbers of pets, they are unable to spend as much on them as their wealthier counterparts. In response to the growing popularity (and ready availability) of pets within all social groups in this country, the pet industry has experienced enormous growth and diversification. The assortment of pet foods (both local and imported), accessories and services for pets and their caretakers that are currently available are a testimony to this burgeoning sector of the South Africa economy. The sudden emergence and continued growth of specialist vet shops cater for the needs and consumerist urges of their target markets, viz., affluent and mostly urban pet owners.¹²⁹ Today's pets have access to many of the same services and goods as their human caregivers – they can be styled and dressed in designer clothing, taken to groomers or a pet spa, given a massage, taken to a homeopath or 'psychologist', attend boot camp and go on holiday to a pet-friendly hotel or resort. Like humans, they can be cremated when they die and pet burial companies cater for this. Kete highlights the propensity pet owners have towards 'humanising' the animals in their care. In her words: "*The impulse to impose quasi-human, quasi toy-like qualities on pets appears also in the matter of clothing and coiffure*" (Kete, 1994: 84).

Although this pattern of consumption and the trends described is fairly typical of white middle class pet owners in this country, many black South Africans, despite the demise of apartheid and the concomitant advent of democracy in 1994, remain trapped in social and economic circumstances that are similar to those experienced in developing countries. So, despite the changes that are taking place, when it comes to the treatment of animals in general and pet-keeping

¹²⁹ Vet shops, which differ from old-style pet shops, grew significantly up until 2008 and then slowed down (Supermarket and Retailer, September 2011). They offer information and education and an assortment of premium brands that are not for sale in other retail outlets. For example, *Hill's* dog and cat food can only be bought at vets and vet shops, who have a trade monopoly.

specifically, two distinct patterns emerge, with whites representing one version and blacks the other. Generally speaking, whites are far more likely than their black counterparts to treat pets as family members and spend huge sums of money on them. The pet food and pet industry in general thus caters predominantly for this sector of the market.

In this study, the majority of survey participants, three hundred and eight seven (or 84.9%) bought gifts and other merchandise for their pets. (See Figure 33)

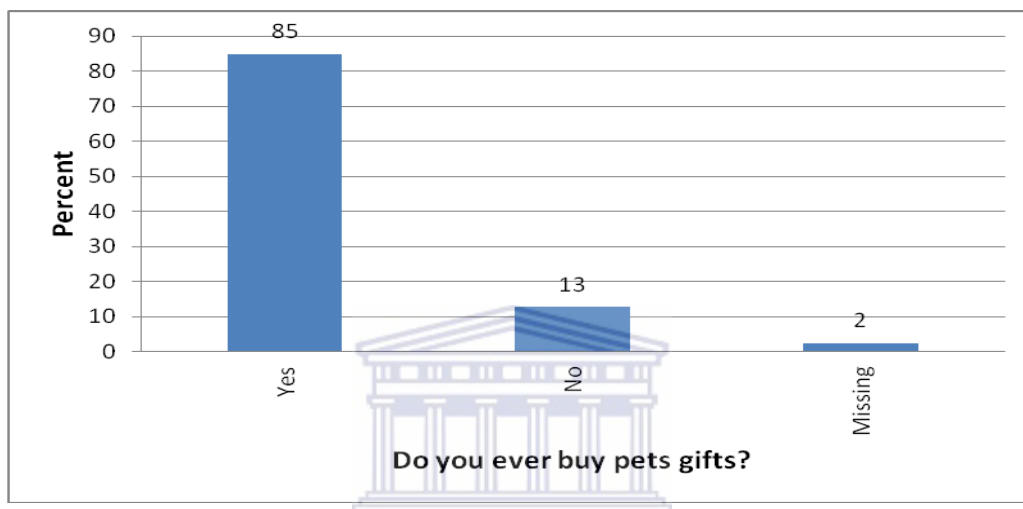


Figure 33: Do you ever buy your pets gifts - survey sample

WESTERN CAPE

The most popular purchases and pet gifts bought are rawhide chew treats, cow hoofs and toys. This is followed closely by beds and accessories like leads, collars, harnesses and pet clothing. Other popular treats include bones and steak. Over and above litter trays and related products (cat litter, litter scoop etc), cats mostly receive stuffed mice, scratch posts and catnip. (See Figure 34)

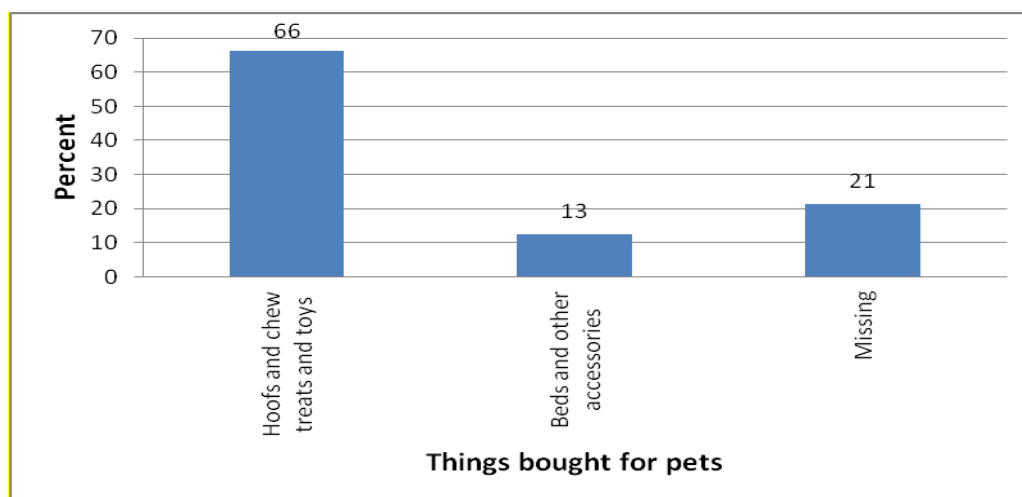


Figure 34: What do you buy your pets – survey sample

Those participants who bought things for their pets were probed further to ascertain whether this practice was limited to certain times of the year. Just under half of the sample, one hundred and seventy nine (or 46.3%) bought things for their pets throughout the year, while one hundred and seventy four (or 45%) only bought gifts for their pets when it was the pet's birthday or at times significant to humans such as Christmas and Easter. (See Figure 35)

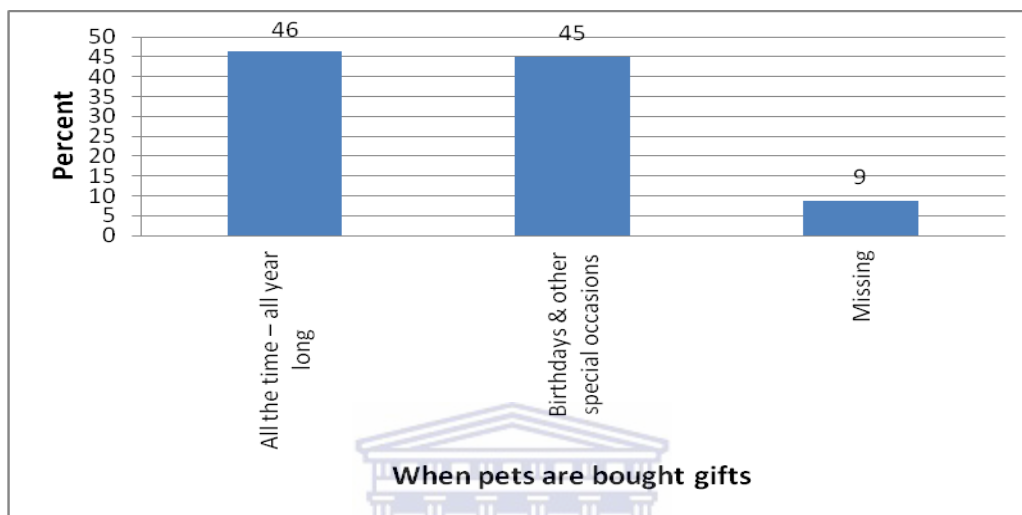


Figure 35: If yes, when do you do this – survey sample

The Khayelithsa residents who participated in this study display a different pattern in terms of consumption of pet goods. One respondent said that he did not buy things for his dogs because, "*it is not our culture as Zulus to buy animals gifts.*" Only five interviewees (or 10%) said that they bought things for their pets, mostly blankets and collars. (See Figure 36)

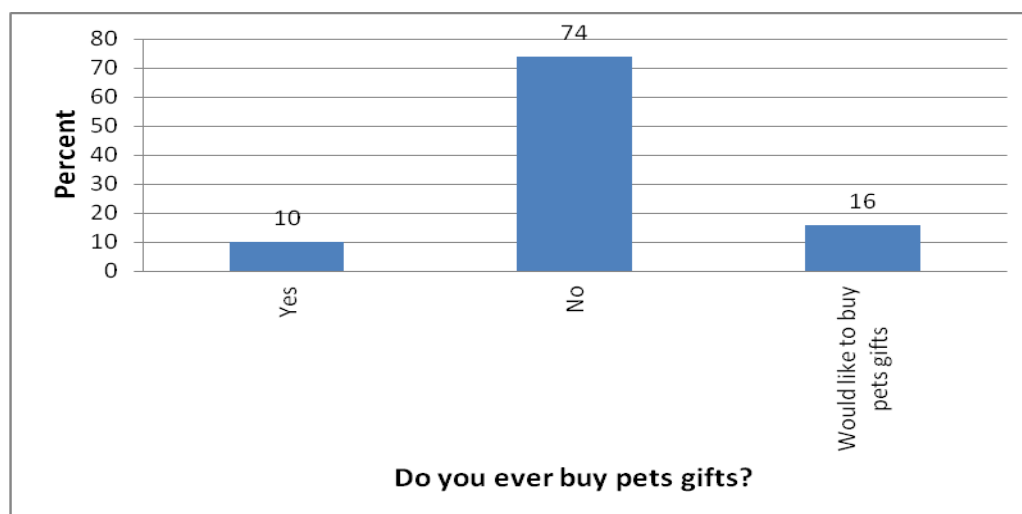


Figure 36: Do you ever buy your pets gifts – interview sample

Only one cat had a fleece blanket and six dogs had been given collars. This difference in consumption patterns is partly attributed to affordability and economic constraints. Several, eight (or 16%) of this sample of pet owners indicated that they would also like to be able to buy gifts for their pets, but were unable to afford to do so at present.



Photo 10 - Dog with collar and lead at Mdzananda Clinic

Another indication of the growth and diversification of the pet industry is the wide array of services that were not available to previous generations of pets and their owners that exist today. From dogwalkers to pet-sitters and dog crèches and daycare facilities, today's pets can be pampered in similar ways to human 'children.' Pets are also far more likely to be taken out of the domestic realm into public than in previous eras and more and more pet owners attempt to include their 4-legged companions (mostly dogs) in everything they do.

The majority, three hundred and eighty five (or 84.4%) of the survey participants take their pets out to various places. (See Figure 37)

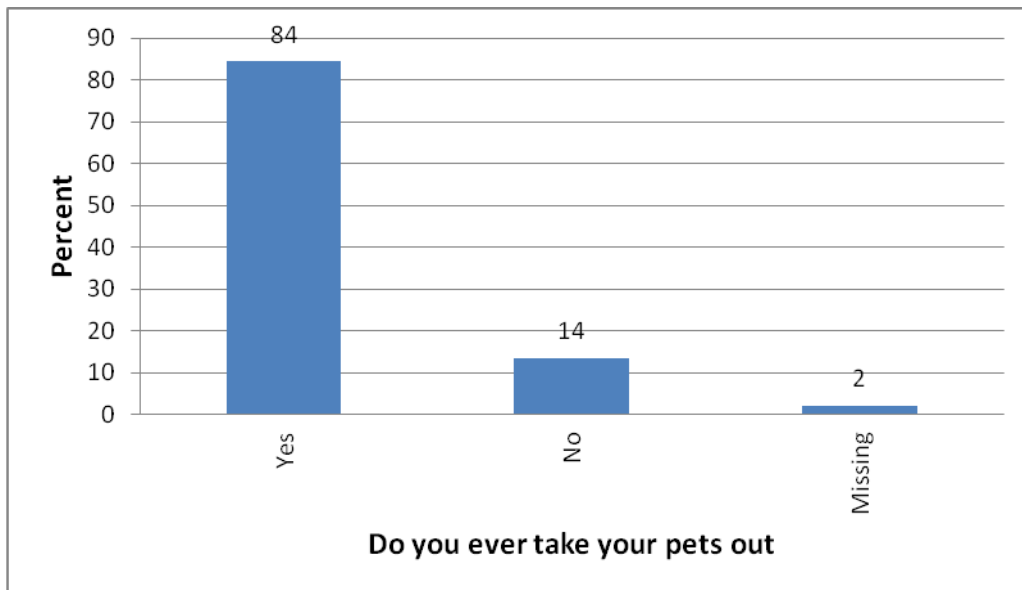


Figure 37: Do you ever take your pets out – survey sample

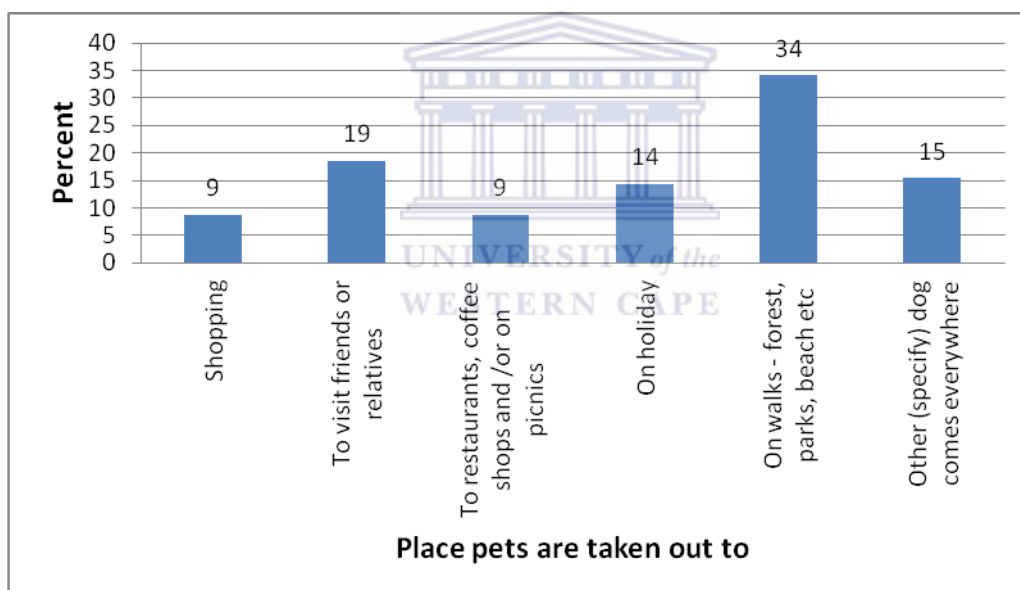


Figure 38: Where do you take your pets - survey sample

Pets belonging to survey participants are taken to visit the friends and relatives of their 'owners'. They are also taken on walks to dog-friendly parks, the beach and other open spaces. Some pets even accompany their 'owners' on holiday and they are booked into pet-friendly establishments and dine at pet-friendly restaurants. Most of this sample thus includes their dogs in various aspects of their everyday lives and several self-employed participants mentioned that they take their dog with them to work. (See Figure 38)

