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## INTRODUCTION: ENGAGED ANTHROPOLOGY VIS-À-VIS MICHAEL BURAWOY'S PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY—A VIEW FROM POLAND

Anthropologists have been engaged in the problems of the contemporary world from the very beginning of the discipline's existence: the founding fathers, Lewis Morgan and Edward Tylor, when writing for a wider audience; Bronisław Malinowski, in calling for researching other cultures "from the native's point of view," and supporting applied anthropology; Franz Boas, in criticizing racist science; and the founding mother, Margaret Mead, by participating in the public debate on the problems of her time.

In order to conceptually organize the field of anthropological engagement and to address the broader issue of the engagement of the social sciences, I have used the concept of public sociology advanced by Michael Burawoy (2009, 2014), who in turn refers to Pierre Bourdieu's field theory. I also refer to Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2006, 2014), a practitioner and theorist of public anthropology.

The vision of public sociology that Burawoy presents is one where sociology engages in dialogue with various audiences and has as its main goal the defense of civil society against the tyranny of the market and state despotism. Burawoy wants public sociology to be considered part of the discipline of sociology because he thinks that public sociology will thus be

validated and the whole of sociology will acquire new life. For Burawoy, the perspective of sociology is therefore civil society and the defense of the social. What should the anthropology perspective be? Very generally speaking—the socio-cultural diversity and unity of human nature. Anthropologists are thus committed to defending pluralism and multiculturalism against racism and nationalism. Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2014: 460) writes that what attracted us to anthropology was “the possibility to raise fundamental philosophical questions while simultaneously engaging with the world of real existing people.”

Burawoy’s concept is based on four types of “sociological work,” which he distinguished on the basis of the type of knowledge produced and the type of audience for which it is created. One is academic sociology, which is the “heart of the discipline.” Academic sociology consists of various research programs and provides other types of sociology with reliable and proven research methods, accumulated knowledge, and a conceptual framework.

The second type is critical sociology, which deals with analysis of the assumptions of research programs, both explicit and implicit, normative and descriptive. The third is policy sociology, which implements goals defined by a client and provides solutions to reported problems or legitimizes solutions already applied.

And finally, the fourth type is public sociology, which is mainly about inducing sociology to talk with the public. Burawoy distinguishes between two types of public sociology. There is the traditional kind, which includes studies on the condition of society written by sociologists for a wider audience; articles on important public issues published by sociologists in newspapers; and journalists’ texts presenting the results of scientific research. The audience of traditional sociology is invisible, passive, and part of mainstream society.

In the organic type, sociologists work “in close connection with a visible, thick, active, local, and often counterpublic” (Burawoy 2005: 7). Burawoy points out that audiences are not constant but changeable, destroyed by the market, the media, and bureaucracy. You have to find them or participate in their formation or transformation. He gives the example of “women” as a category that has become an active and visible audience because the intellectuals participating in it defined women as marginalized, repressed, and deprived of the right to vote. Within public sociology, there is a more dialogical relationship between the sociologist and the audience, where both sides present their agenda and are expected to adapt to each other.

The boundaries between these four types, Burawoy writes, may be blurred, and professional sociology may have many facets: practical (securing research funding, scholarships, etc.); public (presenting research results in an accessible way); critical (debates on research programs). Public sociology is often an invisible, private activity, remaining on the margins of a sociologist's professional activity, and should be valued as part of sociological life.

Burawoy relates his concept of sociology to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the field of art, and places both in a tabular form that organizes them well.

Table 1

## The field of art (Bourdieu)

	Autonomy	Heteronomy
Dominant	Pure art	Bourgeois art
Subordinate	Avant-garde	Social realism

Burawoy writes that

“This representation of the field of art can be mapped onto the field of sociology (Table 2). While the historical genesis of different types of sociology varies from context to context, there is a correspondence between (a) bourgeois art and policy sociology serving the dominant classes; (b) social realism and public sociology, which, as a reaction to policy sociology, engages broader dominated publics; (c) pure art and professional sociology, which involves a relatively autonomous community, defined by its research programs; and, finally, (d) avant-garde and critical sociology, which is first a critique of professional sociology but also of policy sociology while infusing its values into a public sociology (Burawoy 2014: 143).”

