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(Re)Articulating Sexual Citizenship

Between Queering the Urban Space and Subjugating the
Queer

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Abstract

In today's post-industrial cities, how urban citizenship is defined and performed have been ambiguously positioned in their relationship with the urban societal space. While the cities become more commodified and privatized with the inter-urban competition, the concept of citizenship is put into a tentative position between being participatory political subjects and passive consumers. Sexuality, in this regard, raises up as an important element of political expressiveness and passivity, with its constructive role on the identity. The discussion on political economy of sexuality by Nancy Fraser and Judith Butler contributes to the study where the participatory role of sexual citizenship can be grounded on cultural and/or economic aspects of subjectivity, from their poststructuralist perspective. By using the discourse theory by Laclau and Mouffe as its method, the thesis explores the articulatory practices for the antagonistic construction of sexual citizenship through discourses of neoliberalism and its counterparts. An analysis on subject positions in a neoliberal era is defined with their participation in the urban as a consumptuary and/or political space. Therefore, this study analyses *Stockholm Pride* as a case to show how sexuality in the urban space is (de)politically (re)defined, and how an entrepreneurial agenda of a post-industrial city, *Stockholm*, discursively functions for positioning sexual citizens between the antagonisms of being a consumer or citizen.

[*keywords*; *politics of space, globalisation, sexuality, sexual citizenship, discourse theory, consumerism, homonormativity, post-industrial city, entrepreneurial city, creative class, post-structuralism, neoliberalism*]

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1. Introduction

“We have some people whose movement in this world being policed and punished and other people whose movement in the world being facilitated.”

–Rio Rodriguez

(Chisholm, 2015, June 19)

Pride festivals are important endeavours for LGBTQ (*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer*) rights, especially in major urban areas and global cities. They are not only facilitating the unity and the visibility of LGBTQ movement, but also queering urban-societal spaces by leading a form of resistance against the normativity of sex (Doderer 2011), and binary construction of gender regime in late-capitalist society. Many Pride festivals around the world and their expressive parades have been increasing visibility of LGBTQ communities in public, creating an alternative to urban public space which is the realm of heteronormativity with its very design and social processes, causing empowerment and social change (Duncan 1996; Valentine 2002; see Taylor 2016). That is why, the protest aspect of Pride is not only contributing the rights-based dynamism of LGBTQ movement, but also queering the urban political space (Doderer 2011), challenging its (hetero)normative structure. Through Pride festivals, “the imagined gay community can be materialized in space through publicly celebrating their culture, pride, traditions, symbols, and mythologies, which for much of the time remain hidden from public view” (Waitt & Markwell 2006, p.217). Therefore, it should be analysed in a premise that it is more than ‘just a festival’, but a spatial political activity with a resistance aspect against heteronormative space.

1.1. Background and Research Problem

Are all pride festivals in major urban spaces carrying the same dynamism of protest and resistance? How do the actors such as urban governors and marketers intervene in this creation of queer space? The starting point of Pride Festivals is emblematically based on *Stonewall Riots* where the police raided in a gay club but faced with the collective resistance of LGBTQ attendants of the club called Stonewall in 1969 in New York, the United States. Aftermath of this riot, many Pride parades claiming sexual rights and social justice in different cities around the world have been inspired by and attributed to this symbolic resistance in New York (Warner, 2002). Today's various pride festivals, especially in North American and West European countries with certain achievements of LGBTQ rights, are largely sponsored by the urban governing bodies, municipalities, transnational companies (TNCs) and being facilitated by prevailing nation-states. In this endorsement process, Prides are being evermore commercialized and commodified. Therefore, how do they construct discourse in their commercial participation in Pride endorsement and how do they position LGBTQ communities are important subjects to analyse, which would have outcomes for sexualized subjects. Although this cooperation through Pride can be read as an opportunity for a further recognition of LGBTQ communities, it would lead us to a critical discussion about a (re)production of 'the Queer' subject with their commodified identities.

One of the famous festivals in Europe, *Stockholm Pride* in Sweden has not only been promoted by the Swedish state, but also the urban governance bodies of Stockholm, and numerous transnational companies (TNCs) which are actively taking part in Pride Parade, facilitating gay rights, but never neglecting the visibility of their brand logos and products in any possible space. Stockholm Pride is considered as the largest Pride in Scandinavia, attracting thousands of participants each year not only from Sweden, but also from other parts of the world ("About Stockholm Pride", 2018). While the parade is open for everyone, most of other events are privatized since participants need to have pre-paid Pride passes. Therefore, there is an ongoing discussion about the level of commercialization of festivals like in Stockholm, positioning them not just as parades of LGBTQ visibility, but also the parade of brand visibility, city rebranding and private sector profitability. Meanwhile, many European capitals explicitly hold their annual Pride

festivals, each year there is *EuroPride* which is expected to be highlight of the year where many organizations in European and global level are involved. It is organized by EPOA (European Pride Organizers' Association) and a co-host city where the first event was held in London in 1992 ("What is EuroPride?", 2018). Such an event is expected to have a higher participation in European, or even a global scale. In 2018, Stockholm Pride, alongside with *West Pride* in Gothenburg, will be hosting *EuroPride* for the third time (the city previously held *EuroPride* in 1998 and 2008). For this reason, Stockholm Pride 2018 is even more interesting for an analysis by giving possibilities to observe commercialization from a more global perspective.

By taking the relationship between (re)production of queer identities and neoliberal subjugation as the focus of this research, I would like to specifically focus on Sweden because of several reasons. Firstly, it is interesting to observe a European welfare state's relationship with neoliberalism and how the notion of citizenship is affected. As Lister (1990) states, "we are now conceived as consumers rather than as citizens. Yet this does not empower us as sovereign consumers so much as it limits our value and our rights to our purchasing power" (p.1). Therefore, it is important to discuss citizenship within neoliberalization trends in a so-called welfare-state. Secondly, Sweden is a country which has come a long way through LGBTQ rights, and widely considered as an 'LGBTQ-friendly' society. Therefore, Pride festivals are not restrained or limited by the state power, contrarily it is endorsed and promoted by being positioned among the values of Swedish society. However, increasing commercialization of Pride festivals and effects of neoliberalization might be changing the protest aspect of the Pride, transforming politically active Queer communities in Sweden into passive consumers. This situation makes Sweden a perfect example to observe subjectivity and social change in a welfare-state under the influence of neoliberalism.

Therefore, **the research question** of this study has been formed as; '*how do neoliberal discourse of urban entrepreneurialism and its antagonists affect the construction of sexual citizenship?*' This question is supported with analytical sub-questions under *Methodology* section.

1.2. Outline of the Research

The main motivation for this study is based upon both my own reflections and previous research which paved the way to explore the possible effects of commercialization of Pride festivals in urban spaces on LGBTQ identities. I would like to test my assumption that Pride festivals are losing their spirits of resistance as queer political spaces due to neoliberalization of urban governance and commodification of urban space. An analysis will be focusing on queer subjects who are positioned within ‘gay markets’ in a consumer position rather than active citizens. Briefly stated, positioning discourse, city, and queer subjects at the centre of the research, this study adopts a poststructuralist critical theory approach within its theoretical framework. The study will be methodologically constructed by the *discourse theory* of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) where their approach will pave the way to explore hegemonic discourse, social antagonisms, and identity constructions in the urban space. In this regard, I would like to elaborate how neoliberal marketing discourse has been constructed and achieves commercialization of Stockholm Pride with my analytical sub-questions for discourse analysis. To understand how governing bodies alongside with official Pride organizers contributes to discourse on entrepreneurial city’s needs based on profitability and reducing queer subjects into consumer subjects. Thereafter, I would like to understand what are the discursive responses and possible resistance(s) from queer subjects against the commercialized Pride, to show the antagonisms between opposing discourses, and identify hegemonic interventions on the meaning(s) of Pride.

Starting from this (1) *introduction*, this thesis consists of four major chapters which are; (2) a *theoretical framework* explaining the previous research, theoretical discussion and stance of this study; (3) a *methodology* chapter explaining how the research will be conducted, and which methods will be used in relation to the theory, (4) an *analysis* chapter with the actualization of empirical study consisting of discourse analysis, followed by a discussion and concluding remarks that sums up the study with its purpose and results, bringing discussion to the possible further research.

2. Theoretical Framework

In accordance with its research question, this thesis focuses on the commercialization of Stockholm Pride, and how sexual citizenship is discursively constituted under the effects of ongoing commercialization and antagonistic discourses. Therefore, it is important to start with a theoretical discussion, focusing on both global and local dimensions of commercialization, and its effects. In this section, I would like to firstly discuss the phenomena of globalization, neoliberalism and social change in a global level. Then, the discussion will move on the urban with the discussion on how globalization and neoliberalism reshape the organization of today's cities. Then 'the global' will meet with 'the local', and the discussion will be leading to the effects of neoliberalism in urban societal space, the notion of citizenship in urban scale and the construction of sexual citizenship. A discussion of social justice for LGBTQ identities under the effects of neoliberalism will be followed by adopting a poststructuralist theoretical stance. Afterwards, the focus will move to Pride festivals and their ongoing commodification. Here, a normative discussion is necessary with focusing on the neoliberal subjugation, subjectivity, and queer condition as conflicting, dialectical, and/or interactive terms to understand how they are affecting each other in the case of LGBTQ Pride. From a discourse perspective, it is fruitful to discuss how capitalist hegemony in neoliberal era and resistance are discursively constructed. Therefore, this thesis will be benefited from its theoretical discussion to form its discursive methodological stance for the analysis.

2.1. Globalization, Neoliberalism, and Consumer Culture

Neoliberalism is a deeply studied phenomena in social scientific research, a new dimension to political economy that influences not only economies and macro-political processes, but also daily life (Harvey 2005; Alderson 2016). However,

prior to going into neoliberalism theoretically, it is crucial to mention globalization as a process that influenced the logic of neoliberal condition. Globalization has many dimensions and explanations, but it has predominantly affected how the nation-state functions (Scholte 2005; Campbell et al. 2010; Lechner & Boli 2014). The emergence of mass global capital and market inevitably has increased the global competitiveness, which has been resulted with changes within the policies and services of welfare states, and the positionality of their citizens. A shift from Keynesian economy to the neoliberal competition with the idea of minimal state is resulted with a new global condition which has been called as *hypercapitalism*. Scholte (2005) explains this new hypercapitalist condition as an accumulation that has never seen before which leads us questioning inequality and fair distribution of wealth normatively and politically. In this new condition, the disintegration of welfare policies has affected distributive justice. For Bauman (1998), globalization has promoted a new nation-state “with its material basis destroyed, its sovereignty and independence annulled, its political class effaced, the nation-state becomes simple security service for mega companies” (p.66). Therefore, non-state actors; namely, the private companies and institutions have increased their influence and power in this new global order.

In contemporary world, cities have been driving forces of globalisation (Scholte, 2005). Globalisation has been reshaping territoriality with increasing mobility, flows and networks where ‘global cities’ have taken the lead in dominating financial and business operations (Sassen, 2012). While the power of nation-state is being annihilated, the transnational companies (TNCs) located in the cities (predominantly in *global cities*) have been filling the gap as the driving forces of (hyper)capitalism. The process of globalization, in this sense, has caused the appearance of thousands of trans-world companies and strategic alliances, including the flow of innumerable global products (Scholte, 2005, p. 160). Their predominant position in economy has influenced the social, which I will cover under the concept of *consumerism* later. However, it is important to firstly elaborate the ideological dimension of this phenomena, called *neoliberalism*.

Historically, the emergence of neoliberalism unsurprisingly coincides with the end of a social democratic focus in the West. Since the world system has been ruled with a *Keynesian* interventionist approach on political economy, the social

democratic welfare state was the dominant actor, based on post-war recovery. David Harvey highlights the tension between neoliberal theory and actual process of neoliberalisation. As a theory, neoliberalism was positioning state as a guarantor of freedoms of private property, action, expression, and choice. It has been aiming the elimination of poverty by securing free market and trade, promoting competition and privatization (Harvey, 2005, p.64-65). However, the contradictions between its theory and practice elaborate today's global injustice. As Harvey criticises neoliberal theory in its many dimensions within a Marxist standpoint, he explains in his own words; "while individuals are supposedly free to choose, they are not supposed to choose to construct strong collective institutions as opposed to weak voluntary associations" (*ibid.* p.69). This tendency to limit collective action would lead to the subjugation of individuals for the sake of market efficiency and resulted with less potential of agency.

Thinking of the individual would lead discussion to neoliberal transformation of subjects. For Bauman (1998), modernity has two different levels to position society; once it was *producers* such as workers and soldiers, today's society consists of *consumers*. This transformation has updated the functionality of society. Today's citizens have the duty of playing the role of the consumer as they are shaped by society, and consumerism becomes the norm by including members with their ability and willingness to take part in it (Bauman, 1998, p.80). As consumerism becomes the norm, the *consumer culture* takes over in many aspects of life, influencing people's daily activities, with their very identities. Since the capital accumulation is a must for function of capitalism, consumerism is an enhancer for it. Wherever the system can achieve commodification of some resources, there is more space for profit and the extension of consumerism. Shopping and tourism are two main activities that reproduce consumerism (Scholte, 2005, p.163) which are stimulated with various marketing strategies. These two activities will be also in the focus of this study in the case of Pride festivals.