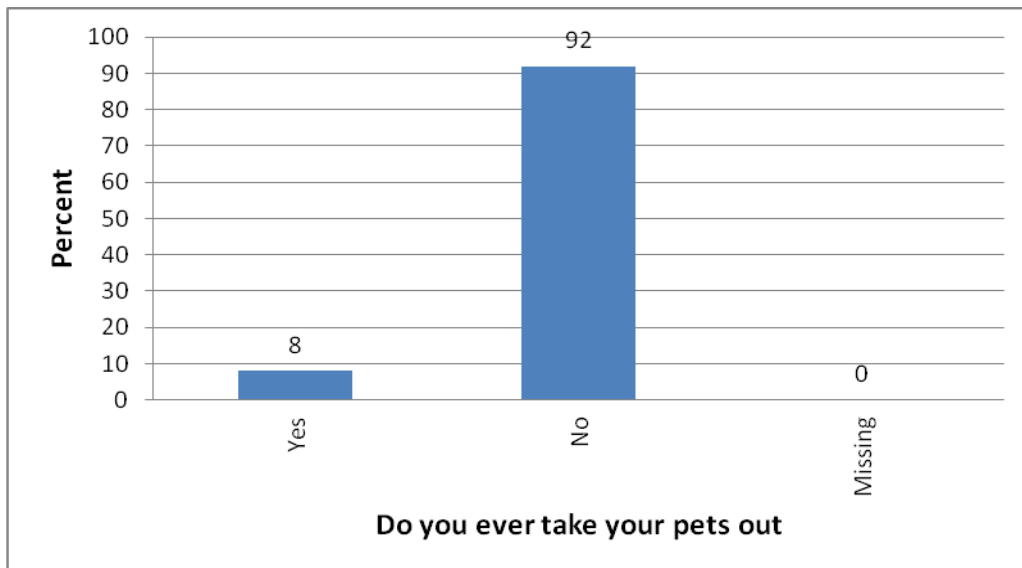


Figure 39: Do you ever take your pets out – interview sample

Once again, a different picture emerged among interviewees and a mere four people (or 8%) said that they took their pets on outings. (See Figure 39 & 40)

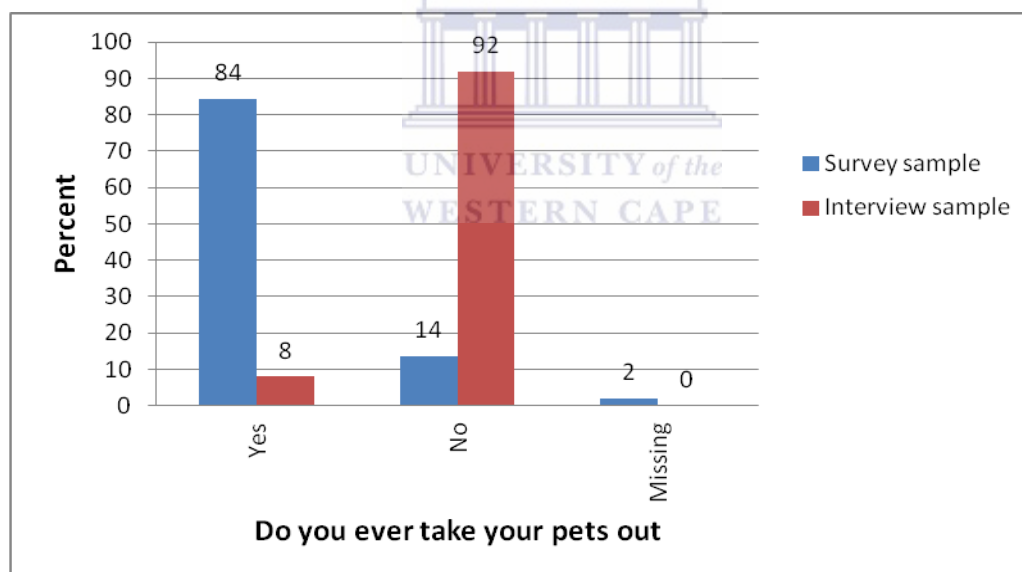


Figure 40: Do you take your pets out – comparison between samples

The few dogs belonging to interview participants, who were taken out, were mostly taken for a walk in the area. Sometimes they accompanied their 'owners' to the shop or to visit to a neighbour, friend or relative. Hunting trips are the only other outing pets kept by interviewees are taken on. Those participants who kept packs of hunting dogs took them out fairly often and they mostly went to open tracts of land adjacent to the township. A further two people (or 4%) of the

Khayelitsha residents interviewed said that they would like to be able to do take their pets to various places, but that it was difficult in their area as there were no parks or safe open spaces to walk their dogs. Their activities were further limited by having no transport of their own. All public transport services in this country ban dogs outright (some exceptions are made for guide and service dogs) and a pet owner wanting to take an animal out with them would struggle to do so unless they had their own vehicle.

It is worth mentioning that almost everyone, four hundred and ten (or 90%) of participants in the survey sample had taken photographs of their pets. (See Figure 41)

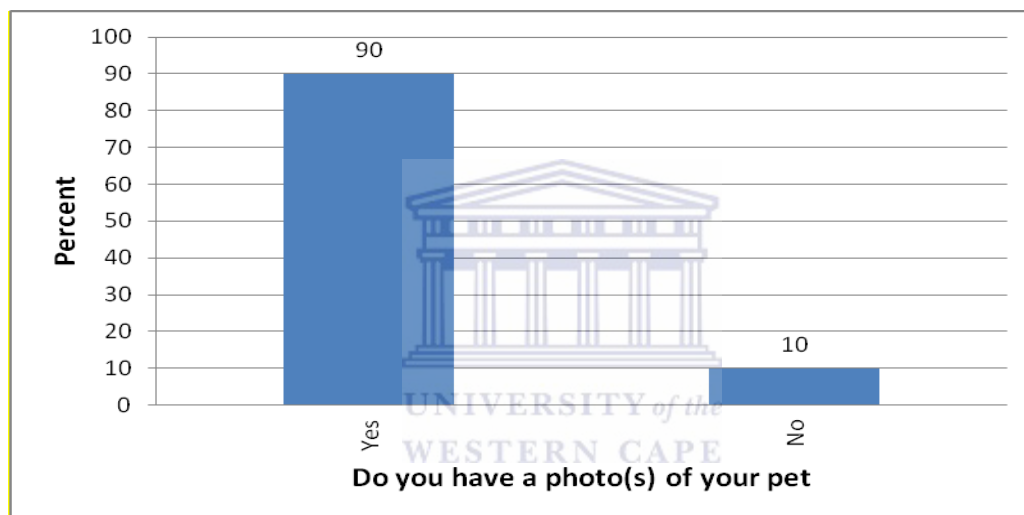


Figure 41: Do you have a photo/s of your pets – survey sample

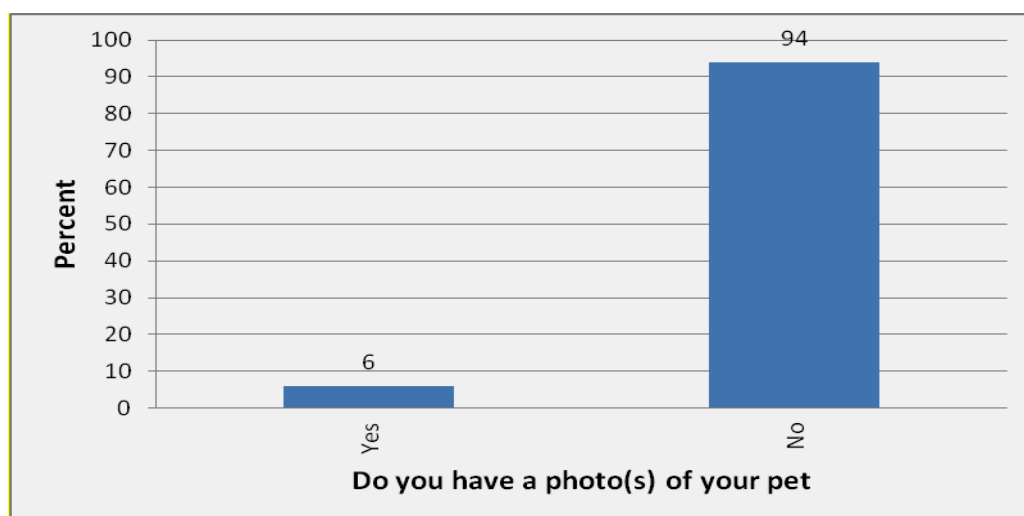


Figure 42: Do you have a photo/s of your pets – interview sample

In contrast, only three (or 6%) of the Khayelitsha interviewees had taken photographs of their pets. (See Figures 42 & 43) However, several interviewees said that they would very much like to have photographs of their pets, but they never had cameras. A female spaza shop owner, is one of the participants interviewed that has photos of her cat, *Nono*. She said that she took the photo of her cat after seeing photos of other people's pets in a magazine, which "gave [her] the idea." Another, a male old-age pensioner was very proud of the fact that he has several photos of his dog, *Puppy*. He said, he loves his "beautiful dog" so he "thought it would be a good idea" to photograph him. A colour photo of *Puppy* has pride of place on the wall of his small RDP house.

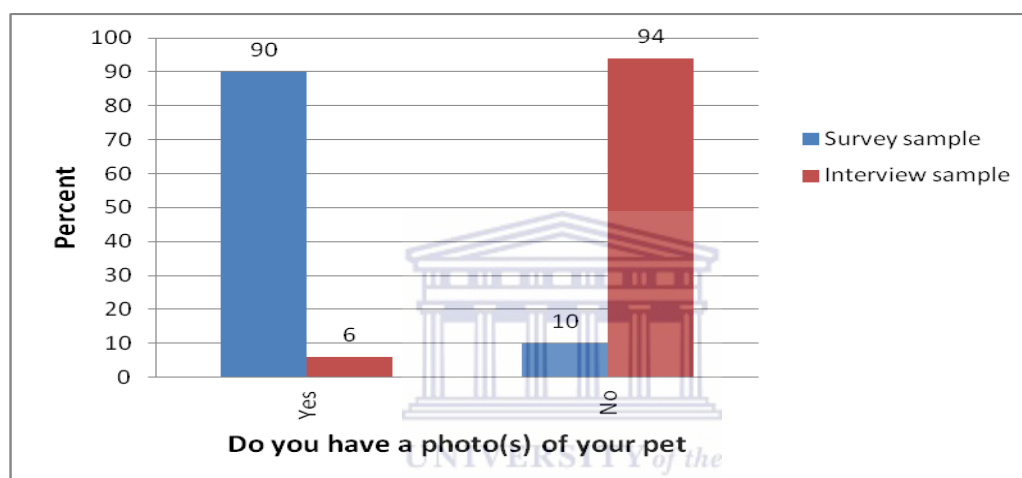


Figure 43: Photo/s of your pets – comparison between samples

7.2. Conclusion

Some cultures are less susceptible than others to the advances of western culture and current fashions regarding pets, which manifests in varied patterns of pet care and consumption. The 'humanisation' trend in pet-keeping is more evident among participants in the survey sample than it is among those interviewed in Khayelitsha. However, even though black South Africans are generally less likely to treat animals like humans and incorporate them into family life than are whites, there are clear signs that this is changing. This was indicated during interviews with participants and is further corroborated by media reports.

Regardless of these different patterns in pet care that have emerged, a range of reasons exist as to why people choose to keep other animals as pets. Essentially, this chapter examined how pets are cared for. In the next chapter, the reasons why some groups and individuals look after pets and others don't are interrogated.

8

Making Connections – Pets, Meaning and Emotional Attachment to Animals

"...the development of strong emotional attachments to animals can be accounted for in terms of the moral crisis and disorder of postmodernity"

(Franklin, 1999: 35).

This chapter continues to expound the research findings. Once again, wherever possible the discussion follows the same sequence as the questionnaires. The function of pets in the lives of participants from both samples, the different views expressed and patterns of behaviour observed are outlined in this chapter. The meanings that pets have for people, the roles they play in their 'caretakers' lives, which in many instances, is related to the reasons why they keep pets, are all explored. In this chapter the following questions are addressed: How do people define and construct their pets, how do they describe their pets' roles and functions, and what meaning do their pets have for them?

Explanations of the appeal of pets offered in the available literature are examined in the light of these findings. In particular, the writings of Leslie Irvine (2004) and Adrian Franklin (1999) are drawn on to explain the myriad motivations and diverse practices associated with pet-keeping in contemporary South Africa. This study argues that, along with demographic factors, broad social changes and past experience, the emotional connection and the strength of the bond between pet and owner plays a significant part in forging our relationships with non-human animals, including our pets. Irvine's concept 'animal capital' is used to explain the divergent views expressed and different attachment levels indicated by participants in this study. In addition, Franklin's theoretical contribution which posits that the, "*postmodernization of human-animal relations resulted in the shift from anthropocentric instrumentality to zoocentric empathy*" is useful for understanding relationships and interactions with animals among participants (1999: 175).

This chapter also examines broader attitudes to animals and how participants respond to prevailing welfare issues, as well as past and present views about

animals, especially pets. But, first, here is a brief synopsis of some of the main findings highlighted in this chapter.

With regard to the role and function of pets in their lives:

- Only a few of the participants in the Khayelitsha sample had previously relied on their pets for emotional support or companionship, whereas most of the participants in the survey sample had experienced this.
- Among survey participants, the animals most likely to offer support of this nature are dogs, followed by cats and other animals like horses. Interviewees followed a similar pattern and in the majority of cases, dogs served this function. Only one woman said that her cat provided her with comfort and another had experienced this from farm animals, particularly, sheep and goats.
- Although the question was not specifically asked, most of the pet owners who responded to the survey, indicated that their pets were part of their family and that they had developed close relationships with them. Only a small number of participants in the Khayelitsha sample viewed their pets as friends or family members.
- While the majority of participants in Khayelitsha made reference to the usefulness and 'working' function served by their pets (mostly dogs, but also cats), this was rarely mentioned in the survey responses. In those instances where the usefulness of pets was referred to, the animal's tended to perform dual functions, as both 'workers' and companions.
- Differing levels and demonstrations of what Irvine (2004) terms, 'animal capital' can be identified among the two samples. In addition, the source and nature of this shows considerable variance.

When probed about their general awareness of animal issues, animal cruelty and the moral status of animals, interestingly:

- Most of the participants in both samples agreed that animals should be given more legal protection.
- Although the majority of participants described themselves as 'animal lovers,' there are clear differences of opinion regarding animal rights, as well as fundamental contradictions and disparities between ideas and practices,
- The majority of survey participants felt that animals deserve the same rights as humans. A significant number agreed that animals need more consideration, but emphasized that humans come first. A small minority said

that animals exist for our use. A different pattern emerged in the Khayelitsha sample and more participants agreed with this latter statement.

- Most participants (in both samples) stated that they became upset when they saw dead animals on the road and when animals were hurt on TV and in movies.
- Almost everyone (in both samples) had heard of the SPCA and most knew what they do. Just less than half of the survey sample is involved with and/or actively supports animal welfares and charities, while no one interviewed made similar claims.

8.1. The Roles, Functions and Meanings of Pets

Although pet-keeping is a fairly universal and ubiquitous social practice, people keep pets for different reasons and various explanations of pet-keeping have evolved. An evaluation of the different roles that pets play in the lives of participants and the motivations and meanings underlying their relationships with pets, reveal that they serve multiple purposes. They can provide emotional support and companionship, function as 'surrogate' family or as status symbols, and they can be useful and perform tasks like hunting and guarding. Various reasons that account for the emergence and widespread popularity of pet-keeping in human societies across the globe have been outlined in the literature. Irvine (2004) identifies four main explanations of pet-keeping as being: the deficiency argument, the affluence argument, the dominance argument and the biophilia hypothesis.

Franklin (1999) links changing relations with animals to broad social and cultural transformations. He examines a variety of animal related practices, which are shaped by variables like class, race and gender. Franklin argues that theories of modernity and postmodernity advanced by, amongst others Beck (1992) and Giddens (1990, 1991) can be used to understand these historic shifts (1999: 34). For him, changes in the 'ontological security' of the individual brought about shifts in our relationships with animals, particularly pets. Franklin's interpretation of postmodernist theory and his application thereof to animal practices in contemporary societies is drawn on to outline the macro social processes that impact on how we regard and care for our pets. Evidence of these changes, especially the formation of closer relationships and intensification of interactions with pets, was found during this study. Although it was more pronounced and identifiable among the survey sample, some interviewees exhibited and expressed similar views and attitudes. Human beings appear to have an

emotional bond or attachment to their companion animals that is not unlike what they experience with their family and friends (Cain, 1985; Katcher and Beck, 1983, 1996). In this sense, the findings of this study are in line with those of similar studies conducted in countries like Australia (Franklin, 2007: 14). Observations of pets functioning as children or family members are corroborated by the comments made by an assortment of participants, particularly survey sample. As has been emphasized earlier on, this sample comprised a specific demographic in terms of class, gender and race.

