

## **DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

My interest on these issues develops from the readings I have done before, especially Antigone, the second tragedy of the Sophoclean trilogy. Antigone is made speechless and pushed outside of the borders of the city of Thebes because of her rebellion against the laws of Kreon. In order to make others understand her standing and the reasons of her deeds, she is forced to speak the official language of laws which mark her as “illegal” if not altogether outlaw. This is an example I find to be inspiring because it provides a ground similarity in coming to terms with our so-called post-modern era in which lots of different “subaltern” groups demand recognition as well as legitimacy. These groups demand the same privileges and rights like the other approved subjects and they may end up achieving them, like the homosexuals demanding to be a part of military service or the marriage institution. The question is what is the subject of emancipation here, the identity group or the expanding zone of the status quo? That is to say, assuming strict identity roles end up with the reciprocal proliferation of power economies and exclusive consequences. What is more, as Butler utters, those that claim for recognition or “those who are oppressed by certain operations of power also come to be invested in that oppression... and their very self-definition becomes bound up with the terms by which they are regulated, marginalized, or erased from the sphere of cultural life”\*. So, fighting for inclusion results in the expansion of the limits and zone of influence of that which is fought against.

### **THESIS TITLE**

Though not purely an empirical research, my thesis is going to be on understanding the functioning of identity politics. The title is going to be “Identity Politics: Emancipation or Subordination”.

### **AIM**

My aim is to illustrate and demonstrate how this mechanism works and forms different subjects and subject positions while subjecting these newly constituted subjects to the already existing power regimes. Additionally I am going to try to enlighten how these opponent groups come to affirm the strategies of the status quo they were arisen to criticize in the first place.

### **MOTIVES**

The world is still a stage for likewise political experiences, like the ethnic groups fighting for becoming a nation-state, different identity groups demanding for recognition, the minority groups asking for voicing their own cultural, religious or linguistic practices...etc. The question of identity politics is interesting because it still is a fruitful area in which the disciplines falling under the social sciences can give a radical critique of the existing power relations of the democratic societies and develop alternative ways less dependent on subordination.

My personal motive is the following. I am a woman coming from a so-called “Eastern” society grown up within the Western educational system and sensitivities. I am a subaltern already born into the political and cultural dichotomies and dualities developed by the Western way of thinking. This topic will help me come to terms with my personal and autobiographical standing within the global world as well.

This subject matter is also crucial for other people because of some points related to intellectual and discursive issues of the sociology discipline. To put it more precisely, the intellectual figures like Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak, both grown up within the discursive and linguistic formations of Western educational system, found the opportunity to receive this language and transform it anew based on their own culturally singular ways of experiencing these “subaltern” positions. They articulated the Western language within the framework of their own idiosyncrasy. So, they presented radical ways of interpretation and somehow enriched the discursive framework of the West independent of the constraints of the East-West, developed-undeveloped dualities.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Is identity politics an emancipation as it is considered to be or does it bring about a hidden subordination resulting from the expansion of the limits of the status quo?
2. Is it possible to form different ways of political practices independent from identities and identity positions?
3. Can the critique of identity politics open a path for alternative ways of historiography? If so, how?

## **RELEVANT THEORETICAL CONCEPTS**

- Identity politics
- Post-colonialism
- The ‘subaltern’

## **SCHEDULE**

In the first two semesters, I am planning to conclude the necessary reading material and putting this into election. The third semester will be the one in which i am going to make my trajectory and draft ready. That is to say, the points that may be opened up and the path that may be taken will be all definite and well defined within this period. My final proposal will be presented at the end of this semester. Starting from the fourth one, I am going to start writing. I am not going to need any budget since my work is not going to be an empirical research.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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\* Butler, Judith..... “Competing Universalities” in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, co-authored with Žižek and Laclau, Verso Press, London, New York, 2000, pp. 136-181, p. 149