

1. Scientific goal of the research

“Social Circuits of Knowledge in the Practices of Academic Humanities” is the first research project in Poland, dedicated to the social impact of the humanities, which combined **theoretical-conceptual and critical-emancipatory goals with empirical research**. The project is implemented by the SOWA scientific network, operating since 2019 and conducting research on the forms of cooperation of the contemporary university with other actors from the social world: cultural and artistic institutions, new social movements, cultural education circles, opinion-forming media, public administration institutions, etc. The network is made up of researchers representing cultural studies, philosophy and sociology, working in several academic centres in Poland (Warsaw, Wrocław, Katowice, Poznań, Toruń).

2. Description and reasons for undertaking the research

The first reason for undertaking research on the functioning of social circuits of humanistic knowledge is the conviction that the models of the so-called social impact, preferred in the transformations of the contemporary university in Poland and worldwide, are not adjusted to the academic practice of the humanists. They arise from the adopted vision of a ‘neoliberal university’, where a number of culture-forming functions of knowledge, characteristic of the humanities of the past and present, are omitted. These include, for example, the practices of activism, informal educational activities, animation activities, creative activities, new forms of humanistic expertise, and new public intellectualism. The second reason for undertaking this research is the global and local transformation that is taking place and which the academic humanities needs to respond to - today's challenges include the crisis of liberal democracy, the migration crises, the climate crisis, social conflicts based on world views and competence, and recent socio-cultural crises caused by the pandemic. Given these circumstances, not only the technological, but also the valorisation and worldview, and educational (according to J. Kmita's classification) role of academic humanities increases. At the same time by disseminating the knowledge we produce, we are obliged to respond to the crisis of the social status of scientific explanations of the world, caused by the spread of anti-scientific tendencies, the so-called ‘third disenchantment’ culture or various forms of denialism. The third reason behind this project are the preferred visions of scientific and research activity, resulting from the process of the neoliberalisation of academia. The aim, in particular, is to impose a strongly instrumentalised and individualised model of cognition and scientific research, which stands in contradiction not only with the experiences of humanists, but also with contemporary concepts developed in the field of humanities - e.g. in the concepts of ‘science as culture’, in praxis and performative approaches to the research process, the circulatory model of knowledge, developed on the basis of Actor-Network Theory. Thus, the theoretical background of the project includes: cultural studies, critical theory and its contemporary updates, critical pedagogy, critical studies on higher education, science and technology studies.

3. Main effects

The project will produce an original concept of social circuits of knowledge. The conditions governing the functioning of these circuits will also be subjected to empirical research. Following the principles of the grounded theory, the conceptual basis will come from the empirical research - it will be "brought out of the field", i.e. embedded in the real experiences and practices of concrete individuals, institutions and organizations. The research will be conducted in six Polish universities. The expected project effects are as follows: 1) a critical and in-depth analysis of the actual practices of Polish humanists, taking into account their contextual conditions (conditions of the academic field, the scientific system and the broader sociocultural context), presented in the form of a monograph and a series of articles printed in Polish and foreign publications; 2) the concept of social circuits of knowledge, presented in the form of a monograph, released in a leading foreign publication; 3) creation of a scientific and research network, capable of developing innovative methods for activist research on the basis of Polish cultural studies and humanities in general, supported by seminars and conferences and activity in media.