Different motivations underlie the decision to acquire a pet and pets have varied meanings, which are very often personal. However, it is imperative to identify the social significance of pets. Pets and their meanings are firmly rooted in cultural discourse and the production thereof needs to be situated within a social and political context. Among South Africans, the meaning of pets differs and while some view pets as signifying something positive, for others this is not the case. The main reasons and rationale for keeping pets that were identified by the participants in this particular study are highlighted in the following section.

8.1.1. Pets as Surrogate Humans

Although this has been elaborated in Chapter Five, it is necessary to briefly recap the main ideas in relation to the findings of this study, as well as the explanations of pet-keeping advanced by Irvine (2004). The idea that pets can, and often do, replace various human relationships, particularly among certain demographic groups is gaining ground, despite this being contradicted by current research. There is a general consensus among several authors (Veevers, 1985, Cain, 1985 and Irvine, 2004) that the relationships between humans and their pets have become more intense and that in some instances, companion animals can act as a 'stand-in' for human significant others. But, these authors caution that companion animals can and often do act as more than surrogates and are often seen as 'persons.' Many people talk to and confide in their pets as they would with human beings and they firmly believe that the animal is able to understand them accordingly. Although the pet 'owners' who exhibit these tendencies, frequently attribute personhood to their pets, with whom they have significant relationships, they recognise, albeit implicitly at times, that there are differences, which distinguish animals from humans. The strong emotional bonds formed with animals and the interactions that many people have with their pets are not necessarily the same as the types of connections they have with other humans. Nor do they completely replace relationships with human significant others, as is

suggested by proponents of the 'deficiency' argument, which Irvine (2004) outlines.

The central premise of the deficiency argument rests on the idea that people keep pets to replace the human relationships that they lack. In this sense, pets become 'surrogate humans' and can be a substitute for almost any type of human relationship, such as children or friends. Irvine refutes this stereotypical argument and counters that animals provide "*qualitatively different*" kinds of relationships than do humans and do not replace them (2004: 67). She concurs with Katcher (1981), who argues that, pets are not mere substitutes for human relationships, but offer something qualitatively different. Irvine (2004) also points out that if pets were kept to replace human ties, then the highest levels of pet-keeping can be expected to be found among single people, yet research has shown that this group demonstrates the lowest levels of pet-keeping. Married people, particularly those with children in the household display the highest frequencies of pet-keeping. In a study of childless couples in the book, *Childless By Choice*, by Jean E. Veivers (1980), the author concludes that childless couples do not have pets with any greater frequency than other couples. The findings of this study confirm this and in the survey sample, those who were either married or living together comprise the majority of the sample. The divorced and widowed people surveyed, mostly had other people, usually children, living with them.¹³⁰ Only a minority of the participants in this sample are single, and most of them live alone. A different pattern surfaced in the Khayelitsha sample and; in this instance, half the respondents are single. However, none of them lived alone and in most cases, they shared households with numerous other family members, including children.

Only two participants, both from the survey sample alluded to pets being 'substitutes' for humans. In these instances, the women concerned were unable to have children and pets performed the role of 'surrogate children' in their lives. A forty four year old, married female, explained: "*the [Siamese] cats are our lives. We bought them when we found out I couldn't have children and they have filled the void ever since. Both my husband and I dote on them and I can't imagine life without them.*" According to Katcher and Beck (1983), pets can become as important as a spouse or significant human other and in some cases can function as 'surrogate mates.' While there is no doubt that this holds true for some pet owners, very little evidence thereof was found during this study and

¹³⁰ The marital status and family composition of participants is discussed in Chapter Five.

only a small minority of participants appeared to use pets as alternatives to human companionship. In line with Franklin's view that, "*it is not at all clear that the extension of greater care and humanity towards pets is simply because they are fulfilling surrogate human roles*" (1999: 86), the findings of this thesis show that, in many cases, animals are being valued for their difference and their 'otherness.' Pet animals are not replacing humans – the emotionally intense and meaningful relationships that increasing numbers of people are developing with them are distinct from the relationships they have with fellow humans. A kind of interspecies connection, in which animal needs are considered and they are appreciated for their uniquely animal qualities is emerging alongside the parallel tendencies to anthropomorphise and humanise them.

In many societies, including our own, pets are increasingly being viewed as 'family members.' Numerous pet owners surveyed for this study volunteered information that was not expressly asked for in the questionnaire. Where relevant, these responses were included in the findings and analysis. Most of them stated that they considered their pets to be part of their families. However, in the Khayelitsha interview sample, only seven participants (or 14%) – three males and four females, made similar claims. One of them, a young male student from Mandela Park had a dog called *Stekana*, who was he claimed was his closest companion. He believed that, "*dog is man's best friend and gives your home dignity.*" Another, a female teacher from Kuyasa said she loves dogs and although her dog serves the purpose of "*house police*" she also sees him as her "*favourite friend.*" A young female living in Driftsands works at a local soup kitchen and she refers to her cat as "*my child*". In her words, "*Lulu is like my first born baby.*" A similar view was expressed by a thirty-six year old male security guard from Enkanini, whose dog (who he rescued when he saw him running in the street) is named *Bin Laden*. He says: "*Laden is my first baby and I have built a nice shelter for Laden*". Two other female respondents said that "*animals have a lot of love and they can be compared to babies*" and that they "*bring out our mothering instinct.*" Another interviewee, a male pensioner, has a three year old male German Shepherd dog called *Puppy*. He initially acquired the dog for security purposes, but said that "*later on the dog formed part of my family as everyone fell in love with the dog.*" Since all his children are currently away studying at university, the dog keeps him company and he said that, "*Puppy is the only family I have in town.*" He also walks *Puppy* whenever he can and says that he, "*cherishes those moments.*" These attitudes are the minority view and the vast majority of participants interviewed saw their animals as primarily

performing practical roles. For both dogs and cats, their 'working' function was emphasised.

In both samples, the animals most likely to offer emotional support and comfort are dogs. However, other animals like cats and horses also fulfilled this role in the lives of survey participants. In the survey sample, two hundred and twenty eight (or 50%) of the survey participants, relied on dogs and fifty (or 11%) on cats. Although many of those surveyed kept dogs for security reasons and the animals often served a dual purpose, (as both protectors and companions), only one stressed this. A twenty nine year old male who identified himself as a professional hunter, said that he used his dogs primarily for working purposes, specifically hunting. Despite their increased integration and acceptance into the family unit, utilitarian attitudes towards pets remain widespread, especially within particular communities and groups.

Only a few interviewees seemed to identify strongly with animals and have developed an emotional connection with them. But, this study has shown that, although the tendency to form intense relationships and forge emotional bonds with pet animals is more prevalent among the privileged and affluent members of society, it is not limited to them. Western style pet-keeping and feelings about animals are making inroads into all communities in this country, especially among the upwardly mobile middle classes. Those individuals and groups, who were located at the upper end of the social spectrum in terms of class position, remain far more likely to regard their pets as family members than those who are materially less privileged. In the South African context, race often intersects with class and in this instance this study shows that for the most part, black South Africans (both working and middle class) were less inclined than their white counterparts, to see their pets in this way. But, it is imperative to re-emphasise that, regardless of the diverse pet-keeping styles practiced by participants from various social groups, demographic factors alone cannot account for these differences. In all social groups, there are individuals who care deeply about animals and invest considerably more in the welfare of their pets than others in their category. This study attempted to explain this tendency.

Whether pets are viewed as family or something else, their popularity has increased in many parts of the world, especially in the 'west.' Franklin (1999) argues that pet populations have risen in Britain, Europe, Australia and the USA in recent years. Franklin contends that "*the changing nature of pet-keeping can*

be related to important social and cultural transformations in modernity, particularly those affecting the individual and household" (1999: 84). Thomas (1983) concurs that new relationships with animals were established in the early modern period. For Franklin (1999), there are a number of indicators that demonstrate that pets have become socially and emotionally closer to humans and that they are frequently seen as 'part of the family.' In Australia, for instance, the vast majority of respondents who were part of the National Pet Survey (2000 – 2004), viewed their pets as family members (Franklin, 2007). Phineas (1973) links the growth of pet-keeping to the demise of the extended family and the corresponding need for additional family members. For Menache, *"Pets serve as surrogate, less expensive children"* (1998: 68). She adds that, in order to counteract the stresses and pressures of urban life, pets had to be docile (ibid).

Franklin observes that, sociologists have documented *"increased individualization, fragmentation of family and community, a frailty of the human bond – at all levels of society"* in many parts of the world today (2007: 10). Loneliness and high levels of ontological insecurity are widely reported in societies ranging from Australia to America (Franklin, 1999, 2007; Giddens, 1990, 1991; Bauman, 1993, 2003). Due to the lack of social and emotional connections and relationships with other humans, pets increasingly serve as surrogates (Franklin, 1999). While pets are important to many people at all times, they tend to value them most at times of crisis and loss, through disruptive transitions, and in weathering prolonged adversity (Cain, 1985). Companion animals provide socio-emotional support that facilitates coping, recovery, and resilience. When people feel vulnerable, lonely, or depressed, other humans may find it difficult or uncomfortable to relate to them. At times like these, the bonds formed with pets can offer comfort, affection, and a sense of security (Cain, 1985). Pets can facilitate adaptation to turbulent life changes. Cain (1985) found that 82% of families acquired a pet at times when they were experiencing a move, separation, divorce, or death. During disruptive periods like these, pets can provide support and stability. Children with pets are less anxious and withdrawn when moving to a new neighborhood and school (Melson, 2003). In one divorcing family, parents eased their daughter's adjustments by letting her keep the family dog with her during the week at her mother's home and accompanying her for weekends at her father's house. A participant surveyed said that she allowed her daughter to adopt a dog as a way of coping with the parent's divorce. In this instance, the dog, Oscar goes with the child when she moves between the two parent's homes, thereby providing her

with both "*company, support and consistency.*" The survey participant believed that Oscar understood when her child talked or confided in him. This is in line with Cain's findings that pets were sensitive to their owner's moods (as conveyed in their tone of voice, body language, or tears). Cain also found that, just as children's emotional or behavioral symptoms can indicate anxiety or stress in the family system, pets often reflected and expressed family distress. Some of the ways that this manifests are: some pets stop eating or display physical symptoms, such as vomiting, diarrhoea, inability to sleep, restlessness or even seizures when tension levels within the family are high (Cain, 1985). Behavioural problems such as excessive barking and inappropriate soiling are also common during stressful periods within the household. According to Cain, at times of intense spousal or parent-child conflict, pets may react by moving close, seeking attention, trying to protect a vulnerable family member or withdrawing or hiding.

Linked to the idea that pets can and often do function as 'surrogate humans' is the recognition of their therapeutic value. A considerable volume of writing about the beneficial and therapeutic roles played by pets exists. Along with the physical, psychological and inter-personal purposes served by pet-keeping, Veevers (1985) postulates that pets can perform various positive social roles. In her article, *The Social Meaning of Pets*, pets are referred to as conduits for networking. Wood *et al* (2005) argue that pets help people to think beyond themselves. They are therapeutic and are good for people's psychological, physiological and psychosocial health and wellbeing. Pets can act as facilitators of social interaction. The authors also highlight the "*community benefits that might accrue from pet ownership*" and the pet's role as a "*social lubricant*" which can help people make "*social contact*" (Wood *et al*, 2005: 1161). They argue that pets can help to facilitate communication and co-operation for mutual benefit and aid the establishment of networks, norms and social trust among people. Pets can enhance health by being "*catalysts for social networks, which is another of the constructs central to social capital*" (Wood *et al*, 2005: 1161). One of the participants surveyed (a single, self-employed fifty-six year old female, who lives alone), explained that she deliberately took her dogs out walking when she felt lonely and depressed as meeting up with fellow dogwalkers in her local park provided her with the company and conversation needed to ease her sense of social isolation. She was "*on first name terms with all the regulars,*" both the dogs and their owners and she enjoyed this daily interaction.

Menache (1998) argues that emotional stress and psychological deprivation foster dog keeping. Studies have shown that pets are frequently adopted during or soon

after stressful periods in people's lives like divorce or death of a spouse. This was confirmed by a number of participants and the general feeling was that pet animals were effective in counteracting the loss of human relationships. One participant, a forty-nine year old female estate agent, who adopted a kitten, claimed that *"adopting this animal helped me to keep it together after my husband left."* Another, a sixty-seven year old retired female stated that *"if it wasn't for the love and devotion of my dog, I would have struggled to cope with my husband's death and the loss of my best friend."*

In his book, Franklin (1999) cites studies that show that the purchase or acquisition of a pet often follows closely the domestic and familial ruptures associated with Giddens' sense of 'ontological insecurity'. Research has repeatedly shown that people who lack or have lost "close ties" are most likely to regard pets having significance in their lives and they tend to develop stronger relationships with them (Franklin, 1999). Several participants in this study, most notably those surveyed, explained that they either acquired a new pet or became closer to their existing pets after experiencing the severing of personal and domestic ties through divorce, death or other means. One respondent to the survey, a forty-six year old woman, related how adopting a kitten after her traumatic divorce prevented her from committing suicide. According to her, the emotional and familial-type connection she developed with the kitten helped her through a difficult period of her life. In her words, *"the companionship and sense of purpose that this animal provides"*, keeps me going. These sentiments were echoed by, a fifty-one year old married woman, who added that for her, *"my animals are better than therapy"* and *"I love them like children."*

In this study, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences with pets, both in the past and present lives. Once again two distinct patterns emerged among the two samples. The majority of the participants in the survey, three hundred and ninety four (86.4%) had experienced an emotional connection with and had been strongly attached to animals, especially pets, at some stage of their lives. One hundred and thirty two (33.5%) claimed that this was restricted to when they were growing up, both during childhood and as teenagers. However, for seventy five (or 19.1%) this was a feature of their adult lives, both in the past and present and one hundred and forty nine (or 37.8%) relied on their pets for emotional support and companionship throughout their lives. Even though many of the respondents from both samples reported that pets have been a source of

support and comfort to them in the past and also in their present lives, in the Khayelitsha interview sample this role was acknowledged less frequently.

Only a small number, seven (or 14%) of the participants in the Khayelitsha sample (five females and two males) stated that they had an emotional connection with their pets, depended on them and viewed them as companions. A twenty-two year old university student from Mandela Park said that he played with his dog when he was "*sad and stressed*" and found her to be "*the best stress reliever*." A single mother who works for the Department of Social Development in Khayelitsha and lives in Makhaza, has two dogs who are her "*day and night security service*" and although she doesn't rely on them for comfort as such, she "*feels secure when they are around*." Another student, a female living in Makhaza, agreed. Her German Shepherd dog is seen as both "*security guard and the best police for home*" as well as the "*best comforter*" with whom she "*plays all the time*." A teacher from Kuyasa has a dog for both "*house police*" and to "*talk to when I am not feeling well*." Another young woman from Town Two said that her dog gave her, "*emotional support*" and an older male from Makhaza who owned a shebeen and five taxis was very enthusiastic about the interview and spoke passionately about his dogs. He explained how dogs had assisted him during his childhood – "*they helped me to look after a flock of sheep and also helped fight against other young boys*." A number of male interviewees hunted with dogs in rural areas during childhood and the emotions, associations and memories these experiences evoked were of a positive nature.

While dogs are the animals that are turned to most often for emotional comfort and reassurance, one woman, from Green Park, owned a small spaza shop and her cat not only kept it free of mice, but provided emotional support for her. According to her, "*when I am stressed and facing a difficult time, I cuddle Nono*." Another female participant interviewed said that she had received 'support' from cows, sheep and goats, particularly while growing up in a rural area. She also claimed that when her "*mother beat her for not doing household chores*," her father's dogs would comfort her. All her current pets, which included the usual dogs and cats as well as ducks, provided her with companionship and emotional support.

