

History of social and political concepts in Poland in 18th–20th centuries

This project aims at creating a dictionary, unique for the Polish academics, which will encompass various concepts important for the humanities, whose meanings has evolved since the mid-18th century. This dictionary will help scholars of such disciplines as history, political studies, sociology and other social sciences, in understanding selected key concepts, whose forms and meanings are historically shaped. The period around the turn of the 18th /19th centuries was crucial for the evolution of notions of the socio-political language in Central Europe. It was the time when their meanings began to stabilize and take more or less modern shape. These changes in meanings should be taken into account in order to conduct research over the social or political phenomena of the 19th and 20th century. Otherwise it is difficult to understand the language of sources, and which results in wrong conclusions and anachronisms.

Polish historical academics did not developed enough historical-linguistic research, which was initiated during the so called *linguistic turn* in the last quarter of the 20th century. The investigations into the historical evolution of political language, unlike such disciplines as *memory studies*, *postcolonial studies* or *gender studies*, found little acclaim in Poland. There are only few broader studies in the history of notions, though some scholars have already drawn some partial conclusions in this field. Moreover, similar work has been already initiated in other countries from our region (e.g. Romania). Our project will be a comprehensive research with the aim of creating a dictionary of socio-political notions, which will be an important tool for better understanding of written sources from the period of 18th-20th centuries. Most significant studies of the issue were conducted by Reinhard Koselleck in Germany, both in his individual works and in the monumental dictionary *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, prepared under his guidance. This work will be an important inspiration for us. We will also refer to the tradition of the British school of the political language analysis. Finally, we will also rely on the methodology developed over years by the Department of History of Ideas, led by Prof. Jerzy Jedlicki, and later by the leader of the project.

The aim of the project at this stage will be creating a preliminary, methodological part of the dictionary and gathering materials for its first volume (each volume with the entries from A to Z). The dictionary will be published in form of a book and on the internet at the next stage, from other financial sources. The methodological volume will contain our reflections over the issue of method of conducting research and an analysis of selected examples of notion meanings' transformation, in a shorter time span (e.g. during the Revolutions of 1848, the Galician autonomous period or the time of political 'thaw' after the 1905 Revolution in Russia).

To broaden our perspective, the project will contain a comparative research as well, in which an analysis of the historical changes in notions' meanings in the Ukrainian language will be made. This will be possible thanks to a collaboration with the historians of similar disciplines from Lviv. The transformation of concepts in the Ukrainian language was simultaneous with their Polish equivalents and partially followed their example. By means of these comparisons, a broader context for the history of notions in Poland will be introduced.

The proposed project concerns issues of significant value for the national culture. Notions are categories, through which the culture describes the world and itself. Therefore knowledge about the transformation of their meanings, their emergence, disappearance and changing, is essential for understanding the given (in this case Polish) culture.