



Gender and Sexual Politics in Europe: Queer Festivals and their counterpublics

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Abstract

Queer festivals make up a part of the legacy of queer activism, as it has developed in North America and Europe from the late 80s onwards. Their political discourse is based on a confrontational style of address, while their content is largely inspired by poststructuralist views of identities as a tool through which power operates (Butler, 1990). However, the 'constant deconstruction of identities... undermine[s] the claims to strength and unity of their own rights movement' (Jasper et al., forthcoming: 29). The anti-identity paradox (Jasper et al., forthcoming; or the 'queer dilemma', Gamson, 1995) entails the failure to avoid the construction of a new identity, built precisely on the same discourse it attempts to deconstruct. Thus, the following puzzle emerges: If we assume that queer politics are based on this 'anti-identity' paradox, on which kind of identity, then, can they mobilize? In other words, given that the identity they attempt to build leads to their selfdestruction, how can queer politics, over time, strengthen and spread across Europe?

Jury:



Olivier Roy (EUI/RSCAS), Didier Eribon (University of Amiens, co-supervisor), Konstantinos Eleftheriadis (candidate), Donatella della Porta (EUI, supervisor), Verta Taylor (University of Santa Barbara – California – *in absentia*)

Bio

Konstantinos Eleftheriadis is a Lecturer in Sociology at SciencesPo-Paris. He has been a 4-year fully funded PhD researcher at the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the European University Institute in Florence. He specialized in queer festivals as spaces where transnational counterpublics emerge. He performed a qualitative methodology (ethnography, focus groups, life histories), and an online survey. He has been a Guest Lecturer in European Studies at the Department of Politics of Maastricht University. He holds graduate degrees in Law (University Paris-8), Sociology/Gender Studies (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris) and Social and Political Sciences (EUI, Florence). He worked as Research Assistant in the program KNOW RESET of the Robert Schuman Centre.