Notwithstanding these views, among interviewees, pet animals are rarely assigned roles comparable with human companions. The notion of pets functioning as a source of comfort and support is a view more commonly held

among survey participants. Two interviewees actually said that they thought it was unfair and morally wrong to "offload stress onto a dog."

Sophia Menache, argues that "*Although the image of dogs changed in response to differences in time and space, these changes did not affect the basic attachment of Western persons to the canine species*" (1998: 69). Westerners exhibit a long history of 'friendship' with dogs from ancient to modern times. Although the expectations we have of dogs are historically and culturally contingent and the meaning of pet-keeping has shifted, affection for animals is a persistent and enduring feature of human societies. Menache concludes that "*petkeeping did not result from a market society, but from a tendency of human beings, whether in the framework of traditional societies or industrial cities, to project onto their pets – dogs being perhaps the most important members of this category – their most cherished values and expectations*" (1998: 82). She adds "*dog keeping, though did not emerge from the detachment of modern human beings from nature, though this detachment did change its meaning. Dog keeping appears, rather, as a constant component in the annals of Western civilization and, in fact, is entitled to be freed of the modernism attributed to it*" (ibid).

Heidi Nast (2006) refers to the work of Marc Shell who explored the familial relationship between pets and people. Shell (1986) "*documented how pets have in the west become valued anew according to modern and postmodern sensibilities*" (Nast, 2006: 301-302). According to Shell: "*Pets, they say, provide pleasure, companionship, and protection, or the feeling of being secure. Pet owning decreases blood pressure and increases life expectancy for coronary and other patients. Pets provide an excuse for exercise and a stimulus to meet people. They help children to learn gentleness and responsibility; they help young couples to prepare for parenthood; and they give their owners some of the pleasure of having children without some of the responsibility. Pets help people to deal with the loss by death of a friend or relative. Not least of all, pets are useful in many kinds of psychotherapy and family therapy*" (Shell, 1986: 121). For Nast, Shell's work points to the start of new perceptions of and relationships with pets, which for her, correspond with the emergence of post-industrial society and concomitant increased consumption. Nast argues that in postindustrial, post-modern worlds, "*pet animal's allure is in part because they can be anything and anyone you want them to be; and remarkable new kinds of spaces to accommodate them are being created*" (2006: 303). In her analysis, she rejects Donna Haraway's view that dogs have become increasingly "infantilized" and

argues instead that in post-industrial places pet animals (especially dogs and cats) are not merely ideal substitutes for children, but "*their anthropomorphic malleability and their insertion into an economy where mobility of labor and capital is an advantage, means that pets (especially dogs) today supersede children as ideal love objects; they are more easily mobilized, require less investment, and to some degree can be shaped into whatever you want them to be—a best friend, a lover, an occasional companion*" (2006: 302). For Nast, there are distinct advantages to owning a pet rather than having a child - they can fit our lifestyles anyway we choose, are highly mobile and can be disposed of if become a problem. Globalisation is re-shaping human-animal relations and the high level of mobility and disposability of pet animals are some of the manifestations of macro social processes.

In sum, this study has found that, in most cases, pets do not replace other humans, including family members. So, even though they are a member of the family like any other, child, grandparent, nephew, aunt etc., they do not take their place. The notion that pets are integral to the family unit is becoming increasingly widespread and this view is filtering through to all communities and social groups in this country.

The prevailing view that attempts to establish a relationship between pet-keeping and increased levels of economic wealth and advances in material circumstances is outlined by Irvine (2004). This explanation of pet-keeping is investigated next.

8.1.2. Pets, Affluence and Status

The affluence argument links pet-keeping to economic improvements and posits that, as people and societies become wealthier and more prosperous, pet-keeping proliferates. Once again, Irvine challenges this argument since pet-keeping is widespread even in poor countries and among the lower classes. Economic improvements may indeed have an impact on the style of pet-keeping practiced, but the ubiquitous presence of pets among the poor suggests that this alone does not promote pet-keeping. So, although there is a positive correlation between rising income and pet-keeping, the observations made during fieldwork and on various other occasions over the past decade, confirm that in most poor areas in this country, there are pets everywhere and as many people, if not more, have pets than in wealthier neighbourhoods. When people become richer, this may well influence their decision to finally take on a pet and they may adopt new ways of caring for their pet since they can afford to spend more money on them, but

material improvements alone cannot account for why people keep pets. The poorest of the poor, the unemployed and even the homeless keep animals as pets and there are as many (if not more) pets during a recession than during more economically prosperous times.

Whether pet-keeping can be directly linked to increased affluence or not, any attempt to understand the motivations underlying pet-keeping as well as the diverse meanings that pets have for people, needs to consider economic and other related factors. Pets are costly, yet this does not deter many people from keeping them. Participants in both samples gave examples of situations where their pets cost them money or caused them inconvenience, yet they kept the animals regardless. Several participants who responded to the survey had experienced situations where their pets had become extremely destructive. They mentioned that their dogs had eaten sofas, chairs, irrigation systems, remote control devices, designer shoes, cellphones and even wooden doors and cats that urinated on laptops and into electrical plug sockets. One woman interviewed said her dog was causing her problems as she kept ripping washing off the line and she had already destroyed items of clothing, which the 'owner' could not afford to replace. Participants had pets that required special food and medication, which was not only expensive, but limited their mobility. One woman surveyed described how she hadn't been on holiday for *"many, many years as my old cat needs constant supervision and medication."* A number of participants surveyed had encountered difficulties when moving house as *"it isn't always easy to find somewhere to live where pets are allowed."* A fifty seven year old teacher chose to move to a *"more expensive and less conveniently located house"* in order to accommodate her two dogs. This study found that not all pets alleviate stress and/ or offer support. However, regardless of the havoc they may cause, some people continue to care for their pets. Even if their pets destroyed their homes and possessions or had specific health, nutritional or behavioural requirements that made it difficult for them to leave them alone for extended periods of time, go on holiday or move house, some 'owners' keep them and continue to consider their needs.

Apart from being a drain on economic resources, pets can, and often do function as status symbols and can convey the 'owners' wealth, status or social position. In South Africa and elsewhere, acquiring and keeping certain animals such as pedigreed dogs, cats, and horses continues to symbolise privilege and elite status, mostly because these types of animals are fairly expensive to buy and

care for. Different types of pets confer social status and privilege and pet-keeping has long been associated with the upper-classes. Pets (particularly pedigreed breeds) can signify affluence and high social standing. Several authors, (Tuan 1984; Serpell 1986; Ritvo 1988) concur that powerful and wealthy people can and often do, keep pets, which are essentially non-productive and thus economically 'wasteful' animals. The upper classes also tended to condemn and discourage the keeping of pets by poorer groups, who lack surplus economic resources. The increased popularity of pets (in both western and non-western cultures) can also be explained in terms of processes such as heightened consumerism and increased commodification. Veblen (1979) reasoned that dogs were the *"nearly ideal tokens of wealth and the owner's capacity to waste large amounts of economic resources"* because they served almost no useful function (quoted in Plemons, 2008: 2). Pets also serve as commodities that accrue prestige for their owners through their consumption practices. In this way they are often viewed and treated as goods, consumer products, objects or property.

¹³¹ In her Masters thesis in sociology, Plemons applies theoretical constructs by Veblen, Marx, and Bourdieu to examine pet owners and their use of animals to convey a message of social status, position and wealth. Plemons argues that, *"The function of a companion animal has evolved from hunting partner, to nuclear family component, to best friend, and now to commodity to help one accrue social status"* (2008: 1).

Jean Veevers (1985) agrees that pets can be and often are seen as possessions, but she reiterates that they can serve a purpose as well. Not all dogs and cats are 'useless' animals nor do they function purely as 'pets' and companions. Generally, their use value is based on their ability to hunt and/or guard. These types of 'utilitarian' views towards dogs and cats are more commonly found in non-western cultures and among rural communities. Several authors have argued that on the whole, utilitarian views about pets are more prolific among blacks and rural dwellers (Brown, 2002). Thomas (1983) contends that 'sentimentalism' about pets and other animals increases when people start to depend less on pet animals thereby diminishing their utilitarian value. He attributes this change to urbanization and other social processes and changes. For Thomas, 'sentimentalism' combined with the shift from an initial forced separation from animals and nature to closer proximity to animals, specifically pets thereafter, fostered the idea that pets were unique individuals with distinct personalities. As a result of the Industrial Revolution and the various technological advances that

¹³¹ In South Africa, pets are still regarded as 'things' and are defined in law as property.

took place, people (particularly urbanites) became less dependent on animals for various functions, which resulted in less utilitarian and more sentimental attitudes towards them. The concomitant rise in popularity and growth of animal welfare movements and debates, which took place towards the end of the nineteenth century also contributed to these changes (1983: 119).

This study confirms that for many South Africans, dogs and cats are still seen as possessions and they have utilitarian value. Although there are fundamental differences between the two samples in this regard, there are overlaps and many of the participants surveyed indicated that their pets (particularly dogs) performed a dual function – companions and protectors. The interviewees (black, Xhosa speaking urban dwellers) were less likely to see pets as companions, friends and family members, but a few did. The extent to which the latter can be attributed to urbanisation or the infusion of western ideas and practices regarding pets, is unclear since this was not specifically measured by the study. What is evident is that, even though most animals ‘owned’ by interviewees were kept for security and protection or “house police” or “mouse control,” a few served as companions and family members in ways similar to that expressed by survey participants.¹³²

With a few exceptions, the pets of interviewees were generally not viewed as ‘status symbols.’ However, as Irvine (2004) and others have noted, pets are not mere demonstrations of elite status and can represent other aspects of the self and an individual’s sense of social identity. While a few participants (in both samples) claimed that other peoples’ views of their pets did not affect them at all, this was not the majority position. Participants in both samples indicated that it upset them if other people criticised their pets and it affected them negatively when their pets behaved badly. However, if their pets were praised, the effect was positive. Some of the interviewees were quite emphatic about this issue and almost everyone in this sample said that it upset and irritated them if anyone criticised their pets/s. A few even threatened to respond violently. A building industry worker said that *“no one will say to my face that they don’t like my dogs and if they do they must suffer the consequences.”* A taxi and shebeen owner from Makhaza who kept a pack of hunting dogs threatened: *“everyone living nearby my house knows that if you criticise my dogs you are in deep trouble because I will beat you.”* These examples suggest that pets are bound with the

¹³² Although many owners keep pets for companionship, high crime levels and lack of security in some areas within Khayelitsha has led to an increasing number of people keeping dogs for protection (www.mdzananda.co.za).

'owners' sense of identity. Their strong emotional reactions to the perceived disapproval and condemnation of their pets, demonstrates how personally they take it and how their pets are linked to their sense of self.

Emotions....

The 'dominance argument' in relation to pet-keeping generally and the findings of this study in particular warrants investigation and is outlined next.

8.1.3. Pets as Subjects of Domination

According to Heidi Nast, *"the creation of pets over the last two decades is linked to certain post-industrial processes and sensibilities that involve not only commodification, but love, dominance and affection"* (2006: 304). The latter influencing factor, is stressed by Yi Fu Tuan, who in his groundbreaking book, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets*, contends that, *"the dominance involved in all kinds of human, animate, and inanimate pet-making goes hand in hand with affection"* (1984: 2). For Tuan, *"dominance may be combined with affection, and what it produces is the pet"* (ibid). According to Nast, Tuan's book, *"shows how pet-making is an appropriating process that cuts across a wide swath of creative human endeavors—from the making of topiary gardens to the capturing of nature in landscape painting to the subordination of slaves, women, and children, to the production of animal pets for humans, an activity that goes back several millennia"* (2006: 304).

The dominance argument advanced by Yi-Fu Tuan (1984) is controversial and does not sit comfortably with many people, particularly those who consider themselves to be animal lovers. The vast majority of participants surveyed identified themselves as being 'animal lovers.' To them, the idea that their pet-keeping urges were inspired, at least in part, by the need to dominate, is anathema. Tuan's suggestion that the inclination to keep animals as pets is underpinned by the need to wield power over them was not widely accepted among those surveyed. Although this was not directly alluded to during interviews, a number of respondents indicated that their relationships with their pets were of this essentially unequal nature. They saw themselves as their pets 'masters' and 'owners.' In Tuan's (1984) understanding, a pet is like a plaything and is something that exists for our amusement and pleasure. Although this explanation may not describe all relationships between humans and their pets, it encapsulates a considerable number of them.

A similar view to Tuan is expressed by Irvine, who in her article, *Pampered or Enslaved? The Moral Dilemmas of Pets* (2004), questions whether the practice of keeping pets, defined as a class of animals existing for human purposes, is ethical. She argues that close relationships with animals have often been ideologically impossible. Our increased knowledge about animals' intellectual and emotional capacities blurs the once-distinct boundary between humans and other animals and means that our treatment of animals must also be reassessed. Animals have the basic right not to be treated as the property of others and keeping them as pets for our pleasure is not sufficient reason to enslave them.

In my fieldwork, attitudes were often expressed by pet owners in both samples that showed that they were inclined to see their pet as 'things' that exist for them and their amusement. Even though these attitudes were most often accompanied by feelings of genuine affection and sentimentality, the idea that pets are entertaining, remains prevalent. Although this is mostly harmless and completely understandable, in some instances, an ominous undercurrent was present. This is illustrated by a thirty-four year old, single, self-employed male, who said: "*I love my dog as much as the next person and yes his antics keep me entertained, but if he started to become a hassle and give me problems, I wouldn't hesitate to get rid of him.*" A similar view was expressed by a twenty-eight year old taxi driver, who during the interview claimed to love his dog but pointed out, "*[a dog] must know who's the boss.*" In general, these types of views tend to be articulated by males and no females that participated in this study indicated their supremacy, dominance or power over their pets.

8.1.4. Pets as Part of Nature

Finally, there is the biophilia hypothesis, which is based on the writings of the famous biologist, E.O. Wilson (1984, 1993). This explanation contends that our relationship to the natural world including animals (even pets) and the need to focus on them has an evolutionary and genetic basis. Wilson's idea that humans have an "*innate tendency to focus on life and life like processes*" has resulted in the desire and tendency to retain contact with the natural world (including animals) throughout history (1984: 1). Humans experience a deep emotional connection towards nature and animals.¹³³ The popularity and proliferation of pet-keeping in many societies across the globe, including our own can thus be seen as a manifestation of these types of 'naturalistic' urges. Kellert's (1993)

¹³³ On the other end of the spectrum is biophobia – an idea first advanced by Darwin in 1877. Today, dogs and cats are often feared.

'humanistic' perspective of nature elaborates on this view. Through doing surveys, he developed a 'typology' of human attitudes toward nature, particularly animals. The nine values that he says describes humans' relationship with the natural world are consistent with Wilson's biophilia thesis which proposes an inherent pre-disposition towards nature and animals among humans.¹³⁴ In this understanding, humans have a biological and evolutionary dependence on nature for both survival and personal fulfilment.

During fieldwork, a few of the pet owners interviewed expressed views that were consistent with a 'naturalistic' relationship with their dogs and cats. The aversion to euthanasia and sterilisation and the tendency to view these procedures as "*going against nature*" illustrates this. Similarly, the 'owners' of hunting dogs spoke of their activities as being 'natural' and as something that keeps them and their dogs in contact with nature. The sterilisation of animals is thought to interfere with the natural order of things. Several participants that were interviewed in Khayelitsha, who insisted that they were animal lovers, said that they would not sterilise their pets because it was "*against nature.*" Comparable views were expressed regarding euthanasia. All of the interviewees who had previously experienced this, stated that having to euthanase their pet had a profound effect on them and made them "*feel bad.*" As one man, who recently lost a hunting dog explained: "*My dog was hit by a taxi on the way home and the clinic said they could not save him. They put him to sleep forever and I still think about it – it's not right.*"

¹³⁴ Kellert's (1993) nine perspectives describing humans' relationship with nature are:

1. **Utilitarian** - The biological advantage afforded to humans in their exploitation of nature's vast resources including food, clothing, tools, medicine and shelter.
2. **Naturalistic** - The satisfaction that humans derive through their contact with nature – contact characterised by fascination, wonder, and awe at nature's beauty, complexity and diversity.
3. **Ecological scientific** - The motivation to systematically study the biophysical patterns, structures, and functions of the natural world. This motivation involves a sense of satisfaction at experiencing the complexity of natural processes, quite separately from their utility.
4. **Aesthetics** - The preference for natural design over human design has been demonstrated in a variety of studies.
5. **Symbolic** - Refers to humans' use of nature symbols to communicate. As noted by Kellert (1993), over 90 percent of the characters employed in children's language acquisition and counting books are animal characters. Also, natural symbols also feature prominently in mythology, fairy tales, and legends.
6. **Humanistic** - The human experience of a deep emotional connection with the sentient aspects of nature and its individual elements.
7. **Moralistic** - The strong feeling of affinity and the sense of an ethical responsibility for the natural world as is often associated with the views of indigenous people.
8. **Dominionistic** - Refers to the desire to master and control the natural world, which is often associated with destructive tendencies.
9. **Negativistic** - Refers to negative affect associated with nature experiences including fear, aversion and disgust.