Table 2

## The field of sociology (Burawoy)

	Autonomy	Heteronomy
Dominant	Professional	Policy
Subordinate	Critical	Public

Burawoy's concept allows anthropologists' types of involvement to be systematized. Here, too, academic anthropology implements a program corresponding to Burawoy's professional sociology, that is, it provides

the other types of anthropology with reliable and proven research methods, accumulated knowledge, and conceptual framework. However, the specificity of anthropology, with its long-term ethnographic fieldwork conducted by researchers in other cultures, causes the discipline to have a slightly different dynamics of development. In reference to Burawoy's tables I propose the following one, which presents the field of anthropology and various aspects of its engagement (Table 3).

Table 3

The field of anthropology

	Autonomy	Heteronomy
Dominant	Academic	Applied
Subordinate	Critical (also cultural critique)	Public Engaged

Early on, there was a need for the practical application of knowledge of primitive cultures, that is, applied anthropology, providing the colonial authorities with knowledge to facilitate the administration of the “natives.” John van Willigen (1993) even argues that in many areas it was applied—not academic—anthropology that was the starting point for funded research because of its practical benefits to colonial administration. The anthropology courses at universities established at the beginning of the twentieth century were primarily intended for colonial officials. Bronisław Malinowski was also involved in this type of activity, and in 1929 he wrote about the need for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures: “There is a gap between the theoretical interests of scientific anthropology, on the one hand, and practice, on the other. This gap should be filled and the Institute may turn out here very helpful” (Malinowski 1929: 23).

A contemporary example of applied anthropology was the American project. Human Terrain System, which consisted in having anthropologists provide information about conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq in connection with the warfare of the US Army and aroused conflicting opinions in an anthropological community (see Kowalski 2015). At the same time, it should be emphasized that the clients of anthropologists currently include not only the state, but also other institutions and associations, as well as businesses.

The critical trend in anthropology gained strength with decolonization and the ethical turn, and later with the so-called crisis of representation

and the postmodern turn in the 1980s. The emphasis on textuality at that time caused a later reaction in the form of more engaged forms of research activity. What Burawoy defines as “public sociology” (broken down into two types) in anthropology has two names: what he calls the traditional type corresponds to “public anthropology,” that is, anthropologists address important problems of the modern world in their research practice, as well as taking part in public debate (Borofsky 2000); and Burawoy’s organic type, which is “engaged anthropology” in the strict sense of the term and consists in engagement “on behalf of a community or social grouping in which the anthropologist works” (Eriksen 2014: 456).

Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2014), who is known for his activities in the public sphere, points out that “anthropologists have always engaged with publics outside of anthropology” (458), but reflection on this topic has appeared only recently. He believes that anthropology can serve a general liberating cognitive interest as understood by Habermas: “since it is capable, no strings attached, to question what is usually taken for granted, to turn familiar stories on their head and to shift the perspective in unexpected directions; it is not by providing blue-prints that anthropology can hope to improve the human lot. Ours is the role of Anansi” (468). Anansi the Spider, the West African and Caribbean trickster, defeats bigger and stronger enemies with his fantasy and courage, which turns his weaknesses into advantages. Eriksen concludes that “the typical anthropological approach does not take home truths for granted, refuses to be coopted by polarizing discourses and insists on the right to view society simultaneously as ‘observer and participant’” (463).

