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Truck Dogs: Advancing a Mobile Geography of Multispecies Relations of Care

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ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates how multispecies relations co-constitute mobile work in road haulage under supply chain capitalism. Bringing labour and animal geographies into dialogue, we extend the concepts of carescapes and caringscapes to theorise the truck cab, route and logistical infrastructures as multispecies sites of care beyond the 'static' workplace. We use multiple methods to create multispecies narrative portraits, through which we reveal how caring labour—training and socialisation, embodied attunement, walking and the management of hygiene, risk and routine—enables truck dogs to travel and reshapes drivers' sensory orientations, working rhythms and well-being. We also show how organisational policies, regulatory regimes and infrastructural constraints render some forms of care legible as security, cleanliness, compliance and asset protection, whilst limiting or displacing others. At the same time, truck dogs offer companionship, routine and vigilance that can ease isolation and insecurity without resolving the structural harms of mobile work. We argue that supply chain capitalism is sustained through a mobile carescape in which care is continually negotiated across schedules, routes and institutional thresholds. By foregrounding these multispecies arrangements, the paper unsettles dominant accounts of where and how care is organised and advances a mobile geography of care attentive to the logistical conditions through which care is made possible, valued and constrained.

1 | Introduction

Willow¹ is a truck dog. She has spent as much time inside a truck cab as outside it since she was three months old. As a puppy, her companion trucker, Casey, could lift her easily into the elevated truck cab. Today, at 120 pounds, it takes a bit more effort and coordination: Willow jumps up and positions herself on the steps, Casey braces and lifts (see image above). This is just one way that Willow and Casey, together, negotiate the physical infrastructures, organisational and occupational rhythms and regulations of the UK road haulage industry. Across the Atlantic, there are many more dogs like Willow. The Canadian Trucking Alliance estimates that as many as 28,000 trucks with companion truck dogs cross the Canada–US border each day (Judd and Prasad 2024), with up to 40% of north American truck drivers

travelling with a companion animal (Motavalli 2021). Whilst comparable figures are not available for the UK, both Casey and Willow know a few fellow truck dogs—of different sizes and breeds—who share in the mobile worlds of UK road haulage.

In this paper, we suggest that the multispecies caring relations between truckers and their companion dogs expose new mobile geographies of care, co-constitutive of institutional, regulatory and spatial arrangements of UK road haulage, which could be understood as a part of logistics' culture of care (Greenhough et al. 2023). Long-haul² trucking is often analysed through the techno-rational logics of supply chain optimisation (exceptions include McLean 2016; Balay 2018; Neis et al. 2018; Hanson 2021). Yet this overlooks how many drivers experience acute isolation and the 'silent epidemic' of loneliness (Holton

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et al. 2023), reflected in suicide rates reportedly 20% higher than the national average in the UK (Mates in Mind, cited in Motor Transport Tindall 2024). At the same time, the high proportion of self-employment create the conditions of possibility for drivers to travel with companion animals (mostly dogs), blurring the lines between spaces and times of waged work and everyday relational care. In this context, we advance an argument that holds the liminality of truck dogs in tension, troubling established classificatory and subjectifying logics through which care in human–animal relations is typically understood, and in doing so rethinks how geographies of care are conceptualised in mobile human–animal relations.

Extending care-full geographies, we take trucker–dog relations as a starting point to expose new mobile geographies of care in occupational automobility (Gregson 2023), articulating both the ‘placed-ness’ of caring relations (Bowlby 2012; Hanrahan and Smith 2020) and the value of a mobile ontology that attends to the fluid, shifting contexts of road haulage within multi-scalar supply chains. To do so, we work with and extend Bowlby’s (2012) concepts of *caringscapes* and *carescapes*, which foreground the spatial–temporal organisation of care and its entanglement with structural policy and resources, through a multispecies frame. More specifically, we treat care as a contested practice, relation and ethic, inseparable from the social, material and political life-worlds through which it is enacted, specifically showing how geographies of care are co-produced through human–animal relations under supply chain capitalism (Tsing 2009; Thiemann 2022), and how these relations generate new spatialities when conventional boundaries between work, home and care become frequently unsettled. Trucker–dog partnerships, we argue, enact distinct modes of living and working, as well as of vulnerability and endurance, within road haulage’s multi-scalar logistics (Alimahomed-Wilson and Ness 2018) and consequently open new conceptual avenues for geographical engagements with care.

We bring scholarship on geographies of care (Middleton and Samanani 2021; Power and Hall 2018), multispecies relations and work (Charles and Wolkowitz 2023; Coulter 2016; Irvine 2013), and labour geographies (Gatsinos 2025)—particularly work centred on road haulage (Gregson 2018; Hanson 2021; Hopkins and Davidson 2022)—into dialogue to reframe how mobile multispecies care is understood. We contribute to geographers’ long-held interest in dogs’ spatialities and positionalities, which has documented how canine lives are differentially constituted within human-centred ontologies. This literature demonstrates how dogs are enrolled in relations of care, control and labour through training practices (Smith et al. 2021), legal and welfare regimes (Srinivasan 2013), experiences of loss and search (Allen et al. 2022) and everyday negotiations of public and mobile space (Fletcher and Platt 2018; Instone and Sweeney 2014). This body of scholarship helps to articulate the ways through which dogs are central to the production of geographical relations of care, mobility and power, constituted through everyday practices, governance arrangements and affective attachments.