2.2. Post-Industrial Cities and New Urban Entrepreneurialism

The city of Keynesian social and economic welfare where redistribution is the key function of national and local government has been in decline since the emergence of neoliberalism (Edwards and Imrie, 2015). From the 1980s, the emergence of post-Keynesian economics in late-capitalist society was being influential on how urban space and urban life is organised. This shift towards a neoliberal political economy has been facilitated by global competitiveness and hyper-capitalism of postmodern era, where it has caused a clear shift in the idea of urban policymaking. The old-fashioned urban managerialism of ‘previously’ redistributive state and localities has been transformed into the idea and ‘doing’ of an *urban entrepreneurialism* (Harvey, 1989; MacLeod, 2002; Bell and Binnie, 2004; Edwards and Imrie, 2015).

The idea of urban entrepreneurialism has changed the perspectives on how urban governance is maintained, how urban citizenship is defined, and how urban space(s) is being used or consumed. The new neoliberal agenda made post-industrial cities to focus on a renewal of the city image, adoption of a new entrepreneurial regime by promoting competition, private enterprises, and a recommodification of social and economic life (Leitner, 1990; MacLeod, 2002). The increased mobilisation and competitiveness of late capitalist society make cities to transform, now being competitors of each other for the sake of their profitability and, as a result, survivability. In a globalising world where territoriality is becoming less binding for both investors and workers (Bauman, 1998), the scale of competition has reached its peak between global cities with their distinctive communities. Today’s cities are not growing with their higher birth rates, but rather with their ability to attract more people (Florida, 2004, p.38). Therefore, the entrepreneurial city needs to define its strategies to reach that aim. These changes facilitated by global competitiveness and hyper-capitalism of postmodern era have caused a shift in the idea of urban policymaking within the new norms of urban entrepreneurialism.

In relation to the needs of new entrepreneurial city, the nature, strategies and actions of the urban governance should have been transformed, to be able to attract the

capital and to be competitive against other cities around the world. In a Marxian approach, David Harvey (1989) explains the pillars of this new idea of governance with certain principal features such as building public-private partnerships, increasing inter-urban competition, and creation of a political economy of place(s). A global trend in privatisations linked with neoliberal policies and competitiveness of the city has influenced the emergence of public-private partnerships. Where the state has been leaving redistributive tradition, the public-sector resources needed to be used for the marketization of the city to attract cultural and economic capital (Edwards and Imrie, 2015). However, this trend of privatism carries a large potential for fragmentation and differentiation within the urban realm. While neoliberal entrepreneurial strategies increase the profitability of the city, the profit comes with its price. The privatized spaces and activities are naturally exclusive for people who cannot have enough financial means to participate, therefore, the socioeconomic inequalities are being sharpened. This situation causes the lack of access to resources and participation in decision-making process for people at the bottom of income level, pushing them into a marginalized position in the city realm both spatially and politically (*ibid.* p.125; MacLeod, 2002, p.602). Additionally, the political economy of places occurs where urban spaces are transformed into sites of consumption and spectacles are created by exploitation and commodification of certain places (Harvey, 1989). The number of mega-events in major cities are multiplying with the increased international cultural networks which include festivals, sports events and contests. These events throughout the commodification of places attract people with high mobility, specifically a capitalist class that is a clear target carrying the potential of investment or high-skilled workforce.

2.3. Creative Class of the Entrepreneurial City

The post-industrial city uses cultural and social capital alongside with creativity as important facilitators of the cities' attractiveness (Barke and Harrop, 1994). Culture plays a key role in the global urban order, where the old industries lose their influence but the economies of the cities are rather shaped by service sector and knowledge-based enterprises (Edwards and Imrie, 2015, p.151). This new approach

and the rise of ‘global cities’ with entrepreneurial mind-set are making inter-urban competition necessary to attract a new ‘Creative Class’.

The cities have increasingly “engaged in competitive strategies to attract capital, re-creating themselves as places of culture and consumption that meet the desires of the executive and the white-collar worker-consumer” (Rushbrook, 2002, p.188). In this respect, Richard Florida (2014) claims that cities are having their *creative turn* where they need a *Creative Class* basing their productivity on knowledge and creative industries. The members of this new class, as Florida furtherly explains, are engaged in the creation of ‘meaningful new forms’ of knowledge such as in art, science, business; or people working in knowledge-intensive industries (p.68-69). The Creative Class is the new facilitator of urban economic development by providing a creative capital, since now the cities are economically stronger with more space for entrepreneurship, innovation, and culture (Florida, 2004). Therefore, the city tries to become a centre of attraction for the Creative Class, to increase the flow of investment, professional citizens, and tourists.

The Creative Class is composed of a cosmopolitan group with high means of mobilization, and less connection with national-local dynamics. In other words, “the new professional-managerial groups have become less concerned about their national interests and turned their back on the nation-state: they display cosmopolitan tendencies” (Isin and Wood, 1999, p.100–101). They are looking for places where tolerance spreads and cultural capital is strong; since it guarantees diversity, artistic activities, and a vibrant and more ‘authentic’ city life (Florida, 2004; Bell and Binnie, 2004; Edwards and Imrie, 2015). The post-modern city uses place-marketing strategies to promote itself to attract the Creative Class, tourists, and investors by simply boosting certain places for them (Jonas et al., 2015). A city if it is not attractive in a global scale, loses its ground in the race, falls behind of its global competitors. Therefore, it is crucial to see how urban local governance, the state, and the market work together to ensure the branding of the city by promoting tolerance, openness, and diversity.

The post-industrial city does not hesitate to promote how diverse and tolerant it is in order to ensure its rebranding. Where the existence of different identities is being

promoted, the urban governance needs the means of commodification of certain groups of citizens with their distinctive identities and lifestyles, which demonstrates the openness and welcomeness of the city. The city, in this case, does a 'paradoxical rebranding' for the groups previously entitled as 'undesirables' such as sexual others above all groups (Bell and Binnie, 2004, p.1809). Binnie (2004) states that *citizenship* is defined through consumption and the urban subjects discipline themselves through their consumer choices. As it will be framed later within a Foucauldian approach of the disciplinary power and resistance; disciplining through consumption can be seen as a way of constraining queer identities. Binnie (2004) critically reflects upon how consumption in urban areas are constructed, how they have limitations on certain identities by constructing a set of ways of behaving. He believes that the promotion of citizenship is made through a process of disciplining and normalising that is ultimately reinforced by exclusive discourses and boundaries. Consumption plays a key role, in this case, for subjugation and disciplining the self. Miles (1998) states that "the consumption is essentially paradoxical", in one hand, it offers a possibility of sovereignty to the consumer where "they can fulfil themselves through what they consume" (p.1006). On the other hand, consumption plays an ideological role where it controls the character of everyday life (*ibid*, p.1007). As Miles furtherly quotes, "people may make history, they may exercise choice, but they cannot exercise the conditions, the avenues of possibilities open to them" (Marsh, 1982, p. 100). In other words, our decision over consumption does not offer us liberation, but rather we are offered with already-segmented choices of consumption, as a result, our identities are reconstructed with our consumption behaviour.

2.4. Commodification of Sexual Citizenship

In a world becoming increasingly urban, the urban population gets diverse and heterogeneous more and more, making citizenship a complicated term. The 'place' becomes "significant for the articulation of political agendas and identification processes" (Blokland et al. 2015, p.659). Therefore, urban citizenship appears as an important term, reflecting political participation of the subject to claim their 'right to the city' (Harvey 2008; Blokland et al. 2015). However, the diverse identities in

urban societal place cannot form a singular identity for their political and cultural claims.

David Evans (1993) had introduced the term *sexual citizenship* within the discussions of citizens' rights, where sexuality is an important component of subjectivity. According to Evans, this kind of citizenship is built upon a series of rights where certain sexual lifestyles are being reproduced linked to markets (Evans 1993, p.64; see at Plummer 2003, p.62). Therefore, *sexual citizenship* can be seen as a construction of subjectivity with ascribed rights and obligations to it (*ibid.*). Throughout the history, the normative construction of citizenship has been formed in certain narrow samplings of subjectivity. As Richardson (2000) states in *Rethinking Sexuality*, "within discourses on citizen's rights... the normal citizen has largely been constructed as male, and... as heterosexual" (p.75). Bell and Binnie furtherly claim by considering "all citizenship to be sexual citizenship, as citizenship is inseparable from identity, and sexuality is central to identity" (Bell & Binnie 2000, see Phelan 2010). Sexuality and claims to citizenship are inseparable. In this respect, citizenship is already sexualized from its very formation, building any subjectivity in a narrow and 'moralized' identification of sexuality (Plummer, 2003). Briefly, sexuality is an essentially important term which sets limitations and liberations of urban citizenship. Bell and Binnie (2000) describe the standard interpretation of citizenship as "*privatized, de-radicalized, de-eroticized* and confined in all senses of the world: kept in place, policed, limited" (p.3). Where these limitations occur, sexualities must be redefined within the heteronormative construction of the society, creating *the new homonormativity* (Oswin, 2008) for the sake of marketization and 'normalization' of queer subjects.

In the post-industrial city, the urban cultural landscapes have been centres of capital accumulation (Zukin, 1995), and the commodification of queer spaces serves to the new markets of consumption in post-industrial cities. Where the existing queer space is marketed and transformed as a cosmopolitan spectacle, the city achieves rebranding and increase its competitiveness (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004). At this point, it is crucial to discuss how is sexual citizenship affected by the process of commodification and what might be the potential outcomes of the promoted consumerism among sexual citizens in urban landscape. It turns out to be more open

to the effects of consumerism; where the places and events are being commodified, the sexual citizen as well (Bell and Binnie 2000, 2004; Binnie 2004; Hubbard 2011; Oswin 2008; Rushbrook 2002). This commodification, ensures that ‘dirty’ and ‘immoralized’ aspects of gay culture are hidden and/or more aggressively disappeared from the scene, but the new homonormativity has been created for the sake of mainstreaming and reaching the approval of predominantly heterosexual Creative Class (Oswin, 2008). Lisa Duggan (2002) describes this type of normativity as the sexual politics of neoliberalism, “a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption” (2003, p.50). This new homonormativity transforms gay villages, bars, clubs, into more hetero-places where they start to lose their counterculture aspect and being offered in a bucket of globalized sameness. Duggan furtherly explains “the new homonormativity works to exclude ‘undesirable’ forms of sexual expression, including their expression in space—for example, by reducing the ‘gay public sphere’ to consumption spaces and gentrified neighbourhoods only” (Duggan 2002; see at Bell and Binnie 2004, p.1811). These transformations create a tolerant image of the city while homophobia and hate crime still take place (Jonas et al., 2015, p.198). Additionally, gay consumer culture is dominated by white-male gays who have potentially stronger financial means. Therefore, class raises up as a concern, causing uneven consumption of the ‘queer’ spaces (see Knopp 1992; Bell 2001; Nast 2002; Rushbrook 2002; Bell & Binnie 2004; Bassi, 2006; Oswin 2008). The promotion of the new homonormativity, touristicization of gay neighbourhoods, and places, as a result, transform the urban places into a process of gentrification. Where gay gentrification occurs, the queer places become less affordable, less diverse, and more commodified, then ‘vulnerable’ groups of gay community are being excluded, left out from the space. Today, many neighbourhoods associated with tolerance and gay appearance are becoming expensive neighbourhoods serving the interests of a small segment of society (*see* Rushbrook, 2002). In this case, the participation in society is being measured with the power of consumption, which transforms gays and creative class into consumer citizens. To become a part of a community gets less linked with shared experience or identity, but more with financial power and advantageous situation in the society. As a result of this

process, where authenticity takes the lead was becoming the unauthentic, mainstreamed, and capitalised (Bell & Binnie, 2004).

The queer subject, as a result, is positioned as ‘global gay’, where it reflects a ‘global consumer’ identity contributing global capital and culture (Jayne, 2006, p.144). By the creation of commodified queer spaces, each city claim their distinctive neighbourhoods, events, and other places to be consumed. However, using place-marketing strategies for commodification of queer places and creating urban spectacles, as a result, serves a homogenization of identities, where the landscape(s) are turned into culturally commodified *zones of indifference* (Miles and Paddison, 2005). As a result, where sexuality is being ‘mainstreamed’ through consumption activities, normalization and visibility of gay culture occur in the forms fitting into heterosexual morality.

A consumption-based manifestation of citizenship, specifically, *sexual citizenship* puts the subject in a passive position, as I quoted earlier from Lister (1990), as ‘consumers rather than citizens’. Poststructuralist scholar *Chantal Mouffe* problematizes the idea of citizenship as passive recipients. Instead, she sees citizenship as an *articulating principle* where it shapes different memberships in micro-communities of society, but also is shaped through these memberships of individuals (Mouffe 1992, p.233-35; *cited in* Smith 2012). Therefore, she does not agree with a holistic approach on citizenship, but a radical democratic pluralist citizenship as an incomplete process which is articulated in different *subject positions* (*ibid.*). For the analysis of the subjectivity and sexual citizenship in this study, I will be adopting such a poststructuralist approach based on articulatory principle by Mouffe, alongside with *Ernesto Laclau*, that I will furtherly discuss in the methodological chapter.