A twenty nine year old female participant who responded to the survey expressed biocentric views and in her words: "*dogs are our last remaining link to the natural world. Being outdoors with them, running, taking in the fresh air gives me a chance to reconnect with nature.*" But, this explanation of human-animal relationships has been criticised because it ignores the different meanings that people attach to animals and how our relationships with them change over time and differ between and within cultures. Regardless of whichever explanation is advanced, this thesis concurs with Irvine (2004, 2007) that pet-keeping cannot be explained by a single causal factor since the underlying motivations are complex and numerous. Furthermore, pet-keeping is historically and culturally contingent and is shaped by broad social forces. As mentioned earlier on, Irvine (2004, 2007) has also emphasised the relationship between pets, self and social identity. In contemporary societies, this is becoming more and more apparent. Pets are increasingly bound up with notions of self and identity and their value is less likely to be determined in terms of the material status of the 'owner'. Fogle (1983) posits that the type and temperament of the companion animal one chooses and the purpose for which it is bred are aspects of 'identity symbolisation.' For example, powerful and aggressive dogs such as Rottweilers and German Shepherds not only serve as protectors and guard dogs, "*but also reflect their owners' desires to present social selves which are correspondingly aggressive*" (quoted in Sanders, 1990: 664). In terms of this assessment, the choice of pet or dog breed reflects the personality traits and behavioural characteristics of the 'owner.'

For symbolic interactionists, all meaning results from social interaction and animals are "*given a cultural identity as people try to make sense of them, understand them, use them, or communicate with them. They are brought into civilization and transformed according to their meaning is socially constructed*" (Arluke & Sanders, 1996: 9). In terms of this understanding being an animal is less about biology and physical appearance and more about the ways in which we 'humans interact with them, which is shaped by culture (ibid). In his ethnographic study in Malawi, Brian Morris (1998) discusses the ways in which people's relationship to their world manifests itself not solely in social relations, but also in their relationship with animals. He argues that animals play an important part in social relationships. In the contemporary world, pets play crucial part in the creation of the "*socially constructed self*" of their owners and this must be examined to completely make sense of current relationships between humans

and their companion animals. A combination of both the social and personal motivations underlying pet-keeping needs to be understood.

Due to the personal significance that pets have for people and the strong emotional attachments they form with them, the social meanings that shape and influence personal meanings sometimes are not always acknowledged or taken into account. The construction of the meaning of pets needs to be situated within the political context and cultural discourse if it is to be fully comprehended. This study has confirmed that for some South Africans pets (dogs and cats) signify something positive, yet for others this is not the case. The reasons for these differences are related to a host of factors, including the social and cultural milieu. As is evident from the discussion thus far, although South African may still lag behind western countries like the UK and USA in terms of the overall extent of pet-keeping, this practice and the commercial industries that support and maintain it are growing rapidly. Pet-keeping within our society has changed historically. In addition, there exists considerable variation across and within 'cultures' and diverse demographic groups display divergent patterns in terms of both the types of pets kept and the treatment they receive.

Although personal choice and individual taste and preference influence pet selection, other factors, such as availability, use value, symbolic meaning, status and 'fashion' all play a part in deciding what kind of pet and/or breed a person opts for. In Chapter Six, the types of pets kept by participants from the two samples was discussed at length, but it is necessary to re-emphasise that pet selection is shaped by both individual and social factors as well as the interplay that exists between the meaning the animal has and the role it plays in the life of its 'owner.' The nature of the human-animal relationship, and the depth of the bond that is formed, is shaped and mediated by the motivations underlying pet choice. Whether a pet is selected for its use value, its aesthetic appeal or other reasons, collectively these factors play a part in determining the subsequent interactions and connections between people and their pets. According to Luke, *"It is certainly true that pets are sometimes kept as status symbols, or to be dominated, or for some economic benefit. But no explanation that omits human affection for animals can completely account for the practice. In fact, the evidence suggests that affection and companionship are by far the most important elements motivating pet keeping in our society"* (2007: 40). The findings of this study support Luke's view and the majority of participants overall, valued their pets for their companionship. Many of them claimed to be strongly bonded to their pets.

8.2. Emotions, Feelings, Bonds and Past Experiences with Pets

In her book, *Loving Nature*, Kay Milton suggests that we are fundamentally emotional beings and that we need to recognise and understand "*the emotional basis of all our actions*" (2002: 151). She argues that, the way in which we see, perceive and treat animals is not only due to social conditioning and culture, but also personal experience and the subsequent feelings involved.

Emotions, which are made up of feelings and their meanings, are important considerations (2002: 4). For Milton, it is imperative to acknowledge and take into account the emotions and cognitions that underlie our relationships with animals generally and our pets specifically. The development of caring and empathy toward animals is paramount in shaping our relationships with them (2002: 90). According to Milton (2002: 96), emotion is at the core of caring. Thus, if we at some point in our lives form an emotional attachment or bond with an animal, this translates into a caring and protective stance taken towards them, along with a general concern for their well-being and welfare. Many people are deeply moved by stories and incidents involving the ill-treatment of animals and hearing such accounts can induce strong emotional reactions, while others remained unmoved. A range of personal experiences (both direct and socially mediated) can bring about emotional responses and feelings. Emotionalism is clearly reflected in the language and discourse of animal protectionism and animal rescue in order to appeal to individuals in their capacity as essentially emotional beings. Many successful and effective campaigns and appeals 'tug at the heartstrings' to get a favourable response from the animal loving sector of the public. In this study, the emotional nature of responses to both surveys and interviews confirms the strong feelings that animals evoke in people. In some instances, it is reflected in use of language and the participants' choice of words.

While developing a caring attitude towards animals comes from experience, the nature thereof varies. For some, increased or repeated exposure to an animal or animals results in increased concern for their welfare. For others, it takes a life-changing epiphany or 'powdering', which can be likened to turning on an 'empathy switch' for them to care.¹³⁵ Animal welfare groups take full advantage of this 'caring' and they make emotional appeals and tell stories about individual animals, which along with giving them names and histories, helps to create a

¹³⁵ In the film, *Powder*, the main character, an unusual and sensitive young male, has the ability to impose empathy (for animals) on other humans.

sense of personhood in animals. This is done in the hope that an emotional connection is made with someone for whom it has personal meaning and thus can identify with their plight. The end result (hopefully) is that this will result in an adoption or donation etc. One participant who responded to the survey, admitted that she responded to an appeal made by a rescue group for a home for a dog because she liked the dog's name and could identify with his plight. She explains, "When I saw Oscar in the paper with his great big eyes and sad face, I just knew I had to go and bring him home." Another woman said that, "the fear in his eyes really got to me and I knew I had to do something." In these situations, anthropomorphism is an essential device since it is necessary to demonstrate that they are sentient beings, are 'just like us' and worthy of concern. Anthropomorphism is thus necessary and integral to the success of animal protectionism since human beings must acknowledge an animal's personhood and see animal as an individual capable of range of emotions and of suffering before they feel the urge to protect them. Appealing to emotions and 'humanising' animals, helps to 'turn on the switch', which is a necessary pre-condition for identifying with an animal. Similar processes affect hunters and the so-called 'hunter's epiphany' occurs when they come to identify with prey animals and respond to them in a caring and protective manner. Often it is the act of looking into the animals' eyes that precipitates this shift. However, many factors, physiological, cultural and social can help turn on this 'switch'.¹³⁶

Milton is concerned with understanding how, "a particular combination of thoughts and feelings, assumptions, goals, values and motivations emerge out of the intensely personal experience of living in the world" (2002: 2). To do this, necessitates going "beyond social and cultural contexts" and recognising that "human beings come to understand the world by perceiving it directly, and not only through the medium of cultural interpretation" (ibid). In other words, forming an emotional connection with nature (or in this instance pet animals), transcends cultural boundaries and discourses. Notwithstanding the relevance of the anthropological perspective that views animals as a cultural constructs and understands our attitudes towards other animals in the context of cultural

¹³⁶ Ingrid Newkirk, the leader of the well known and high profile animal rights organization – people for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) offered to give Anna Wintour (editor of Vogue and fur wearer) a brain scan for her birthday. Newkirk told The Observer, "There is this thing called a 'mirror neuron' that allows you to empathise," and "In some people it's not developed." Newkirk also offered Wintour a lobotomy to activate the part in her brain responsible for empathy, a faculty which Newkirk alleged was lying dormant and needed to be 'switched on.' (The Observer, Sunday 22 November 2009: 14). Similarly, Jonathan Balcombe jokingly told a reporter from The Washington Post that he was born with the 'animal protection gene' which suggests that this characteristic is inborn and 'biological' (Cape Argus, 5 May 2012).

diversity and the sociological focus on the important role played by broad social, economic and political processes and forces, this is not the whole story and other issues must be taken into consideration. Direct experience and emotion play a key role (Milton, 2002). Milton contends that, emotion is a mechanism that helps us to connect to the environment and animals. It shapes our knowledge and influences our memories. While she concedes that emotional attachments are themselves products of learning and that we learn what to feel about certain things through socialisation and enculturation, this is not the full picture. She argues that not all learning is socially mediated and that we can pick things up directly from either the environment or animals. Milton contends that, our attitudes and actions are based on what we "*feel, know and think about the world*" (2002: 4) and she questions how we come to 'know' animals. She concludes that, as with nature, it is through experience, both direct and socially mediated (2002: 63). However, personal histories, memories and emotions must be factored in. Emotional attachments like our understandings of the world are products of experience (2002: 149).

The direct experience we have with animals, particularly those we keep as pets informs and shapes our perceptions of and interactions with them. Our socialisation during childhood and the role, if any, that pets play in this phase of our development impacts on future responses and practices. For example, Paul and Serpell (1993) have identified a strong correlation between positive pet experiences during childhood and a broad interest in animal welfare in adulthood. Throughout fieldwork, participants in this study (in both samples) indicated in writing and verbally that their earlier, childhood experiences with pets (and other non-human animals) had made lasting impressions and strongly influenced their current views and behaviour. For some, animals (not always their own) provided emotional support and comfort. This mostly happened when they were children, but for some of them, it continued throughout their lives. Those who had negative experiences were also strongly affected. The latter include, losing pets, and being chased, attacked and bitten by animals, which resulted in them fearing them later on. From this study, it seems that pet-keeping "*softens hearts*" and paves the way for care of other animal species. The emotional bonds formed, the collection of past experiences and interactions with animals, combined with knowledge about animals and the level of awareness of their needs, collectively contribute to present dispositions and relationships. This is especially pertinent in the realm of pet-keeping. Irvine's (2004) concept of 'animal capital' which encompasses a

range of knowledge and experiences such as culture, direct experience, emotional attachment, prior knowledge, memories and past exposure, is discussed next.

8.3. 'Animal Capital' and Pet-keeping

Irvine (2004) posits that, in the process of social learning, we acquire, accumulate and inherit 'animal capital' in ways similar to how we obtain other non-economic forms thereof, viz., cultural and social capital.¹³⁷ According to Irvine, the type of relationship we have with animals is related in part, to the nature and extent of our knowledge about them. So, in order to have a complex relationship with them, an in-depth interest in and varied knowledge of their needs and feelings is required (2004: 65). For Irvine, animal capital is "*knowledge, skills, access to resources, and a motivating interest in the well-being of all animals*" (2004: 77). She uses the term, "*to refer to resources that enable the development of meaningful, nonexploitative companionship with animals*" (2004: 66). Those individuals who make a concerted effort to generate animal capital tend to enjoy meaningful relationships with their pets, which extends beyond the provision of food, water and shelter. Possessing animal capital enables individuals to be aware of their pet's desires and needs and incorporates a mutual understanding between them that can facilitate the process of teaching and training of the pet.

In terms of this understanding, participants from the two samples in this study vary considerably with regard to the amount of 'animal capital' they have acquired and accumulated. However, within each group, there were certain individuals who had obtained and accrued high levels of 'animal capital', which sets them apart from others in their category (Irvine, 2004). More than half, twenty seven (or 54%) of the interviewees had learned what they currently knew about animals within their homes from family members. Most of them, both males and females indicated that they has learned what they know pertaining to animal care from their fathers. A forty-eight year old man interviewed in Site B, has been actively involved in looking after animals throughout his life and his father, a herbalist, taught him about caring for animals, including dogs, as they had always kept large pack of hunting dogs in the rural area where he originates from. He explained: "*My father knew about plants and he told me which ones to pick when the animals were sick. The cows, especially, were treated like this...but also the dogs.*" Two other men also said that they had been taught by their fathers how to administer "traditional" or "Xhosa" medicine to animals and

¹³⁷ These concepts were defined by French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1986).

although initially used on livestock, both of them continue to apply this knowledge when their own pet dogs and cats became ill. Another interviewee had a grandmother who kept various animals (farm and pet dogs and cats) and she helped her to look after them while growing up. This, she says, instilled in her, a "love for animals." Similar experiences were reported by numerous of the participants surveyed. Overall, participants in this group are able to access a wider range of resources when it comes to caring for animals and responding to their needs. This study also found that the importance of a 'role model' in inculcating a love and respect for animals, as well as transferring the knowledge needed for their care and upkeep can be ignored.

Irvine argues that knowledge of and access to these "resources" which include "veterinarians, trainers and behaviourists" is dependent upon the amount of 'animal capital' available to an individual (2004: 66). To demonstrate this point, participants in this study varied considerably in this regard. Those surveyed had a far greater awareness of and access to the types of resources and experts Irvine refers to. They are also far more likely to engage them and make use of their services. This is largely about affordability and economic factors, but it is also related to their having knowledge thereof in the first place. This specific type of 'capital' is acquired through various means and like all forms of capital can be used to our advantage. In this instance, it makes having an intense connection and emotional bond with animals possible.

Although the interviewees were less likely to know about or consult behaviourists or visit private veterinary clinics than the survey participants, this does not mean that certain individuals within the Khayelitsha sample do not possess or have access to some measure of 'animal capital.' The nature, form and source thereof may differ, but the 'knowledge' and understanding that it entails, can be clearly detected among interviewees. In particular, in health related matters, 'indigenous knowledge' passed on by significant others, especially their fathers and other older males, is used to treat and medicate their pets.¹³⁸ The array of traditional practices that keep animals healthy and treat and control diseases, comprise 'ethnoveterinary medicine' (Luseba and van der Merwe, 2006). In many rural

¹³⁸ According to the World Bank, indigenous knowledge encapsulates the knowledge and practices that are unique to a given culture or society. It is the basic component of any country's knowledge system and it encompasses the skills, experiences and insights of people, applied to maintain or improve their livelihood. Indigenous people have contributed to knowledge in the fields of medicine and veterinary medicine as a result of their intimate understanding of their environments. Indigenous knowledge is passed down from generation to generation and closely interwoven with people's cultural values. Indigenous knowledge is the 'social capital' of poor and marginalised groups (www.worldbank.org).

(and urban) areas in South Africa, *“traditional medicine is sometimes the only available alternative to expensive or unavailable modern orthodox health care for the management of both human and animal health”* (Luseba and van der Merwe, 2006: 115). Those participants interviewed who did not have direct knowledge of which herbs and treatments to use on their pets, sometimes consulted traditional healers.

