

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick

Permanent WRAP URL:

<http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/164444>

copyright and reuse:

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it.

Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: wrap@warwick.ac.uk

The production, transnational circulation and re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’ from Gramsci to Postcolonial studies

Piermarco Piu

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

Supervisors

Prof. Gurminder K. Bhambra and Dr. Goldie Osuri

University of Warwick, Department of Sociology
December 2020

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Table of Contents | 2 |
| Acknowledgements | 5 |
| Declaration | 6 |
| Abstract | 7 |
| Introduction..... | 8 |
| <i>Methodology</i> | <i>18</i> |
| 1. <i>The transnational circulation and re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’: a composite framework of analysis</i> | <i>18</i> |
| 2. <i>Selection of the literature: criteria</i> | <i>21</i> |
| 3.1 <i>Selection of the literature: limits</i> | <i>25</i> |
| 3.2 <i>The impact of the hierarchies of knowledge on the literature selection</i> | <i>27</i> |
| 1. Introducing the ‘subaltern question’. Gramsci and the <i>Prison</i> Notebooks | 30 |
| 1.1 <i>“At the Margins of History”: the socio-political conception of subalternity</i> | <i>30</i> |
| 1.2. <i>The “Observations on Folklore”: the cultural dimension of subalternity</i> | <i>36</i> |
| 1.3. <i>“Spontaneity and Conscious Direction”: the gradient of political and cultural organisation of subaltern groups</i> | <i>41</i> |
| 2. The ‘folklore debates’ in Italy | 47 |
| 2.1 <i>The ‘folklore debates’ in Italy: the first wave (1949-1955)</i> | <i>47</i> |
| 2.2 <i>The ‘folklore debates’ in Italy: Cirese and the second wave (late 1960s-1980s) ..</i> | <i>53</i> |
| 3. At the margins of the Italian folklore debates | 57 |
| 3.1 <i>The circuits of circulation of the Italian folklore debates: connections ‘at the margins’ between Hobsbawm, the PCI intellectuals and De Martino</i> | <i>57</i> |
| 3.2 <i>Hobsbawm: re-articulating the ‘subaltern question’ at the margins of the Italian folklore debates.....</i> | <i>64</i> |
| 4. At the roots of <i>Subaltern Studies</i>..... | 67 |
| 4.1 <i>The roots of Subaltern Studies (I): contexts and circuits of circulation of Gramsci in the Anglophone area (1957-1970)</i> | <i>67</i> |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 4.2 The roots of Subaltern Studies (II): contexts and circuits of circulation of Gramsci in the Anglophone area (1970-1983) | 72 |
| 4.3 Subaltern Studies: reading Gramsci within an intellectual conjuncture (I)..... | 81 |
| 5. Subaltern Studies and the re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’ | 85 |
| 5.1 The ‘subaltern question’ in Subaltern Studies (1982-1988) | 85 |
| 5.2 Subaltern autonomy: the ‘politics of the people’, spontaneity, subaltern consciousness and subaltern insurgency | 90 |
| 5.3 Subaltern Studies: reading Gramsci within an intellectual conjuncture (II)..... | 101 |
| 5.4 Subalternity in Subaltern Studies, the Italian folklore debates and Gramsci: affinities and divergences | 104 |
| 5.4.1 Subaltern Studies, the Italian folklore debates and subaltern autonomy.... | 106 |
| 5.4.2 Subaltern Studies, Gramsci and subaltern autonomy | 107 |
| 5.5 The rhythm of thought of subalternity in Subaltern Studies and the ‘epistemic turn’ in the ‘subaltern question’: consequences for sociological analysis..... | 110 |
| 6. Spivak, Subaltern Studies and the globalisation of the ‘subaltern question’ | 120 |
| 6.1 Spivak and Subaltern Studies (1982-1987) | 120 |
| 6.2 1988: “Can the Subaltern Speak?” | 131 |
| 6.3 “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, epistemic violence and the ‘old’ subalternity..... | 141 |
| 6.4 The circulation of “Can the Subaltern Speak?”: institutional conditions and intellectual conjunctures | 145 |
| 6.5 The circulation of the ‘subaltern question’ in the US academy: intellectual and political re-articulations | 150 |
| 7. Spivak after “Can the Subaltern Speak?”: re-articulations of subalternity | 156 |
| 7.1 Subalternity beyond the ‘old subaltern’ | 156 |
| 7.1.1 The ‘new subaltern’ | 156 |
| 7.1.2 Subalternity, a position without identity..... | 163 |
| 7.2 The ‘rhythm of thought’ of subalternity in Spivak’s work | 165 |
| 7.3 Re-assessing Spivak’s contribution to the ‘Postcolonial Gramsci’ | 168 |
| 8. The impact of the ‘subaltern question’ in the social sciences, or ‘How can the Subaltern contribute to Social and Sociological Theory’? | 183 |
| 8.1 The circulation of postcolonial understandings of the ‘subaltern question’ in the social sciences | 185 |
| 8.2 How can the Subaltern contribute to Social and Sociological Theory? Introducing the epistemic perspective and the social practice..... | 190 |
| 8.3 The epistemic perspective | 193 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 8.3.1 <i>The limits of the epistemic perspective</i> | 196 |
| 8.4 <i>Forms of transition between the epistemic perspective and the social practice</i> | 202 |
| 8.5 <i>The social practice and the collaborative turn</i> | 206 |
| 9. Conclusion. How can the Subaltern Contribute to Social and Sociological Theory? Towards a ‘subaltern theoretical direction’ | 211 |
| 9.1 <i>The ‘subaltern question’ and the ‘contribution problem’ as a social practice</i> | 211 |
| 9.2 <i>The ‘subaltern question’ and the ‘collaborative turn’</i> | 216 |
| 9.3 <i>A subaltern theoretical direction.....</i> | 223 |
| Epilogue..... | 233 |
| Notes..... | 236 |
| Bibliography | 257 |

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been funded by the ESRC.

Thanks to my supervisors, Gurminder K. Bhambra and Goldie Osuri, for all the discussions, suggestions, critiques and challenges, and for the invaluable human support when times got rough – but also, for the good times! Thanks also to all the staff and colleagues in the Department of Sociology, for their comments and input on earlier drafts and sections of this thesis, to Janet Smith, for the technical support, and to Anna Maria Piredda, for the access to the libraries in Sassari.

Thanks to my planetary crew of friends: Ákos, Leonello, Rebecca, Gian Lorenzo, Licia, Lorenzo, Gabriela, Sami, Tania, Erik, Mara, Rosalind, Rosie, Heidi, Manu, Gianluca, Marian, Maurizio, Felipe, Eli, Gianluca, Stefania & family, Carlo, Daniela & family, Carlo, Valeria & family, Mauro, Vedra & family, Stefano, Giulia, Giuseppe, Nuala, Matteo, Roberto, Elisabetta, Gianstefano, Valentina, Brancazzu&Anna, Angelo, Antonio, Melanie, Andrew, Bruno, Cate, Claudio, Martina, Daniele, Mefi, Fabio, Aurora, Danilo, Lorenzo, Alice, Leonardo, Maria Giovanna, Saverio, Rosa, Abramo, Ivana, Carlotta, Marcello, Michele, Mariangela, Giada, Moissa, tutt* le/i compagn* di Rebeldia... I don't think I have time and space to explain why each of you has 'deposited traces in me', but thanks! A special thanks to Simona, Marco and Sara.

Thanks to Zia Anna, Zio Mario, Warren, Emily, Erna, my (extended) family, for the support.

Grazie a Vannino e Giovanna, pa la zappitta & il libro.

Thanks to Christine, because we've shared this.

Questa tesi è per Stefania, che non c'è più.

Declaration

The thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

The 'subaltern question' cuts across various intellectual endeavours – from Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* in the 1930s, through the Italian folklore debates and British 'history from below' during the 1950s-1960s, to *Subaltern Studies* in the 1980s and, more recently, Postcolonial studies. This circulation has also extended to broader debates in the social sciences. For example, postcolonial perspectives in sociology have made reference to the role that the 'subaltern question' plays in the construction of new sociologies and social theories of 'the modern' and 'the global'. Further sociological debates have mobilised the resources of *Subaltern Studies* in order to develop social theories regarding the politics of subaltern groups in the Global South, particularly in India.

The aim of this thesis is to map the transnational circuits whereby the 'subaltern question' was produced, circulated and re-articulated and to consider the implications of this for current debates in the social sciences.

The 'subaltern question' circulated across heterogeneous times and institutional and political contexts, and it was re-articulated within different theoretical and political frameworks. This thesis reflects on the problems, solutions and applications raised by these re-articulations. In particular, it uses these reflections to interrogate the ways in which 'the subaltern' contributes to social theories developed in the social sciences debates, considering their various deployments of subalternity, as well as their respective strengths and limitations. Notwithstanding the risk of commodifying subalternity, this thesis argues that emancipatory spaces can be carved out of the hegemonic relation between sociology and subalternity by challenging – although never completely subverting – the hierarchies and social practices between intellectual and subaltern groups. As such, this thesis puts forward the idea of a 'subaltern theoretical direction' grounded on a practice of *conricerca*. This is proposed as a novel and politically effective way of engaging 'spontaneous' subaltern contributions, such that the hierarchies are reconsidered in terms of their articulation *within* a 'single cultural environment'.

Introduction

What does the pagan-inflected religiosity of the Southern Italian peasantry before the 'Economic Miracle' have in common with the tribal insurgencies of colonial and postcolonial India? And what does the deconstruction of hegemonic narratives that have excluded non-Western others have in common with the historiographical, sociological and anthropological interest in (pre)political mobilisations of the oppressed? Likewise, the relaxed after-dinner discussions of British and Italian historians and the animated conferences of diasporic Indian intellectuals? Or even between some notebooks written in a dark prison cell and volumes printed by the most important academic publishing houses of the world? The answer boils down to: the 'subaltern question'.

This dissertation understands the 'subaltern question' as a configuration of problems – not least, the polysemic definition of subalternity – that have emerged in relation to subordinate social groups (but also, individuals) whose historical activity is repressed, neglected, misinterpreted or 'at the margins' of hegemonic histories, discourses and social formations. This dissertation argues that the 'subaltern question' represents the guiding thread cutting across intellectual endeavours that were to varying degrees connected with each other – from Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* in the 1930s, through the Italian folklore debates and British 'history from below' in the 1950s-1960s, to *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial studies¹ (for example, Gayatri Spivak's work) in the 1980s-1990s. Significantly, this circulation had an impact upon current debates in the social sciences – particularly, the theoretical approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies and the context-specific studies on subaltern groups influenced by *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial studies.

Theoretical approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies have made implicit or explicit reference to the role that the 'subaltern question' plays in the development of social theories of 'the modern' and 'the global' and in the construction of new global sociologies. The context-specific studies have used their interactions with subaltern actors and have mobilised the resources of *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial studies to develop social theories regarding the politics of subaltern groups in the Global

South, for example in India. In this way, and although the connection with the 'subaltern question' is not always explicit in these debates – to the point that sometimes it has not been addressed at all – its impact on them is not negligible.

The central aim of this thesis is to map the transnational circuits whereby the 'subaltern question' was produced, circulated and re-articulated and to consider the extent to which this circulation has had an impact on current debates in the social sciences. This brings the 'subaltern question' to the fore of these debates, to evaluate the intellectual and political implications of an explicit discussion of this issue.

The first part of this dissertation thus accounts for the *transnational circulation and re-articulation of the 'subaltern question'*. Some terminological clarifications are mandatory here. The term *circulation* draws on Wiebke Keim's discussions on the international circulation of knowledge in the social sciences. According to Keim (2014: 90, 93), 'circulation' denotes processes of knowledge production understood as collective endeavours. These processes are thus characterized by communicative interactions between agents who exchange ideas through books, documents, articles, conversations, etc. But also, ideas are exchanged through the agents themselves, who embody those ideas and therefore act as 'living conduits'. As such, knowledge is not produced in one location and subsequently spread, rather it is produced in and through circulation (Wörher, Keim, Ersche et al. 2014: 252). This introduces the *transnational* character of this circulation. In particular, this dissertation understands knowledge circulation as a process that is not territorially bound to a nation state. Rather it constantly moves across nations and national borders, so that knowledge is produced by this continuous movement, which shifts the meaning of an idea or problem according to location, place or historical context (Grewal 2005: 3, 7-8, 12).

Moreover, knowledge does not circulate within empty political spaces. Rather it crosses over hierarchies, according to specific and asymmetric enabling mechanisms – e.g. material and institutional cleavages, contexts of reproduction, processes of recognition and prestige (Keim 2014: 92-94). The present work considers and develops² Keim's models of circulation – 'reception'³, 'exchange'⁴ and 'negotiation between

theories and practices’⁵ – so as to conceptualize the concrete contexts of circulation of the ‘subaltern question’.

This dissertation illustrates the ways in which the ‘subaltern question’ has been approached from different theoretical and political perspectives, during its circulation across different times and institutional and political contexts. This story officially started in the 1930s with Gramsci’s observations on subalternity in his *Prison Notebooks*, and unfolded over the next 85 years, following the multiple circuits where the ‘subaltern question’ was *re-articulated* through receptions, exchanges and negotiations – that is, where the ‘subaltern question’ was acknowledged and (mis)interpreted, hybridized and modified with other theoretical and political frameworks, critically discussed or simply accepted as an implicit or explicit source of intellectual or practical inspiration. The dissertation maps the emergence of the ‘subaltern question’ from different contexts. In this sense, the ‘subaltern question’ was discussed across different countries (e.g. Italy, India, UK, US) and produced by different editorial operations (e.g. the philological version of the *Prison Notebooks*, the version of the Communist Party of Italy, the different translations and selections in the English-speaking world). Furthermore, it was applied in relation to different political and social situations (e.g. the social struggles of the Italian subaltern masses pre- and post-World War II, the subaltern insurgencies in Europe after the French Revolution, the subaltern mobilizations in colonial and postcolonial India), different disciplines (e.g. history, anthropology, sociology, literary criticism), and different bodies of thought, schools and debates (e.g. the Italian folklore debates, British Marxism, *Subaltern Studies*, Postcolonial studies – particularly, Spivak’s work – and current debates in the social sciences).

This encompassing account of the unfolding of the ‘subaltern question’ is based on an endeavour that maps the material circulation of concepts, debates and problems within and across multiple circuits situated in historically specific contexts. This mapping exercise is fundamental not only to highlight the historical connections between the different moments in the circulation, but also to shed a critical light on this circulation: a historical account of the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’ highlights the ways in which subalternity has been approached in different

historical contexts. In particular, it highlights the possibilities opened or closed by these re-articulations: for example, the idea of subalternity as an epistemic position that is used to re-organise an academic field, or the erosion of its socio-historical understanding. Moreover, it sheds light on the new or recurrent theoretical and political problems that these re-articulations have raised: for example on the one hand, the 'methodological reduction' and the 'epistemic approach' to subalternity; on the other hand, questions that span from subaltern autonomy and the schism between leaders and led, to spontaneity and direction or the integration between subaltern and hegemonic knowledges. Further, it highlights the solutions and the applications that these re-articulations have envisioned: for example, the use of subalternity in a colonial context or the strategies to retrieve subaltern traces in hegemonic discourses.

Additionally, the discussion of each specific moment in this circulation provides the lexicon and the point of comparison to evaluate the deployment of subalternity in other moments of the circulation. That is, each moment in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question' can be used in a comparison with the other moments, so as to understand them from different perspectives, and to interrogate them on the basis of issues that are still open questions in these other moments.

In this way, this extensive account offers substantial contributions to literature. It explores the almost neglected historical connections of the Italian folklore debates with the rest of the debates on subalternity – particularly, the British 'history from below' and *Subaltern Studies* – and it uses this discussion to draw comparisons and develop critical insights on these different moments. Moreover, it illustrates the 'rhythm of thought'⁶ of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies* and Spivak, thus offering a perspective that criticizes and enhances the existing literature interested in their approaches to subalternity. Further, it offers an original contribution to the existing literature on the reception of Gramsci's ideas by using Spivak's 'rhythm of thought of subalternity' to re-assess the debates on the 'Postcolonial Gramsci'.

At the same time, this mapping exercise provides conceptual and critical insights that pave the way for the second part of this dissertation. Particularly relevant here are the analyses on the circulation of the 'subaltern question' in the English-speaking world,

and the discussions on the approach to subalternity in *Subaltern Studies*, Spivak and, more generally, Postcolonial Studies. This dissertation discusses the ways in which the circulation of the English translations of the *Prison Notebooks* presented Gramsci's observations on subalternity as purely methodological suggestions.

Moreover, it argues that this 'methodological reduction' was central to *Subaltern Studies* and Spivak's work. This is because it provided the conditions for one specific re-articulation of subalternity which became dominant in Postcolonial studies: the 'epistemic approach' to the 'subaltern question'. This understands subalternity as a perspective external to the hegemonic domain, which is used to analyse the implicit regulative code that organises hegemonic discourses. At the same time, this dissertation illustrates the possibilities that the epistemic understanding of subalternity opens (or closes) in terms of theoretical, sociological and political developments. In particular, it discusses the implications of considering subalternity not as the object of sociological enquiry, but as a position from which to critique and re-organise an academic field (e.g. historiography, anthropology, sociology, etc.)

Significantly, these discussions are relevant for the second part of this dissertation, which addresses the theoretical approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies and the context-specific analyses on subaltern groups. This second part dedicated to understand the extent to which the 'subaltern question' affected these debates, and to evaluate them through an explicit discussion of this issue. Although the connection with the 'subaltern question' is not always explicit in these debates, the present work considers the specific cases where this impact is evident. For example, it discusses the socio-historical use of the word 'subaltern' and the explicit references to and critiques of *Subaltern Studies* and Spivak's work. Moreover, it generalises this specific impact into a broader interpretative hypothesis about these debates: it claims that these debates rework a postcolonial (and epistemic) understanding of the 'subaltern question', where subalternity is understood as a position that is external/excluded from the hegemonic narratives and formations. This dissertation argues that these debates have sought to develop new social theories and ideas of sociology by moving beyond the idea of subalternity behind this postcolonial understanding. This has been done on the basis of insights generated from concrete interactions with subaltern groups or

simply by 'being sensitive to subaltern voices'. These debates point to a more general aspect of the 'subaltern question', which concerns the inclusion of subaltern contributions within social and sociological theories. That is, 'How can the Subaltern contribute to Social and Sociological Theory?'

This dissertation illustrates this problem in terms of an epistemic and a social-practical perspective. It argues that, when the 'contribution problem' is approached as an epistemic issue, subalternity represents a standpoint that, along with other standpoints, is included within interpretative frameworks that (re)construct social theories and new sociologies. In this respect, social and sociological theories are developed through a subaltern standpoint. Whereas, when the 'contribution problem' is approached as a social practice, social and sociological theories are constructed with subaltern groups. This dissertation demonstrates that this social practice can be understood in terms of Keim's 'negotiations between theory and practice', and thus in terms of exchanges of knowledge between academic and extra-academic actors.

Crucially, the present work argues that the debates analysed in the second part of this dissertation can be interpreted and evaluated in the light of these two perspectives. This dissertation discusses the ways in which both debates emphasise the epistemic perspective on the 'contribution problem', thus reiterating an epistemic approach to subalternity, where 'subaltern' is more a point of observation than a social agent. Moreover, this dissertation points to the limitations implicit in this epistemic position, particularly highlighting the minimal space dedicated to explaining the ways in which academic and extra-academic actors (re)construct social theory or new sociologies. Or, the minimal space dedicated to exploring the strategies that might guide the negotiations towards these (re)constructions, and understand the power relations and political practices that inform these negotiations. As such, this thesis argues that both these debates have lost track of the practical aspects of the 'subaltern question'.

This dissertation uses this critique to emphasise the need for supplementing the epistemic approach to subalternity with its practical aspects, and thus for discussing both debates from the perspective of the 'contribution problem' as a social practice – particularly in terms of collaborations with political impact. Significantly, some scholars

in these debates have sought to discuss the 'contribution problem' in these terms. The present work builds on their position, highlighting some questions that have been left open: what exactly is the emancipatory potential in these debates? What are its limits? How can collaborative projects deal with the differentials in cultural power that inform the negotiations between theory and practice?

This final part of this dissertation addresses these three questions, so as to shed light on the practical implications of the 'subaltern question' that have been overlooked in both debates. That is, it uses the 'subaltern question' to discuss the social practices whereby sociologists and subaltern groups cooperatively produce social/sociological theories. As such, the dissertation develops Keim's idea of 'negotiations between theory and practice', arguing that knowledge in these negotiations circulate across the subaltern-hegemonic cleavage: the present work conceptualises the relation between subaltern and hegemonic knowledges in terms of spontaneity and direction. This understands the debates in the social sciences as hegemonic operations that formalise 'spontaneous' subaltern knowledges and that, more generally, insert them within the hegemonic circuits of knowledge production. Crucially, this dissertation argues that this hegemonic inclusion is double edged, because it might 'colonize' subaltern knowledges or commodify subalternity, but also might open up spaces of emancipation. How can these spaces be carved out of a hegemonic relation – particularly the relation between intellectuals and subalterns?

In this respect, this dissertation discusses the pedagogy-hegemony relation in Gramsci's work and the potentials and limits of his experiences with the workers' movement. In particular, it demonstrates that a hegemonic relation with subaltern groups can pursue emancipation if it challenges as well as recognises the structural hierarchies informing the intellectual division of labour between intellectuals and subalterns. In this way, this thesis argues that the hegemonic relation between sociology and subalternity opens up spaces of emancipation if it reconsiders the hierarchies between researchers and subaltern groups, without necessarily assuming the dissolution of these hierarchies.

As such, this dissertation puts forward the idea of a 'subaltern theoretical direction' grounded on a practice of *conricerca*. This is proposed as a politically effective way of engaging 'spontaneous' subaltern contributions, so that the hierarchies are reconsidered in terms of their articulation *within* a 'single cultural environment'. In particular, the 'subaltern theoretical direction' offers an example of strategic imagination that can guide the negotiations between theory and practice, which in turn bring about the cooperative (re)construction of social theories and new sociologies. Moreover, it offers the conceptual, imaginative and organisational resources to potentially mend the schism between intellectuals and subalterns. As such, the last part of this dissertation represents a way to re-connect with the 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, where the epistemic and practical aspects of the 'subaltern question' are interwoven.

The reason to discuss the cooperative production of social/sociological theories with subalterns in the light of the 'subaltern question' rests on three considerations. Firstly, this discussion is used to evaluate the impact of the 'subaltern question' in current debates in the social sciences. This is particularly relevant, considering that a significant part of interventions in these debates has not sufficiently addressed the social aspects of the 'contribution problem', thus losing track of the practical dimension of the 'subaltern question'. Secondly, this discussion builds on the recent literature on these debates, which has emphasised the need for exploring and fostering the concrete engagement between the sociologists and 'the public'. This thesis discusses this need in terms of the strategies (i.e. a 'subaltern theoretical direction') that can guide the engagement of the sociologists with a '*subaltern* public'. Thirdly, this discussion is animated by one of the most pressing political problems in the 'subaltern question' – that of mending the schism between intellectuals and subalterns. Generally speaking, this schism is determined by what Gramsci defines as the most elementary political problem: "there really do exist rulers and ruled, leaders and led. [...] [P]olitics [is] based on this primordial, and [...] irreducible fact" (Gramsci 1971: 144 [Q15 §4⁷]). In particular, this schism results from specific historical and institutional conditions – not least, the academic apparatus – which exclude subaltern groups from participating to hegemonic cultural activities.

This dissertation argues that the development of social research on subaltern groups or on the basis of subaltern perspectives is important. But also, it is important to address *how* this development might occur, thus considering the concrete ways in which ‘the excluded’ can be included. Different issues are at stake here: the role of the intellectual, who avoid being self-referential by relating to subalterns and to the ‘subaltern question’. More importantly, the emancipatory possibilities opened up by the inclusion of the excluded, in terms of both epistemic and social justice. This dissertation contributes to explore these emancipatory possibilities from the perspective of (direct) democracy in the production of knowledge. This represents a small step in the direction of practices that can challenge the separation between intellectuals and subalterns – particularly, the sociologists and the ‘others’ excluded by sociological narratives.

This perspective is informed by the awareness that this separation is a historical issue, and it is thereby the product of social divisions but, also, of the division of intellectual labour. The point is to decide to overcome this separation or not – or, at least, to either address or not address this separation as a political problem, and thus to think through the construction of different relations between intellectuals and subalterns. The future of the global and Postcolonial sociologies debates and the context-specific research on subaltern groups is determined by the small steps taken towards the solution of this political problem.

This dissertation is composed of 9 Chapters (including the Conclusion). Chapter 1 introduces the ‘subaltern question’ and the issues that are relevant to the present work. This chapter discusses Gramsci’s observations on subalternity in the *Prison Notebooks*, thus highlighting his socio-political conception of subalternity, his observations on the cultural aspects of subalternity and his considerations on spontaneity and direction.

Chapters 2 to 7 focus on the history of the transnational circulation and re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’. Chapter 2 discusses the early reception of Gramsci’s approach to subalternity in the Italian folklore debates after World War II, and in the ‘second wave’ of these debates (1960s-1970s).

Chapter 3 addresses the relation of the Italian folklore debates to the subsequent moments of the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question', particularly, Eric Hobsbawm's work.

Chapter 4 explores the intellectual roots of *Subaltern Studies*. In particular, it discusses the ways in which their intellectual production was affected by the circulation of Gramsci's work in the Anglophone area between the 1950s and the 1980s as well as by the debates on his work (e.g. the debates among the British Marxist and the 'second wave' of the Italian folklore debates).

Chapter 5 discusses the 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity in the early *Subaltern Studies* (1982-1988), evaluating it in relation to Gramsci's work. In particular, this chapter argues that *Subaltern Studies* have provided the *condition of possibility* for an epistemic understanding of subalternity.

Chapter 6 addresses the intellectual relation between Spivak and *Subaltern Studies*, and it discusses another central moment in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question' – that is, Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a). It introduces the approach to subalternity in Spivak's early work, arguing that this approach has actualized – although is not reducible to – the epistemic understanding of subalternity. Moreover, this chapter discusses the circulation of Spivak's early work during the 1990s-2000s, particularly in the US academy. It considers the 'global' projection of the epistemic approach to the 'subaltern question' as well as the institutional conditions that supported this process. Ultimately, this chapter demonstrates that the adoption of the epistemic approach as the main interpretation of the 'subaltern question' is due to the reception of Spivak's work.

Chapter 7 considers Spivak's later approach to subalternity, which integrates the early one into a complex explanatory matrix of the 'subaltern question'. This chapter illustrates Spivak's 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity. It compares Gramsci and Spivak's 'rhythms of thought' of subalternity, in order to discuss the transnational

circulation of the 'subaltern question' in Postcolonial studies. In particular, it reassesses Spivak's contribution to the idea of a 'Postcolonial Gramsci'.

Chapter 8 discusses the extent to which the 'subaltern question' affected theoretical approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies and context-specific research on subaltern groups. Moreover, the question 'How can the Subaltern contribute to Social and Sociological Theory?' is used to develop some critical considerations on these debates.

The Conclusion addresses these critical considerations, thus discussing the social contexts whereby sociologies and subaltern groups cooperatively produce social and sociological theories. It considers this problem in the light of the 'subaltern question', thus putting forward an argument about a 'subaltern theoretical direction' that prefigures the cooperative development of social and sociological theories from below.

Methodology

1. The transnational circulation and re-articulation of the 'subaltern question': a composite framework of analysis

This thesis is organised in relation to some key moments in the history of the approaches to the 'subaltern question'. In particular it wishes to illustrate the movement of the 'subaltern question' throughout contexts that are distant in space and time. Moreover, it aims to understand the ways in which the meanings of the 'subaltern question' have shifted across different situations: the contexts where the methodological, historiographical, practical, cultural, political and sociological implications of subalternity have coalesced together (i.e. Gramsci, the Italian folklore debates, Hobsbawm's work); the situations where the theoretical and epistemic implications of the 'subaltern question' have been emphasised (i.e. *Subaltern Studies*, Postcolonial studies and, to a lesser extent, Spivak's work); recent sociological discussions where some of the original implications have come back to the fore – although, as will become clear in the Conclusion, there persist the tendency to

overlook some practical implications of subalternity (for example, the full extent of a subaltern praxis in research).

In order to explore the movement of the 'subaltern question' across different parts of the world, and to chart its semantic shifts, this thesis situates itself at the intersection of global conceptual history, hermeneutics broadly speaking and the sociology of knowledge. This is because it sought to enhance the methodological and theoretical premises of conceptual history through the hermeneutic strategy of close reading, the analytical tools of the sociology of knowledge and through a transnational outlook.

As Reinhart Koselleck has observed, the theoretical premise of conceptual history is that "history finds expression in certain concepts" (Koselleck 2015 [1972]: 46) and that a change in the meaning of a concept corresponds to a change in/of the social context (2015 [1972]: 47). As such concepts are not units of meaning with an original core, because their meanings shift along with the transformation of social contexts. Moreover, conceptual history rests on

[the] methodological principle of framing the analysis through a diachronic and a synchronic perspective: the synchronic dimension concerns the specific situation in which a protagonist uses a concept and the diachronic dimension involves tracing the meanings of a concept over time. (Olsen 2012: 172)

By applying these considerations not only to the concept of subalternity, but also to the network of questions that have been raised around this concept⁸, this thesis looked into the ways in which the 'subaltern question' was approached by different authors, and within writings that can only be understood within specific social situations. In particular it traced the semantic shifts of the 'subaltern question' that emerge from these writings and are related to these social contexts and their changes.

These considerations raise three questions: firstly, how to detect these semantic shifts? This thesis performed the close reading of these writings, in order to delineate the meanings that the 'subaltern question' assumed within them. Close reading represents a technique of in-depth textual analysis that, at its basic level, helps navigating the situational, historical (and, figurative) semantic context of a word (Greenham 2019:

31), thus exploring “the range of possible meanings that any such word may reasonably be said to have” (ibid.).

Considering that, from the perspective of conceptual history, socio-political concepts retain precisely that openness towards a wide range of meanings (Koselleck 2004: 84-85), this dissertation could fruitfully apply close reading to analyse, on the one hand, the semantic scope of subalternity and its network of questions and, on the other hand, the development of their semantic configurations. As such, this thesis could detect the early signs of a new semantic shift – that is, a *re-articulation* of the ‘subaltern question’ – its consolidation, the persistence of old semantic configurations, the development of old configurations into new ones, or their overlap. This provided nuanced accounts of the approaches to subalternity, which questioned the ways in which existing literature has discussed the relation between specific authors and the ‘subaltern question’⁹.

More generally, thanks to this use of close reading, this thesis could enhance the methodological premises of conceptual history. This is because it deployed a “method of micro-diachrony” illustrating those “[s]pecific processes of semantic change, of the accumulation, shift or displacement of meaning” (Steinmetz 2016: 348) that the conceptual history’s focus on long-term diachrony can explain only to a limited degree (ibid.).

Secondly, how exactly does semantics relate to a social context? Similar questions have not received a specific answer in conceptual history – particularly, in Koselleck’s work. In fact, on the one hand,

the question of how language and context influence each other is nowhere elaborated in his approach, except for in the abstract reference to the convergence between history and concept, and the status given to concepts as indicators and factors of historical change. (Olsen 2012: 181)

On the other hand, in conceptual history

‘meaning’ was primarily understood [...] in terms of the reference to extralinguistic circumstances or cognitive correlates (concepts) and only as a rare exception in terms of regular usage in communication. (Steinmetz 2016: 346-347)

This thesis deployed the conceptual tools of the sociology of knowledge in order to bypass these blind spots of conceptual history. In particular, it used the idea of *circulation* (Keim 2014) to map the semantic developments of a concept (or a network of question) in relation to changes of social contexts.

As anticipated in the Introduction, the idea of circulation points to processes of knowledge production characterised as communicative interactions, whereby the meanings of concepts are ‘made in circulation’ and thus re-articulated within, through and in relation to shifting socio-historical contexts. This dissertation used some models of knowledge circulation – i.e. ‘reception’, ‘exchange’ and ‘negotiations between theory and practice’ – in order to address the relation between the concepts (or, the network of questions) and the historical, institutional and social contexts whereby the ‘subaltern question’ has been re-articulated in the past 85 years.

Thirdly, what does a change of social context entail? As mentioned in the Introduction, this dissertation understood circulation as a transnational process where knowledge is continuously produced. As such, a change of social context describes a transformation occurring within a particular context. Moreover, it points to a shift between two (or more) social contexts, which takes place within a *transnational* dimension whereby semantic configuration change through movements and connections across borders. In this way, in the light of this transnational overlook, this thesis sought to challenge “the ‘methodological nationalism’ inherent in the project of conceptual history” (Pernau and Sachsenmaier 2016: 3), thus offering a contribution that can be situated within the global – or, transnational (2016: 11) – turn of the field.

2. Selection of the literature: criteria

On the basis of the composite framework discussed in Section 1, and wishing to understand the key moments of the transnational circulation and re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’, this dissertation primarily selected some influential authors – or, some influential texts or group of texts which constitute the literary corpus¹⁰ that is illustrative of each key moment. An influential text in the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’ can be considered as a highly cited work that has conceivably

had a significant impact on (or, is connected with) one or more moments of this circulation. Or, it is a work that is representative of these moments, because it introduces important re-articulations of subalternity that mark the beginning of a new phase in the circulation of the 'subaltern question'.

The impact of these influential texts was established on the basis of non-quantitative criteria: on the one hand, on the basis of what different scholars have claimed in relation to the impact or the centrality of these texts as well as of their authors. On the other hand, it was established on the basis of the density of debate generated by these texts – which, for example, were published (and re-published) in dedicated anthologies, or represented the focus of special issues or collections of essays, or were recurrently mentioned across a wide range of overviews and critical contributions. Significantly, the greater was the density of the debate, the more these texts could conceivably be considered as central, thus illustrating those key moments in the unfolding of the 'subaltern question' that this thesis explored with more detail.

As such, this dissertation analysed the emergence of the 'subaltern question' in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, where subalternity assumes historical, cultural, political and practical nuances for the first time. In order to shed light on the seminal influence of this conception of subalternity and, more generally, of the *Prison Notebooks* in Italian or English translations, this thesis looked at the first moments of circulation and re-articulation of the 'subaltern question' within and without of Italy: the Italian folklore debates and Hobsbawm's work. It showed the ways in which processes of reception and exchange re-articulated the questions concerning the culture and political mobilisations of subaltern groups. Moreover, it analysed these re-articulations in the light of the new cultural and political exigencies that emerged from the socio-historical contexts where these questions circulated. Furthermore, this thesis demonstrated that the Italian folklore debates and Hobsbawm's work were connected to (and influenced) the broader transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'.

The literary corpus of the Italian folklore debates was selected, on the one hand, among those texts that dedicated anthologies have considered as the most influential contributions to these debates – e.g. Ernesto De Martino's work – and, on the other

hand, among those texts that affected the subsequent circulation of the 'subaltern question' – e.g. Alberto Mario Cirese's work. Hobsbawm's writings were selected on the basis of those texts that have had a meaningful connection with the Italian folklore debates or have had an impact on *Subaltern Studies*¹¹ – a project which, along with the work of Spivak, represent a moment that has been central to recent re-articulations of the 'subaltern question'.

Significantly, this dissertation accounted for a wider selection of sources from *Subaltern Studies* and Spivak, beyond their most influential work. This situated their emphasis on the theoretical and epistemic implications of subalternity within the complexities of a multi-vocal project as *Subaltern Studies*, or of a multifaceted and prolific author as Spivak. Moreover, this thesis used the discussions on their broader literary corpora as heuristic tools to interrogate problems, solutions and applications raised by their re-articulations of subalternity. These interrogations contributed to a theoretical and political lexicon through which this thesis formulated nuanced comparisons with other moments in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'.

In particular, this dissertation focused on the writings that *Subaltern Studies* published between 1982 and 1988, during the early phase of the project. This choice lies on two orders of reasons. Firstly, an interpretative hypothesis of *Subaltern Studies*: their work after the end of the 1980s – with the exception of Spivak's contributions – marked what S. Sarkar (2000 [1997]) calls 'the Decline of the Subaltern' in the project. This does not mean that subalternity disappeared in the later *Subaltern Studies*, after the project's 'postcolonial', 'post-structuralist' or 'postmodern' turn of the mid-1980s.

Nevertheless, not only subalternity as a category received less emphasis than other concepts or problems, for example community, fragment, modernity and Enlightenment (S.Sarkar 2000 [1997]: 300, 307-308). But also, Gramsci became less central to the project (Ludden 2001: 16-18). As such, he was mentioned in the later *Subaltern Studies*. However, they engaged with his thought only within the boundaries of concepts that the group re-articulated before the end of the 1980s, i.e. passive revolution, national-popular, common sense, spontaneity, hegemony and subalternity¹². After the 1980s, the project's exploration of Gramsci's theoretical-

political lexicon was overshadowed by the focus on other conceptual frameworks – i.e., those of Foucault and Derrida. This ‘decline of subalternity’ in the later *Subaltern Studies* is part of the reason why these texts were not engaged with in this thesis.

In addition, 1988 marked the globalisation of the project. As this dissertation mentions, Gramsci's lesser impact on *Subaltern Studies* approximatively coincided with the circulation of the project in US universities, which was prompted by *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988) – a collection published thanks to Edward Said and Spivak's editorial effort. Significantly, as members of *Subaltern Studies* argue (Chakrabarty 1998: 461; Chatterjee 2010a: 85), the image of the project resulting from this ‘global’ operation was for the most part filtered by Spivak's late 1980s essays, particularly “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) and the new version of “Subaltern Studies Deconstructing Historiography” (1988b [1985b]) in *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988). Moreover, as this thesis discusses, after 1988 the research agenda of *Subaltern Studies* began to converge with Spivak's perspective, and with the issues discussed in her essays. The substantial coincidence between these research agendas as well as Spivak's centrality to the circulation of subalternity after 1988 further justifies why this dissertation did not prioritize the discussion on the later *Subaltern Studies*.

Spivak's centrality to this circulation motivated the analysis of a wider part of her intellectual production, which covers her early essays as well as her writings from the mid-1990s onwards. The focus on her later writings is further justified because they introduce new and significant re-articulations of the ‘subaltern question’. The central character of Spivak's early work is also due to its impact on the postcolonial re-articulations of subalternity analysed in this thesis, such as those discussed in Brennan (2013: 73-76) and Green (2013a: 97-99).

The second part of the dissertation wished to understand the role that these debates – particularly, *Subaltern Studies*, Spivak and the postcolonial re-articulations of subalternity – played in empirical research. As such this thesis focused on two strands of sociological debates: on the one hand, the global and Postcolonial sociologies debates, where the ‘subaltern question’ and Spivak's work has had some impact. On the other hand, the writings that have analysed, criticised and re-articulated the

foundational categories of *Subaltern Studies* in order to produce context-specific research on subaltern groups. This dissertation organised its discussion in relation to the ways in which these debates mobilised subalternity for theoretical, epistemic and empirical purposes, but it also emphasised the extent to which they have overlooked some practical aspects of the 'subaltern question'.

Significantly, these debates emerge from ongoing discussions. Therefore this thesis could not easily demarcate them, because it was not possible to assess the influence of recent publications. This situation proved to be different from that of other debates on the 'subaltern question', whose demarcation was also helped by the fact that they were published in anthologies (e.g. the Italian folklore debates) and series (e.g. *Subaltern Studies*), or were produced by a single author (e.g. Hobsbawm or Spivak's work).

In the light of this relatively complicated demarcation, and considering that, as mentioned, this thesis selected the literature according to non-quantitative criteria, the literary corpus of these sociological debates was chosen on the basis of a mix of personal knowledge and non-systematic use of snowballing techniques (see Wohlin 2014: 3), which indirectly measured the influence of some contributions. In the end, more than 100 contributions were included in this dissertation: the literary corpus of this debate was wide enough to suggest interpretative trends on the 'subaltern question', on the basis of which this dissertation formulated generalisations on the use of subalternity in these debates.

3.1 Selection of the literature: limits

What are the limits implicit in the selection of this thesis' literary corpus? As mentioned, this dissertation assessed the impact of the selected literature without relying on quantitative measures. Similarly, there was no attempt to provide a comprehensive review of the literature – for example, through methods of citation analysis (Qiu, Zhao et al. 2017: 207-309) – which would have provided an extended and empirically grounded overview of this literary corpus.

This was mainly due to this thesis' aim and approach to the literature. This dissertation wished to map out some key debates around subalternity, and to understand the relation between semantic and context shifts, rather than to appraise the detailed circulation of these semantic changes. Moreover the time dedicated to a quantitative analysis of the literature would have subtracted time to the close reading of this literature – that is, to the hermeneutic strategy through which this thesis has analysed the various moments in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'.

In fact, quantitative attempts that map the circulation of Gramsci's writings and categories (e.g. Gerli and Santoro 2018) respond to the opposite hermeneutic strategy: distant reading. The use of quantitative methods to study the circulation of the 'subaltern question' would have thus required another kind of work and other reading strategies – which, in any case, would have analysed patterns whose existence is not at question. As Gerli and Santoro (2018: 457) argue,

Gramscian studies have been characterised by some *patterns* that are widely recognized and studied, and whose *effective existence* does not require undue measuring investments, such as the development of [...] a postcolonial circulation grounded on the appropriation of Gramsci's category of «subalternity» in Indian Marxist historiography and in the subsequent spread outside of India.

As such, discarding quantitative approaches to the literature, and thus privileging close reading over distant reading, was central to discuss in depth the semantic shifts throughout the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'. The close reading of the literature allowed to scrutinize the multiple re-articulations of subalternity, and thus to identify and evaluate: the traces of different conceptions of subalternity, for example its differential definition; the modifications introduced by the circulation of variations over original texts, for example the 'methodological reduction' of the 'subaltern question' introduced by the *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (1971); the ways in which these modifications prompted new approaches to subalternity, for example the 'epistemic approach'; the impact of these modifications and approaches on research, for example on current sociological debates.

This does not imply that privileging close reading had no impact on the systematic nature and the empirical validity of this thesis' claims as well as, in principle, on the

representativeness of its results. Although the present work accounted for an 'influential' corpus of literature, thus very likely including the most representative contributions in the circulation of the 'subaltern question, a quantitative approach to this circulation would be desirable for future developments of this dissertation. This would allow to move beyond some hypothesis on the circulation of the 'subaltern question' that, albeit very probable, are grounded on perceptions and impressions. That is, this would assess

how much these tendencies that can be recognized at once in Gramscism on a global scale are significant, and the extent as well as the ways in which they have spread and have re-defined «Gramsciology». (Gerli and Santoro 2018: 457)

3.2 The impact of the hierarchies of knowledge on the literature selection

In what ways have the hierarchies within the circulation of the 'subaltern question' affected the selection of the literary corpus? Are these hierarchies reproduced in the literature selection? Assuming that the meaning of 'hegemonic' oscillates between direction and domination in the political and cultural sphere (Cospito 2009: 266), this dissertation demonstrated that the 'subaltern question' circulated throughout different hegemonic circuits that have progressively lost the connections with each other: the circuits of Western and non-Western revolutionary political parties, where theory and practice of subalternity tended to merge, and the academic circuits of Western and non Western universities, where theory and practice of subalternity progressively detached.

Discussions on subalternity emerged within the writings of a high-profile cadre of the Communist Party of Italy, and were functional to the strategy of this party, which aspired to be hegemonic and thus to direct the revolution of the Italian subaltern groups. The Italian folklore debates, Hobsbawm's work and the early reflections of subalternity in India were part of contexts where the 'subaltern question' was discussed within political parties in order to emancipate subaltern groups in different parts of the world – although it entered the academic debate in correspondence with these moments. Nevertheless, it was only with *Subaltern Studies* that the above-mentioned circuits began to split, with subalternity progressively becoming a

theoretical concern confined to the academia. This was the prelude to the global circulation of the 'subaltern question', which was facilitated by Western hegemonic apparatuses that reproduce as well as contest dominant culture – for example, the elite universities in the US where, despite Spivak's effort to mend the separation between theory and practice, subalternity circulated as a theoretical/epistemic problem, with little or no practical relevance for subaltern groups. As this thesis demonstrated, only recently some practical aspects of the 'subaltern question' have come to the fore of academic research in the social sciences.

The tendency whereby the 'subaltern question' has circulated predominantly in these dominant cultural circuits had an impact on the selection of the literature in this dissertation. Its extensive discussion of the 'subaltern question' from *Subaltern Studies* onwards (that is, the academic circulation of subalternity predominantly in the Northern/Western areas of the world) was possible on the basis of the large availability of sources related to academic debates – a sign that (Northern/Western) universities have represented and still represent the intellectual space of choice for discussions on subalternity. This does not imply that this thesis overlooked all the non-academic or non-Northern/non-Western contexts.

The cases of the Italian folklorists and Hobsbawm illustrate discussions on subalternity taking place within and without the academia, although confined to Europe. Still the (Northern/Western) academic circulation of the 'subaltern question' was central to look into these cases. The in-depth focus on the Italian folklore debates was facilitated by personal academic knowledge and by the straightforward access to the sources at university libraries in Italy. Similarly, the focus on Hobsbawm was affected by the fact that this dissertation was written in the UK (where the material on his work is widely available) and, particularly, in the university where his archive is stored.

The early discussions on the 'subaltern question' in India represent a case where not only subalternity circulated within and without the academia, but also in a non-Northern or non-Western context. Still, the space that this thesis dedicated to this moment is comparatively smaller than the space dedicated to other moments, such as *Subaltern Studies* and Spivak's work. Some sources 'at the roots' of *Subaltern Studies* –

e.g. Chandra Sarkar (1968) and S. Sarkar (1973) – were not extensively analysed because they did not directly contribute to the re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’. Other contributions published on the Indian journal *Social Scientist* – which discussed the ‘subaltern question’ *before Subaltern Studies* (e.g. Chopra 1979, Mittal and Kumar 1980) – did not receive particular attention because this thesis considered them as less influential, at least compared to the widespread references to *Subaltern Studies* in the literature. The scattered information (e.g. Datta Gupta 1994) that this dissertation found about the circulation of Gramsci's thought in India outside of academic contexts (i.e. among the Indian intellectual Marxists within or without the Communist parties and, more generally, among the popular masses) could not grasp the full complexity of the situation.

Questions of academic influence and availability of sources in Northern or Western libraries had an impact on the attention that this dissertation paid to non-academic or non-Western/non-Northern contexts. A greater emphasis on the early circulation of Gramsci and subalternity within and without academic contexts in India would thus help correcting this bias. This discussion would achieve two objectives.

Firstly, it would discuss figures that are seldomly considered in the literature, so as to recognise their impact on the ‘subaltern question’ and address the reasons why the literature has silenced them. Secondly, it would demonstrate that, along with Gramsci, Hobsbawm and the Italian folklore debates, other moments in the history of the ‘subaltern question’ addressed this issue in its theoretical *and* practical dimension, thus being part of political endeavours aimed to emancipate subaltern groups within non-European (or non-Western) contexts. These moments deserve to be studied, precisely because they have something to teach: for example, they can offer theoretical and practical tools in order to understand and intervene on the colonial heritage underpinning the schism between intellectuals and subalterns within and without academic contexts. The re-composition of the theoretical and practical aspects of subalternity can be addressed from many (and not necessarily Northern/Western-centric) perspectives. In this way, the circuits of circulation of the ‘subaltern question’ might find new ways to merge together, again.

1. Introducing the ‘subaltern question’. Gramsci and the *Prison Notebooks*

This chapter presents an overview of Antonio Gramsci's observations on subalternity. It addresses his socio-political conception of subalternity, his observations on the culture of subaltern groups (i.e. their ‘folklore’) and his position on the ways in which spontaneity, as a defining element of the history and life of subaltern groups, can be directed. This is to introduce what is theoretically and practically at stake in the history of the approaches to these observations on subalternity. Or, in other words, as the following chapters will illustrate, the history of the ways in which the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’ unfolded in the past 70 years – from the early reception of Gramsci's work in the post-World War II Italian folklore debates to its most recent impact on the social sciences. In this respect, this chapter addresses some recurrent theoretical and practical problems in the history of this circulation: who are ‘the subalterns’? How do they organise and in what sense are their forms of organisation different from those of the dominant groups? What is a ‘subaltern form of knowledge’, and why is it different from hegemonic knowledge? Are subaltern forms of knowledge autonomous from the hegemonic ones? To what extent can the subalterns be considered objects of study? What are the political stakes of incorporating subaltern perspectives within hegemonic forms of knowledge?

1.1 “At the Margins of History”: the socio-political conception of subalternity¹³

As with the problem of ‘hegemony’ or the idea of the ‘organic intellectual’, the ‘subaltern question’ is undisputedly connected with Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), and with his multifaceted activity as a revolutionary, cultural and political organiser, founder and secretary of the *Partito Comunista d'Italia*, deputy at the Italian Parliament, journalist, political thinker, philosopher, linguist and literary critic (Fiori 1970 [1966]). His discussion on the ‘subaltern question’ in the *Prison Notebooks* rethinks and expands the Marxist categories of ‘proletarian’ and ‘underclasses’, thus highlighting the entanglement between economic and cultural forms of oppression

(Baratta 2007: 120-122; Liguori 2016: 124). Moreover, it conceivably represents the theorisation of what he had experienced throughout his whole life before his arrest in 1926 – from his childhood and youth in the impoverished Sardinian countryside, in the periphery of the Italian Kingdom, to his involvement with the struggles of the Italian proletariat between the end of World War I and the early 1920s.

As such, Gramsci's position on the 'subaltern question' does not just spring as fully formed from the *Prison Notebooks*. Rather, it is developed throughout them, coherently with their fragmentary, incremental and 'spiral' structure (Francioni 1984: 17-24). More importantly, and although the 'subaltern question' was explicitly discussed within the *Prison Notebooks* for the first time, his position on this issue results from longer, more sustained and subterranean reflections, which found their first moment of expression in his pre-prison writings – particularly in "Some Aspects of the Southern Question" (Green 2002: 3-4). This unfinished essay – Gramsci was writing it when he was arrested in 1926 – influenced his work in prison. In fact, during 1927, a few months after his arrest, Gramsci formulated the first preparatory plan for the *Prison Notebooks*, which aimed to develop the unfinished arguments of 1926 (Green 2009: 54). In this respect, this essay introduced many topics that were later reworked in the *Prison Notebooks*, especially within the notes dedicated to the 'subaltern question': the problem of 'Southernism', the role of the intellectuals¹⁴ in the construction and direction of political subordination, their attitudes towards the issues of Southern Italy, the South of Italy as a 'great social disintegration', and so on (Gramsci 1966: 131-160, see also Fresu 2010: 76-78; Green 2009: 53-70).

However, and despite the impact of this essay on Gramsci's reflections on subalternity, there are no occurrences of the term 'subaltern' in it. Moreover, the essay does not explicitly thematise any socio-political conception of subalternity. More generally, as some scholars have observed (Green 2002: 1-2; Liguori 2011b: 35; 2015: 41-42; 2016: 89-94), Gramsci's pre-prison writings, and up to the first third of Q1, use the term 'subaltern' in relation to the intermediate ranks in the chain of command of the state, the party or the army – e.g. a subaltern officer, which represents the intermediate position in the military hierarchies. As such, any reference to a socio-political conception of subalternity is understood in the light of this 'ranking model' and, in any

case, the term 'subaltern' does not point to proletarians or other lower classes, rather to militaries or petite bourgeois bureaucrats. The meaning of the concept shifts towards the end of Q1, where it is used figuratively to illustrate a general state of inferiority or subjection. Nevertheless, it is only within Q3 that Gramsci connects subalternity with a social condition, thus describing the situation of specific social classes (Liguori 2011b: 35; 2015a: 42-44; 2016: 94-98).

Notwithstanding these (scattered) references to the concept, Gramsci recognized the practical and political importance of a systematic enquiry into the socio-historical conditions of subalternity only at a later stage. The word 'subalternity' does not appear in the other two general plans of the *Prison Notebooks* (respectively 1929 and 1931). The 'subaltern question' was more specifically addressed only in 1934, when Gramsci was on parole – that is, not confined in the fascist prisons but still under detention in a room at the Cusumano clinic in Formia (Rome), while suffering serious medical conditions (Fiori 1966: 326-333; Francioni 1984: 126).

Here, Gramsci reworked some fragments from Q1, Q3 and Q9, and collected them into a new notebook, Q25, under the emblematic title "At the Margins of History (History of Subaltern Social Groups)". In this notebook, subalternity is a central category to a political analysis of the history of subaltern groups. In addition, this analysis and, thus this category, are functional to the broader strategy that a revolutionary political party has to follow in order to guide subaltern groups towards their emancipation: the transformation of the present, and thus the end of subalternity, requires understanding the historical conditions that have created the state of subalternity (Buttigieg 1999: 31-32; Green 2002: 1-10). The historiography of subaltern groups is not separated from the practical intervention into their reality, thus illustrating the practical and political implications of the intellectuals' theoretical work.

How has Gramsci addressed the political and historical analysis of subalternity? Or, what are the general usages of the socio-political conception of subalternity in the *Prison Notebooks*? As mentioned, references to the 'subaltern question' are spread across the *Prison Notebooks*. However, Gramsci has never provided a clear-cut definition of 'subaltern classes/groups'¹⁵ (Buttigieg 2009: 826-827; Green 2011: 393). In

this respect, subalternity is a name that stands for a problem: the (re)production of hierarchies. The real question is to understand what constitutes subalternity in a specific situation – a task that only an empirical enquiry can address¹⁶. As Guido Liguori (2011b: 40; 2015a: 44-46; 2016: 100-102, 110) has argued, there are at least three different scopes of applicability of ‘subaltern’ in the *Prison Notebooks*. The concept can be applied firstly to the advanced industrial proletariat and, secondly, to the disaggregated segments of population that are politically and culturally marginal, for example the peasants, the underclasses or ‘starvelings’ (*morti di fame*), etc. Thirdly, it can be applied to single individuals within specific socio-cultural contexts – thus opening up the space for understanding the subaltern as an individual subject, rather than as a collective one.

Moreover, subalternity points to other socio-cultural dimensions that are not separated from class problems, but at the same time do not necessary fall under the rubric of class. Subalternity encompasses questions of religious belonging, race and gender (Gramsci 1975: 2286 [Q25 §4]) – although the ‘gender question’ is only to some extent similar to the ‘subaltern question’. This is because “«male chauvinism» can be compared to class domination only in a certain sense; it [...] has greater importance for the history of customs than for political and social history” (ibid, own translation), and thus it is more relevant as a cultural than as a political problem¹⁷.

Furthermore, the condition of subalternity is not necessarily tied up to the political perspective of the working class, the peasants, the underclasses, etc. For example, Gramsci (1971: 53 [Q25 §5]) has pointed out that the ‘innovative’ social forces that led the Italian *Risorgimento* (represented by Camillo Cavour and the ‘Moderates’ party) were subaltern prior to becoming ruling groups.

Therefore, although there is no definition of subalternity in the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci has provided the conditions for this definition. The concept of ‘subalternity’ can be understood as a flexible sociological and historiographical instrument that understands the situation of different social groups belonging to different societies of different epochs. ‘Subalternity’ is thus a category that maps the ways in which the

word 'subaltern' is used Gramsci's work. As Marcus E. Green (2009: 54-55, my parenthesis, own translation) has pointed out,

Gramsci conceives of the historical category of subalternity in order to locate and examine those subordinate social groups whose activity is ignored, misinterpreted, repressed or is 'at the margins' of the dominant history [...] [and] who have little or no political power, compared to the ruling dominant groups.

In this way,

subalternity is constituted within an ensemble of socio-political, cultural, and economic relations that produce marginalization and prevent group autonomy. (Green 2013b: 127)

As such, subalternity is not only a matter of being dominated. But also, it points to the space of political agency that subaltern groups have within specific contexts. At the same time, the question of agency cannot be separated from processes of marginalization at social and discursive level, which results from the dominant classes' combined exercise of domination and hegemony¹⁸. Therefore, subalternity is also a dialectical category. That is, subalternity cannot be understood outside of hegemonic processes. As Giorgio Baratta (2007: 130, my parenthesis, own translation) has argued,

«[s]ubalterns» is an eminently dialectical *category*. Unlike «the people», [a category] that has an *ideological* character [...], and [...] «slaves», «proletarians», «peasants», «workers», as well as «nobles», «bourgeois», etc., which form classes and social groups on the basis of the political economy of a determined society or mode of production, the expression «subalterns» has an immediately political (more than ideological) character, other than an economic one. The wide historical and socio-economic differentiation of the subalterns' world is both cause and effect of the mobility and flexibility of the concept, which takes shape only through its relation with the other side of the dichotomy: subaltern *contra* dominant-hegemonic.

Therefore, in Gramsci's perspective, there are no inherently subaltern 'social objects'. Rather, there are complexes of social relations crossed by the dialectic between subalternity and hegemony. Society, its groups and single individuals are located within these cleavages and in turn they are divided, opposed and arranged into hierarchies.

How exactly has Gramsci discussed subalternity? This Section considers some notes in the *Prison Notebooks* that explicitly address this issue, in order to introduce some recurrent themes in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'. As will become clearer, the approaches to the 'subaltern question' in the past 70 years either quoted or simply mentioned these notes as a source of inspiration. Or, at least, these

notes can be understood as the implicit reference or the point of comparison against which limits and strengths of the different approaches to subalternity can be assessed.

As mentioned, Q25 represents the most organic discussion (relatively) on subalternity in Gramsci's work. In particular, this notebook includes two important methodological notes. The first (Gramsci 1971: 54-55 [Q25 §2]) focuses on the relation between the history and the historiography of subaltern groups.

The history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic. There undoubtedly does exist a tendency to (at least provisional stages of) unification in the historical activity of these groups, but this tendency is continually interrupted by the activity of the ruling groups; it therefore can only be demonstrated when a historical cycle is completed and this cycle culminates in a success. Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up: only "permanent" victory breaks their subordination, and that not immediately [...]. Every trace of independent initiative on the part of subaltern groups should therefore be of incalculable value for the integral historian. (Ibid.)

This implies that, from a historical perspective, the activity of subaltern groups has always been subjected to the dominant groups: every attempt of mobilization of subaltern groups, even only to produce heterogeneous and contradictory forms of political subjectivity, and around contingent and temporary interests, has always been undermined and repressed by the dominant groups. From a historiographical perspective, these attempted insurgencies are rarely properly recorded: the history of subaltern groups is 'fragmented and episodic' or, in the best case scenario, has been misrepresented. The task of historians is thus to take the agency of subaltern groups seriously, and to emphasise every trace of their autonomous activity.

The core of the second methodological note (52-54 [Q25 §5]) helps the historian understand the processes of political development of subaltern groups – that is, the progress towards political autonomy, which results from the unfolding of class struggle (Baratta 2007: 131). Gramsci has outlined a finely tuned and flexible six-step framework that looks into the ways in which subaltern groups progressively detach from the dominant groups, thus creating autonomous organisations. As he writes (1971: 52 [Q25 §5]), in order to understand this process

it is necessary to study: 1. the objective formation of the subaltern social groups, by the developments and transformations occurring in the sphere of economic production; their quantitative diffusion and their origins in pre-existing social groups, whose mentality, ideology and aims they conserve for a time; 2. their active or

passive affiliation to the dominant political formations, their attempts to influence the programmes of these formations in order to press claims of their own, and the consequences of these attempts in determining processes of decomposition, renovation or neo-formation; 3. the birth of new parties of the dominant groups, intended to conserve the assent of the subaltern groups and to maintain control over them; 4. the formations which the subaltern groups themselves produce, in order to press claims of a limited and partial character; 5. those new formations which assert the autonomy of the subaltern groups, but within the old framework; 6. those formations which assert the integral autonomy, ... etc. The list of these phases can be broken down still further, with intermediate phases and combinations of several phases. The historian must record, and discover the causes of, the line of development towards integral autonomy.

Other notes in Q25 provide some cursory observations on the history of subaltern groups during the Roman and the Medieval Age (Gramsci 1975: 2284-2287 [Q25 §4], 2290 [Q25 §6]), as well as in contexts closer to Gramsci's time. In particular, he has presented the repression of Davide Lazzaretti's millenarianist and pseudo-socialist uprising in the aftermath of the Italian unification (2279-2283 [Q25 §1]). In his discussion of Lazzaretti's uprising, Gramsci (2279-2280 [Q25 §1]) has addressed the ways in which this and other subaltern insurgencies in Italy – particularly in the South – were represented as 'individualistic, barbaric, folkloristic or pathological' by hegemonic intellectuals – for example, Cesare Lombroso, one of the most prominent scholars of scientific racism in Italy. An epistemic device organised along the lines of race underpinned the representation of subaltern insurgencies, thus providing the ideological justification for political repression. More generally, it depoliticized these insurgencies in the name of a history of the Italian unification written from the perspective of the dominant classes.

1.2. The “Observations on Folklore”: the cultural dimension of subalternity

So far, this chapter has illustrated the question of subalternity in the *Prison Notebooks* from the perspective of a political-historical analysis of subaltern groups, and it has argued that there are no 'subaltern *social objects*' in Gramsci's work. Significantly, the ways in which the culture of subaltern groups – particularly, their folklore – is discussed in the *Prison Notebooks* demonstrates that there are no 'subaltern *cultural objects*', either.

Unlike the late thematisation of subalternity, the question of folklore was part of the *Prison Notebooks* from their first general plan. During 1935 Gramsci reworked some notes from Q1 and he collected them in Q27 under the title “Observations on folklore” (Francioni 1984: 127). Significantly, Gramsci does not consider folklore simply as a collection of traditional tales, songs and legends of a group of people. Rather, he has approached the topic as the perspective that subaltern groups have on their life and their surrounding world. In particular,

[f]olklore should [...] be studied as a 'conception of the world and life' implicit to a large extent in determinate (in time and space) strata of society and in opposition (also for the most part implicit, mechanical and objective) to 'official' conceptions of the world (or in a broader sense, the conceptions of the cultured parts of historically determinate societies) that have succeeded one another in the historical process. [...] This conception of the world is not elaborated and systematic because, by definition, the people (the sum total of the instrumental and subaltern classes of every form of society that has so far existed) cannot possess conceptions which are elaborated, systematic and politically organized and centralized in their albeit contradictory development. It is rather, many-sided – not only because it includes different and juxtaposed elements, but also because it is stratified, from the more crude to the less crude if, indeed, one should not speak of a confused agglomerate of fragments of all the conceptions of the world and of life that have succeeded one another in history. (Gramsci 2000: 360 [Q27 §1])

It is clear that Gramsci is critical towards the conception of the world of ‘the people’ – or, the subaltern groups: he has highlighted many ‘negative’ features of folklore. This is non-systematic, fragmentary, at times crude, it is a confused agglomerate of residuals from other (hegemonic) conceptions of the world. But crucially, it somehow opposes these hegemonic conceptions.

What was Gramsci’s take on folklore? Alberto Mario Cirese’s reading creative but rigorous of Q27 has effectively summarized the underpinning logic of this notebook (Baratta 2007: 148). In this view,

[f]olkloric conception is to *official* as subaltern social class is to *hegemonic*, as *simple* intellectual category is to *cultured*, as *unorganic* combination is to *organic*, as *fragmentary* internal organization is to *unitary*, as *implicit* mode of expression is to *explicit*, as *debased* content is to *original*, as *mechanical* opposition is to *intentional*, as *passive* conflict is to *active*. (Cirese 1982 [1976]: 222)

Cirese’s analysis does not only illustrate a matter of fact – that is, the negative characters of folklore: simple, unorganic, fragmentary, implicit, degraded, etc. But also, his analysis highlights that these negative attributes are antipodal to the hegemonic attributes. Subaltern cultures are opposed to a hegemonic conception of the world,

even though passively and non-intentionally. Moreover, these subaltern conceptions of the world lack the attributes of the hegemonic culture, and thus they reflect a condition of subordination – that is, they are subjected to the influence of a hegemonic conception of the world.

Therefore, folklore is always defined against hegemonic processes, while being dialectically related to them. Folklore results from the trickle down of hegemonic elements (Dei 2018: 21, 76), but it is also the limit to this downward expansion (22, 77, 91). In this way, folklore is a ‘confused agglomerate’, a collection of derived elements from precedent and current hegemonic cultures, as well as the expression of a relatively autonomous cultural realm. As Gramsci (2000: 361 [Q27 §1]) has argued in his discussion on the ‘morality of the people’, folklore has

various strata: the fossilized ones which reflect conditions of past life and are therefore conservative and reactionary, and those which consist of a series of innovations, often creative and progressive, determined spontaneously by forms and conditions of life which are in the process of developing and which are in contradiction to or simply different from the morality of the governing strata.

The oppositional and relatively autonomous aspects of folklore, which limit the expansion of the hegemonic culture, are thus related to the ‘positive’ (progressive, creative) features of folklore. These positive attributes include, for Gramsci: tenacity, adhesion to the real life conditions of the subaltern groups, a progressive political value (although this applies only to few aspects of folklore), some originality, some capacity of selection of (cultural) elements ‘handed down from above’, and thus a relative autonomy (Cirese 1982 [1976]: 225-236).

However, these positive attributes are marginal when compared to the negative features of folklore (225, 236-237). In fact, according to Gramsci (1975: 2314 [Q27 §1]), folklore must be transcended by discarding all its negative features and by repurposing the few positive aspects for the needs of a revolutionary struggle. In this respect, the party must ‘uproot and replace’ folklore with a new proletarian culture, thus using a ‘folkloric’ progressive as the political ground for an ‘hegemonic’ progressive that mends the schism between the intellectuals and ‘the simple’¹⁹. As Kate Crehan (2016: 67-68) has argued,

Gramsci's attitude to folklore is often extremely critical [...] [b]ut he is by no means simply dismissive: he takes folklore extremely seriously. [...] In Gramsci's eyes, [...] folklore acts to blind people to the real sources of their oppression and exploitation. The reason to study it is so as to challenge it more effectively. [...] Though folklore [...] contains much that needs to be "uprooted and replaced," he also sees it [...] as containing elements of good sense. It is significant, for instance, that he writes here about [...] bringing into being a new culture that draws from the good sense embedded in folklore.

Nevertheless, the preponderant weight of folklore' negative features cannot be separated from the history of the hegemonic processes (Dei 2018: 91). Crucially, this means that Gramsci has not emphasised the autonomy of folklore. Rather, he sees the life and the culture of subaltern groups as embedded within broader economic, political and cultural contexts (Crehan 2002: 5), to the point that 'folkloric' and 'hegemonic' do not stand for two different, internally autonomous and coherent cultural unities. Rather, 'folkloric' and 'hegemonic' are "qualities that combine in different ways and that acquire their meaning only in a relational way, that is to say one in relation to the other" (Dei 2018: 87, own translation). Therefore, the distinction between subaltern and hegemonic is not clear-cut, because it cannot be mapped onto a simplistic dichotomy between 'subaltern' and 'hegemonic' culture. Rather, it represents a wide and variable spectrum of gradual contrasts and reciprocal interpenetrations (2018: 128).

The interpenetration between the subaltern and the hegemonic is central to shed light on Gramsci's conception of subalternity. In fact, this interpenetration represents a fundamental conceptual and political feature of subalternity. There is no 'pure' subalternity in Gramsci's work, rather it is always embedded within and influenced (or produced) by hegemonic processes (P. Thomas 2015: 874). The political challenge is thus to carve out spaces of emancipation for subaltern groups within this 'hegemonic enclosure' (Baldacci 2016: 157)²⁰.

Moreover, Gramsci's denial of the dichotomy between subaltern and hegemonic culture raises two important issues in terms of his understanding of culture. Firstly, if Gramsci's conception folklore does not represent a coherent and distinct (subaltern) cultural unity, in what sense does it encompass the cultural expressions of subaltern groups? It is unquestionable that Gramsci has approached folklore to understand the

worldview of subaltern groups (Crehan 2002: 99) and that he has approached the problem of the subaltern culture through his understanding of folklore (2002: 105)²¹. More importantly, the fact that folklore is not a distinct cultural unity does not necessarily imply that there is something aporetic in Gramsci's understanding of folklore. Rather, this points to the extent of the autonomy of folklore. Significantly, Gramsci's approach to the question of culture is different from an 'anthropological fashion' according to which cultures are to some extent systematic, discrete and bounded entities (2002: 36-37, 66). As such,

'culture' in Gramsci *never represents any kind of autonomous domain*. [...] Culture is for Gramsci rather a precipitate continually generated in the course of history. In other words, the ways of being and of living in the world that we think of as culture can be seen as particular forms assumed by the interaction of a multitude of historical processes at particular moments of time. (2002: 72, my emphasis)

Moreover, if culture is the 'precipitate' of historical processes, Gramsci considers these historical processes as materially determined – that is, they are structured around the basic opposition of any society: the opposition between dominant and dominated (Crehan 2016: 69). Therefore, folklore results from historical processes that are related to the social condition of subaltern groups and emerges from these social strata or resonates with their conception of the world. This in turn points to a definition of folklore that exceeds traditional tales, songs and legends: it includes those cultural phenomena that are produced not only *by* subaltern groups, but also directly or indirectly *for* them – e.g. serial novels, chivalric romances, novelised biographies, devotional literature, mass-circulation newspapers, the Italian opera, and so on (69-75).

Secondly, if Gramsci has denied the dichotomy between subaltern and hegemonic culture, then the spectrum of socio-cultural configurations that blurs the line between the 'hegemonic' and the 'subaltern' can be understood as the index of continuity between 'high' and 'low' culture. In this respect, the difference "between folklore at its most fragmented and official conceptions at their most organic [...] is one of 'quantity', not one of 'quality'" (Cirese 1982 [1976]: 238). That is, compared to folklore, the official conceptions of the world are *more* internally coherent, *more* homogeneous, *more* logical, etc. Therefore the difference between folklore and official conceptions of the world lies in the 'quantity of each qualitative element', and not in a qualitative

difference. This is especially true for the relation between folklore and Marxism. In fact, folklore and Marxism are two ‘conceptions of the world’, two philosophies, and therefore there is no *qualitative* difference between them (ibid.)²². The point is that folklore is a special form of philosophy, that is, a “*spontaneous* philosophy” (Cirese 1982 [1976]: 240, my emphasis), and thus a spontaneous conception of the world.

1.3. “Spontaneity and Conscious Direction”: the gradient of political and cultural organisation of subaltern groups

In Gramsci’s work, the spontaneity of folklore is related to another aspect of the ‘subaltern question’: the problem of ‘spontaneity and conscious leadership’ or ‘spontaneity and direction’²³. References to this problem are spread across the *Prison Notebooks*, but the most relevant place is “Past and Present: Spontaneity and Conscious Leadership”, a note in Q3 that Gramsci wrote during 1930 (Francioni 1984: 37, 44).

The word “spontaneity” can be variously defined because it refers to a multifaceted phenomenon. One needs to point out, however, that “pure” spontaneity does not exist in history: it would be the same thing as “pure” mechanicity [...]. One may say that the element of spontaneity is therefore characteristic of the “history of subaltern classes” and, especially, of the most marginal and peripheral elements of these classes, who have not attained a consciousness of the class per se [...]. In these movements [...] there exists a “multiplicity” of elements of “conscious leadership”, but none of them predominates or goes beyond the level of “popular science” – “common sense”, that is, the [traditional] conception of the world—of a given social stratum. (Gramsci 1996: 48-49 [Q3 §48])

What are the ‘multiple faces’ of spontaneity (and direction)? As Nicola Badaloni (1973: 84, my parenthesis, own translation) has argued, in the *Prison Notebooks*

spontaneity is a set of daily experiences that are already guided [*illuminato* in the original Italian] and unified by a traditional philosophy; the «conscious direction» is the substitution of this spontaneous philosophy with a more articulated and unifying one which springs from a comprehensive vision of the material environment where that so-called spontaneity is located.

Generally speaking, the whole cultural and social life of subaltern groups is organised around a particular balance between spontaneity and direction, which characterises the sources of meaning of their experiences as well as the criteria that inform their actions. The sense of their experiences and the guide to their actions is thus directly linked to a particular ‘philosophy’ that, as Cirese (1982 [1976]: 238) has noted, is at the

same time adherent to their social condition. This 'spontaneous' philosophy in turn belongs to a specific subset of variations across the spectrum between folkloric and official conceptions of the world: it is a variation that *tends* to be less coherent, systematic, comprehensive and so on – although it is not *completely* incoherent, unsystematic, narrow, etc. In this respect, even the most 'spontaneous' philosophy is never fully spontaneous, because it is a worldview that provides at least some (local) awareness of the surrounding environment.

Significantly, this balance between spontaneity and direction has a political implication: it is indicative of a more or less developed political consciousness. As illustrated, 'spontaneity' is a typical feature of subaltern groups – especially the most marginal and peripheral ones. In particular, spontaneity is the earliest moment of their political consciousness (Del Roio 2009b: 795) – or, the germinal form of their organised 'collective will' (Nardone 1971: 58). Spontaneity is thus an aspect of those uprisings, mobilizations, social movements, and so on, that are not (or not completely) organised in a coherent, planned and centralized way. As such, spontaneity points to socio-political phenomena that are not (fully) influenced and informed by pre-existing theoretical elaborations (Del Roio 2009a: 794). Conversely, 'direction' is a specific mode of exerting power characterized by consensus and thus hegemony, through which a collective will (i.e. the party) commands 'spontaneous' socio-political phenomena (Filippini 2009: 219-220). At the same time, it is also a way of providing these spontaneous phenomena with a 'theoretical consciousness' (Badaloni 1973: 83).

Nevertheless, as Gramsci has emphasised, 'pure spontaneity' does not exist. Spontaneity and direction cannot be considered in isolation, rather they form a continuum (Liguori 2011a: 61, 64). Even the most spontaneous political movement is somehow organised, and it is always possible to find traces of direction which transcend spontaneity into political aims, political platforms, etc. Therefore, political movements are only *relatively* spontaneous, compared to more conscious forms of conduct (Massucco Costa 1958: 200-201). At the same time, even the most disperse form of conscious leadership must rely on the spontaneity of a political movement. In fact, direction is always exerted upon given political movements. Therefore it is always the direction of specific groups, with their particular experiences, modes of thought

and so on, which provide the material and cultural basis for more coherent, unified and coordinated forms of organisation. As Badaloni (1973: 84-85, own translation) has argued, “the conscious direction must not detach from spontaneous movements, rather it must direct them [...] in terms of elevating them to a level of political awareness”.

Spontaneity without direction is ‘blind’, whereas direction without spontaneity is empty. This implies that spontaneity is inherently ambiguous: it cannot be disregarded, but at the same time it is not politically advisable to rely upon it alone (Nardone 1971: 58). The political question is thus to find an ‘effective’ or ‘real’ balance between spontaneity and direction. This is not of little importance: what is at stake is the emancipation of subaltern groups which, in turn, has the potential to mend the schism between intellectuals and subalterns.

Gramsci addressed this political question at a practical and historiographic level. At a practical level, Gramsci’s reflections are inspired by his political experience with the *Ordine Nuovo* group and the Factory Councils movement during the Italian ‘Red Biennium’ 1919-1920²⁴:

the leadership that the movement acquired [...] was not an “abstract” leadership; it did not consist in the mechanical repetition of scientific or theoretical formulas; it did not confuse politics [...] with theoretical disquisition. It devoted itself to real people in specific historical relations, with specific sentiments, ways of life, fragments of worldviews, etc., that were outcomes of the “spontaneous” combinations of a given environment of material production with the “fortuitous” gathering of disparate social elements within that same environment. This element of “spontaneity” was not neglected, much less disdained: it was *educated*, it was given a direction, it was cleansed of everything extraneous that could contaminate it, in order to unify it by means of modern theory but in a living, historically effective manner. The leaders themselves spoke of the “spontaneity” of the movement [...] it was, above all, a denial that anything having to do with the movement might be reckless, fake [or not historically necessary]. It gave the masses a “theoretical” consciousness of themselves as creators of historical and institutional values. (Gramsci 1996: 50-51 [Q3 §48])

Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group operated within the Turinese movement²⁵ by organizing the workers around the Factory Councils, so as to prepare them to the control of production and, potentially, revolution. The Factory Councils were the development of the institutions resulting from the metalworkers’ activity prior to 1919-1920 – the Internal Commissions – which had been ‘spontaneously’ regulating more

and more aspects of the life in the factories (Romano 1965: 336; Spriano 1969: 13-14). Therefore, the case of the Turinese movement illustrates the intermingling of spontaneity and direction: the movement combined a perspective on the struggles in the factories that was immediately close to the cultural, political and social life of the workers with the education (rather than the disdain) of this spontaneous perspective. Or, the educational activity of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group produced a theoretical consciousness out of the concrete experiences of the workers (Badaloni 1973: 83), thus introducing them to the idea of producing without the owners. The workers' 'spontaneous philosophy' (the practices, the discourses and the ways in which workers approached their life and struggles in the factories) was 'effectively' homogenised to Marxism-Leninism, so that this 'theoretical consciousness' actively resonated with the concrete condition of the workers (Liguori 2011a: 63-64). In this way, Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group sought to "translate the elements of historical life into theoretical language, but not vice versa, making reality conform to an abstract scheme" (Gramsci 1996: 52 [Q3 §48])²⁶.

At the historiographic level

[t]he elements of "conscious leadership" in the "most spontaneous" of movements cannot be ascertained, simply because they have left no verifiable document. One may say that the element of spontaneity is therefore characteristic of the "history of subaltern classes" and, especially, of the most marginal and peripheral elements of these classes [...] who [...] do not even suspect that their history might possibly have an importance or that it might be of any value to leave documentary evidence of it. (Gramsci 1996: 48 [Q3 §48])

This 'lack of verifiable evidence about conscious leadership' resonates with the historiographic remarks on the 'episodic traces of independent initiative of subaltern groups' in Q25. The point in both cases is to find evidence about the autonomous political activity of subaltern groups, as part of the strategy of a revolutionary party which aims to transform their present condition. Moreover, from the perspective of the 'translation of historical life into theory', Gramsci's argument in Q3 has another affinity with Q25: even though the traces of conscious leadership (or independent subaltern initiative) are indicative of the autonomy of subaltern groups, the extent of this autonomy is a matter of historiographic enquiry. Or, it is a matter of assessing the 'real' balance between spontaneity and direction, which cannot be assumed according to abstract criteria. This balance provides the political criteria to explore the line of

development towards 'integral autonomy', and thus to assess the weight of spontaneous and directed components in each of the six steps towards integral autonomy. At the same time, the six-step framework provides a way to explore the contexts where the balance between spontaneity and direction can be evaluated. As such, understanding the concrete organisation of subaltern groups guides the revolutionary party in its task of political direction.