2.5. Pride Festivals as Places of Consumption and Gay Consumers

One of the most well-known fields of consumption for gay consumer is Pride festivals in urban societal places. The increasing marketing discourse in Pride was affecting sexualised spaces and making them ever-more commodified (Probyn, 2000; see at Bell & Binnie, 2004, p.1814). Some scholars make a correlation between consumption and resistance, seeing pride festivals as collective consumer resistances by alternating dominant heterosexual mainstream through specific products (de Certeau 1984; Hall & Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Murray & Ozanne 1991; Ozanne et al. 1998; Penaloza & Price 1993; Willis 1978, 1990; see at Kates & Belk 2001). Furtherly, Kates emphasises on the importance of social reflexivity in consumption and resistance, where the consumers' reflections in Pride festivals would challenge the meanings of heteropatriarchy (Kates & Belk 2001, p.402; see also Fiske 1989a, 1989b; MacAloon 1984). However, such an approach does not reflect on the premise that claims the very process of consumption is never free from subjugation.

If consumerism subjugates LGBTQ communities, it is crucial to discuss how does this subjugation occur. Companies are using various marketing strategies to reach this aim while fragmenting social groups and seeing them as 'target audience'. From a poststructuralist approach, Campbell (2003)'s work is focusing on consumption-liberation dilemma for LGBTQ community and trying to elaborate how sexuality is culturally reproduced within capitalism. He explains us the strategies being used to position 'gays as consumers'. This strategy, as he cites from Whitaker (1999), causes a recognition that can be achieved through purchasing power, therefore marginalization continues for those who cannot afford to be recognized. Unsurprisingly people-of-colour, working-class, and poor gays and lesbians will be furtherly marginalized in this case through segmentation of 'gay marketing'. He claims that target marketing has the consequences for LGBTQ people that reducing them into singular identity, positioning them with their sexuality and cannot see the intersectionality between race, ethnicity, class, gender, and religion (Campbell, 2003, p.24). This taken-for-granted positioning contributes to the blindness regarding inequalities faced by different groups of LGBTQ. In his

conclusion, he states that to have profit maximization as their main concern, companies contradict with human dignity in their strategies and since LGBTQ's profitability comes from their political marginalization, companies do not seek any enfranchisement in politics for these groups (ibid. p.25). Such an argument supports the idea that target marketing and segmentation of LGBTQ as a consumer group position them as passivized subjects, where in this case, the appearance of big companies and their sponsorships in Pride remain contextual. We see those companies' supports in urban places with already 'tolerant' and 'diverse' settings, however, they hesitate to appear where queer movements are being policed and constrained. Therefore, claiming supportive role for a social justice by transnational companies and urban governing bodies remains quite contradictory. The next part will analyse this discussion furtherly in terms of the political economy of sexual citizenship from a poststructuralist approach.

2.6. The Political Economy of Sexual Citizenship and Active Participation

Where neoliberalisation in urban policies and reshaping citizenship occur, it must have its effects on the claims for social justice by queer subjects. Regarding this, taking a theoretical stance for ontological and epistemological questions would pave the way to see how sexual citizenship might have been redefined. As Plummer put it, recognition and participation are two main components that define and give meanings on citizenship (*see* Plummer 2003, p.65-66). As Ruth Lister states, in an approach based upon false universalism, it is easy to neglect the particularity of the needs within communities. The notion of *community*, in such a case, is exclusively constructed by signifying majority, where minorities are particularly constructed as specific communities, such as *gay community* (Cohen, 1997). The incorporation of the notion of community into citizenship, in its normative construction, therefore remains problematic. Here, a pluralist conception of community is necessary which Lister conceptualizes as a *differentiated universalism*. In her terminology, she points out the tension between universalism and diversity, which is productive rather than interceptive, offering possibilities for a reformulation of citizenship with a dynamic synthesis between the universal and the particular (Lister 1998). Such a reformulation might need "relating the universal and the particular in the drive to

define social justice from the standpoint of the oppressed” (Harvey 1993, p.116). Continuously, she utilizes from the concept of *reflective solidarity* from Dean (1996), which emphasises on “universalist ideal urging the inclusion of our concrete differences” (p.142).

Defining social justice from the standpoint of the oppressed can benefit from the fruitful discussion between Nancy Fraser (2013) and Judith Butler (1997, 1999) on gender, sexuality and social justice, in the case of subjugation to neoliberal system. From a poststructuralist and queer theory perspective, their discussion is incorporating political economy of sexual citizenship and the participatory aspect of citizenship for the claims for social justice. Fraser (2007, 2009, 2013) draws a *two-dimensional conception of justice* in her extensive study on the feminist approaches on late-capitalist society, *Fortunes of Feminism (2013)*, which helps us to understand how inequalities based on gender and sexualities occur in late-capitalist society. Fraser’s feminist critical approach on neoliberalism and her question ‘how to remedy the global injustice’ draw a relatively systematic guideline to discuss neoliberal subjugation. As Fraser (2013) argues in her work; we would talk about two claims of justice, *redistribution* and *recognition* which are historically differentiated but should be integrated since she adapts her concept to sexuality and LGBTQ emancipation as well.

First dimension she mentions is distributive which focuses on the economic aspect, claiming that gender plays a constitutive factor for class-based differentiations and inequalities in society. The other aspect is recognition, which stresses out the status differences in society where inequality is based on *androcentrism* (Fraser, 2013, p.162). She sees participation as the key factor for remedying injustice. To achieve this aim, her suggestion is to adopt criteria that she calls as *participatory parity*. While introducing that she suggests institutional changes to overcome inequality based on maldistribution and misrecognition of the subjects (Fraser, 2013). The claims for recognition and redistribution are her key concepts to explain the sources of injustices, and she talks about objective and intersubjective conditions to be fulfilled. The objective condition that should be satisfied is redistribution. By redistribution, Fraser means a fair distribution of materials that allows people to participate to protect their rights and express their identities. It is important to prevent the exploitation of subjects to make them active participants in society and

interact with others as peers. The other condition is intersubjective, which is based on recognition. In this case, each participant should have equal respect and opportunity to express themselves and achieve economic, political, and social participation. Therefore, both maldistribution and misrecognition should be overcome for social justice, and neither one alone is sufficient (Fraser, 2013).

Another poststructuralist scholar, Judith Butler has an ontological criticism on Fraser over the sources of injustices for homosexuals. In *Merely Cultural* (1997), as a critique to Fraser's theory of justice, Butler criticises her by being reductionist for homosexual deprivation and positioning it only as a matter of cultural misrecognition. At this point, the main distinction of their view is based on functionality of capitalism. Butler sees strong connection between material conditions of life and sexual reproduction which are constitutive for political economy. Therefore, Butler believes that capitalism necessarily needs heteronormativity for its survival. Here, the notion of heterosexual family stands as a facilitator of the capitalist economy that leads subjects to a condition of *compulsory heterosexuality* (Butler, 1999). In this case, the inherence of capitalism and heteronormativity will cause the continuous maldistribution for LGBTQ people. However, Fraser does not reach an agreement with Butler here. Rather, she furtherly claims that economic heterosexism is also based on the relations of recognition (Fraser 2013, p.180). In capitalist society, she believes, the link between sexuality and the accumulation of surplus value is attenuated (p.181). Therefore, the functionality of capitalism does not necessarily need kinship relations and domination of heterosexual family. For her, the deprivation of LGBTQ community is based upon their status differences in social life, not on class (p.182-183). Neglecting heterosexual kinship relations provides neoliberal market to subjugate the individual bodies and position gay person as 'gay market'. Thus, many TNCs do not hesitate to support LGBTQs by taking part in the any possible social space they produce which can be marketized. As she furtherly states, "they apparently see advantages in accommodating gays, provided they are not subject to boycotts or are big enough to withstand them if they are" (Fraser, 2013, p.183). In this regard, the opportunity of marketing LGBTQ is being used for maximizing profits, and capitalist market reproduces the LGBTQ community as consumers, commercializing their rituals and transforming their lifestyles. Therefore, the norms

of sexual citizenship are redefined by capitalist market, reconstitute its very existence, and leave the questions of injustice ambiguous.

This discussion on political economy shows that the struggle for social justice and economic justice are inseparable, but rather, going hand-in-hand. In socialist/leftist discourse, a common argument on division of the issues exists where an underestimation of ‘identity politics’ occurs and categorized as soft issues in comparison to class-based struggles (Smith 2012, p.30). What is to be argued, that capitalist exploitation shall not be considered as mere measure of inequalities, as well as race, gender, and sexuality are not isolated forms of oppression (ibid., p.26). As Fraser argues and Butler critically contributes, the injustice(s) based on maldistribution and misrecognition are interconnected, and should be measured collectively. “In a radical democratic society, there would be equal access not only to the material resources necessary for self-development, but also to meaningful participation in social, cultural, political, and economic decision-making” (p.30-31) therefore the discussion on subjectivity should involve the interplay between political/cultural and economic measures for struggles of social justice. In our case, the dilemma between consumer and citizen subject positions will be benefited from such an approach for the analysis of sexual citizenship. As it will be discussed in detail in methodological section (*Chapter 3*), *Ernesto Laclau* and *Chantal Mouffe* develop such an idea on the formation of subjectivity, where they will call it as *subject positions* rather than a singular terminology of subjectivity.

2.7. Discourse, Sexuality, and Subjectivity

Problematizing neoliberal subjugation of the queer subjects necessarily needs a discussion on the construction of knowledge about sexualities. The aforementioned discussions on how sexual citizenship is explicitly defined by neoliberal market relations would lead us to discussion on how these attempts for fixations of identities occur, how the knowledge about sexualities can be controlled and policed through discursive practices. Foucault’s theories of archaeology/genealogy of *knowledge* and his analysis of *power* offer us an understanding of how *knowledge* can be discursively constructed. Foucault focuses on the production of knowledge, and *discourse*, here, can be the language, statements formulating the language, or a

particular topic, where it produces the knowledge in a historical moment (Hall 1992, p.291). Inclusively by the concept of discourse, Foucault eliminates the distinction between language and practice. Therefore, discourse is more than the language itself, but it is the practice of language, where it constitutes a way of thinking, or a certain set of knowledge (Hall et al. 2013). It does not depend on a single statement or action. Foucault argues that it is not the things themselves giving knowledge of things but the meanings behind them, therefore, subjects such as *sexuality* can only exist within the produced discourse behind them (*ibid*, p.30). *Sexuality*, as Foucault furtherly mentions, can appear as a specific way of regulating sexual desire (1978), and *homosexuality* is produced within a historical moment, in relation to discourses of morality, psychiatry, and law (Weeks, 1981). Things are true only within a specific historical context. In the context of Western culture, discourses of sexuality have been produced from a white male and heterosexual perspective (Richardson, 1996).

How is the *subject* positioned in a discourse perspective? Where does subjectivity stand in power relations? According to Foucault, *subject* does not but discourse produces knowledge. In this case, subjects produce knowledge through “the limits of episteme, the discursive formation, the regime of truth, of a particular period and culture” therefore, “*the subject* is produced through *discourse*” (Hall et al. 2013, p.39). *Subjectivity*, in this sense, can easily be reproduced, reconstituted, and subjugated through the existent knowledge. Homosexual subjectivity, therefore, coexist within the institutionalization of *heterosexuality*. The normative construction of patriarchal discourse creates the compulsory heterosexuality (*see* Butler, 1999), as society serving the interests of men; meanings of sex, desire, and sexual subjectivity have been formed through the practices of masculinity (Rich 1980, Richardson 1996). As Foucault (1978) states in *History of Sexuality*, sexuality in western society is deployed in a way “what was formed was a political ordering of life, not through an enslavement of the others, but through an affirmation of self” (p.123). In this sense, historically, sexuality has been constructed within a *disciplinary* regime to define the sexual subject. However, Donald M. Lowe (1995) suggests that in late capitalism, sexuality has been transformed “from a disciplinary to a consumptuary phenomenon” (p.127) and sexuality functions to animate consumption in late capitalist society (*see* Cruz & Manalansan 2002, p.140). Such

a function reflects a take-over, a discursive construction of sexuality, turning the sexual subject into consumer subject (as discussed above). Lowe furtherly argues “an urban male homosexual minority with sufficient income transforms itself into the gay lifestyle” (Lowe 1995, p.135). This new consumptuary model is helping us to understand how marketers and urban governors benefit from sexuality, especially by reducing sexual citizenship into consumerist *lifestyle* rather than a political identity. In such a case, marketing discourse and commodification of the queer subjects within urban entrepreneurship strategies, places, or pride festivals work for subjugating bodies into passive consumers, recreating the knowledge about queer lifestyle(s).

Where the term *homosexuality* is invented and dominated by already-heteronormative construction of capitalist society, the term *queer* is expected to reflect a political dimension of sexuality, and appears more as a term of *resistance* to normativity of sex. In this respect, *queer* as a term, cannot be seen as fully equal to LGBT. According to Browne (2006), *queer* is not a ‘simplistically appropriated identity category’ (p. 888). While Queer can be possessed by individuals as an identity, we must admit that no individual is free-floating or disembodied (Oswin 2008, p.92). Foucault’s analysis on power relations points out ‘where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power’ (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). Power, as Foucault puts it, a productive term. Where power relations tell their discourse(s), the resistance itself is not free from the oppressive, therefore the Queer as an identity cannot be possessed with a full freedom from normativity. Queer as a political categorization of sexual identity may distinct itself from the sameness with LGBT categorization and obedience, but it cannot be free from oppression, and/or subjugation. In addition, the embodiment of queer subjectivity does not exist on its own. As Nash and Bain (2007) indicate that ‘queers are not just queers’, but they have co-existing embodiments of certain norms of sexualities, where queer places discipline queer subjects (*see* Oswin 2008).