Another indication of the interview participant’s understanding of and connection with dogs was demonstrated by the behaviour and conduct of their animals. For example, an individual who is able to safely walk an unleashed large pack of hunting dogs on a busy public road, or even the highway, as some do, in an orderly manner, clearly has some measure of control over the animals. This stems from his connection with them and his insight into their behaviour. In these instances, the individual has ‘animal capital’ based on prior experience and a connection with dogs. (See Photo 11)¹³⁹



Photo 11: A pack of hunting dogs being walked without leashes

¹³⁹ Sunday Times columnist, Marianne Thamm describes a similar scene she witnessed. She writes: *“Later that week I watched a cowherder near the N2 in Cape Town casually saunter next to the highway with a pack of dogs trotting obediently behind him. No wild shouting to “heel”, no taut leash, no pink tongues flailing and spittle spattering. Just interspecies understanding and harmony”* (Sunday Times. Lifestyle: 2009: 3).

Other sources of knowledge that enhanced the 'animal capital' of interviewees included friends, neighbours, schools, television and books. In addition, all interviewees had heard of the SPCA and most were aware of the veterinary services available in their area. Some interviewees mistakenly thought that the SPCA was a "government department", but without exception, all of them knew that they helped animals. A number of interviewees knew about both the SPCA mobile clinic and the permanent Mdzananda Animal Clinic and some of them made use of these facilities for sterilisation, vaccination and other veterinary treatments. For many, the SPCA was synonymous with 'animal rights,' which several interviewees said they supported and condoned.

Among those interviewed, while men seemed to have more interest in and concern for animals, particularly pets, than women, the latter were more likely to develop deeper attachments with them. Overall, the in-depth interest in animals, concern with their needs and understanding their feelings which for Irvine (2004) comprises, 'animal capital,' is far more prevalent in the survey sample than it is in the interview sample. Several interviewees indicated that they had no real interest in or connection with animals, including their pets. Among those surveyed, this was a minority view and for the most part, a strong bond with their pets was demonstrated.

Irvine concedes that, "*the concept of animal capital is anthropomorphic because it portrays animals like us in many ways*" (2004: 75). However, she emphasizes that the concept is not anthropocentric since it "*challenges the ideology of human dominion over animals with the possibility of cooperation*" (2004: 75). Animal capital, she insists is very different from animals as capital (2004:77). The latter suggests exploitative relationships and using animals to meet our own needs, while the former understanding is about doing the opposite (ibid). For Irvine, "*animal capital not only creates more complex and therefore satisfying relationships with animals; it expands the experience of self*" (2004: 67)

The amount of 'animal capital' that can be accessed shapes general views about and concern for animals as a whole. This final section of this chapter focuses on the views participants have about animals in general and their concern, or lack thereof, for their welfare.

8.4. Broader Attitudes to Animal Welfare

Several studies have attempted to explore whether there is a relationship between caring for pets and concern for animals in general. As mentioned earlier on, Paul and Serpell (1993) reported that adults who had regular contact with pets during childhood were more likely than adults without such experience to express concern for animal welfare. They were also more likely to join animal welfare organisations and/or to be vegetarians, which Paul and Serpell argue, suggests a role for early experiences in influencing later attitudes.

Along with childhood pet ownership and other previous experiences with animals, many other factors influence attitudes toward animals and the quality of relationships we have with them. As has been argued throughout this thesis, along with pet-keeping, another contributing factor, that effectively shaped attitudes towards animals is urbanisation and the resultant 'closeness' to them that emerged. As Thomas (1983) has shown, the same people who wrote in support of animals in Britain during the eighteenth-century, were closely involved with pets such as dogs and cats. Serpell (1986, 1996) agrees that the increase in the popularity of pets in England in the eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century centuries increased concern for animal welfare. Similar patterns can be detected in this country. In contemporary South Africa, pet-keeping has proliferated and the increased popularity of pets, combined with high levels of animal abuse and a pet over-population problem, has resulted in heightened awareness of and concern for animal welfare issues. Although there are cultural and other variations regarding pet-keeping as well as interest in animals in this country, there also exists an overarching tendency to follow global trends and broader socio-economic changes and political processes. Van't Hooft and Millar observe that, among privileged groups in non-western societies, a 'westernisation' process is taking place in relation to pet animals whereby they are increasingly being kept indoors and relied upon for company and support. This differs from non-privileged and predominantly rural groups who are less exposed to these changes and ideas (2005: 25).

Regardless of variation in terms of the amount of 'animal capital' accrued or the differential infusion of 'western' values and ideas, most of the participants in both samples viewed cruelty to animals as a serious crime. Four hundred and twenty four (or 93%) of those surveyed and thirty five (or 70%) interviewees believed that animals should be given more legal protection.

Differences of opinion emerged between samples with regard to animal rights. Most of the survey participants, two hundred and sixty one (or 59%) thought that animals should have the same rights as humans. One hundred and fifty eight (or 34.6%) agreed that animals need more rights and consideration, but they emphasised that human needs and interests, are primary. Only a few number, nineteen (or 4.2%) of those surveyed agreed with the statement that, *Animals exist for our use*. In contrast, several of the interviewees, fourteen (or 28%) held this view. It is important to mention that two of them clarified their position by adding that they meant this *"in a positive way."* In their understanding of the statement, animals exist for our use, doesn't imply something inherently negative and exploitative, but merely that animals are here for humans.

Overall there was strong support for improving the legal status of animals and one of the main the reasons provided by participants to substantiate their answer is: *"Because they cannot speak for themselves."* Another said, *"Since they can't talk for themselves, we need to look after them.* Religion was often cited and according to a participant: *"After all God put us here to take care of his animals – each and every one."* A thirty seven year old female stated that, *"animals are vulnerable and always at the mercy of others."* She continued: *"In tough economic times they are the last on the list for help and the first on the list to be abandoned or neglected. There are no effective laws making neglect of a pet illegal, if there are they are not properly enforced. In USA they take these claims seriously, they have professional teams who do investigating, follow ups and these could lead to arrest. I have called the SPCA here several times about a neglected animal wandering around our complex for weeks, they did nothing. I wrote them an official letter giving details of the animals owners, they still did nothing. I advised this animal was attacking my own animals and causing trouble in the complex even though I was feeding him to keep him alive, still they did nothing. I implored the SPCA for help here, not one follow up was done. The owners moved out and abandoned the animal, so I had to find other owners for this poor neglected dog through a private "pet adoption" system, he now has a loving home. But still to this day, I'm waiting for a follow up from the SPCA."*

The majority of participants in this study, four hundred and twenty six (or 93.4%) of those surveyed and thirty (or 60%) of interviewees identified themselves as 'animal lovers.' They expressed how hurting animals (even on TV) and seeing dead animals on the roads upset them, which indicates empathy. Only a small minority of participants (in both samples) provided responses that appeared

devoid of empathy and who had accumulated very little 'animal capital.' But it is necessary to reiterate that contradictory views, as well as a discrepancy between opinions expressed and behaviour observed was recorded during fieldwork. A participant that claimed to be an 'animal lover' previously allowed numerous dogs to starve to death. In his study on Chinese university student's attitudes to animal welfare, Gareth Davey (2006) made similar findings. Although they reported strong concern for animals and their welfare, their actions often contradicted these sentiments. Agreeing with granting animals more rights and considering their needs, while violating them on a day to day basis, can also be found among participants.

The type of animal being harmed is significant and crocodiles, snakes and cats were singled out by interviewees who said that although they cared about animals being hurt, it didn't matter if it was one of these species. This is in line with previous studies who found that treatment of animals is species specific (Driscoll, 1992).

A key difference emerged between samples with regard to their involvement in and support of animal welfare charities. Two hundred and twenty two (or 48.9%) of the survey participants actively support animal welfares and charities, but not a single interviewee claimed to do the same.

8.5. Conclusion

This chapter described some of the reasons participants cited for keeping pets, as well as the roles that pets play in their lives. While each of the various explanations of pet-keeping have validity, none can stand alone and account for the full spectrum of pet-keeping experiences and underlying motivations prevalent in contemporary societies. Pets do perform functions similar to other humans and this study found some evidence to support the deficiency argument, as well as the affluence, dominance and biophilia explanations of pet-keeping.

But, the emotional bonds formed and connections made with animals play an important part in the development of pet attachment and warrant scrutiny. Irvine's notion of 'animal capital' can help explain different levels of attachment among participants.

The ambiguous, inconsistent, contradictory and dualistic approach to animals prevalent in many contemporary societies, including South Africa needs to be

taken into account when developing policies, programmes and interventions aimed at solving the social and environmental problems related to pet-keeping. The final concluding chapter continues this discussion and offers suggestions for future research and practice.



9

Conclusion

"This sympathetic imagination needs to be extended to the 'real' animals in all their embodiedness and in all their presence so that humans do not denigrate and mistreat them as inferior others. They deserve to live and thrive as ethical subjects in our lives and in our laws – in southern Africa and beyond"

(Woodward, 2008: 168).

This study set out to explore pet-keeping in contemporary South Africa from a sociological perspective. It examined pet ownership in households across the country and the relationship between sociological variables and the treatment of pets was investigated. The task was approached by, firstly doing a review of the available literature within the broad, but growing field, known as 'Animal Studies'. Secondly, fieldwork, which entailed conducting a survey, interviews and observations, was embarked on. The Literature Review and Methodological discussion (contained in Chapters Two and Three) were followed by five empirical chapters, which examined and analysed the data collected during the fieldwork process. These chapters detailed the demographic profiles, views, attitudes and everyday practices associated with pet care that were favoured by participants from both samples. Collectively Chapters Four - Eight outlined some of the factors which may influence both our perceptions of pets and respective pet-keeping styles. In evaluating the role of pets in South African society, animal welfare issues have to be considered in the light of the enormous stray and shelter dogs and cat population in this country, as well the high levels of abuse and violence perpetuated against them.

The empirical material is able to support four main conclusions. Firstly, there are differences in pet-keeping among participant samples, which can partly be attributed to various socio-economic, political, cultural, geographical and individual factors. Secondly, similarities in attitude and behaviour exist and these are a result of broad social forces and processes. Thirdly, misunderstandings and confusion often leads to conflict over animals, which when examined, reveal much about the dynamics of our society and our perceptions of and interactions with one another. Fourthly, the proliferation of pets, combined with contradictory

attitudes towards and inconsistent treatment of animals, has led to a situation whereby it has becoming imperative to intervene on their behalf. Programmes aimed at curbing the pet over-population crisis confronting communities in various locations, as well as dealing with a host of other problems associated with pet-keeping are essential and the Western Cape Provincial government has taken the lead in this respect.

This final chapter not only concludes this study, but discusses 'the way forward'. The potential for cultural shifts and changes in attitudes about animals to occur in a multicultural society like South Africa is touched on. In addition, the implications and practical application that this research has for social policy related to both human and animal welfare in this country is outlined. These findings and recommendations are timely in light of current developments in the Western Cape regarding the pet by-law and official attempts to deal with the pet over-population problem confronting the province in a humane manner. At the same time, human social issues are being taken into account and the inclusion of social scientists on the planning and advisory committee responsible for implementing and executing the pilot phase of this mass pet sterilisation programme demonstrates a commitment to this.¹⁴⁰ Although many of these developments and changes are unique to the Western Cape, other provinces, cities and municipalities have taken similar steps.¹⁴¹

Close proximity to pets and the dissolution of boundaries between 'us' and 'them' has policy implications. Public health issues, environmental concerns and social problems like violence, abuse, inequality and discrimination can all be more clearly understood if animals, particularly pets are considered. Pet over-population often results in large numbers of dogs roaming the streets, especially in poor areas. There is a direct connection between public health and the abundance and close proximity of pets. Excessive noise from barking as well as pollution and unsanitary conditions from excrement, are all symptoms of too many pets. The "*downsides*" of animal domestication, such as the spread of *contagious zoonotic diseases*" have implications for public health policies (Ritvo, 2007: 129). For those charged with the task of protecting animal welfare and public health, the attitudes and behaviours of all social groups and communities

¹⁴⁰ The pilot phase of the planned dog population control project was approved by the Premier in April 2012. The Department of Agriculture will co-ordinate and oversee the pilot, based in Kayamandi township near Stellenbosch. Various groups belonging to the recently constituted Animal Welfare Forum, including Stellenbosch Animal Welfare and the Cape of Good Hope SPCA are involved in this initiative.

¹⁴¹ Similar Pet by-laws came into effect in the City of Johannesburg in 2010.

must be considered and it is hoped that the information generated in this research can somehow be used to inform a wide range of policies and programmes that focus on pets and the integral roles they play in our society.

9.1. Summary of Findings

This study has found that a diversity of demographic, structural and individual factors influence pet-keeping. This thesis considered, age, gender, class, race, marital status, type of residence, and children in the household in order to establish whether they can be associated with specific attitudes and styles of pet-keeping. My analysis showed that people of both genders and family and household types express their relationship with pets in varying ways. Widely held perceptions that only white and economically privileged people care about animals generally, and pets specifically, are challenged by this research. Although attitudes and behaviour are attenuated by both demographic and cultural factors, most of the participants interviewed in Khayelitsha showed sensitivity to animals, cared for their pets and had an awareness of welfare issues. However, other matters need to be considered such as previous experience and quality of relationships with animals, which were found to contribute significantly to attitude formation. Socialisation and past experiences, the extent of 'animal capital' acquired, intangible influences like emotions and the bonds formed with animals, collectively play a part in shaping relationships and interactions with pets. The combined role of these factors in determining the participant's state of involvement with pets, and their specific 'style of pet-keeping,' was the focus of previous chapters.

This thesis traced the history of the human-animal bond in South Africa and identified some of the ways people describe and relate to their pets. The opinions pet owners have about various issues in pet keeping and animal welfare were examined. The data analysis focused on interpreting participant's responses in light of past research, and in the context of the nascent field of 'Animal Studies' in sociology. This thesis reviewed previous work that identified the place of dogs and cats in different historical, social and cultural contexts. It traced how our relationships with pets have changed, the shifts in meaning they have for 'owners' and how they have become increasingly included in home and family life.

One of the purposes of this study is to understand how culturally based attitudes toward pets (dogs and cats) emerge and interact in a multicultural society like South Africa. This research demonstrates that people from various social and

cultural backgrounds develop diverse feelings about pets. Thus, culturally-based attitudes are among a multitude of factors that come into play when legislation and government policies related to animals are developed and enacted. Sometimes these divergent attitudes are the source of conflict and animal practices ranging from confining pets to properties, to ritual slaughter, hunting with dogs and dog-fighting can and often do result in cultural clashes and disagreements in this country and elsewhere. Strategies for ameliorating struggles of this nature need to be informed by these findings and insights. Post-apartheid South Africa permits 'black' animal practices (e.g., the keeping of livestock in urban areas and ritual slaughter), which compete with and challenge 'whiteness.' Racialisation and the vilification of African traditions that perceived to impinge on rights of animals still occur in these instances.

The opinions that pet owners (in two distinct samples) have about various issues in pet keeping were explored. When it comes to pet-keeping, it is apparent that South Africa is indeed two countries in one. However the situation is changing and distinctions between types of pet 'owners' are no longer as clear cut. Cultural differences and socio-economic disparities are still reflected in differential pet-keeping styles and practices, but, convergences across groups occur, and are often expressed via social class, ideological and religious beliefs and lifestyles.

Broad social forces including urbanisation, globalisation and westernisation and the resultant emergence of new values have impacted significantly on pet-keeping in this country. Changes in the family, such as delaying childrearing and/or having fewer children, as well as ruptures in family life like divorce and death and increased perceptions of risk resulting from this, shape our relationships with pets. In addition, security threats posed by crime, economic uncertainty and environmental problems influence pet-keeping. Relationships with pets are increasingly being seen as safe and risk free. In addition, pets respond to and cater for emotional needs and consumerist urges of 'postmodern humans' (Franklin, 1999). Along with the humanisation trend and the tendency to anthromorphise animals, particularly pets, these changes have translated into altered relationships with pets.