In this way, Gramsci's reflections on spontaneity and direction once again point to the theoretical, political and practical entanglement that characterizes the question of subalternity. As the discussions on the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question' will illustrate, this entanglement will constitute the context where the legacy of Gramsci's subalternity has been disputed.

This chapter presented an overview of Gramsci's observations on subalternity, in order to provide a preliminary indication of the debates that characterize the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'. This chapter offered a theoretical and political lexicon that is integral to explain and evaluate the ways in which these debates have approached subalternity. Moreover it discussed some notes of the *Prison Notebooks* where the 'subaltern question' is explicitly addressed.

The discussions in this chapter focused on three main issues: the socio-political conception of subalternity, the cultural dimension of subalternity and the question of spontaneity and direction. Each of these issues offered a preliminary answer to a specific problem that is recurrent in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question': who are 'the subalterns' and how can they be objects of historical or disciplinary enquiry? What is a 'subaltern' form of knowledge, and can this be autonomous from the hegemonic one? In what sense is emancipation the political stake in the direction of spontaneity – or, in the reorganization of spontaneous (subaltern) forms of knowledge within more systematic perspectives?

In this respect, the problems and the answers highlighted in this chapter are also central to address the ways in which the 'subaltern question' affected current debates

in the social sciences. In particular, the socio-political conception of subalternity offered a preliminary understanding of the explicit or implicit sociological reference that underpin the 'epistemic use' (or 'epistemic approach') of subalternity in recent social sciences debates. The question of folklore introduced the theoretical and political lexicon that illustrates the relationship between sociology (as a hegemonic form of knowledge) and other (subaltern) knowledges, worldviews and perspectives that have been marginalised in the discipline so far. The discussions on spontaneity and direction pointed to the political relationships between 'higher' and 'lower' forms of knowledge, and thus to the schism between intellectuals and subalterns. This provided the conceptual resources to explore the ways in which the cooperation between intellectuals and subalterns might result in the production of an emancipatory sociological knowledge.

2. The ‘folklore debates’ in Italy

This chapter begins the discussion on the circulation and re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’, which will be developed throughout the rest of this work. It introduces the earliest stage of this circulation and re-articulation: the intellectual and political debates on the folklore of subaltern groups, which took place in Italy after World War II (1949-1955) and were developed further during the 1960s-1980s. In particular, this chapter discusses the focal point of the earlier folklore debates: the work of Ernesto De Martino, and his perspectives on the history of subaltern groups and the progressive aspects of folklore. Moreover it discusses a particular aspect of the second wave of the Italian folklore debates – that is, Alberto Mario Cirese’s interpretation of Gramsci’s “Observations on Folklore”, and the question of folklore as an autonomous object of study.

2.1 The ‘folklore debates’ in Italy: the first wave (1949-1955)

The early Italian folklore debates (1949-1955) emerged from a complex historical, political and intellectual conjuncture²⁷. After World War II, Italy – along with the rest of Western Europe – entered into the US sphere of influence. The Italian internal political situation reflected these circumstances: the pro-US Christian Democracy party (DC) progressively consolidated its political supremacy and hegemony, as epitomised by the 1948 elections, which inaugurated the long political phase of ‘centrist coalitions’. The Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), which were excluded from the lever of power after 1947, contrasted the DC’s politics by forming alliances or collaborating together – at least until the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956.

Nevertheless, the DC’s political domination and hegemony were not complete. This was not only due to the political opposition of the PCI and PSI but also, to the social turmoil of that period – particularly, the cycle of struggles of the Italian subaltern classes between 1945 and 1956. The movement for the occupation of the lands in

Southern Italy and working class conflict in the Northern factories were indicative of a social and political unrest that could not be subsumed under DC rule. This unrest was also a political opportunity for the PCI (and, to a lesser extent, the PSI), because the party could politically direct these struggles. At the same time,

right behind this ample front of popular struggles [...] a cultural movement began to grow [...]. [The movement] intended to make them [the social problems] the pivot of a new cultural project, albeit with different styles and orientations, but unified by the idea of a social engagement of art, literature, cinema and scientific research. This militant presence of the men [sic] of culture was integral to an articulated but unidirectional bloc of pressures, aspirations and struggles, which configured a popular front at a social level, which was politically unified by the key idea of a 'new and progressive democracy' as the new regime of the post-Resistance Italy. (Clemente 1976a: 19, my parenthesis, own translation)

Part of this cultural movement was formed by researchers, artists and writers interested in ethnographic research or, more generally, popular culture – that is, the culture of subaltern classes²⁸. Despite their different ideological upbringings – either Benedetto Croce or Karl Marx – these intellectuals had all been involved in the anti-fascist struggle after 1943. This represented the shared political ground that catalysed their attention and (often) participation in the post-war social upheavals. Significantly, many of these intellectuals also belonged or were close to the PCI or the PSI, at the time when these parties sought to organize the mobilizations of the subaltern masses (Clemente 1976a: 20-23).

The story of these intellectuals/militants illustrates the cultural movement that grew alongside the popular struggles in post-war Italy. Moreover, it is connected with an important intellectual development of those years: the reception of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* in a significant part of the Italian left (Liguori 2012: 96; Meoni 1976: 41). Notably, the political and intellectual trajectory of many among these intellectuals/militants converged with the events related to the publication of the very first edition of the *Prison Notebooks* – the 'Togliatti-Platone' version²⁹ – which was commissioned by the PCI and was issued in six volumes by the publishing house Einaudi between 1948 and 1951.

The debates on the 'subaltern popular world' and the broader 'folklore debates' originated within this cultural movement, and were thus strongly connected with the political turmoil of the subaltern classes, especially those of Southern Italy, as well as to

the publication of the *Prison Notebooks*. These debates focused on the first volume, *Historical Materialism and the Philosophy of Benedetto Croce* (1948), which contained Gramsci's reflections on the relation between high culture – e.g. Marxism – and the people's 'spontaneous philosophy'. More prominently, they focused on Gramsci's "Observations on Folklore", which appeared in the volume *Literature and National Life* in 1950 (Clemente 1976a: 29-34; Pasquinelli 1977: 24-27; Rauty 1976: 19).

The prelude to these debates was the publication of Carlo Levi's *Christ stopped at Eboli* (1945), in the aftermath of World War II. Levi's work is a memoir of his confinement in a small village in Southern Italy under the Fascist regime in 1935-1936, and it depicts the material and cultural oppression of the Southern subaltern masses, although exoticising their culture as radically different from the dominant culture (Rauty 1976: 8). This triggered public attention towards the 'subaltern popular world'. Moreover, Levi's work reflects the situation of the intellectual who encounter a static and timeless world that is stuck in its condition of oppression – a world where social change is seen to be beyond the realm of possibilities (Clemente 1976a: 20; Dei 2018: 24).

Significantly, a few years later this possibility of transformation was not considered out of reach any more. "[T]he subaltern popular world's irruption into history" (De Martino 2017 [1949]: 67) was already a given in 1949, when the anthropologist and historian of religions De Martino published his "Towards a History of the Subaltern Popular World" in *Società*, a journal of the PCI. This article – which bears witness to Levi's influence (68) and *Historical Materialism and the Philosophy of Benedetto Croce* (Liguori 2012: 112; Pasquinelli 1977: 24) – was the starting point for some controversies and collaborations, which almost all appeared within leftist publications throughout the first half of the 1950s. Despite their limited resonance within the organizations of the workers' movement (Clemente 1976a: 23-24; Satta 2017: 248-249), these debates were indicative of the intellectual and political commitment of a group of intellectuals/militants towards the subaltern popular world, its culture and its struggles. De Martino's article implicitly shifts from the position of the intellectual in Levi's account: not any more the helpless encounter between the intellectual and the peasants' cultural misery in a small village of Southern Italy, rather the direct

involvement of the party intellectual in the uprising of subaltern classes (Clemente 1976a: 20).

As De Martino (2017 [1949]: 65-66, my parenthesis) pointed out,

[o]n a global scale the popular masses are fighting to enter history [*per entrare nella storia*] and overthrow the order that keeps them subaltern. This phenomenon [...] concerns colonial and semi-colonial people who rise up against the yoke imposed on them by hegemonic countries as well as popular masses, the subaltern strata of the population of hegemonic countries, who are gradually becoming conscious of their real situation and the contradictions that characterize it, and aligning with the most advanced, conscious, and organized component of the proletarian movement.

According to De Martino, subaltern groups are historical subjects, and thus they create their own history – that is, they have agency, they are not merely historical objects³⁰.

De Martino's argument is twofold. The first part of his article provides a radical critique of the social sciences, which have analysed and represented the subaltern (and primitive) cultural world as a world of objects, rather than agents.

[T]he naturalism of Western-European ethnological research reflects [...] the naturalness with which the subaltern popular world has been treated by bourgeois civilization [...]. Insofar as the subaltern popular world constitutes for bourgeois society more a world of things than of people, a natural world that gets mixed up with dominable and exploitable nature. (De Martino 2017 [1949]: 63)

The reduction from agents to objects thus highlights the inherent complicity of the social sciences with the domination and exploitation of the subaltern classes³¹.

However, De Martino is not interested in the pure critique of the discipline. Rather, the second part of his article introduces the intellectuals' role in subaltern struggles.

This part of the article outlines the Gramscian task of the leftist intellectuals, whose activity should be geared toward mending the schism between them and the masses, which was created during the 'naturalistic' era of social sciences (Pasquinelli 1977: 13). Intellectuals should thus rethink their function. Inspired by USSR ethnography (De Martino 1977a [1949]: 64, 66) and accepting³² the suggestions from the first volume of the Togliatti-Platone's *Prison Notebooks* (Pasquinelli 1977: 24), De Martino argues that the role of high culture is to 'historicise the popular'. This is to contrast a history written from the perspective of the dominant classes (Meoni 1976: 48), and facilitate the real insertion of the subaltern masses into history (De Martino 2017 [1949]: 67).

As such, the intellectuals support the irruption of the subaltern masses into history by providing them with a 'historiographic consciousness' (De Martino 1977a [1949]: 70 note 23). On the one hand, this consciousness fosters their own self-understanding, because it makes them aware of the historical roots of their oppression. This is, in turn, central to transform the conditions of subalternity: transforming their present into a better reality requires understanding the processes that have contributed to the formation of this present as well as the obstacles to social change (Meoni 1976: 52-53; Pasquinelli 1977: 6; Rauty 1976: 115-116). On the other hand, this form of 'intellectual support' is the way in which the intellectuals can understand the subaltern popular world, so as to politically and culturally connect to the subaltern masses (Anderlini 1977a [1950]: 103; 1977b [1950]: 127) and thus participate in their struggle. Therefore, the 'historicisation of the popular' cannot be disentangled from the practical intervention into the reality of subaltern groups³³.

After the publication of "Towards a History of the Subaltern Popular World" (1949), De Martino deepened further his interest in the 'transformation of the present'. The need for 'applied research', the controversies around his 1949 article (Pasquinelli 1977: 20), his further reflections on USSR ethnography (De Martino 1977b [1950]: 136-138) and, above all, his fieldwork in Romagna between 1950 and 1952 (Ciavolella 2017: 186-187; Dei 2018: 96) and the publication of Gramsci's "Observations on Folklore" in 1950 (Pasquinelli 1977: 25; Clemente 1976a: 29-32), led him to focus on the emancipatory potential implicit within subaltern cultures – that is, on the 'progressive folklore'.

Together with the discussions raised by the posthumous publication of the work of the 'poet-peasant' Rocco Scotellaro (Clemente 1976c), the question of progressive folklore developed further the debates on the history of the subaltern popular world (Rauty 1976: 8). In De Martino's perspective

[t]he historicisation of the popular is currently specified as the analysis of the contrast of the culture of the subaltern classes vis-a-vis the hegemonic culture of the dominant classes. While discussing folklore, Gramsci shed light on its character as a «conception of the world and life implicit to a large extent in determinate [...] strata of society and in opposition (also for the most part implicit, mechanical and objective) to "official" conceptions of the world». (Pasquinelli 1977: 25, own translation)

Drawing on his own interpretation of Gramsci's conception of folklore, De Martino considered progressive folklore as a development of Gramsci's reflections on the 'positive' aspects of folklore: De Martino's 'creative re-adaptation' of Q27 thus overemphasises the ways in which subaltern groups *actively* use some oppositional aspects of their culture to critique the hegemonic culture. As he states,

[the] progressive folklore [...] is the people's conscious proposal against their own socially subaltern condition, [...] which comments, expresses in cultural terms, the struggles for the emancipation from it [the subaltern condition]. (De Martino 1977c [1951]: 144, own translation)

Progressive folklore thus unifies the popular classes around an emancipatory project that pursues the PCI's idea of a 'progressive democracy' (Ginsborg 1990: 43-44). Central to this project is a shift from a 'traditional'³⁴ subaltern culture to a non-subaltern and massified popular culture based on progressive cultural aspects (Clemente 1976b: 115-116; Pasquinelli 1977: 21). Examples of 'progressive aspects' that contribute to a new conception of the world are: old and new songs of social protest and political struggle, politicized variations over traditional themes, the popular critique of the Church and the owners that informs poetries or proverbs, the folklore of the occupation of the lands and the factories, the folklore of the strikes and working class' celebrations, and so on (De Martino 1996 [1951]: 89, see also Clemente 1976a: 26; Dei 2018: 96). These progressive aspects thus illustrate the *active/autonomous*³⁵ capacity of cultural elaboration of subaltern groups (De Martino 1977e [1952b]: 157). In particular, these aspects can be considered as

the only historically possible way with which the popular masses [...] can get in contact with their history and their destiny, thus expressing [...] their world [...] [.] [T]he only actual, sincere, spontaneous way with which the peasants [...] can enter within the world of culture, acquire cultural consciousness of their life, of their historical position. (De Martino 1977d [1952a]: 150-151, own translation)

Therefore, progressive folklore underpins a worldview that provides the subaltern masses with a historiographic consciousness, which makes them aware of the opposition of their culture vis-a-vis the hegemonic one. In this way, they can grasp the historical specificity of their culture and condition. Contra Q27, spontaneity is not only the index of some local awareness of the surroundings. Rather it expresses a worldview that is able to comprehensively understand the material environment. Moreover, De

Martino's position is indicative of a particular perspective on what subaltern cultures are as a whole (traditional and non progressive aspects included). As with Q27, subaltern cultures limit and resist to the expansive capacity of the hegemonic culture (Dei 2018: 25; Pasquinelli 1977: 25, 27, 29) – although this resistance is not necessarily politically organised, rather it is passive or implicitly oppositional.

De Martino's argument about a comprehensive/oppositional worldview based on progressive folklore is central to a broader controversy at the core of the folklore debates. These discussed the independence of subaltern cultures vis-a-vis the hegemonic culture in the context of an ambivalent reception of Gramsci's position on subaltern autonomy (Dei 2018: 103)³⁶. This controversy was not simply a discussion among different intellectuals, but also, it illustrated the internal debate within the PCI, which affected the party's official position towards the culture of subaltern groups, particularly those of Southern Italy. Mario Alicata's intervention epitomises the PCI's refusal to recognize autonomy to subaltern cultures (Dei 2018: 98-99). In his critique of Levi, Scotellaro and De Martino's works, Alicata guards against the risk of idealizing the culture of the Southern subaltern masses. He claims that subaltern worldviews are not comparable to a Marxist-Leninist perspective, and thus he refuses to consider them as valid (critical, rational, etc.) instruments to represent reality (Alicata 1977 [1954]: 189-191). Subaltern cultures are not able to offer a 'comprehensive vision of the material environment'. Moreover, he is sceptical towards a struggle for the 'autonomous' emancipation of the subaltern masses – that is, a struggle pursued on the basis of a subaltern culture that is not subsumed to the cultural and political direction of the party (195-197).

Interestingly, although this controversy faded away after the mid-1950s, its echoes resonated in the second wave of the Italian folklore debates and, as Chapter 3 will demonstrate, in the work of some non-Italian Marxists (e.g. Hobsbawm), who played an important role in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'.

2.2 The 'folklore debates' in Italy: Cirese and the second wave (late 1960s-1980s)

After a period of stagnation in the late 1950s, the folklore debates took a new direction, thus leading to its 'second wave' (late 1960s-1980)³⁷. The industrial working class became the new point of reference, and thus the analyses of popular culture widened their scope by encompassing the culture of both the peasants and the industrial proletariat. Cultural analysis was thus grounded onto distinctive class patterns that pointed to the existence of cultural forms separated and autonomous from the hegemonic culture (Rauty 1976: 26-27). Overall, this way to analyse popular culture rested on two hypotheses: the autonomy of popular culture and the repurposing of popular traditions for the objectives of class struggle (Rauty 1976: 26). This marked a shift from the approach of the earlier folklore debates: the second wave

assumed as a platform: *a)* a hypothesis of transformation of the concept of «folkloric science»; *b)* a retrieval of the *social song* as the first element from which to move towards a new culture [...]; *c)* a progressive encounter-synthesis between the researcher and the political militant, [...] that will de facto end up assigning the possibility of research to the militant only. (Rauty 1976: 27-28, own translation)

In this respect, Cirese's intervention at the International Conference of Gramscian Studies in 1967, which was later published as "Conceptions of the World, Spontaneous Philosophy and Class Instinct in Antonio Gramsci's «*Observations on Folklore*»" (1976a [1969]; 1982 [1976])³⁸, can be considered part of this second wave of debates. In particular, Cirese's intervention has illustrated the ways in which Gramsci approached folklore as something that deserves attention and study, but is not necessarily useful from the perspective of political and cultural action (Cirese 1982 [1976]: 213-214).

Cirese refers to some issues from the first wave of the Italian folklore debates – e.g. the politically progressive value of folklore as well as its autonomy, resistance and expansive capacity vis-a-vis the hegemonic culture (225-232) – although, as anticipated in Chapter 1, he has considered them relatively marginal in the context of Q27 (236). Nevertheless, these relatively marginal issues cannot be discarded, because they point to the positive aspects of folklore which, combined with the negative ones, contribute to the ways in which subaltern groups understand the world. How do negative and positive features of folklore combine? Cirese argues that Gramsci has not resolved the tension between these negative and positive elements, or between a 'confused agglomerate' and 'some elements of direction', because he has not provided a final

criteria that assesses their *qualitative* similarity (240-241). However, according to Cirese (244)

that particular 'combination' of cultural elements is the intellectual heritage of a particular social group. The group lives it and makes use of it from inside, without realizing its contradictoriness, or at any rate not realizing it in the same way as somebody looking in from the outside. Thus, any combination of cultural elements which is embodied by an identifiable social unit come to constitute a kind of '*de facto* unity'.

Significantly, the idea of a '*de facto* unity' which combines negative and positive aspects of folklore is essential to Cirese's research and his creative reading of Q27. In his perspective, Gramsci's position on folklore points to a worldview that can legitimately be understood as the social unit or object of a specific discipline (214) – a discipline that Cirese will later call '*demologia*', which studies the culture of the subaltern classes in Western societies³⁹ (Dei 2018: 30-33, 107-108). Moreover, this '*de facto* unity' emphasises the autonomy of folklore. According to Cirese, folklore is thus a cultural form that is separated from the hegemonic one⁴⁰.

Therefore, Cirese's 1967 intervention is internal to the basic assumptions and the platform of the second wave of the Italian folklore debates. This is not only because his intervention supports the hypothesis of a new 'folkloric science' (the *demologia*) based on the analysis of the 'internal cultural gaps' within Western societies. But also, because it discusses the extent of autonomy of subaltern cultures. Significantly, as Chapter 4 and 5 will illustrate, this discussion on subaltern autonomy will be central to understand and evaluate *Subaltern Studies*' approach to the 'politics of the people' as an autonomous domain, and to highlight the material connection between *Subaltern Studies* and the Italian folklore debates.

This chapter discussed the history of the early approaches to Gramsci's observations on subalternity: the 'folklore debates' in Italy. This discussion enhanced the theoretical and practical lexicon to understand the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'. In this respect, this chapter analysed the progressive aspects of subaltern culture, the extent to which subaltern knowledges can be considered autonomous from hegemonic knowledges, as well as the patterns of interaction between them (e.g. the expansive capacity of hegemonic culture, the resistance offered by subaltern

cultures). Moreover, this chapter provided the historical context that will be central to understand not only the intellectual affinities, but also the material connections between the Italian folklore debates and some other moments in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question' – particularly, the work of Hobsbawm and *Subaltern Studies*.

Also, the discussions here are relevant to understanding the ways in which the 'subaltern question' affected current debates in the social sciences. This chapter provided suggestions to understand the fundamental features of subaltern knowledges, the ways in which the domain of culture is organised and the modes of interpenetration between subaltern and hegemonic forms of culture.

3. At the margins of the Italian folklore debates

This chapter highlights the first⁴¹ historical connection between the Italian folklore debates and other moments in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'. It argues that the Italian debates affected the early unfolding of this circulation, particularly influencing Hobsbawm's work. Significantly, this chapter demonstrates that the circulation of knowledge involved in this process was not always a proper reception or, in any case, it was a very limited one: this circulation happened 'at the margins' of the Italian debates⁴². Nevertheless, this marginality does not diminish the importance that this circulation had for the re-articulation of the 'subaltern question' in the subsequent debates – particularly, in Hobsbawm's work.

3.1 The circuits of circulation of the Italian folklore debates: connections 'at the margins' between Hobsbawm, the PCI intellectuals and De Martino

The Italian folklore debates have been particularly relevant to the unfolding of the transnational discussions on subalternity. This is because of the intellectual affinities that suggest possible comparisons between this and the other moments in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'. Moreover, as this Section will argue, because these different moments are connected one to another through (almost neglected) material links. Many scholars have argued that the Italian folklore debates, *Subaltern Studies* and some strands of discussion in Postcolonial studies (e.g. Spivak's work) are quite similar from an intellectual perspective, particularly in terms of their shared theoretical, methodological and political concerns – not least, as will become clearer in the following chapters, their interest in a theory and historiography of subaltern groups, or the political commitment towards the study of their culture (Baratta 2008: 255; Berrocal 2009; Ciavolella 2015; Liguori 2012: 35 note 12; Showstack Sassoon 2009: 73; Vacca 2009: 12-13; Zinn 2016: 99). Moreover, as this dissertation will illustrate, the question of subaltern autonomy (as well as the similarities and divergences with Gramsci's perspective on this issue) represents a central intellectual

affinity between these different moments in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'.

However, while highlighting similar theoretical and methodological concerns, scholars have also implicitly or explicitly suggested that the transnational discussions on the 'subaltern question' – especially after the 1980s – developed separately from the two waves of the Italian folklore debates, which in turn had little or no international resonance (e.g. Chaturvedi 2000: viii; Liguori 2015b: 118; P. Thomas 2015: 83)⁴³. The impression of material interruptions during the circulation of the 'subaltern question' is reinforced further, considering that their arguments on subaltern autonomy are inspired by different sources: the "Observations on Folklore" for the Italian debates, a selection of passages from Q25 for the other transnational discussions, as Chapter 4 will illustrate.

Nevertheless, a closer look 'at the margins' of the Italian folklore debates illustrates some triggers underpinning the transnational debates on subalternity and, more generally, the material connections that created the circuits of circulation of ideas between these different debates. By exploring the connections 'at the margins' between Hobsbawm and the first wave of the folklore debates, this Section will thus suggest that the resonance and the importance of the Italian folklore debates was wider than what has been commonly assumed.

Why is Hobsbawm so relevant for these connections 'at the margins'? As Chapter 4 will illustrate, he was central to the circulation of Gramsci's observations on subalternity – and, more generally, Gramsci's thought – in the Anglophone area, India included. Moreover, as a communist militant, he was attracted by the Italian political situation after World War II – in particular, the social struggles in Southern Italy – as well as by the deep embeddedness of the PCI across the country (Di Qual 2017: 86-87). During his journeys to Italy in the 1950s he established strong connections with many Italian Communist intellectuals (2017: 84-160) – although De Martino, who had just moved from the PSI to the PCI (Costantini 2015: 124), was not among them⁴⁴. More generally, Hobsbawm did not have a direct relation to the 'core' of the folklore debates (Ginzburg 2013: ix-x), thus ostensibly confirming the idea of the 'missed historical convergence'

between the Italian and the subsequent debates on the 'subaltern question'. Crucially though, some of the Marxist intellectuals who met Hobsbawm during his journeys to Italy were fundamental to introducing him to Gramsci's work, thus affecting his intellectual production – particularly, his positions on subalternity. At the same time, these intellectuals operated 'at the margins' of the first wave of the folklore debates.

The relation between Hobsbawm and the 'margins' of these debates can be introduced by discussing his *Primitive Rebels* (1959a). This book accounts for the multiple forms of *pre-political*⁴⁵ social agitation in Western and Southern Europe after the French Revolution. Hobsbawm's book does not directly refer to subalternity nor to the *Prison Notebooks* (or to any selection of the *Prison Notebooks* for an English-speaking public). Nevertheless his work is related to Gramsci's reflections, in particular those on subalternity. In fact, the analyses of the peasant masses in Southern Italy outlined in Gramsci's "Southern Question" are considered as a model for any analysis into the activity of other subordinate social groups in Europe (Hobsbawm 1959a: 10). Moreover, Hobsbawm's claim about "the persistent tendency, first systematized by the positivist criminologists of the later 19th century, to regard them [the social movements] as psycho-pathological phenomena" (12, my parenthesis) resonates with Gramsci's argument about the representation of Lazzaretti's uprising in Q25 §1. This is the first sign of a deeper relation between Hobsbawm's book and Gramsci's work, which can be fully assessed by considering the fundamental role that the PCI intellectuals played in this respect.

As Hobsbawm (1983: 32-33) recalled in an interview

Primitive Rebels [...] had two origins. I was traveling a good deal at that time, in the fifties, in various Mediterranean countries and got very interested in things that I saw [...] – particularly in Italy where I made contact with leading Communist intellectuals who had a very substantial knowledge of what was going on in places like South Italy. I was also reading Gramsci, who is extremely good at analyzing this type of nonpolitical protest movement. The other thing was my contact with the social anthropologists in Cambridge, Meyer Fortes and Max Gluckman in Manchester.

Hobsbawm's interview suggests a connection between his readings of Gramsci and the PCI intellectuals. Although during the years spent in Cambridge Hobsbawm had already heard of Gramsci in his discussions with Hamish Henderson⁴⁶ and Piero Sraffa⁴⁷ (Di

Qual 2017: 123), his contacts with the PCI intellectuals in Italy represented the opportunity for a more sustained engagement with Gramsci's work – particularly with Q25. The PCI intellectuals thus mediated Hobsbawm's critical re-adaptation of Gramsci. In other words, there is a *direct* connection between Gramsci, the PCI intellectuals and Hobsbawm.

In fact, in summer 1952, during one of his journeys to Italy, Hobsbawm spent some time with Ambrogio Donini – a member of the Central Committee of the PCI, the first president of the (then) Antonio Gramsci Foundation in Rome, and also one of the first who read the original manuscripts of the *Prison Notebooks* or, at least, part of them (Donini 1988: 77, 141-152). The relation with Donini is particularly significant not only because Hobsbawm acquired direct knowledge of Gramsci's work while visiting the archives of the Gramsci Foundation, where he had access to the original manuscripts of the *Prison Notebooks* (Di Qual 2017: 123; Hobsbawm 2007). But also, the encounter with Donini had another fundamental impact. Hobsbawm (2002: 346) has recalled "a dinner in the house of Professor Ambrogio Donini in Rome in 1952, or rather conversations after dinner" during which "[m]y host [...] told me something about the Tuscan Lazzarettists". Therefore, it was at Donini's house that Hobsbawm found out about Davide Lazzaretti and the story of the insurgency and repression of his millenarianist movement (see also Hobsbawm 1959a: 65 note 2; 2002: 346-347). Notably Lazzaretti's story is not only the opening paragraph of Gramsci's Q25 (Gramsci 1975: 2279-2283 [Q25 §1]), but it is also part of the fourth chapter of *Primitive Rebels* (Hobsbawm 1959a: 57-73). As such, it is possible to see why the encounter with Donini was an important turning point in Hobsbawm's intellectual production. This is confirmed by Hobsbawm's own words:

the introduction to the work that subsequently generated my first book on the primitive rebels [...] saw the light thanks to the fact that I heard of Davide Lazzaretti. At that time, because I hadn't read it yet, I did not know the passage that Gramsci wrote in the *Prison Notebooks* where he spoke about what there is "at the margins of history", precisely starting with the discovery of Lazzaretti, as an example of the special and extraordinary history of the subaltern classes. The encounter with Gramsci's text stimulated me to the point that I did not limit myself to addressing the argument, but I planned and realized a whole book about the orientation of writing the history "from below", the history "of the subalterns". (Hobsbawm 2007, own translation)

The encounter with Donini can be seen to have affected Hobsbawm's subsequent works too. Immediately after *Primitive Rebels* (1959a), Hobsbawm wrote an article, "For the study of subaltern classes" (1960), which was translated in Italian and published for the first time in *Società* – the same journal where De Martino's 1949 piece and part of the folklore debates appeared. It was also published on *Pasado y Presente* in Argentina few years later, with the title "Para el estudio de las clases subalternas" (1963). In this article, Hobsbawm considers the (then) recent trends in anthropological, sociological and historiographical research – 'history from below' included – which were gradually shifting towards the study of the subaltern classes in Europe and in the colonies. As with *Primitive Rebels* (1959a), the article does not explicitly refer to the *Prison Notebooks*. However, as demonstrated, Hobsbawm was clearly aware of the content of Q25: the direct reference to the Gramscian idea of subaltern classes is a first illustration in this respect. At the same time, the general sense as well as the wording of a section in the article resonates with parts of Q25⁴⁸.

Crucially, Hobsbawm's encounter with Donini had two other significant implications. Firstly, considering that *Primitive Rebels* (1959a) was relevant for the subsequent debates on the 'subaltern question'⁴⁹, the transnational circulation of subalternity found an important material trigger in Hobsbawm's conversations with Donini. Secondly, thanks to those conversations, Hobsbawm's intellectual trajectory crossed the 'margins' of the Italian folklore debates.

For Donini was not a central voice in these debates. Nevertheless he was, like De Martino, a historian of religions. He knew of De Martino's research⁵⁰ – particularly that on progressive folklore – and was aware of De Martino's intellectual and political standpoints, although he did not share them. This can be illustrated by their controversy on the question of folklore – which in turn reflects the controversy around the PCI's official position towards the culture of subaltern groups. The Gramsci Foundation organised a debate around the main themes of *Literature and National Life* (1950) in Rome (30 May-4 June 1951). Together with Vittorio Santoli and Paolo Toschi, De Martino was invited as a keynote to the session "Gramsci and Folklore" (De Martino 1996 [1951]: 86). His speech contextualized the topic within the new socio-political situation in Italy. It operated a 'creative re-adaptation' of Gramsci's "Observations on

Folklore” (Dei 2018: 96) by counterpoising his idea of progressive folklore to Gramsci’s dismissive comments about the ‘negative’ aspects of folklore (De Martino 1996 [1951]: 88-89). Donini, as the president of the Gramsci Foundation, did not agree with the overall content of the session (Severino 2003: 531). In particular, he criticized the keynotes’ lack of preparation, which exacerbated the absence of an adequate preliminary planning from the Foundation’s side.

It is not completely clear to what extent Donini contested De Martino’s intervention specifically (ibid.). However, one can firstly observe that Donini had already argued against the very idea of ‘popular culture’, insisting on

the non-existence of popular culture, [popular] literature [...], since it cannot be considered as «culture» without adjectives, as that which *interprets and expresses* the requirements of a collectivity. (Donini, cited in Ciavolella 2016: 439, my parenthesis and my emphasis, own translation)

This emphasis on the active capacity of interpreting the needs of a collectivity suggests that Donini’s vision of culture is associated to social subjects that are already conscious of their historical mission – to the point that ‘popular culture’ was an oxymoron to him (ibid.). Donini’s view thus opposed De Martino’s take on progressive folklore as the conscious proposal of the subaltern popular world.

Secondly, Donini represented the PCI’s official perspective on folklore, which explicitly contested De Martino’s position on the topic (ibid.). On the basis of a specific ‘re-adaptation’ of the *Prison Notebooks*, the party did not simply aim to ‘uproot and replace’ folklore. Rather, the PCI considered folklore as an archaic cultural residual that had to be jettisoned on the road towards the construction of a new culture and a new society (Dei 2018: 80, 97-99, 103). Therefore, the party opposed the conception of folklore as an instrument of liberation, against De Martino’s emphasis on the emancipatory aspects of progressive folklore.

The encounter with Donini thus opens up the possibility of a historical connection between Hobsbawm and ‘the margins’ of the Italian folklore debates. Significantly this historiographic hypothesis can be taken further to a more general level. In this respect, Hobsbawm never directly analysed the ‘core’ of the folklore debates – and thus, for example, he never discussed De Martino’s articles. Nevertheless, there is a connection

– a critical reception indeed – between Hobsbawm and some parts of these debates, which became the object of his critique, and were also incorporated within *Primitive Rebels* (1959a).

During the second half of the 1950s, Hobsbawm wrote some reviews for the *Times Literary Supplement*, where he introduced the readers to some of the latest Italian editorial products and debates around the Italian Southern Question (Di Qual 2017: 136-137). He discussed Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (1945) as well as other of his books (Hobsbawm 1959b). Moreover, he presented *Inquiry on Orgosolo* (1954), research undertaken in a small village of central Sardinia by Franco Cagnetta – an anthropologist who collaborated with De Martino. And also, he discussed Rocco Scotellaro's work, in particular his *Peasants of the South*, published posthumously in 1954 (Hobsbawm 1955). Significantly, Hobsbawm has mentioned Levi in *Primitive Rebels* (Hobsbawm 1959a: 21). Also, his book has included both Cagnetta and Scotellaro's works, respectively within a discussion about the birth of inchoate social movements from banditry (4, 20, 176-179) and about the millenarianist movements in Southern Europe (72)⁵¹.

Although he did not undermine the value of these works, Hobsbawm criticized them in his reviews, by warning the readers against the risk of idealizing the social situation and the culture of the peasants. His reviews suggest that the solution to the problems of the subaltern masses in Southern Italy is necessarily related to the dissolution of their cultural world: after all, the task of “transforming the South without losing its virtues and humanity” is “an impossible task” (Hobsbawm 1955). His arguments resonate with the position of the PCI on popular culture – particularly with Donini's perspective, but also with Alicata's intervention discussed in Chapter 2, which also critiqued the idealized representation of the peasantry in Scotellaro, De Martino but especially Levi's works. In this way,

Hobsbawm [...] brought the Communist polemics that had invested Levi's books in Italy to the English context. It was within a purely Italian and Communist perspective that he approached Southern Italy. (Di Qual 2017: 137, own translation)

Hobsbawm's concerns about the approaches that emphasise the historical and political function of subaltern cultures are thus coherent to the dismissive position on popular

culture formulated by the PCI intellectuals, who in turn mediated his access to Gramsci's work, in particular Q25. To what extent is Hobsbawm's position internal – or at least, comparable – to the PCI perspective then?

The connections 'at the margins' analysed in this Section offer some suggestions for this comparison, which will thus highlight the ways in which the 'subaltern question' was re-articulated in the transition from the Italian debates to Hobsbawm's work.

3.2 Hobsbawm: re-articulating the 'subaltern question' at the margins of the Italian folklore debates

The discussions on the pre-political character of the subaltern struggles in *Primitive Rebels* (1959a) are comparable to the perspective that the PCI – Donini, Alicata, etc. – had on progressive folklore. Even though Hobsbawm did not directly argue for jettisoning folklore, he has claimed that the 'pre-political' forms of social agitation are reformist, and thus can hardly be integrated within the revolutionary perspective of 'modern' social movements. Or, even when these 'pre-political' agitations are potentially revolutionary⁵², they nevertheless need a theory and a political platform coming 'from the outside' (Hobsbawm 1959a: 5-8). Hobsbawm considers pre-political and political forms of agitation – as well as their underpinning political cultures – as *qualitatively* different, even though in some cases the 'spontaneous philosophy' of the subaltern masses might be included within the perspectives of modern social movements. Nevertheless, this 'spontaneous philosophy' is not sufficient to bring about social change. Rather, it needs to be "imprinted with the right [that is, Marxist] kind of ideas about political organisation, strategy and tactics" (Hobsbawm 2017 [1959]: 141, my parenthesis), so as to reach a 'comprehensive vision of the material environment' that is useful for a revolutionary perspective. In this way

whereas De Martino proposed the notion of *folklore progressivo* in order to dignify popular culture as the living and current force for the transformation of the world, Hobsbawm rather defined the cultural forms of popular contestation as «pre-political», that is incapable, in their historical situation, of transforming themselves into an actual revolutionary politics, [a transformation] that only the new culture of the «working class» would have been able to do. In this respect, Hobsbawm was

perhaps not so far from the positions of the [Italian] Communist Party or some of its members. (Ciavolella 2016: 444, my parenthesis, own translation)

This comparison between Hobsbawm and the PCI does not deny that his understanding of the 'pre-political' was mostly influenced by his relation to Gluckman and Worsley, and by his attendance to the Manchester seminar during 1956 (Ciavolella 2017: 193-195; Di Qual 2017: 141-143). Nevertheless, the critique to progressive folklore is the position against which Hobsbawm's 'pre-political' converges with the PCI intellectuals' perspective on cultural policies and political strategy. This is because their underpinning conceptions of popular culture share similar political and theoretical coordinates, in contrast to the notion of progressive folklore. Their conceptions have emphasized the non-revolutionary character of popular culture, as well as its *qualitative* difference from the proletarian culture that will/would give birth to a socialist society. Combined with the historical connections analysed in Section 1, the convergence between the two perspectives suggests some forms of knowledge circulation between 'the margins' of the Italian folklore debates and Hobsbawm, whose perspective in turn affected the subsequent transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'.

At the same time, these connections 'at the margins' might shed light on a more general issue related to the circulation of Gramsci's observations on subalternity. As anticipated in Section 1, the Italian debates predominately focused on the "Observations on Folklore", whereas the other transnational debates were inspired by a selection of passages from Q25. The most plausible reason behind these divergent sources of inspiration is the fact that the "Observations on Folklore" were not included in Hoare and Smith's *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (1971) – which represented the main reference to Gramsci's work in the entire Anglophone area for about thirty years⁵³. It might be also the fact that Hobsbawm's work – which influenced the subsequent circulation of the 'subaltern question' – emphasized the contents of Q25 rather than those of Q27. This can in turn be explained by the ways in which the PCI intellectuals conveyed particular aspects of the *Prison Notebooks* to Hobsbawm, as well as by the influence of their dismissive conception of popular culture. Although Hobsbawm did not directly mention Q25 (at least) until the early 1960s, his work predominantly focused on the history of subaltern mobilizations, and

downplayed the ways in which (or the extent to which) the culture of the subaltern masses can be either 'uprooted and replaced' or employed in its positive aspects to create a 'modern' proletarian culture that is not *qualitatively* different from a subaltern 'spontaneous philosophy'.

This chapter mapped the roots and the patterns that connected the Italian folklore debates with the subsequent circulation of the 'subaltern question' – particularly, Hobsbawm's work. This contributed to the literature that analyses the ways in which Gramsci's observations on subalternity have been approached throughout the 20th century. The existing literature has discussed the conceptual affinities and divergences between the Italian folklore debates and the other moments in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'. However, this literature has predominately considered the Italian folklore debates as a historically discrete object that is separated from the broader transnational debates on subalternity.

Moreover, this chapter used these historical roots and patterns so as to compare the different moments of circulation of the 'subaltern question'. In particular, this chapter discussed Hobsbawm's notion of the 'pre-political' through the lens of progressive folklore. This discussion will be also used to compare Hobsbawm and *Subaltern Studies* in Chapters 4 and 5. At the same time, this chapter considered the political (or pre-political) character of subaltern insurgencies in their relation to spontaneity. This is to explore further the lexicon that maps the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question', and in turn to shed light on the ways in which subalternity affected current debates in the social sciences.

Significantly, the relation between the Italian debates and Hobsbawm were only one among the many transnational circuits where the 'subaltern question' circulated throughout the 20th century. This chapter started appreciating this transnational dimension. It is thus time to consider this dimension in its full extension.

4. At the roots of *Subaltern Studies*

This chapter accounts for the Gramscian roots of an intellectual project mainly located across UK, India and Australia, and that was central to the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’: *Subaltern Studies*. It discusses the formation of the *Subaltern Studies* project and the biographies of its members. Moreover, it discusses the ways in which these were influenced by some intellectuals’ developments (e.g. the circulation of Hobsbawm and Cirese’s work) and political issues (e.g. the political situation in India between the 1960s and the 1980s) that were entangled with the transnational circulation of Gramsci’s work up to the early 1980s – for example, the *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (1971). This chapter also complements the discussions in Chapter 3, particularly those concerning the (‘marginalised’) connections of the Italian folklore debates with the other transnational debates on the ‘subaltern question’.

4.1 The roots of *Subaltern Studies* (I): contexts and circuits of circulation of Gramsci in the Anglophone area (1957-1970)

A bird’s eye view of the ways in which Gramsci’s observations on subalternity and his remarks on the history of subaltern groups influenced *Subaltern Studies* would return the image of a transnational network that connected different parts of the planet. The question of Gramsci’s legacy cannot be confined to national borders. As illustrated in Chapter 3, Hobsbawm’s case exemplifies a transnational circuit of circulation of the ‘subaltern question’ that connected Italy with the UK. A fortiori this observation can be taken further with *Subaltern Studies*, which was an inherently transnational project mainly located across UK, India and Australia (Chakrabarty 2000a: 467; Prakash 1994: 1477). *Subaltern Studies* and their interest in subalternity emerged in relation to the transnational circulation of ideas and debates located within specific historical contexts, from more local to international scopes. In particular, some of these ideas and debates were integral to the reception of Gramsci’s observations on subalternity, which was part of the broader transnational circulation of his work – a circulation that pre-existed the foundation of *Subaltern Studies*. Therefore the

emergence of *Subaltern Studies* can be explained by accounting for the multiple and convergent transnational circuits of reception and exchange of Gramsci's ideas – particularly, his conception of subalternity. At the same time, this emergence can be explained by the impact that the circulation of knowledge within these transnational circuits had on more localized historical contexts: for example, India, in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Hungary (1956).

As Datta Gupta (1994: 18) has argued, Gramsci was virtually unknown in India before the publication⁵⁴ of *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (1957), which was edited and translated by Louis Marks for Lawrence and Wishart as well as for International Publisher – respectively, the publishing company of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and the publishing company of the Communist Party USA. The publication was authorised by the CPGB, which in this way interpreted the aspirations of theoretical renovation related to the new international political conditions after 1956: Gramsci's texts were particularly appropriate for this situation, considering the aura of 'heterodoxy' that Marxist circles attributed to them in the pre-1956/Cold War context. At the same time, this publication was supported by the CPGB *History Group* – that is, the 'dissident' historians of the party: Hobsbawm, Edward Palmer Thompson, Christopher Hill and, among the others, Louis Marks, who studied under Hill, and was Hobsbawm's housemate in his apartment in Bloomsbury.

Despite various scientific and philological problems⁵⁵ *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (1957) was the very first publication of Gramsci's work that had some impact in the Anglophone area (Boothman 2005) – although, it was not a great commercial success (Forgacs 2015 [1995]: 149-150) and, as Buttigieg (2016: 29) has noted, its influence was limited to leftist circles⁵⁶. As such, it was the very first attempt to provide the English-speaking public with a selection of notes from the *Prison Notebooks* and with some articles from the pre-prison period. It includes Gramsci's notes on 'common sense' (Liguori 2009) and the 'philosophy of praxis' (Dainotto 2009a). This illustrates the CPGB *History Group's* support, because these notes resonated with the primary research interest of these 'dissident' historians – that is, writing a 'history from below', so as to emphasise the practices and the political activity of the subaltern classes (Forgacs 2015 [1995]: 148).

Significantly, Marks' selection does not include any direct reference to the socio-political conception of subalternity – and, more generally, it does not include any note from Q25. However, this does not imply the complete erasure of the 'subaltern question' from the volume. In fact, this selection includes Gramsci's "Southern Question" (Gramsci 1957b: 28-51), along with three articles from *L'Ordine Nuovo*. Moreover, it is evident that the selected notes and articles employ more generic terms, such as 'subordinate/subordinated'⁵⁷, so as to refer to the pre-prison meaning of 'subaltern' (e.g. Gramsci 1957b: 68, 124, 180) as well as to groups or classes that are non-hegemonic (e.g. Gramsci 1957b: 153, 168-169, 178-173).

The Modern Prince and Other Writings (1957) immediately raised some interest in India. Bhabani Sen, a political leader of the (then undivided) Communist Party of India, published a review in Bengali in the leftist journal *Parichay* (Datta Gupta 1994: 18). The circulation of the book in the country fostered the formation of a Gramsci-literate public of readers, which was ready to engage with his thought (Chaturvedi 2000: viii). However, this public was limited to a small fraction of Indian Marxists. In fact, the communist leaders, the militants and the members of the Communist Party (or the two communist parties, after the split in 1964) were almost entirely unaware of Gramsci's ideas. Therefore, only small groups of intellectuals – mostly academics and students – began to give sustained consideration to Gramsci's work (Capuzzo 2009: 41; Datta Gupta 1994: 18; Guha 2009 [2007]: 362-364; Scarfone 2010: 209).

The Bengali Marxist historian Susobhan Chandra Sarkar was the most relevant figure among these intellectuals. He analysed and spread Gramsci's thought within the Indian academy during the 1950s-1960s. His work (e.g. Chandra Sarkar 1968) illustrates the first example of systematic reception of Gramsci's writings in India. Moreover, he used to discuss Gramsci's work with his students and colleagues (Capuzzo 2009: 41; Chaturvedi 2000: viii; Scarfone 2010: 209).

These conversations were of great importance to Ranajit Guha – the founder of the *Subaltern Studies* group – who studied with Chandra Sarkar at the Presidency College in Kolkata between the end of the 1930s and the 1940s and was his colleague in the

Department of History at Jadavpur University between 1958 and 1959. Throughout the 1940s-1950s Guha was a cadre of the Communist Party of India, but he left after 1956 and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. In the meanwhile, he progressively became involved in academia. From 1953 onwards, he taught in some undergraduate colleges around Kolkata, then at Jadavpur University. In 1959 Guha moved to the UK, and he was appointed first at the University of Manchester, then in Sussex (Amin and Bhadra 1994: 222-224; Capuzzo 2009: 41-42; Chatterjee 2009: 2-11; Chaturvedi 2000: viii) – exactly at the time when Gramsci’s work was having an impact on British Marxism.

To what extent did Gramsci influence British Marxism, and how did this, in turn, affect *Subaltern Studies*? During the 1960s, many British Marxists contributed to the scholarship on Gramsci – although they did not necessarily influence *Subaltern Studies*: for example, there is no agreement upon whether the *New Left Review* intellectuals and their reflections on Gramsci influenced *Subaltern Studies* or not (Brennan 2001: 149-150; Brass 2000: 158, 170-171 notes 8-9, 11-12; Chaturvedi 2000: ix).

The case of the CPGB *History Group* is different. As illustrated, their role in the publication of *The Modern Prince* (1957) reflected their wider interest in Gramsci’s thought. Hobsbawm’s biography and work between the 1950s and the early 1960s epitomise a strong commitment towards the historical analysis of subaltern groups, as Chapter 3 has argued. Crucially, his work was also fundamental to the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’ and, most notably, *Subaltern Studies*.

Primitive Rebels (1959a) – his first monograph dedicated to the history of subaltern groups and their mobilizations – is particularly illustrative of this situation. This book argues that the social agitations taking place in Western and Southern Europe after the French Revolution were ‘archaic’. This is not because they were backward, rather because their language and organisational forms were *pre-political* – namely, they were not able to express and organize their aspirations and needs according to the modalities of modern mass political subjects (Hobsbawm 1959a: 1-3, 8). As mentioned in the Methodology⁵⁸, *Primitive Rebels* (1959a) has been central to Guha’s *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (1983a) – but also, to the subsequent work of *Subaltern Studies*⁵⁹. In fact, Hobsbawm’s take on the *pre-political* character of

subaltern insurgencies is exactly what Guha challenges in his book. Guha has combined his critical reception of Hobsbawm's work with the acceptance of Gramsci's reflections on spontaneity and direction, so as to provide the theoretical framework of the whole book. Contra Hobsbawm, Guha's work understands peasant insurgencies in colonial India as inherently *political* (Guha 1983a: 6). In Guha's perspective, Hobsbawm

has written [...] of 'pre-political people' and 'pre-political populations' [...] to describe a state of supposedly absolute or near absence of political consciousness or organization. (Guha 1983a: 5)

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Hobsbawm claimed that even those subaltern uprisings that have some revolutionary potential need to be imprinted with the 'right kind of ideas' about political programmes, organisation, tactic, strategy, etc. This implies that even the less 'archaic' forms of social movements do not have well defined aims, programmes, direction – that is, they lack of political and theoretical consciousness. Contrarily, as will become clearer in Chapter 5, Guha recognises that the 'spontaneity' of subaltern insurgencies in colonial India resulted from complex organisational processes: these insurgencies were informed by political perspectives underpinned by articulated forms of political and theoretical consciousness.

The controversy between Guha and Hobsbawm does not undermine the general importance of the British 'history from below' and its reading of Gramsci for *Subaltern Studies*. For example, scholars have suggested that Thompson's work in the 1960s had an impact on the intellectual production of the group – although its members downplayed the extent of Thompson's influence (Brass 2000: 167; Brennan 2001: 150-152; Chandavarkar 2000 [1997]). For example "Ranajit Guha seems to have often used the term 'subaltern' somewhat in the way Thompson deployed the term 'plebeian' in his writings on eighteenth-century England" (S. Sarkar 2000 [1997]: 301). Yet, despite these suggestions, the relations between the British 'history from below' and the *Subaltern Studies* project is under-researched. An encompassing account of the ways in which CPGB *History Group* influenced the project has not been written yet (Chaturvedi 2000: xvi note 24).

4.2 The roots of *Subaltern Studies* (II): contexts and circuits of circulation of Gramsci in the Anglophone area (1970-1983)

1971 was a watershed in the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’. During the mid-1960s, the members of the *New Left Review* and some communist intellectuals discussed the hypothesis of a new selection of Gramsci’s work, so as to replace Marks’ ‘old’ selection. The final product of these conversations was *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, which appeared some years later (1971)⁶⁰. Despite this delay, the impact of this publication was remarkable. As many commentators have observed (e.g. P. Anderson 2016: 71; Brennan 2001: 149; Hobsbawm 2015 [1987]: 140; Rosengarten 1995: 153-154; Sassoon 1979: 595), this new selection became the most widely consulted source of Gramsci’s works in the Anglophone area for the following 30 years. The CPGB was once again fundamental in this situation, because this new selection was published by Lawrence and Wishart – as well as by International Publisher. This time though, the translation and the editorial work were appointed to Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, two contributors of the *New Left Review* who were not related to the CPGB.

The first two and the last three of the eight sections of the *Selections* (1971) follow the same criteria that inspired the organisation of the ‘Togliatti-Platone’ version of the *Prison Notebooks*, whereas sections 3, 4 and 5 are the product of Hoare and Smith’s work. Their editorial choice is relevant to the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’: as will become clear, the third section of the *Selections* (1971) had a seminal influence on *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial Studies. What is the editorial choice underpinning this section? Whereas the ‘Togliatti-Platone’ version published the whole Q25 in *The Risorgimento* (1949), the third section of the *Selections* (1971) – which is entitled “Notes on Italian History” – reproduces only some parts of Q25. In particular, Q25 §5 and Q25 §2 (the ‘methodological’ paragraphs) appear in this order and they are merged together, followed by other fragments from Q19, Q15 and Q10.

The problem with the “Notes on Italian History” – and, more generally, with whole volume – is that it is a selection. Therefore, it includes or excludes specific parts of the *Prison Notebooks* according to the editors’ judgement. Moreover, it suggests a

framework of interpretation of the notes that is different from the original text. The ways in which the *Selections* (1971) reduced Q25 to its 'methodological notes' was thus particularly important for the English-speaking readers of Gramsci. As Buttigieg (1999: 31, my parenthesis, own translation) has argued,

[if one reads] these notes out of context, they become barely more than a programme for an alternative historiographical research. One does not realise that, according to Gramsci, the analysis of the history of subaltern social groups is inextricably entangled with the articulation of an effective strategy for a revolutionary political party – not to mention the dense and complex texture of Gramsci's thought in which the reflections on subalternity are intertwined with his analysis of the State, civil society and hegemony.

The discussion on Hoare and Smith's editorial choice in this Section does not intend to make puritan claims about the use or abuse of Gramsci. This is because, firstly, despite the 'methodological reduction' Q25, the *Selections* (1971) is not as narrow as it might appear at first sight. In this respect, the word 'subaltern' occurs in places other than the "Notes on Italian History". For example, it occurs in the fragments related to spontaneity and direction (Gramsci 1971: 291-295 [Q3 §48]), thus showing that the 'subaltern question' in the *Selections* (1971) is part of a more complex 'texture'. At the same time, the *Selections* (1971) inspired readings of the 'subaltern question' that were not necessarily limited to the concept of subalternity alone. In this respect, the fragments on spontaneity and direction triggered original enquiries into the political action of the peasant masses – such as Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (1983a: 4-5; 10-12).

Secondly – and more importantly – the point of this 'philological' discussion is to understand what is at stake in the *Selections* (1971). Ideas are not exported as finished goods or fully formed ideological commodities, after all. As such, misunderstanding is ubiquitous, and it is part of the historical transfer (Guilhot 2014: 68-69). At the same time, misreading is not the only feature of an editorial selection. A selection is also a form of adaptation and interpretation that instantiates a problem in a context out of/for which it was not written (Keim 2014: 98-100). The point is to discuss the scope of use of a problem within a new context, so as to evaluate its political and – for the present work – sociological applicability.

The ‘methodological reduction’ of Q25 in the “Notes on Italian History” represents the specific scope of use of the ‘subaltern question’ within the *Selections* (1971). This ‘methodological reduction’ is linked to the outline of a programme of alternative historiographical research. Moreover, as Green (2002: 16) observes, the “Notes on Italian History” had a seminal influence on the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’. Therefore, as the next chapter will illustrate, this ‘methodological reduction’ can be understood as the material condition for a further re-instantiation (and re-articulation) of subalternity in other intellectual contexts: the ‘epistemic approach’ to the ‘subaltern question’, which represents one of the ways in which subalternity was deployed in *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial studies, and later affected current debates in the social sciences⁶¹.

Therefore, the *Selections* (1971) has been central to the transnational receptions and exchanges of Gramsci’s observations on subalternity, for better or for worse. On the one hand, it is the first material evidence of a clear and direct occurrence of this concept in the Anglophone area. On the other hand, it is the first material evidence of a clear and direct *spread* of the concept of subalternity across the whole Anglophone area, India included – or, at least, it is the material condition for this spread.

In India, as Datta Gupta (1994: 18) has observed, the widespread availability of the *Selections* (1971) coincided with the circulation of Susobhan Chandra Sarkar’s systematic account of Gramsci’s writings (1968) as well as with the diffusion of many other translations, selections or commentaries on Gramsci’s work⁶² (Datta Gupta 1994: 18). This fostered the further circulation of Gramsci’s ideas among the above-mentioned small group of Indian Marxists. An example of this circulation was *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903-1908* (1973), the work of Sumit Sarkar – a soon-to-be member of *Subaltern Studies* as well as Susobhan Sarkar’s son. In this book, Sarkar (1973: 95) describes “the English-educated elite which was to spearhead the national – and *swadeshi* – movement in Bengal” as the Gramscian ‘traditional intellectuals’ (513-514), drawing on Cammett’s commentary and Marks’ *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (1957).

Throughout the 1970s-1980s, the Indian Marxists' interest in Gramsci was also illustrated by the growing number of conferences, workshops, seminars and lectures on his work, his thought and his relevance to the South-Asian context, as well as by the various special issues dedicated to Gramsci in social sciences journals (Datta Gupta 1994: 18-19). In this respect, the *Social Scientist* is the proof that Gramsci's observations on subalternity were already circulating among the Indian Marxist intellectuals prior to the publication of *Subaltern Studies I* (1982c). In 1979, in fact, the journal

first spelt out the relevance of Gramsci's methodological schema as presented in *Notes on Italian History* to the study of [the Indian] national movement. (Chopra 1982: 55, 63 note 1, my parenthesis)

If these examples illustrate the interest that Gramsci and the 'subaltern question' raised among small groups of Indian intellectuals, the circulation of his ideas within these circles resulted only partially from an academic process. The political situation in India between the mid-1960s and the 1970s was significant in this respect.

The interest in Gramsci reflected the distance between the Indian Marxist intellectuals and the Indian Communist Party/parties. In fact,

[w]hile the organised left parties in India formulated their political strategies primarily in terms on a Soviet or Chinese model, basically adhering to a rather mechanical or deterministic understanding of Marxism, the intellectuals found in Gramsci an altogether fresh approach to Marxism with its emphasis on consciousness, praxis and, above all, a framework for relating Marxism to the history, society and culture of one's own country. (Datta Gupta 1994: 18)

This distance increased during the repression of the Naxalite uprisings (1968-1971) and, more generally, with the spread of the peasant insurgencies in West Bengal, which led to the birth of Maoist groups engaged in a (currently ongoing) guerrilla warfare against the Indian State.

Significantly, Guha's interpretation of these events sheds light on the ways in which they affected the formation of *Subaltern Studies* as a group and raised the interest of the project in Gramsci's work. According to Guha⁶³ (2009 [2007]: 362-364), the uprisings – and particularly, the Naxalite movement – resulted from the discontent related to the formation of the Indian Republic. He has argued that the political unification of the country happened at the expenses of the rural and urban lower

classes and middle classes, thus inaugurating what he has called a phase of 'dominance without hegemony' (2009 [2007]: 368). During the 1960s, the misery brought the poor and the unoccupied people to desperation. Even Khisan and Bhoodan – that is, the rural reformers movements – started questioning the non-violent pursuit of improvements for the rural classes (Stein 1990: 128). In this explosive context, the Naxalite movement started as a local revolt against landlords, but it soon scaled up to small insurrections that spread throughout the countryside, and also in the cities. The movement was the trigger that unified two generations of Indian militants around the discontent towards the failed promise of a better future. Nevertheless, the Naxalite uprisings were repressed under Indira Gandhi's premiership – with the complicity of the two Communist parties. This brought about a weakening of the movement, and led to an aftermath of doubts and questions (Guha 2009 [2007]: 362).

Throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, the Indian Marxist intellectuals *collectively* and *personally* elaborated these doubts and questions in different fields – literature, art, history, social sciences, etc. In this respect, the engagement with Gramsci's ideas was the outcome of a *collective* elaboration after the repression of the Naxalite uprisings. In fact,

[i]n the late sixties and seventies it was a feeling shared by the left that the collapse of India's rather fragile political order was almost imminent, faced as it was by a severe political and economic crisis. By the late eighties [...] it is becoming, however, increasingly evident that the growing economic crisis will not necessarily lead to the breakdown of the political system. Moreover, the sharpening of the crisis is in a way contributing to the rapid growth of reactionary forces and failure of the left to break new grounds.

All these factors, coupled with the growing commercialization of culture, the entry of big business and foreign multinationals in India's public life and their growing control over the consciousness of India's masses, have led to a serious heart-searching and Gramsci is becoming increasingly relevant in the context. The compulsions of an extremely complex historical situation necessitating a shift of forces away from base to superstructure, economy to culture, force to ideology have brought Gramsci closer to India's Marxist scholars and intellectuals who really long for socialism in the true, revolutionary sense of the term. (Datta Gupta 1994: 18-19)

Significantly, this engagement with Gramsci and thus these collective elaborations on the Naxalite uprisings also affected *personal* biographies, as Guha's story illustrates.

During 1970-1971 – that is, during the repression of the Naxalite movement – Guha went on sabbatical leave, and he moved from the UK to India. In India, at the Delhi

School of Economics, Guha was supposed to do some research for a book on Gandhi that he had planned to write. However, while in Delhi, he established connections with a group of Maoist students. This encounter radically changed Guha's research interests. He gave up his study on Gandhi, and the 'old' and the 'new' generation of militants – respectively, Guha and the Maoist students – decided to focus on the history of peasant insurgencies (Amin and Bhadra 1994: 224; Chatterjee 2009: 11; Guha 2009 [2007]: 364-365). As such, the formation of *Subaltern Studies* and its interest in Gramsci can be seen to have been strongly related to the mix of collective and personal elaborations on the Naxalite insurgencies (see also Seth 2006: 591, 602-603). In turn, these elaborations provided *Subaltern Studies* with the conceptual and political ground to critique the colonial legacy in postcolonial India – and, by extension the colonial legacy in the study of Indian/South Asian history.

This is because, firstly, the “Notes on Italian History” conceivably provided a useful historical framework to interpret these recent insurgencies. Secondly, as Guha (2009 [2007]: 364) has argued, one of the key questions for *Subaltern Studies* has been understanding the reason why the end of colonial domination did not change the apparatuses of colonial domination (i.e. the State) and, more generally, why the misery of the past continued into the misery of the present – a present that was marked by the repression of the Naxalite movement and the failed promise of a better future.

That said, personal elaborations did not immediately result in collective forms of expression. Back to Sussex in 1971, Guha continued his research on peasant insurgencies, though he was rather detached from the British academic environment. However, the substantial drop in his academic output – he published only a few book reviews up until the mid-1970s – was counterbalanced by an increased attention to the political situation of India (Amin and Bhadra 1994: 224; Chatterjee 2009: 11-12). In this respect, as Chatterjee (2009: 11) has noted

Indira Gandhi's declaration of a state of emergency seemed only to confirm what Guha had long suspected – that the Indian bourgeoisie had failed to achieve hegemony, that its rule did not elicit the consent of large masses of the people, and that its dominance was therefore necessarily based on coercion.

Throughout the 1970s, Guha collaborated with the Indian radical magazine *Frontier*, where he wrote about the repression of the Naxalite movement, the failed promise of

the Indian Republic and, most notably, about the history of peasant rebellions in lower Bengal – an argument that Guha expanded further for a publication in an academic journal in the mid-1970s (Guha 1974). In the end, these ten years of personal elaborations, academic isolation and political commitment resulted into his ‘full-blown statement’ (Chatterjee 2009: 12) on the history of peasant revolts – that is, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (1983a). A year before, in 1982, Guha had already inaugurated the *Subaltern Studies* series. The history of *Subaltern Studies* had officially begun.

The informal birth of *Subaltern Studies* can be traced back to 1979, when Guha hosted some informal meetings and discussions around the state of South Asian historiography at his house in Brighton as well as in Kolkata (Amin and Bhadra 1994: 224; Chatterjee 2009: 12; Chaturvedi 2000: vii). A small number of young historians attended these meetings and discussions. Some of them – Gyan Pandey and Shahid Amin, PhD students at Oxford – had already met Guha during the time he spent in Delhi in 1971 (Chakrabarty 2013: 23). In particular, they were part of that ‘new’ generation of Indian militants whose interests into peasant insurgencies was directly or indirectly influenced by the Naxalite uprisings (Majumdar 2015: 52).

The 1971 was crucial also for David Hardiman, a PhD student at Sussex at that time. He had never met Guha before, despite the fact that they were both based at the same university. However, at the beginning of his doctoral research, while spending some time in Delhi, his encounter with Guha profoundly influenced his future research (Hardiman 2013). Years later he was invited to Guha’s informal meetings in Brighton, along with David Arnold, an early career academic at Sussex. Both Arnold and Hardiman were another perfect match for Guha’s discussions on South Asian historiography. In fact, as for Pandey, their research up to 1979 reflected a significant discontent towards the ‘nationalist approaches’ to Indian history (Chakrabarty 2000a: 470-471, 482 note 14). Therefore, their alternative accounts about the making of the Indian nation easily fit within a broader critique of the elitist historiographies of India – which constituted one of the focal point of the soon-to-be *Subaltern Studies* project, as Chapter 5 will illustrate.

In 1979, by the time that Arnold and Hardiman were involved in the project, Dipesh Chakrabarty, a PhD student at the Australian National University of Canberra, was in England for a short visit. Here, he had his first meeting with Guha, and he spent some days at his house in Brighton. In 1980 Guha moved from Sussex to Canberra, but he briefly stopped-over in Kolkata. Chakrabarty, who was in Kolkata doing some research for his dissertation, spread the news of Guha's arrival to some friends of his, Partha Chatterjee and Gautam Bhadra, who later became part of the project (Chakrabarty 2013: 23).

The group expanded further in 1983 (Chatterjee 2009: 13) with the inclusion of Sumit Sarkar – the son of Susobhan Sarkar, Guha's teacher. Other people joined or gravitated around *Subaltern Studies* throughout the following years – most notably, Spivak, who started as an 'outsider' in the mid-1980s with the publication of "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" in *Subaltern Studies IV* (1985b), and then became part of the editorial collective in 1993 (Chatterjee 2010a: 82; Ludden 2001: 15). By that time, the 'core-group' had already produced some of the groundwork for the first phase of the project, and further elaborated on the reception of Gramsci.

In fact, during the early 1980, one specific commentary on Gramsci's work was interesting for the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question' and, particularly, for *Subaltern Studies*: Cirese's "Conceptions of the world, spontaneous philosophy and class instinct in Gramsci's «Observations on folklore»" (1976a [1969]) which was published in English translation as "Gramsci's Observations on Folklore" (1982 [1976]) within Anne Showstack Sassoon's *Approaches to Gramsci* (1982), as discussed in Chapter 2. Cirese's commentary is interesting here because it suggests that the circulation of the 'subaltern question' after the 1980s was not completely disconnected from the themes of Q27, despite its emphasis on Q25. This points to the 'marginalized'⁶⁴ circulation of knowledge between the second wave of the Italian folklore debates and the early intellectual production of *Subaltern Studies*, as illustrated by David Arnold's "Gramsci and Peasant Subalternity in India" (1984a).

In this article, Arnold's critical reception of Gramsci underpins the analysis of peasant subalternity in India and the evaluation of the conceptual framework that *Subaltern*

Studies has developed in this respect. Arnold discusses the ways in which Gramsci and *Subaltern Studies* have understood the culture of the peasants in terms of different balances between regressive and progressive elements as well as inherited and autonomous features. He sets out the ways in which these two different approaches can contribute to the analysis of the elite-subaltern relations in rural India during 19th and 20th century.

Significantly, in order to critically discuss Gramsci's approach to peasant culture, Arnold accepts Cirese's reading of the "Observations on Folklore". Although Arnold never directly mention the contents of Q27, he illustrates Cirese's argument about the imbalance between positive and negative elements in Gramsci's understanding of folklore, and thus he considers the relatively minor weight that the positive aspects have within the subaltern cultures (Arnold 1984a: 159-162). Moreover, Arnold discusses the extent to which subaltern cultures are autonomous from the hegemonic culture – particularly in terms of both their resistance to the expansive capacity of the hegemonic culture and their ability to either select cultural elements 'handed down from above' or actively shape hegemonic cultural contents (162, 174-175).

On the basis of these observations, Arnold argues that, unlike Gramsci, *Subaltern Studies* have given "undue prominence" (169, my emphasis) to the 'positive' cultural aspects of subaltern groups. Therefore he explicitly agrees with Gramsci's perspective on folklore, and implicitly relies on Cirese's argument about the marginality of the progressive aspect of folklore in Q27. As such, Arnold (ibid.) continues, the (then) future research of *Subaltern Studies* needs to address that "99 per cent of the time when peasants are not insurgent or assertive". The '99 per cent' argument reflects not only the limits of *Subaltern Studies*, but also their distance from Gramsci's remarks on the peasants' (limited) cultural autonomy. As Chapter 5 will illustrate, *Subaltern Studies'* emphasis on subaltern autonomy – the 'politics of the people' – can be understood as a creative re-adaptation of Gramsci, and it can be justified as a strategic move against the dominant approaches to the history of the subaltern classes. As Arnold (ibid.) has argued,

the immediate need was to challenge the assumptions of the existing historiography and this could most effectively be done by showing through peasant movements and rebellions the separateness and the vitality of the subaltern political domain.

In this way, the question of subaltern autonomy was of the utmost importance for the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question' after the 1980s as well as for the Italian folklore debates. The convergence between these different debates on the question of subaltern autonomy is interesting, because it points to a circuit of circulation of ideas between the second wave of the Italian folklore debates and *Subaltern Studies*. Nevertheless, the problem is that the actual magnitude of this circulation was limited – or better, marginalized. Cirese's work is undoubtedly a link between these two debates, but its impact on *Subaltern Studies* was not significant. Rather, the reception of Cirese's work is ostensibly limited to Arnold's article. Similarly, Arnold's article was not taken further in the subsequent work of the group.

4.3 *Subaltern Studies*: reading Gramsci within an intellectual conjuncture (I)⁶⁵

Sections 1 and 2 have accounted for the ways in which and the reasons why *Subaltern Studies* ended up being interested in Gramsci's observations on subalternity. These Sections have discussed the role that the debates around Gramsci's ideas played in this respect. However, what was outside these debates? This Section will contextualise the creative re-adaptation of Gramsci in *Subaltern Studies* within a broader intellectual conjuncture, which fostered the circulation of Gramsci's ideas without necessarily affecting the debates around Gramsci's work.

Ludden (2001: 5) notes that *Subaltern Studies* deployed Gramsci's ideas at a critical juncture in historical and, more generally, social studies. The intellectual developments within this critical juncture were not necessarily affected by the reception of Gramsci's ideas on subalternity – and sometimes they did not focus on Gramsci at all – although they represented the vectors of circulation of the 'subaltern question'.

The long-standing tradition of research on the history of oppressed groups was one of these vectors. As many commentators have argued (Bayly 1988: 111; Brennan 2001: 150-152; Bhattacharya 1983: 5-6, 8-13; Chaturvedi 2000: xi; Chopra 1982: 55; Hauser 1991: 242; Masselos 1992: 110; S. Sarkar 2000 [1996]: 319 note 8), the interest in a historiography written from the point of view of the subaltern masses – particularly, research on the history of peasant rebellions – can be traced back to the 1940s, long before the birth of *Subaltern Studies*. Some intellectual developments in the 1970s were influenced by this scholarship on the history of oppressed groups, while also offering significant contributions to this topic. In fact, the 1970s began with the publication of two journals focused on the peasant question in South Asia, one of which – *The Journal of Peasant Studies* – published some important research written by *Subaltern Studies* scholars and their critics some years later (e.g. Arnold 1984a; Bayly 1988; Guha 1974). More generally, the 1970s marked the full ‘return’ of the peasants in South Asian history – as Stokes emblematically announced in 1978 (Stokes 1978: 265-289). The (soon-to-be) members of the *Subaltern Studies* group contributed to this intellectual atmosphere, as already noted, and conversely, this milieu affected their research. The group’s interest into peasant subalternity – and thus, as Chapter 5 illustrates, a definition of subalternity that is essentially rural – was thereby the product of the ‘golden age’ of peasant studies (Arnold 2015: 264).

Subaltern Studies constructed part of their own scholarly identity against another historiographical development of the 1970s-1980s: the so-called ‘Cambridge School of History’⁶⁶. This ‘school’ – which focused on the history of 18th-19th century India – sought to detect the elements of *continuity* in the transition from the Mughal Empire to the British colonial rule, and thus it was not interested in “seeking the popular cultural and political roots of a *distinctive* nationalism in India” (Stein 1990: 128, my emphasis), as it was with *Subaltern Studies*. As will become clearer, this divergent emphasis on historical continuity and difference is only a small aspect of the broader controversy that opposed the *Subaltern Studies* project and the ‘Cambridge School’.

At the same time, *Subaltern Studies* constructed their own scholarly identity against another intellectual development of the 1970s-1980s – that is, the “schism in social theory into opposing schools that separated society and culture from state, institution

and political economy” (Ludden 2001: 8). The overall debate, whose most significant products were Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1983) and James C. Scott’s *Weapons of the weak* (1985), represented a crucial shift in historiography: the disentanglement of people’s history from national history and the history of the state, which in turn emphasised ‘histories from below’; and, more generally, the disentanglement of historical (and academic) research from national (and nationalist) politics. This suggests why *Subaltern Studies* can be situated within this intellectual atmosphere. One reason is their distance from the INC politics in the 1970s. The other will be extensively discussed in Chapter 5: namely, their interest in the ‘politics of the people’ as independent from the ‘politics of the elite’.

As such, it should come as no surprise that *Subaltern Studies* was also coeval with the first *global* ‘history from below’ – that is, Eric Wolf’s *Europe and the People without History* (1982), which drew on the British ‘history from below’ and Gramsci’s reflections on hegemony. By 1982, the early production of *Subaltern Studies* (e.g. Hardiman 1982) had already been influenced by Wolf, particularly by his ‘middle peasant thesis’ – that is, his contribution to the 1970s debates on peasant rebellions, which focused on the revolutionary role of the peasantry (Chaturvedi 2007: 11). Once again, the ‘golden age’ of peasant studies, along with a long-term tradition of ‘histories from below’, were central to raise the interest of *Subaltern Studies* in peasant subalternity.

This chapter considered some problems, authors and circumstances, so as to map the early unfolding of the transnational debates on the ‘subaltern question’. It accounted for the formation of *Subaltern Studies* – a group that had a significant impact on the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’. By following the members of the group throughout parts of their intellectual biographies, this chapter considered the formation of the project as integral to the ways in which Gramsci’s ideas – particularly, his observations on subalternity – circulated in the Anglophone area between the end of the 1950s and the early 1980s. It discussed the ways in which the project was influenced by Gramscian authors and currents of thought as well as by the circulation of the English translations of Gramsci and commentaries on his work – most notably, Hobsbawm and Cirese’s research. More generally, it contextualised the circulation of

the 'subaltern question' in the Anglophone area – and thus the formation of *Subaltern Studies* – within broader intellectual and political developments, such as the 'critical juncture' in historical and social studies and the historical and political situation of postcolonial India between 1960s and 1970s.

In this way, the discussions in this chapter introduced some theoretical, methodological and political issues that inform *Subaltern Studies*' perspective on subalternity, i.e. their interest in peasant uprisings, the political character of subaltern insurgencies and the question of subaltern autonomy. Moreover, by discussing the impact of Hobsbawm and Cirese's work on *Subaltern Studies*, this chapter continued to explore the roots and the patterns that connected the Italian folklore debates with the subsequent circulation of the 'subaltern question'. This contributed to fill the gaps in the literature interested in the approaches to Gramsci's observations on subalternity.

Also, this chapter contributed to shed light on the ways in which the 'subaltern question' affected current debates in the social sciences and, more generally, the debates on subalternity of the last 30 years. This is because it discussed some texts that were central to the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question', for example the *Selections* (1971). In particular, this chapter argued that the 'methodological reduction' of Q25 in the *Selections* (1971) can be understood as the material condition for the 'epistemic approach' to the 'subaltern question', which represents one of the ways in which subalternity has been deployed in *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial studies, and later affected current debates in the social sciences. In this way, this chapter introduced some of the ways in which the 'subaltern question' was instantiated in a context out of/for which it was not written. These considerations will be taken further in the following chapters, so as to evaluate the political and sociological possibilities opened (or closed) by this new deployment of the 'subaltern question'.

5. *Subaltern Studies* and the re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’

This chapter presents the *Subaltern Studies* project as a central moment in the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’. It focuses on the ‘early phase’ of *Subaltern Studies* (1982-1988), when the rebalance in their research interests – the ‘postcolonial’, ‘post-structuralist’ or ‘postmodern’ turn – was not yet evident⁶⁷. It analyses the ways in which *Subaltern Studies* re-articulated the ‘subaltern question’ and Gramsci’s observations on subalternity. In dialogue with scholarly interpretations of the project’s work, this chapter discusses the essentialist and non-essentialist ways in which *Subaltern Studies* understand the politics and culture of subaltern groups as ‘autonomous domains’. It illustrates the project’s approach to the ‘subaltern question’ and locates this approach within the context of particular intellectual conjunctures. Moreover, this chapter compares the question of subaltern autonomy in *Subaltern Studies* with the Italian folklore debates and Gramsci, arguing that essentialist and non-essentialist conceptions of subaltern autonomy constitute the project’s ‘rhythm of thought’ of subalternity. This ‘rhythm of thought’ provides the conditions for an ‘epistemic approach’ to subalternity. As such, this chapter introduces the sociological implications of this epistemic understanding.

5.1 The ‘subaltern question’ in *Subaltern Studies* (1982-1988)

The ‘early phase’ of *Subaltern Studies* and their earlier research interests can be mapped onto three Gramscian categories: subalternity, hegemony and passive revolution (Scarfone 2010: 213-225). This dissertation will discuss the relation between subalternity and the project’s first research interest: the challenge to elitist historiographies from the perspective of the ‘politics of the people’. The point is to illustrate the project’s ‘rhythm of thought’ of subalternity. That is, these Sections will focus neither on specific essays, nor on the positions of some members of the group. Rather, they will illustrate the perspectives that the project *as a whole* has on subalternity – particularly, subaltern autonomy. Taken together these – often opposed

– perspectives contribute to the ‘rhythm of thought’ of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies*.

As mentioned, *Subaltern Studies* have focused on a critique of elitist historiographies of colonial India. The emphasis that the project put on the *politics of the people* – that is, the politics of the subaltern classes/groups – represents the core of this critique (e.g. Guha 1982b: 4; 2009 [1996]: 356; 2009 [1997]: 323-328). Generally speaking, *Subaltern Studies* have developed a critical – although not new – narrative of Indian history from colonialism to independence: a history written from the perspective of the Indian subaltern groups. The ‘subaltern approach’ is opposed to elitist historiographies: the colonialist/British historiography, the Indian (neo)nationalist/bourgeois historiography and Marxist historiography (Chakrabarty 1992: 5-8; 2011: 168-169; Chatterjee 2010b [1998]: 290-292; Guha 1982b: 1). These historiographies have not documented the life of subaltern groups from the perspective of these groups (Chakrabarty 1983: 259-655). Rather, they concealed/overlooked the role that these groups – especially, the peasants (Guha 1982b: 5) – played in anti-colonial struggles and in the making of the Indian nation (1982b: 3).

