

1. The aim of this project is to examine the effectiveness of the application of legal mechanisms introduced by the Russian authorities after the suppression of the January Uprising with the intention of depriving Polish landowners and petty nobility of their homesteads. The analysis will as well focus on strategies used by the Polish origin (nobility, burghers and peasants) to recover their lost landed property towards Russian landowners in the territory of north-western gubernias of the Russian Empire. Some of the posed questions will concern the percentage of landed properties acquired by Russian owners that passed into the hands of Polish landowners, burghers and peasants on the basis of selected decrees as well as the methods that were used by the Polish origin to acquire lost property. The chronological framework of the project covers the period from the introduction of the Confiscation Decree of 22 March 1863 to the evacuation of the Russian administration in 1915. Conducting the planned research will make it possible to explain the importance of land ownership in the formation of modern 19th -century nationalities in Central and Eastern Europe, which was already defined not only by state privileges.

2. The analysis will involve archival materials issued by the Office of the Vilnius Governor-General as well as the reporting gubernia boards for land assets in three selected gubernias: Grodno, Vilnius and Minsk. Moreover, I will use notarial deeds recorded at the offices of Senior Notaries at District Courts as well as documentation kept by county tax inspectors. The research sample will cover 162 landed estates, which constitutes 20% of properties taken over by the Russians by way of selected legal provisions, i.e. the Confiscation Decree of 22 March 1863, the Instruction of 23 July 1865 and the Instruction of 10 December 1865. The core of the study will be based on several research methods: legal and historical (analysis of normative acts), genealogical (analysis of memoirs and diaries). Moreover, I will use a quantitative method based on relational databases supplemented with categories of data on specific properties: location, land area and structure, property price, owner.

3. The distinctive feature of the planned research is its interdisciplinary character. Apart from economic and political history, it combines issues that are typical of national sociology or legal history. The relational database used to analyse notarial and tax documentation is a modern research method that is not widely used by 19th -century researchers. The development of a research model will allow for verifying research hypotheses concerning the recognition and definition of methods used by the Polish nobility to recover lost land properties. The model database will help to perform a comparative analysis in terms of solutions introduced by other colonial empires, such as the German Empire. In order to supplement the information obtained so far, I will continue my query in archival resources in Lithuania, Belarus and Russia. The outcomes of the research work will be developed in the form of a series of scientific articles, which are planned for publication in reputable journals dealing with Eastern European issues. Moreover, the results of the work will be presented to the international audience (e.g. International Conference of European History and Politics in Moscow), workshops and seminars.