

Vistula University of Finance and Business
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PhD Thesis

**Road infrastructure and its development in
the Płock Masovia region during the period
of the Kingdom of Poland and the Second
Polish Republic (1815 - 1939)**

Abstract of the Doctoral Dissertation in English

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Road infrastructure and its development in the Plock Masovia region during the period of the Kingdom of Poland and the Second Polish Republic (1815 - 1939).

Since the dawn of time, communication routes have played a key role in the development of civilization. The density of communication routes was crucial for the development of transportation and trade. Modernization of the road network reduced transportation costs, which fostered growth in production and trade. Entrepreneurs could deliver their products to markets faster, and farmers gained easier access to cities and towns where they could sell their crops.

Due to its immense economic importance, road infrastructure played a significant role in the development of Plock Mazovia between 1815 and 1939. It demonstrated many similarities with the development of other regions of Poland.

The aim of this doctoral dissertation is to characterize the road infrastructure in Plock Mazovia during the period of the Kingdom of Poland and the Second Polish Republic (1815 - 1939) and the various aspects of its development. In the post-partition period and during the Reborn Poland, road construction and modernization were key factors stimulating economic development and influencing social change in the region.

To date, Polish historiography lacks a comprehensive work addressing the issues of road construction in Plock Mazovia between 1815 and 1939.

In the first half of the 20th century, a pioneer in research on the history of roads in the Kingdom of Poland was engineer Melchior Władysław Nestorowicz, a professor at the Warsaw University of Technology, a specialist in the construction and maintenance of paved roads, and an organizer of road administration in Poland during the Second Polish Republic. Already at the beginning of the 20th century, he published several works addressing issues related to the development of roads and road legislation in the Kingdom of Poland. Several dozen scientific studies by engineer Melchior Władysław Nestorowicz on road construction in Poland date from the interwar period.

It should be emphasized that the development of road infrastructure in Plock between 1865 and 1939 was addressed only by regionalists from Plock: Krystyna Iwańska - Grochowska and Piotr Gryszpanowicz.

My doctoral dissertation therefore addresses the development of road infrastructure in Płock Mazovia between 1815 and 1939, from the establishment of the Congress Kingdom, i.e., from the beginning of the development of road legislation, until the years of the Second Polish Republic.

In territorial terms, the subject of my analysis is the area of Płock Mazovia, a distinct geographical region consisting of counties administratively and economically linked to the region's largest city, Płock. In addition to Płock County, these include the following counties: Gostynin, Sierpc, Płońsk, Ciechanów, and Przasnysz. I would like to point out that, with the exception of Gostynin County, between 1815 and 1915 these counties belonged first to the Płock Voivodeship and then to the Płock Governorate. It is also worth noting that Płońsk County became part of the Warsaw Governorate in 1894. From 1837, Gostynin County belonged to the aforementioned governorate.

Of the counties mentioned, the following were extremely important due to their important administrative functions: Płock County (Płock - as the capital of the voivodeship, or governorate); Gostynin County - due to its network of roads connected with bridges over the Vistula River; and the remaining counties of Płock Mazovia - due to the roads connecting them with the center of administrative, political, economic, and socio-cultural life of the region, which was Płock. It is also worth noting that the Vistula Railway, the only railway line on the eastern edge of Płock Mazovia at the time, ran through Ciechanów County from 1877. During the Second Polish Republic, another railway line was built, connecting Gostynin with Płock and Sierpc.

One chapter of this dissertation examines the competition between land communication and transport, rail and the Vistula River, and their impact on the socio-economic development of towns and villages in the Płock Mazovia region in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, as seen through the development of trade, agriculture, crafts, and industry. The work also aims to demonstrate the impact of road construction and modernization on the socio-economic development of the region.

Through the prism of research results on the history of road infrastructure in Płock Mazovia, I attempt to establish the principles of road management, the principles of road and bridge construction design, and the organization of roadworks in specific historical periods of the 19th century and early 20th century.