Therefore these historiographies obliterated not only the world and the worldview of subaltern groups – from the ‘nitty-gritty’ of the small peasant sugar cane agriculture (Amin 1982) to the ‘precapitalist’ working class culture in the jute mills (Chakrabarty 1983). But also, crucially, what was missing in their account was

the *politics of the people*. [...] Parallel to the domain of elite politics there existed throughout the colonial period another domain of Indian politics in which the principal actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society or the colonial authorities but the subaltern classes and groups constituting the mass of the labouring population and the intermediate strata in town and country – that is, the people. (Guha 1982b: 4)

What is the ‘politics of the people’ and why is it related to subaltern groups? The answer requires a preliminary clarification of the ways in which *Subaltern Studies* have discussed subalternity.

As David Hardiman (1986: 90) has argued *Subaltern Studies* do not have a clear theory of subalternity. Nor there is agreed upon a univocal or precise definition of the word ‘subaltern’ (Chaturvedi 2007: 21; Ludden 2001: 17; Yang 1985: 178). In some cases, this

term has not even theoretical relevance: it is a “*convenient short-hand* to distinguish the lower, labouring and exploited classes from the upper, relatively privileged groups” (Pandey 1982: 190 note 107, my emphasis). Or, it points to a generic condition of subordination, thus lacking theoretical specificity (Chaturvedi 2007: 9): ‘subaltern’ is a synonym of oppressed, although this oppression has different expressions. In this respect, the “Preface” to *Subaltern Studies I* (1982c) is particularly significant, not least because it refers to a general-purpose dictionary, rather than the *Prison Notebooks*:

the word ‘subaltern’ [...] stands for the meaning as given in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, that is, ‘of inferior rank’. It will be used [...] as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, office. (Guha 1982a: vii)

In the light of the problems that affect the *definition* of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies*, it is convenient to discuss *examples* of subalternity in the project.

The members of the group have used the word ‘subaltern’ first and foremost for peasants, thus defining subalternity essentially in rural terms (Arnold 2015: 264). Moreover, the word refers to tribals and workers but also, for example, it is used in relation to small landlords, religious authorities and the petty bourgeoisie of colonial India. More generally, the word ‘subaltern’ refers to either individuals or groups⁶⁸.

This implies that, firstly, subalternity in *Subaltern Studies* is not limited to labour and the proletariat (Currie 1995: 232). As Section 2 will illustrate, class analysis is never the final point in *Subaltern Studies*: class and cultural analysis have been interwoven since the earlier phase of the project (Chaturvedi 2007: 9-11), thus encompassing forms of domination that exceed the relations of production. Nevertheless, as Arnold (1984a: 164) has noted, the most important division in the societies of colonial India was between the subordinated groups of workers and peasants and the groups that politically and economically dominated them.

Secondly, the ‘subaltern question’ cannot be separated from domination. For example, Guha (1982b: 8) has distinguished different layers within dominant groups, or the ‘elite’ (rather than ‘hegemonic groups’, as in Gramsci’s writings). This breaks down the elite of colonial India into dominant *foreign* (non-Indian) groups and dominant *indigenous* groups. These indigenous groups included classes and interests related to

the all-India and the regional/local level. The local level was particularly articulated, because it was the space where both the indigenous elites operated: the all-India indigenous elite – i.e., big feudal lords, the upper part of the bureaucracy and the industrial and mercantile bourgeoisie – and the local indigenous elite – i.e., “the lowest strata of the rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and upper-middle peasants” (ibid.). These latter groups belonged

to social strata hierarchically inferior to those of the dominant all-India groups [...] [they] *acted in the interests of the latter and not in conformity to interests corresponding truly to their own social being.* (ibid., emphasis in the original)

This is to say that local elites have one peculiarity: they resulted from the aggregation of floating social groups that were either dominant or dominated. Or rather, they acted according to the interests of either the dominant all-India groups or their true social being: the people – that is, the subaltern groups (ibid.). The local elites can thus be subaltern. For example, the small landlords can be considered as subaltern (Bhadra 1985: 230-245). Or, subaltern insurgencies in colonial India resulted from a complex amalgam of local elites and tribals (Arnold 1982: 126). At the same time, local elites are not necessarily subaltern. Guha (1982b: 8) has described the condition of the local elite as the *deviation* from the *ideal* category of ‘people’ (subaltern groups). This *ideal* category points to a *differential definition of subalternity*, because ‘the people’ represent “*the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the ‘elite’*” (ibid., emphasis in the text).

Therefore, historians – and, by extension, researchers – face a twofold challenge: on the one hand, the problem is to locate subalternity between its ideal positioning (the ‘demographic difference’) and its historical formations (peasants, workers, non-industrial urban poor, etc.). On the other hand, the issue is to investigate the extent to which the local elite deviates from the subaltern condition: that is, the deviation from an ideal which is already a difference – or, the difference of a difference. Therefore, at a theoretical level, *subaltern groups differ from the elite*. Notably though, the extent to which this difference is clear-cut in *Subaltern Studies* points to the problem of their essentialist understanding of subalternity. Sections 4.2 and 5 will provide an extensive discussion of this issue. Suffice it to say here that it is always possible to isolate

arguments in the *Subaltern Studies* series that might suggest an essentialist understanding of subalternity – for example, the argument about the ‘politics of the people’ as a domain of politics that is ‘sharply different’ from the elite domain (Guha 1982b: 5).

However, firstly, this essentialist understanding should be contextualised. The argument concerning the strong distinction between the subaltern and the elite domain appeared within “On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India” (1982b), the ‘manifesto’ of the group (Chatterjee 2012: 48) – that is, within a form of writing where simplification is conceivably a basic strategy. Secondly, many historiographical contributions in *Subaltern Studies* have provided nuanced rather than essentialist illustrations of the subaltern-elite relations (Capuzzo 2014: 340). As Arnold (1984a: 164) states, “the precise location of the elite/subaltern divide needs to be established in each specific regional and historical context in accordance with these general principles”. Lastly, the theoretical understanding of the subaltern-elite division in *Subaltern Studies* is not *inherently* essentialist. On the one hand, the local elites are defined in relation to subalternity. On the other hand, subaltern groups are defined in relation to the local, foreign and all-India elites. Therefore, subalternity – and thus the politics and the culture of subaltern groups – cannot be defined without the elite, and vice versa.

The theoretical circularity of the argument sheds further light on the task of the historians or, more generally, the researchers: they must assess the distance between the subaltern groups and the elite as well as the extent to which the local elite is close to the subaltern groups: *the subaltern groups differ from the elites, minus a more or less extended buffer zone* where they intermingle. Secondly, the circularity of the argument points to the cultural and political interrelations between subaltern and elite groups (e.g. Arnold 1982: 122-123, 126; Bhadra 1985: 252-253; Chatterjee 1982: 17-18; Pandey 1982: 177). These interrelations determine and therefore set the limits of each group.

As such, the political culture of the elite sets the limits to the political and cultural projects of subaltern groups – as illustrated by the inability of subaltern insurgencies to

forge institutions out of the authorities created by the Raj (Bhadra 1985: 253-254, 275). Conversely, the existence of a subaltern culture denotes an hegemonic project that cannot express or subsume the full range of cultural and political possibilities in the colonial society. For example, the persistence of a 'machine folklore' among the jute workers of Kolkata around the 1930s is indicative of a situation where the relation between workers and machines is regulated by religious frameworks, rather than by forms of technical knowledge (Chakrabarty 1983: 285-286; Kaiwar 2014: 94). This is not to say that the subaltern domain is sealed off from the elite domain. On the contrary, for example, Amin (1984: 25-47; 51-55) has illustrated the ways in which Gandhi's message was decodified and amplified in the imagination of the peasant masses of Gorakhpur during his visit in 1921. The point is that "the subaltern functions [...] as a measure of objective assessment of the role of the elite" (Guha 1982a: vii). The existence and – more importantly – the political agency of subaltern groups illustrate the limits of the hegemonic project, the extent of its expansive capacity and thus the extent of resistance against it. These are indicative of the margins of cultural and political *autonomy* of the subaltern groups – their autonomy from/within hegemony. How do *Subaltern Studies* understand this autonomy?

5.2 Subaltern autonomy: the 'politics of the people', spontaneity, subaltern consciousness and subaltern insurgency

Subaltern Studies have sought to grasp the autonomous political and cultural life of subaltern groups by re-articulating Gramsci's observations on subaltern autonomy. As this Section will demonstrate, the understanding of subaltern autonomy in *Subaltern Studies* resonates with the six-step framework in Gramsci's Q25 §5 (Guha 1982a: vii). Chapter 1 has argued that this framework looks into the ways in which subaltern groups form autonomous organisations. In particular, in the *Prison Notebooks* the use of this framework is related to a research on the history of subaltern groups. Moreover, it is part of the strategy that a revolutionary political party must follow, so as to guide subaltern groups towards their emancipation.

Subaltern Studies have approached the six steps only from a historiographical perspective. As such, they have re-articulated Gramsci's observations on subaltern

autonomy in a way that overlooks their strategic aspects (Buttigieg 1999: 31). In particular, *Subaltern Studies* have understood the autonomy of subaltern groups in terms of both the historiographical problem of *the politics of the people* in colonial India and a historiographical discussion on *spontaneity, subaltern consciousness and insurgency*. As will become clear, three conceptions of autonomy emerge in the light of these issues, and are often in tension with other conceptions of subaltern autonomy that emerge from the commentators' analyses discussed in Section 4.2. Taken together, all these conceptions constitute the project's 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity.

As mentioned, the 'politics of the people' defines the domain of Indian politics where the subaltern groups are the main actors. Therefore, *Subaltern Studies* understand the politics of the people as the domain of political agency of subaltern groups – paradigmatically, the peasants (Guha 1982b: 4; Majumdar 2015: 53). In particular, this agency is organized around peculiar grammars of mobilisation, which include kinship, territoriality, religion, caste (Chakrabarty 2000a: 473; Guha 1982b: 4; Kaiwar 2018) and, although implicitly or not necessarily prominently, class (Chibber 2013: 162-166; Guha 1983a: 169-177; Pandey 1982: 182). The politics of the people thus addresses a particular configuration of power (Guha 2009 [1997]: 324) that is organized differently from that of the elite: it is a parallel – and, *to some extent, independent* – domain of politics, with distinctive origins and dynamics. The extent of this independence illustrates the first (and general) conception of subaltern autonomy in *Subaltern Studies*.

A first observation here is that *Subaltern Studies* emphasise the relative independence of subaltern groups from the elite, without necessarily operating historical and theoretical simplifications. That is, the politics of the people is neither completely separated from/nor fully integrated within the politics of the elite. As the case of the peasant masses in Gorakhpur has illustrated, there are multiple interactions and overlaps between these two domains (see also Arnold 1984a: 164-165; Guha 1982b: 5-6; S. Sarkar 1984: 305-320; Scarfone 2010: 218-219). Therefore, the distinctions between the subaltern and the elite domain cannot be boiled down to a dichotomy between subaltern and elite politics, as if the two were completely different and internally coherent political units. The relation between these domains is expressed by

a wide and variable spectrum of reciprocal interpenetrations and gradual contrasts – although this does not exclude that the politics of the people co-exists with the domination or hegemony of the elite over the subaltern domain.

In fact, the existence and the agency of subaltern groups as well as their politics and culture illustrate the limits and the expansive capacity of the elite's hegemonic projects. In this respect, the elite cannot destroy or consume subaltern groups under their domination, because otherwise there would be neither domination, nor relations of power (Chatterjee 1983: 59). Moreover, *Subaltern Studies* have adopted Gramsci's position (Guha 1982a: vii), according to which "subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up" (Gramsci 1971: 55 [Q25 §2]). Therefore, subaltern groups⁶⁹ are never fully integrated into the hegemonic order, although they are subjected to the elite (Chatterjee 1983: 59), which thus affects their (relative) autonomy. At the same time, the relative independence of the subaltern political domain is also the product of subaltern agency.

In fact – and this is the second observation – this political domain originates in the economic, cultural and social forms of existence of the Indian peasants. These created the conditions for tribal or class solidarity and collective action (Arnold 1984a: 170-171; Capuzzo 2009: 47-48), but were also the paradigm for a broader range of subaltern uprisings in colonial India (Guha 1982b: 5). In this respect, the autonomous modes of thinking and action of subaltern groups politically express a culture and a worldview which is relatively independent from the culture and the worldview of the (current) elite. As will become clear, *Subaltern Studies* have for example illustrated the ways in which bonds of tribal solidarity that later affected cooperative practices in insurrectionary contexts had been previously strengthened by the daily experiences of subaltern groups – e.g. cooperation over hunting, fishing, religious rites and other collective activities. Similarly, the distinctive modes of political communications of subaltern groups – particularly, rumours – helped transcending the limits of local political action, thus reinforcing intra-tribal and class solidarity (Arnold 1984a: 170; Capuzzo 2009: 48-49). Nevertheless, aspects of the elite politics and culture are constitutive of the subaltern political domain, which is thus influenced in multiple ways by elements 'from above' and 'from below', as well as by their interactions.

This brings us to a third observation: subaltern grammars of mobilisations are (partially) rooted in pre-colonial times, although they are not necessarily 'archaic' (Chakrabarty 2000a: 473; Chibber 2013: 162-166; Guha 1982b: 3-4; 1983a: 169-177). As will become clear, the autonomy of subaltern mobilisations in colonial India does not result from a residual past. Rather, it illustrates the ways in which specific subaltern groups do politics within modernity, and from the colony. This is not a matter of counterposing an 'archaic' way of doing politics to a 'modern' one. Rather, it is a matter of a different degree of political organisation, that is informed by specific political and cultural grammars deployed in specific situations, and that emerges in close (or less close) contact with more organized forms of politics. This points to a further conception of autonomy in *Subaltern Studies*: a form of political agency that is 'quantitatively' different from that of the social movements of the 20th century, and that at times interweaves with the history of these movements.

This conceptualisation of the (political) autonomy of subaltern mobilisations in colonial India is introduced by the ways in which Guha re-considered the *spontaneity* of subaltern insurgencies – particularly, in the light of specific forms of political consciousness, and against the discussions of 'pre-political' mobilisations in Hobsbawm's *Primitive Rebels* (1959a). Moreover, it points to the cultural and political codes that inform this *consciousness*, and that explain the political organisation of subaltern *insurgencies*.

Drawing on Gramsci's considerations on spontaneity and direction, Guha (1983a: 5) argues that pure spontaneity does not exist in the history of Indian subaltern groups, because there were always traces of political consciousness, direction, defined political aims and political programmes. In fact, every attempt of subaltern insurgency in colonial India was marked by some degree of political organisation: temporization and weighing of pros and cons, petitions, deputations, peaceful demonstrations, consultations, meeting, gatherings and so on (1983a: 9). Therefore subaltern insurgencies in colonial India were *not* pre-political (1983a: 4).

Significantly, the political languages and modes of action of these subaltern groups are comparable to those of the 20th century ('modern') mass movements – although only to a certain extent. This is not necessarily in terms of different grammars of mobilisation – as will become clear, the Indian subaltern groups did 'speak' and rework the languages of colonial institutions and national liberation. Rather, it is in terms of political maturity (Guha 1983a: 10-11). Subaltern mobilisations in colonial India did not present a centralized leadership controlling all the local initiatives. Rather, mobilisations were mostly fragmented into local leaders, local objectives, local alliances, and so on (Guha 1982b: 6; 1983a: 4-5, 10-11). In this way, they were not able to raise above localism and generalise into a hegemonic project (Guha 1982b: 4). As such, subaltern forms of political organisation were less centralised, had less general objectives, etc. That is, subaltern autonomy in colonial India was 'quantitatively' different from elite forms of agency.

Nevertheless these subaltern mobilisations were as political as those of the 20th century movements, just with different aims. In this respect, they were directed against the elite power bloc (Capuzzo 2009: 46-47; Guha 1983a: 9) – particularly, towards the destruction of the semi-feudal relations between the rural masses and the landlords (1983a: 8-9). As such, thanks to their political activity, subaltern groups acquired some form of 'theoretical consciousness' (1983a: 11): a comprehensive vision of the social structures that inform their material environment.

Moreover, these subaltern mobilisations did not necessarily develop separately from elite mobilisations. Subaltern agency is (quantitatively) different from that of the elite, but it might also merge or interweave with the elite politics. Significantly, this resonates with Gramsci's six-steps in Q25, which, as illustrated, concern the study of: the formation of the subaltern groups in relation to both pre-existing social groups (whose mentality and ideologies they conserve for a time) and the sphere of production; the affiliation (e.g. influence, passive adherence) of subaltern groups to dominant formations; the formation of parties in the dominant groups, whose aim is to gain the consensus or control the subaltern groups; the birth of subaltern formations that put forward limited/partial claims, or assert their autonomy within older frameworks or assert integral autonomy (Gramsci 1971: 52 [Q25 §5]).

In this respect *Subaltern Studies* have made direct reference to Gramsci's first step, for example in S. Sarkar (1984: 274-276), where he briefly discusses the pre-existing communal strands of subaltern class politics within the Non-Cooperation movement in Bengal around the 1920s. At the same time, they have linked the revolts (*fituris*) in the Gudum Rampa hills – especially between 1879 and 1920 – to the discontent of the Adivasi hillmen who, although transformed into sharecroppers or landless rural proletariat, mobilised around political grammars that responded to their subordinated condition within the pre-colonial feudal system (*muttadari*) (Arnold 1982: 116-119)⁷⁰.

Moreover, *Subaltern Studies* have illustrated the subalterns' active/passive affiliation to as well as their influence on dominant political formations. For example they have considered on the one hand, the active adhesion of the Mubarakpur weavers to the Congress struggle for independence during the 1920s (Pandey 1984: 266-268) and, on the other hand, the passive affiliation of subaltern groups to the Swadeshi movement between 1905-1908 (S. Sarkar 1984: 278-279). Moreover, they have illustrated the mutual influences between religious-communal and nationalist politics (Chatterjee 1982: 17, 27, 34, 36-37). Or, they have discussed the ways in which the pressure from below of the peasant movements in Kumaun during 1910s-1920s "led to the radicalization of an organization originally set up to mediate between the state and the peasantry [...] [:] the Kumaun Parishad [which] initially swore undying loyalty to 'George [George V] Pancham'." (Ram. Guha 1985: 95, see also 84-96). In this respect, the Kumaun Parishad also illustrates the case of a political formation created to maintain the control over subaltern groups⁷¹.

Furthermore, the work of *Subaltern Studies* presents many references to subaltern formations which pressed claims of a limited and partial character, or which asserted, if not their integral autonomy, at least their autonomy within older frameworks. Significant are for example Bhadra's (1985: 273-275) discussions on the 'rebels of 1857', whose attempts of insurrection very seldomly rose above their immediate experience or towards general aims – e.g. a general rising, the affirmation of a new order, and so on⁷². Similarly, Pandey (1982: 182) has considered the ways in which the

Awadh peasants' struggle of 1921 became openly political, with the proclamation of *swaraj* and the creation of a parallel self-government⁷³.

In this way, against Hobsbawm's idea of *pre-political* mobilisations – which, as illustrated, lack political and theoretical consciousness – *Subaltern Studies* have “stretched the imaginary boundaries of the category “political” far beyond the territories assigned to it in European political thought” (Chakrabarty 2000a: 473). That is, they have illustrated the possibility of alternative organizations of the political space *within* modernity – and from the colony. As such, the history of subaltern mobilisations in colonial India interweaves with that of the ‘modern’ political movements of the 20th century. Moreover, the difference between subaltern mobilisations and ‘modern’ mobilisations (in the colony, but also in Europe) is quantitative, not qualitative: it is not a matter of ‘archaic’ vs ‘modern’ forms of insurgency. Rather it points to different degrees of political organisation informed by specific forms of consciousness, and thus by specific visions of the surrounding environment.

How have *Subaltern Studies* discussed subaltern consciousness? This question is fundamental to understand the extent to which the political and cultural autonomy of subaltern groups is different from a residual of the past. At the same time, it introduces the third conception of autonomy in *Subaltern Studies*: the conscious attempt to set one's own rules. In particular, this is the capacity to mobilise political and cultural grammars as historical products, thus re-activating or re-working pre-existing material within different contexts.

Subaltern Studies have discussed the question of *subaltern consciousness* as an index of political organization and, more prominently, as a form of collective consciousness. The first conceptualises the ways in which the ‘politics of the people’ was organised. As illustrated, subaltern mobilisations in colonial India presented a certain degree of planning, purposeful action, deliberation, explicit reflection, definition of aims, and so on (e.g. Chatterjee 1982: 35; Guha 1983a: 4-6, 9-11; 1983b: 1-2; Pandey 1982: 176-177). Against the metaphor of subaltern insurgencies bursting out as natural phenomena (Guha 1983b: 2), even (apparently) extemporaneous and improvised actions – e.g. burning or looting – can be traced back to dispersed forms of

organisation. Moreover, these actions do not necessarily depend from the direction of the elite – although this might be possible (e.g. Pandey 1982: 166-185). The ‘conscious’ undertaking of insurgencies (Guha 1983a: 2) represents the subaltern deliberate attempt to set the rules of their own mobilisations, and it thus illustrates the autonomous agency of subaltern groups, who are the subjects of their own history (1983b: 33, 38).

However, political organisation does not explain the full extent of subaltern political and cultural autonomy. This is because, firstly, *Subaltern Studies* have not focused on the history of subaltern mobilisations alone. Although a significant part of their early work analysed the role that culture and ideology played *within* subaltern mobilisations (Arnold 1984a: 169), the group was also interested in the broader cultural and ideological life of subaltern groups (e.g. Amin 1982; Chakrabarty 1983). Secondly, the ‘consciousness’ that informed these insurgencies resulted from deliberative processes – e.g. meetings, discussions, etc. – which cannot be understood outside of specific ideological and cultural formations. As such, the organisation of the subaltern political domain was directly related to its symbolic expressions.

Subaltern Studies have adopted a quasi-Durkheimian perspective to understand subaltern consciousness, and thus the symbolic life of subaltern groups. That is, their conceptualisation of subaltern consciousness resonates with Durkheim’s definition of collective consciousness: “the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society” (Durkheim 1984 [1893]: 39). In fact, shared beliefs play a prominent role in subaltern consciousness, along with a broader range of cultural expressions: the codes that articulate subaltern consciousness span from religious ideas, incipient forms of political consciousness – e.g. class consciousness – political imaginaries and collective memories, to more or less secularized rumours, full-blown (non revolutionary) moral economies and all those cultural expressions related to “community, kinship, language and other primordial loyalties” (Chakrabarty 1983: 308)⁷⁴.

Notably, this understanding of collective consciousness is at times more fragmented and contradictory than the Durkheimian version (e.g. Pandey 1984: 268-269)⁷⁵.

However, many members of the group have been influenced by Guha's position on the 'elementary grammars' of peasant insurgencies in colonial India. In this way, their work has illustrated the fundamental structural logics and principles of organisation behind the codes that articulate the consciousness and the political action of subaltern groups (Kaiwar 2018): negation, ambiguity, modality, solidarity, transmission and territoriality (Guha 1983a: 18-332, see also Bhadra 1985: 239; Chatterjee 1984: 181 note 73; Sw. Dasgupta 1985: 118-121, 129).

Overall, this combination of structural logic with cultural codes produces a historical account 'from below' of the perceptions (Bhadra 1985: 130) or the perspectives (Arnold 1987: 404; Chatterjee 1982: 32; Pandey 1982: 166) that subaltern groups have on their surrounding world – mobilisations included. Subaltern consciousness thus stands for a perspective that is often ordinary, rather than revolutionary (e.g. Pandey 1982: 171-174) – that is, it stems from the day-to-day experiences of subaltern groups. At the same time, it is subjected to the elite's perspectives. How do *Subaltern Studies* conceptualise the features of this 'ordinary perspective'?

Some of the cultural and political codes that inform these daily experiences can be traced back to precolonial/precapitalist times. As illustrated, the ordinariness of subaltern consciousness is not outmoded, rather it is 'pre-colonial (or pre-capitalist) but not archaic' (e.g. Chakrabarty 1983: 308-309; Guha 1982b: 4). For example, the codes that inform this consciousness are rooted in

certain cultural practices [that] [...] continue to exist long beyond their historical origin by becoming codified through constant repetition and by thus entering the structural aspects of a culture. (Chakrabarty 2013: 25)

In *Subaltern Studies*' view, the cultural practices of subaltern groups in colonial India have developed historically, rather than being residuals of the past. This implies that norms of social organisation are culturally constructed and codified within the colonial context. For example, Guha – along with other members of *Subaltern Studies*⁷⁶ – has shown the ways in which forms of tribal solidarity and communal obligation that affected rural insurgencies were "built up through a combination of sanctions and exhortations. They could not be taken as pre-given" (Chibber 2013: 164). Solidarity was not informed by an a-historical tribal loyalty. Rather, it was elicited on the basis of

cultural practices motivated by the material situation within the context of colonial domination (164-165): solidarity resulted from 'beliefs and sentiments' that were informed by material/class interests. In this way, subaltern consciousness – the source of solidarity (Durkheim 1984 [1893]: 55-59) – is historically produced. More generally, it is the historical 'precipitate' generated by the gradual contrasts and reciprocal interpenetrations between the subaltern and the elite domain (see also T. Sarkar 1985: 156-158). Therefore, *Subaltern Studies* have offered a historical understanding of the processes of subaltern cultural organisation, without necessarily assuming their 'uncontaminated origin'⁷⁷.

Similarly, in *Subaltern Studies* the processes of political organisation which mobilised these cultural practices are understood from a historical perspective. This implies the political re-purposing and re-activation of pre-colonial grammars within modernity. For example, the group has discussed the ways in which grammars related to forms of communal labour were mobilised during the insurgencies – for example, the grammars informing the 'pastime' fishing practices of the peasantry of Pabna during the 1873 uprising (Guha 1983a: 127-128). Therefore, the mobilisation of these grammars and practices – which, in line with Gramsci's six steps, derive from the ideologies, aims and mentality of pre-existing groups (S. Sarkar 1984: 274) – gestures towards the historical embeddedness of political and cultural autonomy. At the same time, the fact that these practices were mobilised during insurgency and within specific historical contexts implies that they were encapsulated *within* modernity, capitalist relations of production and colonial imbalances of power (e.g. Hardiman 1987: 47) – and yet in tension *with* them (Chakrabarty 1993: 1096)⁷⁸. However, this tension is not necessarily polarised.

As anticipated, the distinction between the subaltern and the elite domain is mapped onto a wide and variable spectrum of reciprocal interpenetrations and gradual contrasts⁷⁹. Therefore, it encompasses more or less complicated forms of mediation, i.e. hybridization, manipulation, acquiescence and so on (e.g. S. Sarkar 1984: 273-274; T. Sarkar 1985: 149-164). The (political) culture of Indian subaltern groups can be understood as the product of 'modernity' not only because (subaltern) grammars are re-worked or re-activated within modern contexts, but also because subaltern political

cultures are made of 'non-archaic' practices and grammars and are thus included within hegemonic processes. In fact, subaltern insurgencies do 'speak' and rework the languages of modern elites, for example those of colonial institutions or national liberation (e.g. Amin 1984: 25-47; Bhadra 1985: 253-254, 263; Pandey 1982: 182). In this way, the collective life of Indian subaltern groups is made of heterogeneous times and beliefs (Majumdar 2016: 57): subaltern and elite aspects coexist within the same experience – or, they are co-constitutive. Yet, subaltern consciousness is still contradictory, "dominated by elite cultural formations while being *resistant* to it at the same time" (Chatterjee 2017: 965, my emphasis).

This oppositional feature of subaltern consciousness – the typical index of subaltern autonomy (Cirese 1982 [1976]: 231), not least because it results from the instantiation of rules that are alternative to the dominant ones – is crucial to understand the (political) life of subaltern groups: the codes that articulate an oppositional subaltern consciousness can explain *subaltern insurgencies*. In this respect, class/economic analysis (e.g. Chakrabarty 1983: 259, 288-291; Pandey 1982: 144-149; 1984: 234-241, 263) does not encompass all the motivations behind subaltern mobilisations and it is thus supplemented by caste and cultural analysis (e.g. Amin 1984: 2, 38, 48; Bhadra 1985: 233, 241-243; Chakrabarty 1983: 264, 270-277, 285, 308-309; Pandey 1982: 167-168; 1984: 263). The frameworks that explain subaltern mobilisations address the autonomous cultural expressions of subaltern groups, their practices and their material culture (e.g. Amin 1984: 48; Bhadra 1985: 270). Many of these explanations point to 'oppositional cultures' which inform, for example, the peasants' understandings of their relation to the state (e.g. Chatterjee 1982: 32) or the local elite (e.g. Pandey 1982: 173).

Moreover, these explanations refer to cultural hybrids that result from the interaction between subaltern elements and elements that are 'trickled down' from the elite culture (e.g. Bhadra 1985: 253-254, 263). Significantly, both oppositional and hybrid cultures are indicative of the limits of subaltern insurgencies. In fact, the oppositional articulation of subaltern perspectives points to the 'negative' character of insurgency: subaltern groups find a common ground only in revolting against domination, and only very rarely they aim to create a new political order (Pandey 1982: 174-185, see also

Capuzzo 2009: 45-46). Similarly, hybrid cultures retain elements of the elite culture – e.g. the deference to the all-India or local authorities – that hinder the effectiveness of the uprisings.

Therefore, in *Subaltern Studies* the ordinariness of subaltern consciousness provides not just an empirical/limited understanding of the surrounding world (Amin 1982: 175; Bhadra 1985: 253-254, 274-275), but a ‘theoretical consciousness’ (Guha 1983a: 11). The point is not necessarily the extent to which this subaltern perspective is accurate, as some members of the group have noted (e.g. Arnold 1982: 121; Chakrabarty 2000a: 473; S. Sarkar 1984: 277-278). Rather, the issue is that this perspective rarely overcomes its historical limitations, thus failing to provide the political and cultural foundations for a new hegemony.

5.3 *Subaltern Studies*: reading Gramsci within an intellectual conjuncture (II)

This overview of *Subaltern Studies*’ approach to subalternity has offered the theoretical coordinates to address its relation to further intellectual developments of the 1970s-1980s: the transition from structuralism to post-structuralism and strands of Marxist research other than of British Marxism. These affected the early phase of *Subaltern Studies* – particularly, their reflections on subaltern autonomy – but were also external to the debates on the ‘subaltern question’.

Between the late 1970s-early 1980s Guha, whose interest in French structuralism came from his passion for painting, introduced the topic to other members of the group (Chakrabarty 2013: 25) – although some of them were already familiar with it. For example Hardiman and Amin’s research was inspired by structural anthropology (Chatterjee 2012: 44). This explains the fact that the structuralists – i.e. Barthes, Levi Strauss, Benveniste, Jakobson, etc. – influenced the interpretation of the ‘Indian peasant question’ in the early work of *Subaltern Studies*. For example, Guha’s “The Prose of Counter-Insurgency” (1983b) and *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* (1983a) have sought to unravel the underlying structure of subaltern consciousness through structuralist languages and methods (Guha 1983a: 15-17; 1983b: 3-40). In the

following years, other members of the group followed Guha's direction – although with different degrees of commitment (e.g. Amin 1984: 1 note 1; 1987: 182-183; Pandey 1984: 255 note 41; S. Sarkar 1984: 313 note 179).

Structuralist modes of reading affected another aspect of the project's work: the critical re-adaptation of some issues in Q25, particularly, the problem of finding the traces of independent initiative in the history of subaltern groups (Gramsci 1971: 55 [Q25 §2]). *Subaltern Studies* relied on structuralist modes of reading to scrutinize the colonial/elite archive, and thus to retrieve those scattered traces that point to the organised dimension of the politics of the people – or, the traces of an autonomous subaltern consciousness. Interestingly, these modes of reading marked the distance of *Subaltern Studies* from the British 'history from below' because, as Chakrabarty (2000a: 479) has noted:

[i]n keeping with the structuralist tradition [...] [t]he interventionist metaphor of "reading" resonates as the opposite of E.P. Thompson's use [...] of the passive metaphor of "listening" in describing the hermeneutic activity of the historian.

As such, the organisation of their hermeneutic strategies around the metaphor of 'reading' (rather than 'listening') was crucial to the early *Subaltern Studies*.

The transition from 'listening' to 'reading' can also be reversed to suggest the ways in which the shift from structuralism to post-structuralism affected the project's reflections on subalternity. As will become clearer in Chapter 6, the postcolonial (and post-structuralist) iteration of the 'listening' metaphor reconfigured the structuralist metaphor of 'reading', which became integral to the operations of representation and interpretation. How did this transition affect *Subaltern Studies*?

Firstly, the rhetorical shift from a structuralist 'reading' to a postcolonial 'listening' maps the project's 'internal' shift from retrieving to representing an autonomous subaltern consciousness. Secondly, early *Subaltern Studies* used structuralist methods to describe and retrieve the 'pure' structure of subaltern consciousness, so as to highlight its fundamental principles of organisation (Kaiwar 2014: 90). However, this 'pure' retrieval was the object of the internal (and post-structuralist) critique of *Subaltern Studies* (Spivak 1985b; 1988a), which contributed to re-balance the research

priorities in the group. Therefore, *Subaltern Studies* negotiated the transition from structuralism to post-structuralism in terms of a critique of subaltern consciousness and its essentialist retrieval – or, by extension, a critique of the retrieval of an objective meaning from the perspective of the trace.

While a comprehensive discussion of the ‘post-structuralist turn’ in *Subaltern studies* is left to a future development of this thesis, the impact of post-structuralism on early *Subaltern Studies* deserves some considerations. Foucault had a seminal influence on Chatterjee and Chakrabarty’s work in the 1980s. For example, Chakrabarty was introduced to Foucault’s ideas when he was hosted at Guha’s house in Sussex during 1979 (Chakrabarty 2013: 26). Derrida too played a role in the early *Subaltern Studies* (Currie 1995: 223). Although the majority of the group approached the question of deconstruction only in the mid-1980s (Chatterjee 2010a: 81-82), Guha’s interest in this topic – and, notably, his first encounter with Spivak – can be traced back to the early 1980s:

I remember walking into Guha’s office in the Coombs Building at the Australian National University one day in the early 1980s when Guha, pointing to a book [...] of his bookshelves, asked me, “Have you read that book?” It was Derrida’s *Grammatology* in Spivak’s translation. (Guha and Spivak had already met in Calcutta). (Chakrabarty 2013: 26)

This demonstrates that Spivak was central to introduce deconstruction to *Subaltern Studies*, and that she affected the transition of the project from structuralism to post-structuralism (Chatterjee 1999: 417). However, this transition was not unproblematic: “[d]econstruction was not easy to absorb” (Ibid.): it generated heated theoretical and political debates within the group (Hardiman 1986: 290), thus (partly⁸⁰) motivating the departure of some members in the following years – for example, Sumit Sarkar in 1994 (Chakrabarty 2013: 26; Chaturvedi 2000: xv note 5). The impact of deconstruction on early *Subaltern Studies* was limited.

The same happened with the project’s reception of the (then) new strands of Marxist research (outside the British ‘history from below’). Althusser influenced some members, thus mediating their understanding of the ‘subaltern question’. His idea of ‘relative autonomy’⁸¹ (Althusser 1967) is illustrative in this respect. This concept was neither part of nor contributed to any reflection on Gramsci’s subalternity.

Nevertheless, Chatterjee (1982: 36) and S. Sarkar (1984: 273) have employed it to discuss the autonomy of subaltern politics from the elite politics. Their use of 'relative autonomy' thus illustrates the interactions and overlaps between the two domains of politics, and considers the ways in which peasants' grammars of mobilisation were encapsulated within the domain of organized politics, as well as in continuous tension with it (O'Hanlon 1988: 207).

However, as Chatterjee (2010a: 81; 2012: 45) has recalled, Althusser never became prominent in *Subaltern Studies*. Therefore, despite Brennan's 'Althusserian Prism'⁸² might be a plausible hypothesis for analysing Gramsci's circulation in Postcolonial studies, Althusser did not convey Gramsci's ideas (particularly, subalternity) to the early *Subaltern Studies* – a point that Brennan has not addressed. More generally, the bibliographic⁸³ and anecdotal evidence suggest that, on the whole, Althusser's influence on the early *Subaltern Studies* might have been less significant than what Brennan has assumed.

5.4 Subalternity in *Subaltern Studies*, the Italian folklore debates and Gramsci: affinities and divergences

Sections 1 and 2 have outlined *Subaltern Studies*' approach to subalternity, thus highlighting three conceptions of subaltern autonomy. This allows to understand the ways in which the group re-articulated further the 'subaltern question'. This Section will evaluate this problem by comparing *Subaltern Studies* with the Italian folklore debates and Gramsci, particularly focusing on subaltern autonomy.

As anticipated in Chapter 4, the "Notes on Italian History" in the *Selections* (1971) were central to the ways in which *Subaltern Studies* re-articulated the 'subaltern question'. This implies that *Subaltern Studies*' interpretation of Gramsci was at times philologically inadequate, as with the case of the 'censorship thesis'⁸⁴. Or, as with the question of the 'methodological reduction' of Q25, it was limited – although not extremely limited, despite what Gramscian scholars have claimed (e.g. Buttigieg 1999: 28, 31; Green 2002: 1, 15-16; Zene 2010: 233-234): coherently with Gramsci's perspective, *Subaltern Studies* used subalternity to describe the lower strata of a

society without revolutionary classes (Schwarz 2001 [1997]: 306). More generally, *Subaltern Studies* have not necessarily detached subalternity from the complex texture of the *Prison Notebooks*. As mentioned, their work has focused on common sense, passive revolution, hegemony, etc. Moreover, the group's position on the political character of subaltern mobilisations is based on the fragments on spontaneity and direction in the *Selections* (1971). Additionally, *Subaltern Studies* engaged with Gramsci's pre-prison writings, for example, "Some Aspects of the Southern Question" (Arnold 1984a; Boni 2012: 296-300). In this respect, the reflections of *Subaltern Studies* on the Indian subaltern groups – particularly, the peasants – resonate with Gramsci's observations on the rural masses in Southern Italy: like Gramsci (e.g. Boninelli 2007: 24), *Subaltern Studies* had a quasi-ethnographic interest in the peasants' everyday life and culture. More generally, they re-articulated Gramsci's observations on the 'subaltern question' for the colonial context so as to understand the condition of subordination of the Indian subalterns (Arnold 1984a: 156). This re-articulation was facilitated by two factors. Firstly, colonial India and the 19th-early 20th century Southern Italy can be considered two 'not fully capitalistic' areas that followed similar trajectories of political and economic development (Arnold 1984a: 155-156, 163; Chatterjee 2010b [1998]: 290; Filippini 2011: 101-102). Secondly, as will become clearer in Chapter 6, the regimes of representation of the Indian subaltern groups were organised along the line of race, thus resonating with the representation of the (Southern) Italian subaltern groups discussed in Q25.

Significantly, the re-articulation of the 'subaltern question' in *Subaltern Studies* can be explored further by accounting for a central aspect of their approach to Gramsci – that is, the question of subaltern autonomy and, more generally, the relation between the 'subaltern' and the 'elite/hegemonic'. As such, the question of subaltern autonomy provides the ground for a comparison between *Subaltern Studies* and the Italian folklore debates. At the same time, this question illustrates not only the affinities between the work of the group and Gramsci but also, as some commentators have argued, their divergences.

5.4.1 *Subaltern Studies, the Italian folklore debates and subaltern autonomy*

The problem of subaltern autonomy is central for both the Italian folklore debates and *Subaltern Studies*. Cirese and Chakrabarty's words are indicative of this intellectual continuity. In his discussions on the autonomy of folklore, Cirese (1977 [1951]: 163, own translation) has argued that

[t]he world of folklore [...] is a world that has grown on its own with movements that have their own physiognomy.

Similarly, Chakrabarty (2000a: 472-473) has claimed that in Guha's work

[p]easant uprisings [...] reflected this separate and autonomous grammar of mobilisation "in its most comprehensive form".

The questions that the Italian folklore debates (and Gramsci) have addressed on a cultural level – particularly, the oppositional and *relatively autonomous* aspects of folklore – have been (implicitly) reconfigured from a political perspective by *Subaltern Studies*. The relative autonomy of both the *cultural* dynamics of the subaltern world and the *political* dynamics of subaltern struggles suggest a resonance between the Italian folklore debates and *Subaltern Studies*. This resonance can be taken further considering their conceptualisations of the *direct* connection between these cultural and political dynamics.

De Martino's take on progressive folklore is comparable to the ways in which Guha understands the mobilisation of a subaltern theoretical consciousness during insurgencies. As illustrated in Chapter 2, according to De Martino subaltern struggles are informed by progressive cultural perspectives that are *immediately* political. As such, progressive folklore underpins a worldview that accounts for the oppositional relation between subaltern and hegemonic groups – that is, a comprehensive vision of the material environment. Therefore, progressive folklore provides subaltern mobilisations with a 'theoretical consciousness'.

Nevertheless, *Subaltern Studies* and the Italian folklore debates diverge on the ways in which these cultural and political dynamics connect. In De Martino's perspective, progressive folklore has some revolutionary potential. Whereas according to *Subaltern*

Studies the cultural frameworks of subaltern groups do not (or very seldomly) contribute to a revolutionary social change. In other words, *Subaltern Studies* have argued that subaltern worldviews are not effective enough to provide subaltern struggles with the political and cultural foundations for a new hegemony.

In this way, *Subaltern Studies* have disentangled the 'theoretical consciousness' from a revolutionary perspective. Whereas in De Martino (and Gramsci) the party – and thus, the intellectuals – connects these two issues, thus organising a theoretical consciousness for revolutionary outcomes. This disentanglement points to the limits that hinder the party's (and thus the intellectuals') mediatory function in colonial India. In fact, the activity of a (bourgeois or working-class) political subject during the anti-colonial struggle lacked hegemonic capacity: it was not able to organise the subaltern theoretical consciousness within a revolutionary perspective, and thus to integrate subaltern demands, needs and languages into a comprehensive national project (Guha 1982b: 7). As such, the re-articulation of the 'subaltern question' in the colony cannot be thought outside of the problems of hegemony and passive revolution.

5.4.2 *Subaltern Studies, Gramsci and subaltern autonomy*

Generally speaking, Gramsci inspired *Subaltern Studies* in their effort to trace the fragmentary trajectories of subaltern political autonomy within colonial contexts, so as to complete the archives of South Asian history with the mobilisations and the everyday life of the Indian subaltern groups (Currie 1995: 233; Sivaramakrishnan 1995: 402). Moreover, as illustrated, some of their perspectives on subaltern autonomy resonate with Gramsci's six-steps in Q25. Nevertheless, as many commentators have argued, Gramsci and *Subaltern Studies* have profoundly different views on subaltern autonomy. To what extent does *Subaltern Studies'* understanding of subaltern autonomy depart from (or resemble) Gramsci's perspective?

A first strand of commentators (e.g. Alam 1983: 43-50; Ludden 2001: 16; Roosa 2006; Schwarz 2001 [1997]: 309-311⁸⁵) has argued that *Subaltern Studies* conceive of the politics and the culture of subaltern groups as *inherently* autonomous: the sharp division between the elite and the subaltern domain – and thus the radical

independence of the latter from the former – directly or indirectly applies to all the studies in the series. For example, John Roosa (2006: 132-135) has examined the flaw in the programmatic statements of the project's early phase – e.g. those in Guha (1982b) – as well as their impact on it. He has argued that

the subalternists' early writings in social history were burdened by the series editor's [Guha] remarkably crude theorizing about a divide in India between "the elite" and "the people", a capacious, residual category that comprised everyone who was not part of the elite. (Roosa 2006: 134-135)

On the one hand, the crude division of Indian politics in two domains – a 'structuralist populism' in Roosa's words (2006: 133) – brings about a 'grand conflation' of actors under two general rubrics ('subaltern' and 'elite') devoid of class determination – e.g. property. These ambiguously describe vague strata locked in relations of unmediated power that are of no use for understanding the society of colonial India. This ambiguity further increases with the attempt to offer more complex descriptions of this society – for example, by dividing the elite within foreign elite, all-India and local indigenous elite (2006: 134). On the other hand, the radical independence of the subaltern domain implies that this domain does not intermingle with other cultural or political forms, thus defying the ways in which the *Prison Notebooks* emphasise the interrelation between the hegemonic and the subaltern realm (Alam 1983: 49; Schwarz 2001 [1997]: 309-310).

A second strand of commentators (e.g. Bayly 1988: 120; O'Hanlon 1988: 199-200; Sivaramakrishnan 1995: 404; S. Sarkar 2000 [1997]: 304-306]) has provided a less unilateral image of *Subaltern Studies*. The central issue is always the project's radical conception of autonomy, which is characterized by "absolute, fixed decontextualised meanings and qualities" (S. Sarkar 2000 [1997]: 304). Significantly, according to these commentators the tendency towards this radical conception is present in many contributions to *Subaltern Studies*, although by no means they consider it as a problem haunting the whole project, at least in its early phase. In this respect, according to Rosalind O'Hanlon (1988: 200-205), Kalyanakrishnan Sivaramakrishnan (1995: 404-405) and Sumit Sarkar (2000 [1997]: 303-304), subaltern autonomy has been taken quite literally in some of the contributions to *Subaltern Studies* – e.g. Henningham (1983), Sw. Dasgupta (1985), Ram. Guha (1985), T. Sarkar (1985) as well as, more prominently, Guha (1983a) and Chatterjee (1982; 1983). This has resulted in the mechanical

application of categories like 'subaltern' and 'elite': their disjunction does not grasp the complex articulation of power relations they intend to describe. On the basis of this radical conception of subaltern autonomy, these (and other⁸⁶) contributions have, on the one hand, formulated assertions about subaltern groups pursuing their political projects in isolation – that is, independently from the elite – (O'Hanlon 1988: 200, see also Bayly 1988: 115, 117). This has not questioned the composition of the subaltern domain, which appears to be as monolithic (O'Hanlon 1988: 203-204; Sivaramakrishnan 1995: 403). On the other hand, they have not acknowledged the ways in which subaltern groups appropriate elite cultural material (Sivaramakrishnan 1995: 403, see also Bayly 1988: 112), thus suggesting the idea of untarnished subaltern cultures (O'Hanlon 1988: 200)⁸⁷. In this way, "[t]he more essentialist aspects of the early *Subaltern Studies* actually indicated moves away from [...] Gramsci's six point 'methodological criteria' for the 'history of the subaltern classes'" (S. Sarkar 2000 [1997]: 305).

A more nuanced version of these positions can be found in Alf Gunvald Nilsen's observations (2017: 47-49; 57-58), which highlights a fundamental tension in *Subaltern Studies*. In his view, the project presents a theoretical tendency towards a radical conception of subaltern autonomy, where the contacts between the elite and the subaltern domain "are reduced to two different political cultures and two different social groups between which short-term external relations arises" (2017: 47). However, this is at odds with the social reality described by many empirical studies – e.g. Pandey (1982), Amin (1984), Sw. Dasgupta (1985) and Hardiman (1984) – which nevertheless refer to this theoretical tendency. In particular, Nilsen (2017: 33-49) has argued that these empirical studies discuss the intersections between the history of subaltern mobilisations and the history of the modern political movement in colonial India. As such, the relation between subaltern groups and nationalist elite that emerges from these studies is not limited to the pure direction of the elite or to subaltern passivity. More generally, this relation does not necessarily imply a radical conception of an independent subaltern domain. Rather, these empirical studies have discussed the ways in which subaltern groups gave their adherence or subjected to the ideologies of the dominant groups – e.g. Pandey (1982) – as well as the subaltern appropriation and re-interpretation of elite material – e.g. Amin (1984)⁸⁸.

Although characterized by different degrees of nuances, these commentators' views point to a specific issue: *Subaltern Studies* have emphasised a radical subaltern difference – a form of *essentialism* that can be either an undisputed theoretical assumption, a theoretical premise that is in contrast with the empirical studies, a tendency that affects only some studies of the series or a flaw that haunts the whole project. In this respect, as Schwarz (2001 [1997]: 311) has noted, this emphasis indicates that *Subaltern Studies* have stretched – or, abandoned – Gramsci's definition of subalternity. By denying the constitutive interrelations between the subaltern and the hegemonic domain, subalternity is considered as external to hegemony: contra Gramsci⁸⁹, subaltern groups are *excluded* from rather than *enclosed* within the hegemonic domain (P. Thomas 2018: 873).

This take on the project's essentialist understanding of subalternity sheds further light on the ways in which, according to some commentators, *Subaltern Studies* and Gramsci diverge on subaltern autonomy. The essentialism in the project underpins an idea of subaltern autonomy as non-mediated or absolute (Modonesi 2014: 29). Autonomy is a condition deriving from the mere existence of subaltern groups, rather than a historical possibility born out of struggles. In these commentators' view, *Subaltern Studies* deviate from Gramsci's six steps, because they do not derive autonomy from socio-historical processes of autonomisation (Alam 1983: 49; Modonesi 2014: 30). Therefore, they do not understand the formation of subaltern groups as produced by interactions with a historical system of hegemonic power that actively integrates and manipulates them. Rather, subaltern groups are pre-existing ontological-political entities (Alam 1983: 46; P. Thomas 2015: 92).

5.5 The rhythm of thought of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies* and the 'epistemic turn' in the 'subaltern question': consequences for sociological analysis

Section 2 has addressed the semantic plurality of subaltern autonomy in *Subaltern Studies* by discussing three conceptions that emerge from their work: a relative independence, a 'quantitatively' different subaltern agency that interweaves

with that of 'modern' social movements, and the capacity to set one's own rules on the basis of pre-existing subaltern or elite material. As such, Section 2 provides a reading of the approach to subaltern autonomy in *Subaltern Studies* that challenges or complements the conceptions of autonomy that have emerged from the commentators' analyses in Section 4.2. This is because the reading in Section 2 claims a convergence with Gramsci's work – particularly, the six steps in Q25 – that is stronger than what these analyses have assumed. Moreover it highlights the limits of these analyses.

As mentioned, some commentators have provided an unilateral image of the project. For example, they have argued that *Subaltern Studies* consider the subaltern domain as inherently autonomous – that is, strongly independent from the elite – and that this autonomy is grounded on what Roosa has called a 'remarkably crude' theoretical division of Indian politics within two domains. The 'crude division' that haunts the whole project is challenged in the first place by the conception of a relatively independent subaltern domain that emerges from the studies in the series. Moreover, some of these writings contain a vision of Indian colonial society that disrupts the elite-subaltern dichotomy as well as the schematic tripartition of the elite. This is because they describe a society where questions of caste, tribe and class intermingle, thus reshuffling established hierarchies within complex social articulations and social blocs. For example, Pandey (1983: 88-90; 100-107) has analysed the social bloc – and thus, the converging interests – between the upper caste landlords (*zamindari*) and tenants of a cowherd caste (the Ahirs) during the anti-Muslim riots of 1916-1917 organized by the Cow Protection movement in Bhojpuri. Similarly, Arnold (1982: 110-111) has discussed the ways in which the reconfiguration of class relations subverted hierarchies and relations of power in Gudam Rampa during the second half of 19th century. In this respect, the sinking of Adivasi groups into landless proletariat was partly due to the dispossession operated by untouchable castes, who had managed to acquire capital and expertise as traders during the British colonial penetration⁹⁰.

A similar unilateral image of the project emerges from Massimo Modonesi, Javeed Alam and Peter Thomas' analyses of subaltern autonomy in *Subaltern Studies*. As mentioned, they have argued that the project has provided a non-mediated or

absolute conception of subaltern autonomy that does not derive from socio-historical processes of autonomisation. This conception understands subaltern groups as pre-existing ontological-political entities excluded from (rather than enclosed within) the hegemonic realm. However, as illustrated, this position is not representative of the whole project. Contributions such as Chakrabarty (1984) might present “the danger of exaggerating the autonomy of the subalterns resulting [...] in the total negation of the significance of non-subaltern mediation or of organic link between the unorganised and organised domain” (R. Das Gupta 2001 [1985]: 110, see also 115-116). However other contributions – e.g. S. Sarkar (1984) – have clearly highlighted the importance of non-subaltern mediation, and thus the question of a relatively independent subaltern domain (see also R. Das Gupta 2001 [1985]: 114-115). As such, the impact of elite agency and cultural material on the politics of the people might at times be limited. Nevertheless, the subaltern and the elite domain connect through a variety of more or less complex forms of mediation – e.g. hybridization, manipulation, acquiescence, etc. Therefore, the distinction between the two domains comprehends a wide and variable spectrum of reciprocal interpenetrations and gradual contrasts, rather than necessarily pointing to two distinct and coherent political units.

The relevance of non-subaltern mediation in turn suggests that *Subaltern Studies* do not necessarily consider subaltern groups as inherently autonomous. In fact, the mere existence of subaltern groups is neither the only marker of subaltern autonomy, nor the most important one. The crucial element is a ‘quantitatively’ specific form of political agency whose history interweaves with that of modern mass movements. In particular, *Subaltern Studies* have illustrated the various articulations of subaltern autonomy – or, the more or less fragmentary socio-historical paths across, within and outside the elite domain, towards Gramsci’s integral autonomy. Therefore, autonomy is not pre-given, rather it is a ‘precipitate’ generated from socio-historical processes. As such, subaltern groups are not pre-existing ontological and political entities excluded from the hegemonic realm: the politics of the people, and thus the oppositional character of subaltern politics, is compatible with both the domination and the hegemony of the elite. This means that, although subaltern groups are not necessarily fully integrated into the hegemonic order, they are still subjected to the elite. The expansion of the hegemonic project has incorporated subaltern groups and has

directed their activity – although with limitations, which illustrate the limited expansive capacity of the hegemonic project.

The critique to O’Hanlon (1988), Sivaramakrishnan (1995), S. Sarkar (2000 [1997]) and Bayly (1988) requires a more nuanced discussion. These four commentators have observed a tendency in *Subaltern Studies* which boils down to a quite literal conception of subaltern autonomy. This has brought these commentators to conclude that some contributions in the series have tended to simplify the complex articulations of power in colonial India, thereby preponderantly addressing subaltern groups who pursue their political projects in isolation, without appropriating elite cultural material. Bibliographic evidence contests the views that these commentators have on these contributions⁹¹. Moreover, generally speaking, the tendencies highlighted by these commentators are counter-balanced on the one hand, by a ‘quantitatively’ different subaltern agency that interweaves with the elite domain and, on the other hand, by the subaltern capacity to set their own rules on the basis of pre-existing subaltern or elite material. More specifically, the tendencies that these commentators have observed in specific studies co-exist with opposite tendencies that emerge from other contributions in the series. For example, the failure to describe complex articulation of power in colonial India – a tendency that Sivaramakrishnan (1995: 404) observes in Guha (1983a), Sw. Dasgupta (1985) and T. Sarkar (1985) – is counterbalanced by contributions such as Arnold (1982: 107-119): as mentioned, this study has described the complex social articulation of the Gudam Rampa societies between the second half of 19th century and the first decades of 20th century. Similarly, the tendency to provide a monolithic description of the subaltern domain – as in O’Hanlon’s (1988: 203-204) reading of Guha (1983a) – is questioned by a symmetrical counter-tendency which emerges from Arnold (1982: 90, 110-111, 119), Chatterjee (1982: 32, 37) and Pandey (1983: 109-112, 125-126), who illustrate the contradictions and the differences that inform the subaltern domain – e.g. in terms of class and caste.

Interestingly, Nilsen (2017) has to some extent recognized the multiple forms of subaltern autonomy in *Subaltern Studies*. As mentioned, he has highlighted a fundamental tension in the project. This sets a theoretical conception of autonomy understood as radical independence against what emerges from the empirical studies,

which refer to this theoretical conception, at the same time describing the interweaving between the subaltern and the elite domain, the adherence of subaltern groups to dominant ideologies as well as the subaltern appropriation of elite cultural material. The question is that, firstly, a 'fundamental tension' exists only if the project's conceptions of autonomy are in contrast with what emerges from the empirical studies. However, as illustrated, different conceptions of subaltern autonomy – other than radical/essentialist conceptions – do emerge from these empirical studies, and are thus coherent with the reality that these studies describe. In this respect, the co-existence among different conceptions of subaltern autonomy mitigates Nilsen's fundamental tension. Secondly, his observations raise an almost paradoxical question: how is it possible that empirical studies, while relying on essentialist theoretical frameworks, provide a complex and nuanced description of social reality? Assuming 'reality' as the product of a historical narrative, a complex description of reality results from a complex historical narrative. In particular, the complexity of this narrative derives not only from its different layers – informative, rhetorical, theoretical/ideological (Topolski 1997: 14-16, 91-94) – but also from, if not complex theories, at least different degrees of theorisation spanning from theoretical to quasi-theoretical frameworks (1997: 108-109). These quasi-theories contain fragments of complex theories – that is, 'narrative engines' which, although not completely explicit, are articulated enough to define nuanced content at the informative level⁹². As such *Subaltern Studies* do not produce nuanced descriptions of social reality on the basis of a (single) theoretical framework of subaltern autonomy, because the project also provides theoretical fragments (quasi-theories) that, although not fully developed, define complex informative content. Significantly, these considerations address the above-mentioned paradox: *Subaltern Studies*' 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity is made of a plurality of theoretical (essentialist) and quasi-theoretical (non-essentialist) frameworks that define subaltern autonomy, and it is thus *coherent* with producing complex descriptions of social reality. Additionally, the focus on a conception of subaltern autonomy encompassing a plurality of (quasi-)theoretical interpretations has another relevant consequence: it allows for establishing comparisons among *Subaltern Studies*, Hobsbawm, Spivak and the Italian folklorists which are conceivably more articulated than comparisons based on a single theoretical interpretation.

Given these observations, do the commentators' readings of subaltern autonomy in *Subaltern Studies* have any point then? The question is not to undermine their readings, rather it is to illustrate that they are complementary to the readings of subaltern autonomy offered in Section 2: all readings are relatively valid, because they support their claims with bibliographical evidence. However, none of these readings is valid from a general perspective, because the examples that support each reading can challenge the validity of other readings. In other words, the non-essentialist reading of *Subaltern Studies* does not get beyond the essentialist aporia, it only questions the extension of the essentialist argument to the whole project. As such an essentialist understanding of subaltern autonomy that departs from Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* belongs to *Subaltern Studies*' rhythm of thought on subalternity, it is not an alien feature. However, it co-exists with other (and often opposed) conceptions of autonomy that resonate with Gramsci's original contribution, within a broader formation that is made of theoretical and quasi-theoretical frameworks.

In this respect, the work of the group contains a (not necessarily coherent) set of theoretical statements⁹³ that *might be* disentangled from a socio-historical understanding of subaltern autonomy emerging from specific quasi-theoretical frameworks. That is, the project contemplates the *possible* deployment of de-contextualized (essentialist) theoretical claims on subalternity.

These theoretical statements underpin a simplified conception of subaltern autonomy, that is disentangled or not integrated with the analysis of socio-historical processes. As O'Hanlon (1988: 199-200) has observed, the point of these theoretical statements is to shed light on a *structural* matrix of domination: they produce a cartography of power that locates the distinction between the hegemonic and the subaltern, without understanding the concrete socio-historical processes of hierarchisation and differentiation. The conceptualisation of these socio-historical processes requires more substantive categories – that is, categories that are able to grasp the socio-historical situation of subaltern groups, their organization as well as the ways in which their condition is interrelated with hegemonic processes. Or, categories that can be formulated in the light of *Subaltern Studies*' quasi-theoretical frameworks of subaltern autonomy.

In other words, the problem of the 'possible disentanglement' is that a theoretical framework conceived for the analysis of power is directly applied to an empirical material, without considering that other more refined (quasi-)theoretical frameworks might be used to understand the socio-historical contexts of application. In this respect, theory becomes the final point that crystallizes historical and social processes into theoretical statements, rather than being the starting point that fosters and is developed through an understanding of socio-historical processes.

The question of the 'possible disentanglement' thus points to two interrelated aspects. On the one hand, theoretical statements on subaltern autonomy are disconnected from socio-historical processes of autonomisation which can be understood through specific quasi-theoretical conceptions. On the other hand, the extent to which these theoretical statements can be used to analyse historical and social processes is questionable. *Subaltern Studies* implicitly leave room to deploy the 'subaltern question' purely as a theoretical tool, which analyses empirical material without preliminary understanding socio-historical processes. How does this affect sociological analysis?

The use of a simplified understanding of subaltern autonomy for direct empirical analysis produces an over-polarized description of social reality – that is, a clear-cut distinction between the rulers and the ruled, or the subaltern and the elite/hegemonic domain (Hauser 1985: 175; O'Hanlon 1988: 199-200, 215; Yang 1985: 178). In particular, this description highlights the differences *between* the two domains (external differences) rather than the differences *within* them (internal differences) as well as the ways in which internal and external differences intermingle. In this way, this description does not address the socio-historical processes that produce the social composition⁹⁴ of the subaltern domain by politically and culturally interweaving with the elite domain⁹⁵.

Without understanding these socio-historical processes the word 'subaltern' loses historical and sociological specificity, and it can be applied to anyone and everyone (Yang 1985: 178) – to the point that the question of who is the subaltern in a specific situation remains unclear (Brennan 1984: 511). Considering that the category of

‘subalternity’ is unable to address any distinction, its validity as an analytical tool is questionable: if ‘subaltern’ is a very heterogeneous category (Sivaramakrishnan 1995: 404-405), if it points to a ‘fluid substance’ (Ludden 2001: 17) that is difficult to identify (Schwarz 2001 [1997]: 313), then it is inherently affected by a lack of precision. Moreover, if very different social groups – and ‘local elites’ as well – are understood within the same encompassing category, then the common features between these ‘subaltern’ groups are very general: they are subjected to a very general unequal relation of power (Fox 1989: 887).

This is particularly relevant for a sociological perspective:

if subaltern is just a transposition of subordinated [...] [i]s subaltern [...] a sociological category or an attitude? [...] Perhaps the concept of the subaltern is, finally, a provocation, a theoretical fiction. (Schwarz (2001 [1997]: 321-321)

If an over-simplified understanding of subaltern autonomy highlights only the basic opposition between rulers and ruled or dominant and subordinated, then the sociological use of ‘subaltern’ as a category is questionable. The crude ‘elite vs subaltern’ theoretical framework makes a point about a structural matrix of power. This theoretical statement about subaltern autonomy in *Subaltern Studies* points to a radical distinction, and thus to a domain that is external to elite or hegemonic processes. However, this ‘outside’ is at odds with sociological descriptions, whose aim is to understand socio-historical relations. As such,

the search for an ‘outside’ is a structuralist fiction [...] [that] may serve to reorganise the procedures of the inside – an inside-out revolution. (Schwarz 2001 [1997]: 323)

The over-simplified understanding of subaltern autonomy is thus functional to re-organise the discipline – in the case of *Subaltern Studies*, historiography.

The project deploys the question of subaltern autonomy as a *meta-theoretical tool for scholarly purposes*, rather than as an object of sociological enquiry: “the subaltern [...] becomes [...] a ‘perspective’ [...] more than a person” (ibid., see also Das 1989: 324). Inspired by the “Notes on Italian History” – that is, the ‘methodological reduction’ of Q25 in the *Selections* (1971) – *Subaltern Studies* used Gramsci’s methodological suggestions to re-write/complete the historical records of South Asian history with the cultural and political life of the Indian subaltern groups, thus challenging elite

historiography from a subaltern perspective. This underpins an alternative use of the 'subaltern question': *from sociological to epistemic and epistemological concerns* (Chaturvedi 2007: 17-18; Mussi and Goés 2016: 307-308; Zene 2015: 69).

This 'epistemic turn' re-conceptualises subaltern autonomy from an object of sociological enquiry to a theoretical feature of an epistemic perspective. Subalternity describes a position that is excluded from the hegemonic/elite domain, and that is functional to a scholarly epistemic turn – that is, the renovation of a discipline: historiography and every discipline where the 'subaltern question' is deployed as an epistemic tool (sociology included). What is lost are the (quasi-)theoretical frameworks that understand the socio-historical dimension of subaltern autonomy – that is, its processes of social composition and political and cultural organisation.

Significantly, before this 'epistemic turn' happened, the 'possible disentanglement' implicit within *Subaltern Studies* had to be actualized. As the following chapters will illustrate, the condition for this actualization was the global circulation of the 'subaltern question', and the ways in which this was re-articulated in Postcolonial studies – particularly, Spivak's work.

This chapter addressed a central moment in the re-articulation of the 'subaltern question', thus defining an important node in the map of the transnational debates on subalternity. In particular, it explained the theoretical, methodological and political issues informing the approach to the 'subaltern question' in *Subaltern Studies*, so as to convey their 'rhythm of thought' on this topic. This chapter discussed the ways in which *Subaltern Studies* deployed the 'subaltern question' to write a history of subaltern groups of colonial India. It considered three non-essentialist conceptions of subaltern autonomy, and discussed these conceptions in the light of the 'politics of the people', spontaneity, subaltern consciousness and subaltern insurgency. Moreover this chapter argued that the project's approach to the 'subaltern question' was influenced by exchanges with different authors and debates (i.e. structuralism, post-structuralism, Althusserian Marxism), but especially by their creative reception of Gramsci's observations on subalternity, which was based on the 'methodological reduction' of

Q25. By comparing *Subaltern Studies* with the Italian folklore debates and Gramsci, and in dialogue with scholarly interpretations of the project's work, this chapter discussed the re-articulation of the 'subaltern question' in *Subaltern Studies*, particularly focusing on their essentialist and non-essentialist conceptions of subaltern autonomy. This demonstrated the connection between this re-articulation and the 'epistemic approach' to subalternity.

Overall, these discussions contributed to the existing literature on *Subaltern Studies* – particularly, they complemented scholarly interpretations about the project's essentialist approach to subaltern autonomy with the non-essentialist conceptions of subaltern autonomy. This offered a comprehensive perspective on this topic and re-assessed the relation between Gramsci and *Subaltern Studies*. Moreover this chapter considered two aspects that will be fundamental to understand the global circulation of the 'subaltern question', particularly its impact on current debates in the social sciences: firstly, the question (and the extent) of subaltern autonomy. Secondly, the epistemic use of the 'subaltern question'. In particular, this chapter discussed the sociological implications of this 'epistemic approach', thus highlighting the metamorphosis of the 'subaltern' from a social agent to a perspective that questions an academic discipline – historiography but also, by extension, sociology.

6. Spivak, *Subaltern Studies* and the globalisation of the ‘subaltern question’

The argument in this chapter is threefold. Firstly, it discusses the circulation of the ‘subaltern question’ from *Subaltern Studies* to Spivak’s work. It understands this moment within the broader reception of Gramsci’s work in the US, and in terms of the intellectual (and personal) controversies and collaborations between Spivak and *Subaltern Studies* throughout the 1980s. Secondly, it discusses the re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’ in Spivak’s “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography” (1985b) and “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a). It considers “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) as seminal for the epistemic approach to subalternity – although Spivak’s early work have understood subalternity beyond its epistemic aspects (e.g. in terms of the ‘old’ subalternity). Thirdly, it follows the ways in which the observations on subalternity in Spivak’s early work – particularly, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) – circulated in the US academy, within a context of specific intellectual conjunctures (i.e. the circulation of *French Theory*) and institutional conditions (i.e. the disciplinary consolidation of Postcolonial Studies). On the one hand, it argues that the reception of Spivak’s observations on subalternity was predominantly limited to her ‘epistemic approach’. On the other hand, it discusses the ways in which this reception coincided with the re-articulation, institutional validation and dissemination of subalternity as a politically ambiguous ‘buzzword’ with little or no sociological nuances. In this way, this chapter follows the spread of the ‘epistemic approach’ to subalternity throughout the 1990s-2000s, particularly in the global circuits where research inspired by Spivak’s early work was produced, and it evaluates some political consequences of this spread.

6.1 Spivak and *Subaltern Studies* (1982-1987)

Spivak’s academic career started long before the 1980s. For the purposes of this thesis, it is sufficient to contextualise Spivak’s research within the broader reception of

Gramsci's ideas in the US academy during the 1970s, and to suggest the ways in which deconstructionist and feminist frameworks influenced her work.

The circulation of Gramsci's work in the US academy during the 1970s, and thus the integration of his thought in the cultural life of the country, coincided with the disintegration of the US New Left as a political movement and its retreat into the universities (Buttigieg 1995b: 145). This transition changed the ways in which the US intellectuals perceived Gramsci: the relatively little attention he had previously received from social movements was counterbalanced by a strong academic interest (Buttigieg 1995a: 96; 1995b: 145). The reception of Gramsci's thought in the US academy was entangled with the theoretical and methodological developments that affected the formation of Postcolonial studies – and thus, Spivak's intellectual biography. In this respect, the crisis in human sciences, the spread of so-called *French Theory*⁹⁶ (Cusset 2008 [2003]) as well as the impact of British Cultural Studies and the 'history from below', all contributed to direct academic interests towards questions that resonated with Gramsci's ideas, such as the role of the intellectuals, the institutionalisation of knowledge, and the power-knowledge relation (Buttigieg 1995a: 96-97).

Throughout the 1970s, the growing interest in Gramsci resulted in a significant number of publications and re-appropriations of his work (Eley 1984: 4-7) – not least, *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (1974), the work of Paul Piccone, the founder of the journal *Telos* (Buttigieg 1995b: 140-142). Significantly, this journal played an important role in the circulation of *French Theory* in the US: it published the double interview to Foucault and Deleuze – which, as will become clearer in Section 2, became the point of departure for Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) some years later (Cusset 2008 [2003]: 60-61, 88). In this way, by the end of the 1970s, the discourses of US social historians were permeated by a 'certain Gramscian vocabulary' (Eley 1984: 9): concepts such as 'hegemony' became part of the academic jargon – particularly, they were used as buzzwords in the standard vocabulary of historical analysis (10).

It was within this intellectual atmosphere that Spivak encountered Gramsci. In the early 1970s, she read his work for the first time at the University of Iowa, where she was Assistant professor of English literature. Moreover, she taught his ideas at the University of Texas towards the end of that decade (Spivak 2000b: xix, xxi; 2012a: 225). During the 1980s – when Gramsci was considered ‘in’ in the US academy (Eley 1984: 14), particularly in literature departments (Dainotto 2009b) – Spivak was involved in other intellectual endeavours that contributed to disseminate his work. Along with her essays discussed in this chapter, particularly significant was the publication of “The Legacy of Antonio Gramsci” (Buttigieg 1986) on *boundary 2* – a journal of postmodern literature that was central to the circulation of *French Theory* in the US (Cusset 2008 [2003]: 62). In this respect, Spivak played a role within this intellectual endeavour, because she was on the editorial board of the journal since 1984 (Spanos 1984: 507; Buttigieg 1986: vi).

Beyond Gramsci, Spivak’s research before the 1980s was inspired by other intellectual developments – most notably, deconstruction. She published the first English translation of Derrida’s *De la Grammatologie* (1967) in 1976. This not only contributed to introduce Derrida’s work in the US – and, in the whole Anglo-American area (Cusset 2008 [2003]: 109-110; Spivak 2005b: 95-99). But also, it suggests the extent of Derrida’s centrality to Spivak’s work (e.g. Spivak 1999a: 423-431).

Moreover, Spivak is known for her engagement with feminist scholarship. Her critiques of French feminists – i.e. Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, etc. – were fundamental to her early work (Balibar and Spivak 2016: 864; Iuliano 2012: 18; Spivak 2009 [1989]: 1-26; 2010: 228). As this chapter will illustrate, her broader interests in feminism – along with her interpretation of deconstruction and her commitment to Gramsci – were also central to her interpretation of *Subaltern Studies* throughout the 1980s. In this respect, how did Spivak and *Subaltern Studies* end up into a dialogue?

Chapter 4 has mentioned that Spivak started a sort of external collaboration with *Subaltern Studies* in the mid-1980s, thanks to the publication of “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography” (1985b) in the fourth volume of the *Subaltern Studies* series. Moreover, she became part of the editorial collective in 1993 (Chatterjee 2010a:

82; Ludden 2001: 15). Her first encounter with the members of the group can be traced back to the early 1980s: Spivak had met Guha in Kolkata at the beginning of the 1980s (Chakrabarty 2013: 26). Also, as Chatterjee (2010a: 81-82) has recalled:

I first met Gayatri Spivak in Oxford the summer of 1982 at a conference organized by the British historical journal *Past and Present*. Gyan Pandey, Shahid Amin, and I were presenting papers at the conference [...]. We had, of course, have heard of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak as a major literary scholar. But [...] we did not imagine that Jacques Derrida [...] could have anything remotely to do with Indian peasants. I remember the three of us ardent subalternist sitting outside an Oxford pub talking to Gayatri about our new collective project. We were to discover much later that she was beginning to make entirely unsuspected connections between her literary and philosophical interests and our historical work.

However, Spivak's work was not influenced by *Subaltern Studies* at the very beginning of the 1980s. This is evident in "Power and Desire" (1983) – that is, the first (and unpublished) draft that was a prelude to her "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a). "Power and Desire" (1983) was delivered as a paper at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) in 1983, and it was part of the teaching institute on "Marxist Interpretations of Culture: Limits, Frontiers, Boundaries" (Chatterjee 2010a: 81; Spivak 1988a: 271; 2010: 233). In this paper Spivak focuses on Deleuze and Foucault, and she introduces the question of *sati* – that is, the ritual practice of widow self-immolation in India – drawing on Lata Mani's work on this topic (Spivak 2000b: xix; 2010: 227, 233; 2012a: 223; 2012i [2009]: 477-478). More generally, the paper addresses a specific problem – that is, the representation of the Third World subject in Western discourse (Chatterjee 2010a: 85).

The intellectual influences of "Power and Desire" (1983) do not include *Subaltern Studies*. In particular, Spivak has recalled that in 1981 she was asked to write about French feminism and deconstruction on two American journals – respectively, *Yale French Studies* and *Critical Inquiry*. This experience left with her the uncanny sensation of being Indian and at the same time a renowned expert of French feminism and Derrida (Balibar and Spivak 2016: 864; Spivak 2010: 228). Moreover, during those years, her reading of *Jane Eyre* made her realize the implicit dynamics that contribute to the formation of a colonial subject (Spivak et al 1996e: 288). Along with the 'uncanny' sensation, this realization provoked a reflection on the interplay between cultural production, resistance and power structures:

'Can the Subaltern Speak?' was given as a speech [...] in the summer of 1983. The central concept in the speech was that once a woman performs an act of resistance without an infrastructure that would make us recognize resistance, her resistance is in vain. (Milevska and Spivak 2006: 62)

At the same time, "Power and Desire" (1983) was influenced by her Marxist interests (Spivak 2010: 233). In particular, her argument is based on her reading of Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1972 [1852]). Significantly, by 1982-1983, she had already studied Gramsci's "Southern Question" and, more generally, she was familiar with Gramsci's work. However she had not read *Subaltern Studies* yet. The 'turn' to the 'subaltern enclave' took place only after a more sustained engagement with the work of the group (Spivak 2010: 233), which thus opened a new phase in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'.

It was only in 1984 that the relation between Spivak and *Subaltern Studies* consolidated (Spivak 2000b: xxi), thanks to her effort in meeting the members of the group (Spivak 2014c: 184). During 1984 Spivak also read Guha's "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India" (1982b) for the first time (Spivak 2010: 233). This reading profoundly affected the direction of her work – particularly between 1985 and 1988, when she was writing "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a). In this respect, the story of this essay is so tightly entangled with the reception of *Subaltern Studies* in her work that, according to Spivak (2012a: 223), it does not even give the impression of being the development of "Power and Desire" (1983). In particular, references to Guha's essay have appeared since the first published version of "Can the Subaltern Speak?" – that is, "Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice" (1985), which was published on the magazine *Wedge*. In fact, this version emblematically opens with "[i]n seeking to learn to speak to (rather than listen to or to speak for) the historically muted subject of the *non-elite* (*'subaltern'*) woman" (Spivak 1985a: 120, my emphasis). The idea of the subaltern as the non-elite directly resonates with Guha's observations in *Subaltern Studies I* (Guha 1982b: 8), according to which subaltern groups *differ* from the elite. Similarly, later in the year her "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" (1985b) mentioned the expanded and (then) soon-to-be published version of "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) and recognised the impact

of Guha's differential definition of subalternity on this essay (Spivak 1985b: 340-341, 341 note 5).

During those years Spivak's engagement with *Subaltern Studies* was not limited to Guha's essay – the group had already published 3 volumes by the end of 1984, after all. Spivak was thus able to have sustained access to all the material necessary for making 'unsuspected connections' between her interests and the work of the group. The opportunity to discuss these connections came right after 1984. In 1985, the fourth volume of *Subaltern Studies* inaugurated a space of discussion, so as to "engage in the debate now developing on the issues raised by our intervention" (Guha 1985: viii). One of the two contributions was Chakrabarty's response to the debates in *Social Scientist* (Chakrabarty 1985). The other one was Spivak's "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" (1985b), which offered the first important postcolonial re-articulation of the 'subaltern question'.

As Spivak (1985b: 338-344) has observed, the work *Subaltern Studies* has raised one specific issue: the autonomy of subaltern consciousness. The group has focused on subaltern consciousness as an "emergent collective consciousness" (343). In what sense does this consciousness 'emerge'? In order to answer this question, Spivak extensively analysed the 3 (then) volumes of *Subaltern Studies* and other of their major contributions, for example Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* (1983a). She discussed the 'double bind' implicit in conceiving of subaltern consciousness as an autonomous domain, thus offering a deconstructionist reading of the project. That is, a reading which looks for a stable ground, while constantly unsettling it. Or, a reading that, while looking for an origin, a presence or the 'face value' of the text, finds the trace of an absence, the displacement of an origin, a slippage of meaning (Derrida (1989 [1967]: 50-74; 1997a [1968]: 49-52; 1997b [1968]: 101-104). In this respect, the first moment – the search of a stable ground or the objective meaning in the text – is very explicit in the project's approach to subaltern consciousness. As Spivak (1985b: 338) has put it,

[t]o investigate, discover, and establish a subaltern or peasant consciousness seems at first to be a positivistic project – a project which assumes that, if properly prosecuted, it will lead to firm ground, to something that can be disclosed. This is all the more significant in the case of recovering a consciousness.

However, Spivak (338-339) has also recognized the contrapuntal moment to this positivistic project – that is, the displacement of an origin, the deferred meaning.

