

*The Polish Socio-political Concepts in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century* is a study in the developments and transformations of the Polish political discourse, viewed through the prism of the key socio-political concepts. Concepts both define and mirror our imagination, and hence the socio-political realities that constitute both its source and its product. Thus, concepts are also carriers of political ideologies, which notoriously compete to monopolize their meanings. The ways we understand 'nation' and 'society,' 'party' and 'revolution' change in time, and these changes are in no way innocent: they are products of ideological competition. However, gaining a monopoly for one of the key political concepts is rare and never permanent. In countries like Poland, large segments of political imagination is formed by concepts borrowed from foreign discourses. Is the process of their transfer and adaptation determined by some definable factors, however? What are the moments when new concepts appear in the public discourse in great numbers?

This study investigates the changes of the meaning, and the rhetorical potential of some 50 Polish socio-political concepts of the last two centuries. First, we will have to explain our selection of the concepts under consideration. Second, we will investigate their semantic fields as they changed over time; their rhetorical uses and abuses, and the claims for them by particular parties and ideologies. Third, we shall try to identify their counterparts – the related concepts that form their oppositions and extensions, that is their proper contexts. Finally, we should attempt to answer the questions about their popularity in certain historical moments, in particular social groups, and in specific types of evidence and media.

Modern conceptual history is a discipline that has its origins in Britain and Germany, dating back to the 1970s. The classical German series, the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, inspired parallel project in the countries like France, Russia, Spain, and Argentina. Our project intends to continue this tradition, applying a variety of conceptual history methods to the Polish context. So far, only the earlier Polish history, and particularly that of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, has attracted the attention of historians systematically employing the conceptual history approach. This study should hopefully be an inspiration, and practical assistance for other scholars working with the socio-political concepts, which are ubiquitous.