

Thursday Sociological Seminars

29/6/2023
14:00

room 207
Jilská 1, Praha 1

RAFAL SMOCZYNSKI

The role of affectivity in the anti-Polish migrant panic in the UK

The inflow of Central and Eastern European labour migrants to the UK which took place after the 2004 EU enlargement has triggered a series of anti-migrant moral panic campaigns resonating with lived experiences of selected sectors of the British public affected by employment risks that have been otherwise a common problem in post-2008 financial crisis times featuring symptoms as short-term contracts, stiff competition, persistent unemployment appearing especially among low skilled job-seekers. Even though this claims-making was conceptualized by some scholars as representing dynamics of open-ended moral panic, nonetheless, it reached its peak point of intensity around the 2016 EU Referendum and shortly after became volatile and subsided. The decline of anti-Eastern European migrant claims-making is not linked in this research with post-Referendum structural change on the British labour market which along with the advent of immigration restrictions would have brought significant new opportunities for native job seekers nor with the sudden disappearance of the grassroots anti-migrant resentment. Instead, it is indicated here to the changing cycle of the mass media's focus which dropped their attention on targeting Polish folk devils, and secondly to the decomposition of institutionalized anti-Polish migrant discourses articulated by politicians, established media, and anti-migrant NGOs. The condition of reproduction of anti-migrant discourses and then from 2016 onwards the advent of volatility of the analysed anti-migrant resentment is discussed within the perspective of Durkheimian approach of the ritual action in constituting collective identities.

Rafal Smoczynski is a sociologist and an associate professor at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. His research interests revolve around social control and social problem studies.

The seminar is freely accessible.