If queer subject is being disciplined (either self-affirmed or oppressed) space and market work deliberately together for the reproduction of sexual citizenship. As Binnie (1997) states “the space is not naturally or authentically straight, but it is

rather actively reproduced and being (hetero)sexualised” (p.223). *Queer spaces* are also disciplinary, but contested and unfixed spaces for queers to challenge the normative settings of sexualities, as places power relations also occur and the meanings of identities are being questioned (Nash, 2006). In this case, social identities remain unfixed, and dynamically being reproduced by working with different dimensions of social stratification such as class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality (Keith & Pile, 1993). Where marketers take advantage of queer spaces and proceeds commodification, it enhances inequalities based on intersections of class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity (*see* Rushbrook 2002, Bell 2001, Bell & Binnie 2004, Oswin 2008). Therefore, if we take Pride festivals as queer spaces, the idea of ‘resistance through consumption’ (*see* Kates & Belk, 2001) gets very problematic in terms of providing opportunities for resistance(s) for queer communities where maldistribution and misrecognition coexist. The subjugation through commodification remains as a serious issue for queer identities, where it has to be ‘normalized’, and ‘adapted’ with heteronormativity to be a part of the market, to be acceptable by the morals of capitalist society. In a condition where heterosexual family is always being promoted and taken as the norm as the safeguard of morality, this subjugation is self-promoted through ‘homonormativity’ by gay community.

2.8. Framing Sexual Citizenship

Prior to moving methodological discussion of the study, I would like to give an overall picture of the discussions I have made on the urban space, subjectivity, and sexuality. If the subjectivity is not a fixed term remaining open to redefinitions and rearticulations as Mouffe (1992) stated, then how do these articulations occur and, namely, can position queer subjects differently in an urban societal context? The subject in the current post-industrial cities with neoliberal setting, either sexualized, consumerised, or both; must be thinkable in their discursively defined subject positions. If the language(s) of hypercapitalism reproduces the discourses on competition, commodification, and consumption; then the urban centres of capitalism are designed normatively as consumptuary spaces. As I have discussed in the chapter explaining the emergence of the post-industrial cities; cities and their governance strategies are also shaped by these discourses, where they re-define

themselves with their new entrepreneurial agenda. In such an agenda, the urban spaces withdraw from political function, but adopting a consumptuary function. If the interests of new entrepreneurial city are shaped in a way that its population positioned as ‘consumers rather than citizens’ as Lister (1990) put, then redefinitions of sexual citizenship inevitably occur in a depoliticizing setting. Benefiting from what Fraser (2013) and Butler (1997, 1999) already told us in our discussion on political economy of sexual citizenship, this hegemonic intervention from neoliberal discourse on sexual citizenship can show us the interconnections within two-dimensional conception of social justice. If Pride events with the function of queering heteronormative space and endorsing LGBTQ solidarity are being commercialized and heterosexualized, then one must not neglect the fact that questions of maldistribution and misrecognition are inseparable in a case of the observation of commodified and depoliticized sexual citizenship. Because, in this case, the subject must be identified more and more in their consumptuary roles rather than political participation, where commodification also limits the means of participation for LGBTQ people to see the Pride as a political participatory practice. Adopting such a perspective, the next chapter will focus on how I epistemologically and ontologically approach on this research and how I am going to analyse Stockholm as a city with an entrepreneurial agenda, with its Pride that would be the target of commercialization and, as a result, depoliticization of sexual citizens.

3. Methodology

3.1. A Short Background: Language, Discourse and Subjectivity

Methodology is formulated in relation to the poststructuralist theoretical perspective of this study. In this case, theory and methodology cannot be clearly separated, rather, they are engaged within discourse theory (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2003). The idea of ontological relativism leads this work to a focus of qualitative research methods, rather than positivist assumptions based on quantitative data. Therefore, the basis of methodology is largely inspired by Foucauldian perspective on discourse. Since Foucault believes in the productivity of power as discourse, our epistemological turn would be obtained from discourse approach on his declaration, “the knowledge is formed culturally and historically, and it is contingent” (Burr & Michael, 1995).

As Foucault explains, power produces its own truth, and that truth is disseminated through discourse (Foucault, 2003). In his own words, “power is never anything more than a relationship that can, and must, be studied only by looking at the interplay between the terms of the relationship” (ibid, p.28), so the dissemination of knowledge through power must be based on an unequal relationship between different sources, and one’s ability to control hegemonic discourse for the subjugation of certain identities. “The same discourse, characteristic of the way of thinking or the state of knowledge at any one time (Foucault called the *episteme*) will appear across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct, at a number of different institutional sites within society” (Hall et al. 2013, p.29). Discourse, in this sense from every channel that it has been disseminated, is able to (re)create the *truth* about objects, as well as the subjects. In a poststructuralist methodology, such an approach on *truth* makes it useless to seek ontological questions on subjects and

things (true and false are discursively constructed), but rather to analyse *how* discourse makes its truth effective (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p.14).

Understanding *subject*, as an important question in social scientific research, has also been at the centre of different discourse analysis approaches in terms of their positionality within discourse, power, and ideology. Structuralist scholar Louis Althusser attributed a passive role to subject where *dominant ideology* creates the subjectivity, and a social position constructed by the language makes *ideological subject* (Althusser 2006). This process happens through *interpellation*, which certain texts, such as texts based on consumption, are affirmed by individuals as consumers, and the subjects reproduce consumer culture with this self-affirmation of the ideology of consumerism (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p.15), therefore, the ideological subject has no space for resistance. Such an approach has been criticised in poststructuralism, and scholars have rejected the singularity of ideology as defining discourse, but different discourses give subjects different positions. That is why, all discourse analysis approaches agree in the idea of ‘discourse makes the subject’, and how the subjects are constituted through discourse is the focus of empirical analysis (*ibid.*, p.17), therefore, subjects must be interpellated through different discourses. The task for the analyst here is “identifying the social consequences of different discursive representations of reality” (p.21). Accordingly, this study takes *subject* as its centre of empirical study, aiming to analyse how sexual citizenship has been reproduced through discourses of consumption in neoliberal condition. This will occur by observing how neoliberal and marketing discourse influence lives of people, and their position in society. At this point, one should avoid positioning subjects as completely passive before hegemonic discourse, but rather they have the ability of being active participants of discursive practice. In his conceptualization of ‘counter-discourse’, Foucault sees subjects with a possibility of resistance against hegemonic power that are oppressing them. In this sense, he positions the act of speaking as political, for his formulation of counter-discourse by the oppressed (Moussa & Scapp, 1996, p.89). Therefore, it will be vital to analyse discourses that are existing antagonistically, because of a Foucauldian understanding of “where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault 1978, p.95-96).

3.2. A Poststructuralist Epistemology: Discourse Theory by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe

In relation to the abovementioned factors, the method of this research will be starting from a discourse analysis on commercial materials from Stockholm Pride in 2018. The aim of that part of the research is to reveal how commercialization in *Stockholm Pride* had occurred through institutional discursive practices by urban governors and sponsor companies, and how neoliberal discourse is formulated to constitute consumer subject position to reconstitute sexual citizenship. This part will be adopting its epistemology from poststructuralism, and will be using *discourse theory* perspective by *Ernesto Laclau* and *Chantal Mouffe* (1985). Their approach rejects the distinction between theory and analysis, and brings political theory and practice together (Zienkowski, 2017). Rejecting a Marxist standpoint of *determinism* and *dialectical interaction*, Laclau and Mouffe critically transformed their epistemology by developing their poststructuralist and anti-essentialist approach, based on discourse both in terms of theory and methodology. They are inspired by *Antonio Gramsci* and his theory on *hegemony*, since he brings up the political dimension for the determination of ideology, and also an idea of consciousness that is not solely based on material base but also superstructure (Gramsci, 1971). While Gramsci still accepts Marxian assumption of the class as an objective term that materially exists, Laclau and Mouffe radically reject it and relate the existence of different groups to discursive and political processes (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p.33). *Objectivity* here, as they argue, can only be *ideological*. Objective truths can only exist at certain constructions that are very widely accepted, and their political constructions have been forgotten (Laclau 1990, p.60). Since Laclau and Mouffe see political articulations bringing contingency to certain knowledge, objectivity can only be produced as an ideology through power and politics (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, p.37-38). Therefore, identities do not exist because of certain realities but rather, they can only be formed within discursive political processes. From their perspective, “*discourse* itself is material and that entities such as the economy, the infrastructure and institutions are also part of discourse [...] *discourse* itself is fully constitutive for our world” (p.19), thus, any dialectic with discourse must be unthinkable. They also criticised

Saussure's linguistic model in structuralism, claiming that meanings of *signs* are not fixed but can actively acquire new meanings, however, each *discourse* is rather an attempt for such a fixation remaining open for change (p.25).

Laclau and Mouffe develop their discourse theory as a methodological approach in social scientific research based on their social constructionist stance in epistemology. By *discourse theory*, they claim that "social phenomena are never finished or total. Meaning can never be ultimately fixed and this opens up the way for constant social struggles about definitions of society and identity, with resulting social effects" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.24). They do accept material reality of both social and physical objects. However, the meaning of things is not derived from this material reality but rather created through discourse which is open for change (Laclau & Mouffe 1990, p.101). Therefore, their method does not see any necessity about looking for ontological answers while accepting the material reality, but rather try to understand *how* the meaning is being fixed through discursive practice and particular truths are created (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p.33).

The use of language and how it affects the social processes is the main aim of the discourse theory. Laclau and Mouffe do not limit their analysis with language, but also extend it to the society since they see a bridge between language and society. If language is never totally fixed, then it is not possible to reach fixation of society and identity as well, therefore they are always changeable (*ibid.*). Unlike Norman Fairclough and Lilie Chouliaraki (1999)'s *critical discourse analysis* (CDA) approach, they see society as fully discursive while Fairclough makes a distinction between discursive and non-discursive by using two sets of analytical tools for his methodology. In this respect, Laclau and Mouffe's approach would be contributing to the research in a great extent to understand discursive relationship between sexual citizenship and the institutions of neoliberalism.

While their discourse theory is based on constructivism ontologically, Laclau and Mouffe do not reject *reality*. They accept the existence of social and physical objects, but they gain their meanings through discourse (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.35). This happens through an interplay between different actors, but their primacy for discursive practices is based on *politics*. In discourse theory, *politics* is far more than being simply party politics, but it is a concept that constitutes

contingent articulations and temporary fixations of the meaning of the social which causes change in discourse, thus in *society* (p.36). Their understanding of politics is based on very daily practices and challenges against set of discourses that provides change in those meanings. Therefore, politics must be an interplay between subjects, the act of dissemination of power. The social political process can be observed, in this sense, through the interplay between marketers and consumers, where the subjects are influenced by and/or take action against ongoing commercialization of neoliberal era, trying to define their own understanding of society. It leads us to an outcome that we speak of an impossible society that society can never be a total entity with the meaning of it is fixed and objective (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, p.111; *see* Jorgensen & Phillips 2002).

3.3. Discourse in Method: Key Analytical Concepts

In its definition, a discourse “is formed by the partial fixation of meaning around certain nodal points” (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, p.112). Here, *nodal points* are the signs that are in a privileged position which other signs are ordered around it. The fixation occurs through the transformation of signs that are not fixed yet called as *elements*, into fixed signs called as *moments* with a particular view of the society and the world (*ibid.*). In this case, any objects and articulations of identity are just momentarily complete, they are always partly constituted by the opposing forces. The definition of the objects/identities are defined by the negativity that separates them from opposite objects/identities; which are located with difference from others in a particular historicity (Keith & Pile, 1993). “In such a fragile world of identity formation and object formation, political subjects are articulated through moments of *closure* that create subjects as surfaces of inscription, mythical and metaphoric, invariably incomplete” (*ibid.*, p.27). Nevertheless, the attempt is to reach the closure, where the ascribed meaning tries to connote a totality, which inevitably remains as an imaginary entity (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.39). In this case, the imaginary of society is created through articulatory practice that tries to reflect a totality. Laclau (1990) calls this attempt as *myth*, which creates a certain space of representation and “whose terms are external to what is representable in the

objective spatiality constituted by the given structure” (p.61). This ideological representation reflects a spatiality that is never fixed, therefore, the attempt does not go any further than being a failure of total hegemonisation, or an unsuccessful attempt to fix the society (p.82; *see also* Keith & Pile 1993).