We make three substantive contributions: First, we extend geographical analyses of labour and supply chain capitalism by situating truckers’ dogs as integral to the everyday organisation of affective, emotional and logistical work. Attending to

trucker–dog relations reveals how infrastructures, routines and occupational norms are not only imposed upon workers but are continually negotiated through multispecies encounters, complicating dominant accounts of supply chain temporality and discipline. Second, we contribute to geographies of care by reworking assumptions about where and with whom care is practised, demonstrating how care is enacted within mobile, regulated and extractive workplaces and gives rise to uneven and ambivalent carescapes across human and canine lives. Third, we contribute to methodological debates on multispecies and mobile research by outlining an iterative ‘patchwork rather than tailoring’ approach that combines in-person and video-mediated encounters, interviews and open-ended qualitative survey responses, enabling the curation of multispecies portraits through which textured arrangements of care under supply chain capitalism can be traced.

Taken together, the analysis presented in this paper offers an alternative route to making visible the ‘seams of global capitalism’ (Tsing 2012, 152), where logistics is not frictionless flow but a contingent achievement sustained by uneven, often invisible, capacities and labours of care and by more-than-human relations that complicate accounts of supply chains as purely rational and human endeavours.

1.1 | Mobile Multispecies Care Ecologies

Scholarship on mobile work disrupts the presumption that employees commute from a fixed home to a static workplace, instead highlighting how labour and daily life are co-constituted on the move. Across the globe, diverse arrangements from nomadic pastoralists (Quicke and Green 2018), digital nomads (Sciuvia 2025) and—central to this paper—truck drivers represent illustrative examples of alternative patterns, relationships and geographies of care. Whilst research on trucking typically underscores tensions between supply chain schedules and domestic caregiving (Hanson 2021), it rarely addresses how care—care giving, care receiving and caring with (Power 2019) unfolds *on the move*. Extended time away from home often relies on unpaid care infrastructures maintained by friends, partners or (grand)parents (Hopkins and Davidson 2023), whilst the truck cab and its ‘pause-spaces’ (service stations, lay-bys, roadside shoulders) become hybrid zones of waged labour and everyday reproduction (Gregson 2018). Yet scant facilities—ranging from limited running water to a lack of toilets—can curtail self-care’s rest and recovery (McLean 2016), compounding the hyper-masculinised norms of this male-dominated occupation (Hopkins and Davidson 2023) which has become characterised by worker mental and physical ill-health (Hopkins et al. 2024).

Mobile work reconfigures not only human relationships, but also the possibilities for sustaining care across human–animal relations. These multispecies practices have received little attention, despite their significance for everyday mobilities. To better theorise these forms of care on the move, we learn from Bowlby’s conceptual metaphors of *caringscapes* and *carescapes*, which together describe the complex ecologies within which care practices emerge and are sustained. Caringscapes refer to the everyday spatial and temporal arrangements within which care is planned, anticipated and carried out—shaped by work

routines, bodily needs, historical experiences and shifting life circumstances. 'Carescapes' encompasses the broad institutional, policy and infrastructural contexts that enable or constrain the organisation of care (Bowlby 2012; Bowlby and McKie 2019). These two dimensions are co-constitutive: policy frameworks and support systems structure possibilities for care, even as situated practices may challenge, reconfigure or sustain those same systems.

Engaging with these concepts as we consider the organisation of care between truckers and their companion animals allows us to both depart from and extend their existing applications. Where much prior work on carescapes/caringscapes has focused on human care arrangements (Bowlby and McKie 2019), we recognise care as a multispecies entanglement—emerging through embodied, affective and spatial interactions between human and non-human beings (Holton 2025). Specifically, we understand care is not solely something humans do *for* animals, but as produced relationally, with companion animals equally capable of giving, receiving and shaping practices of care (Cudworth 2022; Haraway 2008).

The care arrangements that emerge within mobile work are shaped not only by the temporalities of human work and life, but by intersecting material and temporal needs of the non-human animal. For example, location, movement and materialities across varied time-spaces of trucking mediate how and when care can be practised, and how these spaces are differently experienced by human and non-human bodies. Meanwhile, institutional factors such as animal restraint regulations, insurance policies and organisational cultures and practices form a shifting carescape that conditions the possibilities for sustaining multispecies life on the move. Together, this scholarship underscores the generative potential of extending geographies of care to recognise the diverse and contingent mobile *and* multispecies relations.

2 | Curating Multispecies Portraits

Our engagement with multispecies relations of care in road haulage emerged slowly and incrementally through extended research encounters. Across multiple research projects, we were confronted with diverse relations of care described by mobile workers that extended beyond child- and elder-care, including navigating mobile work whilst tending to house plants, maintaining allotments and caring for household pets—often described as providing a sense of home, community and safety. Where interlocutors were without others with whom to share these responsibilities, they frequently expressed emotions of worry and concern. At the same time, we often heard from both truck drivers and their family members about the loneliness and mental health crises widespread in road haulage.

It was within this context that we began assembling a multi-method body of empirical material to better understand these relations and practices. Between 2024 and 2025, we generated empirical insights through the coming together of different methodological approaches, weighing possibility *and* feasibility through our decision-making. Rather than treating our empirical materials as discrete datasets, we approached them as

fragments curated into multispecies portraits, attentive to how different forms of empirical material could be brought into conversation. In this way, we take a more 'patchwork than tailoring' approach to our empirical analysis (Higgins et al. 2017). Our empirical sources were selectively assembled, juxtaposed and layered to curate the multispecies portraits and accompanying analysis presented below.

