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PREFACE

The idea of military anthropology is not new. In its inherent form, it can be traced back to ancient times. However, as a formulated discipline, the theoretical-cognitive reflection appears at the turn of the 20th and 21st century—military anthropology developed in parallel by Russian and American academics. Both approaches became, for us, Polish military anthropologists, the starting point for our research. The classical Russian paradigm grows out of multidisciplinary studies: history, psychology, cultural studies, sociology, and philosophy. Hence, Vladimir Bazhykov defines military anthropology as a tool for planning, developing, and handling armed and social violence to achieve specific political purposes. In this sense, the American paradigm of military anthropology is no different from the Russian one. An example of the practical application of anthropological methods of cognition as a tool for gaining a strategic advantage is the Human Terrain System used by the US Army in the Iraq Wars. However, ethical problems have arisen in American reflections on military anthropology. Moral inquiries about the use of anthropological methods of cognition as a tool for warfare have been raised by the American Anthropological Association and The Network of Concerned Anthropologists.

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Nonetheless, while the American academics were dealing with the moral aspects of military anthropologists' activities, the Russian ones began to develop anthropological tools' new fields of application. The Russian Federation's researchers ceased to treat anthropology only as a set of customs and culturally determined behaviors. The perspective on the opportunities offered by culture has changed. Even though the Russian war doctrine itself does not provide theoretical guidance on a new paradigm, one can observe the sharp shift from the culture understood as behavior to culture understood as creation.

Even before the Russian-Ukrainian war outbreak, Russia was using its literature, movies, theatre, and fine arts as a weapon to change the narrative and discourse. Nowadays, it is evident that the culture and its products are being treated as a battlefield.

Living in Central Europe, Polish anthropologists cannot maintain the intellectual distance like their American colleagues. The problems connected with the hybrid war and culture, which is one of its parts, require all academic resources involvement. The contemporary battleground is also all about dominating people's thoughts.

We, at this moment, offer you a new paradigm of military anthropology, focused on culture as an area where a fierce battle for resources is taking part. These resources are not oil or strategic points, but identity, language, and heritage.

This issue of "Wiedza Obronna" is our first attempt to discuss the military anthropology understood in this way.

The topics covered in the published articles related to both theoretical and practical issues. The critical concept study refers to anthropological aggression, anthropological defense, and anthropological espionage. The spectrum of observations here is vast, ranging from empirical evidence of Ukraine and Russia's conflict to historiography and "battle for history".

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