The myth and its subjects are defined with the co-existence of a *constitutive outside*, and due to the existence of this arbitrary outside for the construction of the social, society cannot be built within an objective order (Laclau, 1990, p.18). In this respect, the discursive construction of sexual citizenship, and mainly marginalized sexualities, can be understood with their constitutive outside, where *normal* and *abnormal* are formulated through discourse. Discourse works in a way to attempt unifying systems of knowledge, and excludes other meanings outside discourse (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002). These possibilities excluded by the discourse are positioned within *the field of discursivity* by Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p.111). This realm outside the discourse makes articulations of meanings possible, while the field of discursivity can be anything outside the specific discourse, the existence of constitutive outside makes the field of discursivity important sphere to change meanings. Signs constituted through other discourses can redefine *elements* of the specific discourse to construct new *moments*. This process happens through *articulation*. In their own words, Laclau and Mouffe call articulation as “any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (*ibid.*, p.105) Here, discourse is constituted through articulatory practices where they form the connection between different elements to transform them into moments. Such elements that are open to different ascriptions of meaning are called as *floating signifiers* (Laclau, 1990, 1993). A floating signifier, as Laclau and Mouffe put it, takes place in the struggles for the fixation of meanings between different discourses (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.28). Since Laclau and Mouffe reject a Saussurian assumption of permanent closures of the meanings, floating signifiers must always exist, and endorse the threat against specific discourses. From discourse theory perspective, all social phenomena are discursively constructed, therefore, they all can be analysed by using these concepts (p.35). In the analytical part of this thesis, the possibilities for these challenges and fixations will be discussed built upon the discussions on

sexuality, subjectivity, citizenship, and consumerism; by using abovementioned analytical concepts.

3.4. Forming Identities: Overdeterminations, Antagonisms, and Hegemonic Interventions

Discourse theory, from its ontological relativism and poststructuralist epistemology, has so far taught us the meaning is always contingent and discursive, thus it is never fulfilled. Therefore, how identity struggle occurs and is positioned in an *impossible society* should be the centre of this study, rather than trying to explore material foundations of identities. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) claim that people are *interpellated* through different discourses, and can hold different *subject positions*, rather than having a singular subjectivity determined by an Althusserian sense of ideology (p.115). Subjectivity is rather *overdetermined* by discourses, where people are positioned throughout the contingency of different discourses (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p.41). Therefore, one can hold different subject positions that can be conflicting and/or complementary in different historic moments, which might prevent each other's fixations. For instance, a woman's subject position can be articulated by the discursive foundation of 'womanhood' in a patriarchal society, where at the same time, other external factors such as her sexuality, ethnicity, and citizenship status can overdetermine her subjectivity in the same society for that historical moment, or all these articulations can be reconstituted in another society that she would relocate, or through future political articulatory practices within the same society.

In the plurality of different identities, Laclau and Mouffe mention about *social antagonisms*, a conflicting relationship between different identity formations. In such a case, "two identities make contrasting demands in relation to the same actions within a common terrain, and inevitably one blocks the other" (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p.47). Since people always hold more than one identity in different circumstances and historical moments, social antagonism should be expected to be occurring constantly, in many fields of social life. At this point, it is important to see that antagonisms do not denote contradiction of the elements, in which identities are fixed and their contradictions cause antagonisms. Laclau and Mouffe (1985)

explain social antagonisms much differently than this simplified explanation of contradictions of identities. For them, the challenge with *the Other* is not derived from the totalities of identities, but contrarily, from the impossibility of their total distinction from the Other, the impossibility of its *very* constitution. Antagonisms in an external position to the society show the limits of *objectivity*, the unsuccessful attempt for the fixation of meanings, therefore, the impossibility of society itself (p.125).

If the society is always incomplete and identities are antagonistically articulated, then how do we perceive society as a more organic foundation? How are certain identities predominantly and unquestionably affecting people's every aspect of life? How the meanings of these identities seem fixed? According to Laclau and Mouffe (1985), that is the part where *hegemony* takes place in identity formation. As it has been briefly discussed at the beginning of this chapter, they radicalise the concept of hegemony by rejecting remaining essentialist aspects of Gramscian approach. In their own words, "hegemony is [...] a political type of relation, a form, if one so wishes, of politics; but not a determinable location within a topography of the social" (p.139). As it was stated before, the social is not defined through an underlying unitary principle, but through articulations. Therefore, adopting a deterministic approach of the social cannot explain how hegemony functions. Rather, the analysis should reject the unified systems of political and social spaces, and acknowledge the *plurality* of hegemonic practices where meaning is not closed through structures, but is always open to the field of discursivity and antagonism (p.139-140). Hegemony, in its discourse theory perspective of plurality, plays a discursive function to dissolve ambiguity of antagonisms, an action they called as *hegemonic interventions*, and therefore one dominant identity suppresses or dissolves the other through the re-articulation of its elements (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p.48). As part of the discussion on subjectivity of this thesis, the interplay between consumer and queer identities is an important part of the analysis, where hegemonic intervention from neoliberal forces are taken into account for reproduction of the sexual citizen.

From discourse theory perspective, identities, as well as the society can never be fixed, and they develop the idea of incompleteness for identities from *Jacques Lacan's* theories. Briefly, Lacan sees identity construction as an effort to feel

wholeness of the self, a process of identification with something outside of oneself, which ends up as the *split* of subjectivity (*ibid.*, p.42). The identification with something has a formational role for the identity, as a *master signifier*, or nodal points of identity which becomes an empty but a central signifier to fill the meaning of the identity with other signifiers. This process of how identities are normatively produced and gained meanings involves a set of articulations that Laclau and Mouffe called as *chains of equivalence* (p.42-43). If we take the example of ‘woman’ again, the master signifier ‘woman’ is set by the attributions and meanings that are politically articulated to ‘womanhood’ which defines the identity of women discursively. Therefore, we cannot think of any totality in identities, but identities that are always open to political re-articulations and adoption of new meanings.

3.5. Criticisms on Discourse Theory

Whereas Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory frames this study’s ontological and epistemological approach in a great sense, their analytical approach also contains some criticisms and limitations. These criticisms would be basically directed at the dilemma between determinism and contingency within the (un)structure of the meaning, and the society. Through their famous work *Discourse in Late Modernity* (1999); Norman Fairclough and Lilie Chouliaraki oppose the ‘everything is contingent’ rule in discourse theory and formulated their *critical discourse analysis* (CDA) approach. Their criticism is directed at how Laclau and Mouffe claim an ultimate contingency in meanings and overestimating possibilities of change (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999, p.125; cited in Jørgensen & Phillips 2002). They revalue the structural domain and its role in the determination of social conditions of people (such as class, ethnicity, and gender), meanwhile still accepting the fact that there is a domain of contingency (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p.54-55). Therefore, Fairclough rejects an exclusive idea of single domain of contingent elements, but rather makes a clear division between discursive and non-discursive (Fairclough 1992, p.64). He rebuilds the dialectical relationship, basically on discourses and societal structures where the discourses as ideological entities can influence knowledge and society, discourses can also be reshaped by structures (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, p.65). His analysis, therefore, makes a distinction

between practical usage of language (texts) and the societal structure while he still embraces the power of discourse on affecting social relations (*ibid.*). This reevaluation of determinism and the strict division of discursive and non-discursive lead to a closer approach on Marxian structuralism in the discursive analysis of the social. By doing this, CDA tries to position itself at a medium point between determinism and contingency, attempting to distinct itself from radicalism in Laclau and Mouffe's highly contingent (un)structures that allows "the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity" (Laclau & Mouffe 1985, p.113). However, where Fairclough tries to overcome ontological reductionism by Laclau and Mouffe, his approach remains epistemologically vague. As Kolankiewicz (2012) criticizes, in analysis "*the text is explained through the processes the existence of which is to prove*" as an outcome of eclecticism between specific analysis of the text and the societal structures (p.135; *italics in original*). The division of discursive and non-discursive in an empirical analysis remains unclear in terms of its consequences in a dialectical approach (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p.89). Whatsoever, in a discourse analysis, including non-discursive practices remains contradictory with ontological perspective of poststructuralism. As *Judith Butler* (1993) states, since all our arguments and concepts are discursively constituted to refer the extra-discursive; any discursive attempt in order to make a distinction between discursive and extra-discursive will be impossible (p.31).

This study, due to its theoretical standing, rejects CDA's epistemology based on a dialectic between discursive and non-discursive; meanwhile seeing society as fully discursive as it was suggested in discourse-theoretical approach. Seeing society as fully discursive makes this study not to focus on determination of structures what regulates the society. From the hypothesis of 'society is impossible', this thesis rather focuses on how meanings are partially fixed in the discursive formations of (un)fragile chains of equivalences. Since the reality of objects never determines the meanings in the society, my question is how discourses, either conflicting or complementing, are (re)articulated to create certain meanings in specific moments. Therefore, Laclau and Mouffe's method will be forming the main structure of the analysis. However, I also acknowledge the aforementioned criticisms on discourse-theoretical approach by Fairclough, where idea of ultimate view of contingency can

hamper concreteness in analysis. The next chapter, by accepting the importance of these criticisms, will analyse the material of this study, to answer the main research question; ‘*how do neoliberal discourse of urban entrepreneurialism and its antagonists affect the construction of sexual citizenship?*’ and other sub-questions that will be explained in the next chapter.

3.6. Data Collection and Analytical Design

In relation to the methodological discussion of this study, I would like to focus on how certain meanings of ‘urban space’, ‘pride’ and ‘sexual citizen’ are discursively constructed by different actors and how these meanings antagonistically exist, and therefore, being at the field of discursivity of each other. The main case of study is Stockholm Pride which has been framed at the introduction section. In order to frame my analysis in consistent with an antagonistic framework, I have decided to focus on two main sections in the analytical part. The first part will be focusing on the official promotional materials provided by *Stockholm Pride* organization and cooperating urban governance organization *Stockholm Business Region*. Accordingly, a second part will investigate social media texts from *Revolutionär Pride Stockholm* (*Revolutionary Pride* in English, *RevPride* from here) where they challenge the normative meanings of Pride, the urban space, and sexual citizenship through social antagonisms.

The data collection for the analysis has been made starting from an investigation of Stockholm Pride organization’s communication materials, simply through their organizational website *stockholmpride.org*. To identify the relevant material from an audience/consumer perspective, I let myself to be directed at the website first, where the organization tries me to attract as a consumer and/or make me discover certain communication materials within the content of the website. As a result, a further investigation of *europride2018.com*, and *visitstockholm.com* came across as other sources of analysis. In the analytical section, I will be explaining how articulations on the discourse of Pride occur through cooperation between official Pride organization, urban governing bodies, and private entities. Since epistemological approach by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) encourage researcher to investigate antagonisms, where the meanings are always open to change, or to be challenged; I moved my second scope of data collection into norm-critical

approaches on Pride and texts that are critical to hegemonic idea of Pride. From my searches through both personal connections and internet-based investigation, I chose *RevPride* which is a grassroots organization that maintains political activism against normative and commercialized Pride festival. They are organized through social media accounts rather than holding their own official websites which reflects their unofficial, non-hierarchical, and non-institutionalized culture in compare to their official Pride counterparts. Therefore, the second part of the analysis will mostly be based on social media posts.

How the data will be used for the analysis? The main aim in this research, as it has been discussed in the methodological section, will be identifying *how* the fixation of meanings occur through articulatory practices. Seeing society as fully discursive from its ontological perspective, this analysis does not aim to identify any structure or realities that regulates society and define socio-economic conditions; but rather, how certain discourses and hegemonic interventions shape structures, inequalities, and/or subjugations. To be more concrete, I identified analytical sub-questions in order to support main research question of this study. First of all, it is one of the main aims to investigate the interrelations between two nodal points of this analysis; *Pride* and the *City*. This correlation has been made in order to understand how the meanings of Pride are reproduced to contribute to the identity construction of Stockholm City. This will be one of the main themes at the first part of the analysis, where discourses on commercialization of Pride and city rebranding go hand-in-hand. Thus, an analytical sub-question would be '*how is the chain of equivalence formulated between the Pride and Stockholm City by the urban entrepreneurial agenda?*'. By this question, I aim to understand potential hegemonic interventions by a post-industrial city on a prominent political event of the urban space, where its commercialization would be in benefit of the entrepreneurial city. Namely, it is mostly investigating how the city is rebranding itself by its own discourses on Pride, and thus, how it transforms the Pride. Undoubtedly, nodal points and/or floating signifiers will be identified in the analysis to see how potential meanings are articulated. This part, as a whole, will be using the data from *europride2018.com* and *visitstockholm.com* websites.

The next theme of the first part will be focusing on how the sexual citizenship is discursively constructed. This theme is also aimed to be connected to the first theme

analytically, to investigate how hegemonic interventions on the meanings of Pride also rearticulate the meanings of being a queer subject, or more generally, a sexual citizen. Therefore, an analytical sub-question is chosen as *'how is sexual citizenship discursively rearticulated through the urban governing bodies and the official Pride organizations of Stockholm?'*. This part will be based mostly on *the LGBT Guide to Stockholm* by *visitstockholm.com* which their campaign plays a discursive function in the reproduction of subjectivity of the queer community of Stockholm City. The official Pride materials will also contribute to the analysis. Any articulations of the meanings on subjectivity will be investigated to understand how queer subjects are framed in an urban and sexual context. Therefore, this part would pave the way to see how the meanings of the city, the Pride, and subjectivity are interrelated and can redefine each other.