In Polish anthropology, the issue of the engagement of contemporary researchers was raised by the Warsaw journal (*op.cit.*), with the publication of Agnieszka Kościańska’s article *Ku odpowiedzialności. Etnologia w Polsce: tradycje i wyzwania* [Towards Responsibility: Ethnology in Poland, Traditions, and Challenges] (2004), and later, the debates it launched (2004–2006). In 2008, the Kraków ethnologists organized a conference entitled “Engaged Anthropology (?)” I was invited to deliver the inaugurating lecture. I mainly talked about the tradition of engagement in feminist anthropology and my own research on current issues.<sup>1</sup>

The discussion that followed and the subsequent stages of the conference revealed how much the question mark in the title reflected the mood of the older generation of Polish ethnologists, who have more or

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<sup>1</sup> I was mainly talking about my research on the conflict over the first LGBT March for Tolerance in Krakow (see Kubica 2009).

less strongly renounced any engagement (Zbigniew Benedyktowicz, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Konteksty*, said that it sounded to him like the idea of an “engaged song” in Communist times). For the younger generation of researchers, the issue of the anthropology’s engagement was quite obvious and self-explanatory. In the publication that followed the conference, however, it was the latter—the accepting—view that appeared, although the question mark remained in the title (Wróblewski, Sochacki, Steblik 2010).

A Slovenian ethnologist, Rajko Muršič, a participant in that Krakow conference on engaged anthropology, wrote on this topic that “when—in studying local traditions—we ‘confirm’ anything related to the specificity of one of the ‘Eastern European’ ethnic groups or nationalities, we can easily become servants of nationalist projects within our nation-states. There is no neutrality: no neutral sphere, scientific objectivity, academic independence, or impartiality. We are subordinate players without the possibility of changing or improving the inherited rules of the game” (Muršič 2010: 66). He therefore believes that engagement is not necessarily a matter of an individual anthropologist’s decision but of his or her work being entangled in a broader political context.

Since then, a lot has been written in Poland on this subject (see Songin-Mokrzan 2014; Baer 2014), also in a polemical context. The Krakow-based ethnologist Marcin Brocki has been arguing against the engagement of anthropology for several years. He believes that engagement in changing cultural categories, in the form assumed by anthropologists (as he understands the public engagement of anthropology), neither increases anthropological knowledge nor increases the authority of the discipline (Brocki 2019). Brocki clearly believes that advocates of anthropological engagement want to transform the entire discipline into public or applied anthropology. However, this is not the case: the position of academic anthropology is not threatened. The issue is rather that it should move toward greater social sensitivity. Burawoy’s (2005) argument can also be used: defending engagement is not to deny the risk it carries, but to recognize that it is necessary despite the risk or because of it.

As it turns out, the engagement of Polish anthropologists is not a new phenomenon. The issue of the ideological entanglement of Polish ethnography has recently appeared in the works of historians and anthropologists (Linkiewicz 2016; Engelking 2005, 2019; Lubaś 2019; Kubica 2020). Olga Linkiewicz (2016) in her article on the scientific ideals and political involvement of Polish ethnology in the interwar period writes that after the May Coup in 1926, the goal of the Sanacja camp was systematically to

control society, and experts in the field of social sciences could help in this regard. Ethnologists conducted field research focusing on multi-ethnic areas that were the subject of international territorial disputes. Collaboration with politicians and the administration developed mainly within research institutes (Linkiewicz 2016: 5), which can be seen as agencies of applied anthropology and policy sociology. Linkiewicz (2016: 8) emphasizes that “In general, the scholarly collaboration with the state was driven by pragmatism and political or power-related aspirations as much as patriotism, which was a unifying principle regardless of political views.” Being embedded in the national idea, which was obvious and not subject to reflection, was their common denominator. I have devoted a separate article to this issue, where I indicated how the theoretical and cognitive pre-judgmental categories used by interwar ethnographers strengthened the Polish nationalist discourse even when those ethnographers distanced themselves from it (as was the case of Jan Stanisław Bystron), or when they were interested in minorities (for instance, like Bożena Stelmachowska, who studied the Kashubians and proved their Polishness) (Kubica 2020).

