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Power of Articulation

Imagery of Society and Social Action in Structural Marxism and Its Critique

University of Tampere

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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Preface and Acknowledgements

Imagery of society and the social lies at the heart of social science. Sociologists, however, have turned their focus increasingly to the action of individuals or collective actors rather than those imageries in social and cultural theory. For an alternative perspective, *Power of Articulation: Imagery of Society and Social Action in Structural Marxism and Its Critique* considers the apparent epistemic shift away from society, portrayed by structural Marxists as a complex and articulated whole, to articulation as a discursive practice in connection with which the notion of society can be, though it need not be, reduced to a discussion of particular social phenomena. With the 'discursive turn' away from structures, it seems that there is no longer a society or the social to study, only actors, networks, and other non-human entities. Indeed, this has been popular imagery over the past couple decades in sociology, after the collapse of post-war socialism and the rise of neoliberalism – as an alleged end of history and ideology. Via new forms of social ontology, some have turned to metaphysics and speculative philosophy, criticising Marxists as pursuing an 'epistemological quest' that belongs to the past.

A more nuanced view on Marxism, however, can be illuminating. In the 1960s with the emergence of social activism in Europe, structuralism and Marxism condensed into an epistemic rupture, a theoretical line opening critical discussion of history and ideology. Hence, new social movements paved the way to a notion of the political that 'consists in building a relationship between […] things [i.e., the ways of doing, of being, and of saying] that have none' (Rancière 1999, 40). Articulation is, in this context, contingent on action bringing together two things that have 'nothing to do with one another' in a manner that changes their identity. 'Articulation' is not only a discursive practice connecting things that have no intrinsic relations but a conceptual metaphor for social relations, one that portrays society as a complex and structured whole composed of many contradictions and struggles. Karl Marx grasped society metaphorically as an articulated whole (with the German concept of *Gliederung*), and Ferdinand de Saussure considered language to be a system of differences in 'the domain of articulations'. Today,

‘articulation’ frequently appears as a buzzword in cultural studies and political analysis, and one finds its uses becoming vague and its meanings growing more unclear. Once, however, it marked radical commitment to specific ways of thinking relationally, which means that some critiques of structural Marxism entertaining its death have missed the target.

This dissertation constitutes the first comprehensive discussion of the concept of articulation, providing a critical reading of its usages and what has occurred on its ‘travels’ from one theoretical realm to another. The work forms a synthesis addressing a clear theoretical gap: almost all the authors whose work I have studied have aligned themselves with some conception(s) of articulation to a greater or lesser extent, but the history and usage of these have seldom been documented. The preparation of the present work entailed analysing theoretical discussions of the past, in a process of traversing the ground many times to explore different notions of articulation in their contexts. This was a process of not only attempting to make sense of what was said but also examining why something was said and thinking about its relevance today. Considering meaning at these multiple levels, I conclude that the structural-Marxist conception of articulation is important in attempts to grasp the point of our ‘return to Marx’, to overcome the dichotomy between structure and action and reveal what is going on in reality, thereby countering the reductionist tendencies evident not only in structural Marxism but in the post-structuralist and post-Marxist critiques.

The complexity of this project drawing together several disciplines in theoretical considerations, has constituted a challenge. Accordingly, I offer my acknowledgements here, in connection with what my sources of significant support have enabled. There are numerous institutions and individuals I ought not to take for granted.

Firstly, it was my academic supervisor, Harri Melin, who gave me the chance to undertake a dissertation project after completing my master’s thesis. Under his guidance, I employed the notion of articulation in an empirical analysis that formed the starting point for my doctoral thesis. I must also thank Matti Hyvärinen, who introduced me to conceptual history, which raised my project to a theoretical level. He also was of immense practical help, urging me to continue my work when I had no funding. For this I am most grateful. In the course of the project, which took me several years to carry out, they both have stood beside me and assured me that one day the work would be completed.

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As a doctoral student, I participated in the Tampere Research Group for Cultural and Political Sociology (TCuPS) research seminars for many years, with Pertti Alasuutari and the other TCuPS members commenting on my papers. I have learnt valuable things about research work from everyone in the group. I am grateful also to my fellow doctoral candidates in sociology for their support and remarks about my work in Turo-Kimmo Lehtonen's research seminars. In addition, I thank all my colleagues who have taken part in our own seminars and various reading groups for most inspiring sessions, and I wish to thank all the people at TaSTI for providing an easygoing and research-friendly environment on Pinni B's third floor.

This dissertation would not be the same without the guidance of Juha Koivisto. His insightful and sometimes painstakingly detailed remarks on my manuscript have made it a more coherent and articulated whole, in more than one sense of

the word. He has also given me valuable research material that I never would have found on my own. I have learnt a great deal about Marxism from my colleagues such as Paula Rauhala through Society of Marxist Social Science (Marxilaisen yhteiskuntatieteen seura) and about structuralism and psychoanalysis through discussions with Pertti Hämäläinen. Special thanks go to my colleague Olli Herranen for all of our shared academic endeavours and his friendship. His thought-provoking ideas have had a considerable influence on my work. I thank Jukka Syväterä too: I have taken part in several conferences and research seminars with him but also, on the less formal side, cycling trips and evening get-togethers. I especially appreciate our regular lunches, with Liina Sointu and others, which have provided necessary therapeutic breaks in the day-to-day work. Lastly, I want to express gratitude to my family, especially Aira, Kari, Tiina, and Iivari, and to my friends, my extended family, and all those who have reminded me that I have a life outside academia. Their presence has provided a balance to all the uncertainty and hard work. This includes special gratitude to my partner, dear companion, and fellow researcher Leena Romu, for her love and understanding.

In July 2016 in Tampere,

Matti Kortesoja

Abstract in Finnish

Analysoin väitöskirjassani artikulaatiota käsitteellisenä metaforana. Jäsennän sen käyttöä ja kulkeutumista strukturalistisen marxismin teoreetikoiden ja sen jälkistrukturalististen kriitikoiden tuotannossa käsitehistoriallisen, ideologia-kriittisen ja kontekstisidonnaisen luennan kautta sosiologian runousopiksikin kutsuttujen juurimetaforien viitekehyksessä. Käsitteellisten metaforien kautta yhteiskunta käsitetään ensinnäkin organismina tai koneena, ja toiseksi sosiaalinen toiminta voidaan niiden turvin nähdä kielenä, draamana tai pelinä (Brown 1977, 1989). Suhteessa kyseisiin metaforiin osoitan, miten yhteiskuntaa kompleksisesti rakentuneena kokonaisuutena kuvaava artikulaation käsite on muuttunut anatomisesta metaforasta sosiaalista toimintaa kielenä kuvaavaksi käsitteeksi, minkä turvin poliittisia ja yhteiskunnallisia kytköksiä lähestytään kielellisinä ja sitten diskursiivisina käytäntöinä.

Käsitteellisten metaforien tutkimus on tärkeää paitsi yhteiskunta- ja kulttuuritieteissä vallitsevien ajattelu- ja toimintatapojen kuvaamiseksi myös niiden analysoimiseksi. Käsitteelliset metaforat kuten artikulaation käsite eivät ole vain teoreettisia ja analyyttisiä työkaluja, vaan ne luovat perustan koko yhteiskuntaa ja sosiaalista toimintaa käsittelevän tiedon rakentumiselle. Tämä johtuu siitä, että ne tekevät abstrakteista yhteiskuntaa ja sosiaalista toimintaa koskevista käsitteistä ja ajatuksista konkreettisempia kääntämällä ne yhden järjestelmän tai diskurssin kielestä toiseen. Yhteiskunnan ja rakenteen käsitteiden mielekkyys ja merkitys on kuitenkin asetettu kyseenalaiseksi ranskalaisten yhteiskuntafilosofien toimesta. Tämä osoittaa merkittävän katkoksen sosiologian klassikoiden kuten Karl Marxin ja Émile Durkheimin tuotantoon, mutta korostaa jatkuvuutta Max Weberin ja hänen seuraajiensa työhön, missä sosiaalisen toiminnan käsite korostuu.

Artikulaation käsite viittaa ensimmäisessä ranskankielen sanakirjassa (1694) ensin kahden luun väliseen yhteyteen eli niveleen ja tämän jälkeen sanojen selkeään ääntämiseen. Nykyisessä *Oxford English Dictionaryssä* artikulaation kaksoismerkitys anatomisena sekä puheentuottamiseen liittyvänä ilmauksena on säilynyt, mutta se saa useita lisämäärityksiä. Nykyisin artikulaation käsitettä käytetään laajalti lähinnä akateemisissa keskusteluissa, mutta sen merkitys on

kuitenkin muuttunut, mikä viittaa muutoksiin paitsi käsitteen käyttötavoissa myös laajemmin yhteiskunta- ja kulttuuritieteellisissä ajattelutavoissa. Analysoin väitöskirjassani miten käsityksestä yhteiskunnasta artikuloituneena ja hierarkkisena kokonaisuutena on siirrytty sosiaaliseen toimintaan kielenä ja kielestä diskursiivisen alueeseen, josta artikulaatiot saavat voimansa.

Väitöskirjassani osoitan, että artikulaation käsite on muuttunut abstraktista ajatuksesta yhteiskunnasta artikuloituneena ja hierarkkisena kokonaisuutena menetelmäksi, jonka turvin yhteiskunnallisia ja poliittisia kytköksiä pyritään muodostamaan käytännössä ilman, että yhteiskunta käsitetään kokonaisuutena. Tämä käänne perustuu strukturalistisessa kielitieteessä esitetylle ajatukselle sosiaalisesta toiminnasta kielenä ja kielestä erojen järjestelmänä artikulaatioiden alueella, jolla asioiden välille luodaan sopimuksenvaraisesti yhteyksiä ja eroja (Saussure 1916/1959). Sen diskurssiteoreettisessa kritiikissä puolestaan esitetään, että yhteiskuntaa ei ole ilman, että se tiivistetään sitä koskeviin keskusteluihin (esim. Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001). Stuart Hallin (ks. Grossberg 1986a) mukaan käsite, jonka turvin yhteiskunta nähdään operoivan kielen kaltaisesti, voi näin supistua käsitykseksi, jonka mukaan yhteiskunta on yhtä kuin kieli. Otettaessa kyseessä oleva kielikuva kirjaimellisesti tämä on erittäin radikaali tiivistymä. Toisaalta se on avannut myös uusia mahdollisuuksia tarkastella yhteiskuntatieteiden vakiintuneita ja luutuneita käsityksiä yhteiskunnasta, sosiaalisesta toiminnasta ja kielestä esimerkiksi luonnontieteistä omaksuttujen verkostometaforien avulla.

Väitöskirjassani haastan jälkistrukturalistisen käsityksen, jossa yhteiskunta tiivistyy sitä koskevaan keskusteluun ja kielipeleihin. Lisäksi kyseenalaistan jo aikansa eläneen tulkinnan, jonka mukaan marxilainen ajattelu on talous- ja luokka-reduktionismia, jossa yhteiskunta nähdään vain kapitalistisen tuotantotavan perustavaa ristiriitaa ja luokkataistelua ilmentävänä totaliteettina. Louis Althusserin strukturalistisessa marxismissa taloutta ja politiikkaa ei nähty vain toisistaan erillisinä elementteinä (”ekonomismi”) vaan moniulotteisesti jäsentyneenä artikuloituneena kokonaisuutena, jota talous määrää ”viime kädessä”. Käsitys yhteiskunnasta kompleksisten suhteiden muodostamana kokonaisuutena on ajankohtainen marxilaisen teorian ymmärtämiseksi ja elvyttämiseksi nykyisessä poliittishistoriallisessa suhdanteessa (konjunktuuri), joka on olennaisesti erilainen kuin viisikymmentä vuotta sitten ”paluussa Marxiin”. Konjunktuurin muuttuessa nyt jos koskaan on yhteiskunnallinen tilaus lähestymistavalle, joka ottaisi huomioon niin rakenteen kuin toiminnan käsitteet ilman että ne liudentuisivat tai pelkistyisivät toisiinsa.

Abstract

Articulation is a joint, connection, or link and an act of fixing and coupling in order to place things in relation by giving expression to them. In structural linguistics, the concept of articulation was used as a conceptual metaphor in conceptualisation of language as a system of differences. It was employed in Marxism, to refer to the organisation of society as an 'articulated whole' composed of 'the limbs of the social system'. After philosopher Louis Althusser, articulation became a core concept for the 'articulation school' of economic anthropology, then for the Birmingham school of cultural studies, and after that in the Essex School in discourse theory and political analysis. From there, the concept has diffused and spread in its contemporary uses.

The concept of articulation has travelled from French structuralism, Marxist political philosophy, and new economic anthropology to Anglophone discourse theory and cultural studies. Focusing on the concept of articulation and its travels by studying the process whereby this concept has become actively adopted, appropriated, and adapted in academic practices, my dissertation contributes to the discussion of conceptual metaphors, their deployment, and the ways in which we build imageries of society and social action. To analyse the movement of concepts that 'is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity', as Edward Said (1983, 157) has put it, this dissertation examines the conceptual metaphor of articulation in the structural-Marxist line of thought, wherein 'society is an articulated whole', and in the post-Marxist critiques of it, where often 'social action is language'.

Conceptual metaphors transfer abstract ideas and models from one system or discourse to another through an attempt to make them more concrete. According to Richard Harvey Brown's *A Poetic for Sociology*, the imageries of society and social action have their foundation in the 'root metaphors' of sociological thought. In classical modern sociology, the root metaphors are 'society seen as an organism or as a machine' and 'social conduct viewed as language, the drama, or a game' (Brown 1989a, 78). In relation to the root metaphors, I consider firstly the ways in which society is conceptualised through a conceptual metaphor of

articulation, with an 'articulated whole' (i.e., *Gliederung*). I am also interested in finding out the ways in which social action is viewed as language and a play of differences.

Althusserianism put emphasis on Marx's theory not only in respect of the 'capital-logic' in philosophy or at the level of the factory floor in terms of the class struggle but as addressing a complex process of many determinations alongside the economic, with reference to an articulated whole, the society. The conceptual metaphor of articulation in which society is an articulated whole takes account of the stratified nature of 'the social', taking society as a hierarchical structure but, unlike nature, not a self-subsistent whole. At the same time, it takes into consideration social action of individuals too, which is structured as a language is 'at the domain of articulations' (see Saussure 1916/1959, 112). The dissertation addresses the 'epistemic shift' from an organic and mechanical order of things to the discursive rules and norms of social action as seen in the concept of language as a system of differences. The work examines the ways in which the metaphorical notion of society as an articulated whole (Ger. *Gliederung*) has given way to a concept that refers to social action as language, wherein social and political linkages are taken as discursive practices in 'the domain of articulations'. Accordingly, society seems to operate in the manner of a language, which can be – but is not necessarily – reduced to the notion 'society is language'.

The idea of articulation marked a sign of a break with a 'downward reductionism' wherein society is a totality expressing hidden structural causes and economic mechanisms. If an analogous image of 'society operating like language' boils down to the iconic conception 'society is language' (*viz*., when it is seen as nothing but discursive), the very concept of society is lost. At the same time, it expands a discursive space for the actions of individuals, which outcome cannot arise outside the context of a specific discursive battlefield concerning class, gender and race, for example (cf. 'intersectionality'). Presented to address these questions 'bottom-up' is a new approach in relation to the structural-Marxist paradigm (i.e., one proceeding from Althusserianism). It also takes account of the action of individuals and the possibilities for social change in the era of social movements. At the same time, however, the overall picture of society can fragment to the actions of individual actors. I suggest that we pay more attention to conceptual metaphors because they are building blocks for the images of society and social action that shape our understanding of what is going on in the situations around us.

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1 Introduction: ‘Power of Articulation’

1.1 Background and Research Objectives

The concept I study in my dissertation is articulation. For many authors (e.g., Stuart Hall and Lawrence Grossberg) this is and was a core theoretical and analytical concept in review of structural-Marxist discussions. To the best of my knowledge, it does not appear in those reference books of social science that increase the value of key concepts forming iconic parts of the imageries of society and social action. There are a few exceptions, however. In the *Historical-Critical Dictionary of Marxism*, Thomas Weber (1994) discusses the concept of articulation in terms of the idea of society as ‘an articulated whole’ (Ger. *Gliederung*).[1] In other words, the term ‘articulation’ is cognate to the German notion of *Gliederung*. Karl Marx grasped social order relationally as an articulated whole, regarding the capitalist relations of production that bind individuals into society and make them its subjects by changing them. The notion of *Gliederung* was put forth first as a conceptual metaphor conveying a meaning of ‘society is an articulated whole’. This conceptualisation was criticised in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s post-Marxist discourse theory, wherein articulation is a conceptual metaphor under which society seems to operate like a language.

In post-Marxist thought, articulation is a discursive practice consisting of the construction of the so-called nodal points around which the signifying elements are temporarily organised or fixed as ‘discursive moments’ (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 113). This theory is based on a structuralist metaphor, ‘social action is language’, which reorganises the imagery of society and social action. I study the notion of articulation in the intellectual and political context of a ‘return to Marx’

[1] Thomas Weber’s article ‘Artikulation, Gliederung’ (1994, 613–628) was published in the first volume of the *Historisch-kritisches Wörterbuch des Marxismus* (HKWM). Thus far, the Berlin Institute of Critical Theory (InkriT) has published about half of this 15-volume work, whose editor-in-chief is Wolfgang Fritz Haug.

and the post-Marxist critique thereof, which 'constitutes the theoretical revolution of our time' (Hall, cited in Grossberg 1986a, 56). I describe and analyse the structural-Marxist line of thought and its criticism with reference to the use of the concept of articulation brought by the 'linguistic turn' (or rather the 'discursive turn') in imageries of society and social action.[2] Firstly, I analyse the structural-Marxist thinking (called 'Althusserianism') in which society is depicted metaphorically as an articulated whole consisting of 'the limbs of the social system' (*Gliederung*). I am also interested in the ways in which articulation is a notion applicable for social action as if it were language, as making and breaking of the signifying chains in practice by means of use of language. Accordingly, I address the 'epistemic shift' from the organic and mechanical order of things toward the discursive rule and norms of social action conceptualised as a language in 'the domain of articulations' – that is, an epistemic shift from social structures and toward a discursive field of action.

In Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxist discourse theory, society does not exist in the absence of discussion about it. In the post-Marxist way of thinking, the useful conceptual metaphor under which society operates akin to language can be condensed down to 'society is language'. That is a radical moment of reduction if the metaphor is adopted literally (see Hall's critique, cited in Grossberg 1986a). In post-Marxist discourse theory, particularly Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985/2001), articulation is a practice that fixes the free-floating signifiers temporarily to form meanings. An incompleteness of this process is alleged to arise from society's openness, which is a consequence of the fact that the floating of the signifiers has no necessary limits. Thereby, the floating of signifiers such as socialism, conservatism, or liberalism can produce different meanings, in different contexts, and they can articulate to other signifiers through the 'nodal points'. In this context, articulation is a discursive practice that enables signifying elements to connect so as to produce new meanings, which is essential to social and political action. It also opens a discursive field for hegemonic struggles in which identities and meanings are relative, the formations partial and

[2] According to philosopher Richard Rorty (1967/1992), linguistic philosophy (namely, the approach of Ludwig Wittgenstein) marked a philosophical revolution. Later, Rorty recognised in his two retrospective essays (from 1977 and 1992) that he had overemphasised the 'linguistic turn' in analytical philosophy (not to be confused with structural linguistics). His amendment is due to the assumption in linguistic philosophy: that a 'philosophical problem' is a product of 'the vocabulary in which the problem was stated […] before the problem itself was taken seriously' (Rorty 1979, xiii). This arose because of a conviction that all philosophical problems can be resolved only through achieving better description and understanding of language. Rorty popularised the term 'linguistic turn' for considering analytical philosophy, not social science.

temporary, and where outcomes are not fixed in advance beyond any concrete battle (pertaining to class, gender, and race, to name a few, 'intersectionality'). Because of this, several social antagonisms determine the discursive limits of society where the signifiers do not float freely and instead have a discursive limit that restricts their possible meanings.[3]

Populist movements such as Spain's *indignados* ('the outraged') have begun protesting against neoliberal austerity policies, as the people in opposition to the political elite, using Laclau's ideas in political practices. Although these left-wing movements have distanced themselves from Marxist vocabulary by using post-Marxist discourse theory, it does not follow from this that Marxism is politically and intellectually useless. Marx and the critique of capitalism have once again become a legitimate subject of academic discussion. It seems, however, that there is a call for new approaches within the contemporary 'return to Marx' that is now emerging after three decades of silence. The first signs of a 'return to Marx' in Western Europe came a hundred years after the first publication of Marx's *Capital* (1867), with the new social movements and countercultural revolution of the 1960s. Fifty years later, Hall said, in his interview with colleague Sut Jhally (in London, on 30 August 2012), that he wanted to re-engage with the Marxist line of critical thinking in a new politico-historical conjuncture, characterised by the economic crisis that had recently reared its head. According to Hall, cultural studies was a political attempt to move away from the economic and class reductionism in the Marxist way of thinking, a move in line with the ideology-critical reading by philosopher Louis Althusser. A quarter of a century after the advent of the return to Marx, Hall addressed its post-Marxist deconstruction in an interview with his disciple Grossberg, under the title 'On Postmodernism and Articulation' (1986). According to him, Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxist discourse theory (2001) offered a portrayal of society against a discursive field of social action that failed to recall the articulated whole. This can but does not necessarily lead to a fully discursive position with which society is reduced to mere discussion of society that neglects the social and economic relations that impel individual actors.

I address the concept of articulation in this context. It is not yet a widespread 'basic concept' within any social and political vocabulary as is 'crisis' (Koselleck

[3] With his political theory, Laclau (1935–2014) attempted to break populism from the nationalist rhetoric of the Right and to articulate it to the Left. According to the members of the Essex School, in discourse theory and political analysis, this research programme 'comprises a novel fusion of recent developments in Marxist, post-structuralist, post-analytical and psychoanalytic theory' (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000, 1).

2006), which has been a building block in a context of discussions linked to newspaper editorials, parliamentary debates, and keynote speeches at academic conferences. The 'articulation' concept is, rather, found in theoretical usage in academic discussions, where its meaning has epistemologically shifted from social structure conceived of as a complex whole to a discursive field of social action considered as language. On one hand, dictionary definitions of the word are often anatomical or biological in nature. This casting is typical in the classical sociological imageries wherein society is portrayed as an organism or as a machine. These conceptual metaphors are derived from the natural and physical sciences. On the other hand, the meanings and values of articulation are related to speech and other means of communication. This is characteristic of the imageries conceived of in terms of language by means of which society is portrayed as a discursive field of social action as manifested in language-games or a play of differences. That imagery is typical in discussions that draw conceptual metaphors from the arts and humanities.

My aim is to make sense of the epistemic shifts in the theoretical and ideological contexts of structural Marxism and its critique that have affected the imagery of society and the social action portrayed. From this perspective, I address the problem of reductionism. 'Economism' is a specific type of downward reductionism in which the entire structure of society articulates around a single line of conflict as in the struggle between capitalists and labourers. Although this form of reductionism is typical in vulgar-Marxist discussions, it characterises many critiques of them too, wherein economy and politics, for example, are depicted as distinct from one another. In structural-Marxist thought, the various instances within the social formation are viewed in terms of an articulated whole of society. In an opposite form of reductionism, economy and society boil down to mere discussion of themselves. To solve this puzzle, I study the epistemic shift in the imageries of society and social action critique by using the concept of articulation as my Ariadne's thread.

In my dissertation, I ask the following questions:

1) How have the usages, definitions, and points of reference in using the concept of articulation changed, and when have these shifts taken place in practice?

2) How are these changes related to the imageries of society and social action that are distinctive of modern sociological thought?

3) What is at stake in the discussions wherein the concept of articulation has been used, discussed, and changed in both theory and practice?

In other words, I firstly address the concept of articulation in structural-Marxist thinking and its critique, giving an overview of the structural-Marxist approach and the criticism of it by studying the concept of articulation in its intellectual and ideological contexts. I provide a systematic reading of this concept to avoid the banal accusations and vulgar interpretations that can arise in connection with the 'society is an articulated whole'. Instead of economism, the conceptual metaphor of articulation builds on a relational approach. After that, I address the second conceptual metaphor of articulation, wherein 'social action is language'. I discuss both metaphors of articulation in relation to the problem of reductionism.

The contribution of my dissertation is twofold. Firstly, it addresses the usages and travels of the concept of articulation from one discipline to another, to shed light on the epistemic shifts in structural-Marxist thinking and in its critique. This requires a careful, reflexive reading of the research material, one that considers the contexts that have contributed to the critical reviews and interpretations. I apply a contextually oriented conceptual-historical method to the imageries of society and social action because they build relatively unselfconsciously on the conceptual metaphors that social scientists appropriate from one field and adapt to another. Highlighting the changes in portrayal of society and social action in structural Marxism and in its critique affords tracing the epistemic shifts that I discuss with regard to reductionist thinking. Secondly, I present an outline of the usages and travels of the concept of articulation as a case in point for those who employ the concept as a theoretical or analytical framework in their studies. Its uses and travels have not been studied to this extent in subsequent applications of the concept in structural linguistics, structural-Marxist political philosophy, new economic anthropology, cultural studies, and post-Marxism (Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory in particular).

1.2 A 'Rough Guide': Usage and Travels of the Concept of Articulation

In academic discussion, concepts form the main building blocks in theories such as those organising the notions of social realities. As cultural theorist Edward Said (1983, 157) put it, 'the movement of ideas and theories from one place to another is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity'. In this sense, theories are more than logical propositions or empirically grounded ideas, on account of concepts crossing boundaries between academic fields in the

search for new ideas and practices. According to Said (*ibid*.), in the travels of a concept, there is a point at which it articulates for the first time. After crossing 'the threshold of articulation' – that is, once the idea has been put into words and entered discussion – it can travel in time and space and traverse various disciplines. When its users contest it in academic debate, it can become a concept that is able to influence its theoretical and practical contexts. Finally, the concept is adapted to academic practice and its users may transform it such that the background from its originating discipline disappears.

I apply Said's summary as I introduce the usages and travels of the concept of articulation in the structural-Marxist line of thought and its critique. It is not possible to offer a fully articulated account on this subject in this introductory chapter, so here I shall suggest a fitting opening and a departure point by addressing the concept of articulation and its travels in time and space. My analysis begins with the theoretical and intellectual contexts encountered along the concept's travels in time and space and in its traversing of various disciplines, from Marxist political philosophy to economic anthropology and cultural studies through to structural linguistics and its critique. The concept of articulation has diffused around the world, spread in empirical studies by political and cultural analysts. This leads to a question about the ways in which concepts travel back and forth between fields and how scholars appropriate and adopt them in their academic practices. Interdisciplinary scholarship based on the travels of concepts is introduced in a book by cultural analyst and artist Mieke Bal (2002). For her (*ibid*., 5), the humanities are founded on concepts rather than methods. I too have taken this as a starting point; it is a fitting jumping-off point for a discussion on the history of the concept of articulation.

In my dissertation, I pay attention to the imageries of society and social action and the 'point' or 'intention' in using the concept of articulation in practice. Hence, reading the texts in which the various theoreticians have used and discussed the concept of articulation is the point of departure for this study. For an armchair traveller such as me, however, it is not possible to master all of the disciplines and their historical contexts. The struggle to understand the various theoretical discussions from the past is one that I address in my efforts to make sense of the arguments and contexts of the discussion and, in turn, explain these to the reader. As for the associated questions of research ethics, I adhere to established scientific practice in my analysis by citing the resources used in keeping with rules of ethics and normative guidelines: I give credit to those to whom it belongs. I use plenty of secondary research material as a source for my

contextual understanding. Indeed, the ideas do not come out of nowhere, and my reasoning is informed by the surroundings and the people with whom I have worked, either directly or indirectly.[4]

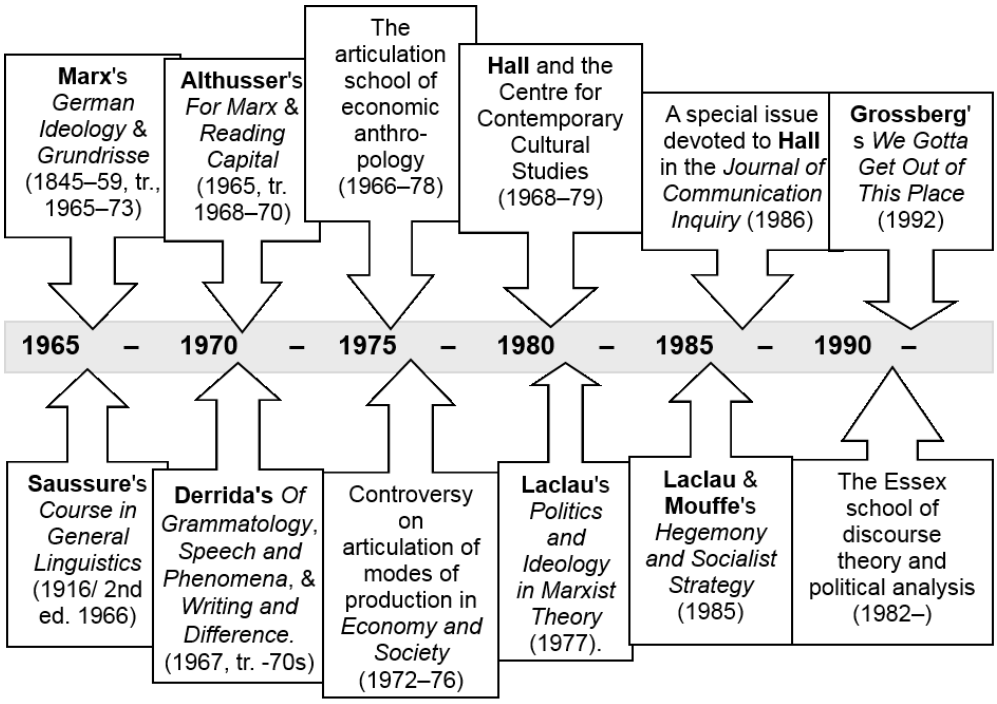
I analyse texts wherein the meaning and reference or the significance and normative tone of the concept of articulation is actualised, altered, or temporarily fixed, that opens the discourse to my investigation. I start by setting the concept of articulation in its theoretical and practical contexts. In other words, the analysis takes place between texts and their contexts. Cultural analysis of concepts and their history is challenging because foreign and distant academic and historical settings represent ample opportunities for confusion and things getting 'lost in translation'. Accordingly, it is worthwhile to note that I have used the English translations even when my source materials were originally written in French or in German, and the discussion here uses the English version for the sake of consistency. In the case of key passages, I have studied the original sources also, because the concept of articulation/*Gliederung* is often absent from translations. Not only do translators choose the words that are available to them, but those words are sometimes informed by a politico-historical conjuncture different from the original. English-speaking Marxism is now becoming more dominant, for example, because of the return to Marx having gained a global position previously accorded to more specific German work on Marx and its subordinate French theory.

The research material consists of about 50 research articles, essays, and book chapters that I have collected from databases and libraries, starting with the present and working my way into the past. As for scope, my textual corpus covers structural-Marxist discussions and their critique in which articulation has been used, discussed, and changed as a concept. My method entailed assessing the value of each text to the discussions that I consider, in a procedure detailed in the next chapter. The timeline depicted below (in Diagram 1) outlines the structural-Marxist line of thought and its critique with respect to conjuncture wherein the concept of articulation has been used, discussed, and changed as a conceptual

[4] Here I list just a few dissertations submitted at the University of Tampere. Jari Aro has studied rhetoric in sociological texts, along with the narratives and metaphors in sociological language use (his work, from 1999, is titled in English 'Sociology and the Use of Language'); Media Studies scholar Ensio Puoskari has addressed Grossberg's work in his 2005 dissertation (whose title translates to 'Communication, Culture and Popular'); and Mikko Lahtinen has defended his political science dissertation on Althusser (in English titled 'Niccolò Machiavelli and Louis Althusser's Aleatory Materialism' and published in 1997). In addition to these works, sociologist Risto Heiskala has presented a theoretical synthesis of action theory, phenomenology, and structural linguistics in his dissertation *Society As Semiosis* (2003).

metaphor. These discussions constitute my research material, which is supplemented by secondary literature that I use to understand the discussions and make sense of them in their contexts.