Although these processes and changes are spread across social groups, there is a concentration within certain demographic categories. The interplay between gender, age and class is a strong indicator in pet-keeping and attachment. Even though interest in animals and concern for their welfare transcends social

divisions, not all socio-economic groups experience these processes and transformations in equitable measure. Despite the demise of apartheid and the advent of democracy in 1994, many black South Africans remain trapped in social and economic circumstances that are similar to those experienced in developing countries and are thus less likely to view pets as family members or be major consumers of pet products and accessories.

However, gradual shifts are taking place. Whereas, in the past, the motivations underlying pet-keeping and the meaning of pets was largely based on utilitarian considerations, and pets were favoured mostly by the wealthier members of society, this is all changing. It is important to bear in mind that alterations in the social structure brought about changes in the meanings that animals, including pets, had for people. It is worth reiterating that, in terms of our relationships with the animals we keep as pets, what was once considered unusual, aberrant or strange, is now thought of as 'normal' and acceptable (Franklin, 1999: 84).

Along with culture, local and historical contingencies, other structural and personal differences all have a part to play and must always be considered. Although South Africa has a long history of pet-keeping in all communities, changes in these practices are taking place, which in many respects are in line with what has happened in many other parts of the world. Our society is subject to the same broad and sweeping socio-economic and political changes that characterise the contemporary world and the way we perceive and treat animals, including pets, is shaped by these processes. In short, we are influenced by the 'spirit of the times' and in postmodernity, human-animals relations have been fundamentally transformed. For many animals, especially pets who share our most private space, our homes, this translates into an increased closeness, socially, emotionally and spatially.

Pets and pet-keeping need to be located within the broader current socio-economic and political context. The dominant cultural ideas about pets and their meanings are being challenged in various parts of the world and new ways of thinking about and treating them have emerged. Several of these shifts have also taken place in South Africa. Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has been in a state of transition in which old beliefs and worldviews are being challenged and the new social realities of pet-keeping are being encountered. While all epochs in history can be said to bring about a degree of change, the thinking about animals, especially pets, which dominated the past era, contrasts with attitudes

and patterns of behaviour that have started to emerge in recent years.¹⁴² Notwithstanding these changes, in the 'new' democratic South Africa, understandings and perceptions of pet animals such as dogs, in some respects, remain rooted in the past.

This study has found that one's view of pets is shaped by a range of sociological variables including culture, history, race, class, gender and age. Furthermore, area of residence (rural or urban), household type, past experiences with animals and childhood socialisation play a part in determining how individuals express their relationships with their pets and whether they regard them in a utilitarian or sentimental way.

Despite the patterns that can be identified, demographic factors alone cannot provide adequate information or a complete understanding and comprehension of the full scope of human-animal relations (Messent and Horsfield, 1985; Wells and Hepper, 1997). A more fruitful method than focusing exclusively on the role played by demographic variables is a combined approach. Individual choices, lifestyle patterns, past encounters, direct experiences and emotional connections are given further impetus by broader social forces and changes and the role of historical, economic and political processes in shaping our views and perceptions of and interactions with pets cannot be underestimated.

Pet-keeping is a heterogeneous phenomenon that should be understood in different social and historical contexts. Although cultural, social and historical specificities and circumstances are crucially important for fully grasping the nature and dynamics of this activity, there are commonalities between different national and local contexts. The theoretical generalisations that frame this study highlight and expound the fundamental features and mechanisms underlying pet-keeping. Franklin's postmodern theoretical perspective which explains and locates pet-keeping in terms of "*changes in the ontological security of the individual*" has been used extensively (1999: 86).

Relatively little is known about demographics and opinions of pet owners generally and in townships like Khayelitsha in particular. This study was

¹⁴² As mentioned earlier, even the language and terminology associated with pet-keeping has changed and reflects the 'political correctness' that has become part of the dominant discourse. Our changing perceptions of and interactions with pets are indicated in the new language of pet-keeping, which refers to pets as 'companion animals'.

undertaken to learn, amongst other things, about how people care for their pets and to describe the current pet population.¹⁴³ The empirical component of this research undertaking has contributed to existing knowledge and the growing body of 'Animal Studies' and sociological literature.

This study represents an exploratory empirical study into an area generally unconsidered in sociology. It provides a number of paths and directions for further investigative enquiry and it is anticipated that it will stimulate local studies and debate on these topics, which remain under researched. Future sociological research could examine the relationship of gender differences and roles in pet keeping. Studying the trends of pet keeping among more specific populations could also be a rich source of data. The classic data gathering techniques of ethnography and participant-observation could be used to study segments of the 'pet subculture.' In the South African context, broader socio-economic and cultural patterns impacted on pet-keeping to the extent that pets (specifically dogs) have come to be seen as members of the family. This view of animals as family may influence a number of policy changes, and studies in sociology. In the light of these developments, the changing role of pets in the family and the anti-social and often abusive practices that increasingly involve them thus warrant scrutiny.

The entire sub-field that explores the 'link' between human interpersonal violence and animal abuse remains largely ignored, yet is extremely relevant to the South African context. Since pets are often caught up in the cycle of domestic abuse, violence prevention programmes and interventions must attend to this. In addition to the shortcomings in research and literature, the lack of collaboration between domestic violence intervention and animal rescue attempts in this country and elsewhere needs to be redressed. There are common denominators that professionals working in all related fields (animal, child, woman and elder abuse) need to become reacquainted with if the cycle of violence is to be broken. Previously compartmentalised, these acts of violence, and the agencies charged with their prevention, need to inform an integrated and multi-disciplinary response to the violence plaguing our society. Solutions to problems of abuse necessitate fundamental social transformations and strategies to reduce violence in society in general and the home in particular must be developed at all levels and include both individual and collective action.

¹⁴³ This type of information is needed if Humane Education and various other animal welfare programmes are to be successfully implemented in this and similar areas.

There are several sociological connections to pet keeping that this research has uncovered. Although some of the findings in this study confirm and are consistent with previous research conducted in other geographical locations and social settings, in some instances the data pointed to patterns that contradict these generalities and commonly held assumptions.

As with any research undertaking, there are practical, theoretical, conceptual and methodological limitations that must be acknowledged. Further refinement of some of the research questions is required. The participant samples focused on specific demographic categories and the non-generalisability thereof is hereby recognised. Subsequent studies should thus attempt to include other social groups and a comparative analysis could be attempted. Additionally, the study was limited to dog and cat 'owners' and other types of pets were excluded.

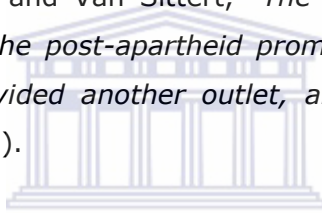
9.2. Pets as a 'Mirror of Society'

This study intended to provide a snapshot of pet-keeping in South Africa. Underlying this is the belief that the understandings derived can be used to provide insight into the nature of our relationships with each other as well as the state of our society as a whole. Underpinning this study is the recognition that animals, their myriad meanings and our interactions with them, mirror the social structure. Animals, in this case, pets, provide a useful lens with which to view aspects of society that may otherwise go unnoticed. They help us make sense of social dynamics and this is especially pressing in post-apartheid South Africa, where animals and their bodies have frequently become 'sites of struggle' and conflict. Pets and pet-keeping can operate like a barometer that indicates current social conditions and dynamics.

This thesis concurs with Rob Gordon, who in his study in Namibia argued that, how pets are defined, used and treated provides insight into the nature of our society and into various components thereof such as the family (2003: 174). But this process is itself influenced and determined by a range of demographic, historical, political, ideological, cultural and emotional interests and concerns. Past experience with and of animals and the subsequent amount of 'animal capital' accrued also contribute toward our attitudes and treatment of other animals, including pets. By understanding the meanings we attach to animals, especially pets, we are able to comprehend broader human society and cultural practices.

The way an individual, group or society treats animals reflects its cultural and social values. Thus studying human-animal relationships makes it possible to evaluate societal changes. Each social transition marks a new stage in values related to animals. Today, more people look to pets for emotional comfort rather than more practical services like guarding, hunting and herding and this shift signifies the belief that pets can be fully functioning social companions.

Animals, and indeed pets provide a unique insight into the 'social imagination' in South Africa. Dogs, who are without a doubt the most popular and prolific pets in all communities in this country, symbolise and reflect aspects of national, social and political identity. The increased popularity of breeds like Pitbulls and other fighting breeds, as well as guarding breeds can be linked to aspects of the contemporary national consciousness and ethos. Increased concern with crime and feelings of insecurity, the reassertion of masculinity and the revival of gambling, play a part in influencing the current allure of these types of dog breeds. According to Swart and Van Sittert, *"The popularity of the pitbull has been further enhanced by the post-apartheid promotion of casino capitalism in which dog-fighting has provided another outlet, albeit illegal, for the national gambling mania"* (2003: 155).



The unequal power relations that characterise our dealings with pets are symbolic of our views and social interactions with other humans. Negatively constructed animal imagery, along with language has long been used to disparage, devalue and oppress others and this is perpetuated in the public discourse in this country. The social and cultural context can constrain or enable discourses and views on animals or pets and nowhere is this more apparent than in South Africa.

It is imperative to try to be animal-centric in approach. Research and subsequent policies should not only be about humans, but about helping animals and acknowledging and affirming their inherent value and worth. Phineas argues: whatever the factors motivating pet-keeping, there is a general consensus that *"the history of pets remains too much the history of their masters, revealing more about the owning society than the owned"* (Phineas, 1973, quoted in Sophia Menache, 1998: 68). This thesis is therefore likely to tell us more about people than about pets.

Notwithstanding this, it is hoped that this research can help in some small way to enhance our understanding of both animals and humans and the social relations and processes that characterise our society. This thesis and any potential

outcomes and unforeseen consequences must at least, in part, be about the animals and not entirely human orientated and anthropocentric in its outcomes. It is anticipated that the findings can help inform and develop appropriate responses and design social policies and inform legislation that facilitate and advance both animal and human welfare. Socially relevant animal health and welfare interventions and service delivery programmes are needed.

When investigating the role of pets in human society, there are several animal welfare issues to consider. From the hordes of stray, often sick and starving animals roaming the streets to the large numbers of unwanted and lost dogs and cats filling animal shelters, pets can become a social problem, which requires an appropriate response. Many human social concerns emerge from and/or are related to the keeping of pets. Pet-keeping has relevance to the fields such as public health, environment, housing, urban planning. This, along with contradictory behaviour towards and boundary drawing between humans and animals is briefly reflected on in the next section.

9.3. The Way Forward

According to Gareth Davy, *"An important step in ensuring ethical animal treatment and welfare is to understand people's attitudes towards them"* (2006: 289). However, locally based sociological research is lacking and this study attempted to uncover and comprehend the beliefs and ideas that motivate perceptions and treatment of pets in South Africa. From observations and other interactions, it became apparent that although animals are everywhere, they often remain invisible and their needs are not always taken into account. In order for them to be considered in policy-making and laws, they have to be brought into sharper focus. For this to happen, views about animals need to change and new ways of thinking about them and exposure to knowledge about them must be actively encouraged and promoted.

"Inconsistent behaviour toward animals is omnipresent in Western society" (Arluke & Sanders, 1996: 5). Arluke and Sanders argue that it is the task of sociology to understand and explain what it is about modern society that makes it possible to treat animals in contradictory and conflicting ways. The changing 'social forces' that underlie and motivate these attitudes warrant investigation (ibid). Evidence of our contradictory behaviour towards animals abounds. Strong bonds with pets as well as abuse and cruelty are prolific. Some animals, like pets are cared for, while others, like farm animals are constantly exploited. The

kindness to pets that seems to be increasing among city dwellers is rarely extended to other animal species. In Cape Town and elsewhere, farm animals and wildlife are not given the same consideration by local government. On the one hand, the Premier and the DA have introduced measures and funded programmes aimed at uplifting the lives of pets. Yet, the same concern is not shown to baboons, tahrs, rabbits, fallow deer and other feral and wild animals that populate the city. Similarly, farm animals are not viewed as moral subjects, who are worthy of consideration and the interests of farmers remain of paramount importance. This view was expressed by Helen Zille, the Premier at an Animal Welfare Summit held in April 2012 (Yeld, 2012).¹⁴⁴

When examining our underlying motivations for indulging our pets, this inconsistency is revealed. In a recent online article, James Serpell (2011) draws attention to this dilemma. According to him, *"Finally, as a representative of meat-eating, urban humanity, I sometimes wonder whether all the care and attention I lavish on my pet dog and cat—not to mention my refusal to countenance eating them under any circumstances—might not also represent a kind of moral atonement; a way of compensating one group of animals for the sins I commit against others. Certainly, over the years, I have lost count of the number of pet owners I have met who claim to be "animal lovers" despite being willing to tuck into rare steaks, pork chops, or plates of chicken wings with undisguised gusto. Perhaps, in addition to their other social functions, pet animals have become the modern equivalents of guardian spirits and neo-totems whose 'sacred' status now gives us a psychological license to devour their less fortunate brethren"* (<http://onthehuman.org/2011/11/one-mans-meat/>)

Arluke and Sanders refer to the ambivalence that characterise human relationships with animals as well as the boundaries we draw to justify our inconsistent treatment of them (1996: 189). Drawing boundaries between ourselves and animal 'others,' is a crucial part of what it means to be human (Hobson-West, 2007:25). However boundaries shift over time and they are not static and unchanging. These boundaries are historically and socially constructed and culture also plays a part in the process of boundary creation (2007: 24). The blurring of the human-animal boundary can thus be seen as part of the wider

¹⁴⁴ The ANC has criticised the 'secret' summit, which they claim amounts to little more than a meeting between Helen Zille and *"a selected few farmers and chosen partners on the rights of animals as well as DA MPCs and provincial officials."* The meeting, which took place behind 'closed doors,' was called following the public outcry after the DA issued hundreds of permits to farmers to kill predators just before the last election (Cape Argus, 5 April 2012).

social shift to postmodernity. The central premise of Franklin's (1999) argument is that, the boundary between humans and other animals has been dismantled by three processes that are associated with the shift from modernity to postmodernity. These are: misanthropy, ontological insecurity and risk reflexivity. In the process, the distinctions between nature/culture; wild/tame; human/animal were dismantled.

Pets help connect humans with the natural world and fulfil deep needs. Separateness from animals resulted in the formation of sentimental and emotional attitudes to them. The development of caring, empathy and emotional attachments to animals is demonstrated by concern with animal causes and changes in pet-keeping. *"Animals will increasingly play a symbolic role as species are exterminated in the twenty-first century, but they are subjects who live with humans and may extend our limited purviews of time, space and relationship. They are one of our last links with wildness which techno-capitalism and our complicit ways of living are so effectively destroying"* (Woodward, 2008:167).

Environmental concerns that link to pet-keeping include dog faeces littering many areas and tonnes of animal corpses that need to be disposed of. In her article, *Zoopolis*, Jennifer Wolch observes that, *"The substitution of pets for wild nature in the city has driven an explosion of the urban pet population, polluting urban waterways as well as leading to mass killings of dogs and cats"* (2002: 201). This is clearly demonstrated in South African cities which are overflowing with dogs and cats, many of whom are stray and unwanted. Numerous animal welfare societies exterminate unwanted pets on a daily basis simply because there are too many and the corpses of dead animals as well as their faeces can be found in many rivers and streams. This decaying matter pollutes groundwater, litters the general environment and poses human health risks in many poor areas.

We need to find more equitable ways to coexist with the animals that share our lives and homes. Housing developers and city planners need to *"desist fixing animals rigidly into our spatial orderings"* and *"allow them more space: to grant them more room"* within our human settlements (Philo and Wilbert, 2000: 25). In his doctoral thesis focusing on Seattle, Fredrick Brown comments that: contemporary forms of pet-keeping, particularly among urbanites *"embrace more egalitarian relations with animals,"* yet *"animals have much less power to remake the city or to shape their own lives than they had one hundred years earlier"* (2010: 239-240). According to Brown, *"while animals may have a greater place*

than ever in our imagination and our families, human control of their activities has made the human-animal division sharper than ever" (2010: 240). Brown's observation resonates with the City of Cape Town, where the interviews and observations for this study were conducted. The presence or absence of animals helped define a place as civilized, middle class and modern (Brown, 2010: 239). In transforming Cape Town into a thoroughly modern, middle class city, the animal inhabitants are being kept in check and in place and the recently introduced By-Laws help to facilitate this. An integral component of this process entails reducing the number of pets living in the city.