In the second part of the analysis, the aim is to investigate counter-discourses against the normative construction of Pride today. Focusing *RevPride*; the analysis will be based on their social media texts targeting the sexual citizens of Stockholm to evaluate how do they rearticulate the discourse on the urban space, Pride and sexual citizenship. It is a crucial part of conducting discourse analysis to show the conflict between different discourses, where in this case, two sources will form the fields of discursivity of each other. The analysis will aim to identify main criticism of these organizations to Stockholm Pride Festival. It is simply about how do they problematize the current conditions of Pride, how are they creating the meanings of Pride in their own perception of reality. In this case, the sub-question of this part of the analysis would be formed as *'how are queer subjects perceiving neoliberal interventions on Pride and the City, how do they become antagonists of a commodified sexual citizenship?'* By this question, the aim is to investigate the possibilities of queer subjects to challenge the potential closures on Pride discourse through neoliberal forces, are they challenging against their consumer subject position and forming what kind of a chain of equivalence to legitimize their own perspective on Pride and sexual citizenship.

Thereafter, a very last part will include a discussion on the antagonistic relationship between two analytical focuses of this thesis; simply the challenge between socially constructed truths on 'pride', 'city' and 'sexual citizen' nodal points, from the perspectives of official pride organizations, urban governing bodies, and grassroots

queer movements. The analyses of the texts from both sides will provide the framework of this crucial part to identify the analytical outcomes of this research, how these conflicting discourses might have reproduced the meaning of sexual citizenship.

3.7. Methodological Delimitations

One of the main limitations of this study is derived from the nature of its discourse methodological approach. The adoption of ontological relativism that is resulted with the contingency of the truth declares the impossibility for the researcher to go outside of discourse. If the discourse defines the subject, then researcher-subject will be a part of discursive struggle to produce their own 'truth' (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2003, p.22). Therefore, my aim as a researcher is to approach the empirical material not to claim certain truths, but it is to explore how articulatory practices work for the production of different meanings. However, it remains as a delimitation that even in such a perspective, since what analyst doing is a political intervention in a never-ending struggle for defining the world (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

Another delimitation is related to the choice of material in terms of availability. By having EuroPride 2018 as a central case which is a globalized form of Pride event, the material provided from RevPride is from Stockholm Pride 2017. The main reason behind that is the lack of material directed at EuroPride 2018 from RevPride, therefore, the material from the most recent complementary event has been chosen.

The next chapter will be formed by the conduct of discourse analysis which will be implemented through abovementioned plan under *Data Collection and Analytical Design* with the acknowledgement of existing delimitations.

4. Analysing Discourse(s): (Re)Articulations through Hegemony and Resistance

4.1. *Discourses of Commercialization and Consumerism on Pride*

4.1.1. *Rebranding a ‘Global City’ - Stockholm: The Open City*

EuroPride 2018 is organized through the collaboration between two major cities in Sweden. For the first time, Stockholm and Gothenburg are hosting the festival together where Stockholm part of the organization is scheduled to be held between July 27 and August 5 in 2018. From their announcements in the websites of Pride, namely, *stockholmpride.org* and *europride2018.com*; the company *Stockholm Business Region* which explains its work as “promoting and developing Stockholm as a business and tourist destination under the brand *Stockholm – The Capital of Scandinavia*” (“Welcome To Stockholm”, 2018a) is promoted as one of the partner organizations. Therefore, they are actively involved in the operation of the event as *Visit Stockholm* and being visible in the promotional content of EuroPride 2018. The company is currently holding a promotional campaign for Stockholm City named as *Stockholm: The Open City*, that is also visibly integrated in official EuroPride 2018 campaign at the *europride2018.com* website. Therefore, it can easily be observed that the campaign is going hand-in-hand with EuroPride 2018 and used by the organization to attract more audience to visit Stockholm for this year’s highlight.

“Have you ever asked yourself what makes Stockholm so special? Why people from all around the world travel here to experience what city has to offer? We believe you will find the answer if you look beyond the glittering water and the breath-taking views. If you search for any high-tech innovations, world-leading fashion and top choice restaurants. We believe you will find the answer at the personality of Stockholm.

Stockholm is a city unlike all others. Built upon the idea that everyone should have access for everything. A wheelchair or stroller should not stop you from using the metro. The non-normative should not only be tolerated, but also celebrated. And no door should be closed because of gender, age, or the colour of your skin. This is the fertile breathing ground for a unique and creative culture. This is the place to explore what democratic design looks like. How music could be made available in new ways and why nature should be accessible for each and every one of us. The place to meet different perspectives and new ideas, ideas that can only arise in a truly open society. This is what makes Stockholm and Sweden so special. This is the reason why people from all around the world visit us. They experience an open city and the good things that come with it. The Modern, Dynamic, and ever-changing. The idea of something different, something better. Stockholm is the Open City. Together we make it possible. To be a proud part of it."

(Visit Stockholm, 2018)

From the text of the video ‘*What Makes Stockholm So Special?*’, what we can see overall is a portrayal of Stockholm City with certain attributions to its character. It has been characterised and equated with certain elements that forms a chain of equivalence on the construction of the meanings on Stockholm as a global city. Namely, Stockholm City is portrayed with some adjectives like ‘unlike all others’, ‘special’, ‘unique’, ‘different’, and ‘better’, where these signifiers connote the construction of a meaning of our floating signifier, *the city* with distinctive characteristics. The reason behind it is a floating signifier is that the whole text is based on an attempt to fix the meaning of *the city*, ideally through Stockholm, with the creation of constitutive others. The constitutive other here, can be any city that is threatening Stockholm’s ‘uniqueness’ or ‘speciality’, in today’s global level of competition, from close neighbour Copenhagen, to far-away city of Singapore. The meanings of the floating signifier can apparently be fixed through understanding how Stockholm is portrayed differently than such other cities, namely, what makes “*Stockholm is a city unlike all others*”. To fill the meaning of *the city*, it is important to identify how the meaning of the city is constructed throughout the text.

The text starts with a description of Stockholm’s personality; “*If you search for any high-tech innovations, world-leading fashion and top choice restaurants. We believe you will find the answer at the personality of Stockholm.*”. Here, the personality of Stockholm is constructed in the strategies of new entrepreneurial

regime that commodifies social and economic life, and through promotion of competition and enterprises (Leitner 1990, MacLeod 2002). We can easily observe that the comparison is always made in a global scale where it uses comparative words such as ‘world-leading’ and ‘top choice’, therefore it starts to form its constitutive other by, first of all, using a language of competition. As we discussed the concept by Richard Florida (2004), the profitability of post-industrial city is based on attracting *the creative class*, and how to attract creative class is based on developing competitive strategies in the areas of innovation, culture, and entrepreneurship. The text is doing that by promoting how good Stockholm is at innovation, fashion, restaurants, therefore, much better than other cities providing creative class the technology, social and stylish life at its best.

Even though the innovative and entrepreneurial atmosphere is crucial for a city to attract the creative class, it is not enough by itself. The Creative Class as a cosmopolitan group chooses places with *authenticity* where tolerance and cultural capital are strong; simply where diversity is guaranteed (Bell & Binnie 2003; Florida 2004; Edwards & Imrie 2015). Therefore, Stockholm rearticulates the meaning of *a city* in the text;

“(...) A wheelchair or stroller should not stop you from using the metro. The non-normative should not only be tolerated, but also celebrated. And no door should be closed because of gender, age, or the colour of your skin. This is the fertile breathing ground for a unique and creative culture. This is the place to explore what democratic design looks like.”

(Visit Stockholm, 2018)

The city of Stockholm as a social place is built as diverse, as tolerant, as unique, as democratic, and as a provider of a creative culture. These articulations are building a chain of equivalence that builds up and fill the meaning our empty signifier, or rather, which can be better called as *the myth* of Stockholm as Jorgensen and Phillips suggest using *myths* organised as social place (2002, p.50). The myth of Stockholm is furtherly constructed as “(...) *The place to meet different perspectives and new ideas, ideas that can only arise in a truly open society*” where it connotes the participatory practice in urban sphere, creating an image of society that is democratically deliberated and open for new ideas. I would like to problematize

here, how the truth on urban societal space is articulated along with commercialization and commodification. The chain of equivalence on the myth of Stockholm is formed very considerably through the elements that are desired in any democratic society; such as, openness, democratic design, meeting perspectives, and new ideas. However, the connection has been made by portraying these values through strategies of competition in new entrepreneurial agenda. Apparently here, diversity and democratic design are offered as a package alongside with world-class restaurants, breath-taking views, and commodities of fashion which ends up with the commodification of the values of a democratic society. The text implies to an attempt of reaching of an objective truth where the openness, democracy, and diversity can only be ensured through entrepreneurial and commercialized imaginary of the society which is kept reproduced in neoliberal discourse.

If this *myth* provides a democratic society for all to participate, and asserting that in a neoliberal setting, then the question of the social justice can be problematized. As Fraser (2013) contributed with her two-dimensional conception for justice, neglecting redistributive justice with neoliberal setting would easily hamper a level of political participation as it is suggested through the text above. From the claim of ongoing commodification deepens financial inequalities, it remains unlikely to expect participants to fulfil objective conditions suggested by Fraser (2013) to be a part of the *Open City*. If the text is recognising differences and a diverse society, the claims for active participation of all groups remain *mythical*. What we can observe from this discursive practice is a hegemonic intervention on the meaning of *the City*, namely, by forming a chain of equivalence between different elements that I have identified, and reach a fixation on the meanings of *open city* and *open society* from a neoliberal perspective. Therefore, Fraser's (2013) claims can be agreed in a way that capitalist market commodifies subjects in order to maximize profits, in our case, LGBTQ community through Pride festival.

The analysis of *The Open City* campaign drew us a framework on how Stockholm governing bodies are practicing new entrepreneurial agenda and utilizing commercial discourse to attract the creative class. The next chapter will investigate, accordingly, how the sexual subject/citizen has been integrated to this rebranding and Pride festival has been used for the interests of the *myth* of Stockholm.

4.1.2. *Rearticulating 'Pride': The Open City's Intervention on Discourses of Pride*

In the last chapter, we observed how the myth of Stockholm City is constructed in their official campaign *Stockholm: The Open City*. I investigated how the myth of Stockholm is discursively constructed which made us to understand the produced knowledge on the city by the urban governing bodies of Stockholm. This knowledge is also reproduced in official website of *EuroPride 2018*, and since the official Pride organization *Stockholm Pride* and Stockholm's urban governing body *Visit Stockholm* are collaboratively working on the organization of *EuroPride 2018*, it is important to make the analysis on their discourse of Stockholm Pride. This part mainly aims to utilize from their cooperative discourse in the analysis and analyse how hegemonic interventions from the new entrepreneurial agenda have affected the discursive construction of Pride and its meanings. Accordingly, Pride can be considered as the central nodal point of this chapter, to identify what elements are transformed into moments to create the normative Pride.

The analytical material in this chapter is from *europride2018.com* webpage. Observing from an audience perspective, the main page welcomes us with the event logo and its motto "Two Cities, One Country – For A United Europe, Open to The World" ("EuroPride 2018", 2018). The campaign motto implies us the influence of *The Open City* campaign, where we see the 'openness' in the articulation in consistent with the discursive order from the previous chapter. One interesting feature of the website is that host cities are in a dominant position in terms of design and the content. The webpage is divided in separate sections on two host cities; *Stockholm* and *Gothenburg*. On the section about *Stockholm Pride*, the sub-section of *Welcome to Stockholm* is prioritized, and the page invites us with 'breath-taking' pictures of Stockholm city, and a group of people having dinner at a 'world-class' restaurant those retrieved from *Visit Stockholm*. Alongside with the pictures, a text is informing us on Stockholm and the Pride in consistent with the picturesque image of the city.

The text rearticulates the competition as I portrayed in the previous chapter, positioning Stockholm distinctively from its competitors, as it is suggested by new entrepreneurial agenda. In two short paragraphs, Stockholm is described as '*one of the world's most beautiful cities*', in a '*magnificent location*', '*the spectacular*', 'a

harmonic blend', and *'ultra-modern'*, where these signifiers contribute to the chain of equivalence defining distinctiveness of Stockholm City. Throughout the text, one may easily observe that the discourse on Pride is formulated from a touristic perspective, as it is a touristic event to be marketized. Tourism has been an important tool to reproduce consumerism (Scholte 2005), and place-marketing strategies are widely used by post-industrial cities to promote certain places for tourists/consumers and turn them into consumption experiences (Jonas et al. 2015). It is forming the main language in this text, where the channels of Pride and the festival itself are reduced to be a touristic activity which we can observe with examples that I will be portraying.

"Culture and Civil Society coming together in a vibrant city Stockholm has a long standing tradition of cooperation between cultural institutions, restaurants and civil society, all coming together during Pride week, as well as during the rest of the year."

("Welcome to Stockholm", 2018b)

Through this statement, the main discourse is targeted in building connections between different nodal points that I previously identified. Stockholm is portrayed as a city that has a 'long-standing tradition' of cooperation, providing an open space for different cultures to meet, by not hesitating inclusion of commercialized city in the process. The main aim is to reach the fixation of meaning on the discourse of Pride, where it is bounded with constructed meanings of the myth of Stockholm. This kind of project, as Fairclough (1997) calls it, is an *order of discourse*, where the terms in each other's field of discursivity are connected in a particular domain. In this specific case, the meaning of Pride is being reproduced in the domain of new entrepreneurial agenda and consumerism, being adopted as one of the values of post-industrial city. The image of 'democratic design' of the city is also reflected where the imagined society co-establishes itself with the collaboration of civil society and culture of the city in the Pride festival. However, here, rather than a politicized setting of Pride, the construction of the meaning is occurring through a hegemonic intervention, which creates its own meanings of Pride. This Pride is the nodal point that would only go along with co-habitation of restaurants, and other

commodified zones, where Pride is discursively reduced to a commercialized event of the Stockholm myth.

