

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Vulnerability, Resistance, and the Dependency on Infrastructure

This research project aims to understand vulnerability in the context of violent conflicts. The term 'vulnerable' is "derived from the Latin noun *vulnus*," meaning 'wound.' A vulnerable person is someone who is "capable of being physically or emotionally wounded." In contexts of war and displacement, being vulnerable denotes to being "open to attack or damage" (Merriam-Webster, 2011). In other words, such a person is vulnerable because he or she is exposed to violence. Both Judith Butler and Julia Kristeva suggest that "we need to accept our own vulnerability rather than try to deny it" (Oliver, 2007, p. 8). Kristeva (2014) proposes a positive ontology of vulnerability, asserting that it is an integral part of human existence and should thus be included "with liberty, equality, and fraternity as a key principle of humanism" (Bunch 2017, p. 142; Kristeva 2014). In her essay *Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance*, Butler (2016) proposes a reconceptualization of the relationship between vulnerability and resistance. Suggesting that vulnerability appears at a different stage than is commonly understood, Butler places it alongside and in relation to precarity. She asserts that this vulnerability is born in relationship to precarity. Graphic images of refugees settling in camps with dire living conditions, which Butler labelled as "failed infrastructures," expose the precarity of the subject. Butler (2016) writes:

"Without shelter, we are vulnerable to weather, cold, heat, and disease, perhaps also to assault, hunger, and violence. It was not as if we were, as creatures, not vulnerable before when infrastructure was working, and then when infrastructure fails, our vulnerability comes to the fore" (p.13).

At this point, Butler (2016) asserts that vulnerability is a fundamental condition of humanity, and we cannot negate its existence. However, precarity appears when this vulnerability is exploited, and, as a result, basic aspects of life become impossible to bear.

Butler (2016) refers to the exploitation of people by the state. The television news reports examined in this research project depict displaced Syrian women living in ad hoc refugee camps and makeshift shelters in Syria's neighboring countries. In this setting, the most basic and essential needs and utilities for a decent life are lacking or difficult to acquire. Butler (2016) described these realities as a 'dependency on infrastructure.' She described such conditions as the continued failure of infrastructure; here the failure becomes the normal state of affairs. Examples of failed infrastructures could entail the struggle for running or clean water, living in a shelter without a door, unpaved streets or the lack of transportation, the struggle to find paid work, no access to medical care, or any necessary provisions that are essential to living. Because there is a 'dependency on infrastructure,' and one's survival and attempts of making one's life livable depend on this same infrastructure, acts of resistance emerge as a consequence.

Butler describes this type of resistance as an act of mobilizing states of vulnerability. She asserts that this resistance appears as a way of combating the precariousness that has taken over people's lives and living conditions. These states of precarity, which embody a sense of exploitation can come in the form of economic, social, or political exploitation. For instance, in the context of the Syrian conflict, social exploitation appears when Syrian women and girls enter child marriages or forced marriages, as a way to ease the economic hardship of the family. Political exploitation appears when Syrian women become the target of state violence, and are sexually assaulted as a way to put pressure on the opposition or the rebels fighting the Syrian Arab Army. As for economic exploitation, this form of exploitation appears when displaced Syrian families live in makeshift shelters or states of impoverishment and take on unpaid or poorly jobs to make ends meet.

Butler (2016) considers these the acts of exploitation—whether those practiced by the state emerge as a result of discriminatory laws, or neoliberal governing systems that produce economic inequality – and “rejects the fundamental reality of vulnerability, which further feeds [the] ability to exploit.” When the exploited subject resists this exploitation through action, resistance is pursued by acknowledging one's own state of vulnerability. In other words,

this acknowledgment of vulnerability becomes fundamental to one's ability to resist forms of exploitation and the forces that fuel this exploitation.

