

**Politics of Plunder:
Post-German Property and the Reconstruction of East Central Europe
after the Second World War**

[individual book project]

Around the end of the Second World War two processes dramatically changed the socio-economic landscape of East Central Europe: the expulsion of up to twelve million Germans and the establishment of a new social order inspired by the Soviet model. This project is an inquiry into the interconnectedness between these apparently distinct histories. My aim is to understand how the redistribution of property formerly owned by Germans shaped the post-war reconstruction of the social order in two countries whose territories were comprised of up to one third of the post-German lands: Poland and Czechoslovakia. The specific focus of this study lies in the illegal takeover of property left behind by Germans, attempts to control it and the associated discourse. Studying the destructive and productive effects of plunder offers me the opportunity to reveal how public security, economic stability and redistributive justice were negotiated at various intersecting levels. I show that the illegal property transfers were both an obstacle to the post-war reconstruction as well as an opportunity used by individuals and institutions to accelerate it. In more general terms, this reading highlights the critical role of the legally-opaque property arrangements to be found in any modern socio-economic order.

**Transnational and Interdisciplinary Sources of the Polish Humanities:
the Letters and Writings of Stefan Czarnowski (1879-1937)**

[collaborative book project, together with Dr Joanna Wawrzyniak,
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The aim of this project is to prepare a critical edition of the letters and writings of Stefan Czarnowski – religious scholar, one of the founders of the Polish sociology, and the main promoter of Émile Durkheim’s research programme in East Central Europe. It traces Czarnowski’s intellectual formation during his studies in Leipzig, Berlin and Paris before 1914, his academic career in Poland after 1918, and the making of the public intellectual throughout this period. Czarnowski’s correspondence with Henri Hubert, Marcel Mauss and other Durkheimians not only documents the history of a close intellectual friendship, but it also illustrates the transformation of French sociology across time and space – from the Paris of the Belle Époque to post-Versailles Warsaw. Czarnowski’s writings reveal his early support for right-wing nationalism, his gradual abandonment of it, and his path towards communism at a time when Europe was being crushed by fascism. The intellectual biography of Czarnowski uncovers many hitherto unknown entanglements of the Polish humanities within the international circulation of knowledge during the first decades of the twentieth century. In more general terms, it invites us to rethink the impact of political changes on academics and scientists’ engagement with politics as well as the tension between the international careers of researchers and the national interests of research institutions.