“We start off in Stockholm: The Swedish capital which is famous for its closeness to nature, booming tech-scene, gender-fluid fashion, colorful LGBT community and the Nobel prize. And of course, the EuroPride Park, EuroPride House and EuroPride Parade.”

(“Stockholm 27/7 – 5/8”, 2018)

From this passage of the text, it is interesting to observe the articulation of different signs to set up the closure of the meanings on EuroPride. As I have discussed before, the neoliberal discourse denotes the signs with commercialization, consumerism and commodification; since it tries to eliminate the possibilities outside neoliberal agenda. *Pride*, as a floating signifier, is attempted to be saved from being in the field of discursivity, where its political readings can make it a space for anti-capitalist demands, mainly claims for redistributive justice as Fraser (2013) put as one of the pillars for remedying social injustices. Leaving no space for the critique of neoliberal discourse (which exists and will be the core of next analytical chapter), is resulted with de-politicization of Pride and reduced to a consumption-based event. Through the text, the *myth* of Stockholm is consolidated with tourism and consumption. The ‘booming tech-scene’ invites the Creative Class, ‘gender-fluid fashion’ marketizes the non-normative, ‘colorful LGBT community’ ensures diversity, and ‘EuroPride’ becomes the part of the chain, complementing the attractiveness of the city.

“Stockholm is a destination with high standards and a professional approach to international events. Sweden is acknowledged as one of the most well-organised and progressive societies in the world, which means everything runs smoothly and on time.” (“Welcome to Stockholm” 2018)

Marketing discourse does not only take place on the discourse of Pride, but rather, a chain of equivalence is extended to be built through an order of discourse where discourses on Pride Festival, Stockholm and Swedish society are promoted

collectively with their imagined inseparability. Stockholm is offering its 'high standards', and its 'professional approach' on 'international' events; therefore, it is the competitive, and correct place (and society) to imagine when it comes to organizing a Pride festival. It is followed by an articulation on Swedish society; as well-organized and progressive at its best. Therefore, the myth of Stockholm is extended to a myth of Swedish society, where their defined characteristics make things 'run smoothly', where everything is 'just perfect'.

I see this as a process of group formation as well, which Laclau and Mouffe (1985) give a lot of concentration in their discourse theory approach. The collective identity of Swedish society is constituted with the chain of equivalence as it connects the myth of Stockholm and the identity of Swedish society. This identity, alongside with the ongoing discourse, portrays Swedish identity within a limited identity construction. It reduces the meanings and possibilities of identifications. Jorgensen and Phillips (2003) state that "people are constituted as groups through a process by which some possibilities of identification are put forward as relevant while others are ignored" (p.44). Therefore, such a chain of equivalence formulated in our quotation from the material is showing us this limitation in practice; an imagined society in which values are defined by competitive discourse, where apparently Swedish society becomes '*one of the most well-organized and progressive societies in the world*'. Such a limitation contradicts the dynamics of globalizing world which makes concrete identifications of heterogeneous societies difficult, and above everything, the attempt of fixation remains unlikely to reflect a reality, but it rather reflects an imaginary.

4.1.3. *Rearticulating Sexual Citizenship: An Affluent Gay Consumer?*

The previous parts of the analysis have shown us the articulatory practice on the discourses of Pride and Stockholm City, thus we could observe how the neoliberal discourse based on (hetero)normativity and Pride as a social event queering the heteronormative place can be built upon the same order of discourse, that is resulted with the equation of Pride with market and consumption. If these elements are reduced to be built upon the same marketing language from being at each other's

field of discursivity, then an analysis on subjectivity should not be an exception. This part of the analysis goes further in the exploration of subject positions in the texts, taking sexual citizenship as its nodal point to evaluate how the fixation of meanings on citizenship occurs in the intersection of sexuality and urban life. In order to do that, the analysis will return to one of our two websites of analysis; *visitstockholm.com*, and analyse *The LGBT Guide to Stockholm: Explore Queer Life in the City* in order to evaluate how queer life in the myth of Stockholm is portrayed and connected to build a chain of equivalence between queer lifestyle and new entrepreneurial agenda. The given material of the analysis is created in order to attract LGBT visitors for their visits, but also to show how diverse is the city for its prospective tourists, and undoubtedly, the creative class.

“Narrow streets meet open minds. Gay and lesbian life in Stockholm is like the city itself: easily accessible, hugely fun, highly varied and warm and welcoming.”

(“The LGBT Guide to Stockholm”, 2018)

The LGBT Guide to Stockholm welcomes us with this message illustrated over a rainbow flag. The text equalizes the meanings of gay and lesbian life and/or queer life with the Stockholm City itself. This chain of equivalence connects our two nodal points to each other; at one side, a myth of Stockholm City as a commodified zone of neoliberal consumption, but also an open city for all; at other side, gays and lesbians of Stockholm with their ‘open minds’, together, and they meet at the ‘narrow streets of Stockholm’. Certain signs that we are already familiar from *the Open City* campaign and *EuroPride 2018* website, are mentioned in an order; to form the meanings of a city and a queer life that have equal characteristics, that are ‘hugely fun’, ‘highly varied’, ‘warm’, and ‘welcoming’.

“Over the last few years, Stockholm has emerged as one of the world’s favorite gay and lesbian destinations, winning awards and topping “Where to go”-lists across the planet.”

(“LGBT Events”, 2018)

The chain of equivalence is continuously built upon and supported by the language of competition. The same discourse as I portrayed in the previous chapter is rearticulated, where Stockholm is a ‘favourite’, ‘award-winning’, and a city ‘topping’ on the lists. Once again, the entrepreneurial city does rebranding of itself through competition. These repeated re-articulations of the myth of Stockholm are linked with identity construction of Stockholm’s queers and queer life which makes the construction of the place also foundational for subject positions. If the place is rearticulated from a neoliberal setting and transformed into consumptuary places, then it becomes important for the articulation of identification processes as well (Blokland et al., 2014). The term *sexual citizenship* that I previously introduced from Evans (1993), here, can help us to conceptualize such subject positions since it illustrates how citizenship is sexually constructed, but also ascribes the rights and obligations of the political aspect of subjectivity. It becomes a useful tool to analyse to observe how interpellation of the subjects occurs through discourse.

Under *the LGBT Guide to Stockholm*, in *visitstockholm.com*, there are four sub-sections, namely; *Stockholm Voices*, *LGBT Club Scene*, *LGBT Events*, *Restaurants and Bars*. The last three of them are benefiting from place-marketing strategies, promoting certain LGBT-friendly restaurants, bars, clubs, and LGBT-oriented events. Complementarily to these contents, the first sub-section, *Stockholm Voices*, has 8 interviews with some representational figures from the queer community. I would like to focus on these interviews since it paves the way to an analysis on *representation* which is an important component of identity construction and group formation in Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory approach. To exemplify the main discourse on the interviews some questions that were asked to interviewees can be stated;

- *Where’s the best place to grab a fika and coffee?*
- *What are you proud of as a Stockholmer?*
- *What is your favourite neighbourhood in Stockholm?*
- *Where do you go shopping?*
- *What restaurant do you take your partner to?*
- *Best spa in Stockholm?*
- *If you could spend an entire day in Stockholm with anyone in the world, who would you choose and what would you do?*

(“*Stockholm Voices*”, 2018)

The participants of the interviews are formed by people who are claimed as ‘the ambassadors of LGBT community’, that people are known figures with their representational role for LGBTQ either in media, in civil society, in arts, etc. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) stress on the contingency of group formations; for them, groups are never objective, but are constituted by their representatives (Jorgensen & Phillips 2003, p.45). Since the meanings of groups can never be fixed, a group is constituted by someone who speaks on behalf of that group (Laclau, 1993). Therefore, taking ‘the ambassadors’ of Stockholm’s queer community as an example, their statements are discursively foundational for the queer community of Stockholm. The content of the questions is reflecting a portrayal of queer community from a consumer perspective. The common discourse in all interviews are making ‘queer representatives’ to state their consumer choices, or more clearly, how do they use the public space of Stockholm as a zone of commodification. In relation to the analysis on sexual citizenship, this can be seen as a process of depoliticizing sexualized subject. How neoliberal discourse fixes the meaning of sexual citizenship is complementing the new closure on the subject position as ‘consumers rather than citizens’ (Lister, 1990). These questions attempt to limit the meanings of sexual citizenship into a standard interpretation of citizenship in post-industrial city, furtherly; privatize, de-radicalize, and de-eroticize the queer identity in Stockholm (Bell & Binnie, 2000). The answers from ‘queer ambassadors’ are mostly going in consistent with the commercial expectations of the raised questions, as they give names of their favourite restaurants, bars, clubs, and stores; suggesting tourists ‘must do’s and filling the meanings of Stockholm City with touristic statements. The chain of equivalence on marketing purposes is completed with the complementing group formation of queer community as consumers for the interests of the entrepreneurial city.

Positioning queer community as consumers paves the way for marketers to demonstrate their *sexual politics of neoliberalism* (Duggan, 2002) where such a strategy demobilizes and depoliticizes their community, endorsing a gay culture based on consumption and domesticity. Therefore, the duty of the ambassadors is portraying what kind of consumers they are and why do they love *The Open City*. It is clearly stated at the answer of one of the ambassadors to the question “*When are you proud to be a Stockholmer?*”, “When the promotion video *Welcome to*

Stockholm - the Open City was released I was really proud. I'm proud of the openness in the city and I want to be a part of the struggle to keep Stockholm open and accessible" ("Stockholm Voices" 2018) says the ambassador. Here, the ambassador is endorsing a released campaign, where discourse of the campaign is creating the truth about the city, and where her subject position is not giving her a participatory role in the design of the society, but rather, the role of a recipient. This attempt to create an affluent gay consumer eliminates 'unwanted' and 'immoralized' aspects of queer culture, where it does not challenge heteronormative institutions and bodies (Duggan, 2003).

From a discourse theory perspective, this campaign is showing us the discursive struggle in order to eliminate alternative meanings on queer community, Pride, and the city. These floating signifiers, from being at each other's field of discursivity, meet at the same order of discourse, where the hegemony of neoliberalism rearticulate their meanings. The one which is previously 'other', is being the part of the circle that builds the neoliberal and commodified set of the truth. Thus, the Pride, the urban societal space, and the queer community become parts of the same chain, discourse determines the structure of an imagined society.

4.2. Leading to Antagonisms: A Non-Normative Reading of Pride Festival and Alternating the Urban Space

The previous chapter in the analysis has shown us hegemonic intervention on three identified nodal points (urban space, pride, sexual citizenship) through articulatory practices enforced by a neoliberal discourse. We have observed how city can be privatized, how Pride can be commercialized, and how citizenship can be commodified by the new entrepreneurial discourse of institutions of the urban governance. However, as it is also stated by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), discourses can only exist with antagonisms. Where hegemonic interventions try to reach objective truths by overcoming antagonisms, antagonistic relationships between different discourses keep preventing any fixations of the meanings. In this analysis, therefore, it has been one of the main tasks to identify antagonistic discourses

against normative Pride festival. In this section, therefore, I would like to analyse *RevPride*, and their statements on *Stockholm Pride Festival*. Focusing on these two different readings of Pride, the urban space, and sexual citizenship make them floating signifiers, and the aim of the analysis is to show how different discourses on these signifiers antagonistically exist. Accordingly, at the first part, I will be focusing on how does *RevPride* reproduce alternative discourses of Pride and how do they challenge normative idea of Stockholm Pride through articulatory practice. Here, it will be important to investigate how do they create their own meanings of Pride, and, therefore, Stockholm as an urban space. The second part will be focusing on an analysis of subjectivity, specifically, how do they perform identity construction and group formation of queer community, and as a result, how do they formulate their own reading of society from an urban perspective. These parts will also form the alternative readings of the myth of Stockholm as an urban space both from political and spatial aspects.

In the analysis, I investigated two channels of communication to obtain the texts from *RevPride*. The first text is an interview done with two representatives from the organization by Swedish news journal *ETC*; and the second is from their main communication channel, their Facebook page. These two sources will contribute to the analysis both in how do the representatives of the community perform the creation of group identity; also, how do they use channels of promotion for their actions with Facebook announcements to create their meanings of Pride and the urban space.

4.2.1. *Alternating Urban Space Through Pride: From A Commodified Zone of Indifference to A Participatory Political Space?*

At the introductory part, I quoted from Doderer (2001) stating that Pride festivals have the function of queering the urban political space. Such a statement attributes an important role to the Pride, where alternating or queering means challenging existing (hetero)normativity in a broad sense. Since we have discussed the urban space as a place constantly reproducing heteronormativity, *Pride* would be an important nodal point of analysis again to (re)define the urban (de)political space.