At this point, Butler (2016) proposes that masculinist politics, which heroizes overcoming one's vulnerability, should be criticized and reconceptualized in feminist theory. She asserts that mobilizing one's vulnerability is a tactical deployment of the state of vulnerability, and this mobilization is essential for acts of resistance. The deployment of this mobilization is also connected to infrastructure. The definition of infrastructure in this particular case extends between (1) a public street, as an infrastructural good which functions as a platform to stage one's political demand, or (2) a mobile phone or any public media in which the subject or the exploited may appear, e.g., a media outlet that brings the subjects' voices into the public sphere. Butler (2016) writes:

"The very term "mobilization" depends on an operative sense of mobility, itself a right, one that many people cannot take for granted. For the body to move, it must usually have a surface of some kind, and it must have at its disposal whatever technical supports allow for movement to take place. So, the pavement and the street are already to be understood as requirements of the body as it exercises its rights of mobility. No one moves without a supportive environment and set of technologies. And when those environments start to fall apart or are emphatically unsupportive, we are left to "fall" in some ways, and our very capacity to exercise most basic rights is imperiled" (p. 15).

Moreover, one cannot take for granted the idea of freedom that can be exercised by the subjects when they decide to mobilize their political action or move physically from point A to point B. For example, Sophie Richter-Devroe (2011) observed the daily struggle of women living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The author affirmed that Palestinian women living under occupation found ways to get on with their daily life. In these circumstances, travelling from the West Bank to Jerusalem is not just an act to reaffirm their right to "enjoy life and have fun;" it also a form of defiance and resistance against the Israeli control of Palestinian people. In this setting, travelling, as a daily struggle, under the occupation in order to run errands and get on with one's daily life, becomes a form of resistance that is complementary with the concept of *sumud*¹ (Richter-Devroe, 2011). By employing their acts of *sumud*, ordinary unarmed Palestinian women are able to sustain daily life under the Israeli occupation (Bourbeau & Ryan, 2017).

1 *Sumud* (دومص) is the Arabic word for resilience.

In the context of the Syrian conflict, a Syrian woman's survival is dependent on simple physical movements. A physical movement may simply be a way to commute to work in order to make a living, despite the fact that the woman's daily commute places her in danger of being exposed to sexual harassment or put in vulnerable positions, such as when she is caught at checkpoints or put under police surveillance. In this case, the subject exposes her precarity in the public space. Butler (2015) asserts that "these bodies, in showing this precarity, are also resisting these very powers; they enact a form of resistance that presupposes vulnerability of a specific kind, and opposes precarity" (p.22).

This line of argumentation does not position vulnerability outside of agency or as something opposed to it; instead, it proposes a feminist model, which rejects the masculinist ideals that perceive agency in a binary opposition to precarity or vulnerability. Butler (2016) affirms that it is a feminist task to undo this binary model, and I follow her affirmation throughout this research project.

2.2 Power and Different Modes of Violence

This research project attempts to understand power in its conceptual capacities and how violence, beyond its general definition of "bodily harm," appears in the media discourses. The research draws on theories by Michel Foucault, Hannah Arendt, and Slavoj Žižek to establish a theoretical framework which enables the exploration of the media discourses on power and different modes of violence that appear in the news reports. Through a critical media studies lens, I explore the concept of violence and how it appears in the television reporting by looking at the different capacities of power.

Foucault (1990) challenged the traditional understanding of power as "top-down substantive phenomenon," which was seen by many conventional scholars as a force that is restraining and oppressive by nature. He did not see it as a synonym to the word 'violence.' Instead, Foucault (1990) contended to understand power and power relations through their ability to enable action and other human capacities. He asserted that power has many facets and can only function when it is brought into action through individual interaction and relationships. Foucault (1980) argued that "power exists only when it is put into action, even if, of course, it is integrated into a disparate field of possibilities brought to bear upon permanent structures" (p. 210). Within this framework,

the notion of power is open, allowing the reader to ask questions about “how” and “why” certain subjects exposed to power relations act as they do.

It is within this frame of reference that Arab television news portrayed Syrian women who have been exposed to incidents of rape, public shaming, and sexual assault throughout the conflict. Such women were depicted as either weak subjects, who were dismissed by their own communities, or as displaced women living in exile. In so doing, they provided a way to escape the societal norms that stigmatized them as victims of torture and gender-based violence. The idea of ‘choosing exile’ to escape stigmatization can, on the one hand, be seen as an example of one’s ‘failure’ to face the norms that made them victims of their victimhood. At the same time, however, this ‘failure’ can also be perceived as a choice made by the victim as a way of refusing the status of victimhood subjected upon them by society. Hence, through a Foucauldian understanding, power here is understood as a ‘force relation’ that can result in (un)intentional behaviors. Foucault wrote:

“There is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject. Subjects try to control the acts of others (or one’s own) but lack the ultimate ability to foresee or govern the outcome, i.e., the subject is only ever partially autonomous” (Maze 2018; from Foucault 1990, p. 95).