Diagram 1. Usage and travels of the concept of articulation in structural Marxism and its critique



I study the uses and travels of this concept from one theoretical discussion to another to learn what happens to the concept when its contexts shift and how these moves bring forth changes in both theory and practice. No-one has yet addressed all these academic discussions in order to find the ways in which the concept of articulation is used and how its usages, definitions, and points of reference have changed. I bridge the gap in the existing literature by studying the concept of articulation in the various debates to reveal its travels back and forth across academic battlegrounds that include structural-Marxist political philosophy, new economic anthropology, cultural studies, and structural linguistics (with the associated critique in connection with psychoanalysis, deconstructionism, and discourse theory). I analyse and describe the concept's usages and its travels

between discussions in order to trace the epistemic shift from society to social action.[5]

As is mentioned above, I focus on the usages of the concept and on its travels by studying the discussions summarised in Diagram 1 in structural-Marxist thinking and in its critique. This line of thought was situated at a very specific conjuncture: a 'return to Marx'. Marx's *The German Ideology* and *Grundrisse*, for example, were not available in English before the 1960s–70s. Marx (1835–1883) used the notion of *Gliederung*, derived from the German word for a limb, 'Glied', as an analytical key concept for the whole structure of society. In the English-language edition of his *Grundrisse* (produced in 1973 from the 1939–41 German release of Marx's 1857–58 work), *Gliederung* is translated as organisation, structure, or order of society, not as articulation (Foster-Carter 1978, 53). It was Althusser who adopted this concept in his vocabulary and changed its range of reference by giving the term a new usage. Althusser used it for the organisation of the various instances of the social formation as 'the articulation of the limbs of the social system' (1970, 98). In *For Marx* (Althusser 1965/1969) and *Reading Capital* (Althusser & Balibar 1965/1970), Althusser describes key terms of structural-Marxist vocabularies such as 'mode of production' and 'the relations of production' and the contradictions, dislocations, and transitions in relation to the conceptual metaphor 'society is an articulated whole' (i.e., *Gliederung*). For Althusser, society emerges as a complex of many determinations and contradictions alongside the economic. In other words, the economic determines only which of the other instances, such as the ideological or political, is dominant at any given time. In this context, articulation is 'the site of a significant theoretical rupture (*coupure*) and intervention' in structural-Marxist thinking (Hall 1980b, 37).

In the debates that followed from the structural-Marxist and philosophical discussions, articulation became a core concept in the field of new economic anthropology. What became known as the 'modes of production controversy' divided Marxists between those who emphasised the idea of a single capitalist system and those who rejected this theory for neglecting the ideological and political struggles and their complex articulations in pre-capitalist social formations (e.g., Berman 1984; Foster-Carter 1978; Raatgever 1985; Wolpe

[5] I should stress that I strive to avoid the 'Munchausen effect'. This means that I steer clear of offering a legendary tale in the manner of the famous baron who claimed that he pulled himself out of a swamp 'into the air by pulling on his own hair' (Pêcheux 1982, 108) without providing empirical evidence.

1980). According to the 'articulation school' of economic anthropology, social formations in the developing world, such as in Africa, consist of the articulation of pre-capitalist modes of production under the dominance of capitalism. In French economic anthropology (exemplified by the work of Maurice Godelier, Claude Meillassoux, Emmanuel Terray, and Pierre-Philippe Rey), the concept of articulation pertains to the relationships among modes of production with respect to various contradictions and social struggle. The idea with 'articulation of modes of production' is that the subordinate mode(s) of production such as domestic self-subsistence economies can co-exist with capitalism over long spans of time. For example, Rey, in 'Class Alliances', divided 'the stages of the articulation of modes of production' into three periods: the first involves interaction between the different modes of production in the same social formation; then, one mode becomes subordinated and a transition to another mode can take place; and, finally, the subordinate mode is defeated. In Rey's work, each of these stages of articulation has a corresponding set of class alliances. Rey's point is that the transition from one mode of production to another is not set in advance. It is a result of the class struggle that extends beyond the economic to the social formations in the ideological and political instances, which has an effect on uneven economic and historical development.

The concept of articulation diffused first into the vocabulary of cultural theorists and then to discourse theorists, who emphasised the 'social' as a product of language. In cultural studies, this concept offered an analytical framework covering historically specific social forms such as race, ethnicity, and gender issues, which became dominant principles for articulating social orders alongside the Marxist class struggle. Hall's view of articulation as 'unity-in-difference', for example, emphasises the relative autonomy of the ideological and political struggles. This means that there is no guarantee of their outcome outside any concrete battle related to sex, race, and class, for example. In fact, it became apparent later that, in principle, anything can articulate with anything else; this gives the concept of articulation a potentially unlimited range of reference (see Grossberg 1992). For connections to be made in practice, however, some links have to be broken for new ones to be created. In Grossberg's cultural theory (2010, 52), cultural studies does not have a method 'unless one thinks of articulation – the reconstruction of relations and contexts – as a method'. As a theory and a method (see Slack 1996), 'articulation' means contextualisation of the research subject in order to get a better understanding of contexts. In this process, articulation involves a commitment to contingency and anti-reductionist thinking in addition

to consideration of the problematic of hegemony whereby the structures of domination and subordination appear in terms of consent that is achieved in ideological and political struggles. 'Articulation' can offer strategic means for intellectuals to intervene in the social and political contexts, thereby enabling the class, race, ethnicity, and gender issues and the social formations overdetermined by the relations to be contested and changed.

The next step in the journey is contemporary imagery of social action in relation to the Essex school of discourse theory and political analysis. Laclau (1977, 159–161), in particular, argued that 'ideological elements have no necessary "class-belonging"' and that class interests are articulations that give meaning to the popular democratic struggles that exist in the ideological and political instance. Later, Laclau and Mouffe (1985/2001) argued that one condition for radical democratic hegemonic struggle is expansion of a political space filled with floating signifiers that have not yet fully formed the differences, which remain only partially fixed. This opens a discursive space for the hegemonic struggle over elements that are not essential but overdetermined by one another. In this sense (see Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 113), articulation is a discursive practice that 'consists in the construction of nodal points' around which the signifying elements are temporarily organised or fixed as discursive moments. The theoretical vocabulary for the discourse comes from psychoanalysis and Lacan's 'return to Freud' that took place over half a century ago, which together inspired a structuralist 'return to Marx' (and accompanying post-Marxist critique) in a new theoretical and political conjuncture. This took place after the rise and fall of the internationalist workers' movement and the formation of the New Left in opposition to ideological, political, and economic forms of 'neo-conservatism' and 'neoliberalism', which builds more or less on socialist ideology in a critical relation to communism.

In the 1990s, the concept of articulation diffused and spread in the jargon of cultural theorists and political analysts all over the world: its usages are now vague; moreover, their ambiguity has affected the change in use: the term 'articulation' is sometimes used as a catchword, but this can obscure the fact that the idea of articulation, and what it represented in 1960s–70s structural-Marxist theory, is becoming more unclear. Some have argued (e.g., Davis 2008) that it is this ambiguity, in the sense of vagueness and open-endedness of concepts, that makes them popular. The concept of articulation displays this kind of ambiguity in the imagery of society and social action in structural-Marxist discussions and the criticism that followed from the 'discursive turn' in 1970s–80s. Furthermore,

neo-materialists active in contemporary French thought have called the concepts of society and the social into question.

1.3 'Power of Articulation'

Before scrutinising structural-Marxist thinking and its post-Marxist critique, I briefly outline the semantic history of the concept of articulation. Akin to words such as 'arm' and 'art', 'articulation' is a Latin-based term whose usage in French and many other Romance languages is similar to that in English. The first French dictionary already had two entries for the term (Richelet & Widerhold 1680, 44). Firstly, it is an anatomical word that refers to a joint of two bones, and then it is denoted as distinct pronunciation.[6] In the third edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the two meanings commonly linked to 'articulation' – the anatomical or biological sense and, then, that related to speech or expression – still prevail, yet the word has many additional definitions attached to it.[7] Many other languages

[6] '*Articulation. Terme d'Anatomie.* Composition naturelle d'os, de laquelle les bouts de deux os s'entre-touchent. [L'articulation des os. *Deg.]*. *Articulation.* Prononciation distincte.'

[7] Under 'Articulation, n.' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (OED Online), we find:

I. Senses primarily anatomical or biological. 1. a. *Anatomy* and *Zoology*. Connection (of bones or skeletal segments) by a joint; the state of being jointed; a manner of jointing. †b. *concrete.* A jointed structure or series. Cf. joint. *obsolete. rare*. c. In a man-made structure or mechanism: connection by a joint or joints, especially in such a way as to permit movement; the state, or a manner, of being so jointed. 2. *Anatomy*. Movement at a joint. *rare*. 3. a. *Anatomy* and *Zoology.* A structure connecting two bones, or two segments of an invertebrate skeleton; a joint; especially a joint that permits movement. Also: a point of close contact between two skeletal elements within a joint. b. *Botany.* A node or joint of a stem; a place at which a leaf or other deciduous part is attached to a plant. c. In a man-made structure or mechanism: a joint or connection, especially one which permits movement. d. *figurative*. A conceptual relationship, interaction, or point of juncture, especially *between* two things. †4. A sprouting of shoots from a node of a stem. *obsolete. rare*. †5. *Botany* and *Zoology.* Each of the segments of a jointed structure; the part contained between two joints in a limb, the stem of a plant, etc. Cf. articulus. *obsolete.* 6. *Dentistry*. The contact made between the upper and lower teeth, especially during movements of the jaw; the adjustment of the position of teeth, especially artificial teeth, to achieve normal contact of this kind. Cf. articulator.

II. Senses relating to speech or expression. 7. a. The utterance of the distinct elements of speech; (*Phonetics*) the formation of speech sounds by the control of the air flow in the vocal tract by the vocal organs. b. *Music*. The separation of successive notes from one another, individually or in groups, especially regarded as an aspect of a performer's technique or interpretation; the manner in which this is done. Also: the capacity of an instrument to produce this effect. 8. The quality of being articulate in speech or expression; clarity, distinctness. Now *rare*. 9. Chiefly *Phonetics*. a. The action of controlling the air flow in the vocal tract by the vocal organs to

feature a similarity in the overall double meaning of 'articulation'; however, the German use of *Gliederung* for a structure or organisation seems to have been quite different until the 1980s, when it became translated more specifically from English as 'Artikulation' (see Weber 1994, 613). In the most common dictionary definitions of the noun, articulation referred first to a joint or connection that attaches body parts to a skeleton in a manner that allows their movement. With regard to this, articulation is a form or manner in which things join. In addition, it is a point of juncture at which elements are connected, or an abstract state of this interrelation. In the specialist field of phonetics, articulation means the production of speech; in the pronunciation of consonants, air moves freely through the 'vocal tract' until it is obstructed by the vocal organs that produce the sound. This is one of the anatomical meanings of the word. In everyday language, however, the term is used with reference to an articulate speaker – that is, someone who can 'put things into words' in a clear and expressive manner. This sense of the word is linked to the idea of poetic skills: the word 'art', which is derived from the Latin *ars* (*artis* in the genitive), means 'a skill in joining or fitting'.[8]

According to these definitions, articulation is a joint, connection, or link and an act of fixing and coupling in order to put things in relation by giving expression to them. An articulation consists of different elements that connect through a specific type of linkage. It is a unity formed out of distinctive parts. Again, if the elements are not articulated, they are separate and do not exist in the same discursive field. By definition, 'articulation' has a double meaning, as a structure or linkage and as an act of rendering eloquent verbal expression. In structural linguistics, articulation is a practice that makes it possible to enunciate utterances from a limited set of sounds with potentially unlimited meanings. In political rhetoric, articulation is a practice that allows distinct interests to connect to form a group for political objectives. Hence, it seems clear that articulation refers to

produce speech or other sounds. Also: the result of this, a speech sound; (formerly) *specifically* †a consonant (obsolete). b. Chiefly *Phonetics*. point (also place) of articulation: the position in the mouth at which obstruction of the air passage takes place in the production of a consonant. Chiefly *Phonetics*. c. manner (also mode) of articulation: the way in which the passage of air is altered by speech organs in order to produce a vocal sound. 10. The faculty or power of speaking, speech; the expression of thoughts by articulate sounds. 11. The manifestation, demonstration, or expression of something immaterial or abstract, such as an emotion or idea.

[8] It was Aristotle who drew a distinction between *praxis* and *poïesis*. He used the first term for a practice or conduct, and the latter referred to action or production that is transformative, such as poetry. According to Althusser (1969, 229), Marx 'replaced the old postulates (…) by a historico-dialectical materialism of *praxis*: that is, by a theory of the different specific *levels of human practice* (economic practice, political practice, ideological practice, scientific practice) in their characteristic articulations.'

many distinct 'things': what might appear to be the same word has various connotations and meanings, which vary with the context. In fact, the concept of articulation is composed of various elements that articulate around a set of different ideas. Clearly, this concept has several meanings, uses, and values attached to it, which I address next.

The double meaning of articulation appears in *Course in General Linguistics*, where Saussure (1916/1959, 10) defines language by means of a Latin word for a joint, 'articulus'. This anatomical, biological term was applied in relation to spoken language. After that, Saussure (*ibid*.) gave it a semiotic meaning as 'a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas', using the German expression 'gegliederte Sprache', which one can gloss as 'articulated speech'[9] and in philosopher Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1967/1974, 66) is translated as 'articulated language' by famous literary theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Employing the second definition in connection with language, Saussure says that 'what is natural to mankind is not oral speech but the faculty of constructing a language'. According to this passage, articulated speech is characteristic of people, but the ability to create a language that consists of distinct signs in relation to distinct ideas is what distinguishes culture from nature. For Saussure, language is not speech but 'a self-contained whole and a principle of classification' (Saussure 1916/1959, 9), where language is taken to be a system of differences distinct from nature (in contrast, nothing is signified as such in nature). For Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1781/1966, cited in Derrida 1974), articulated speech was 'the first social institution' – one must learn it in order to speak to others.

The notion of 'power of articulation' comes from Derrida, who wrote: 'Saussure, in contradiction to his phonologist thesis, recognized, we recall, that the power of articulation alone-and not spoken language-was "natural to man"' (1967/1974, 228–229). For example, a plant develops from a seed in accordance with the laws of nature, in part of an evolutionary process. Saussure's predecessors studied the historical evolution of linguistic forms in a diachronic manner. For Saussure, a plant 'does not stand for something; it is not the bearer of meaning' in the manner of a sign; a sign has a differential function in articulated language, which is a synchronic system (Culler 1976, 82). In this manner, a sign of a plant stands for something in a symbolic order such as

[9] Saussure defended his dissertation, on the Indo-European vowel system, at the University of Leipzig in 1876, where his teachers were 'Young Grammarians' (Ger. *Junggrammatiker*), for whom the mid-nineteenth-century biological metaphors were outdated (Culler 1976, 82).

language, which is a system of differences and used in a 'domain of articulations', where a distinct sign articulates a distinctive idea. In this context, 'power of articulation' is not a phonic substance; instead, I grasp it relationally, in 'like a language' terms, such that it means a capacity to speak and act – that is, forming, organising, and expressing thoughts and feelings with other people, and the ability to make and break the connections by using articulated language. In addition, articulation offers a mirror reflecting the ways in which the relations that have real effects on its subjects form or break and structure their agency. Saussure defines language as a system of differences that is used in the domain of articulations, where 'social action is language', while for Marx, according to Althusser, 'society is an articulated whole', a complex of many determinations and contradictions based on the economic but also the ideological and political.

Structural Marxists discussed the structured and differentiated whole of the social formation with reference to articulation, which links, expresses, and changes the relations between the instances within the social formation in a manner of formation that occurs not only horizontally (i.e., discursively) but also vertically as an articulated and hierarchical whole. Structural-Marxist thought builds on a 'stratified ontology', which is not 'flat' in the sense found in its post-Marxist deconstructions, wherein articulation is a discursive practice used in a discursive field of action, in which the actors articulate the signifying elements that form discursive moments (e.g., Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001). From a fully discursive perspective, there is only a short step to seeing things and their relations as nothing but discursive – social constructions. This form of reductionism is characteristic of the critics of Althusserianism, for whom differences only 'yoke together' because of political articulations (see Hall 1985, 93).

In post-structuralism, society and 'the social' are constituted by way of discursive practices. In Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxist discourse theory, there is a shift away from the structural-Marxist notion of the subject, which articulates to the ideological discourse by means of political practices. Its replacement is the psychoanalytical notion of the subject as lack of identity that articulates around nodal points that can never be fixed other than temporarily. I consider post-Marxist discourse theory as a theoretical supplement to the structural-Marxist line of thought in indicating the limits of its conceptual metaphor of articulation, wherein society is an articulated whole (i.e., *Gliederung*), and considering articulation also as language and a discursive practice (i.e., 'power of articulation').

1.4 The Structure of the Dissertation

The introductory chapter of the thesis outlines the main lines of my research project by discussing the uses of the concept of articulation and its travels from one academic discussion to another in the context of structural-Marxist theory and in its critique. In previous studies, the concept of articulation has not been accounted for as a conceptual metaphor in relation to the epistemic shifts in the imagery of society and social action. In order to fill the gap, I study the concept for purposes of making sense of its appropriations and adaptations in relation to epistemic shifts in how society and social action are portrayed in structural-Marxist thought and its critique. My aim is to understand the most important ways of using the concept of articulation in respect of the conceptual metaphors that characterise the imageries of society and social action. I have also outlined the discussions that I analyse in the following chapters of the dissertation, via a brief history of the concept of articulation, thus presenting a rough guide for the reader. In addition, I have highlighted the double meaning of 'articulation' and the shift away from an anatomical metaphor of articulation to reference to an act of giving expression, a discursive practice that diverges from the spatial notion of society structured as an articulated whole (*Gliederung*).

In the next chapter, 'Conceptual Metaphors of Society and Social Action', I draw on conceptual-historical methodology to outline the framework of my study. I start with conceptual-historical methodology related to political thought and its critique, with focus on the idea 'the pen is a mighty sword' found in 'Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics' (Tully 1983). I outline a method for grasping the 'point' or 'intention' behind use of the concept of articulation in discussions in which it is used and discussed in a manner that allows analysis of its meanings in their contexts as a struggle. Nevertheless, this approach can capture only the praxis or rhetorical aspect of the usage of concepts, not the poetics of conceptual metaphors wherein society and social action become comprehensible. Because of this, I draw my analytical framework from the 'root metaphors of sociological thought' (Brown 1977/1989a), a perspective from which knowledge is metaphorical. This is because the conceptual metaphors transfer abstract ideas and thoughts from one system of meanings or discourse to another in attempts to make them more concrete. Accordingly, metaphors are a method applied for seeing things from the standpoint of something else, which is also a condition for the appearance of new ideas and concepts that materialise in practice.

‘The Return to Marx: Structural Marxism’ is the title of the third chapter, in which the discussions that I address are placed in their theoretical and practical contexts. I start with Marx and continue with a brief history of Marxism prior to the ‘return to Marx’ of the 1960s. The occasion marking Marx’s return to academic discussion came at the time of publication of the collected works of Marx and Engels, *Marx-Engels-Werke* (MEW), a century after *Capital*. Marx’s economic manuscripts and material on ‘the logic of capital’ formed a foundation for the return in the German-speaking world, while Althusserianism arose in France in the era of structuralism and critique of both communist and bourgeois ideology. In this context, I pay attention to the works of Althusser, whose reading of Marx became effective on account of his teachings and writings at the École normale supérieure, where he influenced the ’60s generation of philosophers who sought a radical change through new social movements. In Britain, cultural theorists and political analysts adopted the structural-Marxist line of thought from Althusser, and they changed the meaning of the concept of articulation in both theory and practice. Althusser’s ideas also persuaded various anthropologists belonging to the ‘articulation school of economic anthropology’. In French new economic anthropology, structural Marxists criticised dependency theorists and world-system theorists for their notion of capitalism as a singular system, which became a controversial topic in respect of the ‘articulation of modes of production’. Structural Marxism was a paradigmatic model for social scientists in many disciplines for a short while before the discourse theorists arrived on the scene, in addition to political activists, who detached themselves from the Marxist critique of ideology and the socialist workers’ movement, wherein the notion of class was articulated at the centre of the party-politics system.

In the fourth chapter, I address the conceptual metaphor of articulation wherein ‘society is an articulated whole’. I proceed from Marx’s notion of *Gliederung*, under which modern bourgeois society is ‘a complex whole’ wherein ‘interaction takes place between the different moments – production, distribution, exchange and consumption’ – that organise the relations of production in a more complex way than before. Marx studied the capitalist mode of production in relation to this complex whole. According to Althusser, society is a complex and articulated whole (i.e., *Gliederung*) consisting of political and ideological instances built on the economic base. The economic determines the order of the capitalist social formation but only in ‘the last instance’. Consequently, society is not a totality that expresses the economic. Instead, it is ‘a structure articulated in dominance’ that consists of relatively independent instances such as the ideological, political,

and economic, which articulate with each other in such a manner as forms 'unity-in-difference' (Hall 1985, 92). In cultural studies and post-Marxist discourse theory, articulations take place as discursive signifying practices in ideology, politics, and struggle for hegemony – which challenges the prevailing imagery of society as a whole.

The fifth chapter, in turn, discusses the conceptual metaphor of articulation wherein 'social action is language' and associated reviews regarding discourse theory, which build on a play of differences. The first section of the chapter, titled 'Language As a Play of Differences', is about the linguistic paradigm and its adaptation in structural linguistics, which spread as a phonological model adopted in social anthropology and psychoanalysis to form a structuralist movement. It was ultimately applied in far more academic fields than phonology and linguistics. One of the most famous passages in this context is Lacan's description of a 'return to Freud' and his claim that 'the unconscious is structured like a language'. This also prompted anthropological awareness of the metaphorical aspects in systems of meanings such as marriage rules and systems of kinship. The idea of a law-like structure that underlies all systems of relations and governs all forms of social exchange, which are similar to language, became a paradigmatic model for social scientists. At the same time, philosophers criticised especially Saussure's distinction between language and speech, an idea that was already half a century old at the time. Instead of structures resembling language, 'post-structuralists' were interested in discourse theory, wherein the relations between conscious statements and unconscious enunciations are dispersed in a discursive field. Post-Marxism resulted in post-structuralist deconstruction of Althusserianism in discourse theory, in which articulation is a discursive practice in hegemonic struggles, which are 'anti-reductionist' (cf. The alleged class reductionism and economic determinism of Marxism).

In discussing the problem of reductionism and articulation in the last two chapters of the work, I sum up and elaborate upon the imagery of society and social action in structural-Marxist thinking and subsequent critique, as analysed in earlier chapters. Reductionism was discussed and challenged with the 1960s–70s 'return to Marx', when economic and class reductionism emerged as an explicit issue. On one hand, thinking in terms of articulation is a sign of a break with a sort of 'top-down reductionism' in which society is viewed as a 'totality' expressing hidden structural causes and economic mechanisms. On the other hand, in line with the conceptual metaphors employed, the notion contributes to 'reduction upward' because society is seen as operating as language does. If this

imagery is taken literally, in such a manner that it loses its metaphorical character, society reduces to mere discussion about it. Thereby, an analogous image of society operating in the manner of language boils down to the iconic conception 'society is language' – *viz*., when society is seen as nothing but discursive, the conception of social structures is lost, while a discursive space is expanded for social action that is not guaranteed outside any concrete battle concerning sex, gender and class, for example (cf. 'intersectionality', discussed in the final chapter). Addressing this 'bottom-up' view is an empirical approach critical of structural-Marxist thinking that takes account of cultural and political agency and the struggles for social change, not to mention commitments to a flat ontology, in which attempts to eliminate the notions of 'society' and 'the social' give way to various antagonisms. In compassing the relations involving both structure and action, along with their change, in a non-reductionist manner, the concept of articulation takes account of both spatial connections and links between differences and the acts of giving expression in a way that takes into consideration 'the economic' in terms of conditions of life and also 'the political' and the 'ideological' actions of individuals in organising the society and the social. Importantly, it does so without depriving the structures and actors of their relative autonomy, by imagining them as being mutually constitutive.

2 Conceptual Metaphors of Society and Social Action

For historian Reinhart Koselleck, gradual transformation of concepts is the main trend in the history of concepts (Ger. *Begriffsgeschichte*). From his perspective, conceptual history is about the 'basic concepts' (Ger. *Grundbegriffe*) conceived of as the 'irreplaceable parts of the political and social vocabularies'. Political historians survey concepts, in other words, as the sociocultural mentalities or sets of ideas and beliefs that change gradually. An example can be found in the conceptual history of 'crisis'. In Classical Greek, the notion demarcated life-and-death decisions in the fields of medicine, religion, and law. Although the concept of crisis once encompassed a 'Last Judgement' idea, it is now secular and covers various everyday issues involved in a turning point for better or worse ('Crisis, n.', OED Online). Amidst circumstances of recession and economic decline, crisis has become a day-to-day state that has caused anxiety and uncertainty for all of us. Uncertainty has forced anxiety on us: we face the prospect of things turning for the worse without any guarantee of a better future. Without present discussions being informed by a better understanding of what is going on, the future remains a vast unknown.

Such an epistemological crisis in knowledge has been offered as justification for political decision-makers' use of austerity measures in response to budget deficiencies all over Europe and application of these policies in domestic contexts. In the wake of financial crisis, some political movements and parties have arisen to challenge conservative and neoliberalist regimes in the euro area in the name of democracy. The crisis has also created a larger opening for extremism in the form of xenophobia expressed as racial discrimination and anti-immigration sentiments. In short, there is a call for sociological imagination for new courses of action. In this context of change, *The Sociological Imagination* (Mills 1959/2000) is one of the most influential classics in the field of sociology. Here, sociological imagination means an ability to deal with both socially perceived social problems and those perceived by individuals by placing them in their historical context. From this perspective, social problems are structural if they affect several individuals. Nevertheless, social scientists differ in their views

on structure and social action and their emphasis on language and its usage, which I discuss in the following chapters of the dissertation.

For 'literalists' (Brown 1987, 97–98) or 'abstracted empiricists' (Mills 2000, 50), only one way of doing things is accepted, while other forms of knowledge are seen as ideologically distorted and unscientific. These empiricists form their knowledge built on ontological conceptual metaphors such as 'communication is sending' and 'linguistic expressions are containers' (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, 10). In these terms, they encode messages in uninventive and formal ways to the receivers, who are supposed to decode them literally via the models that authors create jointly with a limited number of experts working in their specialist fields of knowledge. Expression is absent when language reduces to its logical forms and content. In semiotics (see Hall et al. 1980, 128–138); however, the messages are not deciphered word for word – they depend on the social, political, and ideological position of the interpreter of the code, which can be dominant, negotiated, or oppositional. In short, no-one can fully control power over articulations. This discursive turn represents an epistemic break in relation to more formalist approaches that dominated sociological discussion in the past. The dominant lines in contemporary sociology are empiricism, especially building on computer-assisted analysis of 'big data', and 'theoreticism', which, through abstraction, has led to thought so far removed from the public discussion that it is economists rather than sociologists who comment on real-world social issues.

Given that most social scientists study texts in one way or another, how aware are we of the conceptual metaphors by means of which we build our work? I consider the conceptual metaphors of sociological thought, which social scientists use more or less self-unconsciously in discussing society and social action. I begin my methodological exploration from the conceptual-historical angle by looking to historian of political science Quentin Skinner, according to whom the meaning of a concept is its usage. After contrasting the Skinnerian method of contextual analysis in the history of concepts against the metaphorical method employed by historians of sociological thought such as Richard Harvey Brown, I strive to merge the two in the chapters after I have established this framework. In the subsequent chapters of this dissertation, I provide a critical understanding of the concept of articulation in its intellectual and historical contexts. I address the epistemic shift in the imageries of society and social action, in analysis that brings out the discursive aspect of conceptual metaphors with reference to how they form and take shape in the academic debates, in both theory and practice.

2.1 A Conceptual-Historical Approach: 'The Pen Is a Mighty Sword'

The first research strategy that I address is based on Quentin Skinner's (1978) two-volume *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. It is aptly described in the article 'The Pen Is a Mighty Sword' (Tully 1983/1989).[10] Skinner discusses this method for the contextual analysis of concepts with his 'critics' in the 1989 work *Meaning and Context*, in addition to his revised essays on the method in *Visions of Politics* (2002). For Skinner (*ibid*., 178), the changes in conceptions such as 'state' allow a glimpse at 'the engines of social change'. This is underpinned by a metaphor of a machine as an instrument of social change; nonetheless, an underlying methodological assumption in his historicist approach is that concepts, language, and contexts are all bound together with social action. In this sense, 'words are deeds', as linguistic philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein has put it.

In the words of James Tully (1983, 491), step 1 is 'the collection of texts written or used in the same period, addressed to the same or similar issues and sharing a number of conventions'. In other words, by situating the concept in relation to other available texts wherein it is used, it is possible to understand the 'point' or 'intention' behind using concepts such as articulation in the discussions addressed. By comparing texts that put forth analogous ideas with a shared vocabulary, one becomes able to explore how the writer has used or altered prevailing normative conventions of using the concept in practice. In other words, the key to studying contextual and historical understanding lies in the usage of the concept in a discourse defined by a set of rules employed by several authors in a given period.

The point of departure in my analysis is, in other words, 'to trace the relations between a given utterance and its wider linguistic context' (Skinner 2002, 85), then place this utterance in its practical contexts. The context of an utterance and the functions and things accomplished with the concept lead the way to what

[10] Skinner is a famous historian of political thought whose procedure is composed of five steps for answering the following questions, according to James Tully (1983, 490):

> a) What is or was an author doing in writing a text in relation to other available texts which make up the ideological context? b) What is or was an author doing in writing a text in relation to available and problematic political action which makes up the practical context? c) How are ideologies to be identified and their formation, criticism and change surveyed and explained? d) What is the relation between political ideology and political action which best explains the diffusion of certain ideologies and what effect does this have on political behaviour? e) What forms of political thought and action are involved in disseminating and conventionalizing ideological change?

Skinner calls the ideological. By 'the ideological', he means active manipulation of 'the use-conventions governing the prevailing normative vocabulary' (Tully 1983, 496). Keeping this point in mind, he has depicted theorists as 'innovative ideologists' who use concepts as weapons in philosophical debates. For Skinner, 'an ideology is a language of politics' (*ibid*., 491), not an epiphenomenal body of thought. Accordingly, the ways in which concepts are used also constitute normative practices, and 'whenever such terms are employed, their application will always reflect a wish to impose a particular moral vision on the workings of the social world' (Skinner 2002, 182). Through this lens, I consider theorists as politicians in 'politicizing theory and theorizing politics' (see Grossberg 1997).

The point is that even the most well-regarded as theoretically grounded philosophical works address problems in the terms of their own age. This means that they are a part of the existing social order in which they were born. Studying what a given concept may or may not have meant in a specific context addresses authorial intentions in relation to meaningful utterances that are not 'true or false' but still do something for an argument. Thus, not only what is meant but also 'the intended force in which the utterance is issued' matters (Skinner 2002, 82). To grasp this 'historical meaning' Skinner asks: 'What does a writer mean by what he or she says in a given text?' (*ibid*., 93). If a text reduces to its grammatical form or logical content, the meaning is not revealed. Similarly, emphasising only readers' response to text puts too much weight on interpretation that reproduces the meaning. Accordingly, the meaning of using a concept in an argument lies not in contents or interpretation but in the force of an utterance that the text brings into the discourse. An utterance does not make sense unless it is a locutionary act in performing an act of saying something. With reference to J.L. Austin's (1962) speech act theory, it is not, however, the expression ('locutionary act') or its effects ('perlocutionary act') but the performative ('illocutionary act') that makes a difference.

A speech act is performed in a given context, and to understand its meaning is to describe the usages of the concept. When referring to 'the context', Skinner (2002, 113) means the discursive space wherein the utterance 'performs', and by 'speech act' he means the particular ways in which this takes place. Whether to focus on authors and their ideas or instead on a particular concept considered in a variety of discussions is a matter of choice, but the usual practice in writing about history of concepts is to embed the concept in its temporal, spatial, and social contexts. Skinner's way of identifying ideological conventions, to survey and explain their discursive formation and change, is possible because of minor

and often already forgotten texts. This step away from the master works is required because classics on their own are misleading guides to the ideological conventions; after all, each challenges the commonplaces of its era (Tully 1983, 495). Hence, a useful strategy for understanding what is at stake in the discussions can be found in reading the classics in relation to 'adjacent' texts to trace the prevailing conventions governing the meaning, and the reference and speech act potential of concepts. From here, we reach one point where a 'historical meaning' arises.

Concepts are ideological claims that change things and their relations. In order to make these changes, one has to use language that is limited by rules, conventions, and normative boundaries in order to form the ideas into meaningful arguments. 'All revolutionaries are to this extent obliged to march backwards into battle', says Skinner (2002, 149–150). Using language to change things and their relations requires one to anchor an argument in a prevailing discursive regime, which is intersubjective and a product of historical conventions, before attempting its transformation. The idea of innovative ideologists who use concepts in strategic ways in philosophical debates makes more sense when this point is borne in mind. In manipulating things and their relations, innovative ideologists communicate their ideas in a way that makes sense, which means that they cannot change the system itself. Elements that could change are the criteria for application of a concept that govern its sense or definition, the range of reference in which the concept could be deployed, and the limits of its possible appraisal – which refers to its speech act potential valued in its contexts (Hyvärinen 2006, 21). In this manner, concepts resist more manipulation than merely the words that describe them.