In North America, travelling with a companion animal is highly prevalent in truck driving work. The political-economic structure, socio-materialities and physical geography of road haulage across North America create supportive conditions for travelling with companion animals, including dependence on owner-operator drivers, the larger size of truck cabs (relative to the UK trucks) and long-haul trucking across the vast continent's highways—covering up to 1000 more miles *per week* than their UK counterparts. Taking an iterative approach, we first assembled sources of information about this practice in the UK—reengaging with past interviews ($n=6$), social media (Facebook, Instagram) and online sources (industry magazines, online fora). It became clear that social media is a key site where truck drivers share experiences of travelling with companion animals through text, video and photographs. From this we learnt the significance of particular configurations making this practice possible: good interpersonal relations with employers, specific shift and vehicle types, routes and delivery sites—and even then, conditions could quickly change and permission to travel with their companion animal rescinded.

To delve into this further, we sought a new set of interviews with truck drivers and their animal companions. We thus returned to social media as a key recruitment pathway. Recruitment was shaped first by locating drivers who travelled with companion animals, and then by drivers' understandable reluctance to discuss a practice that remains unevenly distributed and insufficiently normalised in parts of the UK road freight industry, an articulated reticence to engage with academic research and occupational commitments limiting available time for interview participation. Following a relational ethics of care to fieldwork (Jacobs and Salimbeni 2024), we treat drivers' discomfort not as an obstacle to overcome but as a meaningful indicator of the social and regulatory vulnerabilities attached to mobile work and multispecies care, both individually and collectively.

Research with mobile workers presents distinct challenges (Hopkins and Davidson 2023). Truck drivers operate under complex and demanding schedules, and access to their workplaces often requires multiple permissions across employers, clients and contractors. Observing truck-dog interactions in real-time (e.g., using 'go-along' methods) raised practical spatial constraints of the truck's cab and regulations requiring animals to be harnessed in a moving vehicle, leaving no space for a researcher-observant. Following a sustained discussion with our interlocutors and industry advisors, a more fluid and adaptive methodological strategy was adopted. This included in-person meetings with drivers and their dogs at motorway services, which allowed for situated observations of their shared routines. When such encounters were not feasible, we conducted audio-visual interviews which made visible their mobile working environments. Our interlocutors joined calls from their truck cabs, showing where their dogs slept, the adjustments

made to accommodate them and the rhythms of their shared routines. This approach extends emerging work on the use of video-mediated ethnography to represent more-than-human relations (see Solhjoo et al. 2022), allowing interlocutors to visually and narratively position their dogs as active presences within the research encounter.

Other interactions took the form of talk-based interviews, conducted either online or by phone, joined from varied settings such as home backyards during games of fetch, truck stops and home offices. These conversations elicited detailed accounts of multispecies practices, recognising, as Hitchings (2012) argues, that people can productively talk about their practices even when direct observation is not possible. In total six interviews, lasting up to two hours each, were conducted. Interviews were semi-structured and designed to centre the dog, even as the method remained human-led. In many of these interactions, the first author's companion dogs, Champ and Jebo, were also present—visible in video calls or accompanying in-person meetings. Similar to Cudworth's (2018) experience in conducting research with her companions, we found that the presence of the dogs invoked trust and lent legitimacy to the research, generating new openings for conversation and easing into discussions. Where possible, interviews were extended to include family members or logistics managers, reflecting an understanding of care as distributed across relational networks (Ho et al. 2024).

We found, however, that whilst the empirical activities described above illustrated practices of multispecies care on the move, they left unresolved questions regarding the broader prevalence and shared nature of such practices across the industry. We thus launched an online survey to overcome some of the recruitment challenges described earlier. The survey yielded 101 responses (Table 1), including drivers who travelled with companion animals (58%) and those who did not but wished to do so (42%).

TABLE 1 | Survey respondent, key descriptive characteristics.

Variable	Response (all respondents)	Response (respondents who travel with companion animal)
Gender ^a	25% women	27% women
Contract type	71% directly employed by a company	68% directly employed by a company
Vehicle usage	41% share vehicle with other drivers; 47% sole driver of vehicle; 12% vehicle owner	28% share vehicle with other drivers; 53% sole driver of vehicle; 19% vehicle owner

Note: For contract types, respondents could select that they were contracted through an agency to one or multiple companies, self-employed or 'other'. The contract type is important as this creates specific spatialities for multispecies relations.

^aTruck driving is a male-dominated occupation, at over 98% in the UK. Our survey and interview respondents' numbers are therefore not representative of the workforce.

The survey combined structured items (multiple-choice questions on work patterns, employment arrangements and caring responsibilities) with an open-ended prompt. Although broad, the final question ('is there anything else you would like to share about how having a pet³ animal fits into your work and life as a lorry⁴ driver?') generated extensive written accounts detailing emotions and aspirations, household and work dynamics and the specific conditions under which travelling with a companion animal was enabled, negotiated or foreclosed. In this paper, we do not present statistical analysis of the survey in this paper; instead, we use the free text survey responses, in combination with other empirical sources to develop the multispecies portraits presented below.