This sheds light on how power is multifaceted, as it creates an arena where acts always occur unexpectedly within the power relationship. Moreover, these acts taken on by the subject, shape the different uses of power as well as exemplifies how power creates as well as *enables* subjects.

In defining the notion of ‘punishment’, Foucault (1984) explained how:

“The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle” (p. 26).

On this basis, the subject comes into being in relationship to power. This power construct defines the way ethnicity, social class, and sexuality define the subject’s subjugation. Without the notion of power, these terms do not hold any true meaning. Furthermore, in the context of power relations, subjectivity is not limited to simply action, but also other possibilities and conditions present “at any given time as well as the space in which acts (and speech) are carried out” (Maze, 2018, p. 123). This demonstrates how power is not a human possession; rather, “it only exists in its exercise, and is not

something that is acquired, seized, or shared” (Foucault, 1990, p. 94). Hence, one can only employ power in a certain time and space, but it can never be possessed (Maze, 2018). In this regard, it is very unlikely that a woman from Syria could join a local refugee community based in Lebanon and work on empowering other Syrian refugee women like herself if she were not displaced and labelled as a refugee herself. Foucault would argue that power has a dual effect. It both enables and confines subjects and it is only through this duality that the subjects recognize their capacities and possibilities to act (Maze, 2018).

Hannah Arendt described this relationship between the power and the subject through the understanding of ‘doing’ and ‘suffering.’ She explained:

“Because the actor always moves among and in relation to other acting beings, he is never merely a ‘doer’ but always at the same time a sufferer. To do and to suffer are like opposite sides of the same coin” (Arendt, 1958, p. 190).

Through this duality, the possibility of the subject to resist this form of power comes into play. According to Foucault (1984), this possibility is inevitable, because without the subject’s attempt to resist, the power relationship cannot come into existence. This explains how “power does not occur *beyond* but *between* subjects” (Maze, 2018, p. 125).

If power is pluralistic and not individualistic, as it exists between subjects rather than over them, what is the role of violence in this particular setting and how can we understand it *vis-à-vis* power? Arendt (1970) asserted that violence is always perceived as something individualistic even when it is employed in a collective manner. Thus, violence needs to be deployed in order to function, and this deployment requires tools. Arendt (1970) wrote:

“The extreme form of power is All against One; the extreme form of violence is One against All. And this latter is never possible without instruments...Instruments of violence are the manners in which violence exerts itself, and, unlike power, they *can* be owned” (p. 42).

By referring to Arendt (1970), I do not use terms such as “force, power, strength, and violence” interchangeably or as synonyms. Moreover, in the news report analysis, I do not intend to compare these incidents of violence (e.g., rape and sexual assault) to other incidents of gender-based-violence that take place in other contexts of war and conflict. Rather, I am interested in linking these examples of violence to other forms of violence to which Syrian women are exposed or have experienced throughout the Syrian conflict, even

when these forms of violence are not viewed as ‘gendered’ in nature. I allow myself to discover the power relations existing in this context and how they take form in these specific settings. Thus, I do not limit my understanding of violence to only its physical forms. I also acknowledge that violence is exercised in different appearances.

Slavoj Žižek (2008) explored how violence takes place in modern times, especially how it is represented in society in relationship to economic interests. He asserted that the reader ought to differentiate between *subjective* and *objective* violence. The former appears when incidents of violence are implemented by an identifiable agent, such as rapists or soldiers, who torture prisoners. In the latter case, objective violence is implemented by an unidentifiable agent; the doer of the violent act is not always present in the narrative. Thus, when objective violence appears in news, the perpetrator usually goes unnoticed by the reader or viewer. Objective violence is “often overlooked in the background of subjective violence outbreaks” (Weiss, 2015).