To make my case, I will use a debate surrounding cultural studies as an example of conceptual historians' critique of 'The Idea of a Cultural Lexicon', by Skinner (2002, 158–174) as expressed in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Williams 1976/1983). In brief, the disagreement involved words vs. concepts. The first claim is that the more complex and nuanced a word is, the more likely it is to be a site of significant historical experience and debate. According to Raymond Williams (*ibid*., 87), 'culture' is one of the most complex words in English, on account of its use as a key notion in many disciplines and systems of thought. It developed from the notion of organic growth to mean cultivation and civilisation, then artistic products, collective action, and entire ways of life. Nevertheless, for Skinner (1979/2002, 160), controversies exist 'about the criteria for applying the word […] or about [for] what range of speech

acts the word can be used', not about its semantics or origins as addressed in dictionaries. Secondly, if someone uses a term such as 'culture', it does not necessarily follow that the corresponding concept is an object of reflective interpretation. In addition, understanding the literal meaning of a word is not a sufficient condition for grasping the concept. A notion becomes a concept only when there is discussion about its usages (*ibid*.). Thirdly, if a word such as 'culture' changes in significance, it could trigger a shift throughout a vocabulary, which could signify a change in attitudes, perceptions, or beliefs among those who use the language in question (*ibid*., 171–172). This last step explains how these changes become conventional and in what ways they establish a new set of practices.

Revisionist historians of political thought such as Skinner support a review of generally accepted ideas about historical events and philosophical systems. From this revisionist perspective, all systems of ideas, cultural studies included, are intentional products of conscious speakers' strivings to affect historical events. Skinner's line of attack focusing on a Marxist thinker such as Williams is not a coincidence: they both worked at the University of Cambridge. In the Skinnerian approach, all universal claims and perennial questions that supersede their linguistic and practical contexts are 'dogmatic' or 'anachronistic'. This means that all attempts to find answers and to discover solutions from the past in present-day discussions are doomed to fail. Allegedly, such politics serves ideological and political interests by not taking account of the accuracy and authenticity of each utterance that, as a historian, Skinner scrutinises carefully in its context. The revisionist method reduces the political and ideological means to a rhetoric, speech, and language-game wherein the social and material conditions of social change are beyond the bounds of discussion (see Wood 2011, 7–11; see also Femia 1981; Nederman 1985). The Skinnerian notion of language builds on analytical philosophy and discourse theory and considers social action in terms of Weberian thinking. These approaches differ from Marxist sociology of knowledge and structuralist epistemology. I address them next.[11]

In epistemology – the study of knowledge – concepts are set in relation to the existing orders of truth. Epistemologists consider themselves to offer critique of the history of ideas as conceptual historians do. In 'The Death of the Author'

[11] According to Skinner (cited in Sebastián 2007, 107), 'the economic determinism associated with Marxism always seemed to me a hostile as well as a misguided argument'. In *Methodology of Social Science*, sociologist Max Weber made similar anti-Marxist statements in the early 20th century (see Hall [1977] 2007).

(Barthes 1967/1977), authorial intentions are criticised as an unfaithful guide to textual analysis, misplaced from the site of the reader. From this perspective, literary texts are produced under determinate socioeconomic conditions that differ from the conditions the authors had in mind. Instead of being products of conscious deliberation by the authors, meanings are hidden and uttered unselfconsciously (see Macherey 1966/2006). In addition, the essay 'What Is an Author?' (Foucault 1969/1979) expresses suspicion of authorial intentions as a means of closure to potential meanings of texts. As for Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966/1970), episteme forms at the crossroads of many fields – among them linguistics, biology, and economics – where a specific discursive formation determines the scope and limit of knowledge. For Foucault, episteme is productive and 'a condition of possibility' for all knowledge, and he is interested in epistemological breaks or ruptures.[12]

In the 1960s, epistemology offered a starting point for many interdisciplinary research programmes, which influenced Foucault and other philosophers:

> To work on a concept is to vary its extension and comprehension, to generalise it through the incorporation of exceptional traits, to export it beyond its region of origin, to take it as a model or inversely, to search for a model for it. (Canguilhem 1963, 452)

Foucault (1969/1979) did not address works of individual authors, but he did consider the discursive formations structured in a certain time and place. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Foucault 1969/1972), he used the notion of archive in relation to language instead of episteme in reference to knowledge. Foucault talked about 'discursive formations' as a replacement for 'scientific discipline' in sociology of knowledge (Sawyer 2002, 437). According to Foucault (1969/1979), Marx and Sigmund Freud, for example, were 'founders of discursivity' who have set the rules and a horizon of possibility for other texts to proceed from their works rather more than they were the authors of the classics in the fields of psychoanalysis and political economics. Their works remain open for discussion. At the same time, these authors and their followers, not to mention their

[12] The French study Foucault not in sociology but in philosophy (Lecarpentier 2015, 11). In 1961, Foucault defended his doctoral dissertation, *Folie et déraison: histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, which was published in English as *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. According to Foucault, madness is not merely a social or discursive construction; it operates within a specific formation of knowledge that had its inception in France in the Age of Enlightenment.

adversaries, have had an 'intention' to get the last word in their theory and hence crush opposing arguments, which makes their project political. Closure of the contexts and determining the historical meaning of texts is an attempt to finish the ongoing battles and suture their potential outcomes.

Without contested concepts and disagreement as to concepts' usage, there is no new knowledge. An epistemology is formed on a set of concepts, methods, and ideas, which change as a culturally shared background for a group of its dedicated supporters and their opponents who call them into question. In a similar manner, philosophers take account of the philosophical thought of their past in order to explicate and criticise the systems of thought prevailing in their time, as Marx did, starting with German idealism and ending with critique of classical political economics. Here, one can cite Antonio Gramsci's approach to the history of modern political thought as a challenge to Skinner's false assumption that for Marxists, intellectual life is simply 'superstructural':

> The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. The first thing to do is to make such an inventory. (Gramsci 1971/1999, 628)

To study ideas that have affected one's own thinking requires critical self-reflection. Gramsci uses the term 'a common sense' (Ital. *senso comune*) for the popular ways of seeing things and of acting in line with these views that are not articulated into coherent and systematic conceptions of the world. The task he charges philosophers with is no more and no less than 'the criticism of all previous philosophy' (*ibid.*), insofar as it has come to be an effective part of their collective and contemporary thinking. From this standpoint, philosophy is a material force that demands study of the historical processes that, rather than vanishing into thin air, have left traces in all of us. In various forms of 'linguistic contextualism' (Lamb 2009, 55), there is a strong tendency to claim that society and the social are more or less self-conscious products of the human mind. Hence, the subjects are 'ideological' as long as the historical and material traces remain interwoven with practice. Instead of applying self-reflective explanations of its object of knowledge, conceptual history is idealistic with respect to the interpretations of subjective meanings of actors, who construct their objects of knowledge socially and discursively by using language.

According to Jürgen Habermas, in *Knowledge and Human Interests*, critical self-reflection takes place via exercise of our emancipatory interest in knowledge. The objective of critical theory is to emancipate and liberate social science and

its subjects from its positivist illusions through methodological reflection such as that taking place in feminist theory, psychoanalysis, and Marxist theory of ideology. These fields were the most contested and challenged in twentieth-century social sciences. If society is depicted with reference to the natural and physical sciences, the portrayal is via organic metaphors such as growth, progress, and development or in line with empirical imagery in which society is conceived of instrumentally as an engine composed of mechanisms that social engineers can alter, manipulate, and change. Instrumentally viewed knowledge serves political decision-making processes, social and political problem-solving, and innovations in economic science. It is built on technical interest through methods of empirical analysis and causal explanations used in the natural sciences. Interpretative social science, in turn, works from practical interest that is manifested empirically by means of hermeneutic approaches in interpreting and understanding social action as non-verbal or verbal communication in people's everyday life. This is typical of, for example, social psychological approaches that focus on social interaction and conversation analysis and of hermeneutics, wherein culture is a historical product of meanings interpreted in terms of social action and language.

In modern sociology of earlier days, i.e., before postmodernism, society was portrayed in terms of physics and the natural sciences, then as social action depicted with reference to language and culture. This change away from the instrumental interest stems from the practical interest in making the unknown known by using 'sociological imagination' – to 'grasp what is going on in the world' (Mills 1959/2000), with a specific view to the relations and forms that go beyond the personal experience and action of individuals. On one hand, social scientists address many themes and issues in parallel with the classics in sociology, using similar conceptual metaphors. On the other hand, the imageries of society and social action are built on the conceptual-metaphor-connected epistemic shifts that have completely changed the ways in which we see ourselves in relation to others either as a group of people or as individual actors. The classic works of sociology endure because they address the structures of modern industrial society, social change, and ways of life by scrutinising the structures and actions of individuals in addition to the methods and concepts applied to address the social concerns and issues historically specific to our age.

According to Brown (1987), who takes the perspective 'society is a text', this means that society is a textual metaphor manifested as a cultural script that guides meanings and usage of concepts in social-scientific discussions. This metaphor does not extend beyond texts and their contexts. Conceptual history operates, in

this case, at the level of reflective articulation of meaning in which the usages, definitions, and points of reference of concepts articulate more or less explicitly in relation to a grammar as a set of rules and laws enacted at a structural level in the constitutive articulation of meaning. The above-mentioned levels, however, are built on pre-reflective articulation of meaning (see 'Levels of Articulation' in Heiskala 2003, 266–268). Considering the links between a poetics of sociology (Brown 1977/1989a) based on the root metaphors of sociological thought and rhetoric wherein various concepts are used and discussed, I next attempt to take into account the various levels of meanings by using my sociological imagination.

2.2 The Root Metaphors of Sociological Thought

According to cognitive linguists such as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980/2003), people think and act with concepts that function metaphorically. Arguments, for example, operate with terms from war (*ibid.*, 4–7). Conceiving of an argument in this manner puts emphasis on the metaphorical aspect of conflicts. Doing so corresponds with our common-sense experiences from such situations because in arguing we act in a manner similar to that we employ when in a conflict with our opponents. The verbal battles take place by means of words used as intellectual weapons to attack or defend one's position, as was illustrated in the previous section of the chapter. This is done, for instance, by means of various tactics and rhetorical strategies (for making statements and rebuffing possible counterclaims), relying on verbal skills and empirical evidence. In consequence, 'argument is war', which points to a lesson that argumentation takes place in reference to war rather than a language-game (Tully 1983, 505–507). From this standpoint, the relationship between an ordinary notion and a more abstract theoretical concept constructs, founds, or demolishes in respect of structuralist conceptual metaphors such as 'theories are buildings' (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, 53).

Rhetoricians study ways of using concepts in argumentation, where metaphors are a specific aspect of language. Cognitive linguists appreciate metaphors as a fundamental relationship. Our understanding of society and social action, in other words, is founded on conceptual metaphors that provide us with ways to make sense of the social world in which we are living. In this respect, the root metaphors of sociological thought are not that different from the conceptual metaphors by

means of which we all act in day-to-day life. Instead of employing common-sense conceptions and everyday understanding of the world, however, I set up a discussion of conceptual metaphors that portray society and social action in sociological discussions, to render them properly conceivable. Conceptual metaphors for society and social action transfer abstract ideas and models from one system or discourse to another through an attempt to make them more concrete. According to Brown (1977; 1989a), the imageries of society and social action are formed from the root metaphors of sociological thought, which offer a vantage point from which to conceive of society and social action in terms other than direct denotation (*ibid*., 128). In classical sociological thought, the root metaphors are 'society seen as an organism or as a machine, and social conduct viewed as language, the drama, or a game' (*ibid*., 78). In *A Poetic of Sociology* (Brown 1977/1989a), a metaphor is a device that carries a concept from one system of meanings into another (*ibid*., 80–81). This transfer of an idea affects the significance of a concept in relation to the other notions within the system. The conceptual metaphors that describe society are adapted from natural and physical sciences, while those for social action are derived more from the arts and humanities. Usually, people value metaphors from the natural and physical sciences, deeming them more scientific than notions derived from the humanities and arts.[13]

The combination of concepts – that is, their articulation in a metaphorical relationship with one another – is a source for new ideas and practices. New, groundbreaking conceptual metaphors adapted to the social sciences can transfer one system of meanings, for a new standpoint or perspective from which to depict society and social action. Only by coming to terms with the prevailing system of meanings, however, can an illustrative metaphor become a paradigmatic model. As a point of reference, the root metaphors are similar to the notion of paradigm (*ibid*., 125). Paradigms are institutionalised as models composed of methods, assumptions, and subject matter that structure a worldview of a scientific community, their philosophy, or even 'ideology'. A root metaphor, in this context, exerts effects subconsciously by setting limits to the discourse limiting the discursive space that impose boundaries for their enunciations. A root metaphor delivers a discursive space for the articulations of concepts, thereby

[13] In the mid-'90s, at a time when social constructionism was fashionable, physicist Alan Sokal 'trolled' postmodern philosophers for relativism. The 'Sokal hoax' was carried out through *Social Text*, where he published an article claiming that physical reality is a social construction, in language mimicking postmodern vocabulary of the New Left.

restricting their new usages and meanings in different settings. The conceptual metaphors take form between two notions that articulate with one another. A metaphorical correspondence between these notions gains its structure because of ontological and epistemological assumptions together with common-sense experience of individuals. Novel illustrative metaphors, which are brought by epistemic shifts in the imageries of society and social action, are open for discussion, yet they are exposed to the normative practices and ideological conventions based on the iconic metaphors that are articulated and conventional.

Until the scientific revolution of the early modern era, it was rational to assume that 'the world' consists of heavenly bodies that seem eternal and that life on Earth is temporal and has only a transitory nature. In other words, the heavens and earth seemed to be two separate spheres. Aristotle's geocentric cosmology in *Physics* was based on an empirical insight that the terrestrial objects stay put unless moved by a force whereas the celestial bodies circle the earth, meaning that it is the centre of 'the world'. In *Metaphysics*, the cause of every change that physicists could not explain was associated with the prime mover (Pietilä 1983). The scientific revolution turned this mediaeval imagery of the world upside-down. According to the Newtonian imagery of the world, the whole universe follows the same laws of mathematics and mechanics (corroborated by scientific experiments), which replaced 'common-sense' conceptions and metaphysical reasoning that had no place in science. In the twentieth century, in turn, Einstein's theory of relativity superseded Newton's theory of mechanics. In Newtonian physics, both time and space were absolute. In Einstein's theory, space curves because of gravity between objects, and time is related to the movement of subjects, which means that the two notions are relational. In relational sociology, there are no paradigm shifts similar to those in science.

Before the 'relational turn' in sociology, 'substantialist' thinking (Emirbayer 1997, 281–291) built on the metaphors of organism and machine (see Brown 1977/1989a), wherein society was like a container (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, 29–31) in which actions and events take place. In this view, individual actions and events occurred within the limits of a nation-state or a social community that was separated from every other of its kind by national or another type of borders. A society was hence conflated with a nation-state or community. 'Substantialists' assumed that society has a law-like nature that forces people to act in accordance with its rules and norms, while 'relationalists' took it as given that society is a result of the actions of individuals, one that cannot exist before those actions do. From these, quite different perspectives, the two classical approaches in sociology

criticised a 'voluntaristic theory of action' and 'utilitarianism' of economists, wherein individuals' actions were seen as derived from the pursuit of private benefit and self-interest (Joas & Knöbel 2009, 23).

In classical sociology, society is a self-contained whole considered akin to an organism or a machine. The founding root metaphor of sociological thought is the conceptual metaphor 'society is an organism.' At the dawn of the 20th century, Émile Durkheim referred to the structure of the social relations in modern industrial society as an organic whole in which each part connects with other elements in 'organic solidarity', in a contrast to their mechanical form in primitive societies. Durkheim was interested in the elementary forms of social life (such as religion) and their complex social organisation, in addition to a systemic character that gives weight to social structure. In the organisation of social life, social relations are constituted internally. In this holistic approach, society is a bounded system, which is like an organic whole that evolves and keeps changing. It develops *sui generis*, as a social order 'of its own kind' organising the social entities in accordance with its own rules and laws (López 2003, 27–30). Because of this, every society is one of a kind, particular, while the structure seems universal. The anatomical terminology, however, requires that the subjects be, in a sense, dead (Foster-Carter 1978, 77). This applies for structuralist vocabulary, wherein the absence of individual subjects characterises scientific discourse (i.e., 'anti-humanism'). This discourse is symptomatic of transfer, whereby it offers a conceptual tool for rethinking social structure as organism with reference to an anatomical metaphor that does not take into account the actions of individuals.

The conceptual metaphor 'society is a machine' is the other root metaphor in modern sociological thought. In the mechanistic terms of the natural sciences, society is a machine-like organism. Energy is transferred readily as heat, fuelling work in a manner similar to that by which capitalists consume labour power and appropriate surplus value from workers in Marxism. Marx took principles from thermodynamics as inspiration in *Capital* (see Rabinbach 1992; see also López 2003, 57–59). However, Marx's notion of society was not a mechanistic or an evolutionary conception. Even though the bourgeois social order appeared to Marx as an inexhaustible force of nature, it was a result of the historical and material relations of production that form 'the anatomy' of its subjects. In contrast to synecdoche, the linguistic trope seen with the social system that functions in the manner of an organism wherein the parts appear as products of a totality, empiricism displays metonymy, because of the machine metaphor in which parts signify the whole structure of society (Brown 1989b, 115–116). The machine

metaphor is an ontological one, which means that it occurs in our everyday life in such a way that its metaphorical character is not apparent (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, 29). In a policy-oriented and data-driven empirical investigation, for instance, the machine metaphor is typically applied to suggest evidence-based policy models and courses of action for the political administration. From this angle, governmental organisations are portrayed as the engines of social change engineered on behalf of the people (*polis*) in line with a survey of empirical data for a specific part of the structured whole of society. This knowledge is practical. It is built on a rigorous scientific method, which is a form of 'epistemic governance' by means of which the global policy models, fashions, and governmental rationalities are adopted and legitimated in the local contexts to serve the interests defined by various experts, for example (see Alasuutari & Qadir 2014).

'Abstracted empiricism' presumes scientific objectivity, repeatability, falsifiability, and commensurability along with adherence to rigorous scientific procedure. This was criticised already half a century ago in American sociology (see Mills 1959/2000; Stein & Vidich 1963). The problem of abstracted empiricism is its inability to account for sociology 'as an art form' (see Nisbet 1963). The classics of sociology, in turn, were not detached from philosophical thinking. In the 1930s, sociologist Talcott Parsons claimed that many sociologists have ended up relatively independent of one another, in a similar critique of a utilitarian conception of rational individuals freed from all restrictive rules and norms of the social system. Parsons advanced the idea of seeing social systems in terms of functions, with social action taking place for purposes of adapting, reaching goals, integrating, and socialising to latent norms and values, in an analogue to functionalist and evolutionary models. According to Parsons, the appropriate unit of sociological analysis is the actor, the fundamental component of structured social relations. In this conception, a social system consists not of individuals but of actors with certain systematic functions (Brown 1989, 133; López 2003, 91–114).

One of the problems in Parsons-style functionalism was its 'grand theory', which was so complex that it has now become extinct outside the realm of social theory. Sociologist Max Weber's study of social action of individuals, in turn, presented in the 1920s in his posthumously edited book *Economy and Society*, is still iconic, not least because of the theoretical reformulations by Parsons. The sociological object of interpretation for Weber is social action, not society or organisation of social life as in the other classic works of sociology:

> Sociology (in the sense in which this highly ambiguous word is used here) is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences. We shall speak of 'action' insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behavior – be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is 'social' insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course. (Weber 1922/1978, 4)

Weber outlined his sociological categories in *Economy and Society*, to understand the action of individuals by articulating ideal types of social action. According to Weber (*ibid.*), a sociological interpretation of action takes place with regard to subjective meanings that actors give to their ways of acting more or less unconsciously. If the meaning of action is oriented towards other people, it is social. Weber's theory of action produced understanding of social action of individuals but not of social structures as the other classic works of sociology did.[14] In contemporary sociology, sociological explanation in terms of social action of individuals has become the dominant way of thinking. Weber uses the ideal types as the interpretative means of 'action-theory', wherein social action is classified as 'instrumentally rational', 'value-rational', 'affect-oriented', or 'traditional'. For example, capitalism is understood as a rational form of social action, in terms of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, wherein a puritan work ethic and religious redemption as a reward for hard work articulate with the individualistic logic of accumulating capital. This seems like only 'the tip of the iceberg' from the Marxist standpoint, in that it considers social action of individuals to be an attempt to grasp the Spirit (Ger. *Geist*) and the form of its appearance in the conscious minds of individuals; it is this religious ideology that operates dialectically behind all the historical and social phenomena.

With the root metaphors in sociological thought, social action is conceived of as language, drama, or a game (Brown 1989a). Common among these conceptual metaphors is an interest in social action as a play. In this play, people act under the social rules, those pertaining to social interaction in everyday life. For example, the metaphor of the drama, which ties in with Shakespeare and the theatre, gained traction in the social sciences in the 1960s. According to Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, social interaction in day-to-day life is similar to what occurs in a theatre, where people act in keeping with

[14] He said: 'Even a socialistic economy would have to be understood sociologically in exactly the same kind of [individualistic] terms; that is, in terms of the action of individuals' (Weber 1979, 18). Note that the concept of society does not belong to the system of Weber's sociological categories employed in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, from 1921 and 1922.

the roles assigned to them. Goffman adopted the poetic metaphor ‘social action is a drama’ from literary theoretician Kenneth Burke, for whom linguistic action is based on drama, which is characteristic of all social relations (including class struggle). In Marxist-Leninist theory of class struggle, the actors are two classes in an antagonistic relationship, in which the contradictions play a crucial role in forming the antagonists. This imagery can be viewed in relation to a notion in which the economic system is conceived of as capitalistic appropriation of surplus value from labour, which becomes an inevitable force of a capitalist law of motion as well as the motor of the class struggle. In this manner, social action as a drama creates the structures that enable and constrain the actors’ playing of their roles. In Alfred Schutz’s attempt at a theoretical synthesis of action theory and phenomenology, meanings are objectivised products of the conscious minds of individuals acting upon them in place of social structures. It is the metaphor of form through which things are embodied in particular contents and removed from the universal that develops into the paradigm of phenomenology (Brown 1987b). Phenomenology takes account of the experience of individuals, while the root metaphors of its opposite, structuralism, lie in unconsciously structured social subjects conceived of in terms of semiotic systems such as language (see Heiskala 2003, 141–143, 319–324, discussing ‘the triangle model of meaning analysis’).

Ever since the classics of social theory have converged, efforts to resolve what lies between structure and agency have driven social theoreticians’ ambitions, yet resolution remains absent. All the above-mentioned approaches are at least half a century old now, so it is time to turn briefly to what has happened in social theory in the years since the classics that expressed and built on them. In contemporary French thought, it is fashionable at the moment to denounce concepts such as society and ‘the social’ in attempts to break the spell of the modern classics. I address this in the last section of the chapter.

2.3 Sociology without Society and the Social?

Today’s communication clearly takes place within social networks. The Internet has made possible gigantic and ever-growing information flows. Information and communications technology and the forms of social interaction in social media have influenced the discourses about a ‘network society’. The discourse on ‘the

information society' has advanced in accordance with the capitalist market-logic (Ampuja & Koivisto 2014, 449). In the 1970s, the oil crisis caused a worldwide economic slowdown. Sociologist Daniel Bell pointed to a change from manual labour to service industries and knowledge-intensive work in a 'post-industrial society', which is organised around the production of information. This new imagery gained widespread acceptance among sociologists, and it spread in policy documents and practices of governance, reaching a peak at the time of the 'dot-com boom' at the turn of the millennium, when urban sociologist Manuel Castells spoke of the 'network society'. Both of these approaches emphasise scientific and technological innovations, yet they differ with regard to the role of Keynesian state regulation of markets (*ibid*., 456).

Twenty years ago, sociologist Nikolas Rose (1996) addressed an epistemic shift away from 'society' and 'the social' to 'the community' as a new site for self-governance. As a replacement to the mechanistic rules and laws of 'the economic' and for organic solidarity within a clearly bounded nation-state, power is relational in a form of 'governmentality', as described in Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Instead of the state wielding the power and using it on its subjects in a return to assuring a certain safety net for the citizens, one sees individuals now increasingly appropriating the techniques of their own self-governance. The idea that the people have to take risks under their own responsibility and manage their lives as entrepreneurs in order to gain access to working life and receive social security through the markets is increasingly becoming 'common sense' in the politics of life (Rose 1996, 328–333, 343). Since the 1970s, social scientists have called these changes in state administration and in its managerial functions 'neoliberal', here referring to privatisation of 'the economic' from 'the social' ('the political' and 'the ideological'), which is one form of the above-mentioned economism, reductionist thinking that establishes a fundamental difference between the economy and society, to depoliticise the economy relative to social action.

In the discourse of the post-industrial society, some sociologists still adhere to the Keynesian idea of the welfare state. In the discourse of the network society, the state has become a relic that belongs to the past. Nevertheless, it is manifestly present – for instance, recent leaks of information on electronic surveillance programmes that have 'wiretapped' people in the name of national security demonstrate states' attempts to control speech. Ironically, the very idea of network is grounded in the notions of reciprocity and exchange in organising a democratic system the purpose of which is to dissolve hierarchical power

relations. In science and technology studies, 'sociology without society' (Touraine 1999) led eventually to sociologist Bruno Latour's notion that society and the social are erroneous ideas. Instead of 'the science of the social' (i.e., 'socio-logy'), 'actor-network theory' studies 'actors', which can be human or non-human, whose action occurs in networks. Networks have no *a priori* spatial orientation ('up–down', 'inside–outside', 'foreground–background', 'centre–margins', etc.) (see Lakoff & Johnson 2003, 15). Instead of being a closed system, the network is open, and it comprises nodes that connect its elements in such a manner that the distance and the surface between elements do not determine their connection (Latour 1996, 371–372).

The idea of nodes or the nodal points is common in imagery of networks that articulate or disarticulate various elements with one another horizontally and not vertically. The view builds on relational (i.e., flat) ontology, which, rather than being limited to fixed meanings that are found in a closed semiotic system such as the structuralist notion of language, builds networks in which elements connect with one another both as material and as collective assemblages. Consisting of nodes, networks form in the manner of a rhizome, in a botanical metaphor that post-structuralists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari used in the two-volume philosophical work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. A rhizome describes thinking in action that is open and whose aim is to spread as widely as possible, where the constituents of the plant-like network sprout from each other.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, in addition to Latour, transcendental concepts such as society and the social, which social scientists take for granted, can fix their thoughts off-target. In this line of thought, society and the social describe and explain things and their relations rather than being questioned and explained as themselves. For Laclau (2006, 107), they are empty signifiers – empty signifiers lack meaning while signifying totalities; hence, they give names to things instead of having any positive existence. In this sense, society and the social do not exist in the sense in which the classic authors in sociology conceived of them. Therefore, the thinking goes, society and the social are not the most useful and meaningful concepts for explaining things and their relations. In contrast, imagining society and the social by using conceptual metaphors as if they were like an organism, machine, or network or language, drama, or a game makes it possible to think and speak about things and their relations, which are given names. In becoming established, their metaphorical characteristics turn out to be more or less non-self-consciously realised. Because of this, there is a 'difference between using metaphors and being used by them' (Brown 1989a,

84). The task of a philosopher (Deleuze & Guattari 1991/1994) is to create concepts; this differs from the use of metaphors in poetics. Social scientists, in whom sociological imagination is a desirable attribute, use conceptual metaphors in a more rigorous manner. The Althusserians in France built structural-Marxist theory on the Marxist critique of ideology. The next generation, however, marked the beginning of an epistemological break from conceptual metaphors referring to society as a whole, in a move to social action as language or a play of differences. Since then, the theories of social action have so far been put forth for discursive explanation of the actions by individuals of which the social phenomena seem to be composed, which I explain in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

2.4 Conclusion

The conceptual metaphors transfer abstract ideas and thoughts from one system or discourse to another through attempts to render them more concrete. The imageries of society and social action are based on the conceptual metaphors, and abstract theoretical models and empirical descriptions are derived in both theory and practice via the metaphors. They also transfer meanings from one discipline to another through proposal of different theoretical means and discursive strategies for conceptualising social structure and action in terms of methodology that guides and informs our thinking in various ways. In classical sociology, images of society were built on the biological and mechanical conceptual metaphors and the root metaphors of social action were interpreted as language, drama, or a game. A newer contender is a metaphor of a network wherein the actors can be either human or non-human. In conceptual history, the idea that concepts are somehow essential and unchangeable entities has given way to an emphasis on historicity and contingency, meaning that they are subject to social change. Thus, controversies and debates are the real kernel of every concept building on imagery of society and social action. That is why it was so important for this chapter to address this methodological concern in my study.

From this standpoint, society is neither machine nor organism: both consist of individual parts and relations between them that specialists such as engineers or physicists can fix or replace by means of their skills and expert knowledge. These concepts of society and the social are related to the birth of the modern

nation-state (Kapferer 2004, 154), and they form part of the background for emergence of a 'science of the social' such as sociology, which is generally considered to have been established by Durkheim. His study *Suicide* (1897/1951) shows that even that most individualistic act of killing oneself is, in fact, a social act that is structured socially in various ways. Instead of the individual, Durkheim gives ontological priority to the social. He does not take society to be a mere aggregate of individuals by way of using statistics; for him, it also consists of corporeal and prudential human beings and their 'collective consciousness', referring to ideas, beliefs, and values that people share in a given community. Durkheim's holism (or 'collectivism') in sociology was a response to the rise of individualism in nineteenth-century Europe, which rise Marx had criticised by concentrating on the ideology of philosophical idealism. The '60s generation of activists and intellectuals, however, became suspicious of all-encompassing critique of ideology that no longer built on notions such as those of the social and society (see Iteanu 2004).

3 The Return to Marx: Structural Marxism

A quarter of a century after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is safe to say that at least communist attempts to demolish capitalism did not lead to an egalitarian and classless society. On account of an exceptionally grim history, the Marxist approaches are characterised by failure of Marxist-Leninist class struggle to defeat the rule of the bourgeoisie and do away with the state through the rule of the proletariat, in addition to forcefully repressed socialist revolutions in the twentieth century. This history shows that Marxism is not just a way of thinking alongside dozens of other philosophical movements; as a political ideology, it has been a powerful ideological force in a manner similar to that of organised world religions. This lends it potentially hazardous power in the hands of extremists. Self-proclaimed Marxists have killed many people, and numerous individuals have been condemned to death on accusations of being 'Marxists'. In the wake of terror that haunts us even today, there is a call for more reflexive modes of Marxist thinking. Responding to that call is by no means a simple task, on account of the traumatic events resisting symbolisation, along with false assumptions about economic and class reductionism, which requires a critical interpretation.

New economic anthropologists, for example, criticised American 'dependency theorists' such as Andre Gunder Frank, for whom the underdevelopment in Latin America was due to the uneven flow of commodities from periphery to core. In addition, they criticised modernisation theorists, for whom there was only one global capitalist world-system, as there was for world-systems theorist Immanuel Wallerstein. In a contrast to the sociological thinking of modernisation theorists, who considered the developing countries to be at a stage of transition to the capitalist mode of production, French new economic anthropologists' empirical fieldwork in postcolonial Africa showed that the Third World was not following the same path at all. The debate on modes of production affected the formation of class alliances and socialist strategies in practice, especially in Latin America,

before General Augusto Pinochet deposed socialist President of Chile Salvador Allende, in 1973 (see Neveling & Trapido 2015).[15]

In France, the structural-Marxist line of thought formed a powerful intellectual formation for a brief moment. Although denounced as communist by its opponents, who have declared it to be effectively absent since the mid-'70s, it has at least had an effect on contemporary thinking, including critical thought, in a critical relation to cultural studies and political analysis. There, the notion of society structured as an articulated whole in relation to the conceptualisation of the economic mode of production shifted to emphasise the action of individuals who articulate the economic in their ideological and political practices. I discuss these continuities and breaks in connection with their significant alterations and changes in relation to Marxist tradition. Instead of seeking an ideological closure, I proceed from a contextual and historical understanding, 'which provides the measure of our success at mapping, at arriving at a better description/ understanding of the context' (Grossberg 2006, 3). I consider the structural-Marxist discussions in relation to the vocabularies and history guides that I have found useful in order to grasp the contexts of these intellectual and political formations (e.g., Bottomore et al. 1991; Dosse 1997a; 1997b; Dworkin 1997; Hall et al. 1980; Hobsbawm 2011; Raatgever 1985; Wolpe 1980).