The ongoing antagonisms on the meaning of *Pride* with these different discourses make it a perfect floating signifier. Therefore, identifying different signifiers that are at each other's field of discursivity will pave our way to see how the meanings of urban space, citizenship and Pride can be reduced in certain ways to meet at the same order of discourse. It is important to investigate how commercialized Pride can be reclaimed as a queer-political space and how do alternative discourses challenge its normative settings.

"In a time when Pride is becoming more and more commercialised and depoliticised, we want to make sure that 5 August is a day of action, of protest; a day on which we express our conviction that another society is possible, that the future will one day resemble the collective rushing heart that unites us."

(Revolutionär Pride & Queers Against Fascism i Prideparaden 5/8,2017)

This statement is from *RevPride's* call for participation in *Stockholm Pride 2017* within their own group, where they perform their attempt to politicize the festival by being physically existent in a Pride they criticise. In the text, their criticism on the current Pride builds up a chain of equivalence between the Pride, commercialization, and depoliticization. One should be critical against how commercial the Pride has got in order to reclaim its political participatory role. This idea is built further in the following part, that they identify 5th of August (the day of Pride Parade in 2017) as a day of *action*, and of *protest*; not a day of celebration, and fun. In this way, they build an antagonism between a depoliticized pride which is based on political inactivity, consumption, and fun-loving activities; and its political alternative which needs action and protest. By seeking an alternative idea of Pride, they also imagine an alternative society since they express an imagined society that is articulated with its possibility of being united, and act collectively to fulfil this imaginary.

The creation of alternative meanings and the imaginaries occur within the process of building chains of equivalences in opposition to other chains (Jorgensen & Phillips 2003), therefore, what is being 'other' and 'rejected' becomes foundational for understanding *RevPride's* discourse of *Pride*. From the interviews with the

members of the organization, it was possible to observe their criticisms on a normative Stockholm Pride.

“If you look at how the official pride looks like in Stockholm, there is plenty that costs money: you need to buy a ticket to the Pride Park, to the pride house and many other events. Many cannot afford this and this can exclude groups such as asylum seekers and poor people, who actually need a network, and not necessarily take part in the what is the largest Pride party in the North. This means that a large group of LGBTQ-people remain outside and are left with no alternative.”

(Klöfvermark, 2017)

As the main theme of this statement, the official Stockholm Pride is signified with *exclusionism*. This contributes to the discussion on how Pride as a way to use urban societal space is reduced to be a commodified zone of indifference, and how it can be exclusionist for different groups among those whom identify as LGBTQ. They reflect their concerns on the accessibility of Pride for all, but its ongoing commercialization does not make it possible. If Pride is imagined as a political participatory practice for LGBTQ people, then the lack of redistributive justice in the process of participation hampers the possibilities of acting *collectively* and to be *united*. In this case, recognition becomes a matter of purchasing power in Pride, which works for the participatory interests of financially advantaged groups, such as white gay men (Whitaker, 1999). It is observable from the text that *RevPride* is stressing out the intersectionality of identities and rejecting its singularity, but rather adopts a similar view with Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) subject positions. They do see the official Pride still as the major endeavour of LGBTQ solidarity by mentioning that the ones who are excluded, who are marginalized ‘are left with no alternative’. Such a view challenges the main idea of the market which needs segmentation of identities in order to put them somewhere consisting with the marketing discourse. Discourse of ‘gay marketing’ can be utterly formed when the identity of gays is fixed, therefore, Pride should be a consumption-based activity which does not differ from any other Pride in different global cities. *RevPride*’s response is reflecting this antagonism on Pride’s meaning. In one hand, the meaning of Pride is constantly attempted to be fixed through discourses of marketing, tourism, and competition; to become a commercialized and globalized activity of

sameness. On the other hand, queer communities challenge the ongoing commercialization of Pride, criticizing it with being depolitical and exclusionist, in that regard, they also try to reach their fixation depending on their local and global struggle of justice.

4.2.2. *The Sexual Citizen: An Affluent Gay Consumer or A Politicized Queer Subject?*

At the previous part of the analysis, we could observe how Pride can connote different meanings in response to the chains of equivalences that it is built upon. In that case, subjectivity is not an exception in this discursive struggle on knowledge construction. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) previously told us that people hold different subject positions under different interpellations rather than having fixed identities. If the subjectivity is contingent and produced through discourse (Hall et al. 2013), then our analytical tools can show how sexual citizenship is challenged within the interplay of subject positions and social antagonisms. In this specific case, the sexual citizen remains as a master signifier that is ambiguously positioned in between as a passivized consumer or political participatory subject.

In their Stockholm Pride 2017 text that is calling people to the Pride parade, RevPride performs a manifestation of sexual citizenship, where it makes certain attributions by rejecting defined roles and expectations from LGBTQ. The text plays an important discursive function of identity construction, by making its own limitation and identification of sexual citizenship;

“Comrades, siblings. Beautiful armies of lovers!

A storm of a thousand petals. A flock of cute wildcats dashing through the city, of perverted fanged mouths shouting: NO PRIDE IN BORDERS, NO PRIDE IN PINKWASHING, shouting EVERY TIME WE FUCK WE WIN. In each other's eyes, at the bottom of the sky, we find everything: courage, willpower, rebellious swollen dreams. We stand together with our siblings across the world and we fight for survival, for borderlessness and for unbreakable solidarity!”

(Revolutionär Pride & Queers Against Fascism i Prideparaden 5/8,2017)

The first part of the text describes an imagined queer community who join to the parade as ‘cute wildcats’ and ‘a storm of a thousand petals’, or shout with their ‘perverted fanged mouths’. *RevPride* here, by positioning the subjects extraordinarily, creates an imagined community whose members reject the homonormative settings of subjectivity. From the text, it can be interpreted that a Pride with borders (challenging nation-state) and a Pride with pink-washing (challenging capitalism) is formed with the same chain of equivalence with a gay consumer identity which I previously conceptualized within homonormativity. As Oswin (2008) called, the new homonormativity marketizes and normalizes queer subjects, where the normalization occurs by neglecting the immoralized parts of the sexual subject. Sexuality, rather, becomes a consumptuary phenomenon by serving the interests of the market, and sexual citizen is subjugated for the adoption of commodified gay lifestyle (Lowe, 1995). While *RevPride* shouts ‘*Every time we fuck, we win*’, they reject the hegemonic intervention on queer subjectivities from a homonormative discourse which brings up consumptuary role of the subject front, and sexual expression behind. They do reject being affluent gay consumers of commodified zones of indifferences. Furtherly, they perform an identity construction that is, in Lacanian terms, dependent upon its constitutive outside, where they define queer community with what is not homonormative, consumerist, and capitalist.

The description of such an alternative queer community goes further in the following text;

“The block will rally all of us LGBTQIA+ socialists and antifascists who dream of a new time and place: a time beyond capitalism, a place without barbed wire and closets. We want to demand our rights and improve our living conditions on our own, we want to see a Pride that goes back to its foundations. We will meet in the kisses and the slogans, we will meet in the August sun that burns and screams that the streets belong to us.”

(Revolutionär Pride & Queers Against Fascism i Prideparaden 5/8,2017)

This (re)articulation of queer community reclaims the political identity in response to depoliticizing subjugation of neoliberal discourse. To reclaim their 'sexual citizenship' as a political identity, they 'dream of a new time and place'. In other words, they reject what commodified places are currently offering to them, and rather reclaim the urban space as a political domain. They reclaim a citizenship status which they 'demand rights' for a recognition and 'improve their own living conditions' for a fair redistribution corresponding to Plummer's (2003) conception of citizenship. As Mouffe (1992) sees citizenship as an *articulating principle*, different connotations of the term can lead dramatically different meanings. The subject position of sexual citizen can be rearticulated in different conditions, moments, and places. This is also what makes urban space a very important component of the analysis. In Lacanian terms, the subject is 'a perpetually incomplete structure which constantly strives to become a whole' (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p.42), therefore, the subjectivity cannot be complete under any circumstances. The subject identifies themselves with 'something', that is never a complete subjectivity, but rather, one of the subject positions they may adopt. This identification with something contingently occurs in the way that what Laclau and Mouffe call as the nodal point of identity, or as Lacan put it, the *master signifier* (*ibid*). Therefore, the sexual citizenship can be structured differently through discourse under different conditions, as the master signifiers can only be antagonistically existing, where it becomes impossible to fix their meanings. This situation is closely related to rearticulation of sexual citizenship through Pride, where in Stockholm Pride heteronormativity is partly and temporarily overcome and the subject position of LGBTQ identities are promoted. The Pride event as a mythical place temporarily transform the normativity of sex, where the hidden pleasures of sex, non-normative sexual desire becomes publicly visible and the meanings of sexual citizenship is inclusively rearticulated. However, it only occurs through the lenses of the capitalist market, where the neoliberal discourse only allows liberation for queers in the chain of equivalence with commodification and consumption, where its limits and the scope of profitability is defined by place-marketing strategies of the urban. Furthermore, while Pride becomes the space offering these temporary 'liberations', the heteronormativity keeps reproducing itself in any public sphere defined by the same neoliberal discourse of the imagined

society. Therefore, it is very difficult to give Pride festival a revolutionary role to overcome normativity of sex under its current commercialized conditions.

In the text, the urban space is reclaimed by *RevPride* in order to (re)articulate how citizenship is lately defined within neoliberal discourse. Therefore, it is important not to neglect that discourses on the urban space and citizenship can antagonistically redefine each other. As it can be seen at *RevPride*'s text, they define an alternative usage of the urban space; which needs to be 'a place without barbed wires and closets', and become 'streets that belong to them'. By calling action for that, with a citizenship identified through discourse, they alternate how the urban space is being used.

4.3. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Throughout the analysis, I have investigated hegemonic and alternating discourses on the sexual citizenship, specifically how social antagonisms exist in the ongoing (and never-ending) struggle of identity construction. The conflict between two subject positions that builds sexual citizenship; either as a depoliticized passive consumer, or a political participatory subject, has been formed through (re)articulations in representations, group formations and subjugations by hegemonic discourses. The hegemony of neoliberal discourse here has been defining a city as a commercialized myth; accordingly, a commodified Pride and a consumerist idea of sexual citizenship. Expectedly, it has resulted with certain social consequences. Namely, queer subjects have been distanced from their political struggle by being a part of a new entrepreneurial project, where they have been reduced to become 'consumers rather than citizens'. Stockholm Pride has become a commodified zone of indifference, where it adopts a supportive role of the rebranding of Stockholm City, and its competitiveness for the creative class and the tourists. As a result, sexual citizenship could be fulfilled with a passivized consumptuary role. However, by adopting a discourse theory perspective, this study has stressed out the contingency of knowledge constructions, where the objectivity of truths can be prevented by social antagonisms. Consistently, the second part of the analysis has shown us the identity construction can never be fulfilled. In an

imagined society where we hold subject positions rather than fixed identities, the discourses on sexual citizenship remain open to different attempts of fixations. *RevPride*'s norm-critical reading of *Pride* and a more authentic definition of queer community appear as a challenge to the homonormative and neoliberal discourse on sexual citizenship. The rejection of consumerism and commodification threatens a neoliberal reading of *Pride*, and in overall, the normatively constructed myth of society.

This study has shown that sexual citizenship remains as a floating term which adopts its multiple meanings from the discursive struggles behind it. Specifically, analysing discourses has led us to identify two major struggles throughout the analysis which are shaped by articulatory practices. Namely, (1) how the urban space is organized as a result of (re)articulating the myth of society and the city; and (2) how different representations of queer community defines the group identity as a whole. These two discursive struggles form an interplay in the construction of sexual citizenship, building the antagonism on the subject position; putting the term somewhere in between a commodified or politicized zone, and somewhat in between with a passivized or participatory identity. Such a struggle leads us to identify, if hegemonic discourse can be foundational on commodification of places and passivisation of subjects, then it is also foundational for maldistribution and misrecognition. If the claims for recognition and redistribution are inseparable for the fulfilment of participatory parity as Fraser (2013) suggested, two abovementioned discursive struggles would play a constitutive role in remedying social injustice. Firstly, how *Pride* is organized as a commodified zone can be resulted with a participatory crisis, where participatory role of sexual citizenship is defined with purchasing power. Such a positioning neglects distributive justice, and groups that cannot have enough financial resources will be misrecognized. Secondly, where representations of queer communities are defined by hegemonic discourses, sexual citizenship can be portrayed as culturally limited, which may be defined through homonormative assumptions on 'gay consumer' culture. Therefore, the misrecognized identity of queer communities will endorse consumerism, and as a result, maldistribution. In this case, the claims for social justice would be strengthened with the resistance against hegemonic interventions of neoliberal discourse. Reclaiming the urban space as a political participatory zone

would carry the potential of leading to an active citizenship, as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) claimed that is possible with a *plural and radical democracy* where political space is organised with non-singularity of power sources and a pluralized conception of citizenship is facilitated.

While this study has shown (re)articulatory practices on sexual citizenship in the case of *Stockholm Pride*, the scope of the research can be extended to explore other commodified experiences of urban space on depoliticizing sexual citizenship. This would lead a further investigation of the chains of equivalences formed by the hegemonic interventions, and struggle of the identity construction occurring in other realms. Also, the exploration of antagonists of neoliberal discourse can be widened to identify coexisting social antagonisms. Thus, it can provide researcher a larger frame of how the imaginary of radical democracy can be formulated in the contingent nature of imagined society(ies).

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