For example, Arab television news reports depicted displaced Syrian families living in poverty-stricken neighborhoods or ‘slums’ with failed infrastructure, alongside their daughters, who were entering child/early marriages. The dominant discourse in the news may frame the issue of child marriage as a consequence of ‘bad parenting.’ By applying Žižek’s (2008) theorization of objective violence, the constructed image of the ‘bad’ parents in the television news could be read differently. The researcher may argue that the ‘bad’ parents may be (partially) exonerated because their subjugation to a neoliberal economic system, one which forces poverty-stricken families to resort to desperate (and sometimes hurtful) forms of resilience. In this context, the agent of violence is unclear because the form of *objective* violence is enabled by more than one factor: a lack of laws protecting girls from early marriages – an unfair economic system that gives rise to poverty – and patriarchal norms that turn daughters into objects of sacrifice.

At this point, the acts of resilience become a significant factor to be examined in relationship to power and violence. In the following section, I discuss the concept of resilience in more detail.

2.3 Defining Resilience in Neoliberal Times

Although resilience and resistance are not mutually exclusive, the former can contribute to the latter. Philippe Bourbeau and Caitlin Ryan (2017) define resilience as follows:

“Resilience is the process of seeking to maintain the status quo in the face of shocks, but it also refers to the idea of transforming a referent object. As such, communities developing strategies to adjust to difficulties are also potential sites of resistance to the structures, inequalities or injustices that have necessitated these adjustments. Enacting resilience can mean that you find a way to ‘get on’ with daily life without acquiescing to the political, economic or social situation that you are in” (p. 9).

In other words, resilience represents the ability of an individual to recover in certain violent or unjust situations and to regain the freedom of acting and deciding. It is an individual’s attempt to make daily life bearable (or possible) by adjusting to disruptions. For instance, in times of conflict, an adversary may employ tactics designed to make living conditions intolerable for individuals or communities. Modes of resilience may appear as the adversary heightens subjugation, while the subject tries to maintain a “normal” life by remaining in place or by seeking and adjusting to the failures of infrastructure. These acts are directly tied to the existing relations of power. They are heterogeneous among women and are dynamic by nature (Bourbeau & Ryan, 2017).

Within the framework of this research, resistance embodies a stage when the subject’s state of existence is barely or minimally impacted by disturbances of failed infrastructure or outbreaks of violence. In other words, resistance is achieved when common acts of resilience become the norm in a given situation. As such, the spectrum of resilience and resistance comprises: (1) coping mechanisms, which can be seen as acts of resilience, (2) other symbolic acts that are not necessarily identified as belonging to a political struggle (e.g., *infrapolitics*²), and (3) political actions practiced in a structured environment. Nonetheless, the prevalence of resilience—as a desired good or prize the

2 Alberto Moreiras (2010) identifies *infrapolitics* as an autonomous practice. “[*Infrapolitics*] enacts a rupture from the political, not in the name of the political, but rather in the name of an essential affirmation that, while involving the ethical, cannot confine itself to the ethical... *Infrapolitical* action exceeds the political and it exceeds the ethi-

subject seeks in their daily life in order to recover from misfortune, shock, or illness—may also function as a tool that reinforces the modes of political economy and cultural hegemony (Butler, 2003; 2009).

In the chapter *Bouncing Back: Vulnerability and Resistance in times of Resilience*, Sarah Bracke (2016) makes a distinction between the terms ‘social resilience’ and the ‘resilient self.’ The terms do not hold opposite meanings, but rather create different nuances to the meaning of ‘resilience.’ The former, which includes the word ‘social,’ establishes an understanding that the concept of resilience demands the collective ability of individuals present within the same nation, community, racial group, or class, to bear and enhance their state of well-being against all odds and challenges that come in the way (e.g., natural disasters, threats from terrorism, health epidemics, and other disruptive encounters). Therefore, the term social, as an adjective, brings emphasis to how the capacity to overcome a certain struggle is not placed solely on one person, but rather on a group of people that make use of institutional, social, and cultural resources to mobilize their well-being.