In Spivak's view, this contrapuntal moment is a sort of underground move that cuts across the whole intellectual production of *Subaltern Studies*, and thus it is not immediately evident in the work of the group. The group analysed the elite archive – particularly, the documents of the 'counterinsurgency' – so as to recover an autonomous subaltern consciousness as an objective reference, a 'positive consciousness'. At the same time, this attempt is constantly undermined by the persistence of an opposite form of subaltern consciousness: a 'negative consciousness'. This 'negative consciousness' is the sign that the archive never returns a 'pure' subaltern voice. The subaltern is always represented through the words of the elite – colonial officers, bureaucrats, soldiers and sleuths, missionaries and planters, but also the 'elitist' historian (Guha 1983b: 2-3). Therefore, the 'positivistic project', which strives for the immediate access to the subaltern consciousness, is doomed to failure. This is because this consciousness is always mediated by the elite gaze: the subaltern and the elite domain thus intermingle, and in turn subaltern and elite autonomy are never pure (Spivak 1985b: 339).

Considering their particular focus on subaltern consciousness, Spivak (ibid.) has claimed that *Subaltern Studies* have adopted the subaltern as a model for a theory of consciousness. This model is structurally incomplete: the subaltern consciousness comes under erasure every time someone attempts to retrieve it, because it is always mediated. As Spivak (1985a: 340) argued, the retrieval of subaltern consciousness is marked by the fact that "it is only the texts of counter-insurgency or elite documentation that give us the news of the consciousness of the subaltern". Therefore, the archive does not return some form of 'true' and pristinely autonomous subaltern consciousness. Or, at least, what appears as a 'positive' consciousness is, crucially, a subaltern subject-effect (341) – a theoretical/literary fiction. And this fiction underpins and legitimises the representations and the interpretations of an elite subject, who is in turn their *author*. The authorial function is thus grounded on the subaltern subject-effect. In Guha's words:

It is of course true that the *reports, despatches, minutes, judgements, laws, letters*, etc. in which policemen, soldiers, bureaucrats, landlords, usurers and others hostile to insurgency register their sentiments, *amount to a representation of their will. But these documents do not get their content from that will alone, for the latter is predicated on another will — that of the insurgent.* (Guha 1983b: 15, my emphasis)

As such, the retrieval of the subaltern consciousness as a subject-effect does not aim to recover an (impossible) subaltern object in the text. Rather, *it highlights a portion of code that regulates the author's representations and interpretations within the text.* In this way, the retrieval of subaltern consciousness highlights the implicit 'subaltern underpinning' of an elite subject, which is thus the product of a subaltern effect. Contra Foucault, *Subaltern Studies* have thus considered the impact that the erasures in colonial history had on the formation of a Western subjectivity (Spivak 1985b: 348-349).

The political outcome of this (failed) retrieval points to what Spivak has called *strategic essentialism*, or "the strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest" (342). *Subaltern Studies* have strategically used an essentialist understanding of subaltern consciousness to criticize elite historiography. By 'retrieving' the traces of autonomous agency of subaltern groups, *Subaltern Studies* considered the role of these groups in the making of anti-colonial struggles, and thus their role as the constitutive other of the elite. Moreover, this critique of elite historiography illustrates the failure of *Subaltern Studies*, because the 'use of a positivist essentialism' is necessarily limited by the impossible retrieval of the subaltern consciousness.

For Spivak, the efforts of the historian and the activity of subaltern groups are heterogeneous (346). The subaltern thus represents a limit, "the absolute limit of the place where history is narrativized into logic" (Ibid.). That is, the 'subaltern question' is the limit after which history (*res gestae*) becomes historiography (*historia rerum gestarum*). Therefore the retrieval of the subaltern consciousness – quantitatively, as a *demographic* difference (Guha 1982b: 8) – is doomed to failure, or at least constantly postponed (Spivak 1985a: 340-341). However, this 'postponed failure' opens up the space for a differential definition of subalternity – the constant deferral of a demographic *difference* (Guha 1982b: 8). As such, the retrieval of subaltern consciousness is not necessarily related to an empirical description of social

stratification. Rather, it is the attempt to represent an always-receding horizon. This retrieval thus points to a critical perspective on representation – or better on the relation between power and discourse (Nilsen and Roy 2015: 7).

Subaltern Studies have thus implicitly considered the subaltern as constitutive and at the same time as a limit to the elite subject – particularly, the historian. However, their considerations do not apply to the *gendered* subaltern – the subaltern woman. The point is not that *Subaltern Studies* have not considered subaltern women in their work. In fact,

the group is scrupulous in its consideration towards women. They record moments when men and women are joined in struggle [...], when their conditions of work or education suffer from gender or class discrimination. (Spivak 1985b: 356)

The problem is that *Subaltern Studies* have not considered the function of the subaltern woman as a symbolic signifier within colonial archives and subaltern mobilizations (Spivak 1985b: 356-358). Despite the fact that *Subaltern Studies* have considered the subaltern as the ‘implicit support’ to the operations of an elite subject, they have overlooked a further portion of ‘regulative code’: the portion that organises the operations of a subaltern subject in hegemonic position. That is, they have not considered the subaltern of the subaltern, the ‘gendered other’ that implicitly supports the insurgent subject. In this way, for Spivak, *Subaltern Studies* have not pushed their ‘incomplete’ theory of consciousness to its logical (and political) consequences⁹⁷.

Significantly, Spivak’s remarks strongly influenced *Subaltern Studies*, thus contributing to the exchanges between her and the project throughout the 1980s. Her discussions about the ‘gender question’ in their work had a clear impact on their subsequent writings (Chakrabarty 2000b: 479; Chatterjee 1999: 417). After the publication of *Subaltern Studies V* (1987), the members of the project have dedicated more and more space to gender issues. *Subaltern Studies XI* is exemplary in this respect, because it is entirely focused on the entanglement of community, gender and violence (Chatterjee and Jeganathan 2000, see also Chakrabarty 2000b: 480). Moreover, *Subaltern Studies* incorporated the ways in which Spivak discussed the subaltern as constitutive and as a limit to the elite subject, and thus her idea of subalternity as the ‘regulative code’ of hegemonic representations and interpretations. This influence is illustrated by the new

balance in the research interests of the group, which emphasised the representation of subaltern subjectivities in colonial discourses over subaltern politics (Chaturvedi 2007: 16-17; Hardiman 1986: 288-289). At the same time, this new balance is closely related to the 'post-structuralist turn' of the project (Currie 1995: 235-237; Hardiman 1986: 288-289; Ludden 2001: 16-17).

This suggests that the influence of Spivak's observations was part of the broader attempt to introduce deconstruction in the group, so that they could analyse the cultural production of the elite with different methodologies. Nevertheless, the members of the groups could not fully appreciate the impact of this attempt on their work until the publication of "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a), as Section 4 will illustrate. And, in any case, this attempt was not completely successful: as Chapter 5 has argued, the members of the group were resistant to deconstruction. Their response to Spivak's interpretation of the project – particularly, to strategic essentialism – perfectly illustrates this resistance (if not hostility) to deconstruction. In Spivak's words:

my intervention made some members uncomfortable. I think I turned out to be more [...] antiessentialist [...] than they had figured. [...] They are not a group of "third world" historians who are just wonderful and correctly strategically essentialist [...]. I think some of them had more invested in the subaltern consciousness than I had thought when I was welcomed in the group. (Spivak 2009 [1989]: 16)

The long term consequences of this quarrel were evident in 1986, during the second *Subaltern Studies* conference in Kolkata (Hardiman 1986: 289-290). Here, the concerns towards deconstructive methodologies were palpably illustrated by an audience divided between those who supported the study of subaltern consciousness and those who wanted to analyse the ways in which subalterns were represented in the texts. This divide affected the unfolding of the whole conference. For example, Julie Stephens' deconstructive attempt to read contemporary feminist writings on Indian women was fiercely criticized from a political and scholarly point of view (ibid.). In an attempt to defend her (unpopular) position on deconstruction, Spivak called for the deployment of deconstructive tools to analyse the texts of the elite (ibid.). In this way, she sought to push *Subaltern Studies* beyond the 'crossroads' where the project was at that time, inviting them to choose one specific direction – that is, a greater emphasis

on the analysis of representations. To some extent, this attempt also underpinned the paper she presented at the conference, “Consuming the Body Politics”. This paper employed Marxist concepts to provide a sort of deconstructive reading of Brecht’s *Threepenny Opera* (1928) and Mahasweta Devi’s *Stanadayini* (1987), which focuses on the story of Jashoda, a subaltern woman who works as a wet-nurse. Nevertheless, Spivak’s intervention was not particularly effective. In fact Devi, who was attending at the conference, strongly disagreed with Spivak’s interpretation of her own text. However, as Chatterjee (2010a: 82) has recalled, the general feeling in the audience was not that Devi simply ‘trumped’ Spivak. Rather, the disagreement “came as a dramatic reminder of the fundamental problem that Spivak had raised on the question of representing the subaltern” (Ibid.): that is, the impossible immediate access to the subaltern consciousness – a consciousness that always comes under erasure, as an always-receding horizon.

Therefore, the deconstructive perspective was not completely rejected in Kolkata, although it was looked with suspicion and accepted with many caveats (Hardiman 1986: 290). Nevertheless, this conference and its aftermath were of great importance for the exchanges between Spivak and *Subaltern Studies* and, more generally, for the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’.

In fact, the publication of *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988) – and thus the ‘globalization’ of *Subaltern Studies* (Ludden 2001: 22)⁹⁸ – can be traced back to what happened at Kolkata in 1986. In this respect, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988)

was a result of my [Spivak] request to the Collective, placed in 1986 at a discussion held in Calcutta after the *Subaltern Studies* conference, to make their work more easily available to the nonspecialist audience in the United States. (Spivak 2000b; xxii note 15, my parenthesis)

Moreover, as Morris (2010: 9) has noted, the Kolkata conference was somehow imbued with a sense of “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a): the conference (and Spivak’s intervention too) anticipated some of the debates included in her 1988 essay – i.e. the use of a deconstructive methodology, the body of the subaltern woman as a space of politics, etc. Moreover, and despite the animated reactions at the conference, Morris’ observation suggests that Spivak’s reflections on subalternity were slowly affecting *Subaltern Studies*. As Chatterjee (2010a: 82) has recalled:

Spivak's critique of the early Subaltern Studies filtered through our work and changed the contents and direction of our project. It was certainly influenced by her participation in the second subaltern studies conference in Calcutta in 1986.

In any case, the impact was not unidirectional. As the publication of *Subaltern Studies V* (1987) illustrates, the *Subaltern Studies* series was an intellectual space for reciprocal intellectual contamination between Spivak and the members of the group. While this Section has already mentioned that this volume was influenced by Spivak's observations on the lack of gender issues in *Subaltern Studies*, it also illustrates Spivak's further engagement with Devi's *Stanadayini* (1987) and thus with the question of subalternity. In this respect, Spivak translated this short story from the original Bengali to English (Spivak 1987). Moreover, she developed further her argument on the ways in which the operating subject is produced by a subaltern subject-effect. She observed that there are different operating subjects according to different subject positions – the author, but also the teacher, the reader, the Marxist-feminist and the Liberal-feminist. These different positions are built upon different forms of erasure of the subaltern. As such, Spivak not only addressed representation and interpretation as situated operations that are produced by different subaltern subject-effects, but she also sought to undermine the exclusive authority of the author (Spivak 1987: 134) – a belated response to Mahasweta Devi's critique at Kolkata in 1986.

6.2 1988: "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

"Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) was influenced by *Subaltern Studies* – particularly, by Guha's differential definition of subalternity, which, according to Spivak, understands the subaltern as the 'space of difference' (Spivak 2005a: 476; 2010: 233). Notably, this definition also points to one of the divergences between "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) and "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" (1985b). This is not because her earlier essay overlooks a differential definition of subalternity. Rather, the point is that "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) has explicitly deployed this understanding of subalternity to analyse the code that regulates the representations in the colonial archive. As will become clear, this approach to subalternity – the 'epistemic approach' – can be used to understand all the subsequent

debates that have focused on the emergence of subaltern traces concealed in dominant discourses and disciplines.

In particular, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) has actualized the disentanglement between theoretical and socio-historical understandings of subaltern autonomy, which is implicit in *Subaltern Studies*. Spivak’s essay extrapolated the differential definition of subalternity from its socio-historical dimension, and used it to analyse power/knowledge relations in a (post)colonial archive. Crucially, this does not imply that Spivak has operated a *complete* disentanglement. Her work has actualized a *possible* deployment of the differential definition of subalternity. Nevertheless, this is not the *only possible* deployment, as the discussion of the ‘old’ subalternity in Section 3 will illustrate. Therefore, Spivak’s essay has *not completely* disconnected this differential definition from the socio-historical understanding of subalternity. In this way, the extent of this disconnection is not determined by “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) or by Spivak’s position on subalternity during the 1980s. Rather, as will become clear, it is related to the reception of her work. In any case, in what ways did Spivak’s essay actualize the disentanglement implicit in *Subaltern Studies*?

Spivak opens her essay with a critical discussion about Foucault and Deleuze’s positions in their double interview “The Intellectuals and Power” (1973)⁹⁹. In particular, she considers the ways in which they, as Western intellectuals, have understood the oppressed/subaltern. Spivak (1988a: 274-275) notices that they tend to understand the First World subalterns as generalized and monolithic subjectivities – *the* working class, *the* prisoners, *the* homosexuals, etc. – who are able to articulate a political discourse and to actively know what they want. Moreover, she argues that Foucault and Deleuze have implicitly grounded this idea of subalternity on concrete subaltern experiences outside of texts. Therefore, they have not realized that their understanding of these subaltern experiences in their texts is the effect of a textual representation. In particular, this textual representation – a *subject-effect* – is produced by Western intellectuals, who are also the authors of these texts. Spivak’s reflections on Foucault and Deleuze are clearly entangled with her discussions on representation in “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography” (1985b). Significantly, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) elaborates further on the question of textual representation:

[t]he unrecognized contradiction within a position that valorizes the concrete experience of the oppressed, while being so uncritical about the historical role of the intellectual, is maintained by a verbal slippage [...]. Two senses of representation are being run together: representation as "*speaking for*," as in politics, and representation as "*re-presentation*," as in art or philosophy. (Spivak 1988a: 275, my emphasis)

The point is thus to address the inherent tension between representation as 'staging' and representation 'in the political context' – that is, between *Darstellung* and *Vertretung* (278).

In this respect¹⁰⁰, Spivak is inspired by her readings of Marx's reflections in his *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1972 [1852]). Her position on *Darstellung/Vertretung* is based on Marx's difference between class-in-itself and class-for-itself, which he formulated in relation to the case of Louis Bonaparte and the small peasant proprietors in France, just before Bonaparte's coup d'état (2 December 1851).

[T]he great mass of the French nation is formed by the simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes. Insofar as millions of families live under conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests forms no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not constitute a class. They are therefore incapable of asserting their class interest in their own name [...]. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. (Marx 1972 [1852]: 106)

According to Marx, the French small peasant proprietors form a class from an objective point of view (class-in-itself), because their living and social conditions are the same. From the perspective of a sociological *description*, they belong to the same social stratum because they are all located on the same side of the relations of production. Or, their class position is the same. At the same time, they do not form a class from a subjective point of view (class-for-itself). As 'much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes', they do not actively connect with each other, and thus they do not realize that their living conditions are the same. Or, they do not have class consciousness, and thus they are not a class from the perspective of a political subject. Therefore, they are not able to *transform* an objective set of shared material interests into a coherent political platform. That is, they are not able to express interests, needs and conditions that are inherent to their objective position within society. In other words, they are not able to *represent* themselves.

Louis Bonaparte has exploited this void of representation to become the *political representative* of the scattered small peasant proprietors. In fact, he re-interprets their interests within a broader range of class interests – those of the capitalist bourgeoisie, for example (108-110). This is because he *speaks for* a political subject that does not exist for-itself and that is only *staged* by his political discourse: *the* small peasant proprietors. This ad hoc modulation of class interests is possible because it is grounded on a fictional product.

In this way, according to Spivak, Marx offered a nuanced discussion on representation. In particular, she (1988a: 277, my emphasis) has observed that

the event of representation as *Vertretung* [...] behaves like a *Darstellung* [...], taking its place in the gap between the formation of a (*descriptive*) class and the nonformation of a (*transformative*) class.

Class-in-itself and class-for-itself thus represent the two different approaches to class in Marx – that is, description (class position) and transformation (class consciousness). In particular, a *descriptive* definition of class is a *differential* definition of class (276). This is because the mode of life of the small peasant proprietors, their interests and their culture are *separated* from, and thus *opposed* to and *different* from the modes of life, interests and culture of the other classes. From the perspective of a *transformative* class consciousness, Spivak observes that Marx's argument does not necessarily lean towards an undivided political subject. Rather his position points to a non-coherent articulation of subjectivities. He has laid the foundation for a model of 'divided and dislocated' political subjects (Ibid.). In this way, Spivak's reading of Marx claims that *Darstellung* and *Vertretung* operate within the cleavage between class position and class consciousness, thus understanding *Darstellung* and *Vertretung* as different but overlapping operations. These two operations are necessary to reach awareness of one own's class position, because this awareness relies on the cognitive and political connection between class-in-itself and class-for-itself – or rather, between objective interests and the political platforms that are elaborated upon these interests.

Spivak claims that Foucault and Deleuze have conflated *Darstellung* and *Vertretung* (279), because they have represented (*Darstellung*) subalterns as political subjects that

are able to know and speak about their interest and their needs (*Vertretung*). As in the case of Louis Bonaparte, Foucault and Deleuze have to some extent re-interpreted the interests of the subalterns: they have *spoken for* political subjects that have been *re-presented* through their discourses. Their subalterns do not have an objective reference in a social dimension. Rather they are part of the code that regulates the representations and interpretations of an elite subject, who is also the author of these representations and interpretations. In Spivak's view, Foucault and Deleuze's texts have thus staged the fictional effect of First World subalterns who *can know and speak about their condition* – whereas it is actually the intellectual that speaks for the subalterns.

Therefore, Spivak considers the subaltern as a textual effect – although she does not deny historical existence and agency to subaltern groups or individuals, as this chapter will demonstrate. In any case, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) does not describe the concrete social contexts where these subaltern groups or individuals live. Rather, it addresses the ways in which subaltern textual effects are deployed within hegemonic discourses. In particular, according to Spivak, Foucault and Deleuze's case illustrates one of these possible deployments, although limited to the (then) First World. What about the Third World subaltern? As Spivak (283) states,

[w]e must now confront the following question: On the other side of the international division of labor from socialized capital, inside *and* outside the circuit of the epistemic violence [...], *can the subaltern speak?*

Can the Third World subaltern speak within hegemonic discourses? This emblematic postcolonial question is directly related to Gramsci's work. In particular, Spivak refers to his “Some Aspects of the Southern Question” as well as, implicitly, to the *Prison Notebooks*. According to her reading of Gramsci (ibid.), his observations on the subaltern classes have extended the discussion on class-in-itself/class-for-itself, and thus on representation (*Darstellung/Vertretung*). Spivak argues that these observations have considered the role that intellectuals play in the organization of subaltern movements towards hegemony¹⁰¹. Here, Spivak seems to suggest that in Gramsci's perspective this role includes the production of a historiography of subaltern groups. In this way, as illustrated in Chapter 1, the mediation of the intellectuals is fundamental to

subaltern groups, because they become historically aware of their class position through this subaltern historiography. That is, they are able to *know their own (subaltern) condition* as the product of social relations, and thus are potentially able to subvert this condition.

Nevertheless, according to Spivak, Gramsci's perspective cannot fully address the problems of representation, because he has not considered the unfolding of the hegemony *in the colonies*¹⁰². Spivak has argued that Gramsci's "Southern Question" has *gestured* towards the role that intellectuals play within the international division of labour, and thus towards their relation with the Third World subaltern. However, his work has not *directly* addressed this question. Spivak has sought to redress this issue, elaborating Gramsci's ways to provide a historical account of the "phased development of the subaltern" (Spivak 1988a: 283). In particular, she has entangled this account with the 'interferences of an imperialist project'. That is, she has connected the implicit reference to Gramsci's six-step framework in Q25 (the 'phased development') with *Subaltern Studies*, whose project is grounded on the development of this six-step framework.

As discussed, *Subaltern Studies* have considered colonial historiography as an epistemic instrument that has actively fragmented or concealed the history and the historical activity of the Indian subaltern groups. Can the Indian subaltern speak *within* and *beyond* colonial historiography? What is the relation between the historian and the colonial subaltern? Chapter 5 illustrated a solution to this issue in *Subaltern Studies*: the critique of elite historiography and the question of the 'politics of the people'. Section 1 discussed Spivak's interpretation of this solution in "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" (1985b). In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a), Spivak has re-iterated that *Subaltern Studies* have constantly postponed the definition of the subaltern domain, due to their differential understanding of subalternity – that is, what she has called an "identity-in-differential" (Spivak 1988a: 284). The challenge is to transform an impossible definition into the condition for a description. Or, the point is to transform a differential definition of class into a descriptive definition – as Spivak has observed in her account of Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1972 [1852]).

In this respect, *Subaltern Studies* have accepted this challenge, although the provided solution is problematic:

[i]n subaltern studies [sic], because of the violence of imperialist epistemic, social, and disciplinary inscription, a project understood in essentialist terms must traffic in a radical textual practice of differences. (Spivak 1988a: 285)

Subaltern Studies have thus ‘trafficked’ with a subaltern difference. However their approach to this difference is essentialist, whether they refer to the subaltern ‘buffer zone’ (local elite, etc.) or to the ‘people’. On the one hand, in fact, the members of group have approached the ‘buffer zone’ by *measuring* a deviation from an ideal that is in itself differential. On the other hand, *Subaltern Studies* have approached the ‘people’ with questions like ‘how can we *touch* a subaltern consciousness that has not been traced?’ (284-285).

In the light of this (impossible) essentialism, the archival work of *Subaltern Studies* gravitates towards a blind spot, because it ‘measures silences’ or shows what a text cannot or does not say (286). That is, it makes the unseen visible, thus illustrating the political mechanism that has both represented and effaced the subaltern (285). As Spivak (286-287) states,

a task of “measuring silences” [...] can be a description of “investigating, identifying and measuring... the deviation” from an ideal that is irreducibly differential.

Therefore, *Spivak has explicitly connected Guha’s differential definition of subalternity* (‘the deviation from an ideal that is differential’) *with the analysis of the political mechanisms that regulate the construction of authorial representations in the text* (‘measuring silences’). In particular, she has extended the scope of applicability of Guha’s definition, thus re-articulating the ‘subaltern question’. This definition can be used not only to analyse a specific socio-historical formation. But also, it now addresses the power/knowledge relation in the colonial archive: *the differential definition of subalternity (or the subaltern ‘as the space of difference’) has been disentangled from its socio-historical dimension*. More generally, it is used so as to analyse the codes of regulation implicit in hegemonic discourses. In this way, Spivak’s early work has re-articulated the ‘epistemic turn’ implicit in *Subaltern Studies* – where subalternity, which makes a point about a structural matrix of power, is used as a meta-theoretical tool to criticize elite historiography. As the following chapters illustrate, this ‘extended’

understanding of subalternity will be of the utmost importance for the subsequent transnational debates on the 'subaltern question'.

How has Spivak deployed this differential definition of subalternity for a textual practice? In her view (ibid.), Foucault, Deleuze, *Subaltern Studies* and, in general, the 'internationalist' Marxists have assumed that a 'pure' form of consciousness exists and is retrievable in the text. Contrarily, she (ibid.) has argued that this retrieval is always doomed to failure. This is because subaltern consciousness is constantly mediated by an elite subject – the historian or, more generally, the intellectual, who combines *Darstellung* and *Vertretung* and thus produces a subaltern subject-effect. Therefore, the subaltern always comes under erasure. That is, they are impossible to identify, because they can only be represented, and thus re-codified by an author who speaks for them. In this respect, they are an identity-in-differential. Moreover, they are central to the representations produced by an elite subject. As Nilsen and Roy (2015: 9) have argued,

there is no escape from the politics and ethics of representation; no pure space from which intellectuals can hope to speak on behalf of, or represents, subaltern interests; no outside of power structures. The subjectivity of the subaltern does not lie in some pure, autonomous space outside of power relations, but it is constituted through these. This poststructuralist shift from conceptualizing the subject as autonomous of (elite) discourse to seeing it as an 'effect of elite discursive systems' [...] was a major outcome of Spivak's intervention.

In this context, the question of the subaltern woman in the colonial archive is particularly relevant, because she comes under a *double* erasure. In fact, the elite subject cannot be reduced to the colonial subject alone. *He* is represented by the (male) indigenous elite, too. According to Spivak (1988a: 301), the subaltern woman is thus a 'third space', an expression of in-betweenness, the space of a difference, 'the place of the *différend*'. In this way, Spivak has re-articulated the differential definition of subalternity towards a deconstructionist dimension.

What Spivak finds interesting in Derrida is that

he articulates the *European Subject's* tendency to constitute the Other as marginal to ethnocentrism [...] [.] [W]hat I find useful is the [...] work on the *mechanics* of the constitution of the Other; we can use it to much greater analytic and interventionist advantage than invocations of the *authenticity* of the Other. On this level, what

remains useful in Foucault is the mechanics of [...] the constitution [...] of the colonizer. Foucault does not relate it to any version [...] of imperialism. (294, my parenthesis)

According to Spivak's comparison between Foucault and Derrida, Derrida (rather than Foucault) has discussed the mechanisms of ethnocentric construction of the Other, which map the mechanisms that regulate the articulation of the elite subject (European, Western, patriarchal, etc.). Moreover, Derrida has warned against the problem of claiming authenticity. Deconstruction thus supports the analysis of colonial and patriarchal discourses – particularly, the analysis of the mechanisms of othering, where the Other is understood as a constantly deferred difference.

Following this understanding of deconstruction, Spivak (297-305) has considered the case of *sati*, so as to understand the question of the subaltern woman as an 'identity-in-differential'. She has addressed the representation of *sati* in the British colonial discourse and in the Indian religious (and patriarchal) discourse. On the one hand, the colonial discourse has re-codified (*Vertretung*) the self-immolating widow as an *object* in the name of colonial practices: the Indian woman has been constructed (*Darstellung*) as a passive victim that must be rescued from a barbarian practice perpetrated by 'brown men'. This has provided the British colonizers with the racialized ideological justification to intervene in India, while effacing the woman's free will. On the other hand, the Indian religious discourse has manipulated (*Vertretung*) the woman's *subjectivity* to confirm the subjectivity of the (Indian) man. In this respect, *sati* is understood (*Darstellung*) as an act of extreme love towards the husband: the woman's agency is re-codified from the perspective of the man's subjectivity, thus becoming internal to the patriarchal discourse. As Spivak (306) states,

[b]etween patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling that is the displaced figuration of the "third-world woman" caught between tradition and modernization. [...] The case of *suttee* [...] mark[s] the place of "disappearance" with something other than silence and nonexistence, a violent aporia between subject and object status.

The subaltern woman is thus not simply silenced. Rather, her silence is re-inscribed as the trace of an absence, which derives from the construction of the representation (*Darstellung/Vertretung*) of the woman as the object and the subject of discourse. The

subaltern woman is thus the excess of signification: she is the non-retrievable difference at the intersection between aesthetic and political representation, speaking of and speaking for, subject and object, position and agency. The differential definition of subalternity maps the symbolic space of this intersection, thus illustrating the function of the subaltern woman as a symbolic signifier within hegemonic discourses.

In any case, Spivak continues (307), “[t]here is no space from which the sexed subaltern subject can speak”. But what happens if *sati* is re-codified as a practice that is explicitly against colonial and patriarchal discourses? In this respect, the story of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri – Spivak’s grandmother’s sister (Spivak 2012a: 224) – is particularly relevant.

A young woman of sixteen or seventeen, Bhubaneswari Bhaduri, hanged herself in her father's modest apartment in North Calcutta in 1926. The suicide was a puzzle since, as Bhubaneswari was menstruating at the time, it was clearly not a case of illicit pregnancy. Nearly a decade later, it was discovered, in a letter she had left for her elder sister, that she was a member of one of the many groups involved in the armed struggle for Indian independence. She had been entrusted with a political assassination. Unable to confront the task and yet aware of the practical need for trust, she killed herself. (Spivak 1988a: 307)

Therefore, Bhubaneswari re-codified women’s suicide in India against patriarchal and religious discourses, because these discourses forbid suicide while menstruating. At the same time, she was involved in the armed struggle against the British when she committed suicide: her action can be understood as directed against a colonial discourse that denies agency to women. Does this example of agency suggest that a subaltern can speak, thus represent herself beyond the double effacement?

In 1988, Spivak’s answer was a resigned ‘no, the subaltern cannot speak’ (308). This is because Bhubaneswari’s granddaughters re-codified further her action, and they understood her suicide as a case of illicit love – which was internal to the rules of patriarchal discourse. Notably though, in response to the many controversies that her essay raised in the following years, Spivak changed her mind: her ‘no’ became a more articulated answer, although neither a convinced ‘yes’ nor a crude ‘the subaltern cannot speak’ (Spivak 1999a: 308-311).

6.3 “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, epistemic violence and the ‘old’ subalternity

What does the question ‘can the subaltern speak?’ mean? Analysing its meaning is crucial for the present work. The ways in which Spivak’s understanding of subalternity is affected by this question are central for the epistemic use of the ‘subaltern question’, and thus for the global circulation of subalternity after the 1980s.

There are at least four different interpretations of the question ‘can the subaltern speak?’:

the subaltern *cannot be heard*; the subaltern *cannot speak*; the subaltern *is being silenced* and the subaltern *escapes us* – or [...] she is an ‘elusive figure’. (de Jong and Mascot 2016: 719)

The first interpretation assumes that ‘speaking’ is different from ‘talking’: speaking is a communicative act which implies a speaker-listener transaction (Spivak et al. 1996e: 289-292; 2012g [2004]: 326). Therefore, if there is no listening (or hearing), then there will only be talking, rather than speaking – that is, an utterance rather than a speech act. Out of metaphor, while ‘speaking’ points to agency and expression, as the cases of *sati* and Bhubaneswari have illustrated, ‘listening’ points to ‘interpretation’¹⁰³. The question of representation (*Darstellung/Vertretung*, speaking of/speaking for) is crucial in this respect. In fact, Bhubaneswari’s case is not only a matter of interpretation, but also representation. As Spivak (2010: 235, my emphasis) has argued:

[w]hen I was thinking of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri, I was full of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* [...] I felt that my task was to *represent* her in all of Marx’s senses. [...] So that was in fact where the essay began. Not in understanding the subaltern as a state of difference.

This points to the second interpretation: the subaltern can never speak with their voice. Rather, they can only speak through the hegemonic discourses (‘speaking for’), and thus through the ways in which the elite – and, by extension, the intellectuals – represent them in the texts (‘speaking of’). Even the most benevolent intellectual is always complicit with some form of effacement. The problem of ‘can the subaltern speak?’ is not speaking, rather it is listening (Spivak 2012g [2004]: 326, see also Byrd and Rothberg 2011: 5; Spivak 1990a: 57; 1990b: 63). In fact, Spivak has not claimed

that the subaltern does not have autonomous historical existence and agency outside of discourses. Bhubaneswari's case is exemplary: she tried to speak, she uttered, although she was not heard (Spivak et al 1996e: 289, 292, see also Legg 2016: 796-797). Therefore, the question 'can the subaltern speak?' does not arise because of a 'failed subaltern production'. Rather it results from a 'failed elite reception' (Byrd and Rothberg 2011: 5) – that is, representation.

This brings us to the third interpretation: the act of representation condemns the subalterns to silence, because of epistemic violence – that is, an act that "constitute[s]/efface[s] a subject that [is] obliged to cathect [...] the space of the Imperialists' self consolidating other" (Spivak 1985b: 348). The epistemic violence implicit in representation re-codifies the position of the subaltern as the implicit support to the representations and interpretations produced by an elite subject. However, this silencing mechanism also points to the trace of an absence: a non-retrievable subaltern that stands prior to re-codification – that is, the difference that underpins the mechanics of representation.

This is relevant to the fourth interpretation: the subaltern as an elusive figure. The subaltern is the space of difference (subaltern-as-difference), because they differ from both their representation and the elite subject, and thus from the hegemonic intellectual. In this respect, there is a sort of incommensurability or heterogeneity between the subaltern and the intellectual (Spivak 1988a: 284, see also Byrd and Rothberg 2011: 5; Cherniavsky 2011: 157). The subaltern as the space of difference – that is, Spivak's interpretation of Guha's definition of subalternity – is thus connected with the epistemic violence implicit within representation. Analysing this connection will illustrate one of the main ways in which Spivak's early work has understood the concrete aspects of the subaltern condition: the exclusion from 'the lines of social mobility'.

As illustrated in Section 2, Spivak's differential definition of subalternity is not necessarily used to describe social contexts. Her understanding of this category is thus not necessarily substantive or empirical – although it does not exclude empirical applications, as will become clearer in this Section¹⁰⁴. The non-empirical use of this

differential definition points to the blind spot of representation. That is, it points to the impossible reproduction of the original, or to the constitutive failure of a 'positivistic project' that aims to retrieve the subaltern consciousness. This implies that

the concept of subalternity [...] in Spivak's work [...] has constituted a position of radical, and indeed an irretrievable, alterity [...] [T]here is a taken-for-granted inaccessibility of the subaltern to the investigator and the intellectual. (Varma 2015: 106-107)

The subaltern-as-difference is thus non-representable by hegemonic knowledge (Li 2009: 278) – particularly, academic knowledge. That is, the subaltern cannot be fully appropriated by hegemonic narratives. However, the subaltern cannot escape from these narratives, because these narratives actively produce subalternity (Bracke 2016: 846) – as a subaltern-effect in the text. This textual effect is produced on the basis of a fundamental erasure, and thus it occupies and conceals a position of radical alterity. Therefore, the subaltern-effect is the trace of an absence informed by epistemic violence. Or, it is the effacement that is instrumental to regulating representations. In this way, Spivak's focus on subalternity

is not directed to that which escapes the logic of capital, but that which is its inevitable casualty and detritus. (Varadharajan 2016: 732)

Whereas the subaltern-effect is internal to the hegemonic discourses, the subaltern-as-difference is structurally excluded by them, because it is subjected to epistemic violence. It is a detritus suggesting

a position of absolute exteriority in relation to hegemonic formations – the condition of being cut off from the lines of social mobility. (Nilsen and Roy 2015: 11)

Therefore, *Spivak's differential definition of subalternity is related to 'being cut off from the lines of social mobility'*¹⁰⁵:

[I]n the essay ["Can the Subaltern Speak?"] I made it clear that I was talking about the *space as defined by Ranajit Guha, the space that is cut off from the lines of mobility in a colonized country*. (Spivak et al. 1996e: 288, my emphasis and my parenthesis)

This connection is fundamental to understanding the conception of subalternity in Spivak's early work. In particular, it is the condition for her definition of the 'old subaltern'¹⁰⁶: those 'excluded from the lines of social mobility' (Spivak 2004: 531; 2012a: 225) – that is from 'cultural imperialism' and the 'logics of capital' (Spivak 1990c: 142; 1992: 45; Spivak et al. 1996c: 164; 1996e: 288, 292). This exclusion from

economic and discursive/cultural logics is an exclusion from hegemonic/elite formations. As such, the subaltern is non-elite. But also, this difference is mapped onto a hierarchy. Therefore the subaltern is subjected to the elite.

On the one hand, the 'old' subaltern is subjected to the epistemic violence of hegemonic narratives (Piu 2019: 42-62): these narratives exclude and re-codify subaltern groups, who are not recognized as autonomous political formations. Following the intuition of *Subaltern Studies*, the subaltern does not figure in the (post)imperialist narratives. Rather, the subaltern is the textual effect that organises these narratives. On the other hand, the 'old' subaltern is subjected from a social perspective: subaltern groups are excluded from the logic of capital, or at least they are only remotely (and problematically¹⁰⁷) influenced by this logic (Spivak et al. 1996e: 292). This 'remote influence' can be understood firstly as a social force that stops the upward social mobility of subaltern agents, and secondly as something similar to Marx's 'formal subsumption' in his *Capital* (1990 [1867])¹⁰⁸. As will become clear in Chapter 7, the 'old' subaltern condition is affected by the organisation of capitalist economy, and it thus results into poor living conditions, lack of education, no access to citizenship, etc. Moreover, the 'old' subaltern is not completely integrated within the economic system either, as they operate in networks of informal economies, etc. As in Gramsci's Q25 (Arnold 1984a: 176 note 2), this 'remote influence' suggests a more general disconnection between subalternity and the capitalist logic, pointing to the unfolding of hegemonic-subaltern relations within pre-capitalist modes of production. It also points to the life conditions of the 'marginal' subalterns (i.e. the underclass), because these social groups are excluded from productive activity and thus not included within the labour-capital conflict – or, they are excluded from the logic of capital.

Therefore, if Spivak's differential definition of subalternity is connected with the 'old' subalternity, the subaltern condition can be understood as a difference that differs from the logic of capital. At the same time, it is a deferred difference. That is, the subaltern condition tends to be separated from the logic of capital, although it is never external to it. Spivak's differential definition of subalternity – and, more generally, her earlier work – is not necessarily devoid of sociological nuances.

In this way, Spivak's early work focuses on subaltern textual effects, but also on concrete subaltern groups and individuals: the 'subaltern question' is not necessarily disconnected from socio-historical processes. Therefore, a differential definition of subalternity disconnected from its socio-historical dimension represent *one* possible deployment of Spivak's concept of subalternity. Crucially though, Spivak's work has left room for other possibilities. Nevertheless, these were lost during the circulation of her essay (and thus, of the 'subaltern question') in Postcolonial studies, towards the debates in the social sciences analysed in this work.

6.4 The circulation of "Can the Subaltern Speak?": institutional conditions and intellectual conjunctures

"Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) offered an original contribution to the 'subaltern question', because Spivak *re-articulated* the reflections on subalternity in *Subaltern Studies* within the context of other influences – from feminism to deconstruction. Along with the 'old' subalternity, one of the outcomes of this re-articulation was the idea of 'the subaltern' as a position ('a space of difference') from which to analyse the implicit regulative code that organises hegemonic discourses. As such, Spivak's essay has contributed to define the 'epistemic approach' to the 'subaltern question. Moreover, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) marked another important moment in the transnational *circulation* of the 'subaltern question': the diffusion of this publication within specific circuits of circulation prepared the ground for the globalisation of subalternity – particularly, of the epistemic approach to this issue, as will be illustrated in this Section. An analysis of some institutional and intellectual conjunctures can suggest the extent of this diffusion.

In terms of institutional conjunctures, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) circulated during a moment of disciplinary consolidation of Postcolonial studies (Singh and Schmidt 2000: 17), which was characterized by complex processes of institutionalization and reproduction of the field across the US (and UK¹⁰⁹) academy. These processes resulted in the proliferation of undergraduate courses and masters programmes, dedicated journals and special issues in non-dedicated journals, seminar

papers and critical essays, conferences, professional associations and research networks (Bartolovich 2002: 2; Boehmer and Tickell 2015: 318; Huggan 2001: 228-229; Moore-Gilbert 1997: 5-7).

The consolidation of Postcolonial studies as a field was the product of a confluence. In particular, it was fostered by the new demographic composition of some Departments in the US academy – particularly, English Literature (Hasseler and Krebs 2003: 90, 94, 99). This new demographics is related to the “sociological explanation for the rise of postcolonial studies [in the US]” (Schwarz 2000: 10, my parenthesis). That is, the migration of “a new wave of foreign born middle class professionals” (most notably Said, Spivak, Bhabha, etc.) who, despite the relatively small number, “began to make felt their presence within [US] academic institutions in the late 1960s and the early 1970s” (2000: 11, my parenthesis). At the same time, the rise of Postcolonial studies cannot be reduced to mere demographic density. Rather, it represented a complex intellectual response to both localized and general institutional requirements and expectations presented by the re-configuration of social relationships after the mid-1970s, with the emergence of global capitalism¹¹⁰ (Dirlik 1998 [1994]: 53-54; Lazarus 2004: 6-7; Lazarus and Varma 2008: 310-311).

Overall, the confluence of these factors – in the context of other institutional developments within and outside the university¹¹¹ – reshaped the structure of various Departments in the US academy. In particular, this process resulted in the creation of dedicated academic positions, which were often appointed to those ‘foreign born middle class professionals’ (Hasseler and Krebs (2003: 91). At the same time, it implied the formation of a postcolonial curriculum in terms of new classes, reading lists, mandatory readings, and so on (Sharpe 2000: 116; see also Boehmer and Tickell 2015: 319; Moore-Gilbert 1997: 5).

This institutional process was in turn crucial to the reproduction of Postcolonial studies as a field, because it was the context where a new generation of postcolonial scholars was trained. During their graduate years, this new generation attended classes related to a postcolonial curriculum, and read the relevant mandatory readings, and so on (Hasseler and Krebs 2003: 94). In this way, they received a postcolonial academic

training since the early years of their university career – perhaps under the guidance of those ‘foreign born middle class professionals’. Once graduated, they entered into PhD programs with specializations in Postcolonial studies. Subsequently, under specific conditions, they found their place in the academy as lecturers for a next generation of students and/or as researchers in the Postcolonial field¹¹². How does the circulation of “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) fit into this picture?

The extent of the circulation of Spivak's essay can be suggested by the ways in which readers and commentaries on Postcolonial theory that included or accounted for her work circulated in the universities. For example, during the end of the 1980s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) was only mentioned in one of the first preliminary surveys in Postcolonial critique – that is, Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature* (2002 [1989]). Significantly though, it became part of the Postcolonial canon from (at least) 1993 onwards. To name but a few examples, Williams and Chrisman's *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (1993) as well as Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin's *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (1995) published an extract of her essay. Similarly, Leela Gandhi opened her *Postcolonial Theory: a Critical Introduction* (1998) with a critical discussion on “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a), to a large degree dedicating the rest of her book to unfold the response to Spivak's essay (Morris 2010: 9). Crucially, as some commentators have pointed out (Hasseler and Krebs 2003: 100; Singh and Schimdt 2000: 17-18), these works were also ‘teaching texts’ that were largely used within undergraduate courses in Postcolonial literature and theory.

The interaction between the above-mentioned institutional and reproductive factors explains the widespread diffusion of Spivak's essay. In fact, the readers and commentaries that include references to Spivak's essay demonstrate the institutional validation of her work. The inclusion of “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) in the postcolonial curriculum established its canonical status, which both fostered and reflected the magnitude of the ‘politics of citation’¹¹³ around it, and thus the further circulation of her work. Moreover, this situation provided the conditions for the long-lasting influence of her work. As the example of the readers and commentaries has illustrated, her essay can be seen to be fundamental to the intellectual education of a

new generation of students, and it became a source of inspiration for scholars researching in Postcolonial studies.

Significantly, the circulation of “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) was not confined to Postcolonial studies. Rather, this essay circulated in wider (and partially overlapping) circuits. An analysis of specific intellectual conjunctures can shed light on this wider diffusion. One of these intellectual conjunctures was the academic and extra-academic success of ‘Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Co.’ (Cusset 2008 [2003]) first in the US and, later, in the rest of the world. The transnational spread of so-called *French-Theory* can be understood as an important vector of dissemination for “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a). This is because the publication of Spivak’s essay can be legitimately included within the history and the processes of diffusion of *French Theory* (Cusset 2008 [2003]: 141-145; 198-202; 287-297). In fact, “postcolonialism has a great deal more to do with the reception of ‘French theory’ in metropolitan centres than it does with the realities of decolonisation” (Kaiwar 2014: 125). Therefore, the institutional, social and editorial conditions that explain the broader diffusion of *French Theory* can be used to explain the ways in which “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) circulated.

The diffusion of *French Theory* relied on the activity of networks of transnational intellectuals – among them Spivak, Bhabha, Said, etc. (Cusset 2008 [2003]: 289-297, 348-352). The same people who contributed to circulate – and pioneer – Postcolonial Studies contributed to circulate *French Theory*. Therefore, it is credible that “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) circulated within the wider networks and circuits where *French Theory* was disseminated. Moreover, as Cusset (2008 [2003]: 81-83) has noted, the success of *French Theory* in the US, and subsequently in the world, was due to an institutional factor: the creation of ‘*French-Theory* oriented’ interdepartmental research institutes as well as inter-university research programmes. These were the contexts where a new generation of specialists was trained, and later produced research that supported the institutional reproduction of disciplines imbued with references to Foucault, Derrida, etc. In the light of the relation between Postcolonial studies and *French Theory* discussed above, it is thus likely that the institutional dynamics of the former (Hasseler and Krebs 2003: 90-91, 94; Sharpe 2000: 116) were part of the broader institutional dynamics that affected the diffusion of the latter. In

this respect, '*French-Theory* oriented' interdepartmental research institutes and inter-university research programmes were also the context of circulation of 'postcolonial contributions', and thus conceivably Spivak's early work. For example, during the 1980s Spivak (and Said) were Senior Fellows of the School of Criticism and Theory, one of the main '*French Theory* oriented' interdepartmental research institute in the US (Cusset 2008 [2003]: 82; Columbia University Record 1989; Spivak et al. 1996a: 73 note 21). In this way, the factors that worked for the reproduction of disciplines imbued with references to Foucault, Derrida, and so on, worked at the same time for the reproduction of the 'subaltern question'.

These discussions on the dissemination of "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) have suggested the magnitude as well as the extreme detail of its circulation such that it is possible to understand the profound impact that this essay had on other intellectual fields. This sheds light on further intellectual conjunctures that explain the transnational (and transdisciplinary) circulation of this essay, particularly in terms of the 'epistemic approach' to subalternity. In this respect, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) fostered

a set of profound transformations in the disciplines adjacent to subaltern studies, including South Asian history, history of Global South, postcolonial studies, anthropology, and gender studies. (Morris 2010: 13)

This chapter has already highlighted the relevance of Spivak's essay for *Subaltern Studies*. At the same time, it was central to ground-breaking work in other disciplines, such as Judith Butler's *Bodies that Matter* (1993) in gender studies and Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2000b) in historiography. In particular, these works rest on the assumption of the subaltern as a textual effect – that is the subaltern (or the 'other') as a fundamental effacement on the basis of which the 'regulative code' of hegemonic discourses operates (e.g. Butler 1993: 116-117, 269 note 16; Chakrabarty 2000b: 40-41, see also Morris 2010: 10-11). More generally, Spivak's essay introduced "*the question that dominates postcolonial studies* [...]" [that is], "how the third-world subject is represented in Western discourse"" (Chatterjee 2010a: 85, my emphasis and my parenthesis).

In the light of this specific impact of “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a), and considering the dissemination of this essay within wider circuits and networks, it is thus possible to suggest the extent to which the idea of the subaltern as a textual effect circulated during the 1990s-2000s, thus pointing to the widespread diffusion of the ‘epistemic approach’ to the ‘subaltern question’.

6.5 The circulation of the ‘subaltern question’ in the US academy: intellectual and political re-articulations

Since the 1990s, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) has become a widespread source of inspiration or, at least, a must-have in the bibliography of many scholars within and outside of Postcolonial studies. As such, the general impact of Spivak’s essay – particularly, her reflections on subalternity – cannot be downplayed in any way. However, the circulation and the success of this essay was not as unproblematic as it might appear.

The problems in the circulation of Spivak’s essay were eminently political, particularly in terms of politically ambiguous re-articulations of the ‘subaltern question’¹¹⁴. The more general political ambiguity of Postcolonial studies in the US academy can be used to introduce this issue:

Postcolonial studies did not emerge in response to student demands or a political activism that spilled over onto college campuses. Rather, it constitutes an institutional reform “from within”. (Sharpe 2000: 116)

This ‘reformist picture’ has surely overlooked the political commitment of singular Postcolonial scholars. Nevertheless, and despite the politicization of these scholars, some commentators (Hasseler and Krebs 2003: 95-96; Huggan 2001: 3) have observed that the processes of institutionalization and reproduction of the field relegated postcolonial frameworks to the realm of theories with little or no political relevance.

This lack of political relevance resonates with the politically ambiguous circulation of Spivak’s understanding of subalternity in the US academy. As she has pointed out during an interview in 1993:

I think the word subaltern is losing its definitive power because it has become a kind of buzzword for any group that wants something that it does not have. (Spivak et al 1996e: 290)

Spivak had already warned against this 'reductive use' of subalternity in the US academy – at least since the end of the 1980s (Spivak 1990c: 142). And yet, she unwillingly witnessed subalternity being instrumentalized to reaffirm dominant political positions within the university. In her words:

[w]henever you hear someone claiming subalternity [...] they are speaking softly because somewhere they are carrying a big stick. Maybe not getting tenures, but they are carrying a big stick insofar as they are at the U.S. University, very far from subalternity. [...] [T]hey are calling themselves minoritarians and subalterns, the powerful ones, who are going quickly throw help and go away. (Milevska and Spivak 2006: 66)

Moreover, she witnessed the continuous erosion of subalternity in terms of political specificity:

many people want to claim subalternity. [...] [J]ust by being in a discriminated-against minority on the university campus, they don't need the word subaltern, [...] they can speak [...], they're within the hegemonic discourse wanting a piece of the pie. (Spivak 1992: 46)

The extent of this political erosion was variable. As Didur and Heffernan (2011: 2) have observed, the range of meanings attached to 'subalternity' in the US academy spans from the ironic exaggeration of 'having a bad hair day' to a vague denotation of 'oppression' and 'otherness'. This is crucial to the ways in which Spivak's understanding of subalternity was re-articulated. In fact, the political erosion of the 'subaltern question' implies that

it is precisely this notion of the subaltern inhabiting a space of difference that is lost in statements such as the following: "The subaltern is force-fed into appropriating the master's culture" (Emily Apter [...]); or worse still, Jameson's curious definition of subalternity as "the experience of inferiority". (Spivak 1999a: 271 note 118)

Therefore, what is lost are the sociological nuances of her differential definition of subalternity – particularly, the question of the inclusion/exclusion from the logic of capital:

"subaltern" has lost its power to indicate people from the very bottom layer of society, excluded even from the logic of the class structure. (Spivak 1997: 121)

The definition of subalternity has been re-articulated: from the 'marginal' subalterns who are excluded from the productive activity to an undifferentiated condition of

victimhood and oppression. The political erosion of subalternity is also a sociological erosion. This resonates with the 'epistemic approach' to the 'subaltern question', where subalternity is used as a meta-theoretical tool with no sociological nuances: a 'sociologically poor' concept of subalternity no longer communicates anything of the social experience of subalternity.

Why has this concept become distant from its social experience, and why has it become so widely used? Part of the answer points directly to the role that Spivak played in the later circulation of the 'subaltern question':

in the US, the word has now lost some of its definitive power [...] what I would say is that a good desire on my part, in the mid-1980s, to make the work of Subaltern Studies more easily accessible to those of us who taught in the US, did inevitably cause a certain dilution of the word. (Spivak 2012a: 221)

This excerpt refers to the 'globalization' of *Subaltern Studies* after the publication of *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988). Here, Spivak is discussing the role that she played in the dissemination of the group's understanding of subalternity. As mentioned, Spivak's 'epistemic approach' to the 'subaltern question' actualized one possible deployment of Guha's differential definition of subalternity. That is, a deployment that is disconnected from a socio-historical understanding of subalternity, thus resulting distant from this social experience. In this respect, the reception of Spivak's work in the US – particularly in terms of her 'epistemic approach' to subalternity – made this specific deployment of the concept become the *only* (or at least, the predominant) deployment. As such, the use of subalternity as a buzzword is historically related to the spread of her 'epistemic approach' to subalternity.

Most notably, the other part of the answer accounts for the co-optation of the 'subaltern question' at an institutional level. According to Spivak (2009 [1989]: 10),

[i]n the last decade, some of the "clinging to marginality" is being fabricated so that the upwardly mobile, benevolent student (the college is an institution of upward mobility [...]), the so-called marginal student, claiming validation, is being taught.

The claim to subalternity of the 'discriminated-against minority on the US university campus' has been validated by the institutionalisation of marginality, which is in turn the product of the 'posthistorical university of excellence'. That is, a university that has fostered

feminist studies in order to attract female students, and research on ethnic or sexual minorities in order to win points with these new fringes of the student clientele; it is even the one that [...] [integrated] into its programs the critique of ideology and the new discourses of opposition. (Cusset 2008 [2003]: 45, my parenthesis, see also Pereira 2017: 76-78)

The 'institutionalisation of marginality' not only affected the demographic composition of the student population in the US academy, it also affected the demographics of the academic staff (Hasseler and Krebs: 96, 98, 100). Within this context, the claims to subalternity are highly visible, because they are functional to the logic of the academic institution¹¹⁵.

The 'institutionalisation of marginality' has thus validated and fostered the circulation of a specific deployment of subalternity – that is, the use of subalternity as a buzzword that communicates little or nothing about the social experience of subalternity, and that rather denotes a vague condition of oppression. Significantly, it is exactly this 'institutionalised visibility' that explains the distance from the 'social experience of subalternity'. In fact,

if the marginal position of academics contributes to their enunciative production and intellectual visibility, marginality is precisely what hinders those whose plights are at issue – minorities outside the university who would often like to integrate moderate political-social groups – and keeps them imprisoned in an inexorable spiral of silence. (Cusset 2008 [2003]: 158)

Therefore, the experience of political visibility of those who claim marginality on campus does not necessarily match the experience of political (in)visibility of the marginals outside the university. That is, the marginal on campus *speaks of* subalternity while *speaking for* the subalterns outside the university, producing utterances that do not necessarily communicate something of the experiences of subaltern groups – and that, actually, might contribute to their effacement. Can the subaltern speak – in the US academy, at least¹¹⁶?

This chapter illustrated the ways in which the relation between Spivak and *Subaltern Studies* brought about the globalisation of the 'subaltern question'. Firstly, it discussed Spivak's intellectual biography up to the end of the 1980s, particularly focusing on her relation to Gramsci and *Subaltern Studies*. It contextualised this moment of the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question' within the circulation of Gramsci's

work in the US. Moreover, it discussed this moment in terms of the controversies and collaborations between Spivak and *Subaltern Studies*, as illustrated by her “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography” (1985b). This essay criticises the project’s attempt to retrieve a ‘pure’ subaltern consciousness. At the same time, it argues that *Subaltern Studies* have used subalternity not necessarily in an empirical way. Rather, their use of subalternity implicitly points to a critical discourse on representation. Overall, the discussions in this chapter introduced the ways in which Spivak prepared the re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’.

Secondly, this chapter discussed this re-articulation, particularly focusing on Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a). It considered the ways in which this re-articulation emerged in relation to her reading of Gramsci and *Subaltern Studies*, and in the context of other conceptual frameworks (Marxist, deconstructive, feminist, postcolonial, etc.). This discussion highlighted the ways in which she has re-articulated the ‘epistemic approach’ to subalternity in *Subaltern Studies*, thus understanding ‘the subaltern’ as a position from which to analyse the implicit regulative code that organises hegemonic discourses. Moreover, this chapter considered the theoretical implications of this ‘epistemic approach’ as integral to Spivak’s understanding of the ‘old’ subalternity – that is, the ‘exclusion from the lines of cultural/social mobility’. It argued that the old subalternity is not reducible to the ‘epistemic approach’ to the ‘subaltern question’, because it retains some levels of sociological specificity. This implies that Spivak has not completely disconnected theoretical discussions on subalternity from its socio-historical dimension. The actualisation of this disconnection rather depends on the ways in which her work circulated during the 1990s-2000s.

Thirdly, this chapter considered the transnational circulation of “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) during the 1990s-2000s, and the impact of this circulation. It focused on the widespread diffusion of Spivak’s ‘epistemic approach’ to the ‘subaltern question’ within the context of specific institutional and intellectual conjunctures. It explained the magnitude and the extreme detail of this circulation as the result of both the phase of consolidation of Postcolonial studies during the 1990s and the broader circulation of *French Theory*, as well as in terms of its impact on various intellectual fields – from historiography to gender studies. Moreover, this chapter discussed further intellectual

and political re-articulations of the 'subaltern question' that resulted from the circulation of Spivak's essay in the US academy. It illustrated the ways in which the 'institutionalisation of marginality' fostered the widespread dissemination of subalternity as a politically ambiguous buzzword with little or no sociological nuances, which is historically connected with the circulation of the 'epistemic approach' to subalternity.

Overall, this chapter provided a historical and conceptual introduction to Spivak's early thought, and it contributed to map a central moment in the re-articulation of the 'subaltern question' after *Subaltern Studies*. Moreover, it followed the reception of Spivak's approach to subalternity in her early work, so as to map the transnational circuits that defined the circulation of the 'subaltern question' after the 1980s. At the same time, the discussions about the conditions of (re)production of the 'subaltern question' illustrated the historical circumstances that consolidated some crucial re-articulations in the approaches to subalternity, thus creating the context where the 'epistemic approach' inspired by Spivak's work became mainstream – particularly, in Postcolonial studies.

The discussions in this chapter are also relevant to understand the subsequent circulation of the 'subaltern question' – not only Postcolonial Studies, but also current debates in the social sciences which have dealt with the emergence of subaltern traces concealed in dominant discourses. In fact, these discussions extensively addressed what the epistemic approach to the 'subaltern question' is, as well as its theoretical implications and its circulation. This provided the historical and conceptual coordinates that will be used to explain the ways in which this epistemic understanding of subalternity has had an implicit or explicit impact on the social sciences.

7. Spivak after “Can the Subaltern Speak?”: re-articulations of subalternity

This chapter discusses Spivak’s *later* approach to the ‘subaltern question’, after “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a): the ideas of the ‘new’ subaltern and subalternity as a ‘position without identity’. It also connects her later and early approaches to the ‘subaltern question’, thus understanding Spivak’s conception of subalternity as a spectrum of political inclusion/exclusion. This illustrates Spivak’s ‘rhythm of thought’ of subalternity, which is characterised by a politically and sociologically grounded understanding of the ‘subaltern question’ that encompasses its epistemic aspects.

Moreover, this chapter compares Spivak and Gramsci’s approaches to subalternity. It argues that Spivak’s creative reception of Gramsci’s work resonates with his reflections on subalternity – although it is not reducible to them, for example because Spivak and Gramsci have different perspectives on the integration between subaltern and hegemonic knowledges. This comparison introduces the discussion of the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’ in Postcolonial studies. It re-assesses Spivak’s contribution to the idea of a ‘Postcolonial Gramsci’, which exceeds her ‘epistemic approach’ to subalternity.

7.1 Subalternity beyond the ‘old subaltern’

In what ways did Spivak re-articulate subalternity after “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a)? This essay was a turning point for her reflections on subalternity, although it was not the final point. This Section offers some observations on Spivak’s later approach to subalternity, without discussing the aspects related to its circulation.

7.1.1 The ‘new subaltern’

As mentioned in Chapter 6, Spivak’s ‘old’ subalternity – that is, the idea of the subaltern ‘excluded from the lines of social mobility’ – raises some political and

practical problems. In particular, this would not qualify the working class as subaltern, thus pointing to an ambiguous relation between subalternity and class. Around 1999-2000 Spivak developed further her understanding of the relation between subalternity and class. She considered a 'new' form of subalternity which is directly related to class issues – the 'new (gendered¹¹⁷) subaltern' (Spivak 1999a: 102, 102 note 43).

Today the 'subaltern' must be rethought. S/he is no longer cut off from lines of access to the centre. The centre, as represented by the Bretton Woods agencies and the World Trade Organization, is altogether interested in the rural and indigenous subaltern as source of trade-related intellectual property or TRIPs. [...]. Marxist theory best describes the manner in which such 'intellectual property' is made the basis of exploitation in the arenas of biopiracy and human genome engineering. [...] But 'the agent of production' here is no longer the working class [...]. [T]his new understanding of subalternity leads to global social movements supported by a Marxist analysis of exploitation [...]. Although the terrain of the colonial subaltern cannot be explained by capital logic alone, this cannot mean jettisoning the concept of class [...] as a descriptive and analytical category. (Spivak 2000a: 326-327, 330)

Who are the 'new subalterns'? This category encompasses the bottom layers of the urban underclass, the men and the women of the illiterate peasantry, the 'Third World women' who are 'targeted by credit-baiting for their micro-enterprise without infrastructural involvement', the homeworkers, the sweatshop labourers, the labouring children, the undocumented immigrant workers the aboriginal people, and so on (Spivak 1999a: 67-68, 101-102, 102 note 143, 220 note 38, 242-243, 267, 276, 380-394, 399-402, 403-404, 415-421; 2000a: 333; 2005a: 483-485; 2012a: 225; 2014a: 11).

The point here is not to enumerate 'new subalterns' in detail. Rather, it is to highlight the ways in which Spivak has supplemented her 'old' understanding of subalternity with the 'new' one. The 'old' understanding of subalternity entails questions like epistemic violence, although it is ambiguously related to class. As this Section will illustrate, the 'new' understanding of subalternity has a distinctive focus on class, although it does not downplay questions of epistemic violence: the new subalterns are constantly effaced and re-codified by the discourses of the agencies of neo-liberal globalisation – for example Bretton Woods, the WTO but also the 'human rights oriented' Western feminism (Spivak 1999a: 361-362, 385-392; 2000a: 327-328). Moreover, as will become clear, they are subjected to the material exploitation of the international division of labour. Fractions of these 'new subalterns' provide the social basis to what Spivak has called the 'globe-girdling non-Eurocentric movements' (Spivak

1999a: 276) – that is, movements like those for ecological or reproductive justice, which fight for changing their material conditions as well as for a more general social change. In fact,

in the developing countries, it is the forces of feminist activism and the non-Eurocentric Ecology movement that did attempt to regenerate the critical element into [a] dream of displacement from capitalism to socialism. (Spivak 2012c [1992]: 143-144)

Significantly, Spivak's 'new' understanding of subalternity is the precipitate of an articulated shift in her perspective on the 'subaltern question'. This shift marks a new moment in her intellectual production:

[in "Can the Subaltern Speak?] the woman [...] was my grandmother's sister. So, because *I wanted access* I went into the family [...]. *I moved from that first move. I moved from studying the subaltern to learning from.* (Spivak 2012a: 224, my parenthesis and my emphasis)

Also, the 'move from studying the subaltern to learning from' illustrates a new phase of her intellectual biography: the abandonment of the *Subaltern Studies* project. In this respect

I have given my resignation to the Subaltern Studies group, because *what interests me is to learn from the subalterns how to act, while they prefer [to] conduct studies on subalterns.* (Balibar and Spivak 2016: 867, my emphasis and my parenthesis)

These moments are in turn grounded on a shift in Spivak's political biography: her political-pedagogical engagement with some Adivasi tribes in India since the end of the 1980s/early 1990s. As will become clear, this includes her activity as a teacher and teacher trainer in the Adivasi rural areas of West Bengal, as well as her involvement in the struggles for the recognition of their rights and in local agricultural projects. Significantly, the categories for this political-pedagogical engagement were inspired by her reading of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*:

I moved from studying the subaltern to learning from [...] especially because [...] the complete lack of interest of the State [...] in terms of training primary school teachers [...]. It was in that situation that I went to Gramsci's thoughts on this in the *Prison Notebooks*. (Spivak 2012a: 224-225, my emphasis)

Therefore, Spivak's reading of Gramsci in the light of the needs of her political activism informed her later perspective on the 'subaltern question': a perspective where *the subalterns are subjects of a (pedagogical) relation rather than objects of study*, as it was with "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) and *Subaltern Studies*¹¹⁸. In fact,

in teasing out the consciousness of the subaltern or the subaltern consciousness from the texts of the elite—that wasn't Gramsci. [...] That is necessarily ignored by later English-reading groups influenced by Gramsci, so that *the subaltern remained an object of study rather than a subject to learn from in a mediated way*. (Spivak 2012a: 222-223, my emphasis)

So far this Section has discussed the ways in which Spivak's 'old' and 'new' understandings of subalternity complement each other. Significantly, each of them has one distinctive feature:

[i]n the old dispensation the subaltern allowed us to stop outside of capital logic. In the thinking that I am now describing, gender allows us to think outside of the abstract logic of citizenship alone. [...] [I]n thinking of gendered subalternity [...] we step [...] from the abstract structures of citizenship, the circuits of hegemony, in other words, agency [...] into subjection. From agent to subject. (Spivak 2012a: 225)

The 'old' subalternity points to questions of *agency* and *citizenship*¹¹⁹, whereas the 'new' subalternity entails the problem of (political) *subjectification* – and thus the problems of political subjection and the (political) subject.

As will become clear, Spivak thinks that those who are 'excluded from the lines of social mobility' – (the 'old subalterns') – do have historical *agency*. Moreover, they are only 'formally subsumed' to the logic of capital, and thus they are not included within the elite's hegemonic project. That is, they have never been part of an encompassing national project, and they are thereby excluded from the exercise of power and the levers of the State (Balibar and Spivak 2016: 864; Spivak 2012a: 222; 2014b: 10). They become '*citizens*' only through political-pedagogical work, which renders them able to speak and to be heard within a political space.

Conversely, in Spivak's perspective the subalterns who are included within the logic of capital can potentially fight back against exploitation, because the 'objective conditions' for this struggle are already in place. In the context of neoliberal globalization, under constant *subjection* to epistemic violence and material exploitation, the 'new' subalterns can fight back against 'new' forms of exploitation over women's bodies and indigenous knowledges, as well as 'old' forms of exploitation (in the Marxist sense). This is because women's (re)productive work and the appropriation of collective intelligence are central to the international division of labour. Therefore, the 'new' subalterns are a necessary social support to neoliberal

globalization (Spivak 1999a: 67, 276; 2012e [2000]: 213-215). The question is to develop a political strategy that turns this social necessity into a political opportunity for social change. Or, the question is to *create political subjects* that put forward emancipatory responses to the issues of reproductive work and intellectual cooperation.

Moreover, the transition from 'old' to 'new' subalternity maps a gradual shift from agency to subject: 'old' and 'new' subalternity are asymptotically related.

If you think of the subject as something that goes beyond the profile of individual intention, and if you think of agency as an action that is institutionally validated, one can conceive of [...] their relation as asymptotic. [...] They relate to each other, but they will never coincide. (Spivak 2007a: 43-44, own translation)

This asymptotic relation maps a political space in between 'old' and 'new' subalterns, thus including forms of subalternity 'hung in the balance'¹²⁰ between agency/citizenship and political subjectification. Spivak's subalternity can be conceived of as a conceptual space encompassing a *large 'spectrum' of political inclusion/exclusion* that is covered by her two understandings of the subaltern condition. The examples of subalternity in Spivak's work demonstrate the validity of this argument.

On the one end of the subaltern political spectrum, Spivak is involved as a teacher with Adivasi tribes in West Bengal – particularly the Kherya Sabars of Purulia and the Dhekaros of Birbhum (Spivak 2003: 35; 2004: 543; 2005a: 483; 2012a: 225). These tribes are part of the so-called Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNTs), who

[live in] ghettos where outside light hardly penetrates. No educational or employment opportunities worth mentioning are available to the ghetto dwellers. [...] [T]hey still wander carrying out odd jobs which have practically lost relevance in the present day world. Most of them are forced to wander into cities in search of livelihood which is hard to find as they are not trusted by the public. (Spivak 1999b: 592-593, my parenthesis)¹²¹

Therefore the DNTs – particularly the Kherya Sabar and Dhekaros people – can *generally* be understood as 'marginal' subalterns 'removed from the lines of social/cultural mobility and from the capital logic' (although, as will become clear, fractions of these groups can be understood as in between 'old' and 'new' subalternity). In fact, they live in segregation, they do not receive a proper education, they do not have access to the

job market, etc. Moreover they live at the margins of the Indian society, because they do not have an 'intuition of the public sphere' – that is, they are not socialized to the political mechanisms of the state, and thus they make their claims visible in a political space (Spivak 2005a: 483). In this way, they are neither 'subjects of rights', nor do they perceive themselves as such. That is, they are not effective citizens of the Indian postcolonial state – although they theoretically belong to it (Spivak 2004: 547-548, 558-559; 2007b: 88-90). As such, Spivak's teaching in West Bengal aims to build a 'sense of citizenship' that can foster their agency within the Indian postcolonial state. The effective condition as 'subjects of rights' is integral to their perception of themselves as 'subjects of rights'.

On the other end of the subaltern political spectrum, Spivak's has established relations with "the counter-globalizing networks of people's alliances in the so-called global South" (Spivak 2003: 35): the collective forms of the 'new' subaltern (Spivak 1999a: 276; 2000a: 327). These are firstly the 'non-western movements for ecological justice', that fight against those agribusiness multinationals which commodify knowledges of nature by patenting seeds that have been developed through the collective intelligence of indigenous communities (e.g. Shiva 2005). At the same time, they are committed to construct social alternatives, for example by practising ecological agriculture in local cooperatives (Spivak 1995: 115-116; 1999a: 380-385; 2010: 230; Sharpe and Spivak 2003: 615-616; Spivak et al. 1996d: 274-277; 1996e: 298-301). Secondly, Spivak talks about a plethora of subaltern women's movements that not only devise homeworking alternatives to sweatshop labour¹²². They also tackle reproductive engineering – that is, reproductive justice, surrogacy and demographic control¹²³ (Spivak, 1995: 116-117, 1999a: 67-68, 385-392, 414) – thereby targeting the pharmaceutical companies that test contraceptives on subaltern women's bodies or commodify their egg cells for scientific research without concern for their well-being (e.g. Cooper and Waldby 2014).

Therefore the non-western ecological movements and the subaltern women's movements are subjected to forms of bio-exploitation (Lettow, 2018), but they also struggle against them. Similarly, they are subjected to and struggle against 'old' forms of exploitation – as illustrated by the organisation of alternatives to sweatshop labour.

As such, Spivak's new subalternity directly points to political subjectification: the interplay between subjection and the creation of political subjects.

However, the subaltern political spectrum also has a large in-between space. In Spivak's work the DNTs are not merely 'removed from the lines of social mobility'. In fact, the term 'DNTs' covers more than 100 million Indian people with heterogeneous ethnic compositions (Government of India, 2008) and different capacity of political mobilisation¹²⁴. More importantly, other examples in Spivak's work point to social groups that can be understood as 'in-between' old and new forms of subalternity.

This is illustrated by the petition to the UN Commission of Human Rights that Mahasweta Devi, Ganesh Devy and Spivak presented in 1998 on behalf of the DNT-RAG, the Denotified and Nomadic Tribes Rights Action Group (Spivak 1999b)¹²⁵. This petition flagged the Adivasis' segregation and exclusion from public life, pushing the Commission to exerting pressure on the Indian State in the name of justice and human rights (Spivak 1999b: 591-593). Interestingly, this petition was not produced by some benevolent intellectuals or token subalterns. Rather, it resulted from the autonomous deliberations of Adivasi communities during an assembly in an Adivasi constituency – that of the Chharas of Ahmedabad. In Spivak's words:

[i]t was in Chharanagar that I saw this initiative [the petition] taking shape with a kind of national scope. It was a problem-solving approach. As problems arose people began to be aware that there was this initiative here that could help them. (596, my parenthesis)

This situation illustrates the asymptotic convergence between agency and subject, or between 'old' and 'new' subalternity. As the petition highlights, the Adivasis in Chharanagar are not included within cultural and capital logics. Nevertheless, they are not completely excluded from the lines of social mobility, because they have agency and they speak, asking an international institution for political recognition. As Chapter 6 has demonstrated, the challenge for the 'old' subaltern social groups is not only speaking, but being heard. This requires a political infrastructure that addresses the complexity of listening processes – or, the processes of representation (*Darstellung/Vertretung*). Crucially, this is exactly the outcome of the assembly in Ahmedabad. The people deliberated about a specific way of standing up for their rights: a petition. Adivasi groups have thus autonomously constructed a political

infrastructure to support the circulation of their claims within a political space, addressing the complexities related to representation: the petition was produced by a restricted number of Adivasi people, although it *spoke for* millions of them. At the same time, Spivak, Devi and Devy *spoke for* the Adivasi people in front of the Commission. Nevertheless, the assembly was facing the complexity of the listening process within political institutions, and therefore they *needed* some form of representation. The political work for agency and citizenship was thus embedded within this specific Adivasi assembly – that is, this political work was already constitutive of their practices. In this way, they were able to act as citizens within the Indian postcolonial state, and perceive themselves as ‘subjects of rights’.

Obviously, the activity of this Adivasi assembly is not ‘quantitatively’ comparable to the activity of political subjectivities that organize local forms of resistance to capitalism – as with the collective forms of the ‘new’ subaltern. Moreover, this assembly represents only a small fraction of a 100 million disenfranchised people: the ‘sense of citizenship’ is not a given among Adivasis. Nevertheless, the assembly in Ahmedabad points to a political and social form that is in-between complete ‘exclusion from’ and ‘inclusion within’ the lines of social mobility. In this way,

[w]hen a line of communication is established between a member of subaltern groups and the circuits of citizenship or institutionality, the subaltern has been inserted into the long road to hegemony. (Spivak 1999a: 310)

7.1.2 Subalternity, a position without identity

Around 2005, some years after her observations on the ‘new subaltern’, Spivak refined further her perspective on subalternity:

[s]ubalternity is *a position without identity*. It is somewhat like the strict understanding of class. Class is [...] a sense of economic collectivity, of social relations of formation as the basis of action. (Spivak 2005a: 476, my emphasis)

Although recent (Spivak 2005a: 482; 2012a: 226), this definition is entangled with ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ (1988a) and its approach to Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1972 [1852]) almost 20 years earlier (Spivak 2005a, p. 476-477). Therefore, Spivak’s early understanding of subalternity might shed light on this new one. Chapter 6 has discussed the difference between class-in-itself and class-for-itself –

that is, between class *position* and class consciousness or class *identity*. Class-in-itself and class-for-itself are thus coextensive with position and identity. Moreover, Chapter 6 has highlighted that the living conditions of the French small peasant proprietors are the same, and thus they have *the same class position* – or, they form an economic collectivity. However, they do not realize that they all belong to the same social stratum, and thus they are *not able to form a collective identity* that is coherent with their class position and material interests. Therefore, inasmuch as they do not have class identity, they cannot create a political subject, and thus they are not able to represent themselves, and to know and speak about their condition. Therefore, a ‘position without identity’ entails the inability of autonomous expression of one’s own conditions and needs.

This new understanding of subalternity maps the two meanings of the ‘old’ subalternity: ‘exclusion from discursive logics’ and ‘exclusion from capital logics’. The question of epistemic violence is crucial to the first parallel. As Chapter 6 has noted, the transition from class-in-itself (position) to class-for-itself (identity) is mediated by representation. In other words, *Darstellung* and *Vertretung* operate within the cleavage between the subaltern position and the ability to speak and know one’s own condition. In this respect, the interplay between *Darstellung* and *Vertretung* creates a subaltern effect (*Darstellung*) which actually results from an elite subject who speaks for subaltern groups (*Vertretung*). Subaltern groups are re-codified within the elite discourse, and thus subjected to epistemic violence. Crucially, this is related to the question of the ‘old’ subalternity and the ‘exclusion from discursive logics’. Subaltern groups are excluded from the hegemonic narratives, because they are subjected to the epistemic violence of an elite subject. Subaltern groups are thus denied autonomous expression within these narratives – which is what subalternity as a ‘position without identity’ implies.

Moreover, a ‘position without identity’ is similar to the ‘exclusion from the logics of capital’. This form of exclusion refers to the situation of ‘marginal’ subalterns, who are not included within the labour-capital conflict. Within this conflict, labour is organized, unionised, and represented in front of capital – the condition of the 20th century working class. Marginal subalterns have no representation within this ‘classical’ conflict

– they have little organisation, scattered unionisation, etc. As such, their ability to organize an autonomous struggle around a political platform is limited: they cannot autonomously express their own conditions and needs – again, this is a ‘position without identity’.

Therefore, subalternity as a ‘position without identity’ maps the condition of the ‘old’ subaltern. And yet, Spivak’s later approach to subalternity is ostensibly at odds with some remarks on the old subalternity in the early 1990s:

"subaltern" [...] [is] the description of everything that doesn't fall under a strict class analysis. (Spivak 1990c: 141)

As Spivak (2005a: 476) argued in 2005, in fact, subalternity “is somewhat like the strict understanding of class”. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 6, the old subalternity is both ambiguously related to class issues, but it is also similar to ‘a position without identity’, the definition of which is entangled with a strict understanding of class. How does one resolve this contradiction? The answer is in the comparison underpinning Spivak’s definition of subalternity in 2005. Subalternity is *like* (that is, similar, but not identical to) a strict understanding of class. Therefore, it can be different from/not reducible to this conception. How do Spivak’s definitions of subalternity hold together? Or, what is the rhythm of thought in Spivak’s subalternity?

7.2 The ‘rhythm of thought’ of subalternity in Spivak’s work

Many commentators have recently analysed Spivak’s deployment of subalternity and its aporias, for example in terms of the impossible delineation of the space of the subaltern. According to these scholars, Spivak uses subalternity via negativa, as a differential category, rather than affirmatively, as a substantive social one (Bracke, 2016: 840; De Jong and Mascot, 2016: 718; Varadharajan, 2016: 732, 739). They have questioned the extent to which Spivak has applied her understanding of subalternity to empirical situations – or, they have considered the tension between the empirical applicability and the theoretical aspects of this concept (de Jong and Mascot 2016: 718-719; Legg 2016: 797, 810-811; Nilsen and Roy 2015: 6-7). In other words, they suggest that she has not operationalized the theoretical aspects of subalternity –

e.g. the question of difference. Therefore her theoretical understanding does not effectively support empirical analysis.

In fact, according to these commentators, the theoretical space of Spivak's subalternity is defined by its inaccessibility, and thus by unrepresentability (Bracke, 2016: 846; De Jong and Mascot, 2016: 718-719; Legg 2016: 811; Mascot, 2016: 778; Varma, 2015: 106-108)¹²⁶. The aporias of representation are coextensive with the aporias of description, thus questioning the empirical validity of analyses informed by her theoretical understanding of subalternity. Moreover, as illustrated in Chapter 6, Spivak's work has also deployed subalternity to analyse the power/knowledge relations within a (post)colonial archive (Nilsen and Roy 2015: 7-8). Therefore, while these commentators have questioned the idea that Spivak uses the theoretical aspects of subalternity to understand empirical situations, they have considered this concept – or better, its 'epistemic features' – central to a project of cultural critique. Crucially, this implies a potential disentanglement between theoretical/epistemic and socio-historical understandings of subalternity. As such, these commentators seem to have widely accepted the fracture between empirical applicability and theoretical/epistemic features in Spivak's subalternity¹²⁷.