A separate and important issue, discussed in individual chapters, is the characterization of the policy of the authorities of the Kingdom of Poland, and later the Second Polish

Republic, towards road construction in Polish lands, particularly in relation to Płock Mazovia.

My dissertation consists of five chapters. In the first, introductory chapter, I present the influence of geographical and social factors on the development of the road network. I discuss such important elements of the geographical environment as terrain, soils, weather conditions, the river network and its impact on the construction of bridges and crossings, as well as the state of forest cover, natural resources, and their use in road construction.

In Chapter II, titled *The Development of Road Infrastructure in Płock Mazovia during the Kingdom of Poland (1815 - 1863)*, I characterize the road policy of the Congress Kingdom authorities.

In 1815, there was no road legislation regulating the construction, operation, and maintenance of roads. These were maintained by local residents on the basis of a levy. The origins of road organization in the Kingdom of Poland were based primarily on the initiatives of General Józef Zająček, who served as governor of the Kingdom of Poland from 1815 to 1826. State and public institutions, as well as economic infrastructure, including road infrastructure, were developing rapidly at that time.

The Congress Kingdom authorities sought to establish new paved roads and improve the technical condition of existing routes. Many regulations were developed and implemented. Already in 1816, several resolutions concerning roads were issued, and a division of public roads into "large, medium and smaller roads" was introduced. Large roads led from Warsaw to the borders of the Kingdom, and medium roads connected voivodeship cities with each other and with Warsaw.

In the construction of paved roads, efforts were made to implement technologies already proven in France and England, which improved travel comfort and shortened freight transport times.

All previous regulations regarding road construction during the early period of the Kingdom of Poland were included in the 30-article decree issued by Governor General Józef Zająček on February 12, 1822, "comprising regulations governing paved roads." This decree was intended to improve postal services, facilitate troop movement, and develop economic life, among other things.

It is impossible not to mention the contributions to the development of road construction in the Kingdom of Poland and the Płock Mazovia region made by Franciszek Ksawery Christiani, Director General of Roads and Bridges of the Kingdom of Poland.

I devote considerable attention to the most important road investments in the Płock Mazovia region, as well as the concern of the central and local government authorities for the transportation routes (streets) in Płock and other cities and towns in the region. I do not ignore the importance of postal routes and postal operations for the Masovian region, as well as the role of military routes connecting the Modlin fortress with nearby garrisons.

After the fall of the November Uprising, despite the systematic restriction of the Kingdom of Poland's sovereignty by the tsarist authorities, road investments continued in Płock Mazovia, particularly the construction of provincial and district roads. This continued until the late 1840s. With the construction of the first railway line in the Kingdom of Poland, the Russian Ministry of Communications abandoned the construction of state roads, and investments in provincial roads were limited.

Chapter III of the dissertation serves as an analysis of road construction in Płock Mazovia during the post-uprising period, spanning fifty years (1865 - 1915). In it, I discuss the Russian authorities' policy towards roads in the Kingdom of Poland and Płock Mazovia during the post-uprising period. I attempt to prove that the tsarist authorities' limited involvement in the development of road infrastructure in Płock Mazovia was a consequence of Russian plans for war. They did not spare any financial resources for the development of military railway routes and roads leading to the Modlin fortress.

I refer to road routes, which lost their dominant role with the construction of the first railway line (in Northern Mazovia, it was the Vistula Railway) and the still well-functioning transport on the Vistula River. I focused extensively on the construction and maintenance of new paved roads in Płock Mazovia, as well as the renovation of existing roads. A significant element of my discussion is the analysis of building materials used to resurface roads, from granite slag to clinker, which was processed into slag.

Another important issue in the aforementioned chapter is the modernization of streets in Płock and other urban centers in Płock Mazovia. In some cities, the technology of laying wooden blocks was still often used. During the reign of the Kingdom of Poland, new paving was laid in various urban centers of the region discussed in my doctoral dissertation, primarily in the market square and adjacent streets, as well as on roads leading through the city to large neighboring towns. River crossings were also a concern for the

city authorities, which involved the construction and renovation of bridges. Due to its considerable financial resources, the largest investments in road and street construction and modernization were recorded in Płock - a city at the provincial level, and from 1837, at the provincial level. Also important in my considerations is the presentation of the efforts of the Płock city authorities to ensure a well-functioning Vistula River crossing.