I address the structural-Marxist return to Marx, which is an epistemic shift from biological and mechanical conceptual metaphors to a relational approach in which society is grasped as a complex articulation between the ideological, political, and economic instances. I start by briefly discussing Marx, who has returned to the academic discussion after three decades of silence. I then look at some of the most important takes on Marxism before addressing structural Marxism and the French return to Marx represented by Althusser and his colleagues in philosophy. After that, I turn my attention to the 'modes of production controversy' that occurred in France in the field of new economic anthropology, which brought attention to the 'articulation of modes of production'. The purpose of this chapter, in other words, is to present the contexts of the discussions without reducing the action of individuals to the settings in which it occurs. Also, instead of 'con-texts', wherein similar issues are discussed by means of use of similar vocabularies, I attempt to map a politico-historical conjuncture (i.e., the 'return to Marx').

[15] 'The fate of Chile surely shows that, like bad medicine, bad theory [i.e., the Chicago School of economics] can kill. It is therefore worth talking about', in the words of Foster-Carter (1978, 52).

3.1 The Return to Marx

Relative to other classics of sociology, Marx's philosophy seems ideological and political. Some depict Marx as an emancipator of the proletariat while others consider him dogmatic, obsolete, and to belong to the past. Capitalism is an economic system motivated by profit. In order to make profit, capitalists use the workers' labour power as a commodity in production. In bourgeois society, capitalists hold the means of production and the workers have to sell their labour power in order to make a living. The foundation of the class struggle is exploitation based on the capitalist appropriation of surplus value from labour. This is due to the commodity form of labour, which produces surplus value appropriated from the workers by the capitalists; that is, during a workday, workers produce more than they need in order to live and the capitalist pays them less than the real value of their labour. In *Capital*, Marx discusses contradictions related to the capitalist mode of production, which generates wealth and prosperity but also inequality and lack of stability in the economic system.

Almost 150 years have now passed since publication of the first volume of Marx's *Capital, Critique of Political Economy* (1867). The workers in developing countries today do manufacturing work wherein the exploitation of labour takes place without health and safety safeguards or an organised workers' resistance of the sort found in rapidly industrialising Britain in Marx's time, while technology, innovations, and scientific knowledge are the most profitable commodities produced in our consumer societies today. The social democratic ideal of the welfare state is built on consent between capitalists and workers, with the politicians having committed to taking care of both welfare and prosperity. Accordingly, Marx's work is currently topical, as this consent dissolves and the malfunctioning capitalist system breeds economic crisis. An open question remains, however, in whether the crisis is leading to collapse of the whole system (Wallerstein et al. 2013). The economic crisis appears to be only a prelude to challenges related to global climate change, for example.

I would like to note, however, that Marx wrote about capitalism in his own time. In the British Museum's Reading Room, he scrutinised the classics addressing the political economy of the 18th century, particularly the works of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and their liberalist followers. No matter the immensity of the *magnum opus* written by Marx, many of his texts were not famous within his lifetime. Sales of the first volume of *Capital*, for example, did not reach a thousand copies until five years had passed. Moreover, his colleague

Friedrich Engels edited the other two volumes after Marx's 1883 death on the basis of manuscripts written in handwriting that seldom was legible. Karl Kautsky edited parts of the manuscript into the fourth volume, *Theories of Surplus Value*. Instead of *Capital*, Marx's most disseminated text is *The Communist Manifesto*, on which he collaborated with Engels. It is the best-selling book of all time after the Bible. For this reason, Marx is a famous political radical and theoretician of the class struggle.

On the verge of revolution in 1848, it appeared that capitalism would collapse in its contradictions. Uprisings swept the continent, and Marx outlined a political programme for developing the first workers' movement. He assumed that socialist revolution would take place at centres of industrialisation and capitalist development all over Europe; however, the revolts failed and reactionary state powers repressed the uprisings for decades. Not until rapid expansion of the first workers' movement did Marx's texts start to attract broader interest. Marx became a leading theoretician in the First International (1864–1872), drafting many political pamphlets and definitions of politics. Allegedly, this was when some anarchists used the term 'Marxist' for the first time. A group of French socialists, who resisted all authorities, used it in a pejorative sense for the followers of Marx. Hence, those who supported Marx and his ideas in the associated political movement saw the term as a negative stamp. Marx himself famously rebuffed the neologism by saying: 'All I know is that I am not a Marxist' (Bottomore et al. 1991, 262–266, 347–350). Whatever the truth underlying this statement, the Second International (1889–1914) excluded the anarchists and institutionalised socialism in the workers' movement until V.I. Lenin's rise to power in Russia's October Revolution, in 1917.

Lenin was the founder of the Communist International (1919–1943), for whom the term 'Marxist' was an exclusive definition denoting those who committed to the class struggle in respect of communism, which is achieved through socialist 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. Marx portrayed the notion of communism in line with his revolutionary experience of the Commune wherein the 'Communards' governed Paris for a few months in 1871. Lenin developed Marx's idea of the Commune in his *State and Revolution* (1917) by replacing the idea of the collective with that of radical and violent overthrown of the state by the proletariat led by the Bolsheviks ('the majority') on their way to forming the Soviet Union. According to Lenin, at the time, 'Russia was the weakest link in the chain of imperialist states' (Althusser 1992/1969, 97). Lenin thought that communism would take its place violently because of revolution, not through economic

growth as the German social democrats believed. In particular, Kautsky, who was a leading theoretician of the German Social Democratic party (SPD), attempted to blunt Marx's revolutionary edge in theory and practice in order to leave his name hallowed as that of a rather harmless academic critic, according to Lenin (Bottomore et al. 1991, 102–105, 308–310).

'Marxism-Leninism' was born in the Communist International after Lenin's death (in 1924). It was 'dialectical materialism' in reference to both historical materialism and the dialectics of Hegelian philosophy (Bottomore et al. 1991, 142). In the 1930s, Soviet-Marxism degenerated into Stalinist totalitarianism, and Soviet dictatorship cast its shadow over the people. The Gulag system and persecution by Stalin resulted in the death of many, including Soviet-Marxists. Before this time of obscurity, however, the Soviet government founded the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow. Here, those who were still alive collaborated with German intellectuals from the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, later known as the Frankfurt School. This was the era in which many important previously unpublished manuscripts by Marx and Engels such as *The German Ideology* (1927, Eng. 1969) and *Grundrisse* (1939–1941, Eng. 1973) were edited, printed, and made available for the first time in public, in Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe – that is, the MEGA project. They edited *The German Ideology* from the manuscripts of 1845–46. This was the critique Marx and Engels levelled at the 'Young Hegelians' who had been their colleagues in German philosophy. *Grundrisse*, in turn, was Marx's economic manuscript from 1857–58 that served as a methodological outline for his *Capital* and was never meant to be published in its own right. Ultimately, the Great Terror of the 1930s brought a Soviet purge of the remaining staff of the first MEGA project, for ideological reasons (Koivisto & Oittinen 2011).

In Germany, 'critical theory' was a response to the traumatic events of the First World War, which crushed the workers' movement and brought collapse to all left-wing parties in the West. Critical theory was a part of the 'Western Marxist' tradition, in contrast to Soviet-Marxist affinities. The most famous critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, among them Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse, lived and worked in the United States, having fled from the Nazis in this time of war. Their thoughts did not emerge in Europe until the anti-colonial revolts and student movements of the 1960s (Bottomore et al. 1991, 208; Therborn 2010, 81). This conjuncture brought Marx back to academic discussion. In philosophical and ideology-critical readings, the critical theorists conceived of Marx's theory as an incomplete and fragmentary whole, not yet a

complete and self-contained totality as in Soviet-Marxist explanations. As a replacement for the positivists' illusions in the previous forms of Marxism, critical theorists portrayed a new Marx with reference to emancipatory interest and methodological self-reflection (e.g., Habermas 1968/1978, 43–65). In response to full-blown fascism, the Frankfurt school of Marxist philosophers treated ideology as the manipulation of the masses.

Hence, reconstruction of Marxist theory dramatically expanded a century after Marx's *Capital*. *Marx-Engels Werke* (the above-mentioned MEW), published since 1956, was a standard edition of Marx's collected works that brought them to a German-speaking audience. The 'new reading of Marx' (Ger. *Neue Marx-Lektüre*) detached itself from the ideological. In 1956, Nikita Khrushchev undertook a political reform to 'de-Stalinize' society of the personality cult surrounding communist leader Josef Stalin, who had died a few years before. Any such attempts to rehabilitate the image of Marxism were overshadowed when, later that very year, Soviet tanks smashed a popular uprising in the communist state of Hungary, and criticism of the Soviets and Marxism was strengthened further. Politician Otto Wille Kuusinen, who had fled from Finland, edited a new version of the socialist doctrine for the Soviets in the 1960s, yet many Marxist withdrew from communism on account of the disintegrating Soviet system, which left an ample opening for a critique of ideology:

> Untethering Marxism from its own historical destiny in the early sixties provided a means of saving it from rapid decomposition by placing it at the center of science. It was one response to the need to abandon an official, dogma-bound, post-Stalinist Marxism with an onerous past. (Dosse 1997a, 293–294)

Acknowledging the difference between science and ideology prompted a revival of Marxist thought in the 1960s and 1970s called the 'neo-Marxist age of reformation'. The most influential return to Marx occurred in Germany with reference to 'the logic of capital', as its name suggests. This 'capital-logic' school of Marxism (e.g., Schanz's *Kapitallogik*) took place in respect of Marx's *Capital*. The approach is still strong in Northern European Marxism. With the capital-logic, the critique of ideology influenced the philosophical approaches. In Italy, in contrast, a return to Marx emerged from 'workerism' (Ital. *Operaismo*) in what was known as 'autonomist Marxism'. This took place in connection with a class struggle of the proletariat within the workers' moment. In France, Althusser held on to Marxist theory. He emptied it of ideological content by detaching Marxism from its historical and ideological settings, thereby generating a scientific theory in the mould of epistemology. Founded on the basis of scientific knowledge,

structural Marxism took shape in the intellectual and political contexts of the anti-humanist, anti-communist, and anti-capitalist struggles. It formed the basis for all the returns to Marx, in France and in other countries.

3.2 Althusser's Structural-Marxist Critique of Ideology

Born in 1918 in Algeria, Althusser was a structural-Marxist philosopher and a member of the French Communist Party (PCF). He may have had greater influence on the structuralist generation of the 1960s than any other philosopher did, as he taught Marxist thinking for decades at France's elite academy. Often, however, his teachings are considered in isolation from their intellectual and political contexts or denounced by ideological means. At first, Althusser worked at the École normale supérieure (ENS), on Paris's Rue d'Ulm, where he taught philosophy earning a state doctorate in 1976. In 1939, he was admitted to ENS as a student but was drafted into the French army and was captured by German troops as a prisoner of war. After World War II, Althusser began his studies (Fr. *agrégation*) in philosophy. He wrote his thesis on German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, under the supervision of philosopher of science Gaston Bachelard. In 1948, Althusser took up a position at ENS, where he would work for over three decades. In 1948, he also joined the PCF, on the recommendation of his former teacher Jean-Toussaint Desanti. It was at this time that Althusser met the woman who was to become his wife and began regular treatment for mental health problems that had been exacerbated by the war. In the 1950s, Althusser taught classical philosophy, and he published his only monograph, *Montesquieu: Politics and History*, in 1959.

In 1961–62, Althusser held his first seminar on Marx with his students on the Rue d'Ulm. Althusser began his article 'On the Young Marx' (1960) by citing a passage from *The German Ideology* in which Marx stated that the neo-Hegelians had not abandoned the bourgeois philosophy, meaning that their ideas were still situated in respect of Hegelian idealism. Althusser (*ibid*.) alleged that with that manuscript, from 1845, Marx extricated himself from the realm of German ideology. At the same time, Marxist humanists and communists both countered Althusser by claiming that Hegelian dialectics is an integral part of Marxism, which they argued is the most developed form of humanism in that it reveals the alienated conditions of capitalist relations in which men have to live their lives.

In this context, Althusser was oriented philosophically to 'anti-humanism' as was his most famous student, Foucault (1966/2002, 422), who speculated that 'man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea'.

In 1962–63, Althusser lectured his students in structuralist philosophy. For Althusser (1962/1969), Marx broke from idealism and the ideology of Hegelian philosophy not by way of inversion of the dialectics but epistemologically, inventing a new problematic, which meant an area of study different from what came before Marx. His effort to excise Hegel from Marxist theory is the main difference between the capital-logic school and Althusserian-inspired structural-Marxist philosophy. In reference to the work of Bachelard, Althusser calls the rupture marked by Marx's departure from Hegel 'an epistemological break', from ideology to science. For him, this started with *The German Ideology* (1845) and was completed in Marx's *Capital*. The period when Marx considered the relations of production to be constitutive of the entire structure of society in relation to the class struggle was termed 'historical materialism'. According to Althusser (*ibid*.), the passage wherein Marx calls for setting Hegel back on his feet was only a caricature.[16] Althusser (*ibid*.) opined that 'mature Marx' did not cleave to the Hegelian framework of concepts, simply turning the concepts inside out; instead, he superseded the whole approach with new concepts that emerged in the critique of classical political economy, which followed his criticism of Hegelian philosophy.

In 1964, the discussion at Althusser's seminar focused on Marx's *Capital*, and in the following year, the minor publishing house Maspero printed his *Pour Marx* and *Lire le Capital* in its 'Theory' series, helmed by Althusser. These books were intended for a small audience, but they sold over a hundred thousand copies in total. Althusser and the members of his reading group, such as Étienne Balibar, Pierre Macherey, Roger Establet, and Jacques Rancière, all co-authors of *Reading Capital*, suddenly became well-known. Moreover, their analyses were presented as an internal critique of the PCF and in opposition to Marxist humanists in the realm of philosophy. This critique took place with respect to philosophy, not politics. Although Althusser was a member of the communist party, his reading of Marx was critical with regard to ideology. The PCF was one of the leading

[16] Althusser (1962/1969) starts 'Contradiction and Overdetermination' in *For Marx* with Marx's words on Hegel: 'With him [Hegel,] it [dialectic] is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell' (here, he cites Marx's 1873 'Afterword to the Second German Edition', from *Capital*'s Vol. 1).

parties at the time, and Althusser struggled against both communist Soviet-Marxism's and bourgeois Marxist humanism's interpretations.

According to *Reading Capital*, Marx conceived a whole new problematic, that of the capitalist mode of production. In *Reading Capital*, Althusser and his colleagues paid attention to contradictory ways of using concepts that Marx himself left unconscious, which brings structuralist elements to Marxist discussion. This occurs by virtue of a 'symptomatic reading' in a manner akin to a psychoanalyst focusing on patients' utterances in their speech (see Brewster, cited in Althusser 1970, 316). In practice, the analyst pays attention to what is absent from the patient's speech – i.e., what the patient does not say explicitly. Marx analysed the treatises of classical political economy in order to make it explicit that, with their economic categories, they neglected the appropriation of surplus value of labour. Symptomatic of the classical political economists' approach was a failure to address the value of labour in relation to the capitalist exploitation, which was explicit but never discussed. It was evident to the classical political economists but not defined as a problem in classical political economy, which is symptomatic.

In 1963, Althusser invited Lacan, a psychoanalyst whose work had been rejected institutionally, to teach at ENS, where Lacan's seminars became major events in structuralist thinking.[17] Althusser's students tuned in to psychoanalysis, and many turned to 'Althussero-Lacanian' philosophy. In 1964, Althusser published the article 'Freud and Lacan' in a journal of the French Communist Party where psychoanalysis was not being discussed at the time. While for Althusser, Marx founded a new science, of the capitalist mode of production, Lacan said, according to Althusser (1964/1971, 198), that Freud founded a new science of the unconscious. The object of psychoanalysis was 'the unconscious', which is formed during the course of 'the humanization of the small biological creature' in a human child (*ibid*., 205). As a former prisoner of war, Althusser (*ibid*., 205–206) went on to state that

[17] Lacan's 'return to Freud' appeared in the 'Rome Discourse' (i.e., 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis', from 1953). It had an effect on psychiatry in both theory and practice. Lacan argued against the ego-psychological and neurobiological tendencies in psychoanalysis. Lacan made explicit Freud's psychoanalytic idea that our innermost being is, in fact, structured by the discourse of the other – that is, the symbolic order wherein the symbolic function of language is seen as constitutive of 'the split subject'. In this connection, the human mind or *psyche* is constituted in relation to language and culture. The International Psychoanalytic Association expelled Lacan because of, above all, his theoretical break from Freudian tradition and his unorthodox psychoanalytical practice (Dosse 1997, 95, 104).

> psycho-analysis is concerned with […] a war which is continually declared in each of its sons, who, projected, deformed and rejected, are required, each by himself in solitude and against death, to take the long forced march which makes mammiferous larvae into human children, *masculine* or *feminine subjects*.

In this passage, a parallel is created between becoming a subject and a war that many survive at least superficially while others are wounded deeply and do not recover from the struggle at all (*ibid*.). Moreover, psychoanalysis is not about a biologically or psychologically fixed essence of human beings nor about culture or society wherein individuals are alienated as its subjects; it has to do with 'the aleatory abyss of the human-sexual itself' (*ibid*.). This means the contingency of subjectivity that will emerge out of the corporeal human beings. Althusser does not deny the importance of the psychoanalytical theory of the transition from the mirror stage to a speaking subject, but he disagrees with the psychoanalytical reading on ideology, wherein early childhood determines unconscious processes in the subject's becoming.

In May 1968, revolutionary action broke out in Paris. Ten million people joined in a general strike that left the French government on the brink of collapse. This resulted in new elections. Althusserian vocabulary influenced many student rioters of '68 (Dosse 1997b, 164), but it also had to adapt and adjust to a new politico-historical conjuncture, to which it was not previously attached. At the same time, Czechoslovakian reformers tried to establish 'socialism with a human face' in contrast to the communist 'Soviet model'. Yet again, the result was forceful defeat by the Soviets: the 'Prague Spring' fell in the territory of their own alliance. After these events, 'euro-communism' (Azcárate 1978) displaced Soviet-style Marxism-Leninism within the communist parties of France, Italy, and Spain. In addition, the contradictions in 'advanced capitalism', with antagonism and social inequality in respect of class, gender, and ethnicity forming in the midst of unprecedented social mobility, economic prosperity, and well-being, gave rise to emancipatory social action in consequence of anti-war, women's, civil rights, and students' movements and the rise of various countercultures.

In Althusser's most famous essay in *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' (1970/1971), said apparatus (ISAs) operate by ideological means and they establish the subjects of ideology (Lat. *Subiectum*, for 'throw under'). This emphasis on the ideological mechanisms opened abstract theory to empirical analysis. In the early 1970s, Althusser unified the social sciences under the structural-Marxist paradigm for a fleeting moment.

The schools, churches, families, law, politics, trade unions, media, and culture all reproduce ideology that has to penetrate both the workers and the capitalists, along with the civil servants and indeed all the ideologists themselves (Althusser 1971, 133, 143). The state apparatus, in turn, functions primarily through repression. In the end, none of the classes can be hegemonic without achieving consent through the ISAs. The capitalist social formation in France at the time was made up of numerous ISAs, where the educational ISA reproduced class relations wherein most people graduated to farming and labour while only a small elite continued their studies. In contrast, in the pre-capitalist social formation, there was only one dominant ISA, the religious state apparatus of the Catholic Church, against which the French Revolution reacted in accordance with the ideas of the Enlightenment, including the iconic liberty, equality, and fraternity as symbols of the democratic and republican state (*ibid*., 142–157).

According to Althusser (*ibid*., 159–161), each specific ideology has a history of its own. Ideology in general, however, has no history; it is like the unconscious, which is eternal – that is to say 'ideology has no history'. Ideology is an 'imaginary relationship of individuals to real material conditions of existence'; i.e., without the social relations of production and class relations, ideology is not expressive. Ideology also has a material existence: the thoughts or expressions from which ideologies seem to be composed are not transcendental in any spiritual sense. Rather, they all have material substance through the ISAs (*ibid*., 162–170). Moreover, people are born as subjects of the ideology. After all, they have been expected and are called by a certain name after their birth. In one of his most cited passages, Althusser (*ibid*., 174) says:

> [I]deology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'

At this point, an individual who identifies with the ideological call of an authority is already subject to the ideology wherein he or she is 'hailed'. Althusser (1970/1971, 162) articulated the above-mentioned idea that the ideology is an 'imaginary relationship' of individuals to 'the real conditions of existence' – that is, to the relations of production and reproduction. This means that the social relations are real, not merely imaginary or symbolic, that they exist independently from our thoughts and yet we can conceptualise them only by means of language that materialises in practice (see Marx 1857/1973, 101; see also Hall 1985, 103–

105). In this respect, Althusser speaks about the symbolic and the overdetermined character of all social relations that have no existence outside language. Yet he also talks about 'the economic', which determines in 'the last instance' which of the other instances, such as the ideological and political, are dominant at the time.

According to colleagues of Althusser such as Nicos Poulantzas (1968/1973, 28) and Balibar (1970, 217), the Marxist approach can be criticised through pointing to the dominant role of religion and politics in previous historical epochs, since people cannot live only from the economic. In *Capital*, Marx gave the critics a rather terse reply, however, that 'it is the mode [of production] in which they gained a livelihood that explains why here politics, and there Catholicism, played the chief part' (Marx & Engels 1867/1909, Note 42). In *Reading Capital*, Balibar (1970, 212–213), unlike Althusser, placed stress on the importance of the concept of the mode of production, which is 'doubly articulated' by a combinatory relation 'between the forces and relations of production'. In this respect, a social formation can comprise two or more modes of production (see Balibar 1970, 212–213; Poulantzas 1973, 14–15). This leads to the question of the 'articulation of modes of production' and the ways in which pre-capitalist modes of production can combine with the capitalist relations of production. Interestingly enough, Althusser's theoretical structuralist rigour led to ethnographic fieldwork being done in Africa in times of decolonisation and capitalist neo-colonialism, including the French works of Godelier, Meillassoux, Terray, and Rey – also known as the articulation school of economic anthropology.

3.3 Patriarchs, Peasants, and Articulation of Modes of Production

The articulation of modes of production was initially an abstract and theoretical issue discussed in Marxism of the 1960s. Those engaging in this academic debate did not share the same background discipline. Nonetheless, this controversy contributed to the birth of a new problematic in the field of economic anthropology. The new approach had to do with describing the pre-capitalist social formations in a conjuncture in which the non-capitalist forms articulated with capitalism. From this standpoint, the scholars were interested in the articulation of the pre-capitalistic forms of production with the colonial and capitalist forms and their effects on the relevant developing countries. The claim that two or more modes of production can coincide and articulate with one another

at the same time is a departure both from Marx's explanations and from Claude Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology and the more liberal tradition of economic anthropology (see Clammer 1975; see also Copans & Seddon 1978). In line with the elaboration on their predecessors' arguments, new economic anthropologists concluded that the growth of the capitalist world-system takes place through its boundary regions, which requires that the pre-capitalist social formations articulate with capitalism. At this point, I shall briefly outline the main ideas surrounding the controversy on 'articulation of modes of production' in the structural-Marxist line of thought, populated with the elements of race, gender, and class struggle.

Godelier (1973/1977, 44, 49) refined the structural-Marxist vogue of the 1960s with the premise of anthropological fieldwork for uncovering the pre-capitalist social formations as a part of the social structure articulated in line with new logic. He posited that the structure of pre-capitalist social formations is based on kinship relations that enable the exploitation of descendants. For this reason, Godelier (Raatgever 1985, 298–300) did not accord a dominant position to the economic as determining the position of all other instances in a pre-capitalist social formation. Instead, the economic is not discernible from other instances. In this respect, the empirical problem is to describe the connections among labourers, non-labourers, and instruments of labour in domestic communities wherein livelihood is organised around descent groups. In this respect, reproduction of productive forces and relations of production take place because of kinship relations refining a domestic or lineage-based mode of production, which differs from the capitalist mode of production.

In new economic anthropology, structures such as the economic are arranged around kinship relations. For instance, in 1964, Meillassoux (Raatgever 1985, 301–303) empirically described a patrilineal system among the Guro people living in Ivory Coast, whose members worked in communally owned fields to produce goods then appropriated by their elders. The elders of the villages had direct control over the adherents' labour power because of reproduction. In these circumstances, production is not based on the possession of means of production or private land. Instead, the village elders have restricted access to the circulation and exchange of prestige goods used for marital payments. By establishing a family, young men produce dependants and eventually can acquire the status of an elder. Hence, the non-productive members of Guro society maintain patriarchal dominance relative to the productive members by controlling the circulation and exchange of women.

After studying the people neighbouring the Guro, the Dida people, Terray (Raatgever 1985, 304–306) reconsidered Meillassoux's work five years after its publication. Applying Althusserian categories that Godelier introduced to the field, Terray (1969/1972) paid specific attention to means of production and forms of co-operation (such as hunting with nets) that require more teamwork than agriculture does. Unlike Meillassoux, Terray argued that more than one mode of production was exercised in distributing the means of labour and organising the ways of co-operating in the 'self-subsistence economy' of the Guro. In this respect, Terray (*ibid*., 132) drew a distinction between two modes of production. The first mode is dominant in a lineage-based system involving simple co-operation in agriculture, along with fishing, gathering, and animal husbandry. The second mode takes place in a 'tribe-village system', which he considered a more complex and egalitarian way of organising the social relations of production and distributing the productive forces used for hunting.

New economic anthropologists argued with one another about the variety of social relations necessary for characterising the 'articulation of modes of production' in pre-capitalist social formations. As for Rey (Raatgever 1985, 306–309), patrilineal groups as seen among the Guro are formed from relations of production that indicate an exploitative relationship between the producers (i.e., peasants) and non-producers (i.e., proprietors), which other economic anthropologists did not consider a class relationship. Meillassoux (1975/1981, 87) claimed, countering Rey, that no one group takes advantage of another within a domestic mode of production *per se*, since both women and young men can achieve the status of an elder in the course of time. Hence, exploitation takes place only through the 'articulation of modes of production', because of a domestic mode that cannot exist as such without capitalism (*ibid*.). In the domestic mode of production, however, village elders' control over the productive members differs from the use of 'free labour' within a capitalist system, wherein the workers possess their labour power used as a commodity exchanged for wages.

With reference to class struggle, Rey, however, insisted that in the domestic mode of production, the exploitation of productive members of Guro society is specifically due to the appropriation of their labour. In Rey's work on the matrilineal groups living in the French Congo, for instance, the exploitation of the surplus labour, for which the elders do not pay, is apparent through the subordination of young men who cannot become elders of their village, to whom they provide free labour. In this polygamous system, the men become elders only outside their local residence or by accident without a guarantee of ever getting

married. In addition, they offer marital payments increasingly in the form of money for their elders. Consequently, young men are pushed to sell their labour to proprietors of the land in exchange for wages, which means that an inexpensive labour force is available for nearby plantation-owners.

In early modern Europe, feudalism both protected and resisted capital in a transition to capitalism. Some pre-capitalist social formations appear to show resistance, at least with regard to unfolding revolts (e.g., the Arab Spring), that their ongoing neo-colonisation makes apparent. As Rey stated in his 'Class Alliances' (1973/1982), the articulation of the feudalist and capitalist modes of production started with the class alliance between capitalists and proprietors, which Marx described over a century ago in the context of the monetisation of land rent as a feudalist form of appropriating the surplus labour from the serfs (Binsbergen & Geschiere 1985, 253). Rey's (1973/1982, 31) claim to counter Marx's argument is that the 'ground rent is a relation of distribution […] of another mode of production with which capitalism is articulated'. Hence, ground rent is a feudal form of taking over the surplus labour of the peasants, which exists within a capitalist system. This articulation between two systems benefits both the capitalists and land-owners, who can co-exist in a class alliance for an extended time.

Although the entrenchment of these relations varies historically, it has a tendency to impoverish the peasants tied to land that they do not possess themselves. With regard to Rey's work on the 'articulation of modes of production', transition from one mode of production to another occurs through a class drama played on the stage of ideological and political instances, which are not as static states of being. In the first phase of articulation, an alliance of the non-producers (i.e., land-owners and capitalists) is activated against direct producers (i.e., peasants) dispossessed of their land and instruments of labour, which protects both the capitalist and pre-capitalist social formations (Rey 1973/1982, 21, 27). After this phase, capitalism takes root in the pre-capitalist social formation and the peasants have to provide their labour outside their domestic communities. This move is analogous to the prevailing situation in many developing countries (*ibid*., 52). Moreover, in order for the pre-capitalist modes of production to be abolished, a process of capitalist neo-colonisation takes place because of extra-economic coercion and violence (*ibid*.). The final phase is seen in the most developed countries, such as the United States; here, capitalist markets destroy peasant production, and the developing countries have no other option than to provide low-cost labour and raw materials (*ibid*.). Rey's key point

is that the transition from one mode of production to another is not set in advance. It goes beyond the economic base in the social forming of the ideological and political instances that have an effect on the uneven and contingent historical and economic development. In this context, the concept of articulation is an attempt to understand the connections between two or more modes of production.

To recapitulate, in structural-Marxism, the controversy about the 'articulation of modes of production' involved articulation of relations between the capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production. In this debate, the social formations in developing countries are considered to be the articulation of the subordinated and pre-capitalist mode(s) of production under the dominance of capitalism, where capitalism has destroyed feudalism yet other forms of production exist in postcolonial territories. The concept of articulation, in this context, was employed for the historical transformations with reference to contradictions and struggle. For example, Rey's idea of the 'articulation of modes of production' is that one or more subordinate modes of production can exist alongside capitalism in the long term. In 'Class Alliances', he (1973/1982) divides 'the stages of the articulation of modes of production' into three periods: firstly, there is exchange and interaction between the two modes of production; then, one mode becomes subordinated and a transition to another mode takes place; and, finally, the initial mode is defeated. In Rey's work, each of these stages of articulation has a corresponding set of class alliances, which means that the outcome of the struggle is not guaranteed in advance.

3.4 The Fate of the Structural-Marxist Paradigm

According to structural-Marxist sociologists Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst, who later became known as its main critics, notions such as 'mode of production' and 'structural causality' should be abandoned in favour of the post-Marxist discourse-theory approach. It became an effective form of criticism against Althusserianism in the late 1970s. Hindess and Hirst (1977) criticised structural-Marxist thought by arguing that it considers structural causality as an effect of the whole in its parts – that is, in a manner similar to that in which the German idealists used the idea of 'expressive causality', for which structural Marxists criticised both humanists and economists. As an alternative to the allegedly teleological and essentialist explanations wherein society is conceived

of as a totality of the economic and class contradictions and emphasis is placed on the mode of production, this complexity is reduced to 'a single structure of social relations', a social formation as an object of discourse. What is at stake in this argument is an attempt to contest a desire to appropriate the whole structure of society arising from the structural-Marxist epistemology, wherein the social relations and different instances of the social formations are construed on the foundation of the mode(s) of production, not as discursive formations. It points to an epistemic shift toward imageries of social action that put emphasis on language and its structures (e.g., discourses) as an alternative to the earlier social-order metaphors related to articulation (of modes of production).

> *Either* the articulation of 'relations' and 'forces' of production is conceived in terms of the connection between social relations and the forms in which their conditions of existence are realized *or* it must be conceived in terms of some kind of necessity in which the character of one object of discourse, the 'relations' or the 'forces', is deducible from the concept of the other. (Hindess & Hirst 1977, 55)

Armed with the critique described above, wherein the articulation of different instances within the social formation is rejected, political theorists and cultural analysts entered into a debate with Althusserians for whom the economic base or the kinship relations determined any social formation in the last instance through assignment of the dominant role to the mode of production. Structural Marxists did not attempt to analyse the action of individuals as a making and breaking of contingent links (discursively) that could challenge the ideas of economic reductionism. Nevertheless, they cast aside the imageries portraying society as an organic whole whose change is dictated by economic laws or its immanent nature – or the opposite, society empirically seen as a machine through which its structure is reduced to law-like mechanisms.

Marxist humanists, in turn, have criticised Althusser and his followers for not considering history. Structural Marxists detached their theory from ideology and politics, in practice. An illustrative example is the polemic book *The Poverty of Theory* (1978), in which historian E.P. Thompson criticised Althusserians (e.g., Hindess & Hirst's early work) by applying a vulgarism from Marx and Engels's characterisation of anarchists: 'all of them are *Geschichtenscheissenschlopff*, unhistorical shit'. Here, the criticism targeted structural Marxism for excessive theory. In his *Essays in Self-Criticism*, Althusser (1974/1976, 127) himself retrospectively admitted that in the mid-1960s 'our "flirt" with structuralist terminology obviously went beyond acceptable limits'. Even though Althusser's political and theoretical concern lay with ideological practices and class struggle,

the structural-Marxist line of thought went out of fashion completely in the mid-1970s. Even Althusser's own disciples rejected him. For example, for Rancière, Althusserianism was elitism. Althusser suffered from mental health problems and was hospitalised numerous times in the course of his career.[18] In addition, some of his followers, such as Michel Pêcheux and Poulantzas, committed suicide.