This Section will rather argue not only that Spivak's work includes empirical applications of her concept of subalternity, but also that its theoretical/epistemic and socio-historical aspects are entangled: Spivak's reflections on the 'subaltern question' can be considered in terms of both the theoretical frameworks developed in her work and her experiences with subaltern groups. These experiences question the opposition between 'old' and 'new' subalternity, thus suggesting that Spivak's approach might not consist in applying old or new categories to concrete cases, but in combining these categories. In this way, empirical cases are located at the intersection of a conceptual device that provides the coordinates for analysing concrete situations.

In this respect, Spivak's understanding of subalternity accounts for the social position of individuals/groups who are not necessarily politically aware of their own position. Notably, their social position has a distinctive class character. In fact, her understanding of subalternity cannot be separated from class issues, as the question of the 'new

subaltern' has illustrated. And yet, class is not exhaustive of the social dimension of subalternity, because her concept describes everything that is not included within strict class analysis: according to Spivak, subalternity exists at the intersection of class, race, gender, etc. This is exemplified by her account of the *sati* widow, caught in between the racialized ideological justification of the British colonizers and the Hindu patriarchal discourse.

Moreover, bearing in mind the influence of Guha's differential definition of subalternity, Spivak's understanding of subalternity is situational: subalternity is not an absolute position. As illustrated in Chapter 5, the local elite can be either subaltern or dominant according to specific contexts. Subalternity is thus a temporary location that results from a political situation where different social positions are organised into a hierarchy. Nevertheless, Spivak's subalternity is not reducible to a generalized condition of inferiority or oppression. Rather, her work has illustrated that "[the] subaltern is oppressed, yet not all oppressed are subaltern" (Bracke, 2016: 839). Spivak is aware of the politically ambiguous use of the concept as a buzzword and of the consequences for its sociological applicability. Moreover, she has used different understandings of subalternity to highlight the political ambiguities of situations that would not appear ambiguous if interpreted through the category of 'the oppressed'.

The ability to speak and know one's own conditions – that is, representation – is one criteria of disambiguation. The question of those who claims marginality in the US academy illustrates this situation. The marginal academics or the 'discriminated-against minority on campus' can represent themselves beyond the effacement of epistemic violence, accessing the political infrastructures that support the circulation of their claims within an institutional space. In this respect, they have access to the hegemonic discourse.: they are not excluded from the lines of social mobility, particularly from discursive and cultural logics. Therefore, they are not subaltern, rather they are oppressed.

At the same time, representation within and exclusion from discursive formations are not absolute criteria of disambiguation. They highlight the political ambiguities implicit in the US academy situation. However they cannot be used as absolute measures of

what is subaltern or not. The examples of those who are in between 'old' and 'new' subalternity, or are 'new' subalterns are relevant here. For these subalterns can speak. Nevertheless they are excluded from the logic of capital (e.g. the Adivasis in Chharanagar), or subjected to the initiative of the ruling classes, or exploited (e.g. the non-Eurocentric movements).

In this way, the inclusion/exclusion from the logics of capital and the question of political subjectification are further criteria for evaluating the subaltern condition. Spivak has analysed specific situations by deploying different understandings of subalternity – none of which are valid from a general perspective. At the same time, these different criteria are entangled with each other in Spivak's work. Therefore, her texts highlight a *matrix for explaining the subaltern condition*. Significantly though, as Chapter 6 has illustrated, the reception of her work during 1990s-2000s predominantly consisted in one specific vector of this matrix – that is, the 'epistemic vector'. This can be further illustrated by analysing the circulation of her observations on subalternity in Postcolonial studies, which contributed to the creation of the 'Postcolonial Gramsci'.

7.3 Re-assessing Spivak's contribution to the 'Postcolonial Gramsci'¹²⁸

The 'Postcolonial Gramsci' is grounded on the creative reception of many aspects of Gramsci's thought – most notably his reflections on intellectuals, hegemony, national-popular, and so on (Brennan 2013: 72; Green 2013a: 95-97; Selenu 2013: 105; Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2012: 7-9). As Chapters 5 and 6 have demonstrated, his approach to the 'subaltern question' affected this field thanks to the fundamental re-articulation operated by *Subaltern Studies* and Spivak (see also Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2012: 9-10; 2013: 83).

However, despite being particularly constructive (Green 2013a: 93), the reception of Gramsci's thought in Postcolonial studies has not been unproblematic:

the postcolonial engagement of Gramsci has produced numerous appropriations of his work that pervade the literature, offering little more than the invocation of common phrases and concepts. (Green 2013a: 90)

This resulted in the almost paradoxical situation where the 'Postcolonial Gramsci' lost track of his 'rhythm of thought' of the 'subaltern question'. Postcolonial approaches to subalternity have not only reiterated the philological issues highlighted in previous chapters, e.g. the 'methodological reduction of Q25 or the 'censorship thesis' (Green 2011: 387-393). But also they have progressively moved the focus from analysing subalternity in terms of class, culture and power to an interest in singular subaltern figures, and then shifted again from these singular subalterns to analyse generalized conditions of oppression or romanticized views of subalternity (Brennan 2013: 73-76; Green 2013a: 97-99).

Significantly, the distance of these perspectives from Gramsci's 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity can be explained by the ways in which Spivak's *early* work – particularly her 'epistemic approach' to the 'subaltern question' – had an impact on Postcolonial studies. This impact was also related to the canonical status of her early work in the field and to its wider circulation in the US academy. Postcolonial understandings of subalternity have been influenced by Spivak's early work because they have focused on the analysis of singular subalternities, which resulted from Spivak's re-articulation of the 'subaltern question' (Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2012: 11; Young 2012: 31). Moreover they have used subalternity as a buzzword for a general state of oppression, thus resonating with the widespread use circulating in the US academy after "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a). Also, they have been quite likely influenced by her idea of 'the subaltern' as the regulative code of hegemonic representations, because this underpins the 'question that *dominates* Postcolonial studies' (Chatterjee 2010a: 85, my emphasis): the representation of Third-world subjects in Western discourse. Furthermore, they have used subalternity as a perspective to describe a position of inferiority/exclusion that is produced by a set of hierarchical relations (Nilsen and Roy 2015: 10)¹²⁹, and they have applied the question 'can the subaltern speak?' to different areas of research (e.g. Beverley 2001; Khair 2000; Maggio 2007; Prakash 1992; Warrior 2011).

However, if the 'typical' postcolonial approach to the 'subaltern question' is distant from Gramsci's perspective, has Spivak lost track of Gramsci's understanding of subalternity? A comparison between Spivak's and Gramsci's 'rhythm of thought' of

subalternity will bring about a re-assessment of her contribution to the 'Postcolonial Gramsci'.

Gramsci conceptualised subalternity "in relation to multiple social groups and the power relations between them. It was not reducible to any singular social axis – class or gender" (Nilsen and Roy 2015: 13). Gramsci's work is characterised by an intersectional deployment of subalternity – although with some limits. These are related to Gramsci's understanding of the 'gender question', rather than to the absence of the 'race question'. This perspective on the 'race question' in Gramsci's work is not accurate. Scholars have stated that, for example,

though Gramsci does not write about racism and does not specifically address those problems, his concepts may still be useful to us in our attempt to think through the adequacy of existing social theory paradigms in these areas. Further, his own personal experience and formation, as well as his intellectual preoccupations, were not in fact quite so far removed from those questions as a first glance would superficially suggest. (Hall 1986: 8-9)

It is true that one can derive some insights on race from Gramsci's personal experiences and intellectual preoccupations, or from re-purposing his concepts. However, race is not a secondary outcome, rather is integral to Gramsci's approach to subalternity. As discussed in Chapter 1, Q25 – particularly, Lazzaretti's story – includes some important observations on an 'epistemic device' that is organized along the lines of race, and that complicated the road to hegemony of the Italian subaltern groups. More generally, this device re-codified the Southern peasants as backward, barbaric, biologically inferior and so on, thus contributing to defining the racialized regimes of representation of the 'Southern Question', which became hegemonic even within the Northern working class (Gramsci 1966: 135-136).

The limits of Gramsci's intersectional deployment of subalternity are rather related to another 'social axis' – that of gender. As discussed in Chapter 1, for Gramsci (1975: 2286 [Q25 §4]) the 'gender question' is only to some extent comparable to the 'subaltern question': male chauvinism is more relevant as a cultural problem than as a political one. This is at odds with the most basic assumptions of a feminist perspective, according to which the relations between men and women *are* political. As Spivak (2005a: 479) has noted, "Gramsci's thought-world had seemed to be more mono-gendered than it was". Still, even though his project was not particularly 'gender

sensitive' in its details, it can be made so (Spivak 2000a: 324). In this respect Spivak has brought gender sensitivity to the 'subaltern question' (Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2012: 11). Her discussions on the subaltern women emphasise that gendered subalternity is not reducible to a cultural problem. Rather it is also an inherently political issue. The 'gender question' is fully included within the rubric of subalternity, and it is also further 'complicated' by other epistemic devices, such as race and class. As discussed in Chapter 6, Spivak's account of the *sati* widow has reworked Gramsci's understanding of subalternity: she has considered the 'interferences of the imperialist project', thus drawing on (and extending) the analysis of the 'subaltern question' in *Subaltern Studies*.

This does not mean that Spivak's approach to the 'subaltern question' is unproblematic. Not only the relation between the 'old' subalternity and class issues is aporetic, but also, her work downplays the question of Dalits and caste. As Zene (2010: 241) has noted, this might be related to the fact that she does not consider herself Hindu, and that consequently she is external to caste ideology. In this way, the little emphasis she put on caste has affected her ways to address inequalities in Indian society, thus focusing on class rather than caste issues. Notably though, Spivak's references to the 'caste question' are more frequent in her later work (e.g. Spivak 1999a: 274 note 122; 2004: 543, 554-555; 2012g [2004]: 332; Spivak et al. 1996b: 89). This suggests that her awareness of caste problems is related to her political activism in West Bengal, and thus to 'an immersion' within socio-political realities profoundly affected by caste.

Despite these limits, Spivak's understanding of subalternity encompasses the entanglement of 'social axis' that are not reducible to the single question of class or gender. Therefore, an intersectional perspective on subalternity resonates both in Gramsci and Spivak's work (Nilsen and Roy 2015: 13-14). More generally, Spivak and Gramsci resonate together on the 'subaltern question' – although their perspectives are not reducible to each other.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Gramsci has opened up the space for understanding the subaltern as an individual subject, other than as a collective one. At the same time,

scholars have argued that the shift from subaltern groups to subaltern individuals represents the distinctive feature of the 'Postcolonial Gramsci'. It is evident that the one who 'invented' the (singular) subaltern was Gramsci, *not* Spivak, as some scholars have rather argued (e.g. Srivastava and Bhattacharya 2012: 11; Young 2012: 31-32). Nevertheless, the 'who came first' argument is relatively futile in the context of the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question': Gramsci's intuitions on the singular subaltern had been lost during this process. The idea of a singular subaltern circulated thanks to Spivak's work – and the work of *Subaltern Studies* too (Liguori 2011b: 39-40).

However, not everything was lost during this circulation. As both *Subaltern Studies* and Spivak have recognised,

Gramsci's main contribution was to notice that, precisely because Italy, with its tail tucked into Africa, is not France, Britain, Russia, or the US, the Risorgimento did not sufficiently assimilate classes created outside capital logic. (Spivak 2014c: 188)

Therefore, Gramsci's most valuable insight for the (late) transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question' is the discussion of specific subjects/groups located outside of (or not completely within) capitalist relations (Morton 2016: 757). As illustrated in Chapter 1, subalternity in the *Prison Notebooks* encompasses different historical periods – from the Roman age to contexts that are closer or coeval to Gramsci's time. Subalternity is thus a category encompassing processes of subordination that are not necessarily reducible to capitalist (or colonial) logics.

Spivak's discussion on the *sati* widow in relation to the Hindu patriarchal discourse and, more generally, the question of the 'old' subalternity resonate with this Gramscian deployment of the 'subaltern question'. Similarly, the 'new' subalternity can be considered internal to Gramsci's perspective on subalternity. As illustrated, her discussion was inspired by her reading of Gramsci. Moreover, her 'new' understanding of the 'subaltern question' has emphasised the class dimension of subalternity. This is because it is related to the international division of labour and the most brutal forms of material exploitation. If the relation between the 'old' subalternity and Gramsci's perspective is problematic, the 'new' subaltern and its emphasis on class are more easily reconcilable with his approach to the 'subaltern question' (Zene 2010: 239-242).

Nevertheless, Spivak's 'new' subalternity does not discard those aspects of the 'old' subalternity that are in clear continuity with Q25, such as the subjection to epistemic violence – that is, the effacement and re-codification of subaltern groups within hegemonic discourses.

Spivak's attention to the ways in which subalternity is represented in the hegemonic discourses, along with her critique of the 'retrieval' of subaltern consciousness in *Subaltern Studies*, resonate with Gramsci's interest in the history of subaltern groups, and thus with the 'incalculable value' attributed to their traces of autonomous activity. For example, she has sought to understand the ways in which

the philosophical presuppositions, historical excavations, and literary representations of the dominant [...] trace a subliminal and discontinuous emergence of the "native informant": autochthone and/or subaltern. [...] In the telling, the chain cuts often – but the cut threads reappear. (Spivak 1999a: xi)

Using both *Subaltern Studies* and deconstruction, Spivak intends to follow the *trace* of the subaltern. The question is not to recover the 'positivistic' fantasy of a 'pure' consciousness, rather to map the traces of its absence. As such, Spivak's project has re-articulated the core of Q25 – although not necessarily because of Gramsci. As discussed in Chapter 6, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) – or better, its first version "Power and Desire" (1983) – was not directly inspired by Gramsci. Nevertheless, her emphasis on the 'discontinuous and subliminal emergence' of the subaltern within hegemonic narratives or the 'cuts in the telling chain' resonate with Q25 – particularly, with the idea that the 'fragmented and episodic' history of subaltern groups is 'interrupted' by the activity of the dominant groups.

In this respect, Gramsci (1971: 54-55 [Q25§ 2]) argues that the historical narratives of subaltern groups are not coherent. Rather, they are made of unrelated fragments that gesture towards inchoate forms of autonomous activity, and that emerge only episodically within the hegemonic discourses (Green 2002: 11-14). This is illustrated by Davide Lazzaretti and his movement. As observed in Chapters 1 and 6, Lazzaretti's story points to the ways in which hegemonic historiography and sociology offered a 'pathological' and 'barbaric' representation of this and other subaltern insurgencies, thus providing the ideological justification for political repression. Lazzaretti's story was effaced and re-codified within the hegemonic discourses. Or, it was subjected to a form

of epistemic violence that was instrumental to regulate the representations of the hegemonic subject. In this way,

Gramsci's critical analysis of the authors who wrote on Lazzaretti further illustrates the difficulty in tracing the subaltern for, even when traces of the subaltern exist in the historical records, the interpretations and representations of the subaltern may be misinformed or ideologically influenced. This creates an additional obstacle in tracing and producing a subaltern history for the integral historian since he or she has to critically engage and analyze the evidence of the past. (Green 2002: 14)

Notably, Spivak's approach to the 'subaltern question' considers the subaltern not only as an object of study/representation – and thus of discourse – but also, as with Gramsci (Baldacci 2017), as a subject of a pedagogical relation. She established schools in the Adivasi areas in West Bengal, so as to train rural teachers and teach children how to read and write. This is to provide the political/pedagogical infrastructure to make those Adivasis aware of their status as citizens within the Indian postcolonial state, which does not recognize them as such. According to Spivak, education in the rural areas of West Bengal is very poor, and has reproduced cohorts of teachers who are not ready for a pedagogical endeavour. This resulted into the more general reproduction of a system of oppression that is palpably represented by class segregation: the Indian educational system actively contributes to the marginalisation of the Adivasi people, who cannot access the conditions for 'an intuition of the public sphere', and thus are citizens only from a formal perspective (Spivak 2000a: 230-232; 2004: 543-564; 2005a: 481-482; 2012g [2004]: 328-334; 2012h [2007]: 293-294).

Spivak's teaching activity aims to create the basis for a 'citizenship consciousness', and thus for a concrete agency within the Indian political society. Moreover, her teaching activity is an opportunity to learn something from the subjects with whom she has a relation – that is, an opportunity to 'learning to learn from below'. In her words:

[t]his is now my own real training ground: learning to learn from below to devise a practical philosophy to train members of the largest sector of the future electorate and to train its current teachers in the habits of democratic reflexes [...] and on a one-on-one basis. (Spivak 2003: 35-36, my parenthesis)

Therefore Spivak works as a teacher for the Adivasis. But also, "[m]y teacher is the subaltern" (Spivak 2004: 568 note 16), as she has emblematically claimed. This resonates with the whole 'pedagogical question' in Gramsci (e.g. Baldacci 2016; 2017),

who “attended the school of the Turinese working class” (Bermani 1987: 105, own translation), thus developing his theories in close contact with the Factory Councils movement. As such, Spivak has directly drawn from his reflections on the ‘master-disciple relation’, which in turn invest the questions of spontaneity and direction, leaders and led, intellectuals and subalterns, etc.¹³⁰

A closer analysis of Spivak’s ‘learning to learn from below’ approach, however, suggests some underlying differences between their pedagogical (and political) approaches to subalternity. As Ilan Kapoor (2004: 641-642) has summarized, Spivak’s ‘learning to learn from below’

is suspending my belief that I am indispensable, better, or culturally superior; it is refraining from always thinking that the Third World is ‘in trouble’ and that I have the solutions [...]. [It] means stopping oneself from always wanting to correct, teach, theorise, develop, colonise, appropriate, use, record, inscribe, enlighten [...]. It [...] can yield to an openness to the Other [...]. Being open to the subaltern ensues in meaningfully coming to terms with her/his difference and agency, ready to accept an ‘unexpected response’ [...]. It implies, specifically, a reversal of information and knowledge production so that they flow from South to North, and not always in the other direction.

Learning to learn from subalterns implies being open to their contributions, thus accepting their unexpected responses – particularly when they represent contributions to knowledge production.

Spivak’s discussion on a ‘planetary mindset’ epitomises this radical openness to subaltern knowledges.

Planet-thought opens up to embrace an inexhaustible taxonomy of such names [mother, nation, god, nature] including but not identical with the whole range of human universals: aboriginal animism as well as the spectral white mythology of postrational science. If we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents [...] alterity remains underived from us. [...] We must persistently educate ourselves into this peculiar mindset. (Spivak 2003: 73, my parenthesis)

In this planetary mindset, ‘aboriginal animism’ and ‘postrational science’ complement (or, in a deconstructive fashion, supplement) each other: “*there is no selection between cultures* in this way of thinking” (Spivak 2007a: 42, my emphasis, own translation). Within a planetary mindset, subaltern knowledges become part of more organised (and thus hegemonic) forms of culture, such as academic (or scientific) knowledge – to the point that, as Spivak (2005a: 484) has claimed,

[f]rom within the humanities, I want to claim the traditional healer's sense of all history as a big now, I want to claim the sense of myth as being able to contain history, and keep detranscendentalising belief into the imagination.

This discussion – which prefigures (although does not actualise) a space of co-theorisation in Spivak's work – suggests the resonances between Spivak and Gramsci's pedagogical and political approaches to the 'subaltern question', but also their divergences.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, according to Gramsci (2000: 362 [Q27 §1])

[f]olklore must not be considered an eccentricity, an oddity or a picturesque element, but as something which is very serious and is to be taken seriously. Only in this way will the teaching of folklore be more efficient and really bring about the birth of a new culture among the broad popular masses, so that the separation between modern culture and popular culture of folklore will disappear.

For Gramsci, the creation of a new popular culture requires a sort of openness towards subaltern knowledges – i.e. folklore. The new popular culture must be based on a 'spontaneous' philosophy that is adherent to the social conditions of subaltern groups. Crucially though the Marxist dialectic between 'folklore' and 'modern culture' is different from the postcolonial supplement between 'aboriginal animism' and 'postrational science', at least because

to know 'folklore' means to know what other conceptions of the world and of life are actually active in the intellectual and moral formation of [...] people, *in order to uproot them and replace them with conceptions which are deemed to be superior.* (Gramsci 1978: 191 [Q27 §1], my emphasis)

Therefore the creation of a new popular culture that encompasses 'high' culture and folklore cannot be separated from 'uprooting and replacing' subaltern knowledges. *There is a selection of cultures* in this new way of thinking – or, at least, a selection of cultural aspects from worldviews that belong to a subset of variations across the spectrum of folkloric and official conceptions of the world. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, Gramsci could not find a solution to mend the schism between subaltern and hegemonic culture. The aporetic conceptual and political space in-between the Marxist dialectic and the postcolonial supplement maps the distance between Spivak and Gramsci's political and cultural strategies, and at the same time raises an unsolved issue in their perspectives on subalternity: how can subaltern and hegemonic knowledges be integrated? Gramscian and postcolonial perspectives do not provide a

definitive answer, and thus this issue is left as an open question in the transnational debates on the 'subaltern question'.

Overall, and despite the differences between Spivak and Gramsci's perspectives on political and cultural strategies, her position on the 'subaltern question' is *not* reducible to what some commentators have considered the 'typical' postcolonial approach to subalternity. This 'typical' approach has interpreted Q25 as a collection of methodological suggestions for the historiography of subaltern classes, thus overlooking their practical role within the strategy that a revolutionary party follows to emancipate subaltern groups (Buttigieg 1999: 31; Liguori 2011b: 33-34). Contrarily, Spivak's political commitment with the 'subaltern question' gestures towards the practical aspects of Q25 – although it is not related to any particular party. This is implicit in her positions on political and cultural strategy. Also, it is explicit in the ways in which she has discussed the entanglement between methodology and practice in Gramsci's reflections on subalternity, particularly in Q25. For example, Spivak has considered 'Gramsci's articulation of the methodico-methodological difference under the auspices of the subaltern' (Spivak 2012a: 222-223, 227, 231). This is the difference between the strategy adopted by the intellectuals to connect with subaltern groups and the methodology to study the history of subaltern groups. Moreover, and contra Green (2002: 19) and Zene's (2010: 233-234) claims, her work is interested in the political activity of subaltern groups – from the non-Eurocentric social movements to the Adivasis in Chharanagar – thus highlighting that, along with textual representation and organization, political struggle is a key element for social change.

Moreover, Spivak's approach to the 'subaltern question' does *not* necessarily fall under the 'politically ambiguous' uses of Gramsci, as Buttigieg (1999: 28-29) and Liguori (2011b: 34-35) have rather argued. Despite philological issues (Piu 2019: 196-204) and conceptual aporias (e.g. the subaltern status of the working class), Spivak has warned against the uncritical or ambiguous uses of subalternity – at least from a political perspective. Not only she is aware of both the 'dilution' of the concept and the consequences in terms of effective applicability. But also, her re-articulation of the category points to an explanatory matrix of subalternity. In particular, she has used this matrix to address politically ambiguous situations, thus disentangling the oppressed

from the subaltern, or pointing out the risks of strategic essentialism, unexamined nativism, etc. At the same time, this matrix of explanation provides the coordinates to her political activism: for example, her pedagogical relation with the Adivasi people is informed by her reflections on agency and citizenship.

This matrix illustrates that Spivak's understanding of the 'subaltern question' is multifaceted, because specific cases of subalternity are explained according to the variable weight of each vector of the matrix. Crucially, and contra Green (2002: 19) and Nilsen and Roy (2015: 10-14), this implies that Spivak *does not* necessarily polarize agency and subalternity. As illustrated, Spivak has been inspired by Gramsci and *Subaltern Studies*, and thus she has recognised historical agency to subalterns as active subjects of their history. Moreover, in Spivak's view subaltern agency does not necessarily imply the end of subalternity. As with Bhubaneswari's case, (subaltern) action does not in itself put an end to the subaltern condition. The autonomous historical agency of subaltern groups/individuals does not coincide with the end of subalternity, because their activity is continually interrupted by the counter-activity of the ruling groups. Agency is thus necessary for putting an end to subalternity, although it is not sufficient. This also requires the pedagogical and political work that builds a 'listening infrastructure': it requires the educational endeavour that provides the basis for a 'citizenship consciousness'. But also, it requires the creation of political infrastructures that supports the circulation of subaltern claims within a political space. Lastly, this requires the political engagement of the intellectuals who are at the service of subaltern groups – those who are excluded from the lines of social mobility and those who are part of social movements that rise up for social change.

If Spivak does not necessarily polarise agency and subalternity, then subaltern autonomy and subaltern condition are *not* mutually exclusive. Rather, Spivak's discussions describe a spectrum of subalternity that maps different forms of subaltern autonomy – from Bhubaneswari through the Adivasis in Chharanagar, to the globe-girdling non-Eurocentric movements. As such, Spivak's position on subaltern autonomy resonates with Gramsci's six-step framework towards integral autonomy – even though she has accounted for different steps, such as the political work towards a 'citizenship consciousness', the construction of epistemic and political infrastructures for listening,

etc. In this way, unlike what Green (2002: 18), P. Thomas (2015: 88, 91) and Zene (2010: 233-234) have argued, Spivak's approach to subalternity contemplates a 'phased development' that underpins the progressive acquisition of subaltern autonomy as the political strategy to organise a hegemonic struggle.

Contra Green (2002: 19), organisation and representation are in any case *not* sufficient for 'integral autonomy' – that is, for putting an end to subalternity. The question of representation is caught within the *Darstellung/Vertretung* double bind, and thus it does not in itself solve the problem of subalternity, even when it is the product of forms of subaltern organisation. A strategically essentialist self-representation of the subaltern condition (e.g. the DNT-RAG petition) is not outside of subalternity. Nevertheless, the end of subalternity requires this and other steps, such as the daily struggles to construct democratic infrastructures, which in the long-term supplement the aim to change the conditions of existence of subaltern groups.

As much as Spivak's explanatory matrix of the 'subaltern question' points to different shades of subaltern autonomy, it also distinguishes between different forms of subalternity. Spivak's approach to the 'subaltern question' is *not* reducible to the 'typical' postcolonial position on this issue, as Liguori (2011b: 34) and P. Thomas (2015: 86, 91-92) have rather implicitly suggested¹³¹. In fact, the transition from 'old' to 'new' subalternity demonstrates that Spivak has articulated the question in terms of class, gender, race, etc. At the same time, as the example of the 'marginal on campus' has illustrated, Spivak's understanding of the 'subaltern question' distinguishes those who are subaltern from those who are not.

The different shades of subaltern autonomy are also illustrative of the different degrees of entanglement between the subaltern condition and the hegemonic processes. Spivak does *not* understand the subaltern as merely located outside of the hegemonic logics, as other scholars have rather argued (P. Thomas 2018: 861-862, 871-873)¹³². In fact, the 'new' subalternity and the subaltern 'political spectrum' point to a matrix of relations that cannot be reduced to a unilateral exclusion (or inclusion). Also, as illustrated by Spivak's later reflections on the Adivasis as subaltern groups, the 'aboriginal responsibility' towards the Other cannot be simply considered as an

untarnished cultural feature of subaltern groups who live 'removed from the stream of history'. Rather 'aboriginal responsibility' results from the material and historical condition of oppression of the Adivasi people (Spivak 2012a: 228-229; 2012b: 3, 30). In this respect, in line with Gramsci's "Observations on Folklore" (Gramsci 2000: 360 [Q27 §1]), this re-conceptualization of the 'aboriginal responsibility' does not reduce aboriginal (or subaltern) cultures to a mere collection of 'archaic and picturesque traits'. Rather, the culture of the Adivasi people is understood as an important and integral expression of their social and historical condition. Therefore, the cultural subalternity of the Adivasi people – as well as their subaltern condition – are not ontological or political assumptions. Rather they result from the hegemonic relations of a modern/postcolonial state, and thus they are deeply entangled with this context.

This chapter focused on Spivak's work after "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a), so as to illustrate her 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity. It considered the 'new' subalternity included within the logic of capital, and illustrated the relation of this conception to Spivak's political involvement with Adivasi groups in India and, more generally, with subaltern movements. In the light of this political involvement, this chapter discussed the complementarity and the distinction between 'old' and 'new' subalternity in terms of agency and subjectification. This brought about the interpretation according to which subalternity in Spivak's work can be understood as a conceptual space that encompasses a 'spectrum' of political inclusion/exclusion. Moreover, this chapter considered Spivak's idea of subalternity as a 'position without identity' in relation to class-in-itself/class-for-itself and inclusion/exclusion from social mobility. This illustrated similarities and differences with the question of the 'old' subalternity. Unlike the existing literature on Spivak's approach to subalternity, this chapter argued that Spivak used subalternity to analyse empirical situation, thus highlighting the entanglement of theoretical/epistemic and socio-historical aspects of this concept in her work. This chapter thereby illustrated Spivak's 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity in terms of an explanatory matrix that cannot be reduced to the 'epistemic vector'.

This chapter also discussed the creation of the 'Postcolonial Gramsci' as based on Spivak's 'epistemic approach' to subalternity. This creation was explained by the circulation of her early work in Postcolonial studies. Moreover, this chapter argued that Spivak's contribution to the 'Postcolonial Gramsci' is wider than this. This chapter compared Spivak and Gramsci's approaches to subalternity. It addressed their resonances in terms of: their intersectional understanding of subalternity; their attention towards the representation of subalternity in dominant narratives; their interest in processes of subordination that are not necessarily reducible to capitalist/colonial logics; their position on the subaltern as a subject of a pedagogic relation. This chapter also argued that the two approaches pay different attention to gender issues and have different perspectives on the integration between subaltern and hegemonic knowledges.

Overall, these discussions focused on Spivak's 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity, thus illustrating a further re-articulation of the 'subaltern question'. Although they did not address the circulation of Spivak's later work, they represented the preliminary step in order to map another moment in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'. Moreover, these discussions questioned the existing literature on Spivak's approach to subalternity, because they provided an encompassing account of the relation between her theoretical and practical understandings of subalternity. This chapter also compared Spivak's and Gramsci's 'rhythms of thought' of subalternity, so as to re-assess the debates on her contribution to the 'Postcolonial Gramsci'. It considered the limits and the productivity of both Gramsci's observations on subalternity and Spivak's interpretation of these observations. This offered a perspective on Spivak's interpretation of Gramsci that is substantially different from the existing literature: this chapter argued that Spivak's reading of Gramsci exceeds the 'typical' postcolonial reception of his thought. The convergence between their observations on subalternity is greater than what the existing literature has commonly assumed.

Also, the discussions in this chapter are useful to evaluate the relation between the 'subaltern question' and current debates in the social sciences. Spivak's idea of subalternity as a spectrum of political inclusion/exclusion provided some conceptual

coordinates that will be used for a critical intervention into these debates. Moreover, the discussion on Spivak's and Gramsci's approaches to the integration between subaltern and hegemonic knowledges introduced the problem of incorporating subaltern perspectives within social/sociological theories.

8. The impact of the ‘subaltern question’ in the social sciences, or ‘How can the Subaltern contribute to Social and Sociological Theory’?

This chapter marks a shift in the argument of this work: after the exegetic account of the circulation and re-articulation of the ‘subaltern question’, this thesis moves on to address the use of subalternity in the social sciences. This chapter firstly discusses the impact of the ‘subaltern question’ on current debates in sociology, thus addressing a further moment in the history of the approaches to subalternity. Subsequently, it analyses the implications of the use of subalternity in these sociological debates, and discusses the limits implicit in this use in the light of specific critiques. These critiques question these debates’ emphasis on an ‘epistemic approach’ to subalternity that lacks of a ‘strategic imagination’, and that overlooks the practical aspects of the ‘subaltern question’. Chapter 9 will put forward practical solutions to these critiques, thereby challenging the limits that characterise the approach to subalternity in these sociological debates.

Significantly, despite this shift in the argument, the next two chapters are directly related to the rest of this thesis – particularly, to chapters 5 and 7. This chapter firstly analyses the sociological debates that have reworked some aspects of the ‘rhythm of thought’ of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies* and Spivak – particularly, the idea of the ‘subaltern’ as excluded/external from hegemonic formations. As illustrated, this idea is integral to the ‘epistemic approach’ to the ‘subaltern question’. This has circulated through the epistemic vector of Spivak’s explanatory matrix of subalternity, and is rooted in the essentialist understanding of subaltern autonomy that characterises the ‘rhythm of thought’ of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies*. Secondly, this chapter demonstrates that, despite the fact that these sociological debates have sought to move beyond the idea of subalternity related to this epistemic approach, the persistent predominant tendency is to deal with the ‘subaltern question’ in an epistemic way: ‘subaltern’ is considered more a perspective than a social agent. As such, the tendency in these sociological debates is also coherent with the ‘methodological reduction’ of Q25 introduced by the circulation of the English selections of Gramsci’s writings,

because it loses track of those practical aspects of the 'subaltern question' that were central to the early phases of its circulation.

The sociological debates analysed in this chapter concern on the one hand theoretical research on global and Postcolonial sociologies; on the other hand, context-specific research on subaltern groups. This chapter argues that these debates have produced theories of sociology as well as social theories of the 'modern', the 'global' and the subaltern condition by reworking the idea of subalternity as external/excluded from hegemonic formations. This has been done either on the basis of insights generated from concrete interactions with subaltern groups or simply by 'being sensitive to subaltern voices'. This chapter re-conceptualises the engagement of these two debates with subalternity in terms of an open question implicit in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question': the problem of how subaltern and hegemonic knowledges are integrated. Or, 'How can the Subaltern contribute to Social and Sociological Theory?'

This chapter understands this aspect of the 'subaltern question' in two ways: on the one hand the 'contribution problem' is an epistemic issue whereby social/sociological theories are constructed through a subaltern perspective; on the other hand, it is a social practice whereby social/sociological theories are constructed with subaltern groups. This chapter evaluates the two sociological debates in terms of the ways in which they have approached the 'contribution problem' as an epistemic issue or as a social practice. It argues that the theoretical approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies and the context-specific studies on subaltern groups have predominately focused on the epistemic dimension of the 'contribution problem', thus leaving little space to discuss this aspect of the 'subaltern question' as a social practice – particularly, as a collaborative practice between intellectuals and subalterns. As such, these two sociological debates tend to reiterate an 'epistemic approach' to the 'subaltern question'. This discussion introduces the problem of the 'collaborative turn' in the two debates analysed in this chapter.

8.1 The circulation of postcolonial understandings of the ‘subaltern question’ in the social sciences

Historically speaking, the social sciences have been resistant to postcolonial interventions – to the point that postcolonial theories started influencing sociology approximatively only after the late 2000s. As scholars have argued, there have been few opportunities of cross-fertilisation between these two fields (Bhambra 2007b; 2014a: 119-120; Go 2013a: 25-28, 38-40). This Section will illustrate one of these ‘few opportunities’. In particular it will discuss the extent to which postcolonial understandings of the ‘subaltern question’ can affect (or have affected) on the one hand the theoretical approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies; and on the other the context-specific research on subaltern groups.

The development of global sociology represents

as a way in which sociology can redress a previous neglect of those represented as “other” in its construction of modernity pointing toward a rejuvenation of sociology that is adequate for this new global age. (Bhambra 2013: 296)

Different theoretical approaches have sought to contribute to this aim, e.g. ‘Southern theory’, ‘epistemologies of the South/ecologies of knowledge’, ‘connected sociologies’, ‘indigenous sociologies’, ‘subaltern sociologies’, ‘decolonial approaches’, etc. (Go 2013a: 28 note 4, 38-40; 2016a: 2, 2-3 note 2). Significantly, these approaches are

united around a critique of the parochial “Northern” or “Eurocentric” character of conventional sociology, and an injunction to transcend it. [They] therefore [...] seek[s] to harvest knowledges from the Global South and thereby cultivate alternative sociologies that can be then articulated together. (Go 2016a: 2, my parentheses)

This call to ‘provincialise sociology’ (Holmwood 2009) is one way of putting forward new sociologies that challenge the epistemological inequalities between different parts of the world, thereby (re)constructing social theories of ‘the modern’ and ‘the global’. The recognition of non-Western historical experiences, practices, imaginaries and theories as legitimate sources of contribution is central here (see also Alatas 2010: 37; Bhambra 2007a: 146; 2013: 300, 308-309; Bhambra and Santos 2017: 4; Burawoy 2010: 64; Connell 2007: 227; 2010: 43-49; Go 2013b: 25; 2016a: 1, 6-7; 2016b: 143-184; Patel 2014: 606-610; Roy and Nilsen 2016: 227-228; Santos 2014: 188-211; Sztompka 2010: 27).

The different approaches in global sociologies contemplate, are inspired by or re-articulate in more complex frameworks one specific postcolonial assumption: a sensitivity “to the voice of non-Western others” (Bhambra 2010: 34). Correspondingly these ‘other voices/perspectives’ are included within their research agenda (see also Bhambra 2010: 34-36, 43; 2013: 310; Burawoy 2008b: 443; Connell 2007: 214; Go 2013b: 10-14; Patel 2010: 5, 16; Santos 2014: 188-191, 199-202; 2018: 134-136, 174-176; Savransky 2017: 13). In this way, these voices/perspectives are used to ‘provincialise’ sociology, and thus to ‘provincialise’ the sociological imagination¹³³ that underpins social theories and theories of sociology. This represents one way of understanding the ‘postcolonial legacy’ in global sociologies, which can therefore be construed as ‘global and Postcolonial sociologies’.

However, to what extent can these ‘others’ be understood as ‘subaltern’? What is striking in these different approaches is that the ‘subaltern question’ is often assumed without sustained and explicit discussion. Moreover, it resonates with (or is directly or indirectly influenced by) postcolonial understandings of subalternity. For example, the meaning of the word ‘subaltern’, for example in relation to ‘subaltern groups’, is often left implicit or characterized by little or no socio-historical specificity (e.g. Burawoy 2008a: 352, 355; 2008b: 440; Glenn 2007: 214, 217, 222-223; Go 2016a: 2, 5, 11; Habib 2008: 390; Hill Collins 2013: 140; Sorokin 2018: 22; von Holdt 2014: 191-192). This approach resonates with one widespread postcolonial interpretation of Spivak’s formulation of the ‘subaltern question’, which understands subalternity as a generalised condition of oppression. This resonance can be generalized to other understandings of subalternity, for example the idea of subalternity as a perspective on hierarchical relations. These meanings have often been assumed without further clarifications, and resonate or appear to be inspired by postcolonial (and Spivakian) perspectives on the issue (e.g. Burawoy 2007 [2005]: 46-47; 2008b: 443; Connell 2007: viii-ix, 222; Glenn 2007: 220, 222, 225-226; Patel 2010: 14, 16; Santos 2014: 33, 46, 56, 125, 134-135; Zussman and Misra 2007: 18).

Nevertheless, this lack of explicit discussion on subalternity has not resulted in a complete absence of discussions. For example, some scholars have sought to bring postcolonial understandings of subalternity to the fore in global sociologies.

Can the “subaltern speak?” Can the subaltern be represented? If so, what does that do to our conventional narratives? If not, by what conceptual or textual means [...] might we capture the traces of agency? [...] Here sociology has something to learn. (Go 2013b: 12)

More generally, Spivak's reflections on the ‘subaltern question’, particularly those that derive from or are directly related to “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a), are sometimes mentioned, reworked within broader arguments or implicitly referenced as conceptual assumptions (e.g. Back 2009; Bhabha 2014a: 126-128; 2016: 961; Connell 2014: 215-216; Glenn 2007; Go 2013b: 10-14; 2016b: 93-94, 159-162; Santos 2018: 178-179; Sitas 2006: 358-362, 370). Whereas, notably, there are only a few scattered references to her later work (e.g. Pradella 2017: 147, 149; Santos 2014: 125 note 17; Santos, Nunes and Meneses 2007: xxi, lx note 4; Sitas 2006: 358)¹³⁴, and even less to Gramsci's observations on subalternity (e.g. Martinelli 2008; Santos 2014: 213, 215-217, 232; Raman 2017: 103)¹³⁵.

In this way, approaches to global and Postcolonial sociologies have deployed the ‘subaltern question’ in ways that are at times directly or indirectly inspired by Spivak's early approach to subalternity – or that, at least, resonate with it. The ‘subaltern question’ thus lies at the intersection between these debates and the broader circulation of Spivak's work in the Postcolonial field. Although this is not a major overlap from a historical point of view, it opens up the conceptual and political space to explore the connections between these two circuits. This in turn justifies a specific way of reading the relation between the ‘subaltern question’ and different approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies.

The inclusion of other voices/perspectives in global and Postcolonial sociologies can be interpreted in the light of Spivak's early understanding of the ‘subaltern question’ – particularly, the ‘epistemic vector’ of her explanatory matrix of subalternity. From this standpoint, subalternity and thus ‘subaltern voices/perspectives’ can be understood as one of the (implicit) textual effects that organise hegemonic narratives. This

interpretation is evident in Santos' contention that "subaltern social groups [...] are the victims of abyssal exclusions" (Santos 2018: 150):

[m]odern Western thinking is an abyssal thinking. It consists of a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible ones being the foundations of the visible ones. The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into [...] the realm of "this side of the line" and the realm of "the other side of the line". [...] [P]opular, lay, plebeian, peasant or indigenous knowledges [are] on the other side of the line. (Santos 2014: 118-119, my parenthesis)

This also resonates with one specific aspect of Spivak's understanding of the 'old' subalternity: the exclusion of the subaltern from the hegemonic discourses – sociology included (see also Back 2009; Bhabra 2007a: 25-33; 2014a: 4, 128; Go 2016a: 20-23; 2016b: 143-184; Patel 2010: 3, 5; Santos 2014: 71-72, 118-135; 188-211; Sitas 2006: 358, 361-363; Zavala Pelayo 2015: 549).

Unlike the debates in global and Postcolonial sociologies, other debates in the social sciences have explicitly discussed the 'subaltern question' and its postcolonial understandings¹³⁶, and have contributed to its re-articulation. These debates have focused on the actions, practices agency and (political) cultures of specific subaltern groups (Adivasis, lower castes, Dalits, sexual minorities, etc.), who present distinctive socio-historical features and are located within specific socio-historical contexts – predominantly, India. The range of these debates is very wide, spanning from the politics (Sa. Dasgupta 2017; Nilsen 2017; Nilsen and Roy 2015), resistance (Chandra 2015a; M. Desai 2015; Nilsen 2016, 2017; I. Roy 2015; S. Roy 2015) and subjectivity (Kumar 2013) of these groups, to their religious practices (A. Desai 2017; Shah 2014; Sundar 2015) and the political complexities and ambiguities of their daily life (Shah 2017a; 2019).

Significantly, the socio-historical use of the word 'subaltern' represents only one way in which these context-specific research has engaged with the 'subaltern question'. In particular, these studies have critically discussed the paradigms of subalternity developed in *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial studies – particularly, Spivak's work. These critical discussions are then included within interpretative frameworks of the 'subaltern question', which rethink and extend the concept of subalternity, so that it can be used to analyse contemporary case studies. In particular, the perspectives developed in these contributions

provide hard-hitting critiques of the underlying assumptions of Subaltern Studies-inspired approaches to subaltern politics: the presumption of purity and autonomy, the bifurcation of [...] elite and subaltern domains, the absence of (elite) mediation, and the unrepresentability of the subaltern. (Nilsen and Roy 2015: 21, see also Nilsen 2017)

These contributions thus contest one specific aspect of the ‘rhythm of thought’ of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies*: the essentialist understanding of subaltern autonomy or, the idea of a pure alterity of the politics of the people vis-a-vis the politics of the elite. Against (a particular interpretation of) Spivak’s early work – particularly, her ‘epistemic approach’ to subalternity – they contest the absolute exteriority of subalternity from the hegemonic/dominant formations: the (un-representable) subaltern-as-difference (Nilsen and Roy 2015: 10-11, 15-16).

This critique of the separation/exteriority between subaltern and elite politics is never formulated in abstract terms. Rather, it is always used in relation to the specific focus of each study, and is grounded on the insights generated from concrete analyses and interactions with subaltern groups. The critique of subaltern autonomy questions the autonomy of subaltern political practices and political projects, subaltern religious forms and the pure and undivided alterity of subaltern subjectivities. These contributions have sought to highlight “the mutual imbrication of subaltern politics and [...] the state” (Nilsen 2015: 38) – particularly, the ambiguities and ambivalences as well as the constraints and opportunities that these imbrications generate (Chandra 2015a: 564-565; Nilsen 2015: 36, 50-52). This questions the dichotomy between the pure assimilation and the pure resistance of subaltern politics. As such, these contributions emphasise subaltern negotiations with and within the dominant structures (I. Roy 2015: 642-643) as well as the ways in which “subaltern resistance is conditioned and mediated by hegemonic processes” (M. Desai 2015: 55).

The analysis of the ways in which hegemonic values penetrate in the subaltern domain in turn challenges the idea of an undivided alterity of subaltern subjectivities, with these subjectivities rather discussed in terms of their internal social articulation (Sa. Dasgupta 2017: 113-116; Shah 2017a: 271-272, 276-277). This idea of the ‘hegemonic mediation’ also has an impact on the analysis of subaltern religious forms, which are not conceived “as distinct and autonomous from the larger religious institutions” (Sundar 2015: 127). More generally these studies have observed that the use of

religious idioms in subaltern mobilisations does not render them “outsiders of the secular politics of the elite” (ibid.). Moreover, although religious forms represent important political expressions of subaltern groups (Shah 2014), they are not necessarily revolutionary – and may bring about the division and internal articulation of subaltern subjectivities (A. Desai 2017: 254-256).

8.2 How can the Subaltern contribute to Social and Sociological Theory? Introducing the epistemic perspective and the social practice

The debates discussed in Section 1 have reworked a specific postcolonial understanding of subalternity which resonates with Spivak’s ‘epistemic approach’ to the ‘subaltern question’ – that is, the idea of subalternity as located outside of hegemonic structures/formations. On the one hand, approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies argue that including the ‘others’, who have hitherto been outside/excluded from hegemonic accounts, represents a step towards the (re)construction of social theories and theories of sociology. On the other hand, the context-specific analyses have grounded their critique of subalternity as external to the hegemonic formations on insights generated by concrete interactions with subaltern groups. From this perspective, they have used this critique to develop heuristic tools for social research.

Both debates have put forward new social theories and ideas of sociology by theoretically or practically moving beyond the idea of subalternity as external/excluded from the hegemonic discourses and formation. This has been achieved either on the basis of insights generated from concrete interactions with subaltern groups or simply by ‘being sensitive to subaltern voices’. In this respect, the two debates point to the more general question implicit in the transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’, particularly in Gramsci and Spivak’s work: the integration between subaltern and hegemonic knowledges. In the context of the two debates discussed in this chapter, this aspect of the ‘subaltern question’ can be re-formulated as the ‘integration of subaltern contributions into social/sociological theory¹³⁷’, the ‘contribution problem’

or the problem of 'the subaltern contribution'. Or, How can the Subaltern contribute to Social and Sociological Theory? This issue is central to bringing the 'subaltern question' to the fore in these two debates. As such, understanding them in terms of the epistemic or social-practical aspects of the 'contribution problem' presents an opportunity to discuss these two debates from different points of view, to assess the limits (and potentialities) of their use of subalternity. In particular, this chapter demonstrates that they tend to reiterate an 'epistemic approach' to the 'subaltern question', even though they have sought to move beyond an idea of subalternity which resonates with this 'epistemic approach'.

As will become clear in Section 3, when the 'contribution problem' is approached as an epistemic issue, subalternity is used as a point of observation/perspective which may or may not refer to subaltern groups. This perspective generates specific interpretative frameworks that contribute to (re)constructing social theories and new sociologies: social theories and new sociologies are (re)constructed *through* subaltern perspectives. In this respect, the integration of subaltern contributions into social/sociological theory remains a theoretical exercise. This is performed by an author-function – that is, a function in the text that is informed by extra-textual relations (social, positional, etc.) which constitute the author as the object of political interpretation (Foucault 1998 [1969]). This author-function combines hegemonic and (*derivative*¹³⁸) subaltern materials within a narrative. In this way, (re)constructed social theories or new sociologies are functions of the text. Or, the epistemic act of coming up with social theories or new sociologies can be understood as the result of rhetorical, conceptual and epistemological strategies, which configure a strictly-speaking literary creation.

Conversely, when the 'contribution problem' is understood as a social practice, subalternity points to subaltern groups as social agents who can actively contribute to the formulation of social and sociological theories. These theories are (re)constructed *with* subaltern groups, within historically determined social contexts and on the basis of subaltern forms of knowledge. Sociologists and subaltern groups are thus involved in concrete social practices that result in the integration of subaltern knowledges within social and sociological theories. As anticipated in the Introduction, Keim's (2014: 104-106) model for the circulation of ideas conceptualises the ways in which academic and

extra-academic actors 'do' social and sociological theory through exchanging of knowledge: the 'negotiations between theory and practice'¹³⁹. In this type of circulation

the issues at stake are different from purely academic concerns. Negotiating theory and practice is animated 'by the pragmatic need to get things' done. [...] What is negotiated here is the practical, social, economic or political relevance of social science production on the one hand, and *the implications of social experience on the ground for theorizing on the other*. (Keim 2014: 104-105, my emphases)

These negotiations are animated by different interests (i.e. academic or pragmatic) and different logics (i.e. testing theories or assessing their social relevance). Moreover, they take place across institutional boundaries (95), thus pointing to structural differentials of cultural power that are not only an obstacle to research, but also an opportunity: "[e]ngaging in dialogue with extra-academic actors [...] and taking them, their lived experience and knowledge seriously, helped to develop a constructive, creative, experiential and solution-oriented attitude" (105-106). As such, the (re)construction of social theories and new sociologies *with* subaltern groups can be understood as taking place within sociologically complex spaces – or, within social processes of knowledge production and circulation. The agency of the actors involved in these social practices is encapsulated within contexts informed by structural constraints and enabling factors.

Why is the focus on doing social/sociological theory *with* subaltern groups important? Firstly, as will become clearer in the following Sections, a significant number of studies and approaches analysed in this chapter have not sufficiently addressed this issue. Bringing this issue to the fore in the debates analysed in this chapter will be useful to assess the limits of their approaches to subalternity. Secondly, scholars who have contributed to these debates have (especially recently) emphasised the 'engagement question' (e.g. Burawoy 2008a: 355; 2008b: 443; Connell 2018: 403; Keim 2014: 105-106; 2016: 3-4; Lozano 2018: 104-106; Nilsen 2016: 282-283; Rooke 2016; Roy and Nilsen 2016: 231; Sorokin 2016: 48-50; 2018: 24; Wieviorka 2008: 385-388). That is, they have emphasised the need for concrete engagement between sociologists and 'the public': "global sociology should go more normative, more public, and accompany the formidable social movements we witness today" (Hanafi 2020: 15). This thesis will discuss this need in terms of the strategies (i.e. a 'subaltern theoretical direction') that can guide the engagement of intellectuals with a '*subaltern* public', particularly in the

light of a political question that Chapter 1 has considered central in this relation: the schism between leaders and led. As such, this thesis contributes to discuss the practical aspects of subalternity in social research, which have been lost in the circulation of the 'subaltern question'.

8.3 The epistemic perspective

The debates in global and Postcolonial sociologies have addressed the 'subaltern contribution' at an epistemic level: subalternity stands for a perspective/standpoint (e.g. Bhambra 2007a: 30-31; 2010: 36; 2013: 310; 2014a: 4; Go 2016a: 2-3, 20-23; 2016b: 143-184; 2016c: 4; Patel 2010: 12; Santos 2014: 188-189; Sitas 2006: 358-359) and thus, literally, for a technique of representation. Subalternity represents a point of observation that generates interpretative frameworks on social phenomena and that is grounded on multiple 'voices'. How is this perspective formulated?

As illustrated, the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies are sensitive to 'non-Western voices', attempting to undo their erasure in hegemonic narratives. This undoing "requires the kind of research undertaken by Subaltern Studies, documenting the experience of the oppressed" (Connell 2007: 214) and, more generally, working for the emergence of their previously neglected imaginaries, (bits of) theories, knowledges, practices, and so on (e.g. Alatas 2014: 252; Bhambra 2007a: 22, 30-31, 58, 146-147, 153, 155; Bhambra and Santos 2017: 4-6; Burawoy 2007 [2005]: 46-47; 2008b: 443; Connell 2007: viii-ix, 213-215; 2015: 10; Go 2013b: 12-14; Omobowale and Akanle 2017: 47-49; Patel 2010: 5, 12, 16; Santos 2014: 188-211; 2018: 9-12; Savransky 2017: 13, 22-23; Sitas 2006: 358-359). These 'voices' can be considered subaltern not necessarily because they are the expression of specific subaltern groups – some research does not even refer to these groups (e.g. Alatas 2014: 252; Burawoy 2007 [2005]: 46-47; 2008b: 443). These 'voices' are subaltern because they can be interpreted as hierarchically subordinate to and/or excluded from the hegemonic formations and are thus subjected to epistemic violence. As such these experiences, histories, knowledges and practices work as the implicit code that regulates the

hegemonic representations and interpretations of the modern, the global and sociology itself.

This points to the epistemic understanding of the ‘contribution problem’. In line with the widespread postcolonial position on the ‘subaltern question’¹⁴⁰, these now emerging ‘subaltern’ voices are deployed for a specific aim: the formulation of a perspective that, along with other perspectives, contributes towards expanding the sociological imagination and thus towards (re)constructing new social theories and new sociologies (e.g. Bhabra 2014a: 1-6, 156; Go 2016b: 181-184; Santos 2014: 175, 181; 2018: 126-129, 147-150). The inclusion of subaltern voices in the making of global and Postcolonial sociologies affects the imaginative processes through which sociology has understood modernity, the global and the discipline itself. The scholars in these debates have thus explicitly deployed the (implicit) code that regulates hegemonic representations to (re)construct social theories and put forward new ideas of sociology.

For example, scholars have questioned standard social theories that have understood the ‘Nation State’ or the ‘Industrial Revolution’ as phenomena endogenous to Europe – that is, as phenomena that had little or no connection with colonial history, and that did not recognise “the historical processes of dispossession, enslavement, appropriation and extraction as central to the emergence of the modern world” (Bhabra and Santos 2017: 4). Similarly, they have criticised the extent to which theoretical paradigms formulated by a ‘centre’ are used to explain social phenomena in the ‘peripheries’. That is, they have questioned

the tendency to take the categories, concepts, and theories developed and deployed of and for the specificities of Anglo-European modernity and uncritically apply them everywhere. [...] The tendency [...] to transpose modernization theory, modelled after the so-called “development” of metropolises, to other societies is a prime example. (Go 2016a: 4-5)

Therefore, the explicit thematisation of ‘subaltern’ voices is integral to understanding firstly what sociology can do vis-a-vis “non-scientific, popular, vernacular knowledge, with a view to building [...] new ‘ecologies of knowledges’” (Bhabra and Santos 2017: 4-5). And secondly, what sociology can be. This is expressed either in terms of a ‘social science on a world scale’ contesting “the exclusion of the social knowledge produced in the periphery” (Connell 2015: 10) and thus the epistemological imbalances between

metropole and periphery (Connell 2007: xi-xii; 103-106; 212-232). Or, it is expressed in terms of a 'global sociology from below', which results from the circulation of knowledge 'from below' among different and geographically located forms of sociology (Burawoy 2007 [2005]: 44-47; 2010: 64).

The situation is relatively similar for the context-specific analyses of subaltern groups. As illustrated, these studies are interested in the actions, practices, agency and (political) cultures of socio-historically located subordinated groups. The observation and analysis of these actions, practices, agency and (political) cultures contribute to more general discussions that represent the specific scope of each study, i.e. the imbrications between subaltern politics and the state, a different conceptualisation of subaltern resistance, etc. Therefore, the 'contribution problem' is (preponderantly¹⁴¹) addressed at the epistemic level: the life of subaltern groups is analysed to produce heuristic insights that contribute to the development of social theories. As anticipated in Section 1, these insights criticise the understanding of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial studies, which is re-articulated and applied to analyse contemporary social phenomena related to the life of subaltern groups. At the same time, the extent of the 'subaltern contribution' is more general and more specific than this.

It is more general because some of these context-specific analyses have opened up the way to new fields of research – i.e. Adivasi Studies (Bates and Shah 2017; Chandra 2015b). And it is more specific, because these analyses have sought to re-conceptualise the politics of specific subaltern groups – for example, in the context of contemporary India (Nilsen 2015) or during the Raj (Sa. Dasgupta 2017). Significant attention has been paid to the practices of resistance among these groups (Chandra 2015a; I. Roy 2015) – particularly their mobilizations around sexual rights (S. Roy 2015) and developmental issues (Nilsen 2016; M. Desai 2015), or the expressions of political life connected with particular forms of religiosity (A. Desai 2017; Shah 2014; Sundar 2015). Moreover, scholars have explored the specific subjectivities of subaltern groups (Kumar 2013). Furthermore, they have discussed the politics of these groups in relation to the State power and its institutions (Chandra 2015; Nilsen 2015), or their daily life in the context of revolutionary struggles for social change (Shah 2017a; 2019).

These context-specific analyses have thus (implicitly) deployed a subaltern perspective that is made of specific 'subaltern voices': the experiences, practices and (political) cultures of specific subaltern groups. This perspective in turn contributes to generate interpretations that are used to re-think not only social theories but also sociology itself – to the extent that some of these analyses have contributed to the development of global and Postcolonial sociologies. In this way, the context-specific research on subaltern groups is functional to the expansion of the sociological imagination.

Therefore the two strands of debates discussed in this Section have different focuses – respectively, the critique of Eurocentric sociological knowledge and the analysis of the (political) life of subaltern groups. Nevertheless, they are quite similar, because they have reiterated an epistemic use of the 'subaltern question'. In particular they have an epistemic approach to the 'contribution problem': 'subaltern' indicates more a perspective for social/sociological theories than a social agent who can actively contribute to the formulation of these theories. By discussing the limits of this approach, it will thus be possible to evaluate these debates more clearly.

8.3.1 The limits of the epistemic perspective

Generally speaking, the epistemic perspective on the 'contribution problem' works at a level of abstraction where its understanding as a social practice is almost transparent. In other words, the epistemic perspective on the 'contribution problem' does not address the complexities related to the concrete organisational aspects of this problem. In this respect, (re)constructing social theories and new sociologies either *through* subaltern perspectives or *with* subaltern groups are two significantly different endeavours.

As anticipated, when the 'contribution problem' is addressed at an epistemic level, the integration of subaltern contributions within social/sociological theory is a theoretical exercise performed by an author, which results in a fictional product that draws from a subaltern perspective. Whereas, when the 'contribution problem' is understood as a social practice, the integration is the result of 'negotiations between theory and

practice'. That is, it results from complex negotiations between intellectuals and subalterns as social agents located within socio-historical contexts. The epistemic act of coming up with social theories or new sociologies can be illustrated in terms of an integration that does not account for the concrete determinations of these negotiations – i.e. institutional boundaries, differences in cultural power among social agents, and so on. In fact, the epistemological organisation of these social theories and new sociologies is to some extent incommensurable with the ways in which they are socially organised. This is because these social theories and new sociologies can be considered as *socially embedded* epistemes, or 'knowledge formations', more than 'simple' epistemes. As Connell (2018: 404-405, my emphasis) has observed,

[a] knowledge formation is not just an episteme. *It is a socially embedded and practiced episteme*, involving the labor through which knowledge is brought into being, sustained, developed, and communicated. This includes practices of data-gathering, interpretation [...]; organizations like schools, madrassas, and universities; institutions like examinations, disciplines, journals, and (on the toxic side) league tables. Above all, *it involves a workforce*.

This is to say that the context of discovery¹⁴² of a theory cannot be reduced to its formal/epistemological organisation, and that the latter does not necessarily explain the former. Therefore, the social practices that bring about the 'subaltern contribution' exceed the epistemic act and, conversely, the narration of the epistemic act is never exhaustive of the (narration of) these social practices. The epistemic understanding of the 'contribution problem' leaves little space to explain and explore the ways in which intellectuals and subalterns as social agents actually do social theory or (re)construct new sociologies. This epistemic approach to the 'contribution problem' is thus coherent with the 'methodological reduction' of Q25, because it overlooks those practical aspects of the 'subaltern question' that were important to the early phases of its circulation.

However, the minimal space left for these practical discussions has not resulted in complete lack of discussion. The approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies have sought to address – or have at least gestured towards – some aspects related to the 'contribution problem' as a social practice: they have gestured towards the role that subaltern groups might play in the social processes where social theories and new sociologies are (re)constructed. In this respect, these new theories and sociologies are constructed by geographically and/or hierarchically located groups: social scientists

from the metropole and the periphery, subaltern/non-academic researchers, (subaltern) activists, subaltern groups and so on (e.g. Arjomand 2008: 547-549; Bhabra 2007a: 147-148; Burawoy 2008a: 355, 357; 2008b: 437, 443; Connell 2007: 213-232; Glenn 2007: 226-228; Santos 2010; 2014: 203 note 16; 231-232; 2018: 146-147, 187-191, 193-197; Wieviorka 2008: 381-382; 386-388). The interactions between 'epistemic communities' – that is, more or less coherent groups of people who produce (sociological) knowledge (Holmwood 2000: 47-48; Stanley 2000: 63-65) – combine hegemonic and non-hegemonic knowledges.

Nevertheless, these contributions lack 'strategic imagination': they leave little space to discuss the 'engagement question'. Therefore they do not address the strategies that understand and guide the negotiations between intellectuals and subalterns underpinning the (re)construction of social theories and new sociologies. The 'subaltern question' has lost track of its practical aspects, again. For example, Patricia Hill Collins (2013: 145, my parenthesis) has considered Connell's 'Southern Theory' approach no more than

a Gentlemen's agreement to engage in friendly conversations [...]. I don't see how [these] debates [...] have much to say about power relations that shape their own practices. [...] Connell certainly is no rookie when it comes to power relations, yet has chosen not to focus on these contested power relations.

In this way, in *Southern Theory* (2007) and other works (e.g. Glenn 2007: 226-228; Santos 2018: 146-147; 187-191, 193-197; Sorokin 2016: 52-54) the integration between subaltern and hegemonic knowledges is assumed without accounting for the power relations and political practices that characterise the negotiations between intellectuals and subalterns, and thus the social aspects of the 'contribution problem'.

More generally, this lack of 'strategic imagination' that overlooks the practical aspects of the 'subaltern question' is illustrated by the ways in which the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies have conceptualised the process of integration between subaltern and hegemonic knowledges. A substantial variety of (epistemic) strategies¹⁴³ can bring about this integration, and all of them are informed by the pure willingness of the epistemic communities – in particular communities of sociologists. As with the research agenda of global and Postcolonial sociologies, these strategies have highlighted the importance of including subaltern perspectives. Also, they have

considered different forms of knowledge as mutually intelligible, and they have stressed the need to be open towards knowledges coming from other – i.e. subaltern – epistemic communities. Overall, these strategies produce a situation of epistemic plurality – or better, a non-relativist co-existence of epistemes – where different knowledges are able to ‘dialogue’ on an equal epistemological footing. The epistemic strategy envisioned by Santos’ ‘ecologies of knowledge’ is particularly illustrative here (see also Bhambra 2007a: 31; Connell 2010: 49; Go 2016a: 22; Rehbein 2014: 217, 219). He has argued that

[t]he ecology of knowledges [...] consists of granting “equality of opportunity” to the different kinds of [scientific/non-scientific] knowledge involved in ever broader epistemological arguments with a view to maximizing their respective contributions toward building “another possible world” [...]. The point is not to ascribe the same validity to every kind of knowledge but rather to allow for a pragmatic discussion among alternative, valid criteria without immediately disqualifying whatever does not fit the epistemological canon of modern science. (Santos 2014: 190)

This dissertation holds that this openness and willingness to dialogue with other forms of knowledge is fundamental and necessary. However the overarching focus on this question obfuscates the role that political willingness plays in the pursuing of political objectives. This in turn raises the need to address the ‘contribution problem’ beyond the epistemic perspective¹⁴⁴, thus discussing the practical aspects of the ‘subaltern question’.

Politically speaking, the willingness of epistemic communities promotes dialogues among different knowledges. This is to open up emancipatory spaces in terms of not only social justice, but also epistemic justice – that is, a space where

knowledge systems of [...] [subaltern] communities (including their fault-lines) are resources that [...] hold epistemic authority when it comes to identifying what counts as a problem, what constitutes the problem and what are the means of redress. (Shilliam 2016: 255, my parenthesis)

Scholars have clearly stated that there is “no global social justice without global cognitive [epistemic] justice” (Santos 2014: viii, my parenthesis, see also Bhambra 2007a: 145; 2014a: 156; Bhambra and Santos 2017: 4, 9; Connell 2014: 218). They have also recognised that the scope of social justice is wider than epistemic justice – e.g. opposing the ‘third wave marketization’ or defending labour and social rights (Burawoy 2008a: 356-358).

However, at question is the achievement of epistemic justice *with* (rather than *for*) subaltern groups as well as the articulation of epistemic and social justice. Can epistemic justice result from a collective endeavour *with* subaltern groups, rather than being the intellectuals' 'gift'? How does epistemic justice foster social justice? This articulation requires forms of strategic organisation that understand the social contexts where epistemic justice can be collectively achieved, in order to conceptualise an epistemic justice that effectively leads to social justice. In particular, this articulation requires a 'strategic imagination' about social negotiations that is not yet evident in epistemic strategies informed by a 'pure political willingness'. The Conclusion of this work will put forward an argument for a 'subaltern theoretical direction'. This offers an example of 'strategic imagination' that addresses the practical aspects of using subalternity in social research by synthesizing epistemic and social justice within a collective political and methodological strategy.

The question of the strategic imagination of social negotiations in turn points to the need for discussing the 'contribution problem' beyond the epistemic perspective. Generally speaking, approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies have a strong epistemological focus¹⁴⁵: the strategies that integrate subaltern and hegemonic knowledges are very often pitched (only) at an epistemic level, conceiving dialogues as taking place within epistemically rich, yet sociologically simple spaces. In this way, these approaches develop arguments around 'dialogues on an equal epistemological footing' that downplay structural/organisational constraints and enabling factors while emphasising the importance of political willingness. As such, the 'dialogues between subaltern/hegemonic knowledges' emphasise agency over structural and organisational issues¹⁴⁶.

To address these structural and organisational issues, the 'contribution problem' must be discussed *as a social practice*, thus addressing the practical aspects of the 'subaltern question'. It is thus necessary to shift the focus from 'dialogues on an equal epistemological footing' to the power relations and political practices that inform these dialogues. As Hill Collins (2013: 144-145) has argued

the next step in drafting global social theory will be far more difficult than creating space for a dialogue. [...] The abstractions of social theory can be a wonderful space

to hide from the messy political practices that replicate social inequalities, precisely because theory ostensibly is about what theorists think and not what we do.

As anticipated, this different focus considers the (re)construction of social theories and new sociologies within sociologically complex spaces – that is, within the context of social processes of knowledge production and knowledge circulation. As will become clear in the Conclusion of this work, agency will be considered as encapsulated by a context. This not only sheds light on the reason why the ‘voices’ included in global and Postcolonial sociologies are *derivatively* subaltern. But also, it brings epistemic plurality to a point of crisis through discussing the ‘contribution problem’ as a social practice. While epistemic plurality is important and indeed necessary, it is not sufficient. The challenge is to organise horizontal intellectual work as a practice in a socio-culturally stratified context.

In this respect, some of the context-specific analyses are quite similar to the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies, at least because they dedicate minimal space to analyse the social aspects of the ‘contribution problem’, thus losing track of the practical aspects of the ‘subaltern question’. This is particularly surprising, given that within these analyses the epistemic understanding of the ‘contribution problem’ is related to the social practices that produce ‘subaltern contributions’. In fact, these analyses build social theories upon subaltern perspectives, which in turn result from ‘negotiations of theory and practice’. For example, the critique of the paradigms of subalternity is explicitly based on the observations and insights from fieldwork and interviews with subaltern groups. Manali Desai’s observations are quite illustrative here (see also A. Desai 2017: 250; I. Roy 2015: 644; S. Roy 2015: 150; Sundar 2015: 130-131). She has argued that

drawing on in-depth interviews with dalit and other Backward Classes (OBC) informal workers, it [Desai’s contribution] shows how the category ‘subaltern’ is overridden by so many different political claims that any recovery of political authenticity and homogeneous subject formation as implied in the original Subaltern Studies project is rendered impossible. (M. Desai 2015: 55, my parenthesis)

Nevertheless the critique and re-articulation of these paradigms of subalternity is not produced within the fieldwork, nor during the negotiations ‘on the ground’ with subaltern groups. Rather, the author re-elaborates the material from the fieldwork and the interviews with subaltern groups in the ethnography – or, more generally, in a piece of social research. The re-articulation of subalternity is produced in light of this re-

elaboration, and as a form of writing. That is, it is the product of the text, and of the author-function.

As with the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies, these context-specific analyses do social theory *through* subaltern standpoints, though not directly *with* subalterns as social agents. Moreover, they gesture towards – although do not problematise – the interactions between the epistemic and social aspects of the ‘contribution problem’. Therefore, these analyses have left little (or no) space for explaining and exploring the ways in which intellectuals and subalterns do social theory and create new sociologies. Additionally, unlike the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies, they do not provide insight into the epistemic dimension of the ‘contribution problem’ – i.e. the epistemic strategies that integrate ‘subaltern voices’ within social theories. In this way, these context-specific analyses almost completely overlook the ‘contribution problem’.

8.4 Forms of transition between the epistemic perspective and the social practice

The context-specific analyses discussed in Section 3.1 are not exhaustive of the wider debate around the production of social research on subaltern groups. Other context-specific analyses have focused on the ‘contribution problem’ as a social practice – or, at least, on some aspects that are central to this dimension. They have emphasised the act of doing social theory through subaltern perspectives. Moreover, they have explicitly discussed some complexities raised by doing social theory within a subaltern environment, although not necessarily with subaltern groups as social agents. In this way, these analyses address ‘forms of transition’ between the epistemic and social dimension of the ‘contribution problem’, whereby some practical aspects of the ‘subaltern question’ are made explicit again.

Generally speaking, these other analyses are aware of the relevance of the ‘contribution problem’ as a social practice. For example, the problem of creating global sociologies

does not come in the form of conceptual templates rather as a series of engagements with different social phenomena that enable us to reflect on what genuinely globalized sociological engagement would look like. [...] [W]e [e.g. Nilsen 2016; Roy 2016] approach global sociology not as a theoretical fact but as a practice. (Roy and Nilsen 2016: 228, my parenthesis)

In this way, according to these contributions the expansion of the sociological imagination is not (only) a theoretical exercise. Rather, it is explicitly related to social practices. The question is how to understand the ways in which these social practices have been approached. These contributions discuss the challenge of doing social theory or (re)constructing new sociologies within subaltern environments – i.e. in the context of subaltern mobilizations.

For example, in Alpa Shah's research, the social theories that critique paradigms of subalternity are produced through a subaltern perspective. Moreover, her research raises the question of how these theoretical products influence the scholar researching within the subaltern environment. In this respect, Shah (2010: 27-28; 2017b) has offered some reflections on the methodological underpinnings of her research about Adivasi communities living in Jharkhand, East India, in the areas of the Naxalite guerrillas (e.g. Shah 2014; 2019). She discusses the benefits of doing social theory within and out of fieldwork, particularly emphasising "participant observation [...] [as] a potentially revolutionary praxis" (Shah 2017b: 46). In her perspective, participant observation is useful for developing a sort of 'theoretical consciousness' – that is, a comprehensive vision of the social and political situation in which the fieldwork takes place. In particular, this vision grasps the contradictions and realities of subaltern political mobilisations (Shah 2017b: 51, 57). Therefore, participant observation can be considered the methodological underpinning of a critical ethnography whose sociological imagination raises above a 'spontaneous' local awareness, thus developing the necessary detachment that is often lacking in activist perspectives. For example, Shah (2017b: 56, my parenthesis) has argued that

in the short run, we [as researchers] may need to suspend our moral desire to become a part of those activists whose political engagements we wish to serve—to pursue any naïve kind of militant anthropology—and to recognize that participant observation may force us to reconsider the theoretical premises of even those we morally feel we should explicitly form alliances with.

Crucially though, it is not clear to what extent this 'theoretical consciousness' feeds back into the subaltern political mobilizations. Shah's work has focused on the researcher's critical detachment, rather than emphasising the processes of 'restitution of knowledge' where the researchers' findings contribute to political discussions within the movement. In this way participant observation is 'revolutionary', but only for the researcher's perspective, not for the subaltern movement. More generally, (Shah's understanding of) participant observation works as a strategy of distinction which strengthens the separation between intellectuals and subalterns, rather than challenging it. As a consequence, the way in which intellectual and subaltern collaborate in the development of social theory is not problematised.

Other contributions, such as some of Nilsen's work (e.g. Nilsen 2015; 2016; Roy and Nilsen 2016), offer a different picture. As illustrated, his research puts forward claims about subaltern conceptions of development or about the relation between subaltern mobilisations and the state in a way that challenges the paradigms of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial studies. Moreover, these claims are based on an (implicit) subaltern perspective which is in turn grounded in fieldwork experiences. As such, his research raises the problem of how these theoretical outcomes can be reintegrated within subaltern mobilisations.

As with Shah's work, Nilsen (2016: 282-283) has argued that the knowledge and insights arising from social theories enhanced by fieldwork experiences result in something akin to a 'theoretical consciousness'. This 'theoretical consciousness', in turn, highlights the contradictions and fault lines within subaltern mobilisations. Crucially, this analysis can feed back into these mobilisations, in a way that can be relevant to them. For example,

[i]n the context of struggles over development, this means [...] to raise questions about what it entails for social movements and their oppositional projects that different groups of participants conceive of the direction and meaning of development in different ways, and what the implications are of the fact that some voices tend to prevail over others in defining what kind of alternative development a movement project should strive towards. (Nilsen 2016: 282)

Therefore, when this kind of theoretical consciousness feeds back into the discussions within subaltern movements, it raises awareness of the conflicting dynamics within the movement itself. In this way, these dynamics can be addressed openly and, in

perspective, become the object of democratic deliberations (ibid.). More generally, theoretical insights become an integral part of a political proposal for social change. In contrast to the previously discussed approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies previously, this articulation between epistemic and social justice is more organic and clear. This is because the formulation of social theories through a subaltern perspective is immediately relevant to the project of social transformation. Nilsen's research is informed by a kind of strategic imagination about social negotiations that can conceive of the connection between epistemic and social justice, thus re-emphasising the importance of a practical perspective on the 'subaltern question'.

Nevertheless, as noted, these works point to forms of transition between the epistemic and the social dimension of the 'contribution problem'. That is, they address some of the challenges of doing social theory within a subaltern environment, although they do not necessarily elaborate on doing social theory with subaltern groups as social agents. In this respect, the question of a theoretical consciousness that feeds back into subaltern movements might leave the impression of a 'psychoanalysis for social movements', which resonates with the idea of a 'sociological intervention'. As Wieviorka (2008: 387) has argued, sociological intervention

[c]onsists in creating a relationship between the sociologist and the actor studied, a relationship in which each plays their role – the researcher does not pretend to be an actor nor does the actor present himself or herself as a sociologist. Here, in the last resort, it is a question of the researcher producing a sociological argument that the actor accepts or rejects; this constitutes the test, the demonstration of the research and the relevance of its hypotheses. The more the actors studied do something with a sociological argument, which concerns them, the more they appropriate it as their own, for example to improve their analysis of past struggles, the more the sociologist has the right to consider that his or her analysis makes sense. This type of approach maintains the sociologist, throughout his or her research, in a relationship of production of analysis and knowledge with the group or the actors being studied. But at no point does the sociologist become a militant or an activist.

Shah's and Nilsen's studies resonate with the idea of a sociological intervention because they appear to deploy "a rationalist strategy of bringing the movement – or at least the research participants – to a greater level of self-knowledge" (Cox 1998). Nevertheless, unlike the idea of sociological intervention, these contributions do not (only) 'test theories against the subaltern movements'. Additionally, the researcher is *also* an activist, with their 'theoretical detachment' rendered functional to the critical self-reflexivity of the movement.

However, if the contribution of the intellectual to social theory and to subaltern movements is clear, the same cannot be said for the other side of the equation. That is, can subaltern movements produce knowledge that directly feeds back into the researcher's perspective? Can this result in social theories and sociologies that are collectively elaborated and built on the contribution of concrete subaltern groups who actively collaborate with the researchers in the production of these theories? More generally, to what extent can the subaltern be not just a 'perspective', but a social agent who can actively contribute to the formulation of social and sociological theories? In this respect, the collaboration between intellectuals and subalterns needs to be brought to the fore in these discussions, to address the 'contribution problem' as a social practice with subaltern groups, and thus to move beyond an epistemic approach to subalternity in social research.

8.5 The social practice and the collaborative turn

Scholars who are directly (or indirectly¹⁴⁷) related to the debates analysed in this chapter have addressed the 'contribution problem' as a social practice with subaltern groups, thus highlighting the problem of discussing the practical aspects of the 'subaltern question'. The actual number of these studies is relatively small compared to the amount of 'epistemic' research that has been produced in the last 15 years. Nevertheless, they have provided important observations on the challenges of 'doing' social/sociological theory with subaltern groups, within historically determined social contexts and on the basis of subaltern forms of knowledge. As illustrated, an effective way to conceptualise these social practices emerges from Keim's remarks on the 'negotiations between theory and practice' (Keim 2014: 104-106). But what about the challenges?

Generally speaking, the 'negotiations between theory and practice' that involve subaltern groups in the production of social theory have been considered particularly fruitful. As Cox and Nilsen (2007: 435) have argued, the most serious work that has produced social theories on social movements comes from "dialogues between activist

and academic theorising, typically on an interdisciplinary basis” (see also Rooke 2016: 335-336). Marxism or feminism are quite illustrative in this respect. This is because their capacity to look behind and beyond the taken-for-granted explanations of social reality is grounded on the re-elaboration of a particular wealth of social knowledge: knowledge derived from the direct experiences, struggles and perspectives of subaltern groups (e.g. Barker and Cox 2002: 8; Cox and Nilsen 2014: 5). Nevertheless, these ‘dialogues’ – and these ‘re-elaborations’ – may have some drawbacks:

[t]aken out of its original pragmatic context and turned to contemplative uses [...], this [activist] theory is rapidly recolonized and becomes a source of new, 'sexy' courses and research subjects whose purpose is to attract students, funding and status. (Barker and Cox 2002: 6-7)

According to Barker and Cox (2002: 8) the institutionalisation of activist (subaltern) knowledge may contribute to its political disempowerment: it becomes an explanatory theory of social structure, losing its character as a theory of movement organisation.