A very important event that revealed the engagement of contemporary Polish anthropologists in the public debate was the Extraordinary Congress of Polish Ethnologists and Anthropologists in Poznań in 2016 under the slogan “Anthropology against discrimination.” A “Manifesto” was signed then, which began as follows:

“As representatives of ethnology and social and cultural anthropology, we feel a special responsibility for the shape of knowledge about culture and society. We are concerned about the increasing number of cases of manipulation and ignorance in this area present in the public debate, media, education and politics. We mainly bear in mind the misleading statements made in relation to migration, refugees, multiculturalism and national, ethnic or religious identities. For these reasons, we consider it necessary and right to organize an Extraordinary Congress of Polish Ethnologists and Anthropologists and to announce this manifesto.”<sup>2</sup>

One of the organizers, Michał Buchowski, summed up the event this way:

“Alarmed by the growing amount of racially, ethnically, and religiously motivated verbal and physical violence in the country, as well as by the rightist authorities’ stance on issues of refugees, which encourages xenophobic

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://zjazd.weebly.com/english.html>. Some of the speeches given then were published in *Lud*: <https://apcz.umk.pl/czasopisma/index.php/LUD/article/view/lud101.2017.01d/14576>.

hysteria and tolerates criminal acts against immigrants. Polish ethnologists and anthropologists held a Special Convention against Discrimination. It was held on November 23, 2016 in the city of Poznań. Four hundred people gathered in this largest ever assembly of anthropologists in the country” (Buchowski 2017).

This manifestation of cultural critique proves the deep engagement in the public debate of the community of Polish anthropologists, who are concerned about the state of Polish society. Another sign of this anxiety was the session that Ewa Michna and I organized during the Sociological Congress in Wrocław in 2019 under the slogan “Engaged anthropology in a time of growing nationalism.” The collection of articles presented in this issue of *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* is one of the effects of the session. The authors are anthropologists of diverse genealogies: both ethnological and sociological, and with different research profiles (field and theoretical). Our aim was to reflect on the engagement of anthropology at the present time.

In her article, Katarzyna Kaniowska proposes an epistemological reflection on “engagement” and refers to the sociologists Norbert Elias, Florian Znaniecki, and Stanisław Ossowski, because—she claims—anthropology and sociology have a lot in common in epistemological issues, especially in regard to how ways of knowing and the knowing subject are considered. This discussion highlights the benefits and dangers of introducing the concept of commitment to the language of science. The author discusses the consequences of considering anthropology as a science based on experience. Experience thus has a double status: it is the subject of research and, at the same time, a way of knowing. The problem of the engagement and neutrality of science raises the question of the identity of anthropology. In this discipline, methodology must be closely related to ethical reflection. Engagement means acting for the benefit of the respondents, with their participation, but also creating space for reflection, the aim of which is cooperation. The subjectivity of the researcher and the researched is equalized. Dialogicality and participation determine the reliability of knowledge. This raises new questions about the social role of scientists as well as the limits of the practice of science and the ideal of science.

Dariusz Brzeziński refers to the works of Zygmunt Bauman (a very “anthropological” sociologist—it is no wonder that he was invited to deliver the keynote speech at the Krakow conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists in 2000). Bauman is a good example of an academic engaged in public debate. Brzeziński focuses on Bauman’s concept of dialogicality as a balance between various forms of engaged science and

as a remedy for the difficulties associated with the turn to strong identities, as well as the need for cooperation focused on developing the best solutions to social problems. The main feature of Bauman's commitment is utopian thinking and the search for alternatives to the existing status quo.

Katarzyna Warmińska and Ewa Michna provide a retrospective description and analysis of their own experience as researchers of ethnic minorities in Poland in the early 1990s and their understanding of the role of a fieldworker at that time, the then existing political conditions and power relations, and their more or less conscious choice of research strategy—engagement or distance. They also consider the consequences of these choices for the field and the academic practice of female researchers.

Monika Baer analyzes European critical anthropology, understood as a kind of practice acting for imaginaries that inspire actual social or political change. Through autoethnographic reflection based on her own experience working in activist-oriented gender and queer studies she gains insight into wider research issues. On this foundation, she proposes a certain vision of the most effective type of anthropological engagement. She suggests that critical anthropology should use emotions in order to act for change. Anthropology could contribute by revealing that political Others share with us common experiences as human beings.

