

Sakellariou Venetia: Collective emotions and social and political behavior.

The subject of her doctoral studies refers to the “Collective emotions and social and political behavior”. More specifically, her studies are on collective emotions and refugees’ crisis. The emotional reactions of Greek people, their behavior towards the refugees and generally their attitude towards the European structure. The research on collective emotions and generally on emotions is an innovative scientific field. In the last decades, people are aware that emotions are the engine of behavior, the motivation of human activity, as well as the directing, prioritizing function of the brain and therefore, they impel to an immediate reaction. Moreover, the realization of emotions helps the interpreting and understanding of all human social and political actions. Nowadays, Greece experiences a new transitional social context, due to the financial crisis and the refugees’ issue. Her intention is to depict the collective emotions which have been generated and their impact on human behavior. As for collective emotions, she originally did a historical research started from Le Bon (1895), Tarde (1890), Mac Dougall (1920), Durkheim etc, who had first mentioned the phenomenon of emotions expressed during gatherings and rituals. At present, the theorists of emotions focus on three ways which collective emotions are elicited: 1. Through identification with a social collectivity. Theorists approach collective emotions as group-based emotions and interpret them on the basis of the social identity theory. 2. Through culture and shared knowledge. Theorists mainly study the appraisal theory of emotions and support common shared meaning of events and situations among individuals and at the same time, they research the impact of social context on appraisals and the impact of civilization and common knowledge as a whole. The above mentioned way is the crucial point of convergence between psychology and sociology. 3. Through emotional contagion which occurs during the individuals’ physical proximity, such as mimic gestures during face-to-face encounters. Furthermore, she also studies emotional climate, which is interwoven with collective emotions. Another crucial point of her research is the study of social contexts, which are divided into two categories: 1. lasting cultural contexts and 2. transitional contexts. The study of these contexts is very significant because all emotions are generated within them.