In drafting Chapter IV, I focus on discussing the importance of road infrastructure for the socio-economic life of the inhabitants of Płock Mazovia in the post-uprising period and during World War I. I address the importance of road routes for the development of agriculture, industry, crafts, and especially trade. I also address the issue of people traveling on roads for religious purposes (pilgrimages) and the numerous emigrants heading towards the border with East Prussia, soon to risk sea travel "for bread" in the United States or Brazil.

The rural population frequently traveled the roads of Płock Mazovia due to their participation in fairs, markets, and church fairs. The roads were also used by landowners and their children, who decided to attend secondary schools, most often in the Płock province, but also studied in Warsaw. These roads were generally used by postal transport. Wealthy owners of their own horse-drawn carriages usually transported their relatives or friends, including those who traveled to other places, to the nearest post office, railway stations or marinas on the Vistula River.

The importance of Jewish entrepreneurs in the development of the transport infrastructure of Płock Mazovia should be emphasized. The Vistula Railway, which ran through the eastern outskirts of the region and opened in 1877, was built by the Vistula Railway Company, headed by the financier and entrepreneur Leopold Kronenberg. One of the founders of steam navigation on the Vistula River in the late 19th century was Chaim Rogozik from Płock. The launch of the Vistula Railway did not diminish the importance of horse-drawn transport. Jewish drivers transported travelers to the railway stations and returned them to the city. Dozens of Jewish porters were employed by Jewish drivers.

In this chapter, I also included information on the functioning of the post office and transport system, as reported by passengers, and on the first motor vehicles that appeared on the roads and streets of Płock Mazovia. The source of this information was primarily articles obtained from the Płock press.

Chapter IV concludes with a discussion of road construction during World War I (1914 - 1918), when the Płock Mazovia region was first the scene of fierce fighting between

German and Russian forces and then fell under German occupation. Military operations largely contributed to the destruction of bridges, roads, and streets in many Mazovian towns. I will not omit the crucial issue of the German authorities' policy regarding the existing road conditions. German troops rapidly began to supplement the paved road network, especially those of strategic importance. During this period, bridges over the Vistula River in Płock and Wyszogród were also repaired. It should be noted that good roads were essential for the German occupation authorities, primarily to transport agricultural produce, timber, and construction materials from the Kingdom of Poland.

The final chapter of my doctoral dissertation, Chapter V, titled *"Road Construction in Płock Mazovia in the Years 1918 - 1939,"* primarily addresses the policy of the Second Polish Republic authorities in the face of major challenges. What were the negative consequences of the policy of the tsarist authorities towards road infrastructure and the destruction of World War I and the Bolshevik invasion of Poland in 1920.

First, I highlight the road construction legislation of the Second Polish Republic and government programs aimed at improving road conditions, including the need to create automotive infrastructure. It's enough to mention the Road Fund, a special fund designated for road construction and modernization, established in 1927. I try to recognize that, alongside government initiatives, local initiatives, including the activities of district and municipal governments involved in road construction and modernization, also played a significant role.

In this chapter, I devote considerable attention to road investments implemented in individual districts of the Płock Mazovia region, as well as road (street) modernization in Płock and other district towns in the region. Płock County led the way in the construction of new roads in the Warsaw Voivodeship, within whose administrative boundaries Płock Mazovia fell. This was the result of well-planned road investments and their rapid and cost-effective implementation. In each of the counties of Płock Mazovia, in addition to the construction of new roads and the repair of existing road surfaces, bridges were built and repaired, and roads were planted with trees.

In the second half of the 1930s, a politically motivated road investment in Gostynin County involved paving the road from Sochaczew to the palace in Łąck, which the city of Gostynin offered to Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły, along with granting him honorary citizenship of Gostynin.