Natalia Bloch reports on her own research and activist projects concerning the emigration crisis of 2015–2017 and three interventions organized at that time in Poznań. She takes the opportunity to refer critically to the sedentarist perspective dominant in the public debate on refugees, and at the same time to indicate the need to activate mechanisms of empathy instead of reproducing the differences. In her opinion, this can be done by making people aware of the contingency of our location and emphasizing our closeness to other people. Therefore, engagement consists in building social sensitivity and interpersonal solidarity. Her anthropological interventions have given her a sense of agency and activity.

Marta Songin-Mokrzan and Michał Mokrzan address a problem currently affecting Polish academia, that is, the neoliberalization of the university, and especially the “yellow spot,” or, in other words, how they (re)produce the entrepreneurial regimes they criticize, with their power relations and subordination mechanisms. Songin-Mokrzan and Mokrzan situate their project within the framework of critical anthropology and outline the development of this approach, as well as discussing neoliberal *gouvernementalité*. In autoethnographic, two-voice description, they deal with the affective aspect of the practices of social actors—themselves—in the face of the changes introduced by the neo-liberal reforms of the

university. The conclusion of their project is the statement that criticism of the transformation of the university should not be limited to various forms of opposition, but should also involve academics' distancing themselves from the positive and negative emotions that these changes evoke in themselves. The authors preferred to have their paper in Polish, because it is addressed to the audience of Polish academics.

Eriksen warns that "Our job is not to tell other people what to do, but to show that everything could have been different" (467). In accord with Burawoy, Polish anthropologists are engaging in dialogue with various publics to build social sensitivity and interpersonal solidarity.

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### Abstract

Engaged anthropology is analyzed in this text as part of the engaged social sciences. The author uses Michael Burawoy's concept of public sociology and Thomas Hylland Eriksen's concept of public anthropology to organize the anthropological field and distinguish four types of anthropology: academic; critical; applied; and public and engaged. Public anthropology is understood here as the participation of anthropologists in public debate while engaged (in the strict sense of the term) on behalf of a community under study. This introduction to *Engaged Anthropology in a Time of Growing Nationalism* [*Antropologia zaangażowana w czasie nacjonalistycznego wzmożenia; Kultura i Społeczeństwo* 2020, no. 2] presents the main issues of the volume's papers on the theoretical and practical problems of engaged anthropology as seen from Poland.

*key words*: engaged anthropology, public anthropology, public sociology, Michael Burawoy, Thomas Hylland Eriksen

### WSTĘP. SOCJOLOGIA ZAANGAŻOWANA A MICHAELA BURAWOYA SOCJOLOGIA PUBLICZNA — WIDZIANE Z POLSKIEJ PERSPEKTYWY

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### Abstrakt

Antropologia zaangażowana została potraktowana przez autorkę jako część zaangażowanych nauk społecznych. Stosując w analizie pojęcia socjologii publicz-

nej Michaela Burawoya oraz antropologii publicznej Thomasa Hyllanda Eriksena, określa ona pole antropologii oraz wyróżnia w jej obrębie cztery typy — antropologia akademicka, krytyczna, stosowana oraz zaangażowana antropologia publiczna. Ta ostatnia jest rozumiana jako zaangażowanie (w sensie dosłowym) antropologów w debatę publiczną po stronie społeczności będącej przedmiotem ich badań. Tekst ten jest wstępem do zeszytu czasopisma „Kultura i Społeczeństwo” (2020, nr 2) pt. „Antropologia zaangażowana w czasie nacjonalistycznego wzmożenia”, w którym znalazły się artykuły poświęcone teoretycznym i praktycznym problemom antropologii zaangażowanej pstrzegany z polskiej perspektywy.

*słowa kluczowe:* antropologia zaangażowana, antropologia publiczna, socjologia publiczna, Michael Burawoy, Thomas Hylland Eriksen