

Anna Horolets

"Living an American Dream: Leisure of Polish Migrants in the US"

ABSTRACT

Leisure is a broad term that has been criticized for the lack of precision and various biases inherent in it (Europocentrism, androcentrism, privileging of middle class experience, elitism etc.). In the talk, I propose to discuss how this category can be used in migration studies. Will an inquiry into migrants' leisure produce a more complex image of migratory situation? As a figure of public and political discourse, the word 'migrant' carries a number of negative connotations. Migrants are associated with threat, but also with suffering and social inequality. Yet, migratory experience is also a quest for better life. Migration is motivated not only negatively, by poverty and persecution, but also positively, by the imagery of the opportunities in a new place, the ideas of 'good life' and dreams about better future. The contention that the brighter side of migratory experience deserves better exposure in social sciences is not the only reason of my interest in migrants' leisure, however. Another important reason is the wish to demonstrate the complexity of migratory experience and its entanglement in various moral regimes that act upon mobile individuals. I will use the empirical materials collected during a 6-month-long fieldwork among Polish migrants and Polish diaspora in Chicago. By focusing on migrants' leisure practices, I aim to demonstrate how they live their 'American dream', and what are the disciplining powers of the imageries of 'good life' in migratory situation. In the talk, I propose to discuss how this category can be used in migration studies. Will an inquiry into migrants' leisure produce a more complex image of migratory situation? As a figure of public and political discourse, the word 'migrant' carries a number of negative connotations. Migrants are associated with threat, but also with suffering and social inequality.

BIO

Anna Horolets has educational background in linguistics (Kyrgyzstan), sociology (Poland) and anthropology (UK). Working in the academia (SWPS, University of Gdańsk and currently University of Warsaw), she studied collective identities and their discursive representations, as well as tourist practices. The interest in these topics resulted in a number of publications, including a book on niche tourism from Poland to the countries of former USSR (in Polish: *Konformizm, bunt, nostalgia. Turystyka niszowa z Polski do krajów byłego ZSRR*, Universitas, 2013). In the last few years her

interests switched to migrants' leisure. She carried out fieldwork among Polish migrants in the UK and US (thanks to the fellowships granted by the Leverhulme Trust and Kościuszko Foundation) as well as among Vietnamese and Ukrainian migrants in Poland. Some of the findings were published in *Leisure Studies*, *Prace Etnograficzne*, *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening* and *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej*. She is currently involved in the project on the media and institutional reactions to the so-called refugee crisis in Europe in Hungary, Romania and Poland.