Moreover, these contributions have interpreted ‘dialogue’ in terms of *the need* for collaboration between researchers and activists – and, by extension, subaltern groups. Discussions on the participation of subaltern/extra-academic actors in the production of social/sociological theory are not new to the history of social sciences (e.g. Leyva and Speed 2008: 35-39) and social movements (e.g. Fuster Morell 2009). Significantly though, some recent debates have emphasised the need for co-producing knowledge between academic and subaltern extra-academic actors. Latin-American anthropologists and subaltern movements have widely discussed this issue (e.g. Leyva and Speed 2008; Köhler 2015; Pérez Moreno 2015; Rappaport 2008). In Europe, scholars – particularly, sociologists – have contributed to these debates (e.g. Meckesheimer 2013). It is within this intellectual environment that is possible to locate the work of scholars who have addressed the ‘contribution problem’ as a social practice with subaltern groups.

Drawing on their engagement with social movements, scholars (e.g. Cox 1998: 10; 2011: 127-128, 131; 2015: 40) have argued for a theory of social movements that is produced through participatory methods (i.e. PAR, sociological interventions, etc.). As such, a renewed attention to subaltern practices is vital. In fact

[c]ontemporary movement theorising is more collective, democratic and practice based; it seeks above all a mode of conversation between different intellectual languages rather than seeking to boost the cultural capital involved in acquiring and developing a single approach. If sociological theory is to regain greater public relevance in the context of the current wave of movements, this ability to talk between worlds is one of its most urgent needs. (Cox 2014: 962)

Therefore, 'relevant' social research needs to 'learn from the subalterns' through and in terms of their collaborative practices. In this way, sociology will be able to redress its long-lasting disciplinary closure to other forms of knowledge (967).

Lozano (2018) has interpreted this 'collaborative turn' from the perspective of public/global sociology (see also Burawoy 2007 [2005]: 52-55; Nilsen and Roy 2016: 231; Rooke 2016; Wieviorka 2008: 387). Collaboration in social research incorporates

those usually targeted as subjects of study into the joint design and implementation of the project, a logic that should operate through every step of the research process. (Lozano 2018: 103)

This implies that

the research subjects are considered as active agents of knowledge production, and their epistemic locations and knowledge practices are taken as a departure point for our projects. (105)

More generally, his argument about a collaborative praxis in public/global sociology emphasises the emancipatory potential implicit in this collaborative turn:

collaboration – understood here as knowledge co-production – enables the direct engagement with publics in and through the research process itself [...]. Thus, in order to [...] reconsider sociological practice, we need to move beyond the questions of 'knowledge for whom and for what', to address also [...]: How do we produce knowledge? Whom are we thinking and learning with? What kind of knowledges and experiences are we taking seriously? Not all sociology must be critical, collaborative and/or public; but the critiques elaborated [...] are important if we aspire to produce [...] a decolonial social science, that defends human life and human dignity [...] against market, state and epistemic fundamentalism (Lozano 2018: 106)

How to reconcile this potential for emancipation with the above-mentioned drawbacks implicit in the negotiations between theory and practice? What exactly is the emancipatory potential of the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies and of the context-specific analyses on subaltern groups? How can collaborative projects deal with the differentials in cultural power that inform negotiations between theory and practice? The Conclusion of this work will further develop the analysis presented here

in an attempt to more fully address the practical aspects of the 'subaltern question' raised by these questions. In particular, it will conceptualise the cooperative production of social/sociological theories with subalterns in the light of the 'subaltern question'. As such, it will put forward an argument about a 'subaltern theoretical direction'.

This chapter discussed the extent to which postcolonial understandings of subalternity has had an impact on current debates in the social sciences: firstly, the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies; secondly the context-specific analyses of subaltern groups that have critiqued some aspects of the 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies*. This offered the conceptual coordinates to map a further moment in the transnational circulation and re-articulation of the 'subaltern question'.

Despite different degrees of engagement with the 'subaltern question', the debates discussed in this chapter have put forward new social theories and ideas of sociology by implicitly or explicitly reworking a postcolonial understanding of subalternity that resonates with Spivak's 'epistemic approach' to the 'subaltern question': the idea of subalternity as external to hegemonic structures/formations. This has been done either on the basis of insights generated from concrete interactions with subaltern groups or simply by 'being sensitive to subaltern voices'. As such, the focus in these debates is the inclusion of subaltern contributions within social and sociological theories.

The debates thus point to a common issue – the 'contribution problem': How can the Subaltern contribute to Social and Sociological Theory? This chapter argued that this aspect of the 'subaltern question' can be discussed in terms of an epistemic perspective or as a social practice. This points to the difference between 'doing' social/sociological theory through subaltern perspectives or with subaltern groups. Significantly, this chapter evaluated these debates in the social sciences in the light of the epistemic and the social-practical approach to the 'contribution problem'. Many studies discussed in this chapter have approached the 'contribution problem' from an epistemic perspective, thus reiterating an epistemic approach to the 'subaltern question' that overlooks its practical dimension. These studies lack a strategic imagination, and they leave minimal space for exploring the construction of

social/sociological theory as a social practice. That is, they are not able to address the sociological complexity of the 'contribution problem'.

Nevertheless, other studies within these debates have sought to pay more attention to the 'contribution problem' as a social practice, thus making explicit some practical aspects of the 'subaltern question'. In this respect, this chapter discussed studies that address forms of transition between the epistemic and social understanding of the 'contribution problem'. However, these studies need to emphasise the collaboration between intellectuals and subalterns, and thus to address the 'contribution problem' as a social practice with subaltern groups, where these are social agents who can actively contribute to social and sociological theory. Following this, this chapter discussed another group of studies that have directly addressed the 'contribution problem' as a social practice with subaltern groups. These studies have pointed to the need for introducing collaborative practices into the debates analysed in this chapter.

Overall, this chapter illustrated and evaluated another moment of re-articulation in the transnational circulation of the 'subaltern question'. It discussed the 'contribution problem' in terms of a social practice, and in the light of the question of collaboration, thus preparing the ground for the argument set out in the Conclusion.

9. Conclusion. How can the Subaltern Contribute to Social and Sociological Theory? Towards a 'subaltern theoretical direction'

The Conclusion uses the idea of the 'subaltern question' to discuss the social practices whereby sociologists and subaltern groups cooperatively produce social/sociological theories. The point is to shed light on the practical aspects of subalternity in social research, and thus to address what has been lost in the current sociological debates on which the 'subaltern question' has had some impact. This chapter is structured around the questions that the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies and the context-specific analyses on subaltern groups have left unanswered. Firstly, how to reconcile the drawbacks implicit in the negotiations between theory and practice that inform these debates with the emancipatory potential of these debates? Secondly, what exactly is this potential for emancipation? Lastly, how can collaborative projects deal with the differences in cultural power that inform negotiations between theory and practice? The concept of a 'subaltern theoretical direction' in this Conclusion presents one possible strategy that can guide the researcher throughout these questions about emancipatory potential and cultural power. This is because it provides the conceptual, imaginative and organisational resources to potentially mend the schism between intellectuals and subalterns. As such, this Conclusion represents a way to re-connect with the 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, where the epistemic and practical aspects of the 'subaltern question' are interwoven.

9.1 The 'subaltern question' and the 'contribution problem' as a social practice

The 'subaltern question' can shed light on the ways in which the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies and the context-specific analyses of subaltern groups produce social/sociological theories through social practices. As illustrated, these social practices – and thus the 'contribution problem' as a social practice – can be understood in terms of Keim's 'negotiations between theory and practice'. This

describes the ways in which academic and extra-academic actors 'do' social and sociological theory through exchanging knowledge. In particular, these negotiations take place across institutional boundaries and differences of cultural power. As such, Keim's framework can be enhanced in the light of the 'subaltern question'¹⁴⁸ by asking: what differences of cultural power inform the negotiations whereby subaltern knowledges are integrated within social/sociological theories?

This Section argues that knowledges in these negotiations circulate across the subaltern-hegemonic cleavage. In particular, the relation between subaltern and hegemonic knowledges can be conceptualised in terms of spontaneity and direction. As illustrated in Chapter 1, the question of spontaneity and direction points to the qualitative similarities and the quantitative differences¹⁴⁹ between subaltern and hegemonic knowledges. Significantly, this conceptualisation can shed light on the 'negotiations between theory and practice' that inform the research analysed in Chapter 8 – as well as on their socially embedded epistemological structure.

As illustrated, 'dialogue' between knowledges on an equal epistemological footing is central to the global and Postcolonial sociologies debates. Epistemic equality is thus the fundamental condition for 'genuine exchanges' between academic and extra-academic actors (Keim 2014: 95-96). The knowledges that circulate in these debates are epistemically – that is, *qualitatively* – similar. If these knowledges are epistemically similar, what are their differences? The answer points towards the ways in which these knowledges are concretely organised within specific situations. Depending on the situation, knowledges within these negotiations are characterized by different degrees of comprehensiveness, coherence, homogeneity, etc. Therefore, they are *quantitatively* different. For example, in the context-specific analyses of subaltern groups, sociologists develop a 'theoretical consciousness' that raises above 'local awareness' of the subalterns who participate in research. This theoretical consciousness organises the 'local awareness' into a more *comprehensive* understanding of the surrounding environment – i.e. the context of subaltern mobilisations (see also Cox 1998: 10; 2011: 131).

Similarly, scholars who have used their concrete interactions with subaltern groups to develop new theories of social movements have highlighted the differences between academic and activist (subaltern) knowledges in terms of a *quantitative* difference – although this difference is not clear-cut (not least because academics can also be activists and vice versa). Nevertheless,

the academic quest is for the *well-formed* [my emphasis] generic proposition or the superior explanation, that is, for the theoretical concept or generalization which covers a set of seemingly dissimilar cases or processes [.]. [I]t is not the case that movement intellectuals have *no* interest in these. However, their *primary* interests do not lie here. Rather, [...] [their] concern lies elsewhere – in formulating 'case propositions' of a very definite and practical nature. These take the form [...] of *practical proposals*. (Barker and Cox 2002: 2, my parenthesis)

Despite these differences, a significant degree of activist/subaltern knowledge is 'frozen' within academic social theories (Cox and Nilsen 2007: 432; 2014: 5-6). This results from processes of *circulation* that *formalise* subaltern knowledges. Although these processes process takes place in non-linear ways, in fact,

the everyday practice of people in struggle contributes to the construction of alternative forms of knowledge from below, which later *become formalised* as academic knowledge. (Cox and Nilsen 2007: 436, my emphasis)

In this way, subaltern knowledge circulates into academic knowledge. Moreover, these knowledges are epistemically (qualitatively) similar, and (quantitatively) different in terms of degrees of comprehensiveness, logical coherence (e.g. well-formed arguments), etc. Significantly, their qualitative continuity and quantitative difference are integral to spontaneity and direction and thus to subalternity and hegemony. Therefore, the circulation of knowledge in the debates analysed in Chapter 8 – and , more generally, the 'contribution problem' as a social practice – entail the 'direction' of 'spontaneous' (subaltern) knowledges into hegemonic ones. Moreover, the epistemological structure of negotiations between theory and practice is embedded within processes of knowledge circulation.

In this respect, 'spontaneity' in these negotiations refers to knowledge¹⁵⁰ that is not explicitly organized within fully formed social/sociological theories, whereas 'direction' points to the formalisation of this 'spontaneous' knowledge and its integration within social/sociological theories. Moreover, spontaneous knowledge is never fully

spontaneous: even the most informal knowledge implies some degree of formalization. Nevertheless, knowledge reaches its highest level of formalisation through processes that organize it within coherent and encompassing perspectives. As illustrated in Chapter 8, subaltern knowledges provide heuristic insights for social theories or new ideas of sociology. Additionally, they are included within ethical protocols (e.g. Smith 1999: 118-120), or they are validated through epistemological procedures (e.g. Bhabra 2007a: 147-148; Keim 2014: 104-105; Santos 2014: 190-191, 205-206; Sitas 2006: 371-373; Wieviorka 2008: 381-382, 387-388)¹⁵¹.

At the same time, this formalisation is integral to the circulation of knowledge across the subaltern-hegemonic cleavage. Crucially, what defines the subaltern character of these knowledges is not their content. That is, their subaltern character is not related to the fact that they are 'non-Western', 'insurgent', 'Southern', etc. Rather, the subaltern character results from the particular configuration of social and cultural relations where these knowledges are located. Following Stuart Hall,

[t]he structuring principle [of 'the subaltern'¹⁵²] does not consist of the contents of each category – which, I insist, will alter from one period to another. Rather it consists of the forces and relations which sustain the distinction, the difference: roughly, between what, at any time, counts as an elite [hegemonic] cultural activity or form, and what does not. [...] What is more, *a whole set of institutions and institutional processes are required to sustain each – and to continually mark the difference between them.* The school and the education system is one such institution [...]. *The literary and scholarly apparatus is another – marking-off certain kinds of valued knowledge from others.* (Hall 2005 [1981]: 68, my emphasis and my parenthesis)

The subaltern (or hegemonic) character of these knowledges thus derives from their exclusion from (or participation in) an elite cultural activity, which is in turn sustained by specific institutions and institutional processes. The 'structuring principle' of subalternity can be understood in terms of Spivak's 'rhythm of thought' – that is, in terms of a principle that organises a *large 'spectrum' of political inclusion/exclusion.*

These discussions imply that subaltern knowledges are 'quantitatively' modified (made *more* coherent, *more* comprehensive, etc.) during their circulation towards social/sociological theories, *thus becoming homogeneous to hegemonic knowledge.* This explains why, in the debates analysed in Chapter 8, social/sociological theories integrate knowledges that are only *derivatively* subaltern: the process of integration is

in itself part of a hegemonic operation. In other words, these ('non-Western', 'insurgent', 'Southern') knowledges are already part of an elite cultural activity, and thus they are hegemonic. In fact, for example, Rosa (2014: 854) has considered Santos' 'Epistemologies of the South' as an approach that "in order to deconstruct a hegemonic form, it [...] construct[s] another hegemonic form, one populated with the imagination of the colonized as well".

The debates discussed in Chapter 8 work as vectors for the inclusion of subaltern knowledges within hegemonic circuits of knowledge production. That is, the participation of 'subaltern contributions' to an elite cultural activity is determined by a 'hegemonic leap'. Therefore, the cultural operation of these debates is a hegemonic operation of knowledge construction, which is invariably internal to the global academy, dominant systems of publication, funding bodies and so on (e.g. Keim 2008: 28-37). Paraphrasing the title of Beverley's "The Dilemma of Subaltern Studies at Duke" (2000) these debates are caught in the 'dilemma' of the 'subaltern question' within the global academy: they are politically progressive projects included within the structures of domination, because

the project of the academic [sociologist] is still basically a[n] [epistemic] project, which, as in Wittgenstein's analytic, leaves everything as it is. Nothing is changed in the past because the past is past; but nothing is changed in the present either, because [sociology] contributes to its own disciplinary reproduction as an ideological state apparatus. (Beverley 2000: 41, my parenthesis)¹⁵³

In this way,

the accumulation of [sociological] knowledge as cultural capital by the university and knowledge centers deepens already existing subalternities. (Beverley 1999: 34, my parenthesis)¹⁵⁴

The 'dilemma' boils down to the risks of accumulating sociological knowledge at the expenses of subaltern knowledges, which in turn are 'colonised as a source of new, sexy courses and research subjects whose purpose is to attract students, funding and status', as with Barker and Cox's previously mentioned observations (Barker and Cox 2002: 6-7). As illustrated in Chapter 6, this risk is implicit in the circulation of the 'subaltern question', at least since its co-optation within the US academy. Moreover, following Graham Huggan, it is also implicit in Postcolonial studies, which cannot be disentangled from the problem of "turn[ing] marginality into a valuable intellectual

commodity” (Huggan 2001: viii). The (postcolonial) introduction of the ‘subaltern question’ into the hegemonic circuits of knowledge production might contribute to the further oppression/effacement of subaltern groups, and thus re-produce subalternity. This is coherent with the idea that there is no subalternity outside of the hegemonic processes that produce it (P. Thomas 2018: 861-863; 873-875): subalternity results from the hegemonic gaze that observes and constitutes something as ‘subaltern’.

Nevertheless, hegemony oscillates between the broader conception of ‘direction and domination’ and a more restricted idea of ‘direction’ as opposed to ‘domination’ (Cospito 2009: 266). As such, it can either legitimise and reproduce subordination or foster emancipatory projects. The academic ‘subaltern dilemma’ thus raises two questions: how do projects that insert subaltern knowledges into the hegemonic circulation (re)produce subalternity? Conversely, is there any space for social emancipation in these projects? Whereas an adequate answer to the first question must be left to future research, Section 2 addresses the second one: it proposes collaborative practices to reconcile the drawbacks with the emancipatory potential of hegemonic projects.

9.2 The ‘subaltern question’ and the ‘collaborative turn’

Can projects that insert subaltern knowledges into the hegemonic circuits of knowledge open up spaces for social emancipation?

An answer to the first question about emancipatory potential around which this Conclusion is structured might come from discussing the ‘subaltern question’ in terms of the pedagogy-hegemony relation in Gramsci’s work (e.g. Baldacci 2016; 2017; Baratta 2007: 195-209; Borg, Buttigieg and Mayo 2002; Broccoli 1972; Buttigieg 2005; Mayo 2014; Manacorda 1970; Urbani 1967: 27). Scholars have observed that Gramsci relates the disparity between leaders (intellectuals) and masses (subalterns) to their respective degree of critical awareness – that is, to the *different cultural levels* existing between them (Baldacci 2016: 146; 2017: 33; Urbani 1967: 27). In this respect,

'hierarchies of culture' are central. In Gramsci's perspective, the purpose – and the necessity – of these cultural hierarchies point to

the formation of an aristocracy of vanguard communists. [...] They will [...] be appointed with the task of *popularising the revolutionary concepts, developing them among the local masses* by adapting these concepts to the different psychologies. (Gramsci 1919, my emphasis, own translation)

Interestingly, the 'hierarchies of culture' resonate with the division of intellectual labour implicit in 'sociological interventions'. Notably though, the political significance of these cultural hierarchies is immediately evident in Gramsci's work: these hierarchies encompass the ideological and social function of the Communist vanguard intellectuals, leaders and militants vis-a-vis the working mass (Manacorda 1970: 44-46). As discussed in Chapter 1, Gramsci argues that this intellectual division of labour is inevitable and functional to the objectives of the worker's movements, although only temporarily. In fact, cultural hierarchies must be levelled, in order to mend the schism between leaders and led (see also Gramsci 1975: 1752 [Q15 §4]). As such, establishing a hegemonic relation between these groups might level hierarchies, thus creating a 'single cultural environment' (Broccoli 1972: 4-5, 42, 45, 54-56). Hegemony might work towards a social emancipation that challenges the schism between intellectuals and subalterns – but only if this hegemony is informed by the *philosophy of praxis*.

This is because this philosophy is intrinsically connected with a project of emancipation of the subaltern social groups, and it aims to go beyond the division between leaders and led. (Baldacci 2016: 157, own translation)

Considering this philosophy as an activity that combines theory and practice (Frosini 2009b), projects of subaltern emancipation are theoretical *and* practical: the philosophy of praxis 'translates into theory the elements of the (subalterns') historical life', thereby guiding political activity within a (subaltern) social context. Therefore, on the one hand, theory is inspired and *developed within* subaltern contexts and *from* subaltern experiences and knowledges so that, as mentioned in Chapter 1, 'it conforms to reality, not vice versa'. Theory accounts for the concrete conditions of subaltern contexts, thus providing an empirical understanding of these social contexts. On the other hand, this empirical understanding is related to political strategies that aim to

transform these contexts. Understanding the present is thus mandatory for social change.

In this way, the combination of theory and practice results in a conception of the world that offers a wider understanding of the material environment. The ideological and social function of the intellectuals boils down to the ideological direction of spontaneous conceptions of the world. That is, a philosophy of praxis that provides 'theoretical consciousness' to subaltern experiences as well as to the criteria that inform subaltern action (Gramsci 1996: 50-51 [Q3 §48]). As illustrated in Chapter 1, this produces an 'effective' homogenisation between 'spontaneous' philosophies and more organized forms of culture. The result is the creation of a 'single cultural environment' where the schism between leaders (intellectuals) and led (subalterns) is potentially mended.

Therefore, hegemonic projects that emancipate subaltern groups have a *theoretical and practical* character. Moreover, they imply a dialectic between *spontaneity and direction* that homogenises spontaneous and 'theoretically conscious' worldviews. These emancipatory projects spring from *the concrete experiences of subaltern groups*, and they are integral to the creation of a *single cultural environment*. Or, 'negotiations between theory and practice' that are rooted in subaltern socio-cultural contexts, and which direct subaltern spontaneity, can transform hierarchies of culture into a single cultural environment, thus developing an emancipatory hegemonic relation. In this way, modes of knowledge circulation are central to social emancipation.

What are the political limits of these hegemonic projects of emancipation – and more generally, of these discussions on the 'subaltern question'? Addressing this question highlights the role that hierarchies play in Gramsci's work and political experiences. As Solinas (2017: 339) has argued, the question of hierarchies recurs very frequently in Gramsci's intellectual and political life:

[t]he organic unity of classes, the concentration in a collective, active and directive subject who gathers the latent movements of the will and expresses them. This is the ground where hierarchies (positively) emerge, as an organic element of a plurality becoming one. [...] The most developed hierarchy represents something like the voluntary self-disciplining that the class "gives" to itself, and it is made of an organic

relationship between whole and parts, between direction and the organism that expresses this direction. (338-339, own translation)

As such, hierarchies are central to the organisation of the workers within a revolutionary political subject, and thus to their strategies of emancipation. As Revelli (1988: 114-118, 121) and Sbarberi (1988: 17-18) have noted, the integration of individuals within a functional hierarchy is central to the abolition of the leaders-led division. Therefore, equality is subsumed to the more compelling question of order. However, to what extent does an equality subordinated to hierarchies produce 'equality'?

Some considerations on Gramsci's political activity during the Red Biennium are particularly relevant in this respect – not least because they point to concrete 'negotiations between theory and practice'. As suggested in Chapter 1, Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group operated as an intellectual vanguard among the Turinese workers, thus intervening in their assemblies and mobilisations (Piu [in draft]). Their activity consisted in gathering and developing the workers' 'spontaneous' experiences, knowledges and political perspectives. In particular they were interested in the workers' thoughts on their life and the struggles in the factories, on the ways in which factories operated and on the political function of the workers' institutions within the factories – such as the Internal Commissions. The political work of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group thus framed this spontaneity within a wider theoretical and political perspective. Their aim was to create new institutions based on the Internal Commissions – that is, the Factory Councils – so as to introduce the workers to the idea of producing without the owners.

Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group produced a theoretical consciousness out of the concrete experiences and knowledge of the workers. That is, they provided the workers with a more comprehensive understanding of the surrounding environment. In this way, their ideological influence had an impact on the workers' critical awareness, thus 'favouring the molecular transition from the groups that are led to the leading group' (e.g. Gramsci 2007: 345 [Q8 § 191]). This broadened the ranks of the political (intellectual) vanguard. In particular, this political vanguard dissolved into a social

(mass) vanguard which was able to collectively organise the creation of the Factory Councils.

The point is that spontaneity in the Turinese assemblies and mobilisations was organised through cultural hierarchies – that is, according to the ideological direction of a political vanguard. The creation and the management of the Factory Councils resulted from the mass organisational activity of the workers, which was in turn ideologically directed by Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group during the Red Biennium. That is, horizontal practices resulted from a political process of knowledge circulation epitomised by the assemblies and mobilisations of 1919-1920, and that fostered the practical participation of the workers across persistent hierarchies. Nevertheless, the political perspective that came out of these assemblies and mobilisations was not necessarily the result of a *collective elaboration*. As Maurizio Garino – one of the most prominent figures in the Factory Councils movement – has recalled:

those of the “Ordine Nuovo” were a group of intellectuals, although they came among us workers to see the concrete problems. [...] Firstly they thoroughly inquired about the concreteness of each problem. And who did they ask for information from? Not the managers, no, rather the workers, those who had calluses on their hands. (Garino in Bermani 1987: 91, own translation)

Therefore, on the one hand, workers were predominantly a source of information. On the other hand, the theoretical frameworks that underpinned the idea of producing without the owners were elaborated within *L’Ordine Nuovo* – that is, predominately by Gramsci and the other editors (see also Bermani 1980/1981: 15-17; 1987: 41, 91, 109, 121, 139; Paulesu Quercioli 1977: 30; Santhià 1956: 62). Although ‘theories’ were collectively socialized through ideological direction, theoretical work was the expression of the political vanguard. Therefore, the schism between intellectuals and subalterns was mended at the level of practices, but was still unresolved at the level of the intellectual division of labour.

This is not to undermine the – indeed impressive – political work that Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group did in Turin during 1919-1920¹⁵⁵. Still these considerations can be used to discuss the transformation of ‘hierarchies of culture’ into a ‘single cultural environment’. As illustrated, the ways in which knowledge circulates is central to this

transformation. Crucially though, the emancipatory aim of this transformation – that is, the equality between leaders and led – can be pursued on different levels. Horizontal practices are important, although not sufficient. *The political and practical challenge of the ‘subaltern question’ is to organise horizontal intellectual work within persistent hierarchies.* Or, the challenge is to operate within socio-culturally stratified contexts and collectively produce knowledge that does not result from the intellectuals’ sole activity. This is the only way to mend the schism between intellectuals and subaltern at the level of the intellectual division of labour.

These discussions are relevant to the debates discussed in Chapter 8. In particular, they shed light on the spaces of emancipation opened up by the ‘negotiations between theory and practice’ that underpin the creation of social theories and new sociologies. The creation of a single cultural environment that challenges persistent cultural hierarchies – and thus the intellectual division of labour – is (predominantly) an open question that needs to be explored.

In many of the context-specific analyses, the ‘subaltern contribution’ comes from the knowledges of specific subaltern groups. These analyses are thus structurally underpinned by negotiations between theory and practice. Nevertheless, as illustrated, they do not discuss their negotiations in terms of the relation between academic and extra-academic actors (particularly, subaltern groups), and in the light of a general political issue: the schism between intellectuals and subalterns. The open question implicit in these analyses is thus the creation of a single cultural environment within persistent forms of intellectual division of labour – that is, the differences of cultural power informing the negotiations between intellectuals and subalterns.

This issue has been partially addressed in some context-specific analyses. In Shah and (part of) Nilsen’s research, the intellectuals’ contributions to subaltern movements are integral to horizontal practices where theory is collectively organised. In particular, their contributions feed into moments of discussion in these movements – i.e. assemblies. Therefore these contributions provide the movement with a ‘theoretical consciousness’, which in turn helps ‘the transition from the groups that are led to the leading group’. In this way, the circulation of theory across hierarchies of culture

contributes to creating a single cultural environment. Nevertheless, if the intellectuals' contribution to subaltern movements (and to social theory) is clear, the other side of the question is not. As illustrated, the collaboration between intellectuals and subalterns needs further exploration. As such, the question is not (only) about promoting the collective organisation of theory in terms of horizontal practices. Rather, the problem is to organise horizontal intellectual labour within persistent hierarchies.

The situation is similar for the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies. As anticipated, these approaches have under-theorised the social aspects of the 'contribution problem': their perspectives on how social theories or new sociologies are constructed do not consider the problems of claiming epistemic plurality within specific social contexts. Epistemic plurality is assumed whereas, as will be clearer in Section 3, it is the endpoint of a research process. That is, horizontal dialogues on an equal footing that bring about the creation of a single cultural environment cannot be simply assumed. Rather, they result from social practices that organise them against the intellectual division of labour¹⁵⁶.

Therefore, one of the open questions in the debates analysed in Chapter 8 is the creation of a single cultural environment within persistent forms of intellectual division of labour. Its creation is not only a matter of feeding theoretical contributions into subaltern mobilisations, or engaging with subaltern contributions on an equal epistemological footing. That is, respectively, it is not only a matter of directing spontaneity or being inspired by the experiences and the knowledges of subaltern groups. Rather, the question is to organise horizontal intellectual work in a socio-culturally stratified context, so as to create a single cultural environment that challenges the intellectual division of labour. As such, the potential for emancipation implicit in the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies and the context-specific analyses on subaltern groups is illustrated by the ways in which the schism between leaders and led can be mended. This also answers to the second question about emancipatory potential around which this Conclusion is structured.

As illustrated in Chapter 8, a relatively small number of studies in these debates have demonstrated the need to introduce collaborative practices. However, these

contributions have left one question unaddressed: how can collaborative projects deal with the differences in cultural power (hierarchies of culture) that inform the negotiations between theory and practice? In order to provide an answer to this question about cultural power, Section 3 will discuss the ‘collaborative turn’ in the light of the ‘subaltern question’. In particular, drawing on PAR and *conricerca*, it will put forward an argument about a ‘subaltern theoretical direction’.

9.3 A subaltern theoretical direction

An analysis of the ‘collaborative turn’ in the light of the ‘subaltern question’ can shed light on the question about cultural power around which this Conclusion is structured. Significantly, it also addresses the other challenges implicit in the debates analysed in Chapter 8 and in the ‘subaltern question’: on the one hand, the elaboration of a strategic imagination that fosters the collective achievement of epistemic justice and that connects epistemic and social justice; the ways in which the political willingness to dialogue on an equal epistemological footing is encapsulated within structural constraints and enabling factors; and the critique of the assumption of epistemic plurality. On the other hand, the organisation of the intellectual work as a horizontal practice.

The discussion finds its prompt in the most recent debates in PAR and in the workerist experiences of *conricerca*, because they provide some suggestions for the horizontal organisation of intellectual work in a socio-culturally stratified context. Moreover, the two approaches can be used to question the claims to epistemic plurality from an organisational and structural perspective.

In particular, PAR represents a set of

methodological alternative[s] to conventional research [...] characterized by the mere collection of data and imposition of procedures, without the participation of interested parties in data gathering and the interpretation of results. (Thiollent and Colette 2017: 163, my parenthesis)

PAR has always been interested in ‘correcting’ unequal relations of knowledge (Rowell and Hong 2017: 64) thus pursuing “the practice of knowledge democracy” (Shosh

2017: 17). In this context knowledge is “widely shared, jointly generated and utilized to help marginalized groups to gain voice” (Brown, Bammer et al. 2003: 85). Researchers are concerned with their engagement with people’s knowledge, particularly if disenfranchised (e.g. Rowell and Hong 2017: 63). Therefore PAR allows space for epistemic plurality (e.g. Rowell, Bruce et al. 2017: 4-5; Rowell, Riel and Polush 2017: 96).

However, some recent commentators have highlighted the limitations of PAR. As Keim has noted,

[the intellectual] division of labour is conserved in various strands of present-day participative action research

and thus

the research and knowledge construction [is] still considered to be the responsibility of the academic researcher. (Keim 2014: 105, my parentheses)

More generally, this limitation has affected this approach since its beginnings. Comparing Fals Borda’s experiments with La Rosca and the further steps that were later taken by scholars associated to La Rosca, Joanne Rappaport (2017: 154) has argued that

[i]n both instances, participatory research is conceptualized as [...] the search for alternative epistemological frameworks that permit people to tell their history from their own point of view. What differs is the extent to which local people were encouraged to think of their participation as vital to the construction of theory.

Therefore, according to these studies (e.g. also Heron 1996: 7-9; Rappaport 2017: 148; Vasco Uribe and Rappaport 2011: 26-28), PAR has sought to rebalance unequal relations of knowledge, although it has de facto disregarded the politics of theory building. As such, it has downplayed the construction of theory as a cooperative effort of all the subjects involved in the research. The researchers’ privilege in theory building and the separation between intellectual and non-intellectual labour have not been completely dismantled. It might be argued that what these studies have claimed is at least debatable (e.g. Townsend 2014: 117-118). While a full discussion about this issue is outside the scope of this work, the point here is what these studies suggest in order to conceptualise the connection between knowledge democracy and epistemic plurality.

Knowledge democracy is not only about democracy of content, which concerns the inclusion of subaltern knowledges into (hegemonic) theories – and thus, epistemic plurality. It is also about democracy of method. That is, it promotes the participation of all the subjects involved in the research decision processes – from the design of the research, to its management and conclusions (Heron 1996: 207).

Research *with* social actors thus

involves shifting the epistemological center [...] which is conventionally set in the academic perspective. It means a questioning of the division of labour in charge, which privileges the academic project at the expense of other intellectual activities which challenge the research questions, the limits of the discipline, theoretical interest and methodological choices. (Meckesheimer 2013: 88)

Assuming that politics is about “the who, the how and the what of decision making” (Heron 1996: 207), participation in research decisions is inherently political. From a perspective of knowledge democracy, the way in which research is organized is politically crucial for pursuing dialogue on an equal epistemological footing.

This question boils down to an argument for *co-theorisation*. Co-theorisation implies that the researchers and the other subjects are engaged in theory building, both from a methodological perspective and in terms of content. Conceptual frameworks are co-produced paying as much heed to subaltern knowledges as to hegemonic ones (Rappaport 2013: 10), as well as “involving a dialogue between distinct knowledge bases [...] that encompass not only their content, but also their form” (Rappaport 2017: 148). Therefore, co-theorization implies the epistemological inclusion of subaltern knowledges into (social/sociological) theories as well as their collective development through a particular organisation of the research. In pursuing epistemic justice, scientific production and the political organisation of the research are entangled: epistemic justice is a collective achievement.

These discussions have woven together the epistemological and the organisational questions implicit in the production of (social/sociological) theories, thus addressing democracy of content and democracy of method. However, what are the structural constraints of a pure political willingness that wants to bridge the separation between

scientific and political work, to pursue democracy of content and democracy of method? How can persistent hierarchies co-exist with epistemic plurality?

Conricerca provides a strategy that pursues both epistemic plurality and social justice, incorporating subaltern knowledges into theory while challenging the intellectual division of labour. *Conricerca* emerged during the early 1960s as a form of militant fieldwork with the workers of factories in Northern Italy. It sought to realize a political science from the perspective of the working class, mapping the class composition within and outside the factories (Wright 2002: 32-62).

Class composition conceptualises the workers' objective and political organisation. As such, it maps both the objective hierarchisation of the workforce in the workplace (*technical composition*) and the processes through which workers self-organize as a group, with specific needs, values, and worldviews (*political composition*). Class composition weaves together structural constraints (technical composition) and political will (political composition) – though it is not their synthesis. Rather, it highlights their tensions and ruptures. That is, class composition conceptualises a political subject that is neither purely objectively given, nor purely independent from the relations of production. Rather, it results from the interaction of two processes: those of capitalistic subjectification and those of autonomous counter-subjectification (Roggero 2014: 517; 2017; Armano and Sacchetto 2011). In this respect, *conricerca* understands how workers are objectively organised, in order to foster their autonomous re-organisation against capitalist hierarchies.

These observations can be used to question the claims to epistemic equality in the debates analysed in Chapter 8. In fact, *conricerca* does not postulate a voluntaristic lack of distinction among the co-researches,

in the name of egalitarianism with populist flavour. Instead it points to the crisis of the division between intellectual and political action [...] in order to situate the problem of organisation entirely within class composition [...]. Horizontality and equality are what is at stake in any struggle. (Roggero 2014: 516)

The creation of a 'single cultural environment' is at the end of an organisational process across 'hierarchies of culture'. The claim to (epistemic) equality confronts structural constraints that exist beyond and before political willingness, which in turn

cannot merely redress them. The only way towards (epistemic) equality is to recognize these structural constraints, and to reorganise *against, through* and *within* them.

The approach of *conricerca* to the intellectual division of labour is a further step from the approach of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group¹⁵⁷. This is because the creation of a 'single cultural environment' in *conricerca* does not only result from horizontal practices, but also from the horizontal organisation of theory and practice (Armano and Sacchetto 2011: 4). In the case of Gramsci and the *Ordine Nuovo* group, horizontal practices are produced through a political process related to the direction of spontaneous forms of organization. In this way, an emancipatory hegemony between leaders and led is based on the 'transition from the groups that are led to the leading group', which creates a single cultural environment *out of* cultural hierarchies. The distinguishing feature of *conricerca* is then not simply the interception of spontaneous forms of (re)organisation against objective hierarchies, and thus the horizontality of practices. Rather, it is the antagonistic elaboration of theoretical and practical perspectives with workers, who autonomously re-organise against their objective organisation (Alquati 1975: 64) 2014) within a context where the cultural hierarchies between the intellectual vanguard and the workers are *sublated*.

In particular, *conricerca* re-organises the cleavage between intellectual work and political practice at the level of class composition (Roggero 2014: 516): *conricerca* practices recognize that professional stratification (technical/social composition¹⁵⁸) might help the workers constitute an autonomous socio-cultural group (political composition). A political subjectivity based on intellectual cooperation thus emerges from different class positions and across different experiences and competencies (Alquati 1993: 9, 63). The horizontal organisation between theory and practice (Roggero 2014: 516) *against, through* and *within* cultural hierarchies is crucial in this respect. How is this horizontality organised?

A direct democracy [...] within the open group of co-researchers [...] must in the first stance address its strategic direction; then the execution of the research plan is recurrently assigned to organized, temporary [...] moments [...]. Therefore professionalism becomes a constraint there [...] but it must not transform itself into executive power beyond specific limits. (Alquati 1993: 119, my emphasis, own translation)

Therefore, theories are formulated by subsuming professional competencies under political participation. In particular, the content of a theory is developed separately; whereas its initial hypotheses, and thus the heuristic of the research, are constantly discussed as political problems by all co-researchers: the theorizing sub-group derives from the larger group of subjects involved in the research.

In this way, in the experiences of *conricerca* 'hierarchies of culture' are not dissolved, rather they are subsumed as a temporary articulation *within* the organisation of a 'single cultural environment'. The practices of the social vanguard do not stem from the ideological direction of a political vanguard. Rather, the political vanguard is a moment of articulation of a social vanguard that has already set the ideological direction of the practices. As with Alquati, what is at stake here is direct democracy. The development of direct democracy among the co-researchers – and thus of an emancipatory hegemony¹⁵⁹ – is grounded on processes of theory building that articulate 'hierarchies of culture' *within* a 'single cultural environment'.

The previous discussions on PAR and *conricerca* are central to the argument about a *subaltern theoretical direction*¹⁶⁰. A subaltern theoretical direction conceptualises the ways in which social/sociological theories based on subaltern knowledges result from collaborative negotiations where intellectuals and subalterns question the intellectual division of labour. This articulates the epistemic and social dimension of the 'contribution problem'. That is, it connects the epistemic questions that inform the debates analysed in Chapter 8 with the problems related to their social underpinnings, thus pointing to a socially embedded epistemology. In this way, a subaltern theoretical direction provides a form of strategic imagination that is able to conceive of the organic relation between epistemic and social justice and the achievement of epistemic justice *with* (rather than *for*) subaltern groups.

In particular, a subaltern theoretical direction is the process whereby the subaltern co-researchers could contribute to the theoretical work at its most coherent and systematic level as well as to the decisions on research design, research management, etc. In this way, the participation of subalterns in the production of social/sociological theory articulates epistemic plurality with the political organisation of research. On the

one hand, subaltern knowledges are re-organised within a hegemonic form through collaborative processes; on the other hand, subalterns participate in the decisions about the research, thus challenging research questions, theoretical and methodological preferences and thereby the ways in which subaltern knowledges are re-organised into hegemonic ones.

Therefore, a subaltern theoretical direction is grounded on co-theorisation. This is integral to the ways in which the debates analysed in Chapter 8 might organise their negotiations, and thus to their *political composition*. In fact, co-theorisation is an aspect of the political organisation of research – or, the space of decisions and thus of political will. The political composition of these negotiations illustrates the ways in which sociologists and subalterns actively organise and negotiate their values, beliefs and worldviews within a hegemonic form, and on an equal epistemological footing.

However, this political will operates within structural constraints and enabling factors. The technical and social composition of the above-mentioned negotiations points to forms of intellectual division of labour where researchers are separated from the other subjects of the research. This division is illustrative of a professional stratification, which is epitomised by the academic/non-academic divide. Along with other socio-cultural divisions (class, race, gender, etc.), professional stratification informs those institutional processes that define what counts as a hegemonic cultural activity, thus demarcating direction from spontaneity, leaders from led, intellectuals from subalterns, hegemonic from subaltern knowledges.

Significantly, as the experiences of *conricerca* have illustrated, there is a tension between political and technical/social composition. This implies that, firstly, sociologists and subalterns are ‘produced’ by this tension – that is, they are not pre-given, opposite and coherent groups: the ‘function’ of ‘the sociologist’ is not monopolised by a sub-groups of co-researchers. Rather, it is re-distributed according to the organisation of the research process, and thus to the co-researchers’ approach the schism between intellectuals and subalterns. Moreover ‘sociologists’ and ‘subalterns’ are not, strictly-speaking, units of analysis. In fact, the co-researchers’ composition already implies that there are technical, social and political differences cutting across

them. These differences inform the two categories ('sociologists', 'subalterns') from within, thus suggesting complex social articulations. This questions the idea of a monolithic subaltern subject with a distinct set of subaltern knowledges: this group is socially stratified. Each strata expresses more or less organised forms of knowledge that are in different degrees mediated by the hegemonic knowledge, and thus can be mapped onto the hegemonic-subaltern spectrum. In this respect, understanding the composition of the subaltern group highlights the ways in which the social stratification of this group (in terms of class, gender, race, etc.) affects its participation in research. Therefore, thinking about this composition is essential to finding the strategies that can tackle this stratification and promote wider forms of participation – or, to understanding which 'subaltern knowledges' are integrated or excluded during the research, and why.

Secondly, the inclusion of subaltern knowledges into a hegemonic cultural activity through forms of co-production cannot be assumed, rather it can only be organised. The call to a 'collaborative turn' in the debates analysed in Chapter 8 thus entails not simply collaborative practices. It also requires understanding the ways in which co-researchers are objectively articulated, in order to detect and foster their recomposition against the academic/non-academic divide or other socio-cultural cleavages that bring about collaborative practices. In fact, the recomposition against the academic/non-academic divide re-organises the dichotomy between professional competencies and political participation in research decisions. In particular, this re-organisation points to processes of co-theorisation in a socio-culturally stratified context, in which cultural hierarchies are not dissolved, rather they are articulated *within* a single cultural environment. Epistemic equality is at the outcome of this process: a collective achievement.

Why is it important to discuss the debates analysed in Chapter 8 in terms of a technical, social and political composition that points to a subaltern theoretical direction? As Connell (2018: 405) has recently argued,

[d]ecolonizing sociology [...] requires rethinking the composition of sociology's workforce and changing the conditions in which it produces and circulates knowledge. I don't think we currently have a clear picture of sociology's workforce on a world scale.

Analysing the above-mentioned debates in terms of their technical/social composition provides a map of their intellectual and subaltern workforce, thus presenting a preliminary step towards its re-composition.

In fact, transforming the present requires understanding the processes that have generated it. As Gramsci and the Italian folklore debates have illustrated, an action that seeks to bring about social transformation requires the support of appropriate knowledge tools. In particular, the pursuit of a political aim – in their case, revolution – needs to take into account the social, political and cultural contexts in which this endeavour takes place, and to organise accordingly. In the debates analysed in Chapter 8, the political aim is different: a (decolonized) social science that articulates epistemic and social justice. Nevertheless, the intellectual task is the same. (Re)constructing social theory and creating new sociologies in the name of epistemic and social justice requires an understanding of the contexts in which these endeavours take place. That is, these debates need to analyse their technical/social composition, to understand the ways in which this can affect the cooperation of the sociological workforce.

Understanding the present configuration of these debates entails analysing their technical and social composition. At the same time, the question of their political composition points to their future. The question of composition is not only a descriptive exercise: the analysis of political composition detects those re-compositions that are already happening without or beyond the intellectuals' direction. That is, political composition detects the 'leaps forward' of the co-researchers in terms of an emancipatory hegemonic capacity that brings about the collective pursuit of epistemic justice and directly connects epistemic and social justice. This is because subaltern knowledges are 'quantitatively' re-organised by the whole group of co-researchers through the spontaneous¹⁶¹ questioning of the intellectual division of labour. In this way the hegemonic leap does not result from the activity of some benevolent sociologist, rather, it results from the collective deliberation of the group of co-researchers. Moreover, the hegemonic leap is the product of forms of direct democracy in the research, and not (only) of institutional processes that determine what is part of/excluded from a hegemonic cultural activity – that is, from research.

The question is thus about fostering collaborative experiments that collectively develop the heuristic frameworks of the debates analysed in Chapter 8 – experiments that have not yet reached a critical mass¹⁶². A subaltern theoretical direction takes a small step in this direction, because it pursues *direct democracy* in knowledge production through the articulation of cultural hierarchies *within* a single cultural environment. The methodological organisation of research is inherently political. In Alquati's words:

[t]he experience of politically oriented research shows that method often reveals the [political] line, especially if it also entails the question of "political" organisation. *The organisational model realises an implicit political line*. And this [political line] is not of little importance for us too. (Alquati 1993: 119, my emphasis and my parenthesis, own translation)

The organisational models that inform the debates analysed in Chapter 8 imply a political line too. As this thesis has sought to demonstrate, this is not of little importance. What is at stake is not only re-connecting with the practical aspects of the 'subaltern question', and thus with the 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. But also, it is mending the schism between global sociologists and subaltern social groups. The question of *how* these debates can be developed in the light of this issue is part of their future.

This Conclusion focused on the 'subaltern question', in order to discuss the social contexts in which intellectuals and subaltern groups 'do' social/sociological theory in a collaborative way. It addressed the approaches to global and Postcolonial sociologies and context-specific analyses on subaltern groups in terms of the concrete engagement between the sociologist and the public – particularly, a subaltern public. In this respect this Conclusion put forward the idea of a 'subaltern theoretical direction', so as to respond to the 'need for engagement' raised by recent studies that have contributed to these debates in the social sciences. At the same time, these debates have only sporadically addressed the 'contribution problem' as a social practice or in terms of collaborative approaches. As such, this Conclusion represented a critical intervention in these debates. It evaluated them in the light of an issue that the present work has considered central to the 'subaltern question': the schism between leaders and led.

Epilogue

In accounting for the later transnational circulation of the ‘subaltern question’, this dissertation has mentioned the social condition of contemporary subaltern groups (particularly, in India) without elaborating further about the circumstances of their condition. This was by no means an attempt to downplay these circumstances. An exhaustive illustration of them would have required another kind of study – a dissertation geared towards the difficult challenge of mapping the ongoing evolution of this political scenario.

During the writing of this dissertation, the political situation in India has seen the continuous ascendancy of militant right-wing Hindu Nationalist parties, which are in the process of establishing a majoritarian state that “combines cultural nationalism and political strategies aiming at flagrant social dominance by the upper castes, rapid economic development, cultural conservatism, intensified misogyny”, paired with “the normalisation of anti-minority rhetoric, routine assertions of the imminent danger posed by internal as well as external enemies to the nation” (Chatterjee, Hansen and Jaffrelot 2019: 1-2).

The role that the politics of Indian subaltern groups – particularly, Adivasi groups – play in this situation is complex. On the one hand, the subaltern condition as well as the broader structures of power based on caste, gender, and sexuality that constitute subalternity in contemporary India are contested ‘from below’, as the development of new forms of subaltern politics illustrates: for example the re-emergence of Maoist insurgency supported by Adivasi tribes, or the Adivasi struggles against neoliberal policies, land dispossession and displacement (Bates and Shah 2017: 1-2; Nilsen and Roy 2015: 3-4). On the other hand, Adivasi groups are not simply ‘victims’ of this situation. Rather, sections of them are also “agents in the communal violence emerging from the expansionist activities of militant right-wing Hindu Nationalist parties” (Bates and Shah 2017: 1). For example, the massive Adivasi participation in anti-Muslim or anti-Christian riots – often against other Adivasi groups – testifies to the ways in which sections of Adivasis have been politically mobilised under the banners of the Hindutva.

This reflects a 'militant Hinduization' which is at the same time detrimental to other sections of Adivasi groups and, more generally, other subaltern groups (Baviskar 2005; Froerer 2006; Jaffrelot 2003).

The result is the intricate political entanglement whereby the Hindu nationalists' tactics of social uplifting co-exist with their 'divide and rule' strategies of the Adivasi groups, and the inclusion of these groups into broader nationalist projects determines their further marginalisation. As such, there is no 'pure' subalternity as much as there is no 'innocent' subaltern – a question that this dissertation has analysed and evaluated in its theoretical foundations, for example by discussing non-essentialist understandings of subalternity, the 'negative' characters of folklore, etc. Still, on the practical level of the subaltern condition in contemporary India, this question raises potentially new issues, particularly from the perspective of knowledge production.

As this dissertation has illustrated, from Gramsci to the folklore debates, up to *conricerca*, the problem of knowledge production was discussed in terms of the collaboration between intellectuals and a particular subaltern group that was 'intrinsically' revolutionary: the workers. Or, more generally, in terms of the activity of a political party – the Communist party – which was able (or potentially so) to 'educate' the 'spontaneously progressive' aspects of subaltern groups and 'uproot' the regressive ones, so as to develop an encompassing political perspective that could guide these groups towards the creation of a revolutionary historic bloc.

In current political scenarios, the working class has lost centrality and incisiveness as a revolutionary subject, as much as the communist party/ies – however different organisations still exist under this name in India – has/have lost its/their 'propulsive capacity' for the renewal of societies. More generally, every attempt of 'uprooting and replacing' a subaltern culture with a 'more encompassing' perspective – i.e. Marxism – would at least be considered intellectually and politically very problematic. From the perspective of knowledge production this new scenario raises interesting questions: how can intellectuals (e.g. sociologists) co-produce knowledge with subaltern groups co-opted by the Hindutva project, and outside of the structures of a revolutionary mass

political party? To what extent does this co-production bring about epistemic and social justice?

The answer is not straightforward. Or better, it is not a given that there can be a definitive one. And also, it exceeds the context of academic research. As some context-specific studies on Indian subaltern groups have demonstrated, the intellectual and political intervention in a subaltern context has to face contradictions that are not purely academic concerns, and that are directly related to the extent of interpenetration between the subaltern and the hegemonic domain – that is, the hegemonic enclosure of subalternity. This interpenetration can be mapped by the analysis of the technical/social composition of the subaltern group, as the result of collaborative practices that bridge the academic/non-academic divide. The ways in which this map can be used to address the contradictions in a subaltern context (i.e. for ‘progressive’ or ‘regressive’ projects) open up to the domain of organised politics.

Notes

- 1 The term 'postcolonial' has a polysemic character, see Lazarus (2004: 1-5) and Parry (2004: 66). A brief definition of Postcolonial studies is thus mandatory. Generally speaking, this work will understand 'Postcolonial studies' as an institutionalized field of academic specialization that emerged around the late 1970s, in proximity to the end of the era of decolonization. Postcolonial studies have sought to expose the entanglement between the epistemological and the political domination of the 'West' as well as to 'give voice' to 'non-Western' forms of knowledge, see Brennan (2002: 186) and L. Gandhi (1998: 52-53). In particular, this dissertation will focus on a specific aspect of Postcolonial studies: postcolonial theory. This refers to forms of (literary first, then interdisciplinary) theory that have been circulating in the academy since the mid-1980s and whose methodologies are to a significant degree affected by the works of Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, and so on, see Brennan (2002: 185) and Huggan (2001: 239). In practical terms, the works of Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said and Homi Bhabha can be considered illustrative of postcolonial theory, see Moore-Gilbert (1997: 1).
- 2 In this respect, this work will discuss examples of 'circulations at the margins' and 'marginalized circulations'. This is to emphasise that the focus on indirect or mediated forms of knowledge exchange is heuristically productive, because it provides a wider understanding of processes of knowledge circulation, see Chapters 3 and 4. Moreover, this dissertation will discuss the circulation of cultural products across the hegemonic-subaltern cleavage. This is to understand the imbalances of cultural power in the circulation of knowledge across 'institutional boundaries' and in the 'negotiations between theory and practice', see Chapter 8 and the Conclusion of this work.
- 3 Reception is the most basic process of circulation, and it is characterized by the fact that "a scholar takes up theories, methods or concepts from elsewhere and relates them to his or her work" (Keim 2014: 94). In this respect, Keim (95-96) has claimed that reception takes place over *time* (e.g. in relation to more ancient sources), *space* (e.g. transnationally, centre-periphery, etc.), *institutional boundaries* (e.g. inside-outside the academia) and *disciplinary boundaries* (e.g. literature-social sciences). Moreover, in the processes of reception, the receiver's agency can be understood in terms of: *acknowledgement* (e.g. passive inclusion of the source), *acceptance* (e.g. generation of heuristic insights from the included source), *modification* (e.g. critical and/or creative re-adaptation of the received knowledge) and *rejection* (98-99). In any case, reception is always part of broader processes of knowledge circulation – for example, exchanges.
- 4 Exchanges can be understood as processes of circulation that produce knowledge by prolonging one or many prior processes of reception of other ideas. In this respect, exchanges bring about forms of knowledge that are based on prior movements of reception and are elaborated through controversies and/or collaborations. Keim (2014: 100-103) has discussed the impact that mobility, personal encounters, 'local' lingua francas, and so on have on these processes of exchange.
- 5 The negotiations between theory and practice are similar to the processes of reception and exchange, and thus they all share the same features. However, 'negotiations between theory and practice' take place between academic and extra-academic actors, and entail different interests (i.e. academic or pragmatic) and different logics (i.e. testing theories or assessing their social relevance), see Keim (2014: 104-106). For a more extensive discussion, see Chapter 8 and the Conclusion of this work.
- 6 This dissertation understands the idea of a 'rhythm of thought' in terms of Gramsci's methodological suggestions concerning a systematic illustration of the thought of an unsystematic author (in his case, Marx). His methodological suggestions include: '1. biography in great detail, and, 2. exposition of all the works, even the most negligible, in chronological order, sorted according to the different phases: intellectual formation, maturity, the grasp of a new way of thinking and its confident application. The search for the *leitmotiv*, the rhythm of the thought, more important than single, isolated quotations' (Gramsci, 1996: 138 [Q4 §1], my emphasis). See also Green (2013a: 92-93). This dissertation follows Gramsci's suggestions, thereby systematically expounding the unsystematic understanding of subalternity in the work of both a multi-vocal project as *Subaltern Studies* and a multifaceted author as Spivak. Excavating their rhythms of thought of subalternity delineates their different thematic expositions of the topic, the variations on these themes, the counterpoints between them, the developments, the caesuras, the dissonances and the resolutions, without losing

sight of the political and theoretical guiding thread that underpins their approaches. This weaves the polysemic and open-end nature of their conceptions of subalternity with the continuities in their reflections in order to justify cross-references between their texts, paving the way to conceptual comparisons.

- 7 From now on, the abbreviation 'Q' followed by a number will stand for '*Quaderno*' ('Notebook') and the Notebook number. For example, 'Q15' stands for Notebook 15. Moreover, this work will always refer to any English edition of Gramsci's notes, whenever available, see Gramsci (1957b), (1971), (1992), (1996), (2000) and (2007). Otherwise it will refer to the Italian edition, see Gramsci (1975).
- 8 This extended scope of conceptual history is justified because the questions that have emerged in relation to the concept of subalternity have undergone profound semantic shifts in correspondence to specific changes of social context. As will become clear, these questions entail: understanding the relation between subaltern and hegemonic groups or between subaltern and hegemonic cultures, assessing the extent of the autonomy of subaltern knowledges from the hegemonic one, representing subalternity in hegemonic discourses, studying subalternity in specific disciplines, developing political strategies of emancipation from from subalternity, etc. From this angle, considering that this extended scope comprehends not only concepts but also systems of meaning, this thesis can be seen as a contribution to historical semantics – that is, to a development of conceptual history, see Pernau and Sachsenmaier (2016: 12).
- 9 For example, this thesis operates the 'semantic de-composition' of the 'epistemic approach' to subalternity. As will become clear, this 'epistemic approach' is traced back to the 'methodological reduction' of Q25 operated by the *Selection of the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (1971). Nevertheless this 'epistemic approach' became an actual possibility with *Subaltern Studies*, it was actualized by Spivak's writings and it constituted the predominant way to approach the 'subaltern question' only after the reception of her early work. Contra existing literature, this de-composition suggests that the approaches of Spivak and *Subaltern Studies* are still related to some social, sociological and, to a lesser extent, practical aspects of the 'subaltern question'.
- 10 Significantly, this thesis has not distinguished between the primary and the secondary literature. That is, it has not distinguished between the sources that map the circulation and re-articulation of the 'subaltern question' from Gramsci to current sociological debates and the sources that further clarify, criticise and explain these re-articulations and that provide information about the socio-historical contexts of production and circulation of these re-articulations. This is because this thesis' approach to the transnational circulation and re-articulation of the 'subaltern question' questioned the distinction between primary and secondary literature at its most basic level: every source that has re-articulated the 'subaltern question' (excluding Gramsci's work, where the 'subaltern question' was produced for the first time) can be seen as providing at the same time a clarification, explanation or critique of one or more precedent re-articulations, and it is thus both primary *and* secondary literature. In order to avoid this contradiction, this thesis has rather discussed these sources in terms of contributions that operated more or less significant semantic shifts of the 'subaltern question' across a series of debates.
- 11 The claims that this thesis makes about the influence of Hobsbawm's work on *Subaltern Studies* – particularly, his *Primitive Rebels* (1959a) – are based firstly on the observations in this direction offered by some members of the group (e.g. Ram. Guha 2012: 37) and other commentators (e.g. Chaturvedi 2000: ix; Mussi and Goes 2016: 294). Secondly, these claims are based on the status of texts such as Guha's *Elementary aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (1983a). As different commentators (e.g. Chaturvedi 2000: ix; Majumdar 2015: 56, 67) and members of *Subaltern Studies* (e.g. Chakrabarty 2000a: 472-473; 2013: 25) have emphasised, *Primitive Rebels* (1959a) has been central to Guha's text (not least because the latter is a polemical response to the former), which in turn has been a model for the early phase of the project.
- 12 See Chatterjee (1984; 1989: 170-174) and Guha (1983a; 1989; 1982b). After 1990, only few contributions to the *Subaltern Studies* series have made direct reference to Gramsci. In particular, Lloyd (1996: 264-265) has discussed Irish historiography in the light of Gramsci's observations on the history of subaltern groups. Kaali (1999: 138) has mentioned the question of common sense in his research on oral narratives in Tamil Nadu. Guha (1992), Prashad (1999: 177-180) and Ismail (2000: 261) have addressed questions of hegemony and hegemonic crisis in Indian and Sri-Lankan politics. Kaviraj's observations (1992: 8-9) on the use of history in the 'imaginary institution of a culturally homogeneous Indian national identity' refer to Gramsci's discussions on the non national-popular character of Italian culture and the failed cultural unification of Italy. As will become clear in chapter 6 and 7, Spivak is a notable exception to this tendency.

-
- 13 The considerations on the socio-political conception of subalternity in this Section are a translated, reworked and expanded version of Piu (2019: 176-180).
 - 14 A discussion on the ways in which Gramsci understood the question of ‘the intellectuals’ would be outside the scope of this work. Suffice it to say that, according to Gramsci (1971: 5 [Q12 §1], my parenthesis), the intellectuals are a social stratum that “gives [a social group] homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. [...] It should be noted that the entrepreneur himself represents a higher level of social elaboration, already characterised by a certain directive [...] and technical (i.e. intellectual) capacity. [...] He must be an organiser of masses of men; he must be an organiser of the “confidence” of investors in his business, of the customers for his product”. Therefore, Gramsci’s definition of ‘the intellectual’ includes those who are engaged in cultural work, but it also encompasses social categories that exceed that of ‘cultural workers’. In fact, intellectuals are organisers of social groups, and in particular they perform a particular ideological work, so as to aggregate different social groups within a historic bloc. Intellectuals connect class position and class consciousness – that is, class-in-itself and class-for-itself. For the connective and organisational role of the intellectual, see for example Green (2013a: 95-97) and Senu (2013: 105). For a general perspective on the intellectuals in Gramsci’s work, see Voza (2009).
 - 15 Gramsci uses ‘classes’ and ‘groups’ interchangeably, see Green (2002: 9 note 7) and Liguori (2016: 123). Nevertheless, the use of ‘groups’ rather than ‘classes’ suggests that the category of subalternity cannot be reduced to class. Rather, subalternity points to socio-cultural dimensions such as race, gender, etc. This also opens up to an understanding of subalternity in terms of caste, see some suggestions in Green (2011: 399-400) and Zene (2010: 242). For a more general perspective about a Gramscian approach to caste, see Zene (2013). See also Chapter 7.
 - 16 This argument develops Kate Crehan’s position on hegemony because, as will become clear, subalternity and hegemony are dialectically related. In this respect, according to Crehan (2002: 104) “hegemony for Gramsci simply names the problem – that of how the power relations underpinning various forms of inequality are produced and reproduced – that is he is interested in exploring. What in any given context constitutes hegemony can only be discovered through careful empirical analysis”.
 - 17 For a critical discussion on this issue, see Chapter 7.
 - 18 The question of hegemony in Gramsci’s work and its relation to the problem of domination is too wide to be discussed in the present work. For some suggestions and some bibliographic references, see for example Cospito (2009).
 - 19 As Baratta (2007: 126-128, 147-148) has pointed out, Gramsci argued that the intellectuals are the only group that is able to develop a new proletarian culture based on the progressive aspects of folklore, and to potentially mend the schism between popular and high culture. Significantly, Baratta continues, Cirese has criticized the extent to which Gramsci succeed in putting forward a coherent theoretical and political framework so as to solve the problem of this schism. Baratta (148-158) has presented a solution to this problem that draws on Gramsci’s conceptual toolbox. Similarly, Davidson (1999: 62-66) has discussed the relation between folklore and ‘modern thought’ in the *Prison Notebooks*, and applied this to the contemporary condition. In this respect, Davidson has argued that Gramsci addressed the construction of a ‘unity through cultural differences’. At the same time, though, Davidson has discarded the problem of ‘uprooting and replacing’ folklore. See also Massucco Costa (1958: 203-204) and Liguori (2011a: 61-62).
 - 20 The degree of purity or embeddedness of subalternity as well as the spaces of emancipation that can be carved out of this situation will be recurrent themes throughout the whole circulation of the ‘subaltern question’, up to the recent debates in the social sciences. See also the Conclusion of this work.
 - 21 Folklore is not exactly a synonym for subaltern culture, although it represents an aspect of this culture.
 - 22 An extensive discussion on these issues would require a closer scrutiny of the *Prison Notebooks*. Suffice it to say that Gramsci’s discussion on the ‘quantitative’ difference between folklore and the official conceptions of the world is part of a broader argument. In particular, this discussion is based on Gramsci’s principle, according to which ‘all men are philosophers’, and it is also related to the ways in which the schism between the intellectuals and ‘the simple’ can be mended, see for example Cirese (1982 [1976]: 238-240) and Liguori (2011a: 60). In this respect, the ‘quantitative’ difference that blurs the separation between ‘low’ and ‘high’ culture is at odds with the action of a political party, which ‘uproots and replaces’ folklore with a new proletarian culture grounded on

-
- Marxism, see for example Baratta (2007: 126-128, 147-158), Cirese (1982 [1976]: 241-242), Liguori (2011a: 61-62) and Massucco Costa (1958: 203-204).
- 23 This work will refer to either 'direction' or 'leadership', thus following Hoare and Smith's remarks in their *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971). In this respect, they have argued that "[t]here is a real problem in translating the Italian *"dirigere"* and its compounds: *direzione*, *dirigente*, *diretto*, *direttivo*, etc. *"Dirigere"* means to "direct, lead, rule" [...]. *"Dirigente"* is the present participle of *"dirigere"* – e.g. *"classe dirigente"* is the standard equivalent of "ruling class" – and as a noun is the normal word for (political) "leader" [...]. *"Direzione"* covers the various meanings of the word "direction" in English, but is also the normal word for "leadership" (Gramsci 1971: 55 note 5).
 - 24 The Factory Councils (*Consigli di Fabbrica*) were the Italian example of a wider group of socialist – although not necessarily communist – mobilisations that took place at the beginning of the 20th century, such as the British Shop Stewards, the German *Arbeiterräte*, the Russian *Soviets*, the Hungarian Republic of Councils, etc. These mobilizations created specific forms of worker's institutions – that is, the Workers' Councils. These were created around geographical units or factories, and were put under the direct economic control of the workers, so as to achieve the workers' self-government of economy and society. Although these mobilisations were all inspired by the Russian *Soviets*, they did not necessarily influence each other – that is, each mobilizations unfolded quite autonomously. In this respect, the Factory Councils resulted from the political activity of the Italian workers' movement in the metallurgic factories during 1919. Subsequently, the Factory Councils spread in other industries. Significantly, the metallurgic factories were also the context where the 'old' workers' institutions – i.e. the Internal Commissions – developed at the beginning of the 20th century, particularly in Turin. Therefore, the Factory Councils were inspired by the Russian *Soviets*, but they were grounded on the Internal Commissions. In this respect, the Factory Councils can be considered as the highest political achievement that resulted from 15 years of struggles within the Italian metallurgic factories, particularly those of Turin. At the same time, the Factory Councils can also be considered as one of the most significant outcome of the Red Biennium (1919-1920), because of their central role during the Occupation of the Factories in September 1920. See in this respect Battini (1988: 193), Clark (1977: 1-2), Sbarberi (1986: 31-32) and Spriano (1964: 99; 1971: 52, 69-70). For a general perspective on the Workers' Councils at the beginning of the 20th century, see Corvisieri (1970). For a discussion on the Internal Commissions, see for example Clark (1977: 36-45) and Spriano (1971: 46-49, 1972: 120-125, 162-171, 173-176, 349-350).
 - 25 For a more extensive discussion, see Piu ([in draft]).
 - 26 Gramsci has contextualised the 'theoretical translation of historical life' within his argument about spontaneity and direction in the history of subaltern groups. However, as Jackson (2016: 220) has noted, this 'theoretical translation' is immediately relevant to political activity. An extensive discussion on the ways in which this 'translation' is related to political theory and political activity would be outside the scope of this work. In this respect, see some suggestions in Fresu (2010: 81-82) and Paggi (1970: 220-223). See also the Conclusion of this work.
 - 27 For more references, see for example Clemente (1976a: 19-20; 1976b: 115-116), Ginsborg (1990: 72-140) and Rauty (1976: 8-11, 17-18).
 - 28 The present work will use the term 'subaltern' and 'popular' interchangeably. This is coherent with Gramsci's position in Q27, which has explicitly defined 'the people' as "the sum total of the instrumental and subaltern classes of every form of society that has so far existed" (Gramsci 2000: 360 [Q27 §1]). A fortiori, this is also coherent with the ways in which the Italian folklore debates have deployed the term 'popular culture' in relation to Gramsci's Q27.
 - 29 This thematic and non-philological systematization of Gramsci's prison notes was edited by Felice Platone and Palmiro Togliatti – who was the secretary of the PCI as well as Gramsci's comrade in the *Ordine Nuovo* group – and thus it was designed according the cultural policy of the PCI. In this respect, the 'Togliatti-Platone' version was foundational for the identity and the legitimization of the party both within the post-war Italian political environment and the Third International. See in this respect Capuzzo and Mezzadra (2012: 34-42) and Liguori (2012: 92-96). It was only in 1975 that Einaudi published the philological edition of the *Prison Notebooks*, which was edited by Valentino Gerratana. Significantly a critical edition of Q25 for the Anglophone area will be published very shortly, as the result of Buttigieg and Green's editorial effort, see Gramsci (2021). Nevertheless, and despite Buttigieg's edition of the first eight Notebooks (1992; 1996; 2007), there is still nothing comparable to the Gerratana's version Q27 in the Anglophone area.
 - 30 This was already a given in De Martino's previous work – to the extent that he had already claimed that the so-called primitive societies were not simply the 'objects' of history, see Pasquinelli (1977:

-
- 5-6). However, his 1949 article represented a crucial shift, because it extended these observations to the subaltern masses in Europe and, particularly, Southern Italy, see Pasquinelli (1977: 7). Significantly, this shift was prompted by De Martino's observations on USSR ethnography, see De Martino (1977 [1949]: 61-62).
- 31 In this respect, his position resonates with that of Gramsci. But also, as will become clearer in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, it resonates with the observations of *Subaltern Studies* and Spivak more than 30 years later. In particular, *Subaltern Studies* and Spivak have raised the question of agency and have criticized the relation between the material exploitation and the epistemic/symbolic exclusion of subaltern groups from historiography or, more generally, the dominant discourses. Nevertheless, in these later developments of the 'subaltern question', the critique of historiography or dominant discourses is an ex-post critique – that is, it is an academic reflection on representation and agency that is inspired by experiences of engagement with subaltern groups. Conversely in De Martino's case, the critique of the social sciences is immediately functional to the aims of subaltern movements – that is, it is formulated within these movements and for these movements. In this respect, the question of agency is not so much the outcome of a theoretical reflection. Rather it is a self-evident assumption that supports a practical-political perspective of intervention. At the same time, the status of dominant forms of knowledge is different in De Martino's case: the hegemonic discourse is not waiting to be challenged by the historian or the academic scholar. Rather, the 'traditional' approach of the social sciences has already gone through a crisis, due to the "the subaltern popular world's irruption into history" (De Martino 2017 [1949]: 65). Therefore, De Martino's point is not (just) the critique of the discipline – this is somehow a given – but it is an interrogation of what intellectuals can do for the subaltern masses within their concrete struggles.
 - 32 The use of the term 'acceptance' in this work is in line with Keim's remarks on the modes of reception of knowledge. Here, 'acceptance' "means a positive affirmation of the received knowledge. It appears useful for the scholar's own work to directly include it into one's argument; it generates heuristic insights or analytical clarity on which one can build" (Keim 2014: 98).
 - 33 A discussion on the historical limits of De Martino's position and the controversies raised by his article is outside the scope of this work, see respectively Clemente (1976a: 23-24, 27, 31-32, 34), Pasquinelli (1977: 17) and Rauty (1976: 17) for a discussion on the limits, and Luporini (1977 [1950]), Fortini (1977 [1950]) and Anderlini (1977a [1950]) for the controversies. Suffice it to say that De Martino's observations outlined a research programme whose concrete developments were barely sketched out, see Meoni (1976: 47-48). In this respect, it was only after 1954 that his work provided the complete picture, see Pasquinelli (1977: 14-15). In particular, he argued that the socio-economic enquiries on the material oppression of the subaltern classes had to be supplemented with the analysis of their cultural oppression. This analysis in turn aimed to shed light on the ways in which cultural oppression resulted from specific historical conditions, i.e. specific institutions or specific political and cultural processes, see De Martino (1977f [1954a]: 159). In the case of the peasant masses in Southern Italy, De Martino traced back their 'cultural misery' (superstition, paganism, etc.) to the cultural policies of the Catholic Church in the Southern countryside, see for example Rauty (1976: 20).
 - 34 That is, according to Gramsci's definition, a conception of the world that is "many-sided – not only because it includes different and juxtaposed elements, but also because it is stratified, from the more crude to the less crude if, indeed, one should not speak of a confused agglomerate of fragments of all the conceptions of the world and of life that have succeeded one another in history" (Gramsci 2000: 360 [Q27§1]).
 - 35 The extent of this autonomy in De Martino's work cannot be discussed in the present work.
 - 36 In this respect, Dei (2018: 91, 94, 95-120) has highlighted the ambivalent reception of Gramsci's position on subaltern autonomy in the folklore debates. In particular, Gramsci never considered subaltern cultures as objects separated from the hegemonic culture and isolated from historical dynamics. De Martino was closer to Gramsci's position – at least after he rejected the idea of progressive folklore in 1954, see also Satta (2017: 249-251). Conversely, Cirese and his followers were more ambivalent. In this respect, they did not deny a historical understanding of subaltern cultures in relation to the hegemonic culture. Nevertheless they highlighted the autonomous and separated features of subaltern cultures. Therefore, they leaned towards an 'essentialist' characterization of subaltern cultures, which is in itself illustrative of the creative reception of Gramsci's position in Q27.
 - 37 The progress from stagnation to a new direction in the folklore debates was related to the end of the Southernist struggles as well as to the displacement of political activity towards Northern Italy in the

- late 1950s, in the context of an accelerated and unequal phase of economic development – the so-called ‘Italian Economic Miracle’, see Rauty (1976: 24-25). The ‘Economic Miracle’ exacerbated the North-South divide in the country and fostered the migration of a significant part of Southern proletarians (workers, peasants, etc.) towards Northern Italy, not least the Northern industries, see Ginsborg (1990: 210-225). This opened up a phase of political protagonism of the workers in the Italian factories, thus leading to a new cycle of social struggles which unfolded for almost two decades, up until the end of the 1970s (250-253; 298-348). In this context, the political protagonism of the workers resulted into specific forms of cultural production – mostly related to the diffusion of the ‘political songs’ – which became the object of the new phase of the folklore debates, see Rauty (1976: 26).
- 38 The rest of the present work will refer to the English translation of this essay, “Gramsci’s Observations on Folklore” (1982 [1976]), which appeared within *Approaches to Gramsci* (1982), an anthology edited by Anne Showstack Sassoon. Curiously, Showstack Sassoon misspelled Cirese’s second name, thus addressing him as ‘Alberto Maria’ rather than as ‘Alberto Mario’. This mistake can be ostensibly found within the great majority of the Anglophone literature that refers to Cirese’s work.
 - 39 *Demologia* studies the cultural diversities that exist within Western societies, whereas ethnology (anthropology) studies the cultural diversities that exist outside of Western societies. See in this respect Cirese (1976b [1968]: 160-161).
 - 40 Significantly though, his general position is more nuanced, because it oscillates between a relational and an essentialist conception of popular culture, see for example Dei (2018: 32). In any case, Cirese’s position on the autonomy of folklore has been the conceptual support to his idea of ‘internal cultural gaps’ within Western societies, see Cirese (1976b [1968]) and Pasquinelli (1977: 35). Cirese has argued that subaltern cultures within Western societies have developmental dynamics and patterns that are different from those of the hegemonic culture. This has in turn provided the theoretical ground to his *demological* approach, see Satta (2017: 241). See an evaluation of this position in Dei (2018: 104-120; 121-137) and Satta (2017: 239-242, 245).
 - 41 See also Chapter 4.2, which discusses the connection between Cirese and David Arnold’s work, and thus between the second wave of the Italian folklore debates and *Subaltern Studies*.
 - 42 The idea of a ‘circulation at the margins’ – along with the idea of a ‘marginalized circulation’, as Chapter 4.2 will illustrate – develop Keim’s understanding of the ways in which knowledge circulates, see Keim (2014). This is because these two modes of circulation emphasise the importance that indirect or mediated connections have for the production of knowledge.
 - 43 This is further confirmed by my email exchange with David Arnold, a member of the *Subaltern Studies* group: “[t]he more recent use of subalternity in relation to India and post colonialism has [...] become[s] a trope, a metaphor, for a much wider phenomenon of oppression and hegemony. The comparators lie elsewhere than in Italy and its Gramscian literature, which remains little known in India or those who work on South Asian studies” (D. Arnold 2019, personal communication, 6 December, my parenthesis).
 - 44 In fact, De Martino is not mentioned anywhere in Hobsbawm’s work, notes, and so on, see Di Qual (2017: 137). This might come as a surprise, considering their shared political and research interests, as well as their similar itineraries in the South of Italy. For example, between 1953 and 1954 they travelled across a specific part of Calabria – particularly, they visited some *arbëreshe* communities (Albanian-speaking minorities in Southern Italy) and they studied their history and their culture (137-140). Moreover, as Ciavolella (2016: 441) has noted, Hobsbawm met De Martino in Rome in 1950, because they were both members of the Honorary Committee at the institution of the Antonio Gramsci Foundation.
 - 45 That is, forms of struggle that are not able to express and organize their aspirations and needs according to the language and the manners of the modern mass political subjects. See Hobsbawm (1959a: 1-3, 8).
 - 46 Hamish Henderson (1919-2002) was a Scottish poet and a Communist who fought with the Italian partisans during World War II. After the end of the war, he kept in touch with the Italian Communists, who informed him about the publication of Gramsci’s work. In 1948, he began to translate Gramsci’s *Letters from Prison*, but this translation was published only between the 1970s and the 1980s. See some references on Henderson in Boothman (2015: 15), Di Qual (2017: 123) and Forgacs (1995: 55).
 - 47 Piero Sraffa (1898-1983) was an Italian economist based in Cambridge, who worked with Keynes and inspired Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* (2014 [1953]). Most notably for the purpose of

-
- this work, he was also Gramsci's very close friend – to the point that he politically, intellectually and economically supported him during the years spent in prison. In particular, Gramsci extensively spoke with him about his theoretical interests. Notably, Sraffa also opened an unlimited account in Gramsci's behalf at a bookshop in Milan, from which he bought many of the books he read in prison. See some references in Frosini (2009a: 798-799).
- 48 In fact, on the one hand Hobsbawm talks about subaltern agitations that “were almost invariably destined to *unsuccess*”, and he considers subaltern history as “a history of almost inevitable defeats and [...] an inability to win [*vincere* in the original Italian]” (Hobsbawm 1960: 443, my emphasis, my parenthesis, own translation). On the other hand, Gramsci argues that “subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up” and that their “tendency to unification [...] can only be demonstrated if a historical cycle [...] culminates in a *success* [...] only [...] *victory* breaks their subordination” (Gramsci 1971: 55 [Q25 §2], my emphasis). Moreover, Hobsbawm claims that subaltern movements are not able “to *break* the framework of a society ruled by the dominant classes” (Hobsbawm 1960: 443, my emphasis, own translation). Whereas, according to Gramsci, only their ““permanent” victory *breaks* their subordination” (Gramsci 1971: 55 [Q25 §2], my emphasis).
 - 49 See Chapters 4 and 5 for the controversy between Hobsbawm's *Primitive Rebels* (1959a) and Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in India* (1983a).
 - 50 In this respect, as Donini (1988: 144) has recalled, in 1949 he became a member of the editorial board of *Società* – that is, the journal where De Martino published his “Towards a History of the Subaltern Popular World” (1949) in the autumn of that year.
 - 51 Notably, Hobsbawm was also aware of the research of Vittorio Lanternari – another anthropologist who contributed to the Italian folklore debates. In particular, Hobsbawm wrote a review for the *Times Literary Supplement*, where he discussed Lanternari's *Religious movements of freedom and salvation of the oppressed people* (1960), see Hobsbawm (1961). It is evident that this book could not influence *Primitive Rebels* (1959a), at least because Lanternari's work was published a year ahead Hobsbawm's book. Interestingly though, Lanternari contributed to the controversies in the Italian folklore debates. In this respect, he argued against the idea of an autonomous popular culture. Nevertheless he considered popular culture not only as a form of resistance or a limit to the hegemonic culture, but also as an operating force that might have an impact on it, see Lanternari (1977 [1954]: 210-212, 215-217). Following these intuitions, Lanternari's 1960 book argued that ‘traditional’ forms of culture, i.e. religion, can be understood as symbolic forms that express the emancipatory aspirations of the subaltern classes, see Zene (2015: 66-69).
 - 52 In this respect, Hobsbawm has mentioned the example of the ‘Sicilian Fasci’ movement in the *arbëreshe* village of Piana degli Albanesi, in Sicily, see Hobsbawm (1959a: 93-107).
 - 53 See Chapter 4.
 - 54 This discussion on the events related to the publication of *The Modern Prince* (1957) is based on Boothman (2015: 15-16), Buttigieg (2018: 28-29), Di Qual (2017: 189-191), Forgacs (2015 [1995]: 147-149) and Hobsbawm (2002: 219).
 - 55 In this respect, as Rosengarten (1995: 153) has observed, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (1957) does neither provide any critical apparatus, nor any explanation for the keywords – not to say any historical contextualisation of the selected passages. Moreover, Forgacs (2015 [1995]: 148) has noted that Marks' introductions to the various sections of the book are sometimes too forced in their interpretations.
 - 56 In the same year a small US leftist publisher, Cameron Associates, issued a further selection of Gramsci's writings for the US public, *The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci* (1957), which was edited by Carl Marzani. Nevertheless, this publication did not have any significant impact on the circulation of Gramsci in the US and thus in the Anglophone area. See some references in Buttigieg (2018: 26-27) and Forgacs (2015 [1995]: 148 note 1).
 - 57 In this respect, as Liguori (2016: 89) has observed, ‘subordinate’ is the generic meaning for the term ‘subaltern’, and thus it is socio-politically less specific.
 - 58 See note 11.
 - 59 Interestingly, a quick scrutiny of the *Subaltern Studies* series immediately demonstrates that the group was influenced by the discussion on the political aspects of subaltern insurgencies, which in turn resulted from the controversy between Guha and Hobsbawm. For some references, see for example Arnold (1984b: 112-115), Chatterjee (1984: 181), Sw. Dasgupta (1985: 118-121) and T. Sarkar (1985: 158).