2.1 | Multispecies Storytelling

In what follows, we take a *storied* approach (Dutta 2016) to uncover the micro-geographies of lives under supply chain capitalism. The stories are constructed following Greenhough and Roe's (2019) advocacy for storytelling as a mode of multispecies attunement; we treat storying as an ethical and responsive practice—one that acknowledges the partiality of knowing and the difficulty of representing more-than-human life without abstraction. Storying here allows us to remain attentive to the affective interruptions, relational tensions and contingent rhythms that characterise care on the move. The narratives that follow are presented as *multispecies portraits*, learning from Bissell and Gorman-Murray's (2019) approach to constructing impressionistic accounts that retain the complexity of lived experience. The portraits trace the situated relations between truckers and companion truck dogs, offering partial and situated illustrations of how care is practised, improvised and negotiated under the conditions of mobile work. Each portrait is named after human and non-human interlocutors, highlighting the relational constitution of care without collapsing the narrative into a solely human account. These portraits are interpretive with the aim to affect, move and incite reflection rather than to definitively represent multispecies life on the road.

It was challenging to decide which accounts to foreground as each trucker–dog dyad mobilised a distinct care ecology, where both trucker and dogs' bodies and dispositions interacted with infrastructures, routines and organisational constraints in particular ways. Ultimately, we focus on three portraits that offer analytic range across different working arrangements and life-course situations, whilst also resonating with the themes most widely echoed in the open-ended survey responses. The three portraits are presented across two sections; first, we show how mobile care arrangements are assembled and made legible within organisational and regulatory contexts. We then attend to the embodied and temporal labour through which these arrangements are sustained and reworked over time.

3 | From Situated to Mobile Care Arrangements

Portrait 1. Casey, Willow and Scout.

Casey is relatively new to truck driving. She does logistics for major entertainment events, after a serious

injury forced her to change career path. The transition wasn't easy: 'I've had the worst two years of my life'. Just as she was adapting to her new role, she lost her four-year-old bloodhound, Mabel, in a tragic accident and went through a divorce shortly thereafter.

Casey has always had animals around her, but she is particularly passionate about dogs—and, more specifically, bloodhounds. Initially prohibited by cost, Casey convinced a breeder to accept a payment plan when she first met Mabel. So, when the opportunity arose to adopt Mabel's niece, she welcomed two-month-old Willow. Since then, Willow, and 13-year-old terrier Scout, have been with Casey practically 24/7: 'I do everything with my dogs, I go everywhere, all the time, like in every shop. Apart from food shops, I go anywhere, I don't care. Until they tell me to get out, I'm not going anywhere. And you'll be surprised actually where you can go'. When we spoke with Casey's boss, Heather, she told us: 'I knew Casey... it wasn't even a question whether the dog was going to work with Casey or not'.

Scout adapted to the truck effortlessly, having already travelled with Casey in her previous job. As an older dog, he was content to curl up on his bed and sleep for most of the day. When Willow joined them, Casey introduced her to the truck gradually, making it a fun place to be with lots of play and treats, 'And this took me about four days before I actually took her on a trip because I cannot have her flipping out. Also, it won't be fair on her'. Now, Willow, sitting much taller than the petite Casey, looks like she owns the truck: 'A lot of people laugh and stuff on the road, because she sits in there, she's just as tall as me, I think'.

Willow's large, stately frame brings significant comfort to Casey: 'She kept me alive... Because if I was to burst into tears, she would hug me'. Casey recounted the ways her dogs improve her work-life: they ensure she takes regular breaks and walks, cuddle up in bed, encourage social interactions, and make long waits to unload or sit in traffic more entertaining. 'No one ever minds about them. There have been foreign drivers absolutely petrified. But I've met some nice people actually come over. So sometimes when I get out, people actually come over and have to sit down and we'll just, you know, I mean talk. She actually brings people together as well. It's really nice'.

The dogs also keep Casey safe. She recalled the first time this happened: 'I went up to Glasgow and

I was getting cut—someone was cutting into my curtain.⁵ And [Scout] woke me up and told me'. Now it's Willow's deep 'woof' that protects Casey, while she emphasised that Willow is not a guard dog and is securely strapped in the cab. But Willow's stature and deep bark are enough to deter most people, she tells us. On one such occasion, Casey was cornered by three men. As the conversation became more tense, Willow sensed the disruption, stuck her head out of the window, and let out a long baying 'rooo', and the men ran away: 'It's just bizarre. It's just we're in sync. You understand me, right, with your dog? Sometimes you think it's God, you know, doing that or whatever you know, but it was just there'.

As a freight transport manager, Heather values the security the dogs provide as well, 'They protect not only the driver and keep them happy, they also protect the load...I mean one bob from one of her dogs and whoever is loitering around her truck will just leave. From a security perspective, having a dog is a good thing for me...and if she had to stay out overnight at places on the road, it gave me absolute peace of mind'. Heather had never had an employee request to bring dogs to work, but it did not surprise her, 'I remember as a kid in South Africa being so jealous seeing someone even in their car, you know, in a pickup truck or a truck with their dog and thinking "Ohh, I'd love to have my dog with me in the cab all the time"'. She confirmed with her insurance company that it did not impact premiums, as long as the dogs were secured in the cab according to the Road Safety Act. Heather then adapted a sample employee agreement on bringing pets to work. They agreed on a weekly cleaning schedule for the truck and set up a small fund for a valet clean in case of any unforeseen accidents.