Various other fields can benefit from incorporating pets into their field of consideration. The connection between 'new social movements' including the women's movement, animal rights, environment, peace, human rights etc. can be emphasised. A commonality of concerns between various marginalised groups and animal causes exists and can be used to mobilise on behalf of both humans and animals. For example, there are shared interests and common cause between indigenous people and the environment, workers and animals and women and animals. Up until now the tendency is to emphasise a conflict of interest between these various causes.

The agencies and stakeholders responsible for dealing with various social issues thus need to be guided by a range of considerations, including the commonality of cause between various marginal groups and animals when developing programmes and designing legislation. In South Africa, more diversity is needed in animal welfare organisations and within the field of animal protectionism as a whole. This may require making a deliberate and concerted effort to attract various ethnic, racial and socio-economic groups to the 'animal cause.' According to Sue-Ellen Brown, *"Greater diversity is needed in animal welfare for moral, political, and sociological reasons and also because people of color who live with companion animals need a greater voice in decisions that may affect them. Before society imposes additional bioethical standards of care on those who live with companion animals, it is important for all stakeholders—regardless of race, culture, religion, or gender—to have a voice"* (2005: 159). Brown (2005) argues that, it is necessary to empower all cultures to appreciate and derive benefit from pets. Failure to accomplish this, could curtail the efficacy of animal welfare laws and measures, which may be viewed as irrelevant to their lives (Brown, 2005).

The propensity for what James Serpell, (1996, [1986]) refers to "*non-productive activities*" like pet-keeping varies across and within cultures. Any interventions must thus take the differences between and within cultures into account, as well as the changes in pet-keeping that have taken place over time. The broad social and economic changes that account for and promote pet-keeping in the world today must be factored into any policies and programmes.

To advance the well-being and protection of animals, including those kept as pets, a knowledge base about animal-human connections needs to be built. Human beings need to recognise that animals are morally significant and that they need to be protected with laws. However, significant changes in values are taking place and the fight for 'animal rights' can be seen as the 'last frontier' in the overall struggle for social justice. In a country like South Africa, this is especially pertinent. In his groundbreaking treatise, *The Case For Animal Rights*, Tom Regan quotes the English philosopher, John Stuart Mill, who said: "*every great movement must experience three stage: ridicule, discussion, and adoption*" (Regan, 1983: vi). Jonathan Balcombe comments that "*We're over the ridicule part*" (*Cape Argus*, 5 May, 2012). If Balcombe is correct, then it is time for putting animals on the agenda, in academic research, social policy and politics. We need to debate animal issues and to move forward all stakeholders must be included. Despite the costs associated with pets, keeping them is mostly positive, both psychologically and socially. Pet-keeping as an activity should thus be actively encouraged and supported. This entails acknowledging and considering the specific needs of pets when planning any developments and executing any programmes of action in a wide diversity of interest areas and domains. While not everyone derives the same rewards from pets, they play similar roles in the lives of people from various social groups and society as a whole benefits from their ubiquitous presence.

By focussing on pet-keeping as a sociological phenomenon, this thesis has contributed to the growing body of literature in the field of 'Animal Studies.' This study has shed light on the attitudes towards pets and the pet-keeping practices of two distinct samples of South Africans.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

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20 May 2009

Dear Pet Owner

My name is Sharyn Spicer and I am a lecturer working at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am currently conducting research as part of the requirements for my doctorate in Sociology and will be interviewing pet owners in your area.

The purpose of my research is to illustrate the factors that influence pet ownership and attachment. This study will investigate the different beliefs and attitudes that a sample of South Africans have regarding pets or companion animals. A further objective is to analyse the impact of demographic profile (gender, status, education etc) on the relationship between pets and their owners.

It is hoped that this information will generate insight into our relationships with animals and that it will ultimately enhance the status of animals and in so doing improve our treatment of them. Furthermore there is a shortage of local sociological studies that consider pets, despite their increased prominence in society. This study thus also seeks to fill in some of the gaps that still exist within the literature on animals in society.

Note to participants:

- Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and won't put you at risk in any way.
- Strict ethical standards will be maintained and the university's code of conduct will be adhered to throughout this research undertaking.
- Your responses will be treated confidentially and anonymity is guaranteed.
- You may terminate the interview/survey at any stage with no penalty.
- Should you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you do not have to answer them.
- This research will not be used for any purpose other than for my PhD and to enhance academic debate. The findings may be published in academic journals.
- On completion of this study, participants will have access to the data in the form of a report and/or summary which will be made available on request.

If you are willing to participate in this unique study, please could you fill in the attached questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. Thank you for your co-operation. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Sharyn Spicer

Cell: 0766371198 / sspicer@uwc.ac.za



APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

*Private Bag X17
BELLVILLE
7535
CAPE TOWN
SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: (021) 959 2336
Fax: (021) 959 3636*

08 July 2009

Dear Pet Owner

My name is Mthandazo Disire Ntsham and I am a student at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am currently assisting Ms Sharyn Spicer, a lecturer in Sociology with her PhD research. We will be interviewing pet owners in your area.

The purpose of this research is to examine the factors that influence pet ownership and attachment.

Note to participants:

- Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and won't put you at risk in any way.
- Strict ethical standards will be maintained and the university's code of conduct will be adhered to throughout this research undertaking.
- Your responses will be treated confidentially and anonymity is guaranteed.
- You may terminate the interview/survey at any stage with no penalty.
- Should you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you do not have to answer them.
- This research will not be used for any purpose other than for my PhD and to enhance academic debate. The findings may be published in academic journals.
- On completion of this study, participants will have access to the data in the form of a report and/or summary which will be made available on request.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

M.D. Ntsham

Cell: 0824317122

APPENDIX C

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A (Demographic Information)

1. Age:

18-29
30-39
40-49
50-59
60-69
69+

2. Gender:

Female
Male

3. Home Language:

English
Afrikaans
Other (Specify)

4. Race:

Black / African
White
Coloured
Indian
Other



5. Religion:

Christian
Jewish
Muslim
Other (specify)

6. Area of residence (Town/City and Province)

7. Marital status:

Married
Living together
Divorced
Widowed
Single

8. Highest Level of education:

Less than High School
High School Diploma / Matric
Degree / Diploma
Post-graduate qualification

9. Occupation:

10. Income:

More than R30 000 per month
R25 000 – R30 000

R20 000 – R24 000
 R15 000 – R19 000
 R10 000 – R14 000
 R7500 – R9000
 R5000 - 8000
 Less than R5000

11. How many children (if any) live in your household?

SECTION B (CURRENT PET-KEEPING PRACTICES & PAST EXPERIENCES WITH PETS)

12. What kinds of animals do you have at the moment? (Read below and circle all that apply. Also indicate how many of each).

- a. dog (s)
- b. cat (s)
- c. birds
- d. fish
- e. horses
- f. rabbits
- g. hamsters, mice, rats, guinea pigs
- h. wild animals (describe)
- i. snakes
- j. sheep, goats, cows, pigs
- k. other (describe)



13. What breed of dog or cat do you have at the moment?

14. Why do you have your current pet?

15. Of your animals, do you - or did you - have a favourite?

Y N

Which one and why?

16. What is your pet's name?

17. Do you have any photos of your pet/s? Y N

18. What do you feed your pet?

- a. Pet food bought from the supermarket
- b. Pet food bought from the vet
- c. Cooked meals / leftovers.
- d. Other (Specify)

19. Is your pet sterilised? Y N

20. Where do you go when your pet is ill?

- a. Private vet
- b. Animal welfare society, e.g., SPCA
- c. Mobile clinic
- d. Nowhere
- e. Other

21. Where does your pet sleep?

- a. Inside in own bed
- b. Inside on your bed
- c. Outside in kennel or other shelter
- d. Other

22. Who looks after and feeds the animals in your household?

- a. Mother
- b. Father
- c. Sister or Brother
- d. Self
- e. Other (specify)

23. Where did you get your pet from?

- a. Bought from a breeder
- b. Bought from a petshop
- c. From friends or family
- d. Responded to good home wanted ad
- e. Adopted from an animal welfare society
- f. Rescued stray.
- g. Other.

24. How long have you had your pet?

- a. Less than 1 year
- b. 1-3 years
- c. 4-6 years
- d. 7-9 years
- e. 10 years or more
- f. Don't know



25. "Sometimes pets or other animals are special sources of support in times of stress." Has there ever been difficult or stressful times when an animal was easier to talk to than people and a source of comfort for you?

Y N

If yes, when did it happen and what kind of animal gave you support?

26. Do you ever take your pets out? Y N

27. If yes, where do you take them?

- a. Shopping
- b. To visit friends or relatives
- c. To restaurants, coffee shops and /or on picnics
- d. On holiday
- e. On walks – forest, parks, beach etc
- f. Hunting
- g. To dog/cat shows
- h. Other (specify)

28. Do you ever buy your pets gifts? Y N

If yes, when do you do this and what do you buy?

29. Does it affect you if people praise or criticise your pet? Y N

30. Have you ever lost an animal? Y N

If yes, what kind of animal and when and how did this happen.

31. If your pet died, what was the reason?

- a. Old age
- b. Put to sleep
- c. Illness
- d. Run over
- e. Deliberately killed

32. Was the loss difficult for you? Y N

33. Does it still bother you now?

- a. Never
- b. Hardly ever
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often
- e. Very often

SECTION C (GENERAL ATTITUDES TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL WELFARE)

34. Sometimes people enjoy themselves by hurting, killing or being cruel to animals. Have you ever seen or heard about anyone doing this?

Y N

35. Some people are afraid of some animals. Are you? Y N

If yes, what kind of animal (s)?

36. Does it bother you to see dead animals on the roads? Y N

37. How much does it bother you?

- a. Just a little
- b. Quite a bit
- c. A lot
- d. Not at all

38. Do you get upset if you see animals being hurt on TV or movies? Y N

39. If yes, how much does it bother you?

- a. Just a little
- b. Quite a bit
- c. A lot
- d. Not at all

40. Do you think animals deserve better treatment than what they generally receive in society? Y N

Why or why not?

41. Would you describe yourself as an animal lover? Y N

42. Which statement best describes your feelings?

- a. Animals exist for our use
- b. Animals should have the same rights as humans

- c. Animals need more rights and consideration, but humans come first
- d. Animals don't matter

43. Who looked after the pets in your household when you were growing up?

- a. Father
- b. Mother
- c. Other (specify)
- d. Self

44. Do you think animals should be given more legal protection?

Y N

Why or why not?

45. Would you describe yourself as an animal lover?

Y N

46. Do you breed animals or belong to any cat or dog clubs or associations?

Y N

If yes, please specify.

47. Are you involved with any animal welfare groups or charities?

Y N

If yes, please specify.



THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A (DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION)

1. Age:

18-29
30-39
40-49
50-59
60-69
69+

2. Gender:

Female
Male

3. Home Language:

Xhosa
English
Other (Specify)

4. Race:

5. Religion:

Christian
Muslim
Other (specify)



6. Area of residence / section of Khayelitsha PE

7. Marital status:

Married
Living together
Divorced
Widowed
Single

8. Highest Level of education:

Less than High School
High School Diploma / Matric
Degree / Diploma
Post-graduate qualification

9. Occupation:

10. Income:

R20 000 + per month
R10 – R15 000
R7500 – R10 000
R5000 – R7500
R3000 – R5000
R1000 – R3000
Less than R1000

11. How many (if any) children live in your household?

SECTION B (CURRENT PET-KEEPING PRACTICES & PAST EXPERIENCES WITH PETS)

12. What kinds of animals do you have at the moment? (Read below and circle all that apply).

How many?

- l. dog (s)
- m. cat (s)
- n. birds
- o. fish
- p. horses
- q. rabbits
- r. hamsters, mice, rats, guinea pigs
- s. wild animals (describe)
- t. snakes
- u. sheep, goats, cows, pigs
- v. other (describe)

13. What breed of dog or cat do you have at the moment?

14. Why do you have your current pet?

15. Of your animals, do you - or did you - have a favourite? Y N
Which one and why?

16. What is your pet's name?

17. Do you have any photos of your pet/s? Y N

18. What do you feed your pet?

- a. Pet food bought from the supermarket
- b. Pet food bought from the vet
- c. Cooked meals / leftovers.
- d. Other (Specify)

19. Is your pet sterilised? Y N

20. Where do you go or what do you do when your pet is ill?

- a. Private vet
- b. Animal welfare society, e.g., SPCA, Mdzananda
- c. Mobile clinic
- d. Nowhere
- e. Buy medicine and treat
- e. Other

21. Where does your pet sleep?

- a. Inside in own bed
- b. Inside on your bed
- c. Outside in kennel or other shelter
- d. Other

22. Who looks after and feeds the animals in your household?

- a. Mother
- b. Father
- c. Sister or Brother
- d. Self
- e. Other (specify)

23. Where did you get your pet from?

- a. Bought from a breeder
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- c. From friends or family
- d. Responded to good home wanted ad
- e. Adopted from an animal welfare society
- f. Rescued stray.
- g. Other.

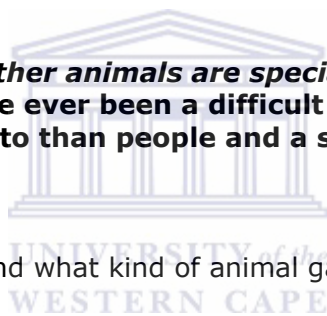
24. How long have you had your pet?

- a. Less than 1 year
- b. 1-3 years
- c. 4-6 years
- d. 7-9 years
- e. 10 years or more
- f. Don't know

25. "Sometimes pets or other animals are special sources of support in times of stress." Has there ever been a difficult or stressful time when an animal was easier to talk to than people and a source of comfort for you?

Y N

If yes, when did it happen and what kind of animal gave you support?



26. Do you ever take your pets out? Y N

27. If yes, where do you take them?

- a. Shopping
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- e. On walks – forest, parks, beach etc
- f. Hunting
- g. To dog/cat shows
- h. Other (specify)

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30. Have you ever lost an animal? Y N

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- g. Put to sleep
- h. Illness

- i. Run over
- j. Deliberately killed

32. Was the loss difficult for you? Y N

33. Does it still bother you now?

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- g. Hardly ever
- h. Sometimes
- i. Often
- j. Very often

SECTION C (GENERAL ATTITUDES TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL WELFARE)

34. Sometimes people enjoy themselves by hurting, killing or being cruel to animals. Have you ever seen or heard about anyone doing this?

Y N

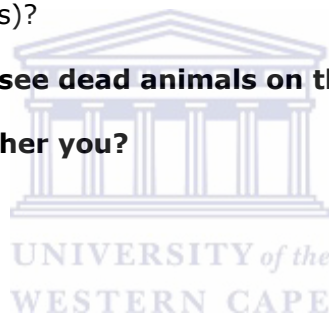
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- g. A lot
- h. Not at all



38. Do you get upset if you see animals being hurt on TV or movies? Y N

39. If yes, how much does it bother you?

- e. Just a little
- f. Quite a bit
- g. A lot
- h. Not at all

40. Have you heard of the SPCA? Y N

If yes, what do you know about them?

41. Do you think animals deserve better treatment than what they generally receive in society? Y N

Why or why not?

42. Would you describe yourself as an animal lover? Y N

43. Which statement best describes your feelings?

- a. Animals exist for our use
- b. Animals should have the same rights as humans
- c. Animals need more rights and consideration, but humans come first
- d. Animals don't matter

44. How did you first learn about animals/pets and caring for them?

- a. From family member / in the home (specify who).
- b. From a friend or neighbour.
- c. From a teacher / at school.
- d. From an employer / in the workplace.
- e. From books, TV or movies.
- f. Have direct experience looking after animals (explain further).
- g. From the SPCA or another animal welfare group.
- h. Other (specify).
- i. I don't know how to care for animals.

45. Who looked after the pets in your household when you were growing up?

- a. Father
- b. Mother
- c. Other (specify)
- d. Self

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!!!