-
- 60 See Buttigieg (2018: 29-31), Boothman (2015: 17-18) and Forgacs (1995: 149-151) for a detailed account of the publication and the features of the *Selections* (1971).
- 61 As mentioned, the 'epistemic approach' understands subalternity as a perspective external to the hegemonic domain, which is used to analyse the implicit regulative code that organises hegemonic discourses. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 will provide a more detailed account of the ways in which *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial studies approached to Gramsci's observations on subalternity. Moreover, these chapters will evaluate the different scopes of use and applicability of the 'subaltern question' in these new contexts. Significantly, Buttigieg formulated his argument on the 'methodological reduction' of Q25 in relation to *Subaltern Studies*. Nevertheless his reflections can be easily extended on the one hand to Postcolonial Studies, because the Postcolonial reading of Gramsci is mainly based on the *Selections* (1971) – although, as Chapter 7 will argue, Buttigieg's observations do not necessarily apply to Spivak's case. On the other hand, they can be extended to the current debates in the social sciences analysed in this work, because they have drawn on Postcolonial Studies and *Subaltern Studies*.
- 62 To name but a few: a selection from the *Letters from Prison* (1979); the *Selections from Political Writings. 1910-1920* (1977); the *Selections from Political Writings. 1921-1926* (1978); the *Selections from Cultural Writings* (1985); Cammett's *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (1967); the English translation of Fiori's biography of Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary* (1970 [1966]). See a more detailed list in Datta Gupta (1994: 18).
- 63 See also Capuzzo (2008: 37-38) for a more detailed account. This Gramscian interpretation of the history of 'postcolonial' India is thus grounded on Guha's point of view, and it is obviously debatable. A complete and exhaustive account of the 'postcolonial' history of India would be outside the scope of this work. For a more comprehensive account of this phase of Indian history – and, particularly, of West Bengal – see for example Chatterji (2007) and Mallick (1993).
- 64 As will become clearer in this Section, this 'marginalization' refers to the fact that neither Arnold's article nor Cirese's work have been taken further in *Subaltern Studies*. Therefore, despite the existence of a link between *Subaltern Studies* and the Italian folklore debates, this link has not been central to the development of *Subaltern Studies* – that is, it has been marginalized.
- 65 Further aspects of this intellectual conjuncture – i.e. structuralism, post-structuralism and the Althusserian Marxism – will be addressed in Chapter 5, after an extensive account of the research programme of *Subaltern Studies*. This is because the impact that these intellectuals developments had on the project can be better understood after discussing the ways in which *Subaltern Studies* have approached the 'subaltern question'.
- 66 Although the existence as a proper school is debatable. In this respect, see Brass (2000), Ludden (2001: 6-7), Stein (1990) and Vezzadini (2010: 153-154).
- 67 The internal development of *Subaltern Studies* was characterized by a 'shift' or 'turn' at the end of the 1980s, which has been defined either as 'postcolonial', 'post-structuralist' or 'postmodern', see for example Bahl (1997: 1333-1334), Chatterjee (2010b [1998]: 297), Chaturvedi (2000: xi-xii), Chibber (2013: 7, 209), Ludden (2001: 18), Mussi and Goés (2016: 309) and Prakash (1994: 1483). In this respect, the terms 'shift' or 'turn' are not completely accurate, because they do not adequately highlight that the later research interests of the project were already present in its early stage, just not as prominently. Therefore, the present work will understand this 'shift' or 'turn' not as a simplified demarcation between 'before' and 'after', rather as a new balance in the project's research priorities. The early *Subaltern Studies* were mainly interested in the insurgencies of subaltern groups, as well as in the autonomous political consciousness of the rebels – particularly, the peasants – see Chaturvedi (2000: xi), Chatterjee (2010a: 83) and Hardiman (1986: 290). More generally, they were interested in class analysis, see Chaturvedi (2007: 9-15), as well as in the study of an autonomous subaltern politics which was recovered *outside* of the dominant discourses, see Ludden (2001: 17) and Prakash (1994: 1480, 1482). The later *Subaltern Studies* mostly focused on recovering the subaltern consciousness *within* the dominant discourses (*ibid.*) and thus on studying the representation of subaltern subjectivities, see Ludden (2001: 15-17), Fox (1989: 887) and Chatterjee (2010a: 83). In this respect, scholars have pointed out that later *Subaltern Studies* prioritised discourse analysis, so as to challenge the core categories of the Enlightenment, see Chaturvedi (2000: xii; 2007: 9-10, 15-18).
- 68 For the use of the word 'subaltern' in relation to: peasants, see for example Bhadra (1985: 245-256) and Pandey (1982: 143); tribals, see for example Arnold (1982: 91) and Bhadra (1985: 256-263); workers, see for example Chakrabarty (1983: 265) and Pandey (1984: 233); small landlords, see for example Bhadra (1985: 230-245); religious authorities, see for example Bhadra (1985: 263-73); petty

-
- bourgeoisie, see for example Guha (1982b: 5); individuals, see for example Guha (1983b: 27, 33, 38) and Bhadra (1985: 230-273); groups, see for example Amin (1984: 4), Chakrabarty (1983: 265) and Pandey (1982: 150; 1984: 259).
- 69 Notably, the *Selections* (1971) refer to Q25 §2, which is a so-called 'C-text' – that is, a note of the *Prison Notebooks* that was re-adapted from a previous version (an 'A-text'). In this respect, Q25 §2 is a later version of Q3 §14. In Q3 §14 – which does not appear in the *Selections* (1971) – Gramsci refers to subaltern *classes*, rather than subaltern *groups*, see Gramsci (1996: 21 [Q3 §14]). Although Gramsci uses 'classes' and 'groups' interchangeably, see Green (2002: 9 note 7) and Liguori (2016: 123), the shift from 'classes' to 'groups' is central to *Subaltern Studies*. This is because the project's understanding of subalternity includes not only class, but also 'caste, age, gender, office, etc.'. Therefore, *Subaltern Studies* have grasped a central aspect of Gramsci's conception of subalternity: they have considered a variety of socio-cultural dimensions that do not necessarily fall under the rubric of class. Nevertheless, this resulted from a fortuitous coincidence rather than from a deliberate choice: *Subaltern Studies* employed the only term that was available to them ('group'). As illustrated, the *Selections* (1971) have made the terminological shift completely transparent.
- 70 Chatterjee (1982: 31-32; 36-38) has discussed the agency 'in transition' from communal to class politics of the Bengali peasants movements during 1920s-1930s, and he grounded this transition on the processes of class differentiation occurring within peasants communities of the area.
- 71 See also Hardiman (1984: 225-228), who describes the INC attempt to control and gain the consensus of the Devi movement between 1921 and 1924.
- 72 See a similar case in Arnold's discussion (1982: 131-133) of the 1879-80 and 1886 *fituris* in Gudem-Rampa.
- 73 See other examples of 'assertion of subaltern autonomy within older frameworks' in Henningham (1983: 145, 159) and Arnold (1982: 135, 141; 1984b: 114-115).
- 74 For the codes of articulation of subaltern consciousness in terms of: shared beliefs, see for example Amin (1984: 2), Bhadra (1985: 242) and Chatterjee (1982: 18, 31); religious ideas, see for example Amin (1984: 29-30), Arnold (1982: 121), Bhadra (1985: 242, 267) and Pandey (1982: 168-171); class consciousness, see for example Amin (1984: 25-47), Guha (1983a: 169-173) and Pandey (1982: 182); political imaginaries, see for example Bhadra (1985: 242-243) and Chatterjee (1982: 34-35); collective memories, see for example Bhadra (1985: 241-242); rumours, see for example Amin (1984: 48-51), Arnold (1987: 68-77) and Pandey (1982: 164-165); moral economies, see for example Pandey (1982: 167-174).
- 75 To what extent is subaltern consciousness actually 'collective' in *Subaltern Studies*? An analysis of what the project has left out can answer this question. These exclusions undermine the idea of collectivity, because they show the unacknowledged methodological bias that underpin this conception of collectivity. For example, the work of *Subaltern Studies* has dedicated very little space to the Dalit question. Issues of caste and the situation of Dalits have been mentioned since the early volumes of the series, see for example Arnold (1982: 111) and Pandey (1982: 167-168; 1984: 264). Nevertheless, only *Subaltern Studies XII* has provided an extensive discussion, see Mayaram, Pandian and Skaria (2005). See further suggestions in Zene (2010).
- 76 For example, T. Sarkar (1985: 156-158) has argued that the Santal leaders of the protests in Malda (1924–1932) repurposed the images of Gandhi and used his symbols. This not only reinforced the leaders' legitimacy vis-a-vis their community, but also provided the tribal culture with a previously unknown belief in a supreme and benevolent principle, which contributed to the unification of the tribal movement. Tribal solidarity and religious practices resulted from the mobilisation of 'modern' nationalist symbols, and thus they can be considered as historical products of the early 20th century colonial India, rather than a mere residual from the past. Similarly, Arnold (1984b: 75-90) has explained the weakening (and thus, the historical development) of tribal solidarity in Madras during the 1876-1878 famine by addressing the divergent class interests of the peasant proprietors (*raiyyats*) and the landless labourers. In this context the unfolding of the riots was affected by the erosion of customary obligations that were foundational to tribal solidarity, because they underpinned the subalterns' expectations towards the elite's response to the famine.
- 77 Chibber (2013: 160-161, 185, 288-290) has argued that Chatterjee and Chakrabarty's arguments contribute to an Orientalist tendency in the work of the group, whereby cultural practices are grounded on a sort of exoticised Eastern psychology. However, his observations do not invalidate the ways in which this chapter analyses the 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies*, and their historical understanding of the culture and the politics of subaltern groups. This is because Chibber's analysis of Guha highlights an opposite tendency. Significantly, Kaiwar (2014: 95-96 note

-
- 256) has discussed the Orientalism implicit in Guha's *Elementary Aspects* (1983b). In particular, he has questioned the idea of grounding the 'endurance and longevity of the peasants through a multiplicity of vicissitudes' on the 'continuities of a precapitalist logic'. Nevertheless, he has also argued that the problem is not so much about this endurance and longevity or about these 'notional continuities', rather it is about understanding them outside of a historical context. In this respect this chapter have illustrated the historical understanding of cultural practices in *Subaltern Studies* – particularly, in Guha's work. Therefore, Guha (1983a) is not necessarily part of the Orientalist tendency that affects some contributions to the series.
- 78 In his discussion about the Adivasi politics in Midnapur, Sw. Dasgupta (1985: 133-134) has mentioned the ways in which the grammars related to communal fishing were mobilized against private property during insurgencies. This shows the deployment of pre-colonial grammars within a modern context – that is, a context created by colonial inequalities (104-115) – and in response to this context, as the question of private property suggests.
- 79 Is there any *qualitative* difference between the subaltern and the elite domain? The answer is not straightforward. On the one hand, some members of the group have emphasised a radical (and qualitative) distinction between the two domains, thus pointing to an unacknowledged Orientalism, see a discussion in Chibber (2013: 160-161, 185, 288-290) and Kaiwar (2014: 90-96). On the other hand, this Section argues that the questions of a subaltern 'theoretical consciousness' and subaltern agency suggest only a quantitative distinction. Additionally, in Chibber's view (2013: 162-166), *Subaltern Studies* do not necessarily assume that the peasants' 'political psychology' in colonial India was different from 'the bourgeois consciousness'.
- 80 There are many other reasons that motivated Sumit Sarkar's decision to leave *Subaltern Studies*: for example, the anti-modernist stance in the later phase of the project, that was (unwillingly but dangerously) close to contemporary Hindu nationalism. See S. Sarkar (2000 [1997]: 313).
- 81 Althusser's idea of 'relative autonomy' addresses a basic question in Marxist theory – that is, the relation between base and superstructure. Superstructure is determined by base, but only in the last instance. That is, base affects the ways in which specific social groups act, as well as their condition of existence, although not deterministically. Therefore, the development of superstructural configurations is relatively independent from the economic base. Social groups have political space for agency and intellectual elaboration. In this respect, they are able to produce historically specific effects that are not reducible to the non-deterministic influence of the economic base.
- 82 That is, the hypothesis according to which Althusser conveyed much of what passes as Gramsci's thought within Postcolonial studies – Stuart Hall included, see Brennan (2001: 153-163, 165, 179).
- 83 Chaudhury (1987) and Spivak (1985b: 347, 349-350; 1987: 99) are the only other direct references to Althusser in *Subaltern Studies* before 1988.
- 84 That is, the idea according to which the *Prison Notebooks* employed the word 'subaltern' as a code-word for 'proletarian', so as to avoid the fascist censorship. This 'thesis' recurs quite often within *Subaltern Studies*, see for example Arnold (1984a: 162) and Chatterjee (2010b [1998]: 289). For a philological critique of this thesis see for example Green (2011: 387-393) and P. Thomas (2015: 86).
- 85 The reference to Schwarz (2000 [1997]) is justified because he argues that "Guha's contributions [...] should not be taken as representative of the group's varied researches [...] but [...] [they] are characteristic of the spirit animating the formation of the *Subaltern Studies* project" (2000 [1997]: 305).
- 86 Bayly (1988: 115) has observed that the emphasis on subaltern autonomy in Pandey (1983) and Hardiman (1984) has deflected these studies from examining the ways "in which elite politics, institutions and economic and social distinctions [...] play a role in limiting an forming subaltern action".
- 87 Both O'Hanlon (1988: 211-212) and Sivaramakrishnan (1995: 399-400; 405-413) have argued that *Subaltern Studies* have often understood subaltern cultures in the light of a timeless primordiality which is grounded on a Levi-Straussian conception of myth and religiosity. An extensive discussion of this issue is outside the scope of this work. As demonstrated in Section 5.2, *Subaltern Studies* have addressed the historical development of the subaltern (political) cultures in colonial India. In particular, they have illustrated the ways in which (subaltern) grammars were constructed through historically determined social practices and were included within hegemonic processes – or, were re-worked and re-activated in interaction with elite material within modern contexts.
- 88 As Nilsen (2017: 50-51) has noticed, the issue here is that "the focus is on how subaltern groups interpret elite messages in a way that often conflicts with its official meaning, on the basis of traditional religious frames of references [...] [whereas] it is rarely asked if this process also entails a

-
- reinterpretation of subaltern cultural traditions". In response, one can observe for example the ways in which the political culture of the (Adivasi) Devi movement in South Gujarat during the 1920 was re-interpreted due to the influence of nationalist politics, see Hardiman (1984: 226-228). Hardiman describes a shift in the sources of political authority – from the 'traditional' divine possession to resolutions put to a mass vote and 'modern' leadership – which made Adivasi politics more secular in tone. This shift took place in a context where new political demands (national independence) were integrated with the old objectives of the movement (challenging the dominance of the moneylenders and liquor-dealers). As such, Hardiman's study points to processes whereby political and cultural traditions are re-interpreted in the light of 'new' developments, and not just vice versa. See also a theoretical discussion about processes of reinterpretation of subaltern cultural traditions in S. Sarkar (1984: 319-320).
- 89 As P. Thomas (2018: 863-864) has argued, in Gramsci's view subaltern groups are included or integrated into the hegemonic relations of the state. At the same time, they are never outside of these relations: subaltern groups are constituted as such by these relations, thus they are not simply 'included' within them. In particular, their formation as a social group results from the processes of material constitution of the modern state.
 - 90 These observations also challenges Roosa's (2006: 135) idea of 'subaltern' and 'elite' as categories that operate a 'grand conflation' of actors under two groups devoid of class determinations – especially, determinations of property. On the class connotation of subalternity in *Subaltern Studies* see also Chakrabarty (1985: 375-376).
 - 91 O'Hanlon (1988: 200-201), Sivaramakrishnan (1995: 404) and S. Sarkar (2000 [1997]: 303-304) have argued that Henningham (1983), Ram. Guha (1985), Sw. Dasgupta (1985), T. Sarkar (1985), Guha (1983a) and Chatterjee (1982; 1983) have taken the question of subaltern autonomy quite literally. However, the discussions in Section 2 have presented T. Sarkar (1985) as a nuanced account of the relations between the subaltern and the elite domain. Similarly, Ram. Guha, although he has argued that "the politics of the peasantry was clearly not derivative of the politics of urban nationalism" (1985: 87), has also showed that the 'incendiarism' of the peasants in Kumaun during summer 1921 was influenced by the campaign of Kumaun Parishad (a nationalist organisation) for firing the forest (1985: 88-89). Moreover, Henningham (1983: 145, 153, 159) has illustrated the permeability between the subaltern and the elite domain. For example, he (1983: 147) has argued that the tactics employed in Bihar and Eastern United Provinces during the subaltern insurgencies of 1942 developed previous nationalist tactics. More generally, other commentators – e.g. Masselos (1992: 108) – have claimed that studies like Henningham (1983) have shown "the interweaving of action against the British Raj by both subalterns and elites". S. Sarkar's observations (2000 [1997]: 304-305) on Chatterjee (1982; 1983) deserve particular attention. He has discussed Chatterjee's tendency to use a terminology that *might* refer to an essentialist distinction between the elite and the subaltern domain. As such, S. Sarkar's considerations ostensibly contradict the argument in Section 2, according to which Chatterjee (1982) illustrates the cultural and political interrelations between subaltern and elite. However, the contradiction is only apparent, because S. Sarkar has argued that Chatterjee's terminology is essentialist, but only retrospectively – that is, back to 1982, nobody in the group found that terminology problematic. Therefore, Chatterjee's essay is not inherently 'essentialist'. Rather, this interpretation is an a posteriori critique that derives from observing how one possible tendency in the project became prominent. It is also interesting that S. Sarkar (1984: 273) has denied the 'essentialist charge' which constitute his critique of *Subaltern Studies* 15 years later.
 - 92 On theories and quasi-theories as the 'engines' of historical narratives, see Topolski (1997: 91-92).
 - 93 To name but a few possible examples: the often-cited "parallel to the domain of elite politics there existed [...] another domain of Indian politics in which the principal actors were [...] the subaltern classes and groups [...]. This was an autonomous domain, for it neither originated from the elite politics, nor did its existence depend on the latter" (Guha 1982b: 4). Moreover "the relatively unorganized world of politics among the people continued to exist, and exist quite autonomously. When it came into contact with the world of organized politics, it left its imprint on the latter" (Chatterjee 1982: 17); "[f]or domination to exist, the subaltern classes must necessarily inhabit a domain that is their own, which gives them their identity, where they exist as a distinct social form, where they can resist at the same time as they are dominated. [...] The point is to conceptualise a whole aspect of human history as a history, i.e., as a movement which flows from the opposition between two distinct social forces" (Chatterjee 1983: 59); "the culture to which [...] the worker

-
- belonged [i]n essence was a pre-capitalist culture with a strong emphasis on religion, community, kinship, language and other primordial loyalties" (Chakrabarty 1983: 308).
- 94 On the question of social composition, see the Conclusion of this work.
- 95 This is to some extent suggested in S. Sarkar (1984: 272-273): he has warned *Subaltern Studies* against the risks of using a very rigid 'elite vs subaltern' distinction. Moreover, he has observed that this 'rigid use' is far from the intentions of the members of the group, who have always wanted to emphasise the 'diversities of social composition of subaltern groups'.
- 96 Following Cusset (2008 [2003]), the term 'French-Theory' will be used as a convenient and at the same time reductive shortcut, so as to address the creative reception of French authors such as Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Lacan and so on in the US literature departments and later in the whole US academy. This 'creative reception' had a very significant impact on the American cultural and intellectual environment. In particular, it resulted in a great variety of theories, interpretations, methodologies, critiques, publications, zines, jargon, and so on, and inspired political positions, artistic endeavours, lifestyles, mass cultural products, etc.
- 97 Significantly, Spivak's critique does not address the little space that *Subaltern Studies* have dedicated to the question of caste – i.e. in terms of the Dalit question. See also Chapter 5 note 75.
- 98 A discussion about the trajectory of *Subaltern Studies* in the global academy – which approximatively coincided with the 'later' phase of the project – would be outside the scope of this work, see some critical reflections in O'Hanlon and Washbrook (1992), Prakash (1990, 1992) and Sarkar (1994). Suffice it to say that the engagement between Spivak and *Subaltern Studies* peaked with *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988). This collection of essays from the first five volumes of the series was published in New York by Oxford University Press thanks to Said and Spivak's conjoined effort, and represented the first selection from *Subaltern Studies* "before a general Anglo-American audience" (Said 1988: x). Significantly, the role that Said and Spivak played in the publication of this collection marked the globalisation of the project as well as its postcolonial / poststructuralist / postmodern turn. This was not only because they directed the interest of *Subaltern Studies* towards Foucault and Derrida (Mussi and Goés 2016: 301-302). But also, because Spivak and Said's 're-invention' of the project for a global public had an impact on both its circulation and its new balance in research interests. In particular, Said's "Foreword" to the volume (1988: ix) explicitly presents the book as "part of the vast post-colonial cultural and critical effort", thus sanctioning the rebalancing of research interests as well as the re-articulation of the project as a Postcolonial endeavour in front of a global audience, see also Chaturvedi (2000a: xii) and Ludden (2001: 22). Most notably, Said impacted on the global circulation of *Subaltern Studies* by politically legitimising the project as the extension of the anti-colonial struggle (vii). As with the case of *French Theory* (Cusset 2008 [2003]: 5, 10, 118-119, 158-160), Said's political endorsement conceivably resonated with the pragmatic character of the 'radical' humanities departments in the US academy, which measured the success and the value of a theory in terms of its usability and political applicability. However Said's contribution to the globalization of *Subaltern Studies* appeared to be less crucial than the role that Spivak played in this situation. In particular Spivak published a revised (although substantially identical) version of "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" (1985b), which appeared as the "Introduction" (1988b [1985b]) to the volume. In this respect the globalization of *Subaltern Studies* (and the global circulation of the 'subaltern question') was due not so much to the other contributions in the volume. Rather, it was fostered by the diffusion of her revised essay and by its influence on the reading public. As Chakrabarty (1998: 461, see also Chatterjee 2010a: 85) has argued: "[m]ost North American scholars, particularly those constituting the reading publics in university and college English departments, read only Spivak and ignored the rest of the volume for quite some time. The best-known contribution of that volume to seminar-speak for a long time remained the phrase "strategic essentialism." [...] [O]ne can safely attribute the later popularity of Subaltern Studies in the U.S. academy to a whole constellation of forces, among which Spivak's own energetic advocacy on behalf of Subaltern Studies must be given a very prominent place. [...] In the United States Spivak was a larger presence than the rest of the volume". As such, in the light of the content and the extent of diffusion of her essay, Spivak disseminated a deconstructive reading of the project as well as a deconstructive and postcolonial critique of the representation of subaltern consciousness, thus contributing to spread the 'epistemic approach' to the 'subaltern question'.
- 99 The argument about Spivak's critique of Foucault and Deleuze is a translated, reworked and expanded version of the argument in Piu (2019: 66-69).
- 100 The argument about Spivak's discussion on *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1972 [1852]) is a translated, reworked and expanded version of the argument in Piu (2019: 40-42).

-
- 101 However, Spivak has not developed further this point. According to Gramsci the role of the intellectuals is to organise the transition from class-in-itself to class-for-itself. In other words, the role of *all* the intellectuals – not just the intellectuals who are organic to subaltern classes – is to connect different class positions and different class identities within a historic bloc, see for example Gramsci (1996: 199 [Q4 §49]) and Green (2002: 18 and 18 note 12). Therefore, in a Spivakian fashion, the intellectual combines *Darstellung* and *Vertretung*, and thus operates within the cleavage between class-in-itself and class-for-itself. The discussions on spontaneity/direction and *Darstellung* /*Vertretung* overlap. For a discussion on the intellectuals in the organisation (direction) of the historic bloc see for example Badaloni (1973: 81-85).
- 102 Notably, Spivak's position on Gramsci is not completely accurate. This might be related to her reading of Gramsci at that time, which was inevitably limited to the *Selections* (1971). It is true that Q25 does not directly account for the 'interference of an imperialist project'. However, Gramsci has mentioned race as a constitutive dimension of the subaltern condition, see Gramsci (1975: 2286 [Q25 §4]). More importantly, as mentioned in Chapter 1, his discussion on the repression of Lazzaretti's movement (2279-2280 [Q25 §1]) has addressed the ways in which hegemonic intellectuals who promoted scientific racism (e.g. Lombroso) re-codified subaltern insurgencies in Italy as 'individualistic, barbaric, folkloristic or pathological'. In this respect, the road to hegemony of the Italian subaltern groups *was* complicated by the 'interference of an imperialist project'. Or at least, it was complicated by an epistemic device organized along the lines of race. In particular, this device represented the Southern peasants as backward, barbaric, biologically inferior and so on, thus contributing to spread prejudices among the workers in the factories of Northern Italy. These prejudices in turn separated the workers of the North from the peasants in the South, and therefore undermined their alliance for a proletarian revolution in Italy, see for example Gramsci (1966: 134-136).
- 103 Two excerpts from Spivak's work justify the connection between 'listening' and 'interpreting'. The first excerpt points to a discontinuity between 'speaking' and 'listening' in Bhubaneswari's story: "I presented 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' as a paper twenty years ago. In that paper I suggested that the subaltern could not 'speak' because, in the absence of institutionally validated agency, there was no listening subject" (Spivak 2012g [2004]: 326, my emphasis). The second excerpt illustrates the same discontinuity, although this time between 'speaking' and 'reading' or 'deciphering', and thus 'interpreting'. Therefore, 'listening' and 'interpreting' are related to each other: "Busia strikes a positive note for further work when she points out that [...] I am able to *read* Bhubaneswari's case, and therefore she has *spoken* in some way. Busia is right, of course. All speaking, even seemingly the most immediate, entails a distanced *decipherment* by another, which is, at best, an interception. That is what speaking is. [...] Yet the moot decipherment by another in an academic institution [...] many years later must not be too quickly identified with the 'speaking' of the subaltern" (Spivak 1999a: 309, my emphasis). It is now possible to understand the relation between the structuralist metaphor of 'reading' and the postcolonial metaphor of 'listening' discussed in Chapter 5. The metaphor of 'listening' is an empty signifier which organises the epistemic operations of the reader: interpreting (and thus, reading), representing, etc. The connotations of this metaphor derive from Spivak's deconstructionist critique of these operations, respectively the (im)possible retrieval of an objective meaning, the tension between *Darstellung* and *Vertretung*, etc. Therefore the metaphor of 'listening' recognizes the centrality of reading. However, it also points to the limits of reading, as illustrated by Spivak's re-interpretation of the question trace in Derrida.
- 104 This is different from the interpretation in de Jong and Mascot (2016: 718), Iuliano (2012: 169), Nilsen and Roy (2015: 7) and Varadharajan (2016: 739). In fact, these scholars have argued that Spivak's differential definition of subalternity is not descriptive or not empirical. However, as this Section will demonstrate, Spivak's differential definition of subalternity *can* describe some forms of social exclusion. The differential definition is thus not necessarily disentangled from an empirical reference. However the disconnection from an empirical reference can be actualized through a specific deployment of this differential definition of subalternity. For a different perspective, see for example Legg (2016: 797-798).
- 105 Notably, Spivak's later work has re-discussed the extent of this 'external position' by addressing the question of the 'aboriginal cultures of responsibility'. Her early work has considered these 'cultures of responsibility' as examples of subaltern autonomy that are not endowed by hegemonic discourses. Conversely, her later work has recognized that these 'cultures of responsibility' are rather the product of a hegemonic culture, and therefore they are internal to it. In particular, these 'cultures of responsibility' are the product of the material and historical condition of oppression of

-
- the aboriginal populations. See for example Spivak (2012b: 3, 30; 2012e [2000]: 212-213; 2012f [2001]: 97, 115).
- 106 The shift from collective to singular, and thus from subaltern groups to subaltern individuals, can be understood as the distinctive feature of the Postcolonial reception of Gramsci's idea of subalternity, see for example Liguori (2011b: 40), Morton (2016: 771), Spivak (2012a: 224) and P. Thomas (2015: 83). Notably, as discussed in Chapter 1, Gramsci's reflections on subalternity have opened up the conceptual space for this shift. However, this intuition was lost during the circulation of the 'subaltern question'. Or, at least, there is no bibliographic evidence that points to the reception of this intuition in Postcolonial studies, see Liguori (2011b: 40). See also Chapter 7.
- 107 The 'old' subalternity is a problematic definition of subalternity. For example, the definition points to arguments such as: "[t]he working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern. It's in capital logic, you know what I mean?" (Spivak 1992: 45-46). See also Spivak (1990c: 142). This is ostensibly at odds with Gramsci's understanding of subalternity, according to which the working class *is* subaltern. See Piu (2019: 225-229) for a detailed discussion of the problems raised by this understanding of subalternity in Spivak's work.
- 108 The formal subsumption of labour under capital is the subjection of labour to the process of valorisation of capital, without a parallel revolution in the technical condition of production. That is, capital as a form is applied onto a pre-existing social content so that, for example, artisans become salaried workers, although their production is still based on artisanal techniques. Capital thus influences a social context, and integrates it within the relations of production, although it does not modify its internal organisation. See Marx (1990 [1867]: 1019-1035) and, for example, Napoleoni (1972: 66-68).
- 109 The ways in which Postcolonial studies emerged in the US and the UK are different, see Hogan (2001: 530-243). Nevertheless, as the discussions in this Section will illustrate, the processes of institutionalisation are quite similar – if not overlapping.
- 110 That is, the issues addressed by the soon-to-be Postcolonial scholars resonated with localized and general problems raised by these new institutional and historical conditions. A complete account of these conditions is outside the scope of this work. To name but a few: postcolonial perspectives met the academic demands for cultural diversity in the context of the US multicultural education reform, see Sharpe (2000: 112-116). At the same time, they met the requirements of transnational corporations, which could no longer afford cultural parochialism and rather promoted the need to 'internationalize' academic institutions, thus 'importing' and 'exporting' students and faculty members, see Dirlik (1998 [1994]: 75). Moreover, Postcolonial studies emerged in response to a crisis of understanding due to the inability of categories such as 'progress', 'modernization', and 'the Third World' to account for the emergence of a new global situation (73). Postcolonial studies contributed to enhance the theoretical awareness of progressive scholarship which sought to 'write back to the empire', to contest the colonial silencing of 'the people' and to un-think Eurocentrism, see Lazarus (2004: 7-13). At the same time, the institutionalisation of the field represented a complex intellectual response to the defeat of anticapitalist and liberationist ideologies within Western-based intellectual circles. In this respect, it was in tune with the widespread political position against Marxism and nationalist insurgencies, and thus it found favour with the conservatives in the academia, see Dirlik (1998 [1994]: 66), Lazarus (2004: 5) and Lazarus and Varma (2008: 311).
- 111 In terms of developments internal to the university, Boehmer and Tickell (2015: 319) have discussed the growing number of theoretical work and teaching texts on postcolonial themes as well as the great prominence that postcolonial literature gained in the humanities curricula. In terms of developments external to the university, Moore-Gilbert (1997: 7) has considered the role of the publishing industry, which distributed the 'primary' literature (novels, etc.) that feed into research in Postcolonial studies, thus contributing to the institutionalisation of the field. Notably, Moore-Gilbert as well as Boehmer and Tickell have focused on the situation in the UK academy, but their considerations can be extended to the US context.
- 112 The situation is obviously more complex, but a more nuanced account of these intellectual trajectories would be outside of the scope of this work. For example, scholars have observed that, during the 2000s, there was a disproportion between enrolments in graduate courses and jobs in Postcolonial studies. In particular, they have noted decreasing enrolments and increasing job demand. Moreover, scholars have argued that employers usually expected PhD graduates to be specialized not only in Postcolonial studies, but also in other intellectual fields. In this respect, early career academics with specialization in Postcolonial studies have not necessarily found a position

-
- that was coherent with their training, due to the variability of the hiring profiles in different Departments. Or, similarly, the early careers' teaching duties have not necessarily been limited to their area of specialization, etc. See in this respect Hasseler and Krebs (2003).
- 113 That is, the 'intellectual profit' that scholars gained from quoting her essay in their work. In this respect, the dynamics of reception of *French Theory* in the US academy (and thus, in Postcolonial studies) can be extended to the reception of Spivak's work among postcolonial scholars. A postcolonial scholar "owes a good portion of his [sic] prestige to the unique way in which he [sic] draws on great authors, forming a real trademark, calling upon them in order to associate himself with their works, citing them along the way to back up his own argument. "One reads when one has a market in which ... discourses on these readings can be situated," as Bourdieu stated, suggesting the idea that a given quotation would have a certain *profitability*" (Cusset 2008 [2003]: 195). In this way, Spivak's work and her reflections on subalternity gained academic recognition thanks to her intellectual relation to the French theorists, see Cusset (2008 [2003]: 195-196, 198-202). This recognition is illustrated by the inclusion of her work into the canon (293). In other words, Spivak's academic success is related – although not completely reducible – to the 'intellectual profit' that she gained from quoting Derrida, Foucault, etc. in her work. At the same time, the extent of her academic success is illustrated by the fact that she was the 'founder of discursivity' of postcolonial reflections on subalternity: work such as "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) has established the rules of discursive formation for other postcolonial reflections on subalternity, see some examples in Morris (2010: 9-13). One generation later, similar dynamics of recognition characterise the relation between Spivak and the scholars who work within the discursive rules created by her texts. The fact that she is a 'founder of discursivity' points to the high profitability of her quotes, which grant academic legitimacy to these scholars. In this way, Spivak represents a standard reference for postcolonial works on subalternity. This has brought to an inflation of citations from her work – particularly, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988a) – which became canonical, and thus central to the reproduction of academic discourses on subalternity and to the circulation of the 'subaltern question'.
- 114 The account of the political circulation and institutionalisation of the 'subaltern question' in this Section is obviously limited and debatable. Not least because it is predominantly based on Spivak's own point of view, rather than on a more encompassing perspective that discusses the complex, mobile, non-linear and unpredictable aspects of this institutionalisation. However, an analysis of this 'encompassing perspective' would have required a totally different kind of work. The 'institutional account' in this Section gestures towards the more complex enquiry that is needed. Significantly, this 'institutional account' is at odds with other 'biographical' approaches to Postcolonial studies, which have highlighted their implicit 'antagonistic' potential, i.e. by discussing their roots into anticolonial, antiracist and/or radical thinkers and movements from the 'Third World' or Europe, or by emphasising the ways in which radical 'enunciative spaces' were created out of the institutionalization of the field, see for example Young (2001: 4-6, 61-63, 384). In this respect the 'institutional account' in this Section has the advantage of highlighting the concrete 'complicity' of Postcolonial studies with the historical conditions of its emergence, rather than its simple 'antagonism'. The position of Postcolonial studies *within* the institutions will provide the context to explain the ways in which subalternity was reduced to a 'buzzword' in the US academy.
- 115 More generally, the ways in which mobilisations in US campuses adopted postcolonial perspectives contributed to the circulation and institutionalisation of Postcolonial studies, and thus to the circulation and institutionalisation of a specific understanding of subalternity. This is because these mobilisations fostered the dissemination of Postcolonial theories, languages and concepts embedded in those mobilisation, which were in turn institutionally validated. The claims of the 'marginal on campus' can be understood as practices of recognition grounded on postcolonial perspectives. These perspectives in turn used the 'subaltern question' in a way that was recognized by (and functional to) the academic institution. On the impact that Postcolonial studies had on the rhetoric of recognition within the practices of on-campus US social movements, see for example Lazarus and Varma (2008: 311).
- 116 As mentioned, this account of the political circulation of the 'subaltern question' in the US academy is limited to Spivak's own perspective. This does not imply that her perspective is exhaustive of the whole circulation. That is, 'schism' is only one among the many other possible relations that intellectuals and subalterns can establish in the US academy. An academic from a subaltern background who is also a community organiser, for example, might as well be considered as an

-
- ‘organic intellectual’. However, a more detailed discussion of this issue is outside the scope of this work.
- 117 A discussion about the gendered dimension of the ‘new’ subalternity is outside the scope of this work.
- 118 In fact, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988a) is internal to a perspective that considers the ‘subaltern as an object of study’, see Spivak (2012a: 224). In line with *Subaltern Studies*, Spivak’s essay has emphasised the question of archival and textual inquiry, the representation and the effacement of the subaltern as well as their irretrievability within hegemonic discourses. The subaltern is not a living person, rather a textual effect – that is, an (im)possible objective reference in the archive.
- 119 A detailed discussion on the ways in which Spivak understands ‘agency’ and its connection with ‘citizenship’ would be outside the scope of this work. Suffice it to say that Spivak has provided two definitions of agency: the first is ‘institutionally validated action’, see for example Spivak (1999a: 71, 364; 2005a: 481). The second is ‘the possibility of self-synecdochizing in a metonym’, see for example Spivak (2005a: 481; 2007a: 44-45) and Mascot (2016: 784-785). According to Spivak (2005a: 483), citizenship is connected – if not reducible – to agency: “it should be clear that “insertion into the public sphere” means for me the effort to create the possibility of metonymizing oneself for making oneself a synecdoche, a part of a whole, so that one can claim the idea of the state belonging to one. That is a citizen”.
- 120 This position differs from Legg (2016: 795), who has argued that Spivak has considered agency and subjectivity as mutually exclusive. At the same time, it is different from the perspectives in Mascot (2016: 781) and Varadharajan (2016: 741), who have argued that Spivak has disentangled the ‘old’ subalternity from agency.
- 121 This account is one sided, because it does not consider the processes of political mobilisation of Adivasi people. For a broader overview of the history of the Adivasi groups, see for example Bates and Shah (2017), Bokil (2002), Dandekar (2009), Devy (2013), M. Gandhi (2012), Government of India (2008), Iuliano (2012: 150-152 note 2), Jay, Qureshi and Mongia (2015: 9-43), Jenkins (2006: 120-134), Korra (2017: 61-62), Nilsen and Roy (2015: 1-4) and Spivak (1999b: 591-593). See also note 124.
- 122 Spivak (1999a: 390-391, 414) refers to Prabartana Weavers, a collective which organises networks of home-based weavers outside of the circuits of textile sweatshops. This collective is part of a bigger organisation, UBINIG (Bengali acronym for *Unnayan Bikalper Nitinirdharoni Gobeshona*, Policy Research for Development Alternatives) which in turn collaborates with FINRRAGE (Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproduction and Genetic Engineering). This shows the links between the struggle against reproductive engineering and the alternatives to sweatshop labour, see respectively <https://www.ubinig.org/index.php/campaigndetails/showArticle/5/12> and https://www.finrrage.org/?page_id=25 (Last access: 23 April 2021).
- 123 In this respect, for example, Spivak has mentioned FINRRAGE, see Spivak (1999a: 390).
- 124 The capacity of political mobilisation of Adivasi groups spans from those groups who, as with Spivak’s case, fight (or are helped) to become ‘subjects of rights’ or ‘citizens’, to those groups who are part of wider social movements or political subjects. Significant examples in this respect are some of the Adivasi communities of the Narmada Valley. Throughout the 1980s-2000s, these communities participated to the broader mobilisations that sought to oppose the processes of dispossession related the construction of dams in that area, see for example Nilsen (2007) and (2010). Significantly, these mobilisations can be understood as part of those collective forms of the ‘new’ subaltern that Spivak has discusses in her work – particularly, the ‘non-Eurocentric movements for ecological justice’.
- 125 This association supports and collaborates with politically organised Adivasi groups who mobilise for their rights. Notably, as Spivak (1999b: 594) has argued, some members of the DNT-RAG have a Kherya Sabar background. Moreover, the DNT-RAG is connected with the NGO Paschim Banga Kheria Sabar Kalyan Samiti. As Gupta (2011: 155) has illustrated, this NGO is organised mostly by Kheriya Sabars and for these communities: for example, it provides them with educational facilities (153-154, 156). It should come as no surprise that Spivak’s teaching activity is directly related to this NGO (153, 155).
- 126 The Gramscian scholar P. Thomas (2018: 871-873) has put forward a similar argument by claiming that the ‘subaltern’ in Spivak’s (early) work is an almost mystical concept, in a Wittgensteinian sense: the subaltern cannot speak, but also they are ‘figures of whom one should not speak’. This Section illustrates a rather different interpretation. That is, Spivak’s work *does* speak of subaltern groups in a concrete way, and thus her concept of subalternity has different scopes of applicability. Moreover,

-
- the 'mystical' figure of the subaltern is not 'the subaltern'. Or, as Spivak (2000b: xx) has argued, "the subaltern 'is' not the absolute other". The 'mystical subaltern' is the rhetorical support to her reflections on representation (*Darstellung/Vertretung*) – that is, the centre of her 'po-ethics of subalternity'. See a more detailed discussion in Piu (2019: 120-172).
- 127 This does not imply that these commentators have avoided using Spivak's understanding of subalternity for empirical purposes. Rather, the point is that they have accepted the empirical / theoretical fracture in Spivak's work, and that their studies have subsequently discussed the ways to mend this fracture.
- 128 Some of the discussions in this Section are a translated, reworked and expanded version of some arguments in Piu (2019: 204-237).
- 129 As illustrated in Chapter 5 and 6, this issue was already implicit in Guha's differential definition of subalternity and, more generally, in the work of *Subaltern Studies*. Nevertheless, it widely circulated in the Postcolonial field through Spivak's early work.
- 130 A discussion on the 'pedagogical question' in Gramsci as well as its resonances with Spivak's writings is outside the scope of this work. For the 'pedagogical question' in Gramsci, see for example Baldacci (2016; 2017), Broccoli (1972) and Manacorda (1970). See also the Conclusion of this work. For some references to the reception of Gramsci's 'pedagogical question' in Spivak's work, see for example Spivak (2012a: 222-223, 230-231; 2014a: 34-35).
- 131 In fact, Liguori (2011b: 34) has argued that Spivak's work influenced a particular postcolonial reading of Gramsci, which denies a class perspective to the 'subaltern question'. Moreover, P. Thomas (2015: 86, 91-92) has discussed Spivak's work in the context of his critique of the postcolonial approaches to the 'subaltern question'. In his perspective, these approaches have offered a trans-historical understanding of subalternity, like 'a night in which all the subalterns are immediately and simply subalterns'.
- 132 P. Thomas' position does not consider the nuances in Spivak's 'rhythm of thought' of subalternity. According to his position (2018: 861-862, 871-873), Spivak understands the subaltern as outside the hegemonic processes, because she has defined subalternity as an experience of exclusion from/outside of the hegemonic logics. At the same time he (863) has explicitly recognized that Spivak's position on the 'new' subaltern does not consider the subaltern as removed from hegemonic logics. Nevertheless he has not integrated this aspect within his general argument and, in any case, he has considered the 'old' subaltern as merely outside of the hegemonic logics. Significantly, Nilsen and Roy have suggested a perspective that implicitly disagrees with P. Thomas. They (2015: 9) have argued that in Spivak's view "the subjectivity of the subaltern does not lie [...] outside of power relations, but is constituted through these", and that the "new subalterns [...] are positioned as entirely subjected to hegemonic power" (11). Nevertheless, they have also claimed that Spivak's understanding of subalternity "suggests a position of absolute exteriority in relation to hegemonic formations" (ibid.).
- 133 This dissertation understands the sociological imagination as the imaginative function that produces social theories and theories of sociology. That is, on the one hand this imaginative function produces social imaginaries that inform specific conceptualization of social relations, social hierarchies and social change. On the other hand, it also informs theories and imaginaries on: the nature of sociology, the kind of knowledge that sociology produces, and the relations between sociology and other disciplines or forms of knowledge. See Go (2016b: 1) for a definition of social theory that mentions the conceptualization of social structures. This definition of social theory in turn resonates with the question of the sociological imagination. In fact, according to Mills (1959: 6, 10, 79), the exercise of the sociological imagination makes social structures intelligible. The 'expansion' of the scope of the sociological imagination from social theories to theories of sociology has been suggested in Santos (2014: 181, 184).
- 134 *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999a) and, more generally, Spivak's later work, are marginal in the global and Postcolonial sociologies debates. Significantly though, Ascione (2016: 318-319, 330-332) and McFarlane (2006: 1417, 1428-1429, 1433-1434) have discussed the deployment of Spivak's 'planetary' for an epistemological project in global and Postcolonial sociologies. This is because planetary expands the sociological imagination that produces the concept of 'global' beyond a Eurocentric and national perspective. In this way, 'planetary' addresses the world as a unit of analysis. In particular, it understands the 'global' as the articulation of multiple and connected perspectives on the world that span from 'the aboriginal animism to the white mythology of (social) science', and that are formulated by different 'epistemic communities'. However, as will become clearer in Section 3.1, Ascione and McFarlane's discussions are internal to an epistemic

-
- understanding of the ‘contribution problem’, and thus the limitations of their studies are co-extensive to the limitations of this epistemic understanding. At the same time, their approaches are closer to Spivak’s early work than to her complex explanatory matrix of subalternity.
- 135 This does not imply that there are no references to Gramsci at all. For example, the debate around an ‘organic’ public sociology is inspired by Gramsci’s theorisation of the organic intellectual, see for example Burawoy (2005; 2007 [2005]; 2008a), Martinelli (2008) and Wieviorka (2008).
- 136 Significantly, some of these context-specific analyses have contributed to the development of the global and Postcolonial sociologies debates, i.e. Nilsen (2016), Raman (2017) and S. Roy (2016) – although they cannot be reduced to these debates. This complicates the account of the relation between global and Postcolonial sociologies and the ‘subaltern question’. In fact, the context-specific analyses in global sociologies have sometimes engaged with the ‘subaltern question’ and its postcolonial understandings. Some contributions – e.g. (Roy and Nilsen 2016: 228) – have acknowledged the direct influence of *Subaltern Studies* and Postcolonial Studies, whose reflections have also inspired more accurate definitions of subalternity, see Raman (2017: 104 note 1). Nevertheless, other contributions have also deployed the ‘subaltern question’ in ways that are not immediately or explicitly related to the postcolonial understandings of this issue. In this respect, the word ‘subaltern’ has been used in relation to particular social groups with specific socio-historical features – i.e. Adivasis, e.g. (Baviskar 2008; Nilsen 2016; Raman 2017); Dalits, e.g. (Banerjee-Dube 2014); migrant workers, e.g. (Shen 2008); women’s movements, e.g. (S. Roy 2016). The ways in which the politics of these groups has been analysed have contributed to a discussion on the ‘subaltern modernity’, see Raman (2017: 94). At the same time, these analyses have provided the conceptual ground to expand and thereby re-construct the categories of (global) sociology, see Banerjee-Dube (2014: 513-514, 527). Moreover, these concrete discussions on subaltern agency are considered as central to more complete and inclusive sociologies, in terms of both their interpretative categories and their projection beyond the academy. That is, in terms of sociologies that are able to dialogue with ‘the public’, and thus are developed alongside subaltern groups and in a critical relation with their mobilizations, see Baviskar (2008: 431) and Yuan (2008: 401).
- 137 As mentioned, the present work will use ‘social theory’ as a synonym for ‘theory of society’ – that is, the theory/ies of social structures, social hierarchies and social change. Whereas sociological theory will stand for ‘theory of sociology’ – that, the theory/ies that are concerned with the nature of sociology, the kind of knowledge that sociology produces, and the relations between sociology and other disciplines or forms of knowledge.
- 138 As will be clearer in the Conclusion of this work, this subaltern material is ‘derivative’ because it is *already* part of a hegemonic intellectual operation. In this respect, a social or a cultural fact is subaltern or hegemonic in relation to the ways in which it is used or acquires meaning within a system of cultural and social relations, see Dei (2012: 115). For example, the funeral dirge among the peasants of Southern Italy in the 1950s was subaltern not because it was inherently subaltern. Rather it was subaltern because the Catholic rituals were the hegemonic form of funeral. Conversely, the funeral dirge was hegemonic in the Ancient Greece, because it was practised by the dominant classes (ibid.). A cultural or social fact is called ‘subaltern’ because it is different from a hegemonic culture that observes, classifies and constructs it as ‘subaltern’ (112). In other words – or better, in ‘postcolonial words’, and from an epistemic perspective – the subaltern consciousness is *already-always* mediated by the intellectual. That is, it is *already* the textual effect of a hegemonic discourse. The question is to explore the space in between the subaltern-effect and the subaltern-as-difference.
- 139 Other recent studies have analysed the contexts of production and circulation of social theories and new sociologies – although they have limited their discussion to problems related to scholarly communities. In particular, these studies have explored the articulation between agency and structural/organisational constraints and enabling factors. On the one hand, scholars have analysed the role that individual choices and strategies play in the contexts where social theories or sociologies are produced, see for example Guilhot (2014: 66) and Rodríguez Medina (2014: 56-57). On the other hand, other scholars have illustrated the ‘macro-economic’ aspects of this articulation. In this respect, for example, they have discussed the circulation of knowledge according to a centre-periphery model. In particular, they have highlighted the material and institutional hierarchies that affect the epistemic inequality between central and peripheral sociologies/sociologists, see for example Çelik, Ersche, Keim et al. (2014: 11), Dados and Connell (2014: 195-196), Hill Collins (2013: 144-146), Keim (2008: 22, 24-27 2011: 124-126; 2014: 93-94) and Rivera Cusicanqui (2012: 102-104). At the same time, these studies have also pointed to the processes of “South-North as well as

-
- South-South circulation within the international social sciences” (Çelik, Ersche, Keim et al. 2014: 2). Or they have discussed the ways in which the circulation of knowledge might restructure the intellectual and political context in the peripheries “by forcing local actors to react to it” (Rodríguez Medina 2014: 42), see also Guilhot (2014: 70).
- 140 As the literature on Postcolonial studies has noted, subaltern perspectives in this field represent an epistemic challenge to dominant conceptions. In this respect, subaltern perspectives open up the space to rethink the ways in which we get to know the world. See some discussions in Chaturvedi (2007: 18), Mussi and Goés (2016: 307-308) and Zene (2015: 69).
- 141 As will be clearer in Sections 4 and 5, some of these context-specific analyses have sought to pay more attention to the ‘contribution problem’ as a social practice.
- 142 See Feyerabend (1993 [1975]) and Popper (2005 [1935]) for a general discussion on the context of discovery in sciences. In this respect, the present work will use the idea of the ‘context of discovery’ so as to account for the ways in which the formal organisation of a social/sociological theory results from socio-historical processes.
- 143 To name but a few of these strategies – which all point to the semantic scope of (political) intentionality: ‘listening to the subalterns’, see Go (2016a: 33); ‘co-creating among intellectual friends’, see Tilley (2017: 38-39); ‘thinking with the differences’, see Savransky (2017: 19, 21, 22-23); ‘formulating’, see Adésinà (2006: 138, 143); ‘dialoguing’, see Connell (2007: 224-229) and Santos (2014: 188-191; 2018: 15); ‘learning from the subalterns’, see Bhambra (2014a: 78, 86, 103, 132, 138); Connell (2007: 222-224; 2010: 48-49), McFarlane (2006: 1425-1429), Santos, Nunes and Meneses (2007: xlv), Santos (2014: 134-135, 224-227), and Savransky (2017: 12-13, 15-16); ‘establishing solidarity-based epistemologies’, see Connell (2015: 14); ‘translating’, see Santos (2014: 212-235; 2018: 16, 31-32); ‘creating connections between different histories and/or knowledges’, see Bhambra (2014a: 4, 141-142, 155), Connell (2007: 213-228) and Patel (2014: 610); ‘creating ecologies of knowledge’, see Santos (2014: 188-211); ‘creating geocultural pluralizations’, see Ascione (2016: 332); ‘creating epistemological coalescences or intercultural dialogues’ and ‘operating translations’, see Raman (2017: 93-94, 95, 99-100, 101, 102-103); ‘creating collectives for the production of knowledge’, see Dados and Connell (2014: 209) and McFarlane (2006: 1432-1433).
- 144 Significantly, Santos’ *Voices of the World* (2010) is very close to approach the ‘contribution problem’ as an epistemic issue and as a social practice. The volume is structured around some interviews between researchers and subaltern activists, in which the activists talk about their participation to social struggles and the practical knowledge that they have gained from these struggles. Each interview is followed by the researcher’s ending remarks. The interviews *are* social negotiations, and the researchers are *doing* social theory that is grounded on these social negotiations. Nevertheless the researchers do social theory *through* subalternity, rather than *with* subalterns. As Santos has argued in his own critique of the book: “it was not possible then to assume clearly the task of passing from knowing-about to knowing-with” (Santos 2018: 196). Therefore, the ‘contribution problem’ is not addressed as a social practice, because researchers are *not doing* social theory with subaltern groups. Rather, the social theory produced in *Voices of the World* (2010) is only the result of the author-function. Additionally, there is no integration between hegemonic and subaltern knowledges, because the latter is only derivatively subaltern (or, always-already hegemonised). Furthermore, Santos’ book does not problematize the complexities of social negotiations – that is, the interviews. Nor it has the ‘strategic imagination’ that understands and guides the engagement with extra-academic actors, so as to redress the imbalances of cultural power between intellectuals and subalterns. Compared to this approach to the ‘contribution problem’, the ‘epistemic minga’ in Santos (2018: 146-147) is one step forward and two steps back. The ‘epistemic minga’ seeks to redress the hierarchies between intellectuals and subalterns. However, it is discussed only at an epistemic level. That is, it leaves little space to discuss the integration between hegemonic and subaltern knowledges as a social practice, as well as the complexities behind such integration.
- 145 This is also confirmed by those scholars who have contributed to (or criticized) the approaches in global and Postcolonial sociologies. In this respect, these approaches are considered as epistemological projects which have strongly emphasised epistemological issues. See for example Bhambra (2014b: 223; 2014c: 451), Dados and Connell (2014: 195), Hill Collins (2013: 138), Patel (2014: 604-605), Reed (2013: 158-159), Savransky (2017: 12-13, 17) and Tilley (2017: 27-28). For some other indirect observations on this issue, see for example Boatcă and Costa (2010: 26) and Go (2013a: 28). For a radical critique of this tendency, particularly for a radical critique of decolonial approaches, see Rivera Cusicanqui (2012: 100-102).

-
- 146 Significantly, some of the contributions to global and Postcolonial sociologies have discussed the social contexts where social theories and new sociologies are created. Nevertheless, they have left little space to discuss the strategies that can guide the practical negotiations between academic and extra-academic actors, and that redress the imbalances of cultural power between them. In any case, their discussions have addressed a ‘political economy of knowledge’ that accounts for the global division of intellectual and sociological labour, see Burawoy (2011), Connell (2015: 3-7, 11-14), and Wieviorka (2008: 386-387); the processes of academic marketization, see Sorokin (2018: 35-37); the patterns of centrality and dependence that inform the unequal production and exchange of knowledge, see Connell (2010: 47-49; 2014: 211-126), Connell, Collyer, Maya et al. (2017: 22-23, 24-25, 27-28, 32) and Connell, Pearse, Collyer et al. (2018).
- 147 For example, Cox has used his concrete interactions with subaltern groups to develop new theories of social movements, and to analyse the ways in which these movements produce knowledge. Nevertheless, his research does not specifically address the ‘subaltern question’ – although his interest in Gramsci is evident, see for example Cox (1998). At the same time, Cox has been closely collaborating with Nilsen for years, see for example Cox and Nilsen (2007; 2013; 2014). Therefore, Cox’s research is relevant to the debates discussed in this chapter.
- 148 In this respect, the argument in this Section extends Keim’s observations on the circulation of knowledge ‘over institutional boundaries’ (scientific/not scientific boundaries) and between academic and extra-academic actors (negotiations of theory and practice), see Keim (2014: 91-93, 95-96, 104-105). The ‘circulation across the hegemonic-subaltern cleavage’ situates these ‘negotiations’ within a specific context. That is, a context where different actors, despite being “regarded as subjects in the knowledge building process” (105), do not dialogue on an equal footing due to power imbalances in cultural production.
- 149 As illustrated, the difference between folklore and official conceptions of the world lies in the ‘quantity of each qualitative element’, and not in an inherent qualitative difference. That is, compared to folklore, the official conceptions of the world are *more* internally coherent, *more* homogeneous, *more* logical, etc. Nevertheless, they both are ‘conceptions of the world’, and therefore there is no qualitative difference between them. Folklore is a special conception of the world – that is, a ‘spontaneous’ one.
- 150 For example, philosophies and imaginaries, see Santos (2014: 2-17); ‘movement’ theorising, see Barker and Cox (2002: 10-24) and Cox and Nilsen (2014: 5); practices, see Santos (2018: 146-147, 161-163); experiences, see Cox and Nilsen (2014: 5-8) and so on. See also Chapter 8.1 and Chapter 8.3.
- 151 In this respect, scholars have not provided a definitive answer on the scientific validity of theories grounded on subaltern perspectives. See for example Bhambra (2007a: 9-10, 147-148, 153-155), Emirbayer (2013: 135), Go (2016a: 11-13), Patel (2014: 609), Ray (2013: 152), Reed (2013: 162-168), Santos (2014: 190, 200, 205), Sitas (2006: 366) and Wörher, Keim, Ersche et al. (2014: 255). For a broader framework, see also Connell (2013: 177-179).
- 152 In the original text, Hall discusses the categories of ‘elite’ and ‘popular’. Nevertheless, they can be considered as synonyms of respectively ‘hegemonic’ and ‘subaltern’. A discussion on the overlap between ‘elite’ and ‘hegemonic’ on the one hand and ‘popular’ and ‘subaltern’ on the other hand would be outside the scope of this work. Significantly, the overlap between ‘popular’ and ‘subaltern’ is coherent with Gramsci’s position in Q27, which has explicitly defined ‘the people’ as “the sum total of the instrumental and subaltern classes of every form of society that has so far existed” (Gramsci 2000: 360 [Q27 §1]).
- 153 In the original version: “the project of the academic historian is still basically a representational project, which, as in Wittgenstein’s analytic, leaves everything as it is. Nothing is changed in the past because the past is past; but nothing is changed in the present either, because history contributes to its own disciplinary reproduction as an ideological state apparatus” (Beverley 2000: 41).
- 154 In the original version: “the accumulation of historical knowledge as cultural capital by the university and knowledge centers deepens already existing subalternities” (Beverley 1999: 34).
- 155 The persistence of the intellectual division of labour might come as a surprise – like a sort of elitist posture in *L’Ordine Nuovo*. Workers were able to have and produce informed position, after all: illiteracy was a relatively marginal issue in Turin at that time, see Castronovo (1987: 189). Moreover workers were ‘craving’ culture and were more and more interested in socialist perspectives, see Bermani (1980/1981: 12). Nevertheless, rank-and-file workers could hardly produce theoretical contributions similar to those of the *Ordine Nuovo* group (who commanded the use of Marxist concepts and Marxist interpretative frameworks). This was conceivably due to the pedagogical

-
- activity of the 'Popular Universities' and the 'socialism of the professors', which provided the workers with a culture that was 'external' to their own problems – that is, a culture that, albeit vaguely socialist, was still entangled and subsumed to the bourgeois culture of that time (ibid.). Significantly, it was the activity of *L'Ordine Nuovo* that raised the interest towards the development and diffusion of a 'workers' culture' in the workers' movement, see Spriano (1971: 42). More generally, it was only after the birth of the Communist Party in 1921, and even more after World War II, that the workers' movement began a systematic operation that elevated the political culture of the subaltern masses who, for the first time, learnt how to read a newspaper or to intervene in public discussions, see Liguori (2012: 122).
- 156 Significantly, the studies in global and Postcolonial sociologies that have engaged only with subaltern perspectives (rather than directly with subaltern 'epistemic communities') might still benefit from the creation of a single cultural environment – that is, from the 'collaborative turn'. This is because the collaborative turn represents an opportunity for sociologists, who can reflect upon the possibilities opened by their engagement with the public – for example, a public of actual subaltern groups or descendants of subaltern groups, whose experiences have been incorporated in global and Postcolonial sociologies. See some suggestions in Shilliam (2016).
- 157 A historical and conceptual reconstruction of the ways in which Gramsci (or better, the Togliatti-Platone's Gramsci) was interpreted by the *operaisti* is outside the scope of this work, see some suggestions in Capuzzo and Mezzadra (2012: 34, 42-46). Moreover, it might be objected that Gramsci's position on the intellectual division of labour can be more coherently critiqued from a Gramscian perspective, rather than from *conricerca*, so as to address the critique of the division of intellectual labour in sociology. For example, Baratta (2007: 157-158) has used the ideas of a 'contrapuntal dialectic' and the 'living philology' so as to question the hierarchies between leaders and masses, and to create a 'single cultural environment'. However, Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* are not specifically written for sociologists, whereas *conricerca* is a sociological tool for militants. That is, *conricerca* directly 'speaks' to the methodology of social sciences and to sociologists. Therefore *conricerca* is particularly appropriate to discuss the ways in which the division of intellectual labour in sociology can be challenged.
- 158 In the post-workerist debate, social composition 'enhances' the class composition framework, because it re-discusses the technical composition of the workforce within a wider social context. In other words, whereas technical composition is related to labour – that is, the productive dimension – social composition addresses the sphere of reproduction – that is, it understands the structural constraints outside of the working environment. As such, "social composition is the specific material organisation of workers into a class society through the social relations of consumption and reproduction. [...] It involves factors like: where workers live and in what kind of housing, the gendered division of labour, patterns of migration, racism, community infrastructure and so on" (Cant, Campanile et al. 2018). At the same time, despite their differences, social composition and technical composition form the material basis of political composition. See also Battaglia (1981: 77).
- 159 As Gramsci (2007: 345 [Q8 § 191]) has noted, a hegemonic relation is democratic as long as it "favours the transition from the groups that are led to the leading groups".
- 160 This is not necessarily a paradox from a Gramscian perspective because, as illustrated in Chapter 1, the actions and the conceptions of the world of subaltern groups always present some degree of direction.
- 161 In this respect, see for example Leyva and Speed (2008: 40-44), who have discussed examples of 'spontaneous and subaltern leaps forward' that have fostered the capacity of theory building in the group of co-researchers.
- 162 Significantly, Sitas has argued that the creation of a postcolonial sociology requires three strategical steps: firstly, the epistemic revolution from the 'South'; secondly, the need for learning from the 'Others'; thirdly, a collective knowledge-making. In particular, the third step is about *experiments* that *could* deal with collective knowledge-making (R. Thomas and Sitas 2019: 65-67). That is, it is about sociological attempts animated by an open-question: "[i]s it possible to co-theorise with people?" (2019: 67).

Bibliography

- Adésinà, Olújìmí O. (2006) "Sociology, Endogeneity and the Challenge of Transformation", *African Sociological Review*, 10 (2), pp. 133-150.
- Alam, Javeed (1983) "Peasantry Politics and Historiography: Critique of New Trend in Relation to Marxism", *Social Scientist*, 11 (2), pp. 43-54.
- Alatas, Syed Farid (2010) "Religion and Reform: Two Exemplars for Autonomous Sociology in the Non-Western Context"; S. Patel, (ed.), *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*, London: SAGE, pp. 29-39.
- (2014) *Applying Ibn Khaldūn. The recovery of a lost tradition in sociology*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Alicata, Mario (1977) "Il meridionalismo non si può fermare ad Eboli"; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 175-199, [or. ed. (1954) "Il meridionalismo non si può fermare ad Eboli", *Cronache meridionali*, 9, pp. 585-603].
- Alquati, Romano (1975) *Sulla FIAT e altri scritti*, Milano: Feltrinelli.
- (1993) *Per fare conricerca*, Padova: Calusca Edizioni.
- Althusser, Louis (1967) "Contradiction and Overdetermination", *New Left Review*, 41, pp. 15-35.
- Amin, Shahid (1982) "Small Peasant Commodity Production and Rural Indebtedness: the Culture of Sugarcane in Eastern U.P., c. 1880-1920"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 39-87.
- (1984) "Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur district, Eastern UP, 1921–2"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-61.

-
- (1987) “Approver’s Testimony, Judicial Discourse: The Case of Chauri Chaura”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 166-202.
- Amin, Shahid and Bhadra, Gautam (1994) “Ranajit Guha: A Biographical Sketch”; D. Arnold and D. Hardiman, (eds.), *Subaltern Studies VIII. Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 222-225.
- Anderlini, Luigi (1977a) “Marxismo e cultura popolare”; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 101-104, [or. ed. (1950) ‘Marxismo e cultura popolare’, *Avanti!*, 12 March].
- (1977b) “Quattro punti e una proposta”; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 123-127, [or. ed. (1950) ‘Quattro punti e una proposta’, *Avanti!*, 20 June].
- Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- Anderson, Perry (2016) “The Heirs of Gramsci”, *New Left Review*, 100, pp. 71-97.
- Arjomand, Saïd Amir (2008) “Southern Theory: an Illusion”, *European Journal of Sociology*, 49 (3), pp. 546-549.
- Armano, Emiliana and Sacchetto, Devi (2011) “Iperindustrializzazione e inchiesta: Romano Alquati”, [Online], URL: www.connessioniprecarie.org/2012/01/28/iperindustrializzazione-e-inchiesta-romano-alquati/ (Last access: 20 October 2020).
- Arnold, David (1982) “Rebellious Hillmen: the Gudem-Rampa Risings, 1839-194”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 88-142.
- (1984a) “Gramsci and Peasant Subalternity in India”, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 11 (4), pp. 155-177.
- (1984b) “Famine in Peasant Consciousness and Peasant Action. Madras 1876-8”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 62-115.

-
- (1987) “Touching the Body: Perspectives on the Indian plague, 1896–1900”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 55-90.
 - (2015) “Subaltern Studies. Then and Now”; A. G. Nilsen and S. Roy, (eds.), *New Subaltern Politics. Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 257-269.
- Ascione, Gennaro (2016) “Decolonizing the ‘Global’: The Coloniality of Method and the Problem of the Unit of Analysis”, *Cultural Sociology*, 10 (3), pp. 317-334.
- Ashcroft, Bill; Griffith, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen (eds.) (1995) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge.
- (2002) *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*, London and New York: Routledge, [or. ed. (1989) *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures*, London: Routledge].
- Badaloni, Nicola (1973) “«Direzione consapevole» e «spontaneità»”; N. Badaloni, L. Gruppi, G. Napolitano et al., *Ideologia e azione politica*, Roma: Editori Riuniti, pp. 73-100.
- Back, Les (2009) “Global Attentiveness and the Sociological Ear”, *Sociological Research Online*, 14 (4), [Online] URL: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/4/14.html> (Last Access: 20 October 2020).
- Baldacci, Massimo (2016) “Egemonia e pedagogia. Una critica delle interpretazioni di Gramsci”, *Materialismo storico*, 1-2, pp. 142-160.
- (2017) *Oltre la subalternità. Praxis e educazione in Gramsci*, Roma: Carocci.
- Balibar, Étienne and Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (2016) “An interview on subalternity (published in partnership with Éditions Amsterdam)”, *Cultural Studies*, 30 (5), pp. 856-871.
- Bahl, Vinay, (1997) “Relevance (or Irrelevance) of Subaltern Studies”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32 (23), pp. 1333-1344.
- Banerjee-Dube, Ishita (2014) “Caste, race and difference: The limits of knowledge and resistance”, *Current Sociology*, 62 (4), pp. 512-530.
- Baratta, Giorgio (2007) *Antonio Gramsci in contrappunto. Dialoghi col presente*, Roma: Carocci.

-
- (2008) “Gramsci ritrovato tra Cultural Studies e antropologia”, *Lares*, 74 (2), pp. 250-256.
- Barker, Colin and Cox, Laurence (2002) ““What have the Romans ever done for us?” Academic and activist forms of movement theorizing”, paper presented to *Alternative Futures and Popular Protest*, 8th annual conference, Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 2-4 April.
- Bates, Crispin and Shah, Alpa (2017) “Introduction. Savage Attack: Adivasis and Insurgency in India”; C. Bates and A. Shah, (eds.), *Savage Attacks. Tribal Insurgency in India*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 1-33.
- Battaglia, Alberto (1981) “Operaio massa e operaio sociale: alcune considerazioni sulla «nuova composizione di classe»”, *Primo Maggio*, 14, pp. 71-77.
- Battini, Michele (1988) “L’«Albergo Occidentale». Le note sulla civiltà industriale”; F. Sbarberi, (ed.), *Teoria politica e società industriale. Ripensare Gramsci*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, pp. 187-197.
- Baviskar, Amita (2008) “Public Sociology and Politics in India: What is to be Done?”, *Current Sociology*, 56 (3), pp. 425-433.
- Bermani, Cesare (1980/1981) “Gramsci operaista e la letteratura proletaria”, *Primo Maggio*, 14, pp. 11-20.
- (ed.) (1987) *Gramsci raccontato. Testimonianze raccolte da Cesare Bermani, Gianni Bosio e Mimma Paulesu Quercioli*, Roma: Edizioni Associate.
- Bayly, Christopher A. (1988) “Rallying Around the Subaltern”, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 16 (1), pp. 110-120.
- Berrocal, Emilio Giacomo (2009) “The Post-colonialism of Ernesto De Martino: The Principle of Critical Ethnocentrism as a Failed Attempt to Reconstruct Ethnographic Authority”, *History and Anthropology*, 20 (2), pp. 123-138.
- Beverly, John (1999) *Subalternity and Representation. Arguments in Cultural Theory*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- (2000) “The Dilemma of Subaltern Studies at Duke”, *Nepantla: Views from the South*, 1 (1), pp. 33-44.
- (2001) “What happens when the subaltern speaks”; A. Arias, (ed.), *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy. With a Response by David Stoll*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 219-236.

-
- Bhadra, Gautam (1985) "Four Rebels of Eighteen-fifty-seven"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 229-275.
- Bhambra, Gurinder K. (2007a) *Rethinking Modernity. Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*, Basingstoke: Palgrave and Macmillan.
- (2007b) "Sociology and Postcolonialism: Another 'Missing' Revolution?", *Sociology*, 41 (5), pp. 871-884.
- (2010) "Sociology after Postcolonialism: Provincialized Cosmopolitanism and Connected Sociologies"; M. Boatcâ, S. Costa and E. Gutiérrez Rodríguez, (eds.), *Decolonizing European Sociology. Transdisciplinary Approaches*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 33-47.
- (2013) "The Possibilities of, and for, Global Sociology: a Postcolonial Perspective"; J. Go, (ed.), *Postcolonial Sociology. Political Power and Social Theory, Volume 24*, Bingley: Emerald, pp. 295-314.
- (2014a) *Connected Sociologies*, London: Bloomsbury.
- (2014b), "Towards a Postcolonial Global Sociology"; W. Keim, E. Çelik, C. Ersche, and V. Wörher, (eds.), *Global Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences. Made in Circulation*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 223-235.
- (2014c) "Introduction: Knowledge production in global context: Power and coloniality", *Current Sociology*, 62 (4), pp. 451-456.
- (2016) "Postcolonial Reflections on Sociology", *Sociology*, 50 (5), pp. 960-966.
- Bhambra, Gurinder K. and Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2017) "Introduction: Global Challenges for Sociology", *Sociology*, 51 (1), pp. 3-10.
- Bhattacharya, Sabyasachi (1983) "History from Below", *Social Scientist*, 11 (4), pp. 3-20.
- Boatcâ, Manuela and Costa, Sérgio (2010) "Postcolonial Sociology: A Research Agenda"; M. Boatcâ, S. Costa and E. Gutiérrez Rodríguez, (eds.), *Decolonizing European Sociology. Transdisciplinary Approaches*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 13-31.
- Boehmer, Elleke and Tickell, Alex (2015) "The 1990s: An increasingly postcolonial decade", *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 50 (3), pp. 315-352.

-
- Bokil, Milind (2002) "De-notified and Nomadic Tribes. A Perspective", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37 (2), pp. 148-154.
- Boni, Livio (2012) "Avanzare dai margini. Il 25° «Quaderno» come matrice di un post-marxismo gramsciano?", *Studi Culturali*, 2, pp. 285-306.
- Boninelli, Giovanni Mimmo (2007) *Frammenti indigesti. Temi folclorici negli scritti di Antonio Gramsci*, Roma: Carocci.
- Boothman, Derek (2005) "Le traduzioni di Gramsci in inglese e la loro ricezione nel mondo anglofono", *inTRAlinea*, 7, [Online] <http://www.intralinea.org/archive/article/1632> (Last access: 15 September 2021).
- (2015) "Introduzione"; D. Boothman, F. Giasi and G. Vacca, (eds.), *Studi gramsciani nel mondo. Gramsci in Gran Bretagna*, Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 13-36.
- Borg, Carmel; Buttigieg, Joseph A. and Mayo, Peter (eds.) (2002) *Gramsci and Education*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Bracke, Sarah (2016) "Is the subaltern resilient? Notes on agency and neoliberal subjects", *Cultural Studies*, 30 (5), pp. 839-855.
- Brass, Tom (2000) "Unmasking the Subaltern, or Salamis without Themistocles", *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 28 (1), pp. 155-179.
- Brennan, Lance (1984) "Subaltern Studies I. Writings on South Asian History and Society. By Ranajit Guha", *Pacific Affairs*, 57 (3), pp. 509-511.
- Brennan, Timothy (2001) "Antonio Gramsci and Postcolonial Theory: "Southernism"", *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 10 (2), pp. 143-187.
- (2002) "Postcolonial studies between the European wars: an intellectual history"; C. Bartolovich and N. Lazarus, (eds.), *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 185-203.
- (2013) "Joining the party", *Postcolonial studies*, 16 (1), pp. 68-78.
- Broccoli, Angelo (1972) *Antonio Gramsci e l'educazione come egemonia*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia.
- Brown, David, L.; Bammer, Gabrielle; Batliwala, Srilatha and Kunreuther, Frances (2003) "Framing Practice-Research Engagement for Democratizing Knowledge", *Action Research*, 1(1), 81-102.

Burawoy, Michael (2005) "Response: Public sociology: populist fad or path to renewal?", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 56 (3), pp. 417-432.

– (2007) "For Public Sociology"; D. Clawson, R. Zussman, J. Misra et. al., (eds.), *Public Sociology Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics and the Profession in the Twenty-first Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 23-64, [or. ed. (2005) "For Public Sociology", *American Sociological Review*, 70 (1), pp. 4-28].

– (2008a) "What is to be Done? Theses on the Degradation of Social Existence in a Globalizing World", *Current Sociology*, 56 (3), pp. 351-359.

– (2008b) "Rejoinder: For a Subaltern Global Sociology?", *Current Sociology*, 56 (3), pp. 435-444.

– (2010) "Forging Global Sociology from below"; S. Patel, (ed.), *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*, London: SAGE, pp. 52-66.

– (2011) "Meeting the Challenge of Global Sociology – from Gothenburg to Yokohama", *South African Review of Sociology*, 42 (1), pp. 143-147.

Butler, Judith (1993) *Bodies that matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, New York and London: Routledge.

Buttigieg, Joseph A. (ed.) (1986) "The Legacy of Antonio Gramsci" [Special issue], *boundary 2*, 14 (3).

– (1995a) "Negli Stati Uniti. 1"; E. J. Hobsbawm, (ed.), *Gramsci in Europa e in America*, Bari: Laterza, pp. 85-105.

– (1995b) "La circolazione delle categorie gramsciane negli Stati Uniti"; M. L. Righi, (ed.), *Gramsci nel mondo. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi gramsciani, Formia 25-27 ottobre 1989*, Roma: Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, pp. 137-148.

– (1999) "Sulla categoria gramsciana di 'subalterno'"; G. Baratta and G. Liguori, (eds.), *Gramsci da un secolo all'altro*, Roma: Editori Riuniti, pp. 27-38.

– (2005) "Educazione e egemonia"; R. Medici, (ed.), *Gramsci, il suo il nostro tempo. Annali Istituto Emilia-Romagna*, 8/2004, Bologna: CLUEB, pp. 57-65.

– (2009) "Subalterno, subalterni"; G. Liguori and P. Voza, (eds.), *Dizionario gramsciano 1926- 1937*, Roma: Carocci, pp. 826-830.

– (2018) "Gramsci in English", *International Gramsci Journal*, 3 (1), pp. 26-40.