Casey, Willow and Scout's story makes visible the emotional, material and organisational entanglements that shape life and work for truck drivers who travel with companion animals. Portraits show how these dimensions are inseparable, how care, labour and logistics intertwine in everyday practice. In this section, however, we focus on two interconnected aspects: how and why companion animals come to accompany drivers in the cab, and the ways in which these relationships are recognised, negotiated and made legible within organisational and regulatory contexts.

3.1 | Conceiving Care on the Move

Historical and situated experiences are understood as central to how care is conceptualised and practised (Bowlby 2012), as well as to how human-animal relations are felt and valued (Roe and Greenhough 2023). This was evident across our interlocutors'

narratives. Dogs had been part of their childhoods, previous professions and family histories—woven into shared rhythms of care long before they entered the logistics industry. These experiences shaped how drivers related to their dogs and how they understood what the dog needed, how they interpreted their bodily cues, and how and where they cared for them. These understandings were entangled with assumptions about breed characteristics, but also attentive to the specific dog—how much exercise they needed, whether they would be lonely left at home, whether they preferred to be close to the driver, and whether their temperament was suited to spending time in the truck's cab. But before this, drivers negotiate care arrangements to support their animals at home, where spatialities of care are contingent on structural dynamics of work and the mobile nature of trucking work.

Animal care, by way of pet-sitters, has become a big business (reportedly worth £1 billion in the UK in 2023), supported through differently configured platforms (i.e., some operating as mutual aid others as a formalised financial transaction). For some drivers with animals at home, this made mobile work possible, knowing that—at a minimum—their animals' basic needs (food, exercise) had been covered. Others relied on family to perform these services. Yet for those drivers without these support systems, adjusting their work patterns was their only course of action. This forced drivers to negotiate trade-offs between occupational mobility and relational responsibilities, 'If pets were allowed to come with us, I would change from day driver to tramper. I'm only a day driver because of my dog. Doing 15 hour and coming home just to walk is very tiring as I walk him have dinner and go to bed.' (survey respondent #45, Male, 35–44). This tension between the demands of paid employment and care has been widely documented for child- and elder-care (Gallagher 2013; Milligan 2000). The long and uncertain nature of truck driving work creates additional tensions: 'Can be difficult at times with irregular finish times... it has happened before where my wife was on holiday with family and I ended up working away for a week, so I had to get a friend to come and look after the cats' (survey respondent #48, Male, 25–34).

Yet it is not only about organising care for animals that drove our interlocutors to seek truck dog arrangements, rather our research uncovered mutual multispecies relations of care, where drivers were not only articulating care for their animal, but also how being able to travel with them would afford new caring relations for themselves too: 'I suffer with anxiety and find myself very lonely at times in this job, having my dog with me is the best company I could imagine. I wish I'd done it sooner.' (survey respondent #5, Female, 35–44). This loneliness is not only emotional and social (Franklin 2015), but also a form of proximal loneliness that arises from the lack of physical closeness, shared rhythms, routines and corporeal interactions (Han 2022). For our interlocutors, dogs helped ease this isolation by offering a warm, breathing presence that anchored drivers in routine and companionship. Casey, reflecting on the health crisis in the industry had said that 'The number of truckers who die alone in their lorries... the suicide rate is higher [than average] or people are having heart attacks in the lorry because of the diet... We shouldn't be on our own as human beings, should we? It's not the way it should be'. Wilkinson (2022) reminds us, however, that loneliness is also political; it reflects structural conditions of work and life,

social disconnection and marginalisation. Truck dogs do not resolve these conditions, but for these drivers their relations provide a way to cope with the affects/effects of mobile working lives.

3.2 | Making Care Legible

Diverse socio-material, legal and organisational conditions either enable or constrain multispecies care on the move. Portrait 1 provides an example of this, with Casey's manager, Heather, drawing on her own histories with dogs when approving the arrangements, but it was the framing of the animals as a security asset—protecting the vehicle and cargo—that provided business *legitimacy*. This alignment with industry values, emphasising safety and reliability, rendered the care relationship legible within organisational terms. Yet even with this permissibility, additional restrictions emerge; animals are not, for instance, permitted in vehicles transporting food or chemicals access is restricted at ports, abattoirs and many industrial sites.

International routes pose further challenges, as borders generate additional labour: 'I don't take my dog on European work because the paperwork requirements are too expensive and I worry what I would do with the truck and load (livestock!) if there was a problem returning back to the UK'. (survey respondent #93, Female, 35–44). This means that drivers' capacity to control their schedule—or their transport manager's willingness to do so—holds an important role in facilitating organisational support. Constrained by the socio-spatial and temporal arrangements of supply chain logistics, transport managers' resources (including vehicles and drivers) are limited, and thus legibility of care within the organisational structure and nature of the work is critical.

Infrastructural dynamics, including laws around animal restraint, shape where dogs can sit in the cab and how far they can move whilst the vehicle is in motion. Dogs must be secured so they cannot distract the driver, but how this works in practice depends on cab layout. In some vehicles, limited space means dogs travel on the floor or squeeze onto the passenger seat for a view. Casey considered herself lucky to have a bunk which gave her dogs more options whilst remaining tethered, whilst still leaving her enough space to sleep on overnight trips.

