

The main aim of the project is to reconstruct cognitive, dramaturgical and communicative dimensions of meanings displayed in humanist marriages, which are, according to their propagators, an alternative for religious and civil marriages (in their view, they are schematic and devoid of “ideological content”). In this project, humanist marriages are understood as “social performances”, following Jeffrey Alexander who considered them as a kind of social process in which actors display the meaning of their social situations for others.

The project involves:

- qualitative content analysis of the performance’s scripts, included oaths, speeches and cultural texts, with reference to their performative (effectiveness and causative power), axiological (which values it refers to) and symbolic (meanings implied in them) dimensions.
- narrative interviews with the main actors of the wedding ceremony (young couples), which will enable to obtain personal narration focused around a key event such as the wedding day
- participant observations, which will enable a better understanding of the environment and allow to collect visual (photographs) and audio-textual (recorded speeches, oaths, quotations) material,
- visual data analysis, extension and contextualization of non-visual empirical data.

A justification for undertaking this research problem is the fact that it is necessary to complement and actualize (a few) publications in regards to it. There is a lack of complex analysis and interpretation of humanist marriage and meanings displayed with it. Implementation of the study will influence the development of sociology and anthropology of religion. The scope and directions of changes for traditional religiousness still are one of the key issues for these subdisciplines. Subjecting humanist weddings to analysis will therefore contribute to develop this scope of research on the example of a country that is a phenomenon in Europe.. The project will thus contribute to develop knowledge regarding changes and processes taking place in Poland. It is noteworthy, that the overtone of humanist marriages is not purely negative (lack of belief or religion), as it also contains a positive element – the free areas left after removal of religious content could be filled by alternative and new meanings, and accomplishment of this project will enable to reconstruct it. What is more, the collected data will enable comparative research and intercultural analysis of various context for the future (i.e., Polish and British).