Although Althusserianism was a 'dead end' for many French structuralists, it caused a paradigm shift in British cultural studies. By the 1990s, pluralism, relativism, and individualism had replaced the causal relations, class struggle, and alleged economic determinism of the capitalist mode of production (that is, social structure seen as an articulated whole that determines the relationships among the ideological, political, and the economic instances of a social formation) (see Resch 1992). The 'culturalist' approach took off at the turn of the 1960s, when the 'New Left' began a renewal of socialism in Britain, with a strong tradition in literary criticism and social history (Dworkin 1997). For the culturalists, social change appeared in terms of culture, which required a new line of attack in Marxism. They defined 'culture' as both meanings and values that have arisen from the historical conditions and social relations through which people relate to the conditions of their existence, along with the cultural traditions and practices wherein their ways of seeing have been expressed and materialised (Hall et al. 1980, 63, 66). They referred to the ideas and cultural practices that organise individuals' thoughts and action as composing 'a whole way of life'. From this perspective, their emphasis was on the cultural activities of people that make their history (*ibid*.). Culturalists analysed the long-term social and cultural changes in post-war British society in terms of the history of the working class, the Industrial Revolution, and consumer capitalism, in addition to the mass media and popular culture, which had become the main tools for communication in the era of advanced consumer capitalism.

The institutionalisation of cultural studies was spawned via the culturalist and structural-Marxist paradigms in the political and intellectual contexts of the New Left, with which activists, educators, and literary critics such as Hall, Richard Hoggart, and Williams were associated, in addition to Thompson, who was

[18] Eventually, in 1980, Althusser strangled his wife, Hélène Rytmann-Althusser, to death. He received compulsory treatment for his psychosis and thereby avoided a jail sentence. Contrary to expectations, Althusser wrote texts in the 1980s, which were published after his death in 1990. 'Aleatory materialism' (see Lahtinen 1997; 2009) (Lat. *alea*, 'the rolling of dice') is characteristic of Althusser's posthumously published works, where he attempted epistemologically breaking the rigid dichotomy between necessary and contingent.

another of the main critics (Hall 1980a; 1980b; Dworkin 1997).[19] While Marxist humanists conceived of culture as an 'expressive totality', wherein each part expresses the essence of the whole, Althusserian anti-humanists conceptualised the structure of society as a social formation consisting of specific practices articulated in relation to one another. From the structuralist viewpoint, people live and make sense of their conditions of existence by means of the categories through which their experience has affected the unconscious structures. The 'anti-humanists' studied social relations and their subjects, not individuals as such. Structural Marxists considered subjects of ideology and their interpellation, class struggle, and relations of production in relation to the capitalist mode of production.

In the 1970s, the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) applied the structural-Marxist paradigm with the notions of hegemony and resistance, in addition to semiology and psychoanalysis, in an attempt to bridge the gap between the structural-Marxist categories and the linguistic paradigm, wherein the subjects are constituted through language and ideology. A problem with this grouping and others, such as 'screen theory', was the notion of the universal subject (Hall 1980a, 69–70). In the mid-1970s, one of the groups at CCCS, who focused on theories of language and ideology, turned to Foucault's work insisting on historical specificity pertaining to language and subjectivity (see Hall et al. 1980, 186–209). In this respect, they recognised a gap between abstract theories of ideology and language and the subjectivities of individuals in their studies of popular culture. After the pioneering work done at CCCS, cultural studies and the discourse theory of the 1990s saw the concept of discourse replace the notions of culture and ideology, in addition to that of language as a system of differences. Consequently, the catch-all term 'discourse' entered the vocabulary of the social sciences and humanities in a manner that disavowed its roots in structural linguistics, Marxist political philosophy, and psychoanalysis, which hence were reduced to being nearly inconsequential (see Sawyer 2002).

[19] Hall (1932–2014) was the first editor-in-chief of the *New Left Review* (1960–), an academic journal for the Left's contemporary theoretical and political debates. Hall was one of the leading Marxist intellectuals in Britain's New Left movement. In 1969, Hall became the acting director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. A decade later, Hall took a chair as a professor of sociology without having a doctorate. He taught at the Open University until his retirement in 1998. Hall is famous for his interdisciplinary work in cultural studies, in areas such as youth studies, postcolonial studies, and media and communication studies.

3.5 Conclusion

Althusser and his colleagues drew an analytical distinction between 'mode of production' and 'social formation', where the former is a theoretical abstraction and the latter is a 'complexly structured totality' with multiple levels – the economic, the political, and the ideological – which overdetermine one another. Instead of foregrounding the capitalist mode of production as determining all relations or reducing ideologies and politics to superstructures, their articulation leans towards a process of creating the relations in practice at the level of empirically ascertainable social formation as has been presented in economic anthropology. In a contrast to economic reductionism, Marx viewed society as an articulated whole made up of relatively autonomous instances having their determinate effects while being determined 'in the last instance' by the economic. In this respect, a social formation is a complex unit, composed of various contradictions alongside class struggle. Althusser elaborated on the idea of overdetermination in contrast to orthodox Marxist vocabulary, wherein the capitalist mode of production consists of the relations of production between capitalists and workers, who are real and in an antagonistic relationship. In the reductionist line of thought, there are no classes outside the contradiction, which is constitutive of, and gives meaning to, the struggles that exist at the ideological and political level.

In the 'return to Marx', discussion of the framework within which the notion of articulation is to be applied occurred a century after Marx's *Capital*. In the context of new social and political movements, cultural theorists and political analysts focused first on the 'articulation of modes of production' and its economic mechanisms, then on social action as language related to ideology, politics, and the struggle for hegemony. This 'return' was also a departure from a conception of society as a fully articulated whole that gives meaning to its every instance by means of a 'necessary correspondence' with the economic and a shift toward other concerns – such as gender, race, and ethnicity issues – with structures found in language, considered via the notion of discourse. The fate of this paradigm was that the notion of discursive formation circulated beyond the reach of any social structure other than a socially constructed discursive field.

Against the background of this chapter, I next depict the epistemic shift in the imageries of society and social action in the structural-Marxist line of thinking and critique thereof, turning my gaze to the notion 'society is an articulated whole'.

4 The Conceptual Metaphor ‘Society Is an Articulated Whole’

> For Hegel, society, like history, is made up of circles within circles, of spheres within spheres. Dominating his whole conception is the idea of the expressive totality, in which all the elements are total parts, each expressing the internal unity of the totality […] which realize a simple principle -- the beauty of individuality for ancient Greece, the legal spirit for Rome, etc. (Althusser 1976, 182)

In these poetic words of Althusser, a circle forms a closed sphere in time and space with an inside and outside, which is bounded by a curved line with no beginning and no end. The idealistic notion of the expressive totality is formed on the assumption that philosophers can realise all elements of this sphere as ‘total parts’ by reconstructing their meaning around a simple unity. In 19th-century idealism, the structured whole of society stood for its parts and gave them historical meaning. In relation to this approach, Engels (1886/1976), who collaborated with Marx, wrote that the collective aim with a manuscript from 1845–46 (i.e., *The German Ideology*) was ‘to settle accounts with our erstwhile philosophical conscience’ – that is, with the neo-Hegelians. In other words, their object of critical self-reflection was to dispense with German idealism characterised as ‘bourgeois’. Marx (*ibid.*) detached himself not only from speculative philosophy but also from empiricism, which is antagonistic to it. This philosophical stream of Marxist critique of ideology formed as an opposite to idealism and also as counter-pressure to the empiricism implemented in economism.

Without further consideration, Marxian approaches could take us back to an essentialist reading using ‘the rigorous and frozen metaphors’ of positivist and mechanistic ways of thinking. Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution presented in *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 swiftly brought about a scientific revolution. It inspired Marx and his followers as a paradigm for systematic change. With regard to evolutionary imagery, society functions in the manner of an organism in keeping with its own nature. It reproduces itself because of action, which reflects the function of the social system as a whole (Brown 1989a, 133). Applying

models from physics and the natural sciences in order to explain the 'natural laws of capitalist production', Marx sought to explicate 'the economic law of motion of modern society', as he states in the preface to the first volume of *Capital* (1867). As for social change as a continuous and teleological idea, it can be traced back all the way to Aristotle's classical Greek philosophy (see Brown 1989a, 130–133; 1989b, 85–86). Over many centuries, philosophers depicted society with reference to an organism, which is subject to change by its very nature, *physis*. In Greek and other works, change has been depicted as a gradual and slow process of becoming with a specific purpose, *telos*.

Marx challenged the evolutionary and functionalist imageries centred on the intrinsic change. The idea of gradual evolutionary change was conceived of in terms of an organic whole in line with the notions of growth, progress, and historical development. This marked a strong contrast against Marx's idea of a 'revolution of the proletariat' to take power away from the bourgeoisie, as portrayed in *The Communist Manifesto*. In consequence, for Marx, the historical change was a product of the collective effort anticipating a better future for the subordinated, which is not reduced to a functionalist and evolutionary approach other than deliberately, or out of sheer ignorance. In Hegel's dialectics, notions take a universalistic and idealistic form of ideas. For Marx, concepts materialise in practice. Although Marx contested Hegel's idealism, he never articulated his own dialectical method; for example, dialectical materialism in Soviet-Marxism was an oversimplification of both historical materialism and philosophical idealism. Marxist theory of ideology is a critique of idealism explaining how ideas form and are actualised in both theory and practice.

I start my discussion of how society can be grasped in terms of articulation with Marx's notion of *Gliederung*, then continue with Althusser, for whom a social formation was 'a structure articulated in dominance'. Althusser criticised the idealist and humanist interpretations in Marxism as well as economist readings that reduced contradictions into the sphere of production. Althusser (1963/1969) pointed out that Marx grasped concepts such as 'labour' not at the level of the factory floor but as a complex process with reference to an articulated whole of society that 'gives its meaning to the simple category' (*ibid*., 196). Thus, concepts are parts of a complex structured whole, wherein each element takes its place in connection with every other one, as in a language. Laclau and Hall adopted the conceptual metaphor 'society is an articulated whole' in their work on ideology, politics, and the struggle for hegemony.

4.1 Marx's *Gliederung*

In relation to anatomical conceptual metaphors in political philosophy, society is portrayed metaphorically as a body consisting of the limbs of the social system exerting their effects thoroughly in its parts, which form an organic whole. Anatomical metaphors put emphasis on the parts and their effective organisation within the artificial social system structured as an organic whole. The apparent analogy is to living entities as members belonging to a certain body that has specific needs and functions. Within imageries of society, this conceptual metaphor is popular thanks to, for example, Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). It is a source for the metaphor of the state as a body, which Hobbes describes as an 'artificial man' consisting of several organs and joints connecting its dispersed 'members' and the 'head of the state' as a sovereign. In this manner, the sovereign appears as a social organism, as Hobbes states in the famous opening section of the book:

> [L]ife is but a motion of limbs […] and the joints, but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the Artificer [and art] goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of Nature, man. For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in Latin, CIVITAS), which is but an artificial man, though of greater stature and strength than the natural.

In early modern political philosophy, the idea of articulation was found in the poetic terms of this mechanical model. In *Leviathan*, the state comes into being through a social contract made by men in order to protect them from 'the state of nature'. That is an order without social rules, laws, or a government. Rousseau's view on this consent is expressed in a passage from *The Social Contract*, from 1762, according to which 'man is born free, but he is everywhere in chains'. The tie that binds the people is society, which enables them to act collectively as rational and moral human beings. This idea about the binding chains had already been articulated in Ancient Greece. The most famous metaphor in Plato's *Republic* is the Allegory of the Cave (see Laclau 1977, 7–13), which paints an image of a lifelong prisoner of the cave managing to escape it while the others remain in chains towards the back of the cave in the belief that the voices outside belong to the shadows reflected on the walls inside. In this respect, the task of a philosopher is to 'disarticulate' the chain of these sensory perceptions and then 'rearticulate' the links by applying reason and logical argumentation. In other words, the

philosopher's objective is to emancipate people from false impressions, which requires, above all, critical self-reflection.

Unchaining people from binding ties such as class is one of the overall themes that run through the collected works of Marx. In his texts, Marx uses the conceptual metaphor of *Gliederung* (which Hegel used in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*), for the structure, or order, of society. As noted above, this is derived from the German word for a limb, 'Glied'. The question of the articulation of 'the whole structure of society' (i.e., *Gliederung*) arises if one takes as subjects not the ideas, or concepts, as Hegel did, but the 'real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live' (Marx & Engels 1976, 42, 44). In keeping with German idealism, Hegel considers the state an ideal organism of a different nature from the affairs of family and civil society. In this respect, Hegel's 'point of departure is the abstract Idea' used as a subject, of whose development the state is a result (Marx 1977, 12). Marx set in opposition to this view 'the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life' (Marx & Engels 1976, 36) – that is, 'the material production of life' (*ibid*., 53). That is not a symptom of Hegel's inversion but a sign of a completely new problematic dealing with 'the relations of production and productive forces' with reference to both the capitalist mode of production and the state.

According to the premises outlined on the first pages of *The German Ideology* (Marx & Engels 1976, 35) and for *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx criticises his neo-Hegelian colleagues. In a contrast to the idealism of the Young Hegelians, 'observation must […] bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production'. This threefold order is present in the concept of the mode of production. That is a key to understanding the concrete ways in which people produce and reproduce 'the material conditions of their life'. On one hand, their active relation to nature determines the form of 'the intercourse [*Verkehr*] of individuals' (*ibid*., 32) – that is, their agency in connection with other people engaged in production. On the other hand, the productive forces that consist of both labour power and the means of labour determine the relations of production, which depend on the social division of labour and the distribution of work between labourers and non-labourers (i.e., among capitalists, land-owners, and peasants). In addition, Marx paid attention to legal issues such as the right of possession, private ownership, and the state distributing its members into the relations of production.

For Marx (1973, 105), categories of 'bourgeois society' are products of complex relations of production and offer understanding about their formation in the course of time:

> Bourgeois society is the most developed and the most complex historic organization of production. The categories which express its relations, the comprehension of its structure [Gliederung], thereby also allow insights into the structure [Gliederung] and the relations of production of all the vanished social formations out of whose ruins and elements it built itself up.

In this passage from his 1857 introduction to *Grundrisse*, Marx proposes that, even though modern society differs from all other epochs of history, it has risen from the ashes of all previous forms and is built on elements that have already existed. Firstly, it seems that this order is evolutionary because of the prevailing and unfolding elements, which appear as parts of the whole. From this standpoint, society looks like an organism that evolves and keeps developing toward its final goal, *telos*. In this respect, its parts articulate in an entity that appears a necessary product of growth and historical change. At the same time, however, Marx contests this imagery of society. Not until 'the most developed and the most complex historic organization of production' – that is, the capitalist mode of production of bourgeois society – has arisen can this kind of understanding of historical social formations be formed, because of the categories 'which express its relations, the comprehension of its structure [*Gliederung*]'. From this point of view, the categories of bourgeois society have made it possible to address the past social formations 'out of whose ruins and elements it built itself up'.

The social formation consists of a combination in the articulated whole, as it appears in Marx's economic manuscripts of 1857–58 (i.e., *Grundrisse* and the first draft of *Capital*). Considering production, Marx thinks of bourgeois society as 'a complex whole'. Following what has come before, it is a more complex organisation than feudal society. This means that bourgeois categories of political economy expressing the relations, such as 'capital, wage labour and landed property', are bound to 'their order [*Gliederung*] within modern bourgeois society' (Marx 1973, 108). Moreover, this order of modern bourgeois society differs from the pre-capitalist forms, a difference that requires a new explanation. In the introduction to *Grundrisse*, Marx devotes attention to apparently simple categories such as labour. In classical political economy, these categories occurred as an abstraction, but he made his critique in relation to a complex whole of society, giving new meaning to them.

In his introduction, Marx outlines his method for analysing the complex whole of society through his critique of the classical political economy of the eighteenth century. On one hand, 'production, distribution, exchange and consumption […] all form the members of a totality, distinctions within a unity' (Marx 1973, 99). For Marx, each member of this totality is therefore distinct, not identical to others, and has its own inner connections and determinations. On the other hand, the unity of totality is overdetermined by production, yet 'production in general' (*ibid*., 85) is an abstract and theoretical category understood only in relation to the concrete determinations in relation to its other moments. In a self-subsistence economy, for example, individuals produce the commodities to fulfil their needs. In the capitalist mode of production, the distribution of commodities takes place after the labour power and the means of labour have been allocated in the markets in accordance with the order of bourgeois society based on private ownership. Hence, production is a result of the preceding distribution of productive forces such as labour, which determine 'the structure [*Gliederung*] of distribution' (*ibid*., 95) along with the consumption and exchange in market-based economies.

According to these comments, in 'Marx's notes on method' (Hall 1974/2003), the whole structure of society (*Gliederung*) is conceived of as a complex unity wherein 'interaction takes place between the different moments' (Marx 1973, 100). In other words, the elements of this totality – production, distribution, exchange, and consumption – are now considered 'as different "moments" of a circuit [of capital], articulated into "a unity [grasped] in terms of their differences"' (Hall 1977b, 23). In this manner, the specific relationship – i.e., a unit wherein the members of the totality connect with each other in a manner such as makes them appear the same – is articulation (Hall 1974/2003, 127–128). The articulated whole forms through both the differences and similarities, which means a product of history that is subject to social change.

Marx used the concept of *Gliederung* for analysing the structure and organisation of a modern bourgeois society as a complex and articulated formation. Even though the notion of *Gliederung* is often translated into English as 'organisation', 'structure', or 'order' (see Foster-Carter 1978, 53)[20], in the

[20] Sociologist Aidan Foster-Carter (1978) published the article 'The Modes of Production Controversy' in the *New Left Review*, wherein he makes brief mention of the English translations of 'Gliederung' as used in Marx's *Grundrisse*, which did not take account of its metaphorical character. Foster-Carter (1978, 53, in Note 29) says: 'David McLellan, Marx's *Grundrisse*, London 1971, translates Gliederung variously as "organization" (p. 39) or "organic connection" (p. 42). Martin Nicolaus, [in the first complete English translation of] *Grundrisse*, London 1973, simply

vocabulary of Western Marxism this anatomical notion becomes a concept of articulation:

> Articulation marks the forms of the relationship through which two processes, which remain distinct – obeying their own conditions of existence – are drawn together to form a 'complex unity'. This unity is therefore the result of 'many determinations', where the conditions of existence of the one does not coincide exactly with that of the other (politics to economic, circulation to production) even if the former is the 'determinate effect' of the latter; and that is because the former also have their own internal 'determinations'. (Hall 1977b, 48)

It follows that the image of society as an organic whole or a body consisting of the limbs of the social system translates into an articulation conceived of as a complex unity of many determinations. Thereby, the relations of production between labourers and non-labourers, for instance, do not dissolve into mere abstractions such as 'isolated individuals' living in a 'state of nature' detached from the social structure as in the Robinsonades of classical political economy. Marx casts aside this abstracted order, condemning approaches that operate with concepts reduced to their lowest common denominator. Instead, he recommends concrete analysis of the material forces and social relations of production and their determination at a particular historical moment. Unlike in the simple empiricist assumption of correspondence between abstract concepts and concrete reality or in an idealist's perception of transcendent Ideas as its subject, society has no author other than people. Hence, Marx (1973, 81) starts with 'individuals producing in society', considered via scrutiny of the capitalist mode of production in relation to its determining moments in a complex unity where simple and plain bourgeois categories are rendered as more concrete concepts.

In *Grundrisse*, Marx (1973, 265) famously says: 'Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand.' This view puts emphasis on the social relations seen as a historical process unfolding in the course of time, which comes out in the notion of the articulated whole of society wherein the material relations of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption take place. Moreover, Marx states that 'there are no slaves and no citizens' (*ibid*.) outside the constitutive social relations of production wherein individuals reproduce themselves and the conditions of their existence as subjects. Marx's aim with *Capital* was to make explicit the laws and mechanisms of the capitalist mode of production by tracing their appearance

gives "structure" (p. 105) and "order" (p. 108).' Marx's intention in using the conceptual metaphor is hence open for debate.

with regard to their historical change and development by using the categories of political economics relationally in terms of social science.[21]

In a well-known and frequently debated passage from the third volume of *Capital* (see Thomas & Reuten 2013), 'the rate of profit has a tendency to fall', which means that exploitation of the labour force is a necessary condition for the economic growth of the capitalist economy.[22] If taken literally, the economic appears as an expressive totality articulating hidden structural causes such as the law of capital accumulation taken as a model of dynamics in which the capitalists and labourers are subject to the capitalist mode of production. According to some adversaries, Marx's explanations are formal and make sense only through the abstract economic categories wherein society stands for a totality wherein the dialectical form and function of concepts gain power over their content. This caveat in the 'capital-logic' often goes unheeded, and interpretations follow an economist and vulgar-Marxist line of thinking that does not take account of Marx's eloquent depiction of society as a 'complex articulated whole' in line with structural-Marxist thinking. This image of society as an 'organic whole' or 'the body' consisting of the limbs of the social system was adopted from Marx, who used the notion of *Gliederung*, with reference to the German word for a limb. Althusser, however, adapted the concept as articulation in his vocabulary and used the term for the organisation of the various levels of a social formation as 'the articulation of the limbs of the social system'. In this context, articulation is not a theoretical but a methodological concept, applied for asserting a relational approach to social-formation structuring in relations of dominance and subordination.

[21] For Marx, work is a condition of human life and a feature common to all forms of society. Marx was interested in human labour in the form of commodity. In the capitalist mode of production, the worker uses labour power to produce commodities. At the same time, labour power is a commodity used in production, which is sold to a capitalist for a wage. The amount of labour that is socially necessary for the production of commodities (including workers' labour power) determines the value of that labour. Although human labour is increasingly 'immaterial' and 'affective', with the commodities produced being information and services, the exchange of labour power for a wage still (re)produces the relations of production and the contradictions in a complex and articulated whole of society (i.e., *Gliederung*).

[22] For Marx, innovations and competition lead to a relative decrease in 'living labour' relative to vampire-like 'dead labour' in the form of capital. The law-like 'tendency of the rate of profit to fall' in a process of capitalist accumulation was a hypothesis that Marx defined as 'the most important law of political economy' in his *Grundrisse*. In the third volume of *Capital*, Marx elaborated on the hypothesis. Note that in the capitalist mode of production the rate of profit has a tendency to fall, in a law-like trend indicating a conjunctural inclination to economic crisis.

In this respect, Marx terms society an 'articulated hierarchy' (the *Gliederung*), a phrase Althusser translates as 'organic hierarchized whole' (Hall 1980b, 40). Next, I consider Althusser's adaptation of the conceptual metaphor 'society is an articulated whole' into the idea of a social formation that is structured in relation to its various instances, such as the political, ideological, and economic, with the last of these determining 'in the last instance' the articulation of its structure.

4.2 Althusser and the Structure Articulated in Dominance

With the structuralist vogue of the mid-1960s, the structural-Marxist line of thought brought into fashion Marx's metaphor of society as an edifice whose upper storeys rest on its foundation (i.e., a topographical image of base and superstructure). In this respect, Althusser elicited a return to Marx through his writings and lectures in philosophy at Paris's École normale supérieure as a member and critic of the French Communist Party. In his reading, Althusser took Marx's notion of society as a 'complex structured whole' further, offering a more contemporary understanding, which I will discuss in this section of the chapter. Althusser's 'epistemological break' in Marxist theory took place on rigorously established theoretical grounds. Structural Marxism entailed him adopting a certain distance from both the PCF and the structuralist movement. This led eventually to critical self-evaluation of earlier theoretical writings he produced, from the 1960s.

Althusser's above-mentioned essays in *For Marx* (1965/1969) and *Reading Capital* (1965/1970) consist of Marx's theoretical interventions in the Hegelian dialectics of 'a simple original unity which develops within itself by virtue of its negativity' – which he terms a 'negation of the negation' wherein the differences eventually become 'indifferent' (Althusser 1963/1969, 197–203). Althusser argued against this totality-oriented Hegelian view by stating that historical materialism is a model for Marxist science that breaks epistemologically with all of the preceding ideological (i.e., bourgeois) forms thence denounced as humanist or idealist. Althusser's targets are the speculative and abstract ideas from which ideological philosophies appropriate their objects of knowledge; that is, he strove to scrutinise their concepts in respect of Marx's theoretical practice (*ibid*., 185–186). For knowledge of a given subject to be obtained, the objects are translated in this respect into an 'articulated combination [*Gliederung*]' produced in

knowledge for epistemological appropriation of the 'complex structured whole' of bourgeois society in reference to Marx's *Grundrisse* (cited in Althusser 1970, 48):

> 'It is not a matter of the connexion established historically between the economic relations in the succession of different forms of society. Still less of their order of succession 'in the Idea' (Proudhon) (a nebulous conception of historical movement). But of their articulated combination (*Gliederung*) within modern bourgeois society'

Althusser argued that knowledge of society should be produced systematically in respect of scientific practice altering ideology as 'the "lived" relation between men and their world' by using a dialectical method. Althusser (1962/1969, 94–95) gave a practical example of this method through Lenin's theses on the Russian Revolution in 1917. At that time, Russia was the most backward part of Europe and its weakest link in a capitalist chain manifesting massive contradiction between a developed mode of production and a feudal state that allowed the proprietors to exploit the serfs. Lenin, and radical followers of his such as Mao Zedong, became involved in dialectical materialism in its practical form because of accumulation of internal contradictions and their collapse in a revolutionary rupture. These contradictions, however, adhere to the laws of the unconscious rather than those of the economic, according to Althusser (*ibid*.).

Althusser (1964/1969) adopted notions such as that of overdetermination of contradictions in his 'symptomatic reading' of Marx's texts in light of Lacan's return to Freud's psychoanalysis. In his 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' (1969/1970), ideological interpellations articulate people as the subjects of an ideological discourse. This process takes place insofar as an ideological discourse is able to recruit its subjects by addressing people in the manner of the above-mentioned police officer (i.e., voice of authority) shouting 'Hey, you there!' in the street. This perlocutionary act by a representative of the law is an ideological call that hails a subject if one stops and turns round upon recognising oneself as the subject of this enunciation. In this respect, subjects of all ideology are constituted in a similar manner with hailing or interpellating them in an ideological discourse (*ibid*., 173). In time of crisis, the ideological elements can fuse into 'a ruptural unity' by means of condensation that leads to dissolution of the dominant ideological discourse, which gives way to the rise or fall of particular political ideologies (e.g., Marxism-Leninism) as a resolution, but Althusser's theory was not a matter of consolidating political ideology in the project to overcome the state apparatus and overturn state capitalist relations.

Althusser (1963/1969, 205) suggests that the 'principal contradiction' between the forces and relations of production in the capitalist mode of production articulates with the secondary contradictions. This conjunction forms the existing conditions of an articulated system wherein political and ideological shifts take place. With this framework, Althusser provided new ways to understand the capitalist mode of production, by criticising the vulgar materialist communists for reductionism in which the entire structure of society turns into a series of ideological and dogmatic beliefs. In place of the same contradiction being everywhere (communism) or nowhere (idealism), contradictions are uneven and overdetermined with one another. For instance, Althusser (*ibid*., 211–212) states that the contradiction between capital and labour becomes secondary through its displacement beneath several other contradictions. The contradictions thus determine each other and the first comes into being only through the secondary ones, which can fuse or condense into a crisis and conflicts. At the same time, importantly, secondary contradictions underdetermine the primary contradiction. Because the latter does not stand out as the one 'spectator a head taller than the others in the grandstand at the stadium' and never manifests itself in a pure form, revolution by the proletariat does not immediately follow from the class struggle (*ibid*., 201).

Contradictions gain force through their articulation within their contexts where 'each contradiction reflects […] the complex whole in which it exists' (*ibid*., 207–208). In this way, the contradictory elements of the social system relate to one another through overdetermination and underdetermination, which articulate the social formation as a complex and structured system filled with contradictions and struggle. It follows that contradictions take place in this complex whole of society, which has 'the unity of a structure articulated in dominance' (*ibid*., 202). Althusser (*ibid*., 207) speaks of uneven relations between the economic, political, and ideological instances as overdetermined in relation to this complex whole. Hence, the causal relations among the three levels seem neither mechanical nor expressive. Instead, the economic determines which of the other instances is dominant at a particular time. Moreover, the economic instance never takes an ultimate place as 'the last resort', on account of the political and ideological, which have their own effects and relatively independent conditions of existence, termed by Althusser 'the structural causality' as an effect of this articulated whole (the *Gliederung*) in its parts that are understood in relation to each other.

In Althusser's defence for his state doctorate (1975/1976, 177), he defined this point further by elaborating on the structuralist imagery via Marx's metaphor of

the base and superstructure, thereby also defending his earlier theoretical writings:

> [T]he determination in the last instance by the economic base can only be grasped within a differentiated, therefore complex and articulated whole (the 'Gliederung'), in which the determination in the last instance fixes the real difference of the other instances, their relative autonomy and their own mode of reacting on the base itself.

In the structural-Marxist line of thought, society is seen as a 'complex and articulated whole' (i.e., *Gliederung*) that consists of the political and ideological instances built on the economic base. The economic determines the order of other instances within the social formation, which compose its relatively autonomous superstructure. Unlike in the vulgar materialist interpretations of this relationship, the ideological and political do not reduce to the economic, or *vice versa*; the economic only assigns their position in the social formation. Consequently, society is not an expressive totality the parts of which realise some fundamental principles. Society is conceived of metaphorically as a 'structure articulated in dominance' that is made up of the relatively independent instances that articulate with one another. This is not an idealistic but a materialist conception of society in terms of Marxist critique of ideology. Nevertheless, the identity of the notion of articulation has changed in practice, in such a manner that the origins of the concept in structural-Marxist theory disappeared.

A major line in the critique of Althusserianism involved the abstract theory that built on the distinction between Marxist science (historical materialism) and Marxist philosophy (dialectical materialism), where the task for the latter was to prevent ideology from penetrating the scientific practice of the former (Thomas 2009, 4). Formally, the distinction was the same as in the Stalinist form of dialectical materialism ('Diamat'), which was an orthodox philosophical doctrine in the communist movement (*ibid*., 386). However, Althusserian structural Marxism levelled searing criticism at communism and its opponents, Marxist humanists who returned to Marx's early philosophical writings. Althusser's theoretical 'anti-humanism' was not scientific practice for post-Stalinists but a struggle in theory to recognise the political effects of the ideological. According to one political theoretician, Laclau (1977, 101–102), the most important contribution of Althusser was to consider ideology in practice as an interpellation of the subjects. Decisively, this part of the structural-Marxist paradigm, which was adapted to discourse theory, has prevailed, while the Marxist concept of the mode of production has been excised from sociological discussions.

The objective with the structural-Marxist theory of articulation is to show either the links between individual instances within the social formation or the articulation of modes of production. In 'Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America', the first article in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, Laclau (1971/1977) proceeded from the 'restricted' concept of the mode of production (Wolpe 1980, 6–15). According to Laclau (1977, 34), the mode of production consists of the articulation of the possession of the means of production, which is the pivotal element, a form of appropriation of the surplus, and the development of the division of labour and productive forces. Laclau introduced the concept of articulation first in relation to the discussion of the articulation of modes of production, in which connection he criticised Frank's dependency theory and the sociology of development in the context of Latin America. Frank and his colleagues in the Salvador Allende administration claimed that Latin America has been capitalist since its colonisation. Laclau challenged Frank's conception of capitalism as a singular world-system by claiming that the relations of production in Latin America comprised feudal elements just as much.

In the literature on articulation of modes of production, structural Marxists such as Terray, Meillassoux, Rey, Balibar, Poulantzas, and Charles Bettelheim (see Wolpe 1980, 6) argued that the capitalist mode of production does not evolve mechanistically or evolutionarily from the pre-capitalist forms, nor does it necessarily dissolve or transcend them. Instead, they gain structure in relation to each other, with the concept of articulation coming in here (Foster-Carter 1978, 51). However, in his conception of articulation, Laclau deviates from the structural-Marxist paradigm. In re-evaluating Poulantzas's *Political Power and Social Classes* (1973/1975), Laclau posits himself as taking a critical stance to the conceptual metaphor of articulation wherein 'society is an articulated whole' composed of the various instances of the social formation. According to Poulantzas (*ibid*.), 'what distinguishes one mode of production from another […] is the particular form of articulation maintained by its levels'. Laclau (1977, 72–73) says that the starting point in Althusserianism is 'the economic, political and ideological instances, which are present in all modes of production and whose articulation constitutes the specificity of that mode'. In short, Laclau asks why there are only these instances and not others, along with how the articulation of the specific instances takes place in practice. The answer he received to the first question was silence, and the reply to the second was made by way of metaphors in relation to the others 'in the realm of complete mythology' (*ibid*.).

Considering the critique of Althusserianism, I next address the ensuing shift to 'the Gramscian moment' (see Thomas 2008).

