ICRSH
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
8th International Conference on Research in Social Sciences and Humanities
Helsinki, Finland
10 - 12 July 2025

Walking the City Together: Hybrid Dog-Human Walks in Urban Poland

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present and discuss the results of my own research: walking interviews conducted among dog owners in a Polish city. Dogs in urban environments constitute an interesting category, as they are both liminal and challenging (Holmberg, 2015). On the one hand, they are present, noticeable, and welcome in cities (Włodarczyk, 2021). On the other hand, their acceptance in urban spaces is conditional—we accept them as long as they are "well-behaved" and act in accordance with our expectations. Drawing on posthumanist thought (Fox & Alldred, 2016), I will discuss the practice of "doing walking" (Ryave & Schenkein, 1974) in the form of walking as a dog-human dyad. I will then present the findings of my research, focusing on the forms of this hybrid walking, the significance of the equipment used during walks, and the spatial-temporal conditions that shape these practices.

Keywords: dogs, hybrid walks; posthumanism; urban space; walking interviews