CEU CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

The **Populism Research Group** together with the **Political Behavior Research Group**
cordially invites you to a discussion on**:**

Theory of Moral Panics and the Contemporary Discourse on Migration

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ABSTRACT

Some forty years ago scholars of public discourse and media coined the term of moral panic. It has proved to be a surprisingly good framework to identify prevailing social strains through analyzing scapegoating processes in a media imbued society. Scholars of moral panic built a model to identify mediated discursive processes that are to strengthen moral boundaries of the society. Moral panics are nervous reactions of traditionally powerful groups of society that can not keep up with the challenges, experience deprivation and loss of control. The subjects of such panics are changing through time. But these are always some disruptive forces that regarded as threat to the established moral and social order. Youth culture, deviant subcultures, gays, foreigners, single mothers, immigrants under many name tags formed a proper scapegoat in the course of history.

During this discussion we are going to run the algorithm of moral panics to see if it has any relevance in understanding the current wave of anti-immigrant scare in Western societies. It is very tempting to explain it as a classic moral panic. However, the paradigmatic changes in media production and public discourse make it necessary to revise the theory. Classic moral panics need social change, competitive media that form a single public sphere, and popular moral. From these prerequisites only social change can be taken as granted today.

DAVID KITZINGER specialized his research in the sociology of communication and media, collective action, but also in digital product development and strategy or public sector information reuse. He is currently a PhD student at ELTE Sociology Department, and has his MA degree from CEU Political Science.