On the other hand, the latter has a slightly different connotation. Bracke (2016) stated that the ‘resilient self’ alludes to a specific bio-political power at work, where the act of resilience “produces a new regime of subjectivity, that is to say, new resilient subjects” (p. 63). By employing the word ‘self,’ resilience, as a new regime of subjectivity within a neoliberal political economy, goes beyond its dictionary definition of “rebounding; recoiling; returning to the original position” (The Oxford English Dictionary, 2019). The term somewhat becomes part of wider neoliberal discourse, one in which “the good subjects” are represented. The “good subjects, according to Neocleous (2007), are the individuals who constantly respond to any situation in resilient ways. Hence, their ability to bounce back becomes the norm, and their attempts to exercise their agency becomes highly tied to their everyday forms of resilience. Bracke (2016) writes:

“In a neoliberal political economy, resilience has become part of the “moral code”: the “good subjects” of neoliberal times are the ones who are able to act, to exercise their agency, in resilient ways. Good subjects...will ‘survive and thrive in any situation,’ they will ‘achieve balance’ across the several insecure and part-time jobs they have, ‘overcome life’s hurdles’ such as fac-

cal, but it is still a practical action oriented to the relation between people” (Moreiras 2010, p. 190 - 191).

ing retirement without a pension to speak of, and just ‘bounce back’ from whatever life throws, whether it be cuts to benefits, wage freezes or global economic meltdown. Neoliberal citizenship is nothing if not a training in resilience as the new technology of the self: a training to withstand whatever crisis capital undergoes and whatever political measures the state carries out to save it” (p. 61).

In other words, the term ‘self-resilience’ is perceived as a commodity of neoliberal citizenship. Resilience, as a property of an individual, is transformed to a property of a system; a system that relies on resilience to remain in operation. This brings the conversation to the question of security: When does resilience start to function as part of a new security apparatus?

Bracke (2016) argues that in a neoliberal society, self-resilience becomes the main, if not the only, source of security. The persistence of resilient practices or the ability to adapt and protect oneself from threat, crisis, or disaster while maintaining structure and function, hinders the ability or the chances to mobilize one’s vulnerability. Under neoliberal ideals, vulnerability is deemed shameful, while the presence of threat, crisis, and disaster becomes the norm, and the possibility of their occurrence becomes permanent. In these circumstances, resilience starts functioning as an abundant ‘raw material’ of the neoliberal system. The individual’s persistent ability to adapt to such circumstances or be prepared to cultivate disciplines of resilience on a daily basis in the face of odds, may result in the denial of the state of vulnerability and the reinforcement of neoliberal governmentality. Perhaps the raw material of self-resilience “is arguably fetishized by the economic and political institutions that bear great responsibility for the contemporary conditions of precarity that are (designed to be) met with resilience” (Bracke, 2016, p. 60). Therefore, within the framework of this book, the definition and function of resilience is not limited to an individuals’ ability to deal with challenges and obstacles, but also involves the ways in which neoliberal governmentality operates its powers within a society – a society in which individuals automatically cultivate a sense of preparedness to the accumulation of crisis, threat, or disasters.

In the context of the Syrian conflict, the resilient subaltern subjects emerge as the displaced Syrian women who have survived the war and are fighting racism, poverty, gender-based violence and discrimination. These subjects, who have lost their possessions, their home and sense of belonging, attempt to rebuild everything or simply to survive. These realities are largely

constructed in the television news through images of externally displaced Syrian women participating in vocational and cash-for-work programs. These programs are basically poverty alleviation programs funded by the UNHCR and other NGOs, the main purpose of which is to illustrate the importance of resilience and how to acquire it. Neocleous (2013) sheds light on the nature of these so-called “training programs.” He writes:

“The beauty of the idea that resilience is what the world’s poor need is that it turns out to be something that the world’s poor already possess; all they require is a little training in how to realize it. Hence the motif of building, nurturing, and developing that runs through so much of the IMF literature” (p. 4-5).

In examining how the Arab television news depicted Syrian women practicing everyday forms of resilience, I draw on Neocleous’ (2013) understanding of the concept, as well as Bracke’s (2016) work to reflect on the following question: When is resilience detached from the context of vulnerability, and when are the subjects’ agentive attempts “hindered or rendered virtually impossible through disciplines of resilience?” (p. 63).

In the section below, I explore concepts by Judith Butler and Saba Mahmood on the notion of resistance and its relationship to agency.

2.4 Resistance, Agency, and the Non-liberatory Subject

I trace the concept of resistance and how it appears in the representations of different groups of Syrian women in the television news by drawing on Judith Butler’s theory of performativity and her understanding of the notion of subjectivity. In *Undoing Gender*, Butler (2004) establishes a theory of signification through the notion performativity. Butler (2004) does not limit her understanding of performativity to gender alone. She provides a general model of the subject based on how actions create meaning through power relations. In Butler’s understanding:

“The subject comes into being through action. Next, the subject desires recognition from another and is constituted through this recognition. Finally, recognition occurs only when a performance is read in relation to a norm. This means that the subject, who desires recognition, comes into being through the ritualized repetition of acts, gestures, or desires, which,

upon recognition, create the illusion of an essential identity” (Clare 2009, p. 51).

