
Preface

This issue of “Culture and Society” focuses on different – gender, sexual, professional and artistic – identities as the products of specific chains of historical events, regimes of knowledge and individual performances. Contemporary social and cultural theory insists upon the fluidity of identity; it increasingly questions identity-based politics and even communities and advocates resistance to the very notion of categorization. A prominent queer theorist Judith Butler argues that identities are constituted through the repetition of acts, deeds and corporeal styles, and that there is no stable, coherent subject in existence prior to entry into culture. According to her, repetition is central to performativity that is a “reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains” (Butler 1993, 2). As Butler puts it, we become subjects from our performances and the performances of others towards us; the doer becomes formed from the doing; there is no doer before the deed. Diana Fuss goes even further arguing that every performance is “to be excessively excessive, to flaunt one’s performance as performance, [...] to unmask all identity as drag” (Fuss 1995, 81n). Despite such claims, identity remains a viable subject of theoretical and empirical research.

The first chapter of the journal focuses on the intersection of sexuality, identity and society. In her article “The Experiences of Bisexuals and the Formation of Bisexual Social Identity in Lithuania,” Darja Lyzenko analyses the strategies used by bisexuals to construct their social identity and the main obstacles they encounter in doing it. Artūras Tereškinas focuses on the relation between social marginalization, sexuality and masculinity in a male escort’s life. In his article “Sexuality, Social Marginalization and Wounded Masculinity: A Male Sex Worker’s Case,” he argues that a dysfunctional family, poor employment and educational history and low socioeconomic status made the respondent’s choice of sex work the means of survival. Susceptible to societal condemnation, stigma and self-doubt, the escort, in his life narrative, expresses a subjective feeling of hopelessness and powerlessness that makes him miserable.

The second part of the journal is devoted to the sociology of gender. In their article, Natalija Mažeikienė and Agnė Dorelaitienė examine male social workers’ constructions of identity, professional orientations and trajectories and uncover difficulties and conflicts in these men’s practices of masculinity.

According to them, in narrating their stories, the male social workers attempt to combine practices attributed to traditional hegemonic masculinity with the practices of a male caregiver. Rita Činikienė analyzes the expressions of career women's power and gender roles in familial activities from the point of view of the respondents' early childhood as well as their social and professional experience.

In the last part of the journal, Sigita Doblytė presents the results of her research of the Lithuanian artistic field. Her article not only examines artists' dispositions towards the state and its cultural policy, but also explores the relations between the young artists' position in the artistic field and the positions occupied by other agents – art critics, other artists, the main Lithuanian art institutions, galleries, etc. At the same time, the author describes the young artists' identity constructions in Lithuania.

The articles in this issue of the journal prompt us to rethink the interrelation of identity, knowledge, power and society and the ways in which multiple identities get produced in relation to forms of power, surveillance and resistance.

Artūras Terėškinas

Bibliography

- Butler, J. 1993. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. London: Routledge.
- Fuss, D. 1995. *Identification Papers*. London: Routledge.