4.3 Ideology, Politics, and the Struggle for Hegemony

For Althusser, Marxist-Leninist doctrine underestimated the ideological, political, and cultural mechanisms that structure 'the economic' and society as a complex articulated whole. In his words, one 'can only think of Gramsci', who developed a 'theory of the particular essence of the specific elements of the superstructure' (Althusser 1962/2005, 114).[23] Strivings for theoretically informed political practice in Marxism did not leave the economic realm until publication of the transcripts on cultural and political hegemony in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, written in 1929–35 and published in 1948–51 (the first edition in English was released in 1971).

Gramsci, born in 1891, was a political journalist and incarcerated leader of the Communist Party in Italy (PCI) who expressed opposition to Benito Mussolini's fascist regime until his death, in 1937. Lenin was among the politicians from whom Gramsci drew upon for his practice. Gramsci employed Lenin's idea of hegemony for the first time when taking part in a debate on the workers' movement with which he became involved in the city of Turin. Gramsci wrote about

> the question of the hegemony of the proletariat: i.e. of the social basis of the proletarian dictatorship and of the workers' State. The proletariat can become the leading and the dominant class to the extent that it succeeds in creating a system of class alliances which allows it to mobilize the majority of the working

[23] 'In the [Marx's] use of 1859 it appears in almost conscious metaphor: 'the economic structure of society—the real foundation (*die reale Basis*), on which rises (*erhebt*) a legal and political superstructure (*Überbau*)'. It is replaced, later in the argument, by 'the economic foundation' (*ökonomische Grundlage*). The continuity of meaning is relatively clear, but the variation of terms for one part of the relationship ('forms of property, social conditions of existence'; 'economic structure of society'; 'real basis'; 'real foundation'; *Basis; Grundlage*) is not matched by explicit variation of the other term of the relationship, though the actual signification of this term (Uberbau; superstructure) is, as we have seen, variable. It is part of the complexity of the subsequent argument that the term rendered in English explication (probably first by Engels) as 'base' is rendered in other languages in significant variations (in French usually as infrastructure, in Italian as *struttura*, and so on, with some complicating effects on the substance of the argument).' (Williams 1977, 76.)

> population against capitalism and the bourgeois State […], this means to the extent that it succeeds in gaining the consent of the broad peasant masses.

In this passage from 'Some Aspects of the Southern Question', from 1926, Gramsci (1978, 443) uses the notion of hegemony as applied by Lenin. In this respect, hegemony refers to the domination of one class over another – that is, 'the proletariat hegemony over the bourgeoisie'. Here, the task for the progressive Italian working class is to organise a revolutionary mass movement against the state in a country whose masses are unevenly divided between the agricultural 'peasant' south and the industrialised and 'bourgeois' north. For the hegemony of the bourgeoisie to be contested, a class alliance with the peasants is necessary if the working class are to be able to overcome the state apparatus. At this point, Gramsci relies on the idea of political action according to which it is possible to influence the course of history in relation to the prevailing circumstances of the day.

In *Selections from the Political Writings* (1916–26), Gramsci (1978) was not yet able to proceed beyond dialectical materialism, wherein the antagonistic production relations constitute the categories for all social actors, such as classes. In other words, the actors' identity articulates in a fixed manner such that the classes derive their politics and ideology strictly from the economic foundation. With *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1929–35), hegemony has become a concrete and historically specific moment (Gramsci 1971, 204–205). Hegemony is constituted in accordance with the prevailing 'relation of forces' at the level of the material forces of production and in relation to the social and political organisation of social actors as classes. Before a class can become hegemonic, however, it is necessary for the people to be conscious of their unity, which can lead to a sense of solidarity that extends beyond their narrowly confined 'economic-corporative' interests in a labour union, for example. Therefore, no social relation or law of the economic guarantees a 'collective will' as opposed to individuals' will and class consciousness.

In *Prison Notebooks*, hegemony arises in a 'war of position'. It emerges at the fronts of civil society by way of prolonged sieges to articulate the subordinate groups into a dominant historical bloc. This strategy pointed to a new lesson for the workers' movement. It also differed from the revolutionary and more traditional 'war of manoeuvre' against the 'bourgeois' state and its ideological apparatus through *blitzkrieg* carried out to occupy its territory. The struggle for hegemony opens a space for the intellectual and moral reforms by means of which it is possible to articulate a wide range of contradictions to alter the power

relations. In this manner, hegemony builds on actors' ability to articulate their worldview such that it contains elements that would appear to be real in the people's everyday life. This commonly shared understanding is 'common sense' (*senso commune*) by means of which the dispersed and fragmented ideological elements can articulate into unity with no *a priori* attachment to classes.

In this line of thought, the term 'practice' refers to the social and political action through which philosophy emerges from a practical social activity as a theoretical practice and self-reflective political action – a 'philosophy of praxis'. In Gramsci's (1971, 190–195) account on hegemony, the aim is to build consent constituted via the 'ethico-political' cultural sphere through the agency of 'organic intellectuals' doing epistemic work in educating the people, organising them, and leading them to form a 'historical bloc' (*en bloc*, a whole) built on its relative independence from the economic base. In this respect, Gramsci draws forth a Hegelian idea of Benedetto Croce whose 'dialectic of distincts' (*ibid*., 193) introduced 'the principle whereby two or more concepts or categories may be distinguished from one another while […] circulating together under a higher unity' (*ibid*., 407, Note 4, cited in Weber 1994, 619). A distinction is formed thus between a dialectic of unity and difference through considering them in respect of the idea of the whole of society. In Italy, Catholicism, for instance, organised the 'national-popular' cultural sphere in a way that did not leave space for its political rearticulation until the rise of Fascism, which fused the contradictions of this social formation into a revolutionary rupture. In this respect, religious ideologies offer material for hegemonic struggles, which inform political articulations for purposes of achieving consent. Here, a thoroughly Gramscian emphasis on political action is evident.

In the 1920s, it seemed plausible that the socialist revolution of the proletariat would reach the advanced capitalist societies on behalf of which Gramsci was fighting alongside the *avant-garde* of the working class. Yet such a proletarian moment never arrived. In its stead, Gramsci had to face a historical conjuncture wherein the Right gained its moment in the form of Fascism. The lesson to be learnt from this disillusionment was that history does not follow the Marxist-Leninist theory of class struggle. Instead, the outcomes of such struggles are rather unpredictable and contingent (see Hall 1987). Gramsci saw this first-hand, experiencing it in both theory and practice. He developed the political role of organic intellectual and had a profound influence on Marxist philosophy, its critique, and the politics of the New Left. Political theorist Laclau was the one to

draw on the work of Gramsci to take another look at a Marxist theory of ideology and class struggle in terms of discourse theory.

In *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (1977), Laclau put emphasis on political and discursive practices such as 'articulation' in relation to the study of populism in Latin America.[24] Laclau (*ibid*., 176) claimed that political ideologies are not populist in the same sense that they are, for instance, 'conservatist, liberalist or socialist'. They act as the articulating principles whereby popular-democratic interpellations articulate dominated classes and portions of the dominant class as 'the people' against the power bloc (ibid., 173–174). For hegemony to take place, political ideologies require popular-democratic interpellation wherein subjects hail the people in a domain of ideological and political struggle for hegemony. Various political ideologies refer to the people in order to gain legitimacy and appear democratic. This is typical. It makes them not populist but 'a peculiar form of articulation of the popular-democratic interpellations […] with respect to the dominant ideology' (Laclau 1977, 172–173), which is antagonistic.

Laclau (1977, 107–108) conceives of populism in relation to the specific contradictions that take place because of the capitalist mode of production articulating its subjects with reference to class and identifying them then as the people against the power bloc. Even though classes are constituted at the level of these antagonistic production relations, other subject positions are overdetermined by these relations at the level of the social formation that is a domain of popular-democratic interpellations. For Laclau, articulation of principles of an ideological discourse takes place on the basis of the class contradiction, yet other contradictions cannot be reduced to such principles. Hence, all political ideologies are transformed in ideological and political struggles for hegemony, wherein their elements are articulated or disarticulated by constituting 'the people' with regard to social and political action. It is only when a class subject is able to articulate the ideological elements of this discourse that hegemony comes about.

[24] An Argentine-born political theorist, Laclau was a member of the Socialist Party and a political activist at the University of Buenos Aires until he moved to England, in 1968. Politically and ideologically, Peronism influenced his theory of populism the most. According to him (Laclau 1977, 176), '[n]o other Latin American populist movement […] achieved such success in its attempt to transform itself into the common denominator ["the people"]'. Experiences from political struggles in Latin America affected his post-structuralist and post-Marxist theoretical reading, an epistemological break from Marxism to discourse theory as he stated in an interview in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (see Critchley & Marchart 2004).

It follows that nationalism (*ibid*., 160), for example, has no specific class connotation. It is a result of the articulation of different social forces, such as liberals, conservatives, and/or communists. They may or may not be able to effectively articulate ideological elements such as democracy, liberty, and the state, in accordance with their own premises that make sense for the subjects at the present historical moment. With regard to all ideological discourse, ideological and political struggles for hegemony take place through the processes of articulation. Accordingly, a class is hegemonic only insofar as it manages to articulate its own worldview or ideology into a dominant ideological discourse because of antagonistic social relations that now have faded into mere political and ideological disputes. At the same time, the dominated classes such as the working class and the fragments of dominant classes attempt to rearticulate these differences into antagonisms by using populist argumentation.

In short, populism occurs in antagonistic relation to a dominant ideological discourse. For Laclau (1977), an ideological discourse has no necessary 'class belonging'. Instead of reduction of its constituent elements to the antagonistic production relations, it occurs because of contingent links that have 'no necessary correspondence' with the economic. Moreover, the 'ideological 'elements' taken in isolation have no necessary class connotation, which means that 'this connotation is only the result of the articulation of those elements in a concrete ideological discourse' (Laclau 1977, 99). In this respect, several of its contradictory elements articulate discursively, with not all of these having already become inscribed in ideology 'as if they were political number-plates worn by social classes on their backs' (Poulantzas 1975, 202). Laclau (1977), in particular, argued that 'ideological elements have no necessary "class belonging" and that class interests are contingent articulations showcasing a link which is said to have "no necessary correspondence" to "the economic"' (Laclau 1977, 159–161:

> Let us abandon the reductionist assumption and define classes as the poles of antagonistic production relations which have no *necessary* form of existence at the ideological and political levels. Let us assert, at the same time, the determination in the last instance of historical processes by the relations of production, that is to say, by classes […]. *It is no longer possible to think of the existence of classes, at the ideological and political levels, by way of a process of reduction*. […] [Therefore] it is necessary to conclude that *classes exist at the ideological and political level in a process of articulation and not of reduction*.

According to Hall (cited in Grossberg 1986a, 53), making reference to this passage, 'articulation, as I use it, has been developed by Laclau, in his book

Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory'.[25] Hall considers the social formations and contradictions in relation to categories such as class and ethnicity. They offer cultural scripts in line with which various actors can get involved in battles over their structural positions, which are overdetermined by their sociocultural understanding of the prevailing situation in which they live. In Hall's analysis of racism (Hall 1980b, 33), the controversy over the 'articulation of modes of production' created an opening for a theoretical framework covering historically specific social formations wherein 'race' became the 'articulating principle' of the whole structure of society as in the cautionary example of apartheid in South Africa. For Hall as a cultural theorist, the particular forms of racism are thus always historically specific and appear in domestic contexts. Although racism operates through a racial differentiation that is related to class exploitation, this problem cannot be reduced to class struggle or antagonistic production relations alone. Hall's analysis described 'race' as a dominant articulating principle of the discursive relations between capital and labour. His view of articulation as 'unity-in-difference' emphasised the relative autonomy of these struggles and their overdetermination in time and space (Hall 1985, 68–69).

This opens up a discursive space for the struggle for hegemony, where the outcomes of that struggle need not entail any certain result for any concrete battle pertaining to sex, class, and race, for example. This has been described as 'Marxism without guarantees'. As an alternative to Marx's standpoint on ideology as false consciousness (see Larrain 1991), ideology structures fragmentary and contradictory elements into an ideological discourse that exerts an effect on the people's common-sense conceptions. An ideological discourse takes place through articulation of the signifying chains to rearticulate and disarticulate their meanings. In this respect, discourse-based theories criticise the structural-Marxist way of thinking since it 'yokes together' a totality in connection with the whole structure of society in terms of class struggle. Hall (*ibid*., 195, 103) gives weight to ideology as 'the systems of representation' and to those systems' relative autonomy from the economic and overdetermination in time and space. This opens room for social and political actions through which the outcome of social struggles does not come into place in isolation from any

[25] Hall says: 'His argument there is that the political connotation of ideological elements has no necessary belongingness, and thus, we need to think the contingent, the non-necessary, connection between different practices – between ideology and social forces, and between different elements within ideology, and between different social groups composing a social movement, etc. He uses the notion of articulation to break with the necessetarian [*sic*] and reductionist logic which has dogged the classical marxist theory of ideology.'

discursive field. It also means that the practice of articulation has its limits with regard to historical specificity. In this respect, the idea of no necessary correspondence points to the fact that there is no guarantee that things are going to articulate with each other. Articulatory practices are always discursive, yet this does not mean that they are nothing but language. I will address this further in subsequent chapters.

In an interview with Grossberg (1986a, 53), who was his student and then colleague, Hall elucidated his reasons for using the concept of articulation:

> An articulation is […] the form of the connection that *can* make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. You have to ask, under what circumstances *can* a connection be forged or made?

A few moments later, Hall (*ibid*., 55) elaborated on this point by saying that

> it is the articulation, the non-necessary link, between a social force which is making itself, and the ideology or conceptions of the world which makes intelligible the process they are going through, which begins to bring onto the historical stage a new social position and political position, a new set of social and political subjects.

A case in point can be found in Hall's analyses of Thatcherite ideology, which made sense of hegemonic struggles that took place at a specific politico-historical conjuncture. All ideology is realised through discursive practices that represent the domain of articulations by constraining and excluding other possible views and conceptions that establish 'regimes of truth'. In consequence, ideology is not a matter of false consciousness and considering people to be cultural dupes but, rather, a way 'to think how an ideology empowers people, enabling them to begin to make some sense […] of their historical situation' (Hall, cited in Grossberg 1986a, 53). This serves as a point of departure for 'Marxism without guarantees'. In this respect, Hall (1986b, 29) means with his use of the term 'ideology' 'the mental framework […] which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of […] the way society works'. The imaginary relation in which people live day-to-day life appears real, and it is a source of articulations that retain their own identity while acting together – not as an immediate unity but as connections, or links, which are not necessarily given (but do require) their own specific terms and conditions of existence.

From the materialist perspective on the relations between the base and superstructure, everything in the structured whole of society articulates with the

economic. As a substitute for this 'necessary correspondence', Hall (1985, 94–95) suggests 'no necessary correspondence' among the ideology of a class, its politics, and socioeconomic position, for instance. This notion does not mean inversion of the former position, as in 'necessary non-correspondence' grasped in a discursive field of floating signifiers wherein nothing ever connects with anything else. Especially since the late 1990s, social scientists have been misreading Hall's Althusserian works as post-Marxist discourse theory. Hall (1980b, 43) holds on to the economic as a necessary but not sufficient condition in his explanation of various forms of racism as being discursive constructions without falling into the trap of reductionism. In addition, Hall called for historical specificity. Instead of dealing with the ideological and political separately from the economic, which is characteristic of the discourse theorists' approach, Hall's 'no necessary correspondence' among the various instances of the social formation is applied with regard to articulations.

Hall made it possible to think about the practices that structure the complex whole of society in cultural terms. Furthermore, with reference to articulation, specific linkages give form to various contradictions. His discussion points to the ways in which the specific practices may be related or do not relate with one another:

> Under the influence of Althusser, Hall […] argued that the conception of the social formation as a 'structured totality' made it possible to understand 'how specific practices (articulated around contradictions which do not arise in the same way, at the same point, in the same moment), can nevertheless be brought together.' (Dworkin 1997, 153)

The structural-Marxist notion of the social formation being structured as 'unity-in-difference' is expressed in respect of the relative autonomy of social practices – that is to say, because of articulation. On one hand, Hall (1985, 94) argues against an economist reading of the Marxist metaphor of 'base and superstructure', finding that there is no necessary correspondence between the economic base and political and ideological superstructures. This means that there is no guarantee that the ideology of the proletariat, for example, corresponds to or deviates from the subordinate position of a worker in the capitalist relations of production. The social formation is a complex unity articulated out of differences, one that does not reduce to the class conflict between capitalists and proletariat. On the other hand, complexity does not mean an endless sliding of the signifier of the sort Lacanian and Foucauldian discourse theorists tend to emphasise, according to Hall (*ibid*., 93). With the assertion that 'nothing really connects with

anything else', it may seem that Marxists, for instance, associate everything with 'the economic', not only as a necessary but also as a sufficient condition for explaining all social conflicts with reference to the class struggle (*ibid*., 93–94). Althusser contested such causal explanations by means of his structural notion of 'difference in complex unity'. This was a new way of thinking about determination. According to Hall (*ibid*.), ideology weaves (or 'quilts') the differences into a complex unity with reference to articulation. If there is a sliding of the signifier, there are also differences, which have to articulate in one way or another to form meanings. In articulation, elements keep their identity while holding together not as essentially the same but as 'distinctions within a unity' (*ibid*.).

Instead, Grossberg (1992, 54) states in his cultural theory that draws from post-structuralism:

> Articulation is the production of identity on top of difference, of unities out of fragments, of structures across practices […]. Articulation is the construction of one set of relations out of another […]. Articulation is a continuous struggle to reposition practices within a shifting field of forces, to redefine the possibilities of life by redefining the field of relations – the context – within which a practice is located […]. Articulation is both the practice of history and its critical reconstruction, displacement and renewal.

In stitching up distinctive identities, fragments, and structures out of bits and pieces, there are no necessary correspondences in their articulation to a particular position or to a particular set of experiences. In fact, it appears that, in principle, anything articulates with anything else. This gives the concept a potentially unlimited range of reference. In order for various connections to be made and remade in practice, some linkages are broken for the creation of new ones. This leads to a field of action that goes beyond the economic to the prevailing conjunctures in which practices are located and changed. The process also includes articulate individuals who are active in contexts that create the circumstances in which history and action take place.

Building on the discourse-theoretical approach and speculative philosophy, Grossberg (*ibid*., 52–61) describes the lines and breaks between practices and their effects as being real: a practice is not found where it is used but, instead, located at the site of its effects. This means that the relations and connections are contingent and made repeatedly. This approach is called 'radical contextualism' because of its commitments to 'relationality' and 'contextuality', which are considered a necessary condition for understanding 'what is going on' in

contemporary conjunctures. This relational or contextual approach is embodied in the concept of articulation, which characterises 'the analytic practice of cultural studies' (Grossberg 2010, 21). It is clear that articulation is one of the central building blocks of cultural studies, where it acts as 'a sign of avoiding reduction' (see Chen, cited in Slack 1996). Scholars of cultural studies have engaged in reflexive reassessment of 'the theory of articulation', from which the concept has reached new audiences.

4.4 Conclusion

Marx's notion of society as a hierarchical and articulated whole (*Gliederung*) can be summed up as 'unity-in-difference' (Hall 1985): production, consumption, distribution, and circulation form a 'complex unity, structured in dominance'. Moreover, in the conception of 'determination in the last instance by the economic', the economic determines only which of the other instances of the social formation is the dominant articulating principle at the time. This created a new problematic for cultural and political analyses, which linked the imageries of society and social action with concepts such as ideology and hegemony (see Hall 1988, 53). In Hall's reading of Marx, the articulated, hierarchized, or systematic combination arranges the complex relations among production, circulation, exchange, and consumption – that is, 'the members of a totality, distinctions within a unity', in which the production of capital is dominant (Marx 1973, 99). In this respect, articulation is not a reductionist concept wherein the economic gives expression to other instances of the social formation, such as politics and ideology. Instead, in the case of social formations, struggles for hegemony take place in the processes of articulation by discursive and political means (Laclau 1977, 158–161).

In the structural-Marxist line of thought, theorising about difference through the concept of articulation does not mean an endless slide of the signifier under the signified as in discourse theory. In struggles for hegemony, in turn, the differences are articulated into a chain of equivalences by ideological means (Hall 1985, 92–93). The relational approach puts emphasis on there being no necessary correspondences among the various instances of the social formation. Discourse theorists approach social formations in relation to their absolute autonomy and the 'necessary non-correspondence' – i.e., with 'a conception of difference

without a conception of articulation' (Hall 1985, 53). The concept of articulation as 'unity-in-difference' builds on the notion of 'no necessary correspondence' between the various instances of the social formation. With reference to their relative autonomy and 'no necessary correspondence' (that is, their articulation), the social formation is not a totality expressing the economic in every instance nor manifesting class contradiction all the time, even if the economic and class conflict are both important aspects of it. In order to understand the 'epistemic shift' in structural-Marxist thought and in its critique, I next examine structural linguistics and post-structuralist criticism, in which language is structured as playing of games in a domain of articulations.

In structuralism, language is a system of differences wherein the signs reflect the structural linkages between the signifiers and the signified. Structuralists considered language to be an unconscious structure that overdetermines the action of individuals in such a manner that speaking subjects are thereby constituted. That discussion leads me to post-Marxist discourse theory, wherein articulation is action of individuals that occurs in a discursive field in a struggle for hegemony. Post-Marxist discourse theory is a way of 'politicising' against the reductionist form of Marxist thought, but it also legitimates some of the attendant Althusserian and Lacanian categories from Lenin and Freud, such as contradictions and overdetermination, whose operations parallel language. Hence, society operates in 'a domain of articulations', relationally as a language does. Therefore, the next conceptual metaphor of articulation that I address is 'social action is language', which was used first a century ago in structuralism and then 50 years later in its post-structuralist critique.

5 The Conceptual Metaphor 'Social Action Is Language'

One of the most commonly used metaphors applied in social science to explicate language involves an analogy with games, associated with analytical philosophers such as Wittgenstein. In this imagery, language is like playing a game. In his example of a make-believe builder's language, words such as 'blocks', 'pillars', 'slabs', and 'beams' are the names of the objects. In Wittgenstein's language-game (Ger. *Sprachspiel*), a builder teaches an assistant names related to an object to enable bringing an object that corresponds to the master's call. The language-game has a material aspect in the form of 'building blocks' that are not only linguistic phenomena. In other words, the materiality of objects is a decisive part of the language-game that post-Marxist discourse theorists call a discourse (Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001, 108). Discourse builds a regularity in a dispersion of its constitutive elements, according to Foucauldian discourse theory, which puts emphasis on the practices of language usage in a manner similar to that of speech-act theorists. In addition, Foucault considered non-discursive practices, outside language. Such a notion of using language as a discursive practice diverges from that of language as a system of differences consisting of signs, the approach employed in structural linguistics.

An analogy with games explicates words and their usage and meaning by comparing and contrasting them metaphorically to other things, such as playing a game of chess. From the structuralist standpoint, the discussion about the usages of words and their meaning in language is an external issue 'while everything having to do with its system and rules' (Harris 1998, 22) is an internal matter in structuralist terms. This means that, in order to explain the meaning of a word, as in the history of ideas, one also has to make sense of the language that sets rules for its usages. Hence, language is similar to a game in the sense that both are 'self-contained' (*ibid*., 24). In a game of chess, it is not the chess piece as such that matters but its differential function (i.e., value) in relation to other chessmen, which confers its distinctive character on the chessboard (Saussure 1959, 110). In a similar manner, a word derives its meaning in contrast to other terms used

systematically in language on the basis of the conventional rules of this system. Unlike chess, however, language changes its rules historically in accordance with individual moves that can have contingent and unexpected consequences for the elements of this system as a whole (*ibid*., 88–89).

Instead of the irony of opposites, wherein the structures and actors stand dialectically for each other, the linguistic trope for structuralism is the metaphor. In the broadest sense, the structuralists' metaphor extends to any system of meanings – for instance, marriage rules and systems of kinship. Historically, structuralism came after phenomenology, criticising approaches that build on action theory, wherein interpretation of subjective meanings were focused on the individuals and understanding of their subjective 'life-world'. After World War II, phenomenology gave way to the existentialist movement in France (Dosse 1997, 5, 368). Its leading figure was the Marxist intellectual Jean-Paul Sartre, for whom 'existence precedes essence' in a form of becoming. From this perspective, people are the products of their actions in the situation in which they live, which does not reduce to the material circumstances. The approach also takes account of the actions and experiences of individuals in reference to the philosophical idealism that structuralists and Marxists had been criticising. Philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty advanced existentialism towards understanding of the human mind, which inspired a new generation of young philosophers, such as Foucault. Instead of Merleau-Ponty, who died young, the father figure for most structuralists was a structural anthropologist of the same age, Lévi-Strauss, for whom the social world was made out of the symbols and signs that appear to be real and from the grammar and syntax through which they gain function (see Brown 1987b, 101; see also Dosse 1997a, 23).

Phenomenologists tend to think that actors constitute the social reality through language as they speak in terms of their intentional and meaningful social action (*ibid*., 56). In France in the 1950s, phenomenology was the dominant approach until structuralism entered the vogue. Social anthropologists and psychoanalysts adopted the structuralist paradigm from linguistics. At the same time, however, many French intellectuals did not want to identify with structuralism and rejected the label. Structuralism encompassed various, quite different approaches that shared a common interest in structures like language. Behind this lie numerous institutional factors, which I address next. For the discussion below, structuralism and its discourse-theoretical critique are a fitting place to begin. After that, I continue by considering Laclau and Mouffe's deconstruction of Marxism with respect to Gramsci's theory of hegemony coupled with Lacanian psychoanalysis,

which developed into discourse theory and political analysis in the tradition of the Essex School, a stream of post-Marxist thought that places emphasis on political articulations.

5.1 Language As a Play of Differences

Structural linguistics is now an outmoded discipline, but it was fashionable 50 years ago: in the 1960s, it had great influence on the French structuralist movement even though its core ideas were already half a century old. Saussure gave his lectures at the University of Geneva, in Switzerland, a century ago, and his colleagues and students compiled *Course in General Linguistics* (Saussure 1916/1959) posthumously from his lectures. In the book, an analytical distinction is made between the signified (or concept) and the signifier (or sound-image). The two are in an arbitrary relation, but when articulated into a sign, the relation becomes conventional, albeit not natural. While the relationship between a sound-image and a concept is arbitrary, it is at the same time conventional because language is a social institution that one has to learn before one can speak. Saussure refers to the link that produces the sign as 'signification' (cf. 'meaning'), and the sign is a basic unit of language, wherein an image of a sound refers to an idea as if the pair were 'two sides of a sheet of paper' (Saussure 1959, 112–113). Note that the sign is only a link between the ideas and the sound-images in the 'relationship between the signifier and the signified'. Saussure (*ibid.*) draws a parallel between the manner in which an air current causes the surface of water to ripple and how thoughts articulate with the phonic substance.

For Saussure, the founder of structural linguistics, language appears in 'the domain of articulations' (*ibid.*, 112). In phonetics, articulation provides the means of speech; for example, in the pronunciation of consonants as described earlier in this work (air moves freely through the vocal tract until it is obstructed by the vocal organs and a sound is hence produced). To Saussure (*ibid.*, 8), however, the sound is 'only the instrument of thought' conceived of as an image wherein a 'complex acoustical-vocal unit' articulates to an idea. For distinctive units to be structured out of 'a shapeless and indistinct mass' (*ibid.*, 111), articulation gives form to these units by uttering them aloud. The argument goes thus: a 'linguistic term is a member, an *articulus* in which an idea is fixed in a sound and a sound becomes the sign of an idea' (*ibid.*, 113). Articulation is like a joint or member

between the amorphous thoughts and sounds that form distinct signs. In the above extract from *Course in General Linguistics* (*ibid*., 10), Saussure defines articulation by using an anatomical term, the Latin word for a joint (i.e., *articulus*); that is

> a member, part, or subdivision of a sequence; applied to speech, articulation designates either the subdivision of a spoken chain into syllables [the first definition] or the subdivision of the chain of meanings into significant units; *gegliederte Sprache* ['articulated speech' ('articulated language' in Derrida 1974)] is used in the second sense in German. Using the second definition, we can say that what is natural to mankind is not oral speech but the faculty of constructing a language, i.e. a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas.

The latter definition of articulation has been appropriated in the structuralist line of thought, wherein language articulates 'a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas'. I assume that the reason for referring to the German *gegliederte Sprache* in this connection as an alternative to an anatomic notion of articulation is to draw a distinction against the more linguistically oriented definition, involving an *articulus* (i.e., a linguistic part or member of a chain cut into syllables and sounds through speech). In the second sense, in contrast, speech (or language) forms a distinctive unit (i.e., a sign) out of 'the floating realm' (*ibid*., 112) of thoughts and sounds by means of articulation that takes shape in language via cutting both of its sides – the expression and content – at the same time, as in the 'sheet of paper' simile (*ibid*., 113). Saussure carries this idea further: 'In language […] whatever distinguishes one sign from the others constitutes it' (*ibid*., 121). The sign is a product of articulation that is 'a positive fact' having 'a substance' (*ibid*., 122), whereas its 'individual members' not yet articulated are only 'differential and negative' (*ibid*., 120), which means that they do not exist outside the system of differences that is language. Saussure paid attention to the abstract rules and conventions of language as a socially instituted system of differences that relationally determines the value of each sign. In this respect, the referent is detached from anything that goes beyond language as a closed system of differences.

Saussure's synchronic approach to language marked a departure from diachronic linguistics, which concerned itself with the origins of language and its development. It was not until the late 1930s, however, that linguist Louis Hjelmslev called Saussure's work 'structural linguistics' (Dosse 1997a, xxii), regardless of the word 'structure' having appeared only a couple of times in his *Course*. Hjelmslev's colleague Roman Jakobson developed Saussure's ideas in

the 1930s within the Prague Circle in linguistics as a general science of language that forms a 'self-contained whole and a principle of classification' (Saussure 1959, 9). Influenced by structuralism, linguist André Martinet moved back to Paris from the United States in the mid-1950s. In his *Elements of General Linguistics*, Martinet (1964/1966, 24–29) designated language as 'a double articulated system'. In his outline of spoken language and its semiotic code structure, the first articulation takes place in a commonly shared plane of communication wherein each of the distinctive units (i.e., signs) is articulated out of the signifier and the signified. This first articulation takes place at a level where the smallest meaningful units are 'morphemes'. The second articulation arises at the phonological level, that of 'phonemes', which consist of speech sounds that are conceived of as signifying elements that lack meaning in their own right. The latter articulation means the spoken expression of the distinctive units in speech. This double articulation makes it possible to enunciate utterances from a pool of a limited set of sounds to express potentially unlimited meanings, on account of the phonological elements (such as syllables and sounds) that function as the distinctive units of language. Because of the double articulation, linguistic units can combine or displace in relation to one another while the structure of language acts as a mechanism that sets rules for the interplay. The rule of double articulation defines language as a structure wherein the meaningful units articulate out of the distinctive elements and the meaning takes place in relation to all other elements in the semiotic system. As a result, spoken language consists of a limited quantity of speech sounds that articulate into an infinite quantity of meaningful units – words constituting sentences, paragraphs, chapters of a book, dissertations, etc.

In the 1950s, Jakobson (1956), who worked first with Hjelmslev and then with Lévi-Strauss, published a famous article on language and language disorders. Jakobson distinguished between the 'paradigmatic' and 'syntagmatic' axes of language, building on Saussure's synchronic approach. Saussure considered symbolic systems to have two axes: the paradigmatic axis has to do with the 'vertical' part of the system of signs, which allows selection of one element such as a word and its substitution with another (in associative relations). This is the metaphorical aspect. The syntagmatic axis, in turn, addresses the metonymic aspect, which entails combination of elements with reference to contiguity, forming 'horizontal' relations such as words articulated into sentences. Syntagmatic relations hold while language is present, linking distinctive elements into meaningful wholes. Paradigmatic relations hold only in the absence of

language as a system of differences that allows a selection of distinctive elements and their substitution with others. In his related work, Jakobson (1956) was able to distinguish between two types of aphasia with reference to the phonological model. In a contiguity disorder, aphasic entails lacking capacity to keep up discussion in units longer than a few words, which is associated with metonymy and a deficiency in forming sentences. In a similarity disorder, in contrast, the aphasic is not capable of choosing between individual words. This means that the patient has a limited vocabulary, which is linked to the metaphorical aspect of language as a symbolic order.