It is difficult to imagine the characteristics of interwar road construction in Płock Mazovia without addressing the beginnings of automotive infrastructure. It is worth noting, however, that at the dawn of Reborn Poland, cars were considered a luxury item. Their owners were limited to the wealthiest landowners and entrepreneurs. Over time, the number of passenger cars in Płock Mazovia increased.

New bus lines were also launched, reaching Warsaw, Łódź, and all major urban centers in the region. A modern bus station was built in Płock in the late 1930s. In each of the district towns of Płock Mazovia, gas stations and car service stations were established.

The final part of Chapter V is devoted to the repair of bridges over the Vistula River and the construction of new bridges in Płock and Wyszogród. Their destruction in the first days of the September Campaign in 1939 by retreating Polish troops is part of the history of Płock Mazovia and the history of road construction in the region from 1815 to 1939.

My research methodology was based on both general and specific methods appropriate to the nature of the source material being analyzed.

In the course of my research, I utilized an inductive method, drawing conclusions based on collected historical sources, as well as a deductive method, utilizing knowledge beyond the sources – primarily previous historiographical findings and the socio-political context of the historical periods covered in my dissertation, namely the post-partition period and the years of the Second Polish Republic. I have often taken advantage of the opportunity to use detailed methods, consisting primarily of comparative studies of collected materials obtained during archival and library research.

In my research, I often incorporated the geographical method into my analysis of road routes and environmental factors influencing the implementation of road investments. I also analyzed the spatial location of cities and their proximity to transportation routes, which influenced the development or stagnation of a given center. It was difficult to ignore the location of river crossings, primarily the Vistula River, crucial for the region's economic development. The study also included bridges in Płock and Wyszogród, exceptionally important for the ongoing military operations in the Płock Mazovia region. Their role was particularly evident during the Polish-Russian War of 1831, World War I, the Polish-Soviet War of 1920, and the September Campaign of 1939.

The quantitative method, which included the compilation and interpretation of statistical data, particularly concerning the implementation of road investments in specific historical periods, was also very helpful in my research.

When defining the socio-economic functions of communication and roads, I used research procedures that allowed me to determine the impact of road construction and modernization on the development of the region, as well as the impact of political changes (e.g. national uprisings) and administrative changes on the development of roads.

While preparing for my dissertation on road infrastructure and its development in Płock Mazovia during the Kingdom of Poland and the Second Polish Republic (1815 - 1939), I undertook extensive research in state archives and academic libraries.

A valuable source of information for the history of road construction in Płock Mazovia during the Kingdom of Poland period (1815 - 1862) was the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, particularly its collection, the Government Commission for Internal Affairs and the Police. Another valuable collection for my research was the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland. The files of the aforementioned collections of the Central Archives of Historical Records contain unique source material characterizing the legislation governing the Kingdom of Poland's road infrastructure development policy. The files of the Government Commission for Internal Affairs and Police contain information on postal and military routes, as well as the efforts of the authorities of the cities of Płock Mazovia to maintain the proper condition of streets, squares, market squares, and bridges over rivers flowing through cities and towns.

To reconstruct the efforts of the authorities of Płock, the largest city in Płock Mazovia, to maintain the proper condition of its streets, sidewalks, and squares, as well as to ensure safe crossing of the Vistula River for its residents, an indispensable source of information are the hundreds of files of the city of Płock stored in the State Archives in Płock. These files cover both the post-partition period (1815 - 1918) and the Reborn Poland (1918 - 1939).

An important central state archive where I conducted research was the Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw. Thanks to this research, I obtained information on political events that influenced road infrastructure in the Płock region of Mazovia during World War I (records of the Central Civic Committee of the Kingdom of Poland, the Central Liquidation Office, and the Central Welfare Council). The Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw also provided a veritable treasure trove of knowledge on the policy of the Second Polish Republic's authorities towards road infrastructure (records of the Presid-

ium of the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Communications) and road investments in individual counties of the Płock region of Mazovia (records of the Association of Polish Counties).

