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# RESEARCH AND IDEOLOGICAL (DIS)ENGAGEMENT

ETHNOLOGIA POLONA



INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY  
POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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Redakcja Ethnologia Polona  
IAE PAN

Al. Solidarności 105

00-140 Warszawa, Poland

Email: [ethnologia.polona@iaepan.edu.pl](mailto:ethnologia.polona@iaepan.edu.pl)

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When ideologies are used to justify violence, oppression, or to fortify hierarchies of inequality, is there an ethical responsibility for anthropologists to engage with the actors pursuing such agendas? If so, what effects might engagement in ideologically driven political interventions have on the quality and impact of anthropological research? If events in an anthropologist's field site prompt political activism, how should anthropologists reflect on the ideological underpinnings of their scholarly response to ideas and events they find objectionable? The aim of this issue of "Ethnologia Polona" is to address these questions by interrogating the intersections of academic research and ideological engagement as they have unfolded historically and as they continue to shape our field today during this period of growing political tensions.

Anthropologists who conducted fieldwork during the Cold War had to contend with a polarised ideological context that either condemned or celebrated socialism. Many continued to conduct ethnographic research during the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s or in their aftermath, when nationalist, xenophobic, and exclusionary debates raged, much as they do today. The importance of recognising the intersection of ideology and research, and the impetus to act it often yields, became especially poignant after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This war prompted anthropologists to re-evaluate their own research and the existing theoretical paradigms that had been developed to understand power and political change. How can we explain the multiple outbreaks of war we witness today and the will to fight among some and the will to resist among others? Which ideologies motivate these positions, and which do we want to inform our own?

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