

Přednáška Moral Panic and Repression: the contentious politics of anti-Semitism in Germany

21.3.2025 - | Fakulta humanitních studií UK

Přijďte na přednášku přední světové socioložky, kterou spolupořádá Katedra sociologie FHS UK s Iniciativou za kritickou akademii. Donatella Della Porta bude přednášet o morální panice, podnikatelích s panikou i represí sociálních hnutí na příkladu německých protestů proti izraelskému postupu v Gaze.

Abstrakt

Moral panics can be used as a mechanism of repression of political and social protests through the definition of activists as challenging the core values of a society. Taking Germany as a critical case, the article analyses a number of aggressive campaigns mounted by the media and politicians against progressive artists and intellectuals, most of whom are from the global South, but which also includes Jewish people critical of Israeli actions, who have been accused of violating the German narrative in what has been defined as a “war” against anti-Semitism. After an introduction to the repression of pro-Palestinian protests, I will begin by providing a methodological note, before going on to present the conceptualization of a moral panic and locate its mechanisms within an analysis of the repression of social movements. I will then present some cases that can be read through the sociological category of a moral panic, singling out the panic entrepreneurs and their forms of intervention as well as the outcomes of their actions. What this further analysis adds to the literature is a reflection on the contextual conditions for the development of such moral panic in a specific mass-media, regulatory and political context. I will then suggest that in the German case in particular the contextual conditions for the spread of the moral panic are related to: a) a bureaucratization of anti-Semitism policies, with the creation of a specialized bureaucracy; the adoption of a semi-legal definition of anti-Semitism through the development of an especially vague and blurred definition of anti-Semitism; and the assimilation of anti-Zionist peaceful forms of protests (such as BDS) as anti-Semitic; b) the development of political and cultural opportunities around the definition of the security of Israel as a “raison d’État” and a convergence on a selective, formalized official memory; and c) the alignment of the majority of civil society and mass-media around an official narrative.

Přijďte na přednášku přední světové socioložky, kterou spolupořádá Katedra sociologie FHS UK s Iniciativou za kritickou akademii. Donatella Della Porta bude přednášet o morální panice, podnikatelích s panikou i represí sociálních hnutí na příkladu německých protestů proti izraelskému postupu v Gaze.

Moral panics can be used as a mechanism of repression of political and social protests through the definition of activists as challenging the core values of a society. Taking Germany as a critical case, the article analyses a number of aggressive campaigns mounted by the media and politicians against progressive artists and intellectuals, most of whom are from the global South, but which also includes Jewish people critical of Israeli actions, who have been accused of violating the German narrative in what has been defined as a “war” against anti-Semitism. After an introduction to the repression of pro-Palestinian protests, I will begin by providing a methodological note, before going

on to present the conceptualization of a moral panic and locate its mechanisms within an analysis of the repression of social movements. I will then present some cases that can be read through the sociological category of a moral panic, singling out the panic entrepreneurs and their forms of intervention as well as the outcomes of their actions. What this further analysis adds to the literature is a reflection on the contextual conditions for the development of such moral panic in a specific mass-media, regulatory and political context. I will then suggest that in the German case in particular the contextual conditions for the spread of the moral panic are related to: a) a bureaucratization of anti-Semitism policies, with the creation of a specialized bureaucracy; the adoption of a semi-legal definition of anti-Semitism through the development of an especially vague and blurred definition of anti-Semitism; and the assimilation of anti-Zionist peaceful forms of protests (such as BDS) as anti-Semitic; b) the development of political and cultural opportunities around the definition of the security of Israel as a “raison d’État” and a convergence on a selective, formalized official memory; and c) the alignment of the majority of civil society and mass-media around an official narrative.

<https://fhs.cuni.cz/FHS-1001.html?event=29721&locale=cz>