The subject’s performance, in acts of speech that appear in the news reports, acquire meaning in the dominant discourses when they become acknowledged in relation to social norms. For instance, Syrian female fighters are depicted in the television news as defenders of the homeland. Their act of defense, which are forms of armed resistance, are represented in relation to their roles as mothers of the homeland. In this setting, their role as fighters is framed in relation to (stereotypical) gender norms, such as ‘mothers of Syria.’ Thus, by drawing on Butler’s concept of performativity, I examine the relations of power present in the television representations, and how the (re)production of gender binaries and “norms are consolidated or re-signified through their citation” (Clare, 2009, p. 52).

Furthermore, in order to trace the “possibilities of resistance to the regulating power of normativity” and the agentive attempts of the subject, I refer to Mahmoud’s (2005) theory of agency. Mahmoud posits agency “outside discourse within discourse” (Clare, 2009) by asking the reader to think beyond the “dualistic structure of consolidation/resignification, doing/undoing, of norms” (Mahmood, 2005, p. 22). Although Butler’s model of performativity is essential to trace how the notion of ‘resistance’ is represented in the news reports, especially in relationship to power relations and normativity. Nevertheless, I do not regard Butler’s theory of agency as universally translatable to all contexts and cultures, especially not in the context of this research project.³ Thus, I firstly conduct the news report analysis on the concept of resistance by using Butler’s theory and then contextualize the findings with Mahmoud’s ideas on agency.

Following Mahmoud’s rationale, as a reader I ask myself to consider the subject’s agentive attempts beyond the “subversion or resignification of social norms” (Mahmood, 2005, p. 14). Clare (2009) writes:

“When agency is understood in terms of performativity, one can too readily slide into a troubling yet formulaic model of academic study: someone acts, another watches and interprets. A theory of agency articulated in terms of signification and performativity may naturalize the position of the academic

3 Mahmoud (2005) pointed out that Butler’s version of understanding agency is more productive when applied in contexts dealing with queer politics.

within an international division of labor as she who holds the normative, interpretive gaze over her objects of study because she judges whether an action is an instance of agency or not. In contrast, a model of agency concerned with the practices through which norms are embodied destabilizes the position of the academic. In this model, agency is not identified by the academic through her interpretation of an action. Instead, the academic must attempt to understand the multiple effects, sensations, and desires that emerge from a practice *for* the subject enacting it, to the extent this is possible. The academic, in this model, is no longer positioned as the audience for action” (Clare, 2009, p. 53-54).

By using Mahmoud’s concepts on agency, I allow myself to understand the agentive attempts of the subject beyond the “practices of signification but also within registers of corporeality”⁴ (Clare, 2009, p. 54). The registers of corporeality entail that “transgressing gender norms . . . might well require the retraining of sensibilities, affect, desire, and sentiments — those registers of corporeality often escape the logic of representation and symbolic articulation” (Mahmood, 2005, p. 188).

Therefore, within the framework of this book, I trace the concept of agency in the context of the subject by thinking beyond the model of language.⁵ In the analysis, I assert how the body can function as “a medium for, rather than a sign of, the self” (Mahmood, 2005, p. 165). This places desire at the center of the discussion and considers it “part of the subject-formation” (Clare, 2009, p.53). This also allows me to regard the agency of the subject not just through to transgression of social norms but also through the inhabitation of social norms.

A theoretical framework that unites concepts from both Butler and Mahmoud is significant to the context of this research project, as it provides a theoretical model that contributes to feminist critical theory and opens up a space to read agency beyond liberal politics. In this way, I am no longer positioned to quickly deem subjects that do not adopt liberal feminist ideals as simply lacking in agency.

4 Signification refers to the sensation of language, or how the dominant discourses create meanings through the body of the subject.

5 Butler and Foucault adopted the model of language that perceives the body as a source of material, in which language and signification are created, hence as a ‘site of performativity.’ In this context, the body “is treated as a sign that becomes meaningful” to the relations of power (Clare 2009).