Casey's manager, Heather, made efforts to formalise their arrangements; however, for many other drivers, the alignment between multispecies care and operational objectives was less secure, making their caring relations fragile to the whims of employers, customers and colleagues, vulnerable to withdrawal, reinterpretation or managerial change. In the absence of a formal policy or agreement, drivers frequently communicated an explicit expectation that the truck remain 'clean'—a key site of contestation through which multispecies care was negotiated, sanctioned or denied. This underscores the sense that the presence of dogs brings with it dirt and filth, in both public and private spaces (Armbruster 2019; Gross 2015). Across our empirical engagements we frequently heard how even drivers with greater autonomy over their vehicles (such as owner-operators) still held thresholds or (un)acceptable levels of 'muddied living' (Cudworth 2021), for instance, Brooke,

a young female driver who works in her family business, said that she only took her dog, Blue, along with her when using their oldest 'run-around' truck. She and her father prefer to keep newer lorries' cabs pristine—even leaving her work boots outside for fear of dirtying the cab.

This spatial sorting reflects an implicit hierarchy of value between the truck and dog: newer cabs, costing around £200,000 for a new articulated truck, are to be protected from potential contamination. Multispecies care thus comes into conflict with economic logics guiding the sector. As Haraway (2008) observes, companion species who eat together gain both nourishment and indigestion. In the confined space of a truck, the physical presence of a dog makes boundaries of cleanliness and order more visible: fur, mud, food and bedding materials accumulate, disrupting efforts to maintain control over the cab as a tidy or regulated environment. These disruptions sit uneasily with conventional distinctions between public and private, work and home and with the status of the dog as a form of 'private property' (Instone and Sweeney 2014) held in tension with operational logics.

Some aspects of the regulatory landscape unexpectedly enabled care. The legal requirement to take breaks from driving every four and a half hours, for instance, creates opportunities for dogs to stretch their legs or relieve themselves, creating moments of synchronicity between logistical and animal rhythms. Such moments are constrained by the location and size of truck stops, availability of green spaces and shade. But even in spaces where care is possible, the dog's presence can attract affective responses from others—curiosity, approval, discomfort. These reactions reconfigure the sociality of otherwise instrumental spaces, reminding us that infrastructures are also affective and relational (Larkin 2013): they reflect assumptions about who belongs in the logistical landscape.

4 | Embodied and Temporal Geographies of Mobile Care

Portrait 2: Ethan and Blaze.

Blaze is a four-year-old red border collie who lives with Ethan and his fiancé Nina in Scotland. As the last pup left in the litter that no one wanted to buy, Blaze was given to Ethan's brother, a farmer, for free. Initially, the plan was for Blaze to ride along on the tractor with Ethan's brother on the farm. Instead, Ethan, in his early 20s at the time, started spending more and more time with Blaze. As the months passed and Ethan's brother moved away, Blaze stayed behind, gradually becoming 'Ethan's dog'.

Not long after, Ethan began working as a truck driver, following in his dad's footsteps, who had transitioned from farming to trucking many years earlier. With his mum wanting the dog out of the house, Ethan was happy to take Blaze along in the truck. His dad had

occasionally taken one of their dogs in his truck when he was growing up, so Ethan knew this was a viable option. Ethan largely drove the same truck, and his boss was agreeable to Blaze accompanying him, as long as the truck cab was kept clean. First, Blaze had to learn the ropes: 'When I first started taking him... I used to be very careful with the windows being open... the very first time I ever had him out, when I got out of the cab, the window was open and he jumped out. It was a gradual process towards me being able to have the windows all the way down'.

When Ethan started driving a much bigger truck, Blaze struggled with the height and didn't like being lifted into the truck. But they figured out a system: 'He knows by now. I open the door and tell him, "Right. Let's go up." He'll go to the door. Then I put my arm under him, grab the handle and go "1, 2, 3 up," and then it's actually quite funny because on the three you can feel him tense. So, he's getting ready for it.' The new truck had a bed behind the seats, providing a more comfortable place for Blaze to nap, as he often did while Ethan was working, only coming up to the passenger seat window when something—maybe another dog—piqued his interest or they approached a stop. As time went on, Ethan and Blaze settled into a routine. Ethan would talk to Blaze, petting him and giving him extra treats. Ethan felt that he became a more diligent driver: 'obviously in the lorry you need to slow down a bit earlier, but I'm even more careful with him because I don't want to just slam on the brakes'.

Life changed, however, when Ethan got engaged to Nina, and they moved out of Ethan's parents' home. Nina suffers from chronic illness and spends a lot of time at home, so Blaze now stays at home with her.

Portrait 3: Doug and Scout.

Doug has been a truck driver for 44 years and has run his own company for the last 18 years. For 16 of those years, he has taken dogs along with him in the truck. He now does deliveries for music events, driving himself or hiring subcontractors as needed. Growing up with rescued greyhounds, Doug never envisioned himself as a 'little dog' person. When his eldest daughter wanted a dog, he didn't think she would be able to meet the activity needs of a big dog, so they got Oliver, a Yorkshire Terrier. In the years that followed, Daisy then Scout, both Yorkshire Terriers, also joined the family.

Speaking about when he first started taking Oliver in the truck, Doug said, 'It was just the fact, really,

that he was going to be left at home alone, like say, my daughter wasn't there. And I just didn't want that, so I would take him. But like, when he was, I was happier that he was at home because he could get attention all the time, right?' Taking three dogs along was easy because he owned his truck and had control over the type of work he did. His previous job would not have allowed it. Doug found the logistics of it pretty simple: keep enough food and water at hand and stop often to give them walks. Without the dogs, Doug said he would never get any exercise. He loved that they always kept an eye on him—waiting impatiently by the window for him to come back—but most of all, just being able to talk to them, especially when they needed to stay out for the night.