Jakobson's study of language disorders influenced Lacan, who adopted the linguistic paradigm in his structuralist reading of Freud. Lacan adopted the notions of metaphor and metonymy from Jakobson as a condensation and displacement of meaning in respect of Freud's classic *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899/1913). In his return to Freud in the 1950s, Lacan put the structuralist and linguistic paradigm into action by claiming: 'The unconscious is structured like a language.' According to Freudian psychoanalysts, when one considers unconsciousness to stem from a structure such as language, slips of the tongue, for instance, give away meanings unintentionally to the signifying elements of the unconscious not organised by the ego. Unlike statements that articulate by way of conscious speech, the unconscious enunciations by the subject are an object of analytical attention in psychoanalysis. Lacan adopted Saussure's notion of language as a system of differences that consists not of signs but of the signifiers. Only signifiers can produce a signified. Because of this, Lacan argued that the signifier is prior to the signified, which only slides underneath it. This marks a contrast with the thinking of Saussure (1959, 113), for whom expression and content were like the above-mentioned two sides of a sheet of paper. In place of the sign fixing the relation 'between the signifier and the signified', there is a barrier that resists all signification.

Crossing that barrier is possible only because of the metaphors that substitute one signifier for another on the paradigmatic axis of language. The syntagmatic axis of language, in turn, is associated with metonymy in its combination of signifiers to form the 'signifying chain'. The 'network of the signifier' has the 'synchronic structure of language' (Lacan 1966, 414), but the signifying chain must be punctuated if meanings are to be produced. This is because of the barrier, a 'bar' (*barre*) between a signifier and the signified, which resists signification but allows a combination or articulation of the signifiers and their displacement. In this process of articulation, the 'quilting point', 'anchoring point', or 'nodal

point' (Fr. *point de capiton*) acts as a 'button tie' stitching up the sliding of the signifier temporally. The elements that stop the endless sliding of the signifiers are the nodal points. The 'quilting points' or 'anchoring points' temporarily prevent the floating of the signifiers, to halt their movement (Evans 1996, 151, 185–191). If the sliding of the signifiers does not stop at a quilting point, the subject will not submit to the symbolic order. A failure to become the subject of the symbolic order leads to psychosis, and certain language disorders are a symptom of this (*ibid*.). Submitting to the symbolic function of culture, the subject splits but does not fragment into pieces. In substitution for unrestricted pleasure (Fr. *jouissance*) and the torments of passion, a lawful and neurotic subject searches for pleasure via culturally and socially sanctioned ways of realising the objects of desire. Structuralism rose, reached its peak, and was transformed into post-structuralist critique all within a rather short span of time. It is that critique that I address next.

Until the 1950s, linguistics and psychoanalysis developed independently of the social sciences. Then came Lévi-Strauss, whom French intellectuals consider among the founding fathers of structuralism and its leading academic. Lévi-Strauss, who lived to the age of 100, published his breakthrough work, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, in 1948. In it, he claimed that the basic kinship structures order marriage rules in a manner paralleling language by prohibiting some relations while stipulating others. A key foundation for the social order is the 'incest taboo', which he claimed is universal. It subsumes the natural order with the order of culture. On one hand, it strengthens the relationships among the members of the system because of their exchange. In this respect, the prohibition of incest not only forbids some marriages on the basis of bloodline but also produces a social order in terms of culture. On the other hand, marital relations are arbitrary and conventional, in a similarity to language (Dosse 1997a, 19–30). In the 1950s, the idea of the law that lies beneath all relations and governs all forms of social exchange in the manner of language spread like a virus across various fields of study.

For the structuralist generation, language was similar to the 'collective conscience' of Saussure's contemporary Durkheim, which binds people together in society. Both Durkheim and Saussure built their theories on the symbolic structures and systems of signs, and they used similar kinds of vocabulary. Yet Saussure never cited Durkheim. There is no proof of him even having been aware of Durkheim's work (Alexander 1988, 4–5; Heiskala 2003, 182). Instead of sociology, Saussure (1959, 16) articulated semiology, as 'a science that studies

the life of signs within society'. According to Saussure (*ibid*., 121), once a sign articulates with another sign, the 'two signs, each having a signified and signifier, are not different but only distinct' from one another. In this manner, signs gain their meanings socially in relation to each other. Language consists of the abstract rules and codes that govern the articulation of signifying elements into meaningful units at the grammatical level. In other words, the structure of language is prior to any expression or utterance. In the 1950s, literary theorist Roland Barthes studied structural linguistics and turned it into a sort of semiology that worked in fields other than phonology, which Saussure had, in fact, anticipated in his *Course*. Semiology as developed by Barthes offered a theoretical model for analyses of denotation, connotation, and myths, which linguists had excluded from their approach. In *Mythologies*, Barthes (1957/1972) deciphered the myths of 'the petit-bourgeois' ideology by using semiology, including advertisements and the world of entertainment. Barthes's poetic style and theoretical writings on French popular culture made him one of the most prominent intellectuals of the structuralist movement in the '60s.

In the 1960s, an epistemic shift occurred from linguistics and structuralist semiotics to discourse theory. Those years saw structuralism grow closer to phenomenological tradition. In 1966, a massive volume of Lacan's work from the mid-1950s was published, presenting his collected writings, *Écrits*. This led to Lacan gaining a public reputation as a theoretician whose writings were almost impossible to grasp. At the time of the student and workers' revolutions of May '68 in Paris, several new universities were born. The head of the faculty of philosophy at the most prominent of these, Vincennes, was no other than Foucault, who hired several Althussero-Lacanians as its first psychoanalysis staff (Dosse 1997b, 147–151). At the time, Lacan had already established his own school of psychoanalysis, represented by his seminars at ENS, where he taught the French *élite*, who were not enmired in the disputes in Freudian psychology. Lacan had split from the International Psychoanalytic Association: the organisation had forbidden him from practising as a psychoanalyst, and they excommunicated him for theoretical teachings outside official Freudian doctrine. In Lacan's seminar on the 'reverse of psychoanalysis', in 1969–1970 at Vincennes, the underlying issue was the institutionalisation of psychoanalysis in the higher-education system and its problems. In his lectures, Lacan talked about the four discourses that unfold a particular structural relationship, the master-signifier's relation to all other signifiers and its relation to 'the split subject' that arises from the relationship wherein the master-signifier represents

the subject in relation to all other signifiers in the field of knowledge. An excess product in this process is a surplus that is 'the object-cause of desire', which is born out of lack of enjoyment (see Evans 1996, 45–47; see also Kurki 2012, 64–90). This leftover prevents the master-signifier from taking over the subject fully. Next, I make a brief excursion into exegesis of Lacanian discourse theory. Note here that that master-signifier can be any signifier representing the subject.

In Lacan's theory (*ibid*.), the model for all discourses is 'the discourse of the master.' This discourse is grounded in the dialectic between master and slave, wherein the master wants to appropriate knowledge from the slave in a manner similar to that by which capitalists struggle to appropriate the surplus value from labour. In 'the discourse of the university', the master-signifier holds 'the position of truth' and knowledge occupies the dominant position, for control of the truth. In the position of the other is the object-cause of desire of the split subject for purposes of knowing, even when the master does not hold a dominant position. This type of discourse is a modern form of the discourse of the master, wherein the master-signifier takes over knowledge from its subjects in an abstract and theoretical form that makes it displaceable. This includes Lacan's own discourse theory. In his lectures to students and the radicals of Vincennes, Lacan expressed an expectation for revolutionary struggle and hysterical questioning to lead only to a new master, who would put the subjects in the position of the slave. The reverse is psychoanalysis. In 'the discourse of the hysteric', the split subject obtains a dominant position. It wishes the master to produce knowledge as the truth of its object-cause of desire, which is lacking. That is the starting point of 'the discourse of the analyst'. In this context, the analyst must turn into an object-cause of desire of the split subject. Knowledge can become the truth of the split subject, subverting mastery and dominance as 'the cure' in practice. The aim in psychoanalysis is, in other words, to bring back enjoyment to the subject via analysis of the symptom (*ibid*.).

Before his death in 1980, Lacan amassed transcripts for 27 seminars, which an admirer and relative by marriage, Jacques-Alain Miller, has been compiling retrospectively into books based on his lectures, as sole editor. Many of his colleagues challenged Lacan's teachings in the Seventies, among them Deleuze and Guattari in their two-volume *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. To their post-structural Foucauldian way of thinking, desire is a productive force, not a lack in subject. In addition, they contested Marxists' precept by which class struggle is a motor of social change. The entire legacy of Lacanian psychoanalysis is still controversial, and many social theorists do not count Lacan as within the

canon of the social sciences, unlike Foucault, whose discourse theory became almost undisputedly accorded the status of sociological classic, a status that social scientists have called into question only in recent years. A cautionary example of the confusing and many contradictory uses of the term 'discourse' is found in the Anglo-American debates from the 1980s in the context of social constructionism. On the basis of false assumptions and misreading, Foucault has been accused of broad usage of the term. These accusations lack a reference point in his actual work (see Sawyer 2002, 434–435). This lapse in academic rigour, wherein Lacanian discourse theory is not discussed at all, is symptomatic of processes of governance wherein those who wield power appropriate only one kind of theoretical discourse, excluding others.

One contemporary of Foucault in French post-structuralism was Derrida, a deconstructive philosopher who criticised Saussure's linguistics alongside distant predecessors such as Rousseau with his 'Essay on the Origin of Languages' (1781/1966). Derrida (1967/1997, 30) states that those authors saw only 'two distinct systems of signs; the second [writing] exists for the sole purpose of representing the first [speech]'. In this respect, Derrida established a distinction from the structuralist tradition, with his notion of *différance* (note that the standard form of the French word instead uses an 'e' in place of the 'a'), which refers to a difference that one can only see, not hear. Because this neologism itself can be distinguished from the popular French word only in written language, it is an effective tool in deconstructing the phonological claims of the superiority of speech. In terms of Rousseau's myth of the origins of language, language without a difference is a collection of inarticulate sounds and unintelligible gestures. Articulated speech, in turn, implemented a difference from this state of nature as a symbolic order. For Derrida (1968/1981, 27), the play of differences forms an unbounded space for the articulations 'by means of which elements are related to each other' infinitely. As, for Derrida, nothing precedes the play of differences, no subject has power over the articulations.

The epistemic shift from French structuralism to its 'post-structuralist' critique came into being in 1966, at a symposium titled 'The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man', held at Maryland's Johns Hopkins University, where Lacan gave a keynote speech in the company of Barthes and many other leading French intellectuals, including Derrida. In the waning of the golden age of structuralism, Derrida deconstructed various metaphysical and speculative notions in his books *Of Grammatology*, *Speech and Phenomena*, and *Writing and Difference*, all published in 1967. As a substitute for deciphering the codes and myths with

reference to semiology as Barthes did, Derrida applied philosophical influences from phenomenology, especially from its German tradition, according to which philosophy builds on metaphysics. He scrutinised these metaphysics in reference to 'deconstruction', which is 'both destruction and construction' (see Dosse 1997b, 17–41). Derrida deconstructed, for example, the opposition set up between writing and speaking, wherein speech seems a natural form of language while writing is only its artificial trace. In the 'logocentrism' referred to above, a specific form of which is 'phonocentrism', speech is superior to writing. Speech builds on the 'metaphysics of presence', and writing ruptures it in respect of 'archi-writing' that is a condition for the systematic play of differences. The 'différance' described above is a catchword associated with the verbs 'to differ' and 'to defer'. According to this notion, each element exists in relation to others, from which it differs, and definition of meaning is deferred through the endless chain of signification (see Derrida 1972/1981; see also Ryan 1982, 11–12). From this standpoint, there is no meaning or origin external to the continuous differing and deferring; there are only traces of metaphysics that deconstruction can expose. 'Post-structuralism' influenced post-Marxist deconstruction of structural-Marxist philosophy and its critique, which I address next.

5.2 Articulation of Nodal Points As a Discursive Practice

Post-Marxist political theorists such as Laclau and Mouffe, their students in the Essex school of discourse analysis, and also well-known philosopher Slavoj Žižek, among others, have developed discourse theory towards a political philosophy, where a new social logic has been in order for the New Left. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (Laclau & Mouffe 1985/2001), the most important discourse-theoretical category cited for political analysis is hegemony with reference to the articulation of the above-mentioned 'nodal points' or 'master-signifiers', terms that refer to a 'particular element assuming a "universal" structuring function within a certain discursive field' (*ibid*., xi). The condition of hegemony entails the discursive elements articulating in practice and not because of their inherent relationships to each other through certain internal laws. This implies lack of totality, which means that the unity of discursive elements is constructed socially and politically in contingent terms. Post-Marxists

posit this as ‘anti-essentialism’ running counter to the Althusserian approach with its universalistic inclination.

Regarding ‘radical democracy’, Laclau and Mouffe commit in both theory and practice to the contingency of all social relations that are open to a hegemonic struggle in such a manner that they claim no relationship to have priority over the others. At the core of a ‘radical democratic’ politics is the notion of contingency and the idea that the identity is not fixed outside the discursive field of articulations. Laclau (1996) contributed especially to the ontology of discourse theory, while his wife (Mouffe) has also made a political call for ‘agonistic pluralism’ criticising ‘deliberative democracy’ (as found in the work of John Rawls and Habermas, Mouffe 1999; see Selg 2011, 169–172) by challenging the liberal democratic models in theory that many people conceive indifferent, descriptive, and apolitical. In politics of deliberative democracy, the discussion builds on liberal democratic values such as freedom of speech, which many consider to be a universal ideal. Agonistic pluralism, in turn, recognises also the adversaries of these confronting them. Said adversaries have a right to defend their own position, which means consent built in hegemonic struggles.

Laclau and Mouffe argue that prerequisite to a struggle for hegemony is expansion of a political space filled with ‘floating signifiers’ that are not yet fully formed and instead are partially fixed (*ibid*., 113). According to Laclau (2005, 116, 226), ‘[t]he logic of the *objet petit a* [i.e., surplus desire/meaning in Lacanian psychoanalysis] and the hegemonic logic [in Marxist philosophy of praxis] are not just similar: they are simply identical’. A signifier acquires different meanings in different contexts and articulates signifying chains through a nodal point (Lacan’s *point de capiton*, or master-signifier) that structures an open discursive field of action. This opens up a discursive space for the ideological and political struggles for hegemony over elements that are not essential but overdetermined by one another. In contradiction with a self-contained and fully articulated system of differences as seen in Saussure’s notion of language or Marx’s conception of society as an articulated whole such as *Gliederung*, social relations are now conceived of as contingent articulations in a discursive field, which leads to the struggle for hegemony wherein ‘radical democratic’ politics and action take place. This ‘Gramscian moment’ allows a sleight of hand for those for whom structuralism is somehow problematic and who want to shed its trappings in a manner similar to post-Marxists attempting to shake the ghost of Marxist-Leninism from their shoulders.

According to Laclau and Mouffe (*ibid*.), by means of the practice of articulation, the constituent elements of a discourse organise in such a way that their relative identity is changed. Such an articulated entity is not, therefore, a fully structured discursive totality akin to a machine or an organism, whose parts are in a necessary relation with one another and determined by this structured whole. Articulations take place instead because of dislocation of its elements, for fixing meaning of the signifiers that float freely in a discursive field. In this sense, articulation is a discursive practice that 'consists in the construction of nodal points' around which the signifying elements are temporarily organised or fixed as discursive moments. According to Laclau and Mouffe (*ibid*., 113),

> the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity.

In the field of discursivity, this contingency is governed by the logics of equivalence and difference, which are in a constant relationship with one another. From this point of view, the 'chains of equivalence' (*ibid*., 170) articulate around discursive subject positions to produce a group identity out of differences in opposition to 'the other', as in the case of the working class versus capitalists, while antagonisms resist this symbolisation (the 'real' contradictions conceived in the relations of production, for instance). The logic of difference is applied to resolve this split in order to disseminate the various antagonisms in a relatively open discursive field for the struggle over hegemony. Hence, no society is a fully sutured and self-confined whole, because of the surplus (the *objet petit a*), which is due to an excess that subverts the fixed meanings (*ibid*., 113).

Radical democracy is based on the assumption of 'the contingency and ambiguity of every "essence"' (*ibid*., 193) of the social. In a complex society filled with contradictions, the overdetermination of all social relations (in other words, the overflow of its discursive fields) implies that society does not have any existence other than as a necessary limit for arbitrariness. Antagonisms arise from this failure to achieve a structured whole of society on the basis of lack seen at the core of all social identity. In this respect, 'the presence of some objects in the others prevents any of their identities from being fixed' (*ibid*., 104). This definition delimits fully constituted systems of difference such as language by making their borders visible as a symbolic order. Consequently, antagonisms or the negativity is at the core of the social, and it is constitutive to the struggles for hegemony. Accordingly, the political seems a discursive field based on social and

political action as the contingent articulations of social relations employed in order to constitute the people against the hegemonic power bloc. The demands for democracy extend in this manner in the new domains of struggle as 'radical democratic' politics.

According to Laclau's *Emancipation(s)*, in Marxism, the contradictions and struggle take place in objective social relations whereas antagonisms set the discursive limits to the objectivity itself (Laclau 2006, 103–104). From the latter standpoint, no object can achieve its own identity. Rather, building of an identity is through the 'empty signifiers' that name the objects of a discourse retroactively, thereby setting up the reference point after the act of signification. An empty signifier, in this connection, is a nodal point – that is, a 'signifier without the signified' (see Laclau 1996, 36; see also Žižek 1989/2008, 109). As the nodal point, a signifier is emptied of its meaning for the project of articulating other signifiers to symbolise the absent identity (Stavrakakis 1999, 80). In 'Why Do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?', Laclau (1996, 44) gives an example of an empty signifier through Hobbes's state of nature:

> [I]n a situation of radical disorder 'order' is present as that which is absent; it becomes an empty signifier, as the signifier of that absence. In this sense, various political forces can compete in their efforts to present their particular objectives as those which carry out the filling of that lack. To hegemonize something is exactly to carry out this filling function.

In early modern political thought, people acknowledged the rule of an absolute sovereign as a legitimate order of society for the simple reason that it seemed the only alternative to inevitable disorder (*ibid*., 45). As for new social movements, the aims of the struggle for hegemony are not always so clear but still signify a resistance to the system in its present state (*ibid*., 41). To construct a nodal point of an ideological discourse in a manner that fills the gap with whatever appears as its closure means to take it as if it were real. This calls for our imagination and new metaphors as an alternative to following every rule to the letter.

Žižek (2000, 108) has learnt this lesson – to conceive of the political with reference to the hegemonic struggles – from Laclau and Mouffe, but he criticises the normative appeals made in favour of a liberal democratic state as 'the renunciation of any real attempt to overcome the existing capitalist liberal regime'. In Soviet-Marxism, hegemony meant a revolutionary task of the proletariat in the anti-imperialist struggle and the becoming of the working class as its hegemonic force. In this context, hegemony acts as a result of a political restructuring of the class with reference to its moral and intellectual leadership,

which is legitimate because the capitalist exploitation demands abolition. After the wars, however, representative democracy became a legitimate method of governance built on consent (i.e., hegemony), unlike its totalitarian alternatives of 'real socialism' and National Socialism. Because of this, antagonism between capitalists and workers did not define the abolition of political actors with reference to the class struggle to any greater extent (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 47–54). In post-Marxism, a result of the overdetermined social relations in the symbolic order is hegemony that comes about in an open discursive field of action where the political is an empty space wherein the discursive elements do not articulate into structured totalities.

With regard to contingency, every identity seems relative, and it enables articulatory practices by discursive means. Discourse is made up of divergent positions, moments where its constituent elements have a relative identity. 'Articulation' is any practice that forms a relationship between two or more elements such that a change in their identity results. The consequence of this structuring practice is a discourse. However, such an entity is never unified, never a self-contained whole. Hence, society defined as a structured totality is impossible (*ibid.*, 114). Taking the place of such a whole is an open discursive field where overdetermination complicates the formation of identities and its elements never fully articulate to the signifying chains. Since all identities are relative, no articulation of the constitutive elements to discursive moments is ever complete. The practice of articulation, therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points that fix floating signifiers temporarily, to quilt their identity in such a way that the identity of the elements changes (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 113).

Every attempt of closure quilting the identities is therefore doomed to fail because identity forms relationally – that is, in relation to all other elements in the discourse. In *Emancipation(s)* (1996), Laclau discusses 'empty signifiers', as referred to above. Since, to become an empty signifier, a signifier is emptied of its meaning, every signifier that refers to other signifiers can become a master-signifier: 'a signifier without a signified'. 'Marxism', for instance, is a master-signifier that does not have any particular meaning as such. In this sense, it is an empty signifier, for which meaning-making takes place in relation to other signifying elements, which change constantly. As I have pointed out, 'Marxism' signifies many different things to different people. Nevertheless, they all use the same signifier in reference to Marx, which forms an identity of its subjects out of contradictory elements, retrospectively. As Žižek (1989/2008, 108) has stated,

'[t]he only way to define 'Marxism' is to say that this term designates all movements and theories which legitimize themselves through reference to Marx'.

In *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989/2008), Žižek calls the object of ideology a 'rigid designator'. It acts as a nodal point around which the identity of the ideological elements is temporarily fixed, supporting signifying chains. According to Žižek (2008), ideology supports the identity after a traumatic encounter with the real – i.e., with antagonisms, which resist symbolisation by revealing the limits of the symbolic. In this respect, antagonism overlaps with Lacan's notion of 'the Real' that resists signification – which means that in a process of signification there is always an unattainable object-cause of desire remaining as a residue or leftover. The *objet petit a* is crucial because it gives consistency to the split subject. Imageries not split by the antagonistic divisions are like ideological fantasies. In radical democratic politics, several social and political positions relate metonymically with one another around certain nodal points that discursively articulate the ideological elements. Its opposite is totalitarian politics. Fascism builds ideologically on, for example, anti-Semitism, wherein the ideological elements condense metaphorically in the figure of 'the Jew'. A case in point is the national socialist ideology that divided the political literally into two opposing camps. Consequently, the identity of different elements was reduced to equivalences, where each difference became displaceable with the others, such that the definition came in purely negative terms. 'Jew' reappeared for fascists as the excrement of a rotting social body that remained intact only in a paranoid conspiracy theory that caused mass destruction in practice (see Žižek, 95–144; Laclau 1996, 36–46; Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 130; see also Stavrakakis 1999, 76). Xenophobia has become topical once more, at a time of rapid social change, amid economic crisis, and with mass movement of immigrants coming from the Middle East to seek refuge in Europe.

5.3 Conclusion

In structuralism, language appears in 'the domain of articulations' (see Saussure 1916/1966, 112; see also Barthes 1964/1968). At the moment of articulation, the expression becomes a sign of the concept, when the idea is articulated as words. In the structuralist vocabulary, 'articulation' is an anatomical term employed to link linguistic parts of language as 'a member, an *articulus* in which an idea is

fixed' (Saussure 1916/1966, 113). I am interested in the epistemic shift from this conceptual metaphor that puts emphasis on linguistic parts and their effective organisation to 'a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas' (*ibid*., 10). When the structuralist vocabulary became fashionable, the meaning of the concept of articulation changed: it carried the conceptual metaphor of articulation across boundaries between fields of study, while its diverse elements articulated as analogous to linguistic structures.

Post-structuralists build their critiques from the structuralist conceptual metaphor 'social action is language'. Instead of language as a system of differences, they put emphasis on a play of differences, wherein the signifiers are not able to fix meanings or to anchor the identity of the subject that is split between the conscious statements and the unconscious enunciations, which resist symbolisation. In post-Marxist discourse theory, the concept of articulation opens up a discursive space for ideological struggles that quilt the signifying chains in practice. This opens a discursive space for the action of individuals seen as negation of the Marxist conception of society (wherein the economic defines political objectives or the hegemonic task of a given social group). At the same time, however, this notion can lead its user to a position at which 'the social' condenses into the action of individuals such that society does not matter anymore. That is a symptom of the post-structural discussion. The prefix 'post' in this context stresses not just a break but also a link with the structuralist and Marxist traditions. In structural-Marxist philosophy just as much as in post-Marxist discourse theory, articulation marks a relationship composed of interchangeable elements that are not the same. The difference between the approaches is that post-structuralists focus on the articulation of elements as an unlimited play of differences in a discursive field by rejecting the notion of society. Hence, discourse theory portrays social reality in a manner similar to that of action theory, emphasising the actions of individuals. I next look at the problem of reductionism in structural-Marxism and in post-Marxist discourse theory to wrap up the discussion.

6 The Problem of Reductionism

> An ontology without a methodology is deaf and dumb; a methodology without an ontology is blind. Only if the two go hand in hand can we avoid a discipline in which the deaf and the blind lead in different directions. (Archer 1995, 28)

> The blind guy couldn't see it. The deaf guy couldn't hear it. Now they're both wanted for it. (See No Evil, Hear No Evil 1989, USA, a comedy film)

Reductionism is necessary to some extent if one is to understand 'society' and 'the social'. Reductionism is typical in classical approaches to sociology, wherein 'an ontology is without a methodology' (i.e., holism) or 'a methodology is without an ontology' (i.e., individualism). Empiricists confine themselves to sensory-perception-based description and explanation of the empirically observable social world; the approach builds on data gathered via systematic observation. Deprived of methodology, the social would appear to them to be an indistinct and formless mass without any meaning, or perplexing chaos lacking any order. In their approach, description and analysis of the social take place through empirical observations guided by the scientific method. Empiricism provided a model for methodological individualists, who took society to be an aggregate of social actions in a manner that conflates society with individuals. Sociologist Margaret Archer (1995, 33–46) defines this as 'upwards conflation', wherein social structure is epiphenomenal in relation to the action of individuals. This type of sociology builds on an individualistic hermeneutic understanding in relation to meaningful social action. Over the last three decades, this approach has experienced a resurgence and become dominant. Archer refers here to Weber's *Economy and Society* (1922/1979).

The problem of methodological individualism is the lack of social ontology, which means that it does not take account of the various strata of a social formation. It reduces them to the action of individuals ('it is through ideas that we construct social reality itself'). Structuralists, in turn, portray society as a whole, whose *sui generis* nature is the main object of study in their research.

Durkheim's *Suicide* (1897/1951) is a classic employing a holistic approach, wherein suicide rates are explained neither by the mental health problems of individuals nor by extreme natural conditions. Suicide is a social fact, one related to social integration and moral regulation in society. If people have no sense of belonging or lack moral guidelines, they are isolated from the social system and may ultimately end their lives. The opposite mode may obtain with the same result in extreme circumstances of oppression and social coercion. Under the structuralist approach, the action of individuals is a mere by-product of social structure. Archer (1995, 3) refers to this approach, in turn, as 'downwards conflation', describing a social theory that conflates individuals with society with the consequence that structure determines the action of individuals. Structuralists focus on the objectified social relations, which means that they do not address the social phenomena as they appear to individuals. Instead of individuals, the social phenomena exist on their own, hence representing a society that is methodologically deaf to action and actors' subjective interpretation of meanings.

I approach the above-mentioned two forms of reductionism in terms of the spatially oriented metaphors, such as 'up–down', through which corporeal human beings experience and understand the world (Lakoff & Johnson 1980/2003). From the philosophical angle of Roy Bhaskar's 'critical realism' (see Archer 1995; see also Sayer 2010; Creaven 2000), lower-strata physical phenomena are relatively independent of higher-strata social phenomena. In this approach, nature (not society) is a self-subsistent whole and does not reduce to language or culture, which are relatively independent from one another. The most famous case of reductionism upward is the Sokal affair. This involved a scientific fraud perpetrated in 1996 by a physicist who attempted to reveal in the academic journal *Social Text* that cultural studies and post-structuralist discourse theory are not scientific but ideological by claiming that quantum gravity is a discursive, social construction. Indeed, from a fully discursive stance, the lower-strata physical phenomena are nothing but higher-strata social constructions by individual actors. All the way down in the opposite direction, in the vulgar-Marxist line of thought, politics and ideology, for example, are reduced to the economic base. From this vantage point, the various instances of the social formation lose their relative autonomy and self-sufficiency, in reductionism downward. I suggest that the structural-Marxist theory of articulation constitutes a significant contribution for overcoming the structure–action dualism in social theory without conflating actors with social structure ('class determinism') or the structure with social action of individuals ('social constructionism'). Moreover, it does not evade or

disassociate itself from the problem of reductionism. Instead, it faces this 'elephant in the room' and tackles it in its own terms.

6.1 Two Forms of Reductionism and the Problem of Flat Ontology

In addressing these generalisations, one of the most prominent attempts to solve this problem of reductionism and structure–agency dualism in sociology has been the 'a-reductionist' structuration theory of Anthony Giddens, in which agency and structure are situated in relation to one another in such a manner that, because of the 'duality of structure' (Archer 1995, 93–94; Creaven 2000, 113–114), there is no difference between the two notions. Structuration theory has its parallels in the sociology of knowledge with phenomenologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's (1966) social constructionism, which focuses on the everyday life of people and their knowledge. These sociologists do not find important any difference between individuals' day-to-day action and the structures that actors reproduce and transform while acting. In more concrete terms, the problem with 'elisionism', wherein 'the social' is inseparable from the individual, is that it does not leave a remainder, a leftover or surplus. Archer (1995, 101) calls the approach 'central conflationism', considering it to deprive the structures and actors of their relative autonomy by imagining them as being mutually constitutive. The problem of these approaches is not that structure and action reduce to one another but just that: their relative autonomy is lost (*ibid*.). In their attempts to rise above the problem of reductionism, some have renounced the classics of sociology according to which the action of individuals is structured in a complex relationship to society.

Unlike the classic authors, who put emphasis either on structures (e.g., Marx and Durkheim) or on action (e.g., Weber), adherents to structuration theory and social constructionism build on an ontology that is flat. In central conflation, actors apply the social rules and norms as they act. In this manner, society is structured through social action, which it both enables and constrains at the same time (see Archer 1995, 81–89). In this type of 'sociology of knowledge' – which structural-Marxist theory criticises for idealism (see Hall 2007, 131–136) – social action, which is intersubjective, objectivises and takes form in the social structure between individuals who construct social reality by using language and other means of communication. A realist ontology, in turn, holds to a stratified nature

of the social, where structures are a product of the interaction of historical agents from the past, which the living and breathing individuals reproduce in contemporary actions. For this process to occur, society depends on the action of individuals, but it pre-exists and confronts them as a structure that constrains and enables their actions. In upwards conflation (i.e., 'reduction upward'), structures similar to a language or culture are epiphenomenal in relation to the action of individuals, and society is secondary to the actors who constitute it. In downwards conflation, action is epiphenomenal in relation to the structures similar to the economic, which is constitutive. A 'reduction downward' is economism, wherein the actors are conflated with structure in such a manner that the working class achieves universal status. In a fully articulated system of differences such as a society portrayed as an articulated whole, there would be no open discursive field for political articulations of 'the social'. Structures, however, do not come out of nowhere; people not only appropriate and adopt them, becoming their subjects, but act in imaginative and creative ways.

Society is not literally a language – it lacks a grammar that one can learn in order to speak. Nor is society a stage for a play of differences or a network made up of various actors and their constant movement. Post-Marxist discourse theorists, however, do have a tendency to consider discursive practices only, while 'neo-materialists' build on a 'flat ontology', thereby not according weight to the stratified nature of the social. In actor-network theory (e.g., the work of Michel Callon, Latour, and Michel Serres) action is non-social and the 'actants' can be either human or non-human actors within spatially oriented networks that are not hierarchical. Within the networks, individual entities interconnect or intersect horizontally and are not organised deductively as a hierarchy. The flat ontology gives no entity privilege over the others; hence, things are seen as interconnecting in process-like networks through their linkages as in discourse theory, wherein the power disperses across the field of discursivity, where it is wielded only for a moment ('Where there is power, there is resistance'). In an alternative to imagining structures and actors as being mutually constitutive, structures pre-exist actors but are dependent on the actions of individuals. Using language, for instance, actors produce structure in their practice, but structure pre-exists them, which means that one has to learn a language in order to speak it. Post-structuralists, in turn, deconstruct the work that erects an opposition between action and structure by emphasising the play of differences in the absence of any structuring whole. In addition, 'neo-materialists' build on a 'flat ontology' and a

critique of the science of the social and the idea of society as a hierarchical organisation (i.e., of the classics in sociology).

I began by introducing the problem of reductionism with reference to classics of modern sociological thought that have considered the distinction between structure and action (i.e., holism vs. individualism). After that, I proposed, with reference to critical realism, that structuration theory, social constructionism, symbolic interactionism, or any other theory under which structures and actors lose their relative autonomy has not offered a true solution to the problem of reductionism. Reductionism is clearly criticised in structural-Marxist thought. In contrast to an evolutionary view based on synecdoche (that is, assuming the whole from a part) or metonymy (the association of a part with the whole, 'social action is language'), articulation is a conceptual metaphor through which social formation is structured as a language is. 'Post-Marxists' have conceived of social relations as constitutive of the subjects from the latter perspective.

I draw attention next to the problem of reductionism in structural Marxism and its critique in relation to the above-mentioned two conceptual metaphors ('society is an articulated whole' and 'social action is language'). I have analysed these conceptual metaphors in the preceding two chapters. My route in exploring reductionism here requires a tracing of the roots I explored there.