-
- Byrd, Jodi A. and Rothberg, Michael (2011) "Between Subalternity and Indigeneity. Critical Categories for Postcolonial Studies", *interventions*, 13 (1), pp. 1-12.
- Cagnetta, Franco (1954) "Inchiesta su Orgosolo", *Nuovi Argomenti*, 10, pp. 1-267.
- Cammett, John M. (1967) *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Campanile, Felice; Cant, Callum; Hughes, Lydia; Lyu, Wendy; Ovetz, Robert; Wheeler, Seth and Woodcock, Jamie (2018) "Workers' Enquiry and Social Composition", *Notes from Below*, 1, [Online], URL: <https://notesfrombelow.org/article/workers-inquiry-and-social-composition> (Last access: 20 October 2020).
- Capuzzo, Paolo (2008) "Introduzione"; G. Vacca, P. Capuzzo and G. Schirru, (eds.), *Studi gramsciani nel mondo. Gli studi culturali*, Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 15-41.
- (2009) "I subalterni da Gramsci a Guha"; G. Schirru, (ed.), *Gramsci, le culture e il mondo*, Roma: Viella, pp. 41-51.
- (2014) "Global Gramsci", *Studi culturali*, 2, pp. 333-342.
- Capuzzo, Paolo and Mezzadra, Sandro (2012) "Provincializing the Italian Reading of Gramsci"; N. Srivastava and B. Bhattacharya, (eds.), *The Postcolonial Gramsci*, New York: Routledge, pp. 34-54.
- Castronovo, Valerio (1987) *Torino*, Bari: Laterza.
- Çelik, Ercüment; Ersche, Christian; Keim, Wiebke and Wörher, Veronica (2013) "Introduction"; W. Keim, E. Çelik, C. Ersche and V. Wörher, (eds.), *Global Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences. Made in Circulation*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 1-19.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh (1983) "Conditions for Knowledge of Working-class Conditions: Employers, Government and the Jute Workers of Calcutta, 1890-1940"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 259-310.
- (1984) "Trade Unions in a Hierarchical Culture: The Jute Workers of Calcutta, 1920-50"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 116-152.
- (1985) "Invitation to a Dialogue"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 364-376.

-
- (1992) “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for “Indian” Pasts?”, *Representations*, (37), pp. 1-26.
 - (1993) “Marx after Marxism: A Subaltern Historian’s Perspective”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 (22), pp. 1094-1096.
 - (1998) “Reconstructing Liberalism? Notes toward a Conversation between Area Studies and Diasporic Studies”, *Public Culture*, 10 (3), pp. 457-481.
 - (2000a) “A Small History of Subaltern Studies”; H. Schwarz and S. Ray, (eds.), *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 467-485.
 - (2000b) *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
 - (2011) “Belatedness as possibility. Subaltern histories, once again”; E. Boehmer and R. Chaudhuri, (eds.), *The Indian Postcolonial: A Critical Reader*, New York: Routledge, pp. 163-176.
 - (2013) “Subaltern Studies in Retrospect and Reminiscence”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48 (12), pp. 23-27.
- Chandavarkar, Rajnarayan (2000) “‘The Making of the Working Class’: E. P. Thompson and Indian History”; V. Chaturvedi, (ed.), *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, London: Verso, pp. 50-71, [or. ed. (1997) “‘The Making of the Working Class’: E. P. Thompson and Indian History”, *History Workshop Journal*, 42, pp. 177-196].
- Chandra, Uday (2015a) “Rethinking Subaltern Resistance”, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 45 (4), pp. 563-573.
- (2015b) “Towards Adivasi Studies: New Perspectives on ‘Tribal’ Margins of Modern India”, *Studies in History*, 31 (1), pp. 122-127.
- Chandra Sarkar, Susobhan (1968) ‘The thought of Gramsci’, *Mainstream*, 2 November.
- Chatterjee, Partha (1982) “Agrarian Relations and Communalism in Bengal, 1926-1935”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 9-38.
- (1983) “More on Modes of Power and Peasantry”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 311-350.

-
- (1984) “Gandhi and the Critique of Civil Society”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 153-195.
 - (1989) “Caste and Subaltern Consciousness”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies VI: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 169-209.
 - (1999) “Interview: Partha Chatterjee In Conversation with Anuradha Dingwaney Needham”, *Interventions*, 1 (3), pp. 413-425.
 - (2009) “Editor’s Introduction”; R. Guha, *The Small Voice of History. Collected Essays*, P. Chatterjee, (ed.), Ranikhet: Permanent Black, pp. 1-18.
 - (2010a) “Reflections on “Can the Subaltern Speak?”: Subaltern Studies After Spivak”; R. Morris, (ed.), *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 81-86.
 - (2010b) “A Brief History of Subaltern Studies”; P. Chatterjee, *Empire and Nation. Selected Essays*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 289-301, [or. ed. (1998) “A Brief History of *Subaltern Studies*”; G. Bhadra and P. Chatterjee, (eds.), *Nimnabarger Itihas*, Calcutta: Ananda].
 - (2012) “After Subaltern Studies”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47 (35), pp. 44-49.
 - (2017) “Gramsci in India: Capitalist Hegemony and Subaltern Politics”, *Studi storici*, 4, pp. 963-986.
- Chatterjee, Partha and Jeganathan, Pradeep (eds.) (2000) *Community, Gender and Violence. Subaltern Studies XI*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chatterjii, Angana P.; Hansen, Thomas Blom and Jaffrelot, Christophe (2019) “Introduction”; A. P. Chatterjii, T. B. Hansen and C. Jaffrelot, *Majoritarian State. How Hindu Nationalism is Changing India*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-15.
- Chatterji, Joya (2007) *The Spoils of Partition. Bengal and India, 1974-1967*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chaturvedi, Vinayak (2000) “Introduction”; V. Chaturvedi, (ed.), *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, London: Verso, pp. vii-xix.
- (2007) “A Critical Theory of Subalternity: Rethinking Class in Indian Historiography”, *Left History*, 12 (1), pp. 9-28.

-
- Chaudhury, Ajit K. (1987) "In Search of a Subaltern Lenin": R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 236-251.
- Cherniavsky, Eva (2011) "The Canny Subaltern"; J. Elliott and D. Attridge, (eds.), *Theory after 'Theory'*, London: Routledge, pp. 149-162.
- Chibber, Vivek (2013) *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*, London and New York: Verso.
- Chopra, Suneet (1982) "Missing Correct Perspective", *Social Scientist*, 10 (8), pp. 55-63.
- Ciavolella, Riccardo (2015) "The Changing Meanings of People's Politics. Gramsci and anthropology from the history of subaltern classes to contemporary political subjects", paper presented to *Gramsci Conference, Past & Present*, London: King's College, 18-19 June, [Online] URL: <https://alterpol.hypotheses.org/515> (Last access: 20 October 2020).
- (2016) "L'émancipation des subalternes par la «culture populaire». La pensée gramscienne et l'anthropologie pour appréhender l'Italie de l'après-guerre et le Tiers monde en voie de décolonisation (1948-1960)", *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome - Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines*, 128 (2), pp. 431-446.
 - (2017) "Gramsci in antropologia politica. Connessioni sentimentali, monografie integrali e senso comune delle lotte subalterne", *International Gramsci Journal*, 2 (3), pp. 174-207.
- Cirese, Alberto Mario (1976a) "Concezioni del mondo, filosofia spontanea e istinto di classe nelle «Osservazioni sul folklore» di Antonio Gramsci"; A. M. Cirese, *Intellettuali, folklore, istinto di classe*, Torino: Einaudi, pp. 65-104, [or. ed. (1969) "Concezioni del mondo, filosofia spontanea e istinto di classe nelle «Osservazioni sul folklore» di Antonio Gramsci"; E. Garin et al., *Gramsci e la cultura contemporanea. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi gramsciani, Cagliari aprile 1967*, Vol. 2, Roma: Editori Riuniti, pp. 299-328].
- (1976b) "Alterità e dislivelli interni di cultura nelle società superiori"; R. Rauty, (ed.), *Cultura popolare e marxismo*, Roma: Editori Riuniti, pp. 151-164, [or. ed. (1968) "Alterità e dislivelli interni di cultura nelle società superiori", *Problemi*, 8, pp. 352-360].
 - (1977) "Il volgo protagonista"; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno*

negli anni 1948-1955, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 161-165, [or. ed. (1951) 'Il volgo protagonista', *Avanti!*, 8 May].

- (1982) "Gramsci's Observations on Folklore"; A. Showstack Sassoon, (ed.), *Approaches to Gramsci*, London: Writers and Reader, pp. 212-247, [or. ed. (1976) "Concezioni del mondo, filosofia spontanea e istinto di classe nelle «Osservazioni sul folklore» di Antonio Gramsci"; A. M. Cirese, *Intellettuali, folklore, istinto di classe*, Torino: Einaudi, pp. 65-104].

Clark, Martin (1977) *Antonio Gramsci and the Revolution that failed*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Clemente, Pietro (1976a) "Movimento operaio, cultura di sinistra e folklore"; P. Clemente, M. L. Meoni and M. Squillacciotti, (eds.), *Il dibattito sul folklore in Italia*, Milano: Edizioni di Cultura Popolare, pp. 15-35.

- (1976b) "Sul "folklore progressivo""; P. Clemente, M. L. Meoni and M. Squillacciotti, (eds.), *Il dibattito sul folklore in Italia*, Milano: Edizioni di Cultura Popolare, pp. 115-122.

- (1976c) "Il "caso Scotellaro""; P. Clemente, M. L. Meoni and M. Squillacciotti, (eds.), *Il dibattito sul folklore in Italia*, Milano: Edizioni di Cultura Popolare, pp. 145-161.

Columbia University Record (1989) 'Four Scholars Are Appointed to Named Professorships at Columbia', *Columbia University Record*, 9 June.

Connell, Raewyn (2007) *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*, Cambridge (MA): Polity.

- (2010) "Learning from Each other: Sociology on a World Scale"; S. Patel, (ed.), *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*, London: SAGE, pp. 40-51.

- (2013) "Under Southern Skies"; J. Go, (ed.), *Decentering Social Theory. Political Power and Social Theory. Volume 25*, Bingley: Emerald, pp. 173-182.

- (2014) "Using southern theory: Decolonizing social thought in theory, research and application", *Planning Theory*, 13 (2), pp. 210-223.

- (2015) "Social Sciences on a World Scale. Connecting the Pages", *Revista de Sociedade Brasileira de Sociologia*, 1 (1), pp. 1-16.

- (2018) "Decolonizing Sociology", *Contemporary Sociology*, 47 (4), pp. 399-407.

-
- Connell, Raewyn; Collyer, Fran; Maia, João and Morrell, Robert (2017) "Toward a global sociology of knowledge: Post-colonial realities and intellectual practices", *International Sociology*, 32 (1), pp. 21-37.
- Connell, Raewyn; Pearse, Rebecca; Collyer, Fran; Maia, João and Morrell, Robert (2018) "Negotiating with the North: How Southern-tier intellectual workers deal with the global economy of knowledge", *The Sociological Review*, 66 (1), pp. 41-57.
- Cooper, Melinda and Waldby, Catherine (2014) *Clinical Labor. Tissue Donors and Research Subjects in the Global Bioeconomy*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Cospito, Giuseppe (2009) "Egemonia"; G. Liguori and P. Voza, (eds.), *Dizionario gramsciano 1926- 1937*, Roma: Carocci, pp. 266-269.
- Costantini, Osvaldo (2015) "Vita e opere di Ernesto de Martino"; A. Signorelli, *Ernesto de Martino. Teoria antropologica e metodologia di ricerca*, Roma: L'asino d'oro, pp. 121-128.
- Corvisieri, Silverio (1970) *Il biennio rosso 1919-1920 della Terza Internazionale*, Milano: Jaca Book.
- Cox, Laurence (1998) "Gramsci, movements and method: the politics of activist research", paper presented to *Alternative Futures and Popular Protest*, 4th annual conference, Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 15-17 April.
- (2011) *Building counter culture: the radical praxis of social movement milieux*, Helsinki: Into-ebooks.
- (2014) "Movements Making Knowledge: A New Wave of Inspiration for Sociology?", *Sociology*, 48 (5), pp. 954-971.
- (2015) "Scholarship and Activism: A Social Movements Perspective", *Studies in Social Justice*, 9 (1), pp. 34-53.
- Cox, Laurence and Nilsen, Alf Gunvald (2007) "Social Movements Research and the 'Movement of Movements': Studying Resistance to Neoliberal Globalisation", *Sociology Compass*, 1-2, pp. 424–442.
- (2013) "What Would a Marxist Theory of Social Movements Look Like?"; C. Barker, L. Cox, J. Krinsky et. al. (eds.) *Marxism and Social Movements*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 63-81.

-
- (2014) *We Make Our Own History. Marxism and Social Movements in the Twilight of Neoliberalism*, London: Pluto Press.
- Crehan, Kate (2002) *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology*, London and Sterling: Pluto Press.
- (2016) *Gramsci's Common Sense. Inequality and Its Narratives*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Currie, Katie (1995) "The Challenge to Orientalist, Elitist, and Western Historiography: Notes on the "Subaltern Project" 1982-1989", *Dialectical Anthropology*, 20, pp. 219-246.
- Cusset, François (2008) *French Theory. How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [or. ed. (2003) *French Theory: Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Co et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux États-Unis*, Paris: Editions La Decouverte].
- Dados, Nour and Connell, Raewyn (2014) "Neoliberalism, Intellectuals and Southern Theory"; W. Keim, E. Çelik, C. Ersche and V. Wörher, (eds.), *Global Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences. Made in Circulation*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 195-213.
- Dainotto, Roberto M. (2009a) "Filosofia della praxis"; G. Liguori and P. Voza, (eds.), *Dizionario Gramsciano. 1926-1937*, Roma: Carocci, pp. 312-315.
- (2009b) "Consenso, letteratura e retorica: Gramsci e i *literary studies*"; M. Pala, (ed.), *Americanismi. Sulla ricezione del pensiero di Gramsci negli Stati Uniti*, Cagliari: CUEC, pp. 29-46.
- Dandekar, Ajay (2009) "The Issue of Denotified Tribes in Independent India", Working Paper 214, Gujarat: IRMA.
- Das, Veena (1989) "Subaltern as Perspective"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies VI: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 310-324.
- Das Gupta, Ranajit (2001) "Significance of Non-subaltern Mediation"; D. Ludden, (ed.), *Reading Subaltern Studies. Critical History, Contested Meaning and the Globalization of South Asia*, London: Anthem South Asian Press, pp. 108-119, [or. ed. (1985) "Significance of Non-subaltern Mediation", *Indian Historical Review*, 12 (1-2), pp. 383-390].

-
- Dasgupta, Swapan (1985) "Adivasi Politics in Midnapur, c. 1760-1924"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 101-135.
- Dasgupta, Sangeeta (2017) "Locating Adivasi Identity in Colonial India. The Oraons and the Tana Bhagats in Chhotanagpur, 1914–1919"; C. Bates and A. Shah, (eds.), *Savage Attacks. Tribal Insurgency in India*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 112-139.
- Datta Gupta, Sobhanlal (1994) "Gramsci's presence in India", *International Gramsci Society Newsletter*, 3, pp. 18-21.
- Davidson, Alastair (1999) "Gramsci, folklore e autonomia"; G. Baratta and G. Liguori, (eds.), *Gramsci da un secolo all'altro*, Roma: Editori Riuniti, pp. 57-67.
- de Jong, Sara and Mascot, Jamila M. H. (2016) "Relocating subalternity: scattered speculations on the conundrum of a concept", *Cultural Studies*, 30 (5), pp. 717-729.
- De Martino, Ernesto (1951) "Il folklore progressivo emiliano", *Emilia*, 21, pp. 251-254.
- (1977a) "Intorno a una storia del mondo popolare subalterno"; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 46-73, [or. ed. (1949) "Intorno a una storia del mondo popolare subalterno", *Società*, 3, pp. 411-435].
- (1977b) "Etnologia e folklore nell'Unione Sovietica"; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 129-143, [or. ed. (1950) "Etnologia e folklore nell'Unione Sovietica"; Associazione Italia-URSS, (ed.), *Scienza e cultura nell'URSS*, Roma: Italia-URSS, pp. 53-69].
- (1977c) "Il folklore progressivo"; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 143-146, [or. ed. (1951) 'Il folklore progressivo', *L'Unità*, 28 June].
- (1977d) "Nuie simme 'a mamma d' 'a bellezza"; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 148-154, [or. ed. (1952a) "Nuie simme 'a mamma d' 'a bellezza", *Il Calendario del Popolo*, 8, p. 1061].

-
- (1977e) “Gramsci e il folklore”; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 154-157, [or. ed. (1952b) “Gramsci e il folklore”, *Il Calendario del Popolo*, 8, p. 1109].
 - (1977f) “Per un dibattito sul folklore”; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 158-161, [or. ed. (1954a) “Per un dibattito sul folklore”, *Lucania*, 2, pp. 76-78].
 - (1996) “Gramsci e il folklore nella cultura italiana”, *Il De Martino*, 5-6, pp. 87-90, [or. ed. (1951) “Gramsci e il folklore nella cultura italiana”, *Mondo Operaio*, 133, p. 12].
 - (2017) “Towards a History of the Subaltern Popular World”, *Chicago Review*, 60 (4), pp. 62-72, [or. ed. (1949) “Intorno a una storia del mondo popolare subalterno”, *Società*, 3, pp. 411-435].

Dei, Fabio (2012) *Antropologia Culturale*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

- (2018) *Cultura popolare in Italia. Da Gramsci all’Unesco*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

Del Roio, Marcos (2009a) “Spontaneismo”; G. Liguori and P. Voza, (eds.), *Dizionario Gramsciano. 1926-1937*, Roma: Carocci, pp. 794-795.

- (2009b) “Spontaneità”; G. Liguori and P. Voza, (eds.), *Dizionario Gramsciano. 1926-1937*, Roma: Carocci, pp. 795-796.

Derrida, Jacques (1967) *De la grammatologie*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit.

- (1976) *On Grammatology*, G. C. Spivak (trans.), Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, [or. ed. (1967) *De la grammatologie*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit].
- (1989) *Della Grammatologia*, Milano: Jaca Book, [or. ed. (1967) *De la grammatologie*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit].
- (1997a) “La «différance»”; J. Derrida, *Margini – della filosofia*, Torino: Einaudi, pp. 29-57, [or. ed. (1968) “La différance”; Collectif Tel Quel, *Théorie d’ensemble*, Paris: Seuil, pp. 41-66].
- (1997b) “«Ousia»e «grammé». Note su una nota di «Sein und Zeit»”; J. Derrida, *Margini – della filosofia*, Torino: Einaudi, pp. 61-104, [or. ed. (1968), “Ousia et grammè: note sur une note de Sein und Zeit”; R. Char, (ed.), *L’Endurance de la pensée: Pour saluer Jean Beaufret*, Paris: Plon, pp. 219-266].

-
- Desai, Amit (2017) "Thoughts on Religious Experience and 'Politics' in Adivasi India: an Anthropologist Attempts a Rereading of History"; C. Bates and A. Shah, (eds.), *Savage Attacks. Tribal Insurgency in India*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 250-268.
- Desai, Manali (2015) "Rethinking Hegemony. Caste, Class and Political Subjectivities among the Informal Workers of Ahmedabad"; A. G. Nilsen and S. Roy, (eds.), *New Subaltern Politics. Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 54-75.
- Devi, Mahasweta (1987) "Breast-Giver"; G. C. Spivak, (trans.), R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 252-276.
- Devy, Ganesh N. (2013) "Culture and Development, an Experiment with Empowerment", *Field Action Science Reports*, 7, pp. 1-6, [Online] URL: <http://factsreports.revues.org/2404> (Last access: 20 October 2020).
- Di Qual, Anna (2017) "Eric J. Hobsbawm tra marxismo britannico e comunismo italiano", PhD thesis, Università degli Studi di Padova, Padova, [unpublished].
- Didur, Jill and Heffernan, Teresa (2003) "Revisiting the subaltern in the new empire", *Cultural Studies*, 17 (1), pp. 1-15.
- Dirlik, Arif (1998) "The Postcolonial Aura Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism"; A. Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*, Boulder and Oxford: WestviewPress, pp. 52-83, [or. ed. (1994) "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism", *Critical Inquiry*, 20 (2), pp. 328-356].
- Donini, Ambrogio (1988) *Sessant'anni di militanza comunista*, Milano: Teti Editore.
- Durkheim, Emile (1984 [1893]) *The Division of Labour in Society*, New York: The Free Press.
- Eley, Geoff (1984) "Reading Gramsci in English. Some Observations on the Reception of Antonio Gramsci in the English-Speaking World, 1957-1982", CRSO Working Paper 314, Centre for Research on Social Organization, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.
- Emirbayer, Mustafa (2013) "A Sociological Breakthrough. Not a Sociological Guilt Trip"; J. Go, (ed.), *Decentering Social Theory. Political Power and Social Theory. Volume 25*, Bingley: Emerald, pp. 131-136.

-
- Feyerabend, Paul (1993) *Against Method*, London: Verso, [or. ed. (1975) *Against Method*, London: New Left Books].
- Filippini, Michele (2009) "Direzione"; G. Liguori and P. Voza, (eds.), *Dizionario Gramsciano. 1926-1937*, Roma: Carocci, pp. 219-221.
- (2011) *Gramsci globale: guida pratica alle interpretazioni di Gramsci nel mondo*. Bologna: Odoja.
- Fiori, Giuseppe (1966) *Vita di Antonio Gramsci*, Bari: Laterza.
- (1970) *Antonio Gramsci. Life of a Revolutionary*; T. Nairn, (trans.), New York: Schocken Books, [or. ed. (1966) *Vita di Antonio Gramsci*, Bari: Laterza].
- Forgacs, David (1995) "In Gran Bretagna"; E. Hobsbawm, (ed.), *Gramsci in Europa e in America*, Bari: Laterza, pp. 55- 69.
- (2015) "Le edizioni inglesi di Gramsci"; D. Boothman, F. Giasi and G. Vacca, (eds.), *Studi gramsciani nel mondo. Gramsci in Gran Bretagna*, Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 145-156, [or. ed. (1995) "Le edizioni inglesi di Gramsci"; M. L. Righi, (ed.), *Gramsci nel mondo. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi gramsciani, Formia 25-27 ottobre 1989*, Roma: Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, pp. 9-29].
- Fortini (1977) "Il diavolo sa vestirsi da primitivo"; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 99-100, [or. ed. (1950) 'Il diavolo sa vestirsi da primitivo', *Paese Sera*, 23 February].
- Foucault, Michel (1998) "What is an Author?"; M. Foucault, *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, vol. 2, P. Rabinow (ed.), New York: The New Press, pp. 205-222, [or. ed. (1969) "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie*, 3, pp. 73-104].
- Foucault, Michel and Deleuze, Gilles (1973) "The Intellectuals and Power: A Discussion between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze", *Telos*, 16, pp. 103-109.
- Francioni, Gianni (1984) *L'officina gramsciana. Ipotesi sulla struttura dei «Quaderni del carcere»*, Napoli: Bibliopolis.
- Fresu, Gianni (2010) "Stato, società civile e subalterni in Antonio Gramsci"; A. M. Baldussi and P. Manduchi, (eds.), *Gramsci in Asia e in Africa*, Cagliari: AIPSA Edizioni, pp. 74-92.

-
- Frosini, Fabio (2009a) "Sraffa, Piero"; G. Liguori, P. Voza, (eds.) *Dizionario gramsciano 1926-1937*, Roma: Carocci, pp. 798-799.
- (2009b) "Unità di teoria-pratica"; G. Liguori, P. Voza, (eds.) *Dizionario gramsciano 1926-1937*, Roma: Carocci, pp. 872-874.
- Fox, Richard, G. (1989) "Selected Subaltern Studies. By Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak", *Contemporary Sociology*, 18 (6), pp. 886-888.
- Fuster Morell, Mayo (2009) "Action research: mapping the nexus of research and political action", *Interface: a journal for and about social movements*, 1 (1), pp. 21-45.
- Gandhi, Leela (1998) *Postcolonial Theory. A critical introduction*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gandhi, Malli (2013) "Denotified Tribes: initiatives taken for development and outcomes", *Man in India*, 32 (3-4), pp. 433-444.
- Gerli, Matteo and Santoro, Marco (2018) "Gramsciology. Studiare gli studi gramsciani nel mondo a distanza", *Studi Culturali*, 3, pp. 439-465.
- Ginsborg, Paul (2003) *A history of contemporary Italy: society and politics, 1943-1988*, London: Penguin Books.
- Ginzburg (2013) "Preface to the 2013 Edition"; C. Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, pp. ix-xii.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano (2007) "Whose Public Sociology? The Subaltern Speaks, but Who Is Listening?"; D. Clawson, R. Zussman, J. Misra et. al., (eds.), *Public Sociology Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics and the Profession in the Twenty-first Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 213-230.
- Go, Julian (2013a) "For a postcolonial sociology", *Theory and Society*, 42 (1), pp. 25-55.
- (2013b) "Introduction: Entangling Postcoloniality and Social Thought"; J. Go, (ed.), *Postcolonial Sociology. Political Power and Social Theory, Volume 24*, Bingley: Emerald, pp. 3-31.
- (2016a) "Globalizing Sociology, Turning South. Perspectival Realism and the Southern Standpoint", *Sociologica*, 2, [Online] URL: <https://www.rivisteweb.it/doi/10.2383/85279> (Last Access: 3 November 2020).

-
- (2016b) *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (2016c) “In Defense of the Southern Standpoint. A Friendly Response to Comments”, *Sociologica*, 2, [Online] URL: <https://www.rivisteweb.it/doi/10.2383/85283> (Last Access: 3 November 2020).
- Government of India (2008) *Report of the National Commission for Denotified Tribes, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes*, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, New Delhi: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Grewal, Inderpal (2005) *Transnational America. Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio (1919) ‘Cronache dell’«Ordine Nuovo»’, *L’Ordine Nuovo*, 16 August.
- (1948) *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce*, Torino: Einaudi.
- (1949) *Il Risorgimento*, Torino: Einaudi.
- (1950) *Letteratura e vita nazionale*, Torino: Einaudi.
- (1957a) *The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci*; C. Marzani, (ed.), New York: Cameron Associates.
- (1957b) *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*; L. Marks, (ed.), London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- (1966) “Alcuni temi della questione meridionale”; F. De Felice and V. Parlato, (ed.), *La questione meridionale*, Roma: Editori Riuniti, pp. 131-160.
- (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*; Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, (eds.), London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- (1975) *Quaderni del carcere*; V. Gerratana, (ed.), Torino: Einaudi.
- (1977) *Selections from Political Writings (1910-1920)*; Q. Hoare (ed.), London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- (1978) *Selections from Political Writings (1921-1926)*; Q. Hoare (ed.), London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- (1979) *Letters from Prison*; L. Lawner, (ed.), London: Quartet Books.
- (1985) *Selections from Cultural Writings*; D. Forgacs and G. Nowell Smith, (eds.), London: Lawrence and Wishart.

-
- (1992) *Prison Notebooks*, Vol. 1; J. A. Buttigieg, (ed.), New York: Columbia University Press.
 - (1994) *Letters from Prison*; Vol. 1 and Vol. 2; F. Rosengarten, (ed.), New York: Columbia University Press.
 - (1996) *Prison Notebooks*, Vol. 2; J. A. Buttigieg, (ed.), New York: Columbia University Press.
 - (2000) *The Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings 1916-1935*; D. Forgacs, (ed.), New York: New York University Press.
 - (2007) *Prison Notebooks*, Vol. 3; J. A. Buttigieg, (ed.), New York: Columbia University Press.
 - (2021) *Subaltern Social Groups: A Critical Edition of Prison Notebook 25*; J. A. Buttigieg and M. E. Green, (eds.), New York: Columbia University Press.

Green, Marcus E. (2002) "Gramsci Cannot Speak: Presentations and Interpretations of Gramsci's Concept of the Subaltern", *Rethinking Marxism*, 14 (3), pp. 1-24.

- (2009) "Subalternità, questione meridionale e funzione degli intellettuali"; G. Schirru, (ed.), *Gramsci, le culture e il mondo*, Roma: Viella, pp. 53-70.
- (2011) "Rethinking the subaltern and the question of censorship in Gramsci's Prison Notebooks", *Postcolonial Studies*, 14 (4), pp. 387-404.
- (2013a) "On the postcolonial image of Gramsci", *Postcolonial Studies*, 16 (1), pp. 90-101.
- (2013b) "Race, class and religion: Gramsci's conception of subalternity"; C. Zene, (ed.), *The Political Philosophies of Antonio Gramsci and B. R. Ambedkar: Itineraries of Dalits and Subalterns*, New York: Routledge, pp. 116-128.

Greenham, David (2019) *Close Reading: The Basics*, London: Routledge.

Guha, Ramachandra (1985) "Forestry and social protest in British Kumaun, c. 1893–1921"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 54-100.

- (2012) "The Brilliance and Dogmatism of Hobsbawm", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47 (46), pp. 36–39.

-
- Guha, Ranajit (1974) "Neel-Darpan: The Image of a Peasant Revolt in a Liberal Mirror", *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 2 (1), pp. 1-46.
- (1982a) "Preface"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. vii-viii.
 - (1982b) "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-8.
 - (ed.) (1982c) *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
 - (1983a) *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
 - (1983b) "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-42.
 - (1985) "Preface"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. vii-viii.
 - (ed.) (1987) *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
 - (1989) "Dominance Without Hegemony and its Historiography"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies VI: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 210-309.
 - (1992) "Discipline and Mobilize"; P. Chatterjee and G. Pandey, (eds.), *Subaltern Studies VII: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 69-120.
 - (2009 [1996]) "Subaltern Studies: Projects for Our Time and Their Convergence"; R. Guha, *The Small Voice of History. Collected Essays*, P. Chatterjee, (ed.), Ranikhet: Permanent Black, pp. 346-360.
 - (2009) "Introduction to the *Subaltern Studies Reader*"; R. Guha, *The Small Voice of History. Collected Essays*, P. Chatterjee, (ed.), Ranikhet: Permanent Black, pp. 361-370, [or. ed. (1997) "Introduction to the *Subaltern Studies Reader*"; R. Guha, (ed.), *A Subaltern Studies Reader 1986-1995*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, pp. ix-xxii].

-
- (2009) “Gramsci in India: Homage to a Teacher”; R. Guha, *The Small Voice of History. Collected Essays*, P. Chatterjee, (ed.), Ranikhet: Permanent Black, pp. 361-370, [or. ed. (2007) “Gramsci in India: Homage to a Teacher”, paper presented to *Gramsci nel suo tempo*, Bari: Università di Bari, 13-15 December].
- Guha, Ranajit and Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, (eds.) (1988) *Selected Subaltern Studies*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Guilhot, Nicholas (2014) “The International Circulation of International Relations Theory”; W. Keim, E. Çelik, C. Ersche and V. Wörher, (eds.), *Global Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences. Made in Circulation*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 63-86.
- Gupta, Susmita (2011) “‘Paschim Banga Kheria Sabar Kalyan Samiti’, Puruliya, West Bengal, India: Case Study of an NGO’s Role in Poverty Alleviation”, *International Journal of Rural Management*, 7 (1-2), pp. 149–158.
- Habib, Adam (2008) “Speaking ‘Truth’ to All Forms of Power. Reflections on the Role of the Public Sociologist in South Africa”, *Current Sociology*, 56 (3), pp. 389-398.
- Hall, Stuart (2005) “Notes on Deconstructing ‘The Popular’”; R. Guins and O. Zaragoza Cruz, (eds.), *Popular Culture. A Reader*, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE, pp. 64-71, [or. ed. (1981) “Notes on Deconstructing ‘The Popular’”; R. Samuel, (ed.), *People’s History and Socialist Theory*, London: Routledge, pp. 227-240].
- (1986) Gramsci’s “Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity”, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10 (5), pp. 5-27.
- Hanafi, Sari (2020) “Global sociology revisited: Toward new directions”, *Current Sociology*, 68 (1), pp. 3-21.
- Hardiman, David (1982) “The Indian Faction: A Political Theory Examined”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 198-232.
- (1984) “Adivasi Assertion in South Gujarat: The Devi Movement of 1922-3”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 196-230.
- (1986) “‘Subaltern Studies’ at Crossroads”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21 (7), pp. 288-290.

-
- (1987) “The Bhils and Shahukars of Eastern Gujarat”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-54.
 - (2013) “My First Meeting”, [Online] URL: <http://permanent-black.blogspot.com/2013/06/last-two-90th-birthday-tributes-to.html> (Last access: 20 October 2020).
- Hasseler, Terri A. and Krebs, Paula M. (2003) “Losing Our Way after the Imperial Turn: Charting Academic Uses of the Postcolonial”; A. Burton, (ed.) *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation*, Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 90-101.
- Hauser, Walter (1985) “Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India by Ranajit Guha”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 45 (1), pp. 174-177.
- (1991) “Selected Subaltern Studies By Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak”, *The American Historical Review*, 96 (1), pp. 241-243.
- Henningham, Stephen (1983) “Quit India in Bihar and the Eastern United Provinces: The Dual Revolt” R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 130-179.
- Heron, John (1996) *Co-operative Enquiry. Research into the Human Condition*, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE.
- Hill Collins, Patricia (2013) “Critical Interventions in Western Social Theory: Reflections on Power and Southern Theory”; J. Go, (ed.), *Decentering Social Theory. Political Power and Social Theory. Volume 25*, Bingley: Emerald, pp. 137-146.
- Hoare, Quintin and Smith, George Nowell (1971) “Introduction”; A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, (eds.), London: Lawrence and Wishart, pp. xvii-xcvi.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. (1955) ‘Voices of the South’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 June.
- (1959a) *Primitive Rebels: studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
 - (1959b) ‘The Mood of Sicily’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 August.
 - (1960) “Per lo studio delle classi subalterne”, *Società*, 16, pp. 436-449.

-
- (1961) 'Aspects of the Millennium', *Times Literary Supplement*, 29 September.
 - (1963) "Para el estudio de las clases subalternas", *Pasado y Presente*, 2-3, pp. 158-167.
 - (1983) "Interview with Eric Hobsbawm"; H. Abelow, (ed.), *Visions of History*, New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 27-46.
 - (2002) *Interesting Times: a Twentieth Century Life*, London: Allen Lane.
 - (2007) 'Gramsci. Grazie ai Quaderni sono uno storico', *Repubblica*, 27 April [Online] URL: <https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2007/04/27/grazie-ai-quaderni-sono-uno-storico.html> (Last access: 20 October 2020).
 - (2015) "Per capire le classi subalterne"; D. Boothman, F. Giasi and G. Vacca, (eds.), *Studi gramsciani nel mondo. Gramsci in Gran Bretagna*, Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 139-143, [or. ed. (1987) "Per capire le classi subalterne", *Rinascita-II Contemporaneo*, 8, p. 23].
 - (2017) *Primitive Rebels: studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries*, London: Abacus, [or. ed. (1987) *Primitive Rebels: studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries*, Manchester: Manchester University Press].
- Holmwood, John (2000) "Sociology and its audience(s): changing perception of sociological arguments"; J. Eldridge, J. MacInnes, S. Scott, C. Warhurst and A. Witz, (eds.), *For Sociology. Legacies and Perspectives*, Durham: Sociologypress, pp. 33-55.
- (2009) "The Challenge of Global Social Inquiry", *Sociological Research Online*, 14 (4), [Online] URL: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/4/13.html> (Last Access: 20 October 2020).
- Huggan, Graham (2001) *The Postcolonial Exotic. Marketing the margins*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Ismail, Qadri (2000), "Constituting Nation, Contesting Nationalism: The Southern Tamil (Woman) and Separatist Tamil Nationalism in Sri Lanka"; P. Chatterjee and P. Jeganathan, (eds.), *Subaltern Studies XI: Community, Gender and Violence*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 212-282.
- Iuliano, Fiorenzo (2012) *Altri mondi, altre parole. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak tra decostruzione e impegno militante*, Verona: Ombre Corte.

-
- Jaffrelot, Christophe (2003) "Communal Riots in Gujarat: The State at Risk?", Working Paper 17, Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics, South Asia Institute (Department of Political Science), Heidelberg: University of Heidelberg.
- Jay, Anna R.; Qureshi, Zoya Bilash and Mongia Juhi (2015) *Beyond the Margins. Stigma and Discrimination Against India's Nomadic and Denotified Tribes*, New Delhi: Human Rights Law Network.
- Jenkins, Celia Joanne (2006) "Constructed Criminality and Contemporary Solutions for De-Notified Tribes", Working paper, Nottingham: University of Nottingham, pp. 120-144, [Online] URL: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hrlc/documents/publications/hrlcommentary2006/constructedcriminality.pdf> (Last access: 20 October 2020).
- Kaali, Sundar (1999) "Spatializing History: Subaltern Carnivalizations of Space in Tiruppuvanam, Tamil Nadu"; G. Bhadra, G. Prakash and S. Tharu, (eds.), *Subaltern Studies X: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 126-169.
- Kaiwar, Vasant (2014) *The Postcolonial Orient. The Politics of Difference and the Project of Provincialising Europe*, Leiden: Brill.
- (2018) "Ranajit's Guha Historiography of Colonial India"; *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communications*, [Online] URL: <https://oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-770> (Last access: 20 October 2020).
- Kapoor, Ilan (2004) "Hyper-self-reflexive development? Spivak on representing the Third World 'Other'", *Third World Quarterly*, 25 (4), pp. 627-647.
- Kaviraj, Sudipta (1992) "The Imaginary Institution of India"; P. Chatterjee and G. Pandey, (eds.), *Subaltern Studies VII: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-39.
- Keim, Wiebke (2008) "Social sciences internationally: The problem of marginalisation and its consequences for the discipline of sociology", *African Sociological Review*, 12 (2), pp. 22-48.
- (2011) "Counterhegemonic currents and internationalization of sociology. Theoretical reflections and an empirical example", *International Sociology*, 26 (1), pp. 123-145.

-
- (2014) “Conceptualizing Circulation of Knowledge in the Social Sciences”; W. Keim, E. Çelik, C. Ersche and V. Wörher, (eds.), *Global Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences. Made in Circulation*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 87-113.
 - (2016) “What are the Criteria for Truth in Globalized Sociology? A Critical Appraisal of Go’s Southern Standpoint Approach”, *Sociologica*, 2, [Online] URL: <https://www.rivisteweb.it/doi/10.2383/85282> (Last Access: 3 November 2020).
- Khair, Tabish (2000) “Can the subaltern shout (and Smash?)”, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 38 (2), 7-16.
- Köhler, Axel (2015) “Acerca de nuestras experiencias de co-teorización”; X. Leyva, J. Alonso, R. Aída Hernández et. al., (eds.), *Prácticas otras de conocimiento(s). Entre crisis, entre guerras (Tomo I)*, México: Cooperativa Editorial RETOS, Taller Editorial La Casa del Mago, CLACSO, pp. 401-428.
- Korra, Vijay (2017) “Status of Denotified Tribes. Empirical Evidence from Undivided Andhra Pradesh”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 52 (36), pp. 61-66.
- Koselleck, Reinhart (2004) *Future Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- (2015) “Introduction (*Einleitung*) to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*”; M. Pernau and D. Sachsenmaier, (eds.), *Global Conceptual History. A Reader*, London: Bloomsbury, pp. 31-54, [or. ed. (1972) “*Einleitung*”; O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur Politisch-Sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 1, Stuttgart:Klett-Cotta, pp. viii–xxvii].
- Kumar, Udaya (2013) “Consciousness, agency and humiliation: reflections on Dalit life-writing and subalternity”; C. Zene, (ed.), *The Political Philosophies of Antonio Gramsci and B. R. Ambedkar. Itineraries of Dalits and subalterns*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 158-160.
- Lanternari, Vittorio (1960) *Movimenti religiosi di libertà e di salvezza dei popoli oppressi*, Milano: Feltrinelli.
- (1977) “Religione popolare e storicismo”; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 206-219, [or. ed. (1954) “Religione popolare e storicismo”, *Belfagor*, 6, pp. 1-7].
- Lazarus, Neil (2004) “Introducing postcolonial studies”; N. Lazarus, (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-16.

-
- Lazarus, Neil and Varma, Rashmi (2008) "Marxism and Postcolonial Studies"; J. Bidet and S. Kouvelakis, (eds.), *The Critical Companion to Contemporary Marxism*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 306-331.
- Legg, Stephen (2016) "Empirical and analytical subaltern space? Ashrams, brothels and trafficking in colonial Delhi", *Cultural Studies*, 30 (5), pp. 793-815.
- Lettow, Susanne (2018) "Biocapitalism", *Krisis*, 2, pp. 13-14.
- Leyva, Xochitl and Speed, Shannon (2008) "Hacia la investigación descolonizada: nuestra experiencia de co-labor"; X. Leyva, A. Burguete and S. Speed, (eds.), *Gobernar (en) la diversidad: experiencias indígenas desde América Latina. Hacia la investigación de co-labor*. México: CIESAS, FLACSO Ecuador and FLACSO Guatemala, pp. 34-59.
- Levi, Carlo (1945) *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli*, Torino: Einaudi.
- Li, Victor (2009) "Necroidealism, or the Subaltern's Sacrificial Death", *interventions*, 11 (3), pp. 275-292.
- Liguori, Guido (2009) "Senso comune"; G. Liguori and P. Voza, (eds.), *Dizionario gramsciano 1926- 1937*, Roma: Carocci, pp. 759-761.
- (2011a) "Movimenti sociali e ruolo del partito nel pensiero di Gramsci e oggi", *Critica marxista*, 2, pp. 59-67.
- (2011b) "Tre accezioni di 'subalterno' in Gramsci", *Critica marxista*, 6, pp. 33-42.
- (2012) *Gramsci conteso. Interpretazioni, dibattiti e polemiche 1922-2012*, Roma: Editori Riuniti.
- (2015a) "«Classi subalterne» marginali e «classi subalterne» fondamentali in Gramsci", *Critica marxista*, 4, pp. 41-48.
- (2015b) "Conceptions of Subalternity in Gramsci"; M. McNally, (ed.), *Antonio Gramsci*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 118-133.
- (2016) "Subalterno e subalterni nei "Quaderni del carcere"", *International Gramsci Journal*, 2 (1), pp. 89-125.
- Lloyd, David (1996) "Outside History: Irish New Histories and the 'Subalternity Effect'"; S. Amin and D. Chakrabarty, (eds.), *Subaltern Studies IX: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 261-380.

-
- Lozano, Alberto Arribas (2018) "Reframing the public sociology debate: Towards collaborative and decolonial praxis", *Current Sociology*, 66 (1), pp. 92-109.
- Ludden, David (2001) "Introduction. A Brief History of Subalternity"; D. Ludden, (ed.), *Reading Subaltern Studies. Critical History, Contested Meaning and the Globalization of South Asia*, London: Anthem South Asian Press, pp. 1-39.
- Luporini, Cesare (1977) "Intorno alla storia del «Mondo popolare subalterno»"; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 73-89, [or. ed. (1950) "Intorno alla storia del «Mondo popolare subalterno»", *Società*, 1, pp. 95-106].
- Maggio, Jay (2007) "'Can the subaltern be heard?': Political theory, translation, representation, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak", *Alternatives*, 32 (4), pp. 419-443.
- Mallick, Ross (1993) *Development policy of a Communist government: West Bengal since 1977*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Manacorda, Mario A. (1970) *Il principio educativo in Gramsci. Americanismo e conformismo*, Roma: Armando Editore.
- Mascot, Jamila M. H. (2016) "Subalternity reloaded: singularity, collectivity and the politics of abstraction", *Cultural Studies*, 30 (5), pp. 774-792.
- Marx, Karl (1972) *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, [or. ed. (1852) "Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte", *Die Revolution. Eine Zeitschrift in zwanglosen Heften*, 1].
- (1990) *Capital: a critique of political economy*, Vol. 1, London: Penguin, [or. ed. (1867) *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, Hamburg: Verlag von Otto Meissner].
- Majumdar, Rochona (2015) "Subaltern Studies a History of Social Movements in India", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 38 (1), pp. 50-68.
- Martinelli, Alberto (2008) "Sociology in Political Practice and Public Discourse", *Current Sociology*, 56 (3), pp. 361-370.
- Masselos, Jim (1992) "The Dis/appearance of Subalterns: a Reading of a Decade of Subaltern Studies", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 15 (1), pp. 105-125.

-
- Massucco Costa, Angiola (1958) "Aspetti sociologici del pensiero gramsciano"; R. Cessi, E. Garin, C. Luporini et al., *Studi gramsciani. Atti del convegno tenuto a Roma nei giorni 11-13 gennaio 1958*, Roma: Editori Riuniti, pp. 199-211.
- Mayaram, Shail; Pandian, Mathias S. S. and Skaria, Ajay (eds.) (2005) *Muslim, Dalits and the Fabrication of History. Subaltern Studies XII*, Delhi: Permanent Black and Ravi Dayal Publisher.
- Mayo, Peter (2014) "Gramsci and the politics of education", *Capital & Class*, 2, pp. 385-398.
- McFarlane, Colin (2006) "Crossing Borders: development, learning and the North-South divide", *Third World Quarterly*, 27 (8), pp. 1413-1437.
- Meckesheimer, Anita (2013) "Decolonization of Social Research Practice in Latin America. What can we learn for German Social Sciences?", *Transcience*, 4 (2), pp. 79-98.
- Meoni, Maria Luisa (1976) "Sul "mondo popolare subalterno""; P. Clemente, M. L. Meoni and M. Squillacciotti, (eds.), *Il dibattito sul folklore in Italia*, Milano: Edizioni di Cultura Popolare, pp. 39-62.
- Milevska, Suzana and Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (2006) "Resistance that Cannot Be Recognized as Such"; S. Chakravorty, S. Milevska and T. E. Barlow, (eds.), *Conversations with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, Oxford, New York and Kolkata: Seagull Books, pp. 57-85.
- Mills, Charles Wright (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mittal, S. K., and Kumar, Kapil (1980) "Anti-Feudal and Anti-Colonial Struggles of the Oudh Peasantry in Early 1920s", *Social Scientist*, 8 (12), pp. 28-45.
- Modonesi, Massimo (2014) *Subalternity, antagonism, autonomy: Constructing the political subject*, London: Pluto Press.
- Moore-Gilbert, Bart (1997) *Postcolonial Theory. Contexts, Practices, Politics*, London and New York: Verso.
- Morton, Stephen (2016) "The wageless life of the subaltern", *Cultural Studies*, 30 (5), pp. 754-773.

-
- Morris, Rosalind (2010) "Introduction"; R. Morris, (ed.), *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 4-18.
- Mussi, Daniela and Goés, Camila (2016) "Antonio Gramsci no centro e na periferia: nodas sobre hegemonia e subalternidade", *International Gramsci Journal*, 2 (1), pp. 271-328.
- Napoleoni, Claudio (1972) *Lezioni sul Capitolo sesto inedito di Marx*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.
- Nardone, Giorgio (1971) *Il pensiero di Gramsci*, Bari: De Donato.
- Nilsen, Alf Gunvald (2007) "On New Social Movements and 'The Reinvention of India'", *Forum for Development Studies*, 34 (2), pp. 271-293.
- (2010) *Dispossession and Resistance in India. The river and the rage*, London and New York: Routledge.
- (2015) "For a Historical Sociology of State-Society Relations in the Study of Subaltern Politics"; A. G. Nilsen and S. Roy, (eds.), *New Subaltern Politics. Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 31-53.
- (2016) "Power, Resistance and Development in the Global South: Notes Towards a Critical Research Agenda", *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 29, pp. 269–287.
- (2017) "Autonomous Domains or Relational Practices? Power and Resistance in Colonial and Postcolonial India"; A. G. Nilsen, (ed.), *Politics from Below: Essays on Subalternity and Resistance in India*, New Delhi: Aakar Books, pp. 23-70.
- Nilsen, Alf Gunvald and Roy, Srila (2015) "Introduction. Reconceptualizing Subaltern Politics in Contemporary India"; A. G. Nilsen and S. Roy, (eds.), *New Subaltern Politics. Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-27.
- O'Hanlon, Rosalind (1988) "Recovering the Subject. Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia", *Modern Asian Studies*, 22 (1), pp. 189-224.
- O'Hanlon, Rosalind and Washbrook, David (1992) "After Orientalism: Culture, Criticism, and Politics in the Third World", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 34 (1), pp. 141-167.

-
- Olsen, Niklas (2012) *History in the Plural. An Introduction to the Work of Reinhart Koselleck*, New York and Oxford: Berghan.
- Omobowale, Ayokunle Olumuyiwa and Akanle, Olayinka (2017) "Asuwada Epistemology and Globalised Sociology: Challenges of the South", *Sociology*, 51 (1), pp. 43-59.
- Paggi, Leonardo (1970) *Antonio Gramsci e il moderno Principe. Vol. I. Nella crisi del socialismo italiano*, Roma: Editori Riuniti.
- Pandey, Gyanendra (1982) "Peasant revolt and Indian nationalism: the Peasant Movement in Awadh, 1919-1922"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 143-197.
- (1983) "Rallying round the Cow: Sectarian Strife in the Bhojpuri Region, c. 1888-1917"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 60-129.
- (1984) "Encounters and Calamities: The History of a North Indian *Qasba* in the Nineteenth Century"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies III: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 231-270.
- Parry, Benita (2004) "The institutionalization of postcolonial studies"; N. Lazarus, (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 66-80.
- Pasquinelli, Carla (1977) "Introduzione. Gli intellettuali di fronte all'irrompere nella storia del mondo popolare subalterno"; C. Pasquinelli, (ed.), *Antropologia culturale e questione meridionale. Ernesto De Martino e il dibattito sul mondo popolare subalterno negli anni 1948-1955*, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, pp. 1-36.
- Patel, Sujata (2010) "Introduction: Diversities of Sociological Traditions"; S. Patel, (ed.), *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*, London: SAGE, pp. 1-18.
- (2014) "Afterword: Doing global sociology: Issues, problems and challenges", *Current Sociology*, 62 (4), pp. 603-613.
- Paulesu Quercioli, Mimma (ed.) (1977) *Gramsci vivo nelle testimonianze dei suoi contemporanei*, Milano: Feltrinelli.
- Piccone, Paul (1974) *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci*, St Louis: Telos Press.

-
- Pradella, Lucia (2017) "Marx and the Global South: Connecting History and the Value Theory", *Sociology*, 51 (1), pp. 146-161.
- Prakash, Gyan (1990) "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 32 (2), pp. 383-408.
- (1992) "Can the 'subaltern' ride? A reply to O'Hanlon and Washbrook", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 34 (1), pp 168-184.
- (1994) "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism", *The American Historical Review*, 99 (5), pp. 1475-1490.
- Prashad, Vijay (1999) "Untouchable Freedom: A Critique of the Bourgeois Landlord Indian State"; G. Bhadra, G. Prakash and S. Tharu, (eds.), *Subaltern Studies X: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 170-200.
- Pereira, Maria do Mar (2017) *Power, Knowledge and Feminist Scholarship. An Ethnography of Academia*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Pérez Moreno, María Patricia (2015) "O'tanil. Stalel tseltaletik. Una apuesta por un conocimiento propio desde los pueblos originarios"; X. Leyva, J. Alonso, R. Aída Hernández et. al., (eds.), *Prácticas otras de conocimiento(s). Entre crisis, entre guerras (Tomo I)*, México: Cooperativa Editorial RETOS, Taller Editorial La Casa del Mago, CLACSO, pp. 429-450.
- Pernau, Margit and Sachsenmaier, Dominic (2016) "History of Concepts and Global History"; M. Pernau and D. Sachsenmaier, (eds.), *Global Conceptual History. A Reader*, London: Bloomsbury, pp. 1-27.
- Piu, Piermarco (2019) "Subalterna/o in Gayatri Spivak: corpi e scritture tra posizionamenti, politiche e po-etiche della subalternità. Per un Gramsci postcoloniale"; E. Alessandrini, M. Marseglia, P. Piu et al., *Antologia Premio Gramsci. XV Edizione. Ales – Gennaio 2017*, Ghilarza: Iskra, pp. 9-388.
- ([in draft]) "The molecular organisation of theories and imaginaries as an emancipatory practice. Some notes at the centenary of the Factory Councils movement in Turin (1919-1920)".
- Popper, Karl (2005) *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London and New York: Routledge, [or. ed. (1935) *Logik der Forschung*, Vienna: Verlag von Julius Springer].

-
- Prashad, Vijay (1999) "Untouchable Freedom: A Critique of the Bourgeois Landlord Indian State"; G. Bhadra, G. Prakash and S. Tharu, (eds.), *Subaltern Studies X: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 170-200.
- Qiu, Junping; Zhao, Rongying; Yang, Siluo and Dong, Ke (2017) *Informetrics. Theory, Methods and Applications*, Singapore: Springer.
- Raman, Ravi K. (2017) "Subaltern Modernity: Kerala, the Eastern Theatre of Resistance in the Global South", *Sociology*, 51 (1), 91-110.
- Rappaport, Joanne (2008) "Beyond Participant Observation: Collaborative Ethnography as Theoretical Innovation", *Collaborative Anthropologies*, 1, pp. 1-31.
- (2013) "The Challenges of Indigenous Research", *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 22 (1), pp. 5–25.
- (2017) "Participation and the Work of the Imagination: A Colombian Perspective"; L. L. Rowell, C. D. Bruce, J. M. Shosh and M. M. Riel, (eds.), *The Palgrave International Book of Action Research*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 147-159.
- Rauty, Raffaele (1976) "Illustrazione del problema"; R. Rauty, (ed.), *Cultura popolare e marxismo*, Roma: Editori Riuniti, pp. 7-33.
- Ray, Raka (2013) "Connell and Postcolonial Sociology"; J. Go, (ed.), *Decentering Social Theory. Political Power and Social Theory. Volume 25*, Bingley: Emerald, pp. 147-156.
- Reed, Isaac Ariail (2013) "Theoretical Labors Necessary for a Global Sociology: Critique of Raewyn Connell's *Southern Theory*"; J. Go, (ed.), *Decentering Social Theory. Political Power and Social Theory. Volume 25*, Bingley: Emerald, pp. 157-171.
- Rehbein, Boike (2014) "Epistemology in a Multicentric World"; W. Keim, E. Çelik, C. Ersche and V. Wörher, (eds.), *Global Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences. Made in Circulation*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 217-222.
- Revelli, Marco (1988) "Egualitarismo e Gerarchia nella «Città Futura» di Gramsci"; F. Sbarberi, (ed.), *Teoria politica e società industriale. Ripensare Gramsci*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, pp. 102-127.
- Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia (2012), "*Ch'ixinakax utxiwa*: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization", *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 111 (1), pp. 95-109.

-
- Rodríguez Medina, Leandro (2014) "Bounding Luhmann: The Reception and Circulation of Luhmann's Theory in Hispanic America"; W. Keim, E. Çelik, C. Ersche and V. Wörher, (eds.), *Global Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences. Made in Circulation*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 39-61.
- Roggero, Gigi (2014) "Notes on framing and re-inventing co-research", *Ephemera*, 14 (3), pp. 515-523.
- Romano, Salvatore Francesco (1965) *Antonio Gramsci*, Torino: UTET.
- Rooke, Alison (2016) "Collaborative Sociological Practice: the Case of Nine Urban Biotopes", *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 29, pp. 327-340.
- Roosa, John (2006) "When the Subaltern Took the Postcolonial Turn", *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 17 (2), p. 130-147.
- Rosa, Marcelo C. (2014) "Theories of the South: Limits and perspectives of an emergent movement in social sciences", *Current Sociology*, 62 (6), pp. 851-867.
- Rosengarten, Frank (1995) "Alcune osservazioni su sei edizioni in lingua inglese degli scritti di Antonio Gramsci"; M. L. Righi, (ed.), *Gramsci nel mondo. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi gramsciani, Formia 25-27 ottobre 1989*, Roma: Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, pp. 153-156.
- Rowell, Lonnie L.; Bruce, Catherine D.; Shosh, Joseph M. and Riel Margaret M. (2017) "Introduction"; L. L. Rowell, C. D. Bruce, J. M. Shosh and M. M. Riel, (eds.), *The Palgrave International Book of Action Research*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-13.
- Rowell, Lonnie L. and Hong, Eunsook (2017) "Knowledge Democracy and Action Research: Pathways for the Twenty-First Century"; L. L. Rowell, C. D. Bruce, J. M. Shosh and M. M. Riel (eds.), *The Palgrave International Book of Action Research*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 63-83.
- Rowell, Lonnie L.; Riel, Margaret M. and Polush, Elena Yu. (2017) "Defining Action Research: On Dialogic Spaces for Constructing Shared Meanings"; L. L. Rowell, C. D. Bruce, J. M. Shosh and M. M. Riel, (eds.), *The Palgrave International Book of Action Research*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 85-101.
- Roy, Indrajit (2015) "Utopia in Crisis? Subaltern Imaginations in Contemporary Bihar", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 45 (4), pp. 640-659.

-
- Roy, Srila (2015) "Affective Politics and the Sexual Subaltern. Lesbian Activism in Eastern India"; A. G. Nilsen and S. Roy, (eds.), *New Subaltern Politics. Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 149-173.
- (2016) "Women's Movements in the Global South: Towards a Scalar Analysis", *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 29, pp. 289-306.
- Roy, Srila and Nilsen, Alf Gunvald (2016) "Globalizing Sociology: an Introduction", *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 29, pp. 225-232.
- Said, Edward (1988) "Foreword"; R. Guha and G. C. Spivak, (eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. v-x.
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2005) "General Introduction. Reinventing Social Emancipation: Toward New Manifestos"; B. de Sousa Santos, (ed.), *Democratizing Democracy: beyond the liberal democratic canon*, London and New York: Verso, pp. xvii-xxxiii.
- (ed.) (2010) *Voices of the World*, London: Verso.
- (2014) *Epistemologies of the South. Justice against Epistemicide*, Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.
- (2018) *The End of the Cognitive Empire. The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa; Nunes, João Arriscado and Meneses, Maria Paula (2007) "Introduction: Opening Up the Canon of Knowledge and Recognition of Difference"; B. de Sousa Santos, (ed.), *Another Knowledge is possible: beyond Northern Epistemologies*, London and New York: Verso, pp. xix-lxii.
- Sarkar, Sumit (1973) *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903-1908*, Delhi: People's Publishing House.
- (1984) "The Conditions and Nature of Subaltern Militancy: Bengal from Swadeshi to Non-Co-operation, c. 1905–22"; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies III: writings on South Asian history and society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 271-320.
- (1994) "Orientalism Revisited: Saidian Frameworks in the Writing of Modern Indian History", *Oxford Literary Review*, 16 (1/2), pp. 205–224.

-
- (2000) “The Decline of the Subaltern in Subaltern Studies”; V. Chaturvedi, (ed.), *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, London: Verso, pp. 300-323, [or. ed. (1997) “The Decline of the Subaltern in Subaltern Studies”; S. Sarkar, *Writing Social History*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 82-108].
- Sarkar, Tanika (1985) “Jitu Santal’s Movement in Malda, 1924-1932: A Study in Tribal Protest”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV: writings on South Asian history and society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 136-164.
- Sassoon, Donald (1979) “La fortuna di Gramsci in Gran Bretagna”; N. Badaloni, G. Baget Bozzo, M. Battini et al., *Politica e storia in Gramsci, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi gramsciani. Firenze, 9-11 dicembre 1977*, Roma: Editori Riuniti - Istituto Gramsci, pp. 595-604.
- Satta, Gino (2017) “Gramsci’s «Prison Notebooks» and the “re-foundation” of anthropology in post-war Italy”, *International Gramsci Journal*, 2 (3), pp. 239-257.
- Savransky, Martin (2017) “A Decolonial Imagination: Sociology, Anthropology and the Politics of Reality”, *Sociology*, 51 (1), pp. 11-26.
- Sbarberi, Franco (1986) *Gramsci: un socialismo armonico*, Milano: Franco Angeli.
- (1988) “Introduzione”; F. Sbarberi, (ed.), *Teoria politica e società industriale. Ripensare Gramsci*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, pp. 7-24.
- Scarfone, Marianna (2010) “Il pensiero di Gramsci nei Subaltern Studies”; A. M. Baldussi and P. Manduchi, (eds.), *Gramsci in Asia e in Africa*, Cagliari: AIPSA Edizioni, pp. 208-227.
- Schwarz, Henry (2000) “Mission Impossible: Introducing Postcolonial Studies in the US Academy”; H. Schwarz and S. Ray, (eds.), *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 1-20.
- (2001) “Subaltern Studies: Radical History in the Metaphoric Mode”; D. Ludden, (ed.), *Reading Subaltern Studies. Critical History, Contested Meaning and the Globalization of South Asia*, London: Anthem South Asian Press, pp. 304-339, [or. ed. (1997) “Subaltern Studies: Radical History in the Metaphoric Mode”; H. Schwarz, *Writing Cultural History in Colonial and Post-colonial India*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 128-161].
- Scotellaro, Rocco (1954) *Contadini del Sud*, Bari: Laterza.

-
- Scott, James C. (1985) *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Selenu, Stefano (2013) "In search of a postcolonial Gramsci: method, thought, and intellectuals", *Postcolonial Studies*, 16 (1), pp. 102-109.
- Seth, Sanjay (2006) "From Maoism to postcolonialism? The Indian 'Sixties', and beyond", *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 7 (4), pp. 589-605.
- Severino, Valerio Salvatore (2003) "Ernesto de Martino nel Pci degli anni Cinquanta tra religione e politica culturale", *Studi Storici*, 2, pp. 527-553.
- Shah, Alpa (2010) *In the Shadows of the State Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and insurgency in Jharkhand*, India, Durham: Duke University Press.
- (2014) "Religion and the secular left: subaltern studies, Birsa Munda and Maoists", *Anthropology of This Century*, 9, [Online] URL: <http://aotcpress.com/articles/religion-secular-left-subaltern-studies-birsa-munda-maoists/> (Last Access: 3 November 2020).
- (2017a) "Alcoholics Anonymous: The Maoist Movement in Jharkhand, India"; C. Bates and A. Shah, (eds.), *Savage Attacks. Tribal Insurgency in India*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 269-294.
- (2017b) "Ethnography? Participant observation, a potentially revolutionary praxis", *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 7 (1), pp. 45–59.
- (2019) *Nightmarch. Among India's Revolutionary Guerrilla*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sharpe, Jenny (2000) "Postcolonial Studies in the House of US Multiculturalism"; H. Schwarz and S. Ray, (eds.), *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 112-125.
- Sharpe, Jenny and Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (2003) "A Conversation with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: Politics and the Imagination", *Signs*, 28 (2), pp. 609-624.
- Shen, Yuan (2008) "Strong and Weak Intervention: Two Pathways for Sociological Intervention", *Current Sociology*, 56 (3), pp. 399-404.
- Shilliam, Robbie (2016) "The Aims and Methods of Liberal Education: Notes from a Nineteenth Century Pan-Africanist", *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 29, pp. 251–267.

-
- Shiva, Vandana (2005) *Globalization's New Wars. Seed, Water and Life Forms*, New Delhi: Women Unlimited.
- Shosh, Joseph M. (2017) "Introduction to Background and Contexts"; L. L. Rowell, C. D. Bruce, J. M. Shosh and M. M. Riel, (eds.), *The Palgrave International Book of Action Research*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 15-19.
- Showstack Sassoon, Anne (ed.) (1982) *Approaches to Gramsci*, London: Writers and Reader.
- (2009) "Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Gramsci e noi"; G. Schirru, (ed.), *Gramsci, le culture e il mondo*, Roma: Viella, pp. 73-88.
- Singh, Amritjit and Schmidt, Peter (2000) "On the Borders Between U.S. Studies and Postcolonial Theory"; A. Singh and P. Schmidt, (eds.), *Postcolonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, and Literature*, Jackson (MS): University Press of Mississippi, pp. 3-70.
- Sitas, Ari (2006) "The African Renaissance Challenge and Sociological Reclamation in the South", *Current Sociology*, 54 (3), pp. 357-380.
- Sivaramakrishnan, Kalyanakrishnan (1995) "Situating the Subaltern: History and Anthropology in the Subaltern Studies Project", *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 8 (4), pp. 395-429.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai (1999) *Decolonizing methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*, London: Zed Books.
- Solinas, Piergiorgio (2017) "Egemonia e gerarchia, tracce nei «Quaderni del carcere»", *International Gramsci Journal*, 2 (3), pp. 331-341.
- Sorokin, Pavel (2016) "'Global sociology' in different disciplinary practices: Current conditions, problems and perspectives", *Current Sociology*, 64 (1), pp. 41-59.
- (2018) "Making Global Sociology in the Context of Neoliberal Domination: Challenges, Ideology and Possible Strategies", *Sociological Research Online*, 23 (1), pp. 21-42.
- Spanos, William V. (ed.) (1984) "On Humanism and the University I: The Discourse of Humanism" [Special issue], *boundary 2*, 12 (3) and 13 (1).
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty (1983) "Power and Desire", paper presented at *Marxist Interpretations of Culture: Limits, Frontiers, Boundaries*, Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, [unpublished].

-
- (1985a) “Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow-Sacrifice”, *Wedge*, 7-8, pp. 120-130.
 - (1985b) “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV: writings on South Asian history and society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 330-363.
 - (1987) “A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi’s ‘Stanadayini’”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies V: writings on South Asian history and society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 91-134.
 - (1988a) “Can the Subaltern Speak?”; C. Nelson and L. Grossberg, (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 271-313.
 - (1988b) “Introduction. Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography”; R. Guha and G. C. Spivak, (eds.) *Selected Subaltern Studies*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3-32, [or. ed. (1985b) “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography”; R. Guha, (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV: writings on South Asian history and society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 330-363].
 - (1990a) “The Problem of Cultural Self-representation”; G. Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic. Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, S. Harasym, (ed.), New York and London: Routledge, pp. 50-58.
 - (1990b) “Questions of Multi-Culturalism”; G. Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic. Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, S. Harasym, (ed.), New York and London: Routledge, pp. 59-65.
 - (1990c) “Negotiating the Structures of Violence”; G. C. Spivak, S. Hasaym, (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Critic. Interviews, Strategies and Dialogues*, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 138-151.
 - (1992) “Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: New nation writers conference in South Africa”; L. De Kock, (ed.), *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, 23 (3), pp. 29-47.
 - (1995) “Supplementing Marxism”; B. Magnus and S. Cullenberg, (eds.), *Whiter Marxism? Global Crisis in International Perspective*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 109-119.
 - (1997) “Moving Devi”, *Cultural Critique*, 47, pp. 120-163.
 - (1999a) *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

-
- (1999b) “The Denotified and Nomadic Tribes of India. Appeal for justice and struggle for rights”, *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 1 (4), pp. 590-604.
 - (2000a) “The New Subaltern: a Silent Interview”; V. Chaturvedi, (ed.), *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, London: Verso, pp. 324-340.
 - (2000b) “Foreword: Upon Reading the *Companion to Postcolonial Studies*”; H. Schwarz and S. Ray, (eds.), *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. xv-xxiii.
 - (2003) *Death of a Discipline*, New York: Columbia University Press.
 - (2004) “Righting Wrongs”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 103 (2-3), pp. 523-558.
 - (2005a) “Scattered speculations on the subaltern and the popular”, *Postcolonial Studies*, 8 (4), pp. 475-486.
 - (2005b) “Touched by Deconstruction”, *Grey Room*, 20, pp. 95-104.
 - (2007a) “Perché il pianeta? Un’autobiografia intellettuale”; S. Adamo, (ed.), *Culture planetarie? Prospettive e limiti della teoria e della critica culturale*, Roma: Meltemi, pp. 41-57.
 - (2007b) “Risistemare i desideri, attendere l’inatteso”, *Aut Aut*, 333, pp. 41-57.
 - (2009) “In a Word. Interview”; G. C. Spivak (ed.), *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 1-26, [or. ed. (1989) “In a Word. Interview with Ellen Rooney”, *differences*, 1 (2), pp. 124-156].
 - (2010) “In Response. Looking Back, Looking Forward”; R. Morris, (ed.), *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 227-236.
 - (2012a) “Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak”; N. Srivastava and B. Bhattacharya, (eds.), *The Postcolonial Gramsci*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 221-232.
 - (2012b) “Introduction”; G. C. Spivak, (ed.), *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, pp. 1-34.
 - (2012c) “Teaching for the Times”; G. C. Spivak, (ed.), *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, pp. 137-157,

-
- [or. ed. (1992) "Teaching for the Times", *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 25 (1), pp. 3-22].
- (2012d) "Echo"; G. C. Spivak, (ed.), *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, pp. 218-248, [or. ed. (1993) "Echo", *New Literary History*, 24 (1), pp. 17-43].
 - (2012e) "What's Left Of Theory?"; G. C. Spivak, (ed.), *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, pp. 191-217, [or. ed. (2000) "From Haverstock Hill Flat to U.S. Classroom, What's Left of Theory?"; J. Butler, J. Guillory and K. Thomas, *What's Left of Theory? New Work on the Politics of Literary Theory*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 1-39].
 - (2012f) "The Double Bind Starts to Kick In"; G. C. Spivak, (ed.), *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, pp. 97-118, [or. ed. (2004) "A Moral Dilemma"; H. Marchitello, (ed.), *What Happens to History: The Renewal of Ethics in Contemporary Thought*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 215-236].
 - (2012g) "Ethics and Politics in Tagore, Coetzee, and Certain Scenes of Teaching"; G. C. Spivak, (ed.), *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, pp. 316-334, [or. ed. (2004) "Ethics and Politics in Tagore, Coetzee, and Certain Scenes of Teaching", *Diacritics*, 32 (3-4), pp. 17-31].
 - (2012h) "Nationalism and Imagination"; G. C. Spivak, (ed.), *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, pp. 275-300, [or. ed. (2007) "Nationalism and Imagination"; C. Vijayasree, M. Mukherjee, and B. Trivedi, (eds.), *Nation in Imagination: Essays on Nationalism, Sub-Nationalisms and Narration*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman, pp. 1-20].
 - (2012i) "Rethinking Comparativism"; G. C. Spivak, (ed.), *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, pp. 467-483, [or. ed. (2009) "Rethinking Comparativism", *New Literary History*, 40 (3), pp. 609-626].
 - (2014a) *Readings*; L. Choksey, (ed.), Kolkata: Seagull Books.
 - (2014b) "The 2012 Antipode AAG Lecture. Scattered speculations on geography", *Antipode*, 46 (1), pp. 1-12.
 - (2014c) "Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 27 (1), pp. 184-198.

-
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty; Landry, Donna and MacLean, Gerald (1996a) "Feminism and Critical Theory"; D. Landry and G. MacLean, (eds.), *The Spivak Reader*, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 53-74.
- (1996b) "Revolutions That As Yet Have No Model: Derrida's "Limited Inc.""; D. Landry and G. MacLean, (eds.), *The Spivak Reader*, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 75-106.
 - (1996c) "More on Power/Knowledge"; D. Landry and G. MacLean, (eds.), *The Spivak Reader*, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 141-174.
 - (1996d) "Translator's Preface and Afterword to Mahasweta Devi, Imaginary Maps"; D. Landry and G. MacLean, (eds.), *The Spivak Reader*, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 267-286.
 - (1996e) "Subaltern Talk: Interview with the Editors"; D. Landry and G. MacLean, (eds.), *The Spivak Reader*, New York and London: Routledge, pp. 287-308.
- Spriano, Paolo (1964) *L'occupazione delle fabbriche. Settembre 1920*, Torino: Einaudi.
- (1969) "Direzione e spontaneità nella tematica dell' "Ordine Nuovo" ", *Rinascita – Il Contemporaneo*, 17, pp. 12-14.
 - (1971) «L'Ordine Nuovo» e i Consigli di Fabbrica, Torino: Einaudi.
 - (1972) *Storia di Torino operaia e socialista. Da De Amicis a Gramsci*, Torino: Einaudi.
- Srivastava, Neelam and Bhattacharya, Baidik (2012) "Introduction"; N. Srivastava and B. Bhattacharya, (eds.), *The Postcolonial Gramsci*, New York: Routledge, pp. 1-14.
- Stanley, Liz (2000) "For sociology, Gouldner's and ours"; J. Eldridge, J. MacInnes, S. Scott, C. Warhurst and A. Witz, (eds.), *For Sociology. Legacies and Perspectives*, Durham: Sociologypress, pp. 56-82.
- Stein, Burton (1990) "A Decade of Historical Efflorescence", *South Asia Research*, 10 (2), pp. 125-138.
- Steinmetz, Willibald (2016) "Forty Years of Conceptual History – The State of the Art"; M. Pernau and D. Sachsenmaier, (eds.), *Global Conceptual History. A Reader*, London: Bloomsbury, pp. 339-366.
- Stokes, Eric (1978) *The Peasant and the Raj. Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

-
- Sundar, Aparna (2015) "Can the Subaltern Be Secular? Negotiating Catholic Faith, Identity and Authority in Coastal Tamil Nadu"; A. G. Nilsen and S. Roy, (eds.), *New Subaltern Politics. Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 126-148.
- Sztompka, Piotr (2010) "One Sociology or Many?"; S. Patel, (ed.), *The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions*, London: SAGE, pp. 21-28.
- Thiollent, Michael and Collette, Maria Madalena (2017) "Action Research and Participatory Action Research in Brazil"; L. L. Rowell, C. D. Bruce, J. M. Shosh and M. M. Riel, (eds.), *The Palgrave International Book of Action Research*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 161-176.
- Tilley, Lisa (2017) "Resisting Piratic Method by Doing Research Otherwise", *Sociology*, 51 (1), pp. 27-42.
- Thomas, Peter D. (2015) "Cosa rimane dei subalterni alla luce dello "Stato integrale"?", *International Gramsci Journal*, 1 (4), 83-93.
- (2018) "Refiguring the Subaltern", *Political Theory*, 46 (6), pp. 861-884.
- Thomas, Renny and Sitas, Ari (2019) "Towards a postcolonial sociology? A conversation with Professor Ari Sitas", *Transcience*, 10 (1), pp. 61-70.
- Topolski, Jerzy (1997) *Narrare la storia. Nuovi principi di metodologia storica*, Milano: Mondadori, Milano.
- Townsend, Andrew (2014) "Collaborative action research"; D. Coghlan and M. Brydon-Miller, (eds.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of action research*, London: SAGE, pp. 117-119.
- Urbani, Giovanni (1967) "Egemonia e pedagogia nel pensiero di A. Gramsci"; A. Gramsci, *La formazione dell'uomo*, Roma: Editori Riuniti.
- Vacca, Giuseppe (2009) "Prefazione"; G. Schirru, (ed.), *Gramsci, le culture e il mondo*, Roma: Viella, pp. 9-15.
- Varadharajan, Asha (2016) "'... half-sick of shadows': figure and ground in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's imagination of the subaltern", *Cultural Studies*, 30 (5), pp. 730-753.
- Varma, Rashmi (2015) "Representing the Adivasi. Limits and Possibilities of Postcolonial Theory"; A. G. Nilsen and S. Roy, (eds.), *New Subaltern Politics*.

Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary India, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 123-125.

Vasco Uribe, Luis Guillermo and Rappaport, Joanne (2011) "Rethinking Fieldwork and Ethnographic Writing", *Collaborative Anthropologies*, 4, pp. 18-66.

von Holdt, Karl (2014) "Critical engagement in fields of power: Cycles of sociological activism in post-apartheid South Africa", *Current Sociology*, 62 (2), pp. 181-196.

Voza, Pasquale (2009) "Intellettuale"; G. Liguori and P. Voza, (eds.), *Dizionario gramsciano 1926- 1937*, Roma: Carocci, pp. 425-428.

Warrior, Robert (2011) "The subaltern can dance, and so sometimes can the intellectual", *interventions*, 13 (1), pp. 85-94.

Wieviorka, Michel (2008) "Some Considerations after Reading Michael Burawoy's Article: 'What is to be Done? Theses on the Degradation of Social Existence in a Globalizing World'", *Current Sociology*, 56 (3), pp. 381-388.

Williams, Patrick and Chrisman, Laura (ed.) (1993) *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory. A reader*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig (2014) *Ricerche Filosofiche*; M. Trinchero, (ed. and trans.), Torino: Einaudi, [or. ed. (1953) *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Frankfurt am Main: Surkamp].

Wright, Steve (2002) *Storming Heaven. Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*, London: Pluto Press.

Wolf, Eric (1982) *Europe and the People Without History*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wohlin, Claes (2014) "Guidelines for snowballing in systematic literature studies and a replication in software engineering", *Proceedings of the 18th International Conference on Evaluation and Assessment in Software Engineering (EASE '14)*, New York: New York Association for Computing Machinery, pp. 1-10.

Wörher, Veronica; Keim, Wiebke; Ersche, Christian and Çelik, Ercüment (2014) "Conclusion: Next Steps toward Global Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences"; W. Keim, E. Çelik, C. Ersche and V. Wörher, (eds.), *Global Knowledge Production in the Social Sciences. Made in Circulation*, Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 251-257.

-
- Yang, Anand A. (1985) "Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History and Society. By Ranajit Guha", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 45 (1), pp. 177-178.
- Young, Robert (2001) *Postcolonialism. A Historical Introduction*, Malden (MA) and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- (2012) "Il Gramsci meridionale"; N. Srivastava and B. Bhattacharya, (eds.), *The Postcolonial Gramsci*, New York: Routledge, pp. 17-33.
- Zavala Pelayo, Edgar (2015) "Nominal Openness and Epistemic Endogamy in 'Global' and 'Provincialized' Sociologies", *Sociology*, 49 (3) pp. 539-555.
- Zene, Cosimo (2010) "L'autocoscienza dei Dalits - 'Intoccabili' come subalterni. Riflessioni su Gramsci nel Sud dell'Asia"; A. M. Baldussi and P. Manduchi, (eds.), *Gramsci in Asia e in Africa*, Cagliari: AIPSA Edizioni, pp. 228-255.
- (ed.) (2013) *The Political Philosophies of Antonio Gramsci and B. R. Ambedkar. Itineraries of Dalits and subalterns*, London and New York: Routledge.
- (2015) "I subalterni nel mondo: tipologie e nesso con le differenti forme dell'esperienza religiosa", *International Gramsci Journal*, 1 (4), pp. 66-82.
- Zinn, Dorothy Louise (2016) "Ernesto de Martino nel mondo anglofono", *nostos*, 1, pp. 97-111.
- Zussman, Robert and Misra, Joya (2007) "Introduction"; D. Clawson, R. Zussman, J. Misra et. al., (eds.), *Public Sociology Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics and the Profession in the Twenty-first Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 3-22.