Oliver passed away at the age of 16, and Daisy passed last year at the age of 13. Daisy's decline had been a shock to Doug, and he has struggled to come to terms with it. Every time Doug spoke of her, he teared up. 'She was my Princess...she loved the truck...Daisy would snuggle into me. I mean, she would like to sleep here on my body,' he said, pointing at his torso. 'I would wake up, and her head would be against my head'. Scout, in contrast, is not quite as affectionate and prefers to sleep cuddled up against a pillow. Doug chuckled, 'But he's a man. He's a man'. Since Daisy's passing, Scout has come to work with Doug every day. Doug cannot bear to be without him, 'Now, honestly, I'd be lost without him. I wouldn't be here without him, you know, I wouldn't be able to stay if anything happened to him... I couldn't be without the dog. I... I couldn't be without a dog, man'. When asked if he would consider getting another dog, Doug, while holding up a treat for Scout that I had offered him, explained that he gets asked this all the time, 'Maybe you should get him a little friend'. I say, 'he's got a friend – me. I'm his friend and he's, my friend'.

4.1 | Embodied Labours of Care

Caring in the truck's cab begins well before the dog ever steps into the vehicle. Most of the dogs were brought into the drivers' lives at a young age, and early care involved intensive socialisation, (in)formal training and the establishment of behavioural and spatial boundaries (Fox et al. 2022). This foundational work often took place within family settings and included bodily tasks such as house-training, teaching recall and accustoming the dogs to touch, handling, restraint and regulated movement (Power 2008). These preparatory efforts are central to the formation of trucker–dog companionship, creating the conditions necessary for mobile cohabitation.

Introducing dogs into the truck cab involves an additional layer of bodily work. Drivers described gradual, careful processes to ensure the cab became a secure and comfortable space for

their animals. These incorporations were shaped by repetition, sensory attentiveness and trial and error. Material adjustments were part of this labour; shifting the passenger seat, laying down extra towels and sheets, fitting harnesses and leashes, all whilst rhythmic attunements developed alongside. Routines such as Ethan's '1, 2, 3 up' lifting rhythm reflect finely tuned bodily choreographies and mutual anticipation. Over time, the presence of the dog became embedded in the driver's embodied decision-making, altering how the road was sensed, navigated and responded to. At the same time, the dogs attuned themselves to the logistical rhythms of trucking life: sleeping when the vehicle was moving, rising at service stations and settling into the pacing of the driver's routine.

Ordinary acts of care, such as walking the dog, not only meet the needs of the animals but also become places of retreat for the truckers themselves. Doug admits he would get no exercise without his dogs. Others described: 'Good relaxation whilst parked up being able to walk dog, releases stress, gets legs and heart working' (survey respondent #18, Male, 65–75). These reciprocal routines 'yoke together' (Haraway 2012) the trucker and the dog, with their movements, emotions and responses intertwined in a co-dependent and co-created experience. They share a 'somatic sensibility' (Greenhough 2010) generating unique embodied experiences specific to the trucker–dog dyad. Blaze's excitement upon approaching stops, Scout's eagerness when Doug returns to the vehicle, or from the first portrait, Willow's expression of boredom in traffic, all mediate and are mediated by truckers' everyday practice. What might otherwise be tedious or isolating stretches of logistical work become infused with humour, play and warmth. In this way, care is both practical and affective, sustaining the dog whilst simultaneously sustaining the human worker within the challenging conditions of mobile work.

As illustrated in Portrait 1, care at times assumes an instrumental form. The temporalities and spatialities of logistical work—motorways, lay-bys, service stations, isolated delivery points—are characterised by heightened risk of theft and harassment. For women operating within a male-dominated and hyper-masculinised industry, these risks are amplified (Hopkins and Davidson 2022), and further extended through employer practice and the political-economic conditions of road haulage: 'My employer does not pay for secure overnight parking and therefore as a female driver, my dogs offer me some feeling of safety when parked in laybys/on the side of roads'. (survey respondent #16, Female, 25–34). For these women drivers, their truck dogs contribute to a sense of safety by extending their sensory awareness and responsiveness to potential threats (Jaffe 2024). Their mutual attunement became a form of relational vigilance that supplements gaps in organisational care, revealing how multispecies labour sustains both the emotional and operational continuity of logistics work.

Interestingly, the emotional and nurturing qualities of care—often associated with feminised labour—were not perceived by any of the truckers as undermining the masculine norms of the industry. As Shukin (2009) suggests, the homosocial nature of the human–dog bond may enable these drivers to engage in affective forms of care without threatening dominant ideals of masculinity. In this way, dogs allow for the performance of care

that is both affective and protective, without departing from—or explicitly challenging—hegemonic occupational expectations.

The embodied and affective labours described here reveal how care is inseparable from the material and sensory organisation of mobile work. Within the confined space of the cab and the material geographies of supply chains, truckers and their dogs co-produce a multispecies rhythm of care; one that is simultaneously nurturing, practical and protective. These practices blur conventional boundaries through constant negotiation, between labour and intimacy, between safety and affection, between home and work.

4.2 | Care's Lifetime

Across all three portraits, care relations unfold over time, shaped by transitions, ruptures and continually reconfigured in response to shifting needs, capacities and obligations (Bowlby et al. 2022; Mol 2008). For Ethan and Doug, and especially for Casey, dogs emerge as affective tethers during periods of personal upheaval. Illness, loss, injury and major relationship transitions prompted not only emotional distress but shifts in the structure and practice of care. In Casey's account, the arrival of Willow followed closely on the loss of a previous companion animal, a marriage ending and a major change in career. Willow's presence anchored new routines and provided affective continuity, offering stability in the aftermath of disruption.