I would like to emphasize once again the significance of the research conducted in the resources of the State Archives in Płock. In addition to hundreds of files of the city of Płock, the files of the cities of Gostynin and Gąbin, as well as the files of the District Road Boards in Gostynin and Płock (for the years 1918 - 1939) were also of significant importance for supplementing the source database used in my doctoral thesis.

My knowledge of road infrastructure in the Płock Mazovia region during the Second Polish Republic was somewhat supplemented by information obtained during research conducted at the State Archives in Warsaw and its branches in Mława and Pultusk.

A significant element of my research was research in academic libraries. I first found textbooks by engineer Franciszek Ksawery Christiani, director of the General Directorate for Roads of the Kingdom of Poland, which dealt with road construction and road infrastructure in the broadest sense.

A special place among the analyzed sources, used in Chapters II and III, was occupied by the „Journals of Laws of the Kingdom of Poland” (1816 - 1866), the „Official Journals of the Płock Voivodeship” (1815 - 1836), and the „Official Journals of the Płock Governorate” (1837 - 1914), which provided important information about the authorities' regulations regarding road construction in the post-partition period. In turn, important information about the condition of roads and road investments carried out in the Płock Mazovia region in the post-uprising period could be obtained by analyzing the content of *Obzory Płockoj Gubernij* and *Pamiatne kniżki Płockoj Gubernij*.

For characterizing the military routes running through Płock Mazovia in the 1830s and 1840s, studies by the Russian Ministry of War proved valuable. They were published by Michał Trubas. Reconstructing postal operations in Płock Mazovia during the Kingdom of Poland was possible thanks to, among other things, the use of source publications from the General Directorate of Post.

Official journals used in this dissertation were an indispensable source, facilitating the analysis of the Second Polish Republic's road infrastructure legislation, including the „Journal of Laws of the Polish State” 1919; the „Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland” 1919 - 1931; and the „Journal of Laws of the Ministry of Communication” 1933 - 1938.

To reconstruct the efforts of the authorities of the individual counties of Płock Mazovia to rebuild the destroyed road infrastructure after World War I, the issues of the „Official Gazettes for the Counties of Ciechanów, Płock, Płońsk and Sierpecki” published in 1919 - 1920 by the individual starosty offices were useful.

The regional press, especially the Płock press, was a valuable source material for the doctoral dissertation. For the post-partition period, the author most frequently used the annuals of „Korespondent Płocki” and „Echa Płockich i Łomżyńskie”, while for the Second Polish Republic, he used the annuals of „Dziennik Płocki”, „Głos Mazowiecki”, „Mazowsze Płockie i Kujawy”, and „Życie Mazowsza”

A valuable addition to the source database was readers correspondence published in the press, discussing travel conditions on the roads of Płock Mazovia, as well as the diaries and recollections of the region's residents, which addressed road construction issues.

It is impossible not to mention the studies by experts in the theory and practice of road construction and operation, included in the dissertation, published in professional journals, including: „Czasopismo Techniczne”, „Drogownictwo”, „Przegląd Komunikacyjny”, „Przegląd Techniczny”, „Roboty Publiczne”, „Technika”, „Transport Samochodowy” and „Wiadomości Drogowe”.

I would also like to emphasize the frequent use of studies by Piotr Gryszpanowicz, PhD, Eng., and Krystyna Grochowska - Iwańska, PhD, the foremost experts on the history of Płock road construction.

It is difficult to imagine writing my dissertation without considering numerous studies by historians and experts on the history of Płock Mazovia. Publications by Adam Dobroński, Marian Chudzyński, Barbara Konarska - Pabiniak, and Janusz Szczepański have held a special place here.

I hope that my doctoral dissertation will significantly fill the gap in knowledge about road infrastructure and its development in Płock Mazovia during the period of the Kingdom of Poland and the Second Polish Republic (1815 - 1939), thus contributing to the development of research on the socio-economic history of Mazovia in the 19th and 20th centuries.

