

## **Psychedelic culture in Poland: practices and discourses**

The term “psychedelic revolution” is commonly associated with the American 1960s counterculture. The figure of a hippie “tripping on acid” has undoubtedly dominated popular imagination through countless images reproduced in popular culture. However, in recent years the subject of psychedelic substances is slowly, but successively entering the mainstream public discourse all around the world. After many years of stigmatization and limited research opportunities, there is a rapidly growing number of research institutes where novel research programs in psychedelic drug studies are being developed, and the question of how these substances can be used to help treat mental disorders is being raised by specialists in fields of psychiatry and psychopharmacology. Many argue that today we are witnessing a “psychedelic renaissance”. How is the so-called “psychedelic turn” reflected in Polish culture and society?

The aim of this project is to examine the cultural and social phenomenon of the current psychedelic renaissance from the perspective of the discourses, practices and aesthetics connected with the various uses of psychedelic substances by members of contemporary Polish psychedelic communities. What is the legacy of the 1960s counterculture on present-day psychedelic culture in Poland? How is the use of psychedelics connected with spirituality, mental health, and ecological awareness? What is the relationship between these substances and the broader psychedelic scene in Poland, encompassing various events, festivals, ceremonies, and expressed through psychedelic music and aesthetics? Is psychedelia still an alternative current of culture, or is it slowly entering mainstream?

The project will study psychedelic culture from two interconnected perspectives. It will explore the social practices (ceremonies, events, festivals) and cultural meanings associated with psychedelic substances by different groups of psychedelic enthusiasts and activists in Poland, and analyze how psychedelic cultures is being expressed through embodied experiences, music, and visuals. It will also map the changing status of psychedelic substances in different types of competing discourses: medical, spiritual, ecological, cultural. Combining in-depth ethnographic interviews, participant observation, research on psychedelic music, and critical analysis of competing discourses, the project will examine the connections, continuations, and points of departure that have shaped contemporary psychedelic culture seen both as a local and transnational phenomenon that has for long existed on the margin but is gradually becoming more mainstream in Poland.

The research project will fill a visible gap in Polish scholarship by contributing to building a complex and critical understanding of the present-day practices of different psychedelic communities in Poland, their historical and cultural expressions, and the changing status and role of psychedelic substances in public opinion. The results of this project will include the publication of scholarly articles and the dissemination of the analyzed material among different academic communities both in Poland and abroad.