Multispecies care arrangements shift with broader household transitions and changing life courses. Ethan's move into cohabitation with his fiancée prompted a reconfiguration of care, as Blaze remained at home to support a chronically ill partner. Doug's decisions were similarly affected by family dynamics. Earlier in his career, care arrangements were shaped by the presence of young children at home, whilst later in life, as the children grew up and spent less time at home, Scout accompanied him more often. We heard this from other drivers too: 'We got our dog when my dad was retired and able to be home with him all the time, but then dad emigrated leaving me with the task of working and taking care of the dog'. (#38, male 35–44).

These examples illustrate how multispecies care is embedded within shifting evolving 'webs of obligation' (Bowlby 2012), where domestic, emotional and occupational responsibilities intersect across time. Such changing dynamics create new necessities and potentialities for multispecies care, extending new relations and requirements to negotiate with employers and customers, enrolling new members into the multispecies configurations.

The dogs' life courses also shaped these relational configurations. The age, energy and needs of each animal required ongoing recalibration, whereby truckers (re)consider the suitability of trucks, routes and (in)activities. Older dogs, like Casey's Scout, prompted quieter routines and more static rhythms, whilst younger dogs demanded training, play and attentiveness to new sensory and behavioural cues. In some cases, the death of a dog disrupted the spatial and affective organisation of life in the cab entirely, leaving behind absences that altered how drivers experienced the road and its routines. Thus, there are

evolving, moving relations—the caring practices themselves are mobile, reflecting the necessity to adapt, evolve and (re)make relations that temporarily suit both human and non-human partners. Caring across lifetimes involves more than sustaining companionship under difficult conditions. It means adapting to change, holding space for loss and refiguring care in relation to altered temporalities and embodied capacities, both human and non-human.

5 | Conclusion: Advancing A Mobile Geography of Multispecies Care

Truck drivers keep supply chains moving. Ongoing dependence on road haulage, for as much as 80% of tonne kilometres in many countries, means that this workforce plays a key role in sustaining national economies. Yet under supply chain capitalism (Tsing 2009), work and employment conditions are deteriorating. New forms of digital surveillance and coordination, for example, are producing logistical geographies that intensify labour extraction from truck drivers, demanding more work for diminishing financial reward and increasingly undermining drivers' well-being. Within this context, this paper sought to expose the complex ecologies of care reflected in the everyday multispecies relations between truck drivers and their companion animals—*truck dogs*. In doing so, it challenges the patriarchal and masculinised cultures of road haulage (Hopkins and Davidson 2022), demonstrating how co-constitutive multispecies care is enacted, received and sustained. Our findings offer fertile ground for developing and extending theoretical understandings of multispecies relations and care within capitalist frameworks.

Mobilising the concepts of carescapes and caringscapes, this paper has shown how trucker-dog relations materialise alternative modes of world-making within logistics infrastructures. Carescapes capture the affective and spatial arrangements through which drivers sustain themselves and their companions amid precarity, isolation and temporal compression. Caringscapes locate these practices within broader moral and relational economies, encompassing the obligations, attachments and affective labours that circulate through mobilised workspaces. Carescapes/caringscapes together make visible the infrastructural and emotional labour required to sustain multispecies life on the move.

Importantly, the portraits presented above resist romanticising multispecies care. Instead, they foreground the frictions, contradictions and ambivalences that characterise caring within capitalist supply chains: moments in which dogs both give and receive care, care operates simultaneously as a coping strategy and a structuring force and the politics of life and labour cut across species. By centring these tensions, the paper repositions logistical geography as a site where vulnerability, dependency and reciprocity are not residual concerns but constitutive features.

Centring the affective and multispecies dimensions of mobile work, this paper reframes the road haulage sector as more than an engine of global commerce, instead revealing a dense field of interdependencies between humans, animals, machines and infrastructures. By foregrounding multispecies care, we advance

debates in human geography on more-than-human work, infrastructures of social reproduction and the ethics of care under late capitalism. Our findings invite further research that reimagines logistical spaces not only as sites of throughput, but as spaces where care, in all its messy, ambivalent and relational forms, takes root and travels.

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Data Availability Statement

Research data are not shared.

Endnotes

¹All names have been pseudonymised. Willow is pictured in the abstract, produced with recorded and informed consent.

²We distinguish here between local trucking routes, which often involve multiple drops, and short journeys and long-distance trucking which may or may not involve tramping—where drivers sleep in their truck.

³We prefer the term companion animal, as it better captures the relation discussed here (Linzey and Cohn 2011). Yet we felt it was necessary to use this word in our survey because of its use in everyday vernacular.

⁴We use 'truck' and 'trucker' in this paper, however, lorry and 'heavy goods vehicle' (HGV) or 'large goods vehicle' (LGV) are also commonly used in the UK. In the stories and analysis, we use 'truck' and 'trucker', except in verbatim quotes where we retain our interlocutors' choice of terminology.

⁵Some trailers used for road haulage are called 'curtainsiders' (other trailer types include shipping containers). They are made of a retractable PVC-coated polyester material that is easy to damage relative to metal containers and rigid vehicles.

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