6.2 'Society Is an Articulated Whole': Conflating Actors with Structure

As displayed in everyday understanding, individualism is a typical form of reductionism that social scientists criticise. For example, unemployment is both an individual-level and a structural problem, yet for individualists, it reduces to merely attributes of individuals and, therefore, is deemed an individual's own fault. However, strong opposition to individualistic explanations may lead to economism. In this form of reductionism, unemployment becomes merely a structural product of the economic. In the social sciences, 'reductionism' is a pejorative term, as seen in accusations of Marxism for reducing the social consciousness of individuals to the material circumstances in which people live their lives (see Sayer 2010). From this standpoint, according to their adversaries, Marxists have a strong tendency to portray social relations in line with economic determinism and class reductionism, in ways that pay no attention to other

categories than the economic, such as gender, race, and ethnicity, which are seen as discursive constructions in post-structuralism.

These criticisms notwithstanding, Marx thought profoundly about social relationships that bind people in society and change them, perhaps more radically than any of his contemporaries did. Marx's review of classical political economy starts with a critique of individualism. In his economic manuscripts (1857/1973, 265), he argues, to counter claims made by both liberalists and anarchists, that society 'does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand'. In doing so, he declares the starting point to be the relationships that cast individuals in unequal social relations with respect to each other in particular social formations. Therefore, individual people are not 'masters' or 'slaves' outside 'the complex social relations that constitute them' as subjects (*ibid*.). In other words, there is no escape from these binding ties, yet they remain subject to historical change, which transforms the subjects too. According to Marx's 1857 introduction to *Grundrisse*, in the so-called bourgeois society, wherein the bourgeois is the ruling class and the proletariat has nothing to sell but their labour, the elements that articulate social structure are organised in a more complex way than they were before (Marx 1973, 105).

Marx (*ibid*.) proposed that, although bourgeois society differs from all other social formations in history, it has risen from the ashes of previous social forms through the elements that already existed. In other words, it has a history, and that history has fundamentally changed the elements from which the capitalist relations of production are formed. This means that the most abstract theoretical categories, such as capital, wage labour, and landed property, are bound up with 'their order within modern bourgeois society'. That is not to be confused with civil society. For Marx, in bourgeois society, simple categories such as labour become more complex in relation to the past, and the present is a vantage point that allows the best view of that change. In other words, the complex relations of production aid in understanding the past relations that are their elementary forms. Marx's interest in pre-capitalist social formations was limited to a proof that the capitalist mode of production has a history in the form of primitive accumulation of capital, which means separation of the worker from the means of production. For Marx, the forms of appropriation are linked to the relations of production that are specific to each era and characteristic of it.

In this respect, Marx considers 'bourgeois society', metaphorically, an articulated whole (Ger. *Gliederung*). Marx portrays specific forms of society as a

result of the social relations affecting people between different formations such as classes. A reductionist understanding would have the economic represent the only determining structure of society, articulating around a single line of class conflict. For Marxism, society is like an edifice whose upper floors rest on its foundation as its economic base. The problem lies in taking the base-and-superstructure metaphor as a theoretical model wherein society becomes a totality that expresses a hidden structure or the economic base in every instance of the social formation. Even though opponents of Marxism accuse it of just this type of economism, reductionism is characteristic also of the opposite position, taking the form of idealism, which structural Marxism criticises. Before going into that debate, however, I address economism for a moment.

In Soviet-Marxism, communist Marxist-Leninists criticised the German socialist democrats of the Second International for economism (see Bottomore et al. 1991, 168–169). For Lenin (1917), social change was a result of political action aimed at revolution, not of economic class struggle as it was for socialist 'revisionists'. Gramsci, from his position within the leadership of Italy's communist party, expanded on the criticism in *Prison Notebooks* (1971, 369–384), stating that economism is typical of *laissez-faire* liberalism and revolutionary syndicalism, which have nothing to do with Marxist 'philosophy of praxis'. A distinction between the state and civil society, wherein economy is a part of civil society that the state should not regulate, forms the basis for the free-trade ideology. This fundamental distinction between the economic and political defines economism. In an ideological strategy such as 'austerity', neoliberal 'economists' depict the economic as a non-political instance outside politics; thereby, democratic values such as 'equality' and 'justice' can be dismissed, since they do not belong to the political decision-making of the economic realm. Ideologically, this is a deliberate attempt to transform the welfare state and politics, not to mention challenge critical political economists. Revolutionary syndicalism, in turn, is grounded in the economic interests of groups with specific occupations who are subordinate to the ruling class and its hegemony. In the struggle for hegemony, however, 'trade unionism' does not go beyond strictly limited economic interests, in what Gramsci (1971, 369–373) considers another form of economism, which is typical in workers' movements.

After Gramsci, Althusser criticised economism by coupling it with humanism at the peak of structuralism, which was 'anti-humanistic' critique of philosophy. In Althusser's structuralist interpretation, Marx broke from humanism not by means of simple inversion of Hegelian dialectics into Stalinist dialectical

materialism but epistemologically, inventing a whole new problematic for the capitalist mode of production. For Marx, turning Hegel's dialectic right-side up again is a metaphor. In this case, the impetus for Marxism came from Engels, who believed that speculative philosophy actually had a rational core. Hence, Marxism came to be 'the exact mirror image of the Hegelian dialectic' (Althusser 1969, 108–109). In this context, Althusser's effort to oust Hegel is the main difference between the 'capital-logic' school and the Althusserian-inspired structural-Marxist reading. For Althusser, Marx's *Capital* was fundamentally different from his Hegelian and philosophical manuscripts. Marx's epistemological break from humanism to 'theoretical anti-humanism' started with *The German Ideology* (1845–46) and concluded in Marx's *Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy* (1857–61), according to Althusser.

Althusser's theoretical anti-humanism was a political response to the Marxist humanism embraced by the French communist movement. For Althusser (1976), social change resulted from ideological and political struggle, which both Marxist humanists and communists rejected. While economism referred to the economic in a manner neglecting the ideological and political struggles, Marxist humanists did not concern the contradiction between capital and labour to be the main cause of the historical change. Althusser (*ibid*., 86) paired humanism with economism as the opposite sides of bourgeois ideology. Althusser had already targeted Marxist humanists in the French Communist Party by saying that 'the philosophical (theoretical) myth of man is reduced to ashes' (Althusser 1964/1969, 229). However, with his theory of articulation of the different instances of the social formation, Althusser ultimately lost the battle against his comrades on both sides of the Channel. Althusser (1970, 126, 131) persistently insisted that Marxist philosophy is dialectical materialism, distinguished from ideologies and other such conceptions of the world (Thomas 2009, 3). For him, it formed part of Marxist science of historical materialism. Gramsci, who, according to Althusser (1970, 133), reduced Marxist philosophy to history, was seen as guilty of a theoretical collapse of the former into the latter. Philosopher André Tosel has even referred to this critique as 'the last great theoretical debate of Marxism' (Thomas 2009, 8).

Because of the contemporary return to Marx, it is worth reviewing the battle briefly from the point of view of reductionism. The Althusserian conception of society as an articulated whole is structured in terms of contradiction and overdetermination. A social formation is composed of relatively independent superstructure overdetermined by the economic 'in the last instance', where the

relations are conceived of via the structural-Marxist metaphor of base and superstructure. It held on for a brief but intense moment in the France of the 1960s and 1970s. As its critique, a Gramscian way of thinking called philosophy of praxis was applied in relation to hegemonic struggles by post-Marxists such as Laclau and Mouffe, who challenged the Althusserian vocabulary. They also emphasised antagonisms as the limits of the social. In contrast to conflating actors with structure, the problem of the post-Marxist discourse theorists is the opposite form of reductionism, in which the structure conflates with a discursive field of action (see Table 1, below). I address this next.

Table 1: Two types of reductionism, in structural Marxism and its post-Marxist critique

Structural-Marxist critique of economism:	Post-Marxist critique of structural Marxism:
▪ Society is an articulated whole (*Gliederung*) ▪ The metaphor of 'base and super-structure' applies ▪ Society is not a totality that expresses the economic (i.e., reduction downward)	○ Social action is language (a 'domain of articulations') ○ The metaphor 'society operates like a language' applies ○ Society is an open discursive field of action (i.e., reduction upward)

6.3 'Social Action Is Language': Conflating Structure with Action

According to Hall's 'On Postmodernism and Articulation' interview (Grossberg 1986a), the reduction of society as structured totality to its economic cause is 'reductionism downward', or the above-mentioned economism. It rests on an assumption that the economic is independent of all other instances of the social formation, such as the political and ideological. In Althusserianism, the economic determines which of the other instances of the social formation is dominant at a given time. In this context, 'articulation' is a sign of a break with an economism-oriented approach wherein society is a totality expressing the economic in every instance of the social formation. In cultural studies, an epistemic shift emerged, from 'necessary correspondence' to no necessary correspondence (Hall 1985, 95), or 'Marxism without guarantees'. In other words, the idea of no necessary correspondence between the different instances of the social formation points to the relations, or articulations, which do not have any guarantee, even in 'the last instance'.

A struggle against structural Marxism can – but need not – take a form opposite 'reductionism upward'. One can cite Hall here (*ibid*.): the conceptual metaphor 'society operates like a language' constitutes the 'theoretical revolution of our time' (Hall, cited in Grossberg 1986a, 56). On the one hand, it is rooted in a conception in which the various instances of the social formation function discursively – i.e., like a language. On the other hand, the image in which society operates like a language can boil down to the notion that 'society is language'. Thus, a useful conceptual metaphor wherein society operates in the manner of a language can be reduced all the way to a conception wherein society ends up being a mere discussion of it. This departure from the notion of base and superstructure was manifested first in discourse theory as an inversion of economism with reference to 'necessary non-correspondence' (Hirst 1976). After that, post-Marxist discourse theorists completed the post-structuralist reversal of Althusserianism by way of deconstructing Marxism in terms of discourse theory.

This critique comes from Laclau and Mouffe's book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985/2001). They drew concepts from post-Marxist discourse theory while adopting a critical stance to the structural-Marxist line of thought. In respect of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Laclau and Mouffe argue that, in a process of articulation, the 'quilting point' or 'anchoring point' – that is, the 'nodal point' – stitches up the sliding of the signifier. According to them (*ibid*., 113), signifiers float freely in an endless flow of discursivity until they become partially fixed with meaning. A signifier obtains the meaning when it articulates into a chain of signifiers temporarily. The nodal point, where the discourse partially fixes the meaning, forms because of a practice of articulation that changes the identity of its elements. Nevertheless, the identity of elements is never complete. This points to a surplus that is open for change. In this case, articulation is a discursive practice that 'consists in the construction of nodal points' around which the signifying elements come to be temporarily organised or fixed for a moment (*ibid*.). An alternative to this social order is a discourse without any fixed meanings, which is psychotic.[26] The problem in post-structuralism is how to account for social reality, not only in opposition to 'the social system' but in unleashing the radical potential

[26] In *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, post-structuralists Deleuze and Guattari associated schizophrenia with capitalism, metaphorically, whilst according to Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, psychosis is a failure to access the symbolic order, which makes schizophrenic its outlaw quite literally. Deleuze and Guattari consider the symbolic order psychotic, because of capitalism, which it can destroy. From this perspective, the schizophrenic is a revolutionary, and hence not made subject to the symbolic order, while for Lacan he or she is psychotic, which signifies a severe mental illness that the psychoanalyst is not even capable of treating.

for change, if the actors are distorted and the structures are formless and not accorded appropriate shape.

A post-Marxist line of thinking took form in the Essex school of discourse theory and political analysis, wherein Laclau and a group of his students have used and discussed the concept of articulation in their deconstruction of Marxism. According to Laclau and Mouffe, no society is a fully articulated and self-contained whole. These post-Marxists' substitute for the positivist notions of society is antagonisms; that is, the negativity begets the social, and the symbolic differences disperse across the discursive field. As for their discourse theory, they argue that one condition for hegemony is an expansion of a discursive space filled with floating signifiers. This opens a hegemonic struggle over those elements that determine the others. These kinds of signifiers gain different meanings in different contexts, and they articulate the signifying chains through 'nodal points' that structure the discursive field. To become one of these points (i.e., a master-signifier), a signifier is emptied of its meaning and transforms into 'an empty signifier', a signifier that does not have any meanings except in its function as a signifier. In this context, articulation is a discursive practice that 'consists of the construction of nodal points' around which signifying elements become organised or fixed in order to structure a discourse.

In an articulated system of differences as in structural linguistics, there was no space for ideological and political struggles, or for the articulatory practices that could change discursive orders. Instead, articulations take place because of dislocations or the surplus, for fixing the meanings of the floating signifiers in a discursive field. From the political point of view, the 'chains of equivalence' articulate around different subject positions to produce group identities out of differences (e.g., working class versus capitalists). The next step is an attempt to dissolve antagonisms and social divisions (in terms of class, gender, and race, for instance) that resist symbolisation or categorisation. In a democratic nation-state, there is a relatively open discursive space for a political and ideological struggle over hegemony. This renders a change possible. In the preface to the second edition of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau and Mouffe (2001, x) note that they put emphasis on the moments of political articulations, on which hegemony is contingent. In other words, hegemony forms on a contingency, which is a form opposite necessity. In this manner, the authors commit to a conception that there is 'necessarily no correspondence' between, say, the state, the property-owning classes, and bourgeois ideology, which articulate only in

practice (e.g., people versus power bloc, in a struggle for hegemony).[27] In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau and Mouffe build on the critique of both economist and structural-Marxist conceptions of society by means of the Gramscian notion of hegemony.

In Marxist-Leninist ideology, the task for the proletariat was to put an end to the antagonisms by destroying the opponent. After the collapse of the communist ideology, history proved that society never achieves totality that puts an end to the political and wherein there are no antagonisms. Instead of society as a whole, the more recent thinkers conceptualised hegemony in reference to the concept of articulation, which is 'any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified' (*ibid*., 105). In post-Marxism, the result of the articulatory practices is discourse. The discursive construction of the social formation from among distinctive elements means that the product of the practice of articulation is not society. The articulatory practices do not determine the level of 'the social'. In its place, the political constitutes it. This declaration by political scientists was a challenge to sociology as a discipline. Only at the level of the political, Laclau says, can various differences articulate to 'the chains of equivalence' in opposition to 'the other' in an antagonistic relationship. The aim with radical democratic politics is to extend the social in an open discursive field of action and deconstruct the emancipatory project of the Enlightenment in line with the needs of new social movements (see also Critchley & Marchart 2004).

No particular form of the political ideology can fully articulate the social. Nevertheless, a particular hegemonic bloc can actualise hegemony at the political level in order to articulate the social order temporarily. In political struggles for hegemony, articulations are populist or popular, and they are, in their nature, attempts to articulate the differences between the people and the ruling bloc, which is a concern in hegemonic struggles (*ibid*.). In his use of the concept, which differs from Laclau and Mouffe's, Hall (cited in Grossberg 1986b, 62) refers to signifying practices that are cultural and ideological, not necessarily political and

[27] Laclau's 'radical democratic politics' has gained political significance in the practices of the 15-M movement, in which the *indignados* mobilised and occupied the major city centres in Spain on 15 May 2011. This anti-austerity movement arose in Spain at a time of crisis in the 'Eurozone', in opposition to a national ruling bloc consisting of social democrats and conservatives who had succeeded one another in political power for decades in a system that seems corrupt. The leaders of the left-wing populist party Podemos organised a mass movement against the elites (*la casta*), which has changed the ways of speaking about the political system in Spain (see Iglesias 2015). In the 2016 elections, Podemos established a political alliance with United Left (IU) and others, challenging the two-party system, but ended up in the opposition nonetheless. Laclau, who inspired this movement in both theory and practice, died in the spring of 2014 while lecturing in Spain.

discursive. In his theory of ideology, articulation is an ideological practice when it fixes the chains of equivalences in such a manner that they appear to people to be inevitable, not social or discursive constructions of signifying practices floating in the symbolic. According to Hall's reading in 'Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates', ideologies form systems of representation, consisting of concepts, ideas, and myths that materialise in practice (Althusser 1965/1969, 231; Hall 1985, 103–104). Hall (*ibid*., 106–107) insists that people are subject to ideology throughout their lives. In a contrast to Marx's notion of ideology as false consciousness, it empowers people 'to make some sense or intelligibility of their historical situation' (Hall, cited in Grossberg 1986a, 53). This approach differs from some Marxist formulations based on the metaphor of the base and superstructure, formulations wherein there is a 'necessary correspondence' between individual instances of the social formation. It also differs from the inversion of the Marxist view that is manifested in post-structuralist discourse theory. In this mirror image, there are horizontal relations between various practices that do not relate with each other outside a discursive field based on 'necessary non-correspondence'. Articulation is a non-reductionist tool for thinking about these relations in a new way with reference to the 'no necessary correspondence' (Hall 1985, 94) idea, which I address next to conclude my discussion of the problem of reductionism in structural Marxism and its critique.

6.4 The Concept of Articulation: A Manifestation of Non-reductionism?

In cultural studies, the concept of articulation is an academic catchword but also 'a sign to avoid reduction' in both theory and practice (see Chen, cited in Slack 1996, 118). Articulation was one of the key concepts in Hall's cultural theory (see Agnus 1992; Clarke 2015; Grossberg 1986a; 1986b; Slack 1996; Weber 1994). In his early works, Hall links articulation with the idea of an articulated whole of society, then with identity as a site of ideological and political struggles. In relation to the 'social action is language' conceptual metaphor, articulation is a discursive practice of connecting 'distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary "belongingness"' (Hall, cited in Grossberg 1986a, 53). In that context, Hall contests the vulgar-Marxist tendency to think about actors as classes by asking 'how an ideology discovers its subject

rather than how the subject thinks the necessary and inevitable thoughts which belong to it' (*ibid.*). Note that Hall uses the concept of ideology with a concept of articulation, unlike discourse theorists such as Foucault, for whom a 'discursive formation' regulates dispersion of diverse contradictory elements in a discourse (Foucault 1972, 38, 44). Although discursive formations allow thinking about the relations of power and knowledge, it does not help much with the questions of resistance and ideological dominance, which Hall (cited in Grossberg 1986a, 48) has cited as his theoretical and political concerns.

Post-Marxist discourse theory does not provide the framework for Hall's thinking. Instead, its foundation is the metaphor 'society is an articulated whole'. The concept of articulation that it encompasses provided him with a way to theorise on the complex social formation consisting of different practices that stands for 'society'.[28] Hall then supplements his reading with a dialogue with post-structuralists, for whom society consists of a lack of totality or an absent whole in an open discursive field of action where there are no rules and restrictions other than language as a play of differences. The problem of the fully discursive position is that 'there is nothing to practice but its discursive aspect' (Hall, cited in Grossberg 1986a, 56), which means that anything is articulable with anything else out of the floating differences. Articulating signifying elements into a discursive moment in such a manner as changes their identity is only the first moment of articulation. The second moment of articulation is a result of the ways in which 'discursive moments' 'do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects' (*ibid.*, 53). Some articulations can break easily, and they are subject to disarticulation. Others are stronger, as is the case with organised religions. They offer their subjects a worldview but also an opportunity to form their identity. Therefore, religions are relatively persistent in the face of social change. However, no articulation lasts forever. None is permanent. That is, articulations are historical and have to be both constituted and maintained in practice.

In this context, the Jamaican-born Hall (*ibid.*, 54) uses an illustrative example of the Rastafarians rearticulating the signifying elements from the Bible to mesh with their experiences through means of expression such as reggae music that spoke to people in their own terms. Rastafarianism is a religious ideology that allowed many detached people in the west Caribbean to make sense of their subordinate position as subjects living in exile from 'the Promised Land'.

[28] See Althusser's additional note on social formations in Ben Brewster's glossary in *For Marx*: 'A concept denoting "society" so-called. L.A.' (Althusser 1969, 251).

Articulations that first appeared completely arbitrary to the world at large were expressive of the black diaspora. As ideological and political subjects, people obtained a voice, which turned into a social force and articulated many as subjects to a Rastafari movement. Most of these people were poor and racially discriminated against. These circumstances do not reduce to any specific class position or cultural experience as such, although class and race are significant. The articulations occurred in a specific politico-historical conjuncture, which means that they have their own 'conditions of existence' (Hall 1985, 113–114). Hall's cultural analysis of politico-historical conjunctures draws, in this context, from Gramsci's and Althusser's works, which were fundamental for the Birmingham school' of cultural studies, which built on conjunctural analyses and descriptions of the articulations between different instances of social formation.

A particular conjuncture results from contradictions and overdetermination; this negates the idea of necessary correspondence. The notion of a conjuncture (Brewster, cited in Althusser 1969, 250; see Grossberg 2006; Koivisto & Lahtinen 2012) has a double meaning: it refers to joining or being a joint (that is, an articulation) and to an economic juncture or crisis. In this context, theoretically informed Marxist political practice, the purpose of which was to analyse the capitalist mode of production for the benefit of the socialist revolution, turned out to be an apt tool for analysing and intervening in hegemonic struggles, instead. In Hall's own politico-historical conjuncture, a post-war hegemonic relationship between Labour and the Conservatives ruptured and turned into a conflict between workers and employers in the mid-1970s. In Britain, Thatcherism (see 'The Great Moving Right Show', Hall 1979) challenged the old social order in consequence of economic crisis, racial conflict, and syndicalist confrontation that took place in a backward and heavy industrial structure at the coming apart of the British Empire. It contested the hegemony based on the consent of its subjects that had been built on rapid economic growth governed by the welfare state, which was under attack. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher started to dismantle the welfare state through cutbacks in the public sector, applying free-market ideology. She articulated her political project via 'authoritarian populism' that followed conservative moral codes and rules of behaviour from the Victorian era. According to Hall (1988), this articulated into a social force in terms of an ideology filled with anxiety wherein deliberately apolitical ways of speaking found subjects for the ideology through exhorting the citizens to recognise that the state was out of control.

Thatcherism addressed entrepreneurial middle-class people who searched for a proper identity in a time of historic change and social conflicts, when the old social fabric seemed to be breaking into pieces. Hegemony means not rule but consent out of various competing and conflicting interests articulated to a ruling bloc. After this point, fragmented and heterogeneous ideological elements can articulate to the 'common-sense' conception of the social world, with which many people can identify. In the turn from the imaginary of a welfare state to the individual's state of well-being (see Kortesoja 2015 for presentation of the Finnish context in this connection),[29] Thatcher even stated that 'there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families'. In other words, there are only the actions of individual men, women, and families forming the nucleus for community life, from which others are excluded as surplus people (or 'parasites'; see Serres in Pyyhtinen 2016, 34–36). After the Conservatives, Tony Blair's 'New Labour' took a similar course, based on the 'Third Way' of Giddens, according to which there are no longer any conflicting interests related to gender, class, and race and there is only globalisation before which all people are equal (Hall 1998, 9). In this context, political actors were not only citizens or consumers but subject to law-like economic forces that seemed as unavoidable as what is found in economism, leaving less space for the political and ideological struggles for hegemony. This formed a foundation also for anti-globalisation movements etc.

In his use of the word 'articulation', Hall means connections or links that, rather than being necessary, require specific conditions of existence, which means that they have their own determinations. This leads to the dissolution of some articulations and the constitution of new ones in their politico-historical conjunctures (Hall 1985, 113). For example, racial and ethnic differences can be dominant ways of quilting the ideological chains in particular social formations.

[29] By analysing a Finnish women's lifestyle magazine that has discussed issues of beauty and health for half a century, I point to a change in its visual modes of representation driven by affective and pleasure-oriented articulations. I suggest that the magazine composes affective 'mattering maps' (Grossberg 1992) that guide its readers in taking care of and feeling good about themselves. To tackle the question of what is depicted as beauty and good for one's health and what is left out of the discussion, I seek a contextual and historical understanding connected with the articulations that order the contemporary discourse on well-being in accordance with the 'self-governance' and 'body-shaping' practices of wellness and beauty care. In my essay, the concept of articulation is a 'practice that consists in the construction of nodal points' (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 113) around which the affective elements of well-being are temporarily organised or fixed for a moment. In other words, it takes the discourse-theoretical idea of articulation into practice in cultural analysis to map a politico-historical conjuncture and a change in the notions of well-being.

In this process, the word ‘black’, for example, can signify a surplus meaning in a chain of equivalence that articulates both with the articulation of capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production and with racial discrimination in every instance within the social formation. In consequence, ethnic and racial differences can articulate with the exploitation of, for example, black and female migrant workers who work in the service sector. Nevertheless, racism is also an ideological discourse. It exists not just at the level of material practices. It is a social or discursive construction out of conflicting ideological elements forming an ideological discourse that has an influence on the common sense of the people. What something is, in other words, receives its meaning in relation to others. Chains of equivalence between distinct ideological elements that are different in nature are products of articulation. That is a non-reductionist view of both agency and structure, one in which the subjects are subject to the structures yet are also able to act and struggle for their change. If one uses the conceptual metaphor of articulation, the elementary forms of ‘the social’ do not articulate by themselves, and actors have to twist and bend the ‘members of the social body’ into a certain position in a struggle for hegemony, in order to use a ‘power of articulation’.

6.5 Conclusion

Neo-materialists build their social theory on contemporary French thought, actor-network theory, and metaphysics, in their strivings to reimagine society and the social. The ontology is that of a process of becoming informed by the materiality of objects that are thought of in a relational manner. Taking a speculative approach, this philosophical way of thinking focuses on temporality and the materiality of flows in a manner that does not make a distinction between nature and culture nor any other instances, as would require jumping from one level to another. In other words, the ontology is flat and the conceptual metaphors are often biological, such as that of the rhizome, with the stress being on growth. In this way of thinking, the materiality of things in relation to one another takes the form of an open network, with neither a beginning nor an end with respect to structure (i.e., any system of meanings such as language) vs. human action, which is anthropocentric from a neo-materialist standpoint. The concept of articulation has shifted from the conceptual metaphor of ‘limbs of the social system’ toward a discursive practice that brings forth and organises signifying elements via nodal

points with emphasis on human action. In post-structuralist discourse theory, articulation seems to be a practice connecting or cutting off the elements of signifying chains discursively by means of language used in the domain of articulations. The idea of an articulated whole of society, which Marx's notion of *Gliederung* described in decades past, has become out of date. In addition, the ideological distinction between Marxist humanism and structural-Marxist philosophy that was so important in a post-Stalinist era is not relevant anymore. It showcases an epistemic shift from the structure of society to the political action of new social movements. On one hand, the concept of articulation is a sign of a break that can lead to reductionism wherein society turns into a discussion about it. On the other hand, it expands a discursive field wherein struggles for hegemony are contingent on political articulations.

'No necessary correspondence' between the individual instances of a social formation in reference to articulation means that articulations do not have any *a priori* guarantee. This is a relational and non-reductionist approach. Addressing politics and ideology not as a superstructure but as discursive practices is a new approach in relation to the structural-Marxist paradigm. It also takes account of cultural and political agency and social change in the era of social movements. At the same time, however, the overall picture of society can fragment to actors, individual elements that are structured in relations in network-like fields of action (i.e., discursive fields). Critics of Althusserianism rarely take account of specific intellectual and political formations and the contexts that have been imprinted on the discussions. Structural Marxism is not a form of economism and class reductionism but critique of them with respect to ideology. Structural-Marxist thinking has a tendency to conflate actors with elements of social structure such as classes in a way that demands a theoretical supplement from discourse theory, which builds on the conceptual metaphor 'social action is language'. As a replacement for 'necessarily no correspondence' between different instances, which in the critique of structural Marxism is partly responsible for the upward reductionism, economy and society, for example, can function 'as if'' they were a language, which means that they have a structure that operates as any system of differences does. Hall pointed out the crucial difference between the metaphorical notion '*x* operates like *y*' and its reduction to '*x* = *y*' by means of the concept of articulation (Hall in Grossberg 1986a, 57). Next, I conclude this discussion, in the final chapter of the dissertation.

7 Discussion of Articulation

Social scientists do not operate outside the politico-historical conjuncture contemporaneous with their work, which means that the circumstances inform both theory and practice. In the way a poet uses metaphors as an art form to combine unconnected words, thereby associating meanings with them by creating new links via expression, social scientists use conceptual metaphors to turn abstract notions such as society and the social into more concrete concepts. With reference to articulation, society was portrayed first by means of the anatomical or biological metaphors, which require that the subjects be either dead or organisms other than human beings. 'Articulation' is cognate with the German notion of structure or order by means of which structural Marxists grasped society as a hierarchical articulated whole (*Gliederung*) consisting of the limbs of the social system. Within this conceptual metaphor, articulation is like a linkage between individual members of the body. The conceptual metaphor whereby society is conceived of as an articulated whole was used by German idealists such as Hegel, whose vocabulary Marx adapted and then used in the critique of those very Hegelian colleagues and classical political economists. The German term 'Gliederung', in Western Marxism, has been translated into English as 'articulation'. It has a double meaning, applied for 'a structure or linkage' and 'articulate verbal expression'.

The Latin idea of *articulus* was an anatomical or biological notion used in referring to the bones and the joints, or a state of connection, and the nodes or nodal points of a plant. It has been applied also to combining of elements, parts, or subdivisions, especially in speech. At first, it meant 'the subdivision of a spoken chain into syllables' (Saussure 1959, 10). Then, it was 'the subdivision of the chain of meanings into significant units' – i.e., 'a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas' (*ibid.*). French new economic anthropologists refined the conceptual metaphor of articulation by showing that the social formations in developing countries consisted of articulations of capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production, articulations wherein the capitalist mode dominated but did not necessarily destroy pre-capitalist forms such as the domestic

mode of production. Usually, the mode-of-production controversy has been manifested in theory with reference to Marx's *Capital*, as in the first issues of *Economy and Society* (see Wolpe 1980), or empirically in connection with anthropological fieldwork (Binsbergen & Geschiere 1985). In the structural-Marxist return to Marx, there are several alternatives to the classical readings of Marx.

Marx adopted his usage of the notion of *Gliederung* from Hegel's work, and he employed it to counter the reification of social relations in the form of abstract ideas. In a contrast against the hypostasis of totality in the German philosophy of idealism, Marx considered society an articulated and hierarchically structured complex whole (Weber 1994, 614–615). Instead of abstract ideas, the starting point for Marx's critique in *The German Ideology* was the 'real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live' (Marx & Engels 1976, 31). In an articulated whole of society, 'the ideality of moments' turned into the members, the elements of the unity; this marked an epistemic shift away from universal ideas and toward particular concepts scrutinised in relation to ideology and the capitalist mode of production. According to Althusser, Marx was the founder of a new science, focused on the capitalist mode of production. This view put emphasis on Marx's theory not only in respect of the capital-logic in philosophy or class exploitation at the level of the factory floor but as a complex process of contradictions and determinations besides the economic with reference to an articulated whole of society. The conceptual metaphor of articulation wherein 'society is an articulated whole' takes account of the stratified nature of social reality. Accordingly, it can be used to depict society as a complex, hierarchical, and articulated order, not a self-subsistent whole akin to nature.

The conceptual metaphors of society as an organism or a machine, which I have addressed in the second chapter of my thesis, stemmed from the natural and physical sciences, whose functionalist and evolutionary imageries structural Marxists criticised in their return to Marx. In 1960s France, Althusser retained Marx's *Gliederung* and elaborated on the conceptual metaphor of articulation wherein 'society is an articulated whole'. Althusser, as a member of the French Communist Party, insisted on an epistemological break from Marxist humanism. This was analogous to Marx's turn away from the Hegelian idealism and bourgeois philosophy found in 'German ideology'. Althusser made his critique with a critical stance to Gramsci, a former leader of the Italian Communist Party who had already contested economism wherein the political and ideological instances of society merely express the fundamental class contradictions built on

the economic basis. Gramsci himself considered the metaphor of the 'base and superstructure' presented in Marx's *preface to Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) ('The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life'). In place of mechanical or structural causation, in which the economic determines the superstructure, Gramsci introduced the notion of hegemony in his Marxist 'philosophy of praxis', to reclaim the political activity. Instead of society existing as an articulated whole, the connections and breaks have to be articulated in practice.

The question, then, is about the order in which to articulate 'the limbs of the social system'. Laclau adopted the concept of articulation for his discourse theory on the basis of the 'social action is language' metaphor of articulation. Laclau (1977, 99) assumed that, in themselves, 'ideological 'elements […] have no necessary class connotation, and that this connotation is only the result of the articulation of those elements in a concrete ideological discourse'. In a rebuttal to Laclau, who was willing to accept any political articulation of the elements of an ideological discourse, Hall has pointed out that a specific articulation of certain ideological discourses has held through long expanses of history. Articulations occur in a specific politico-historical conjuncture. This means that they are a product of actions that are neither necessary nor inevitable results of articulations, and the articulations do not last forever. Hall's ideas are made clear in his analysis of Thatcherism, addressing the ideological discourse of authoritarian populism composed in 'a contradictory juncture between the logics of the market and possessive individualism, on the one hand, and the logics of an organic conservatism, on the other hand' (Hall 1988, 53). This led to Hall's criticism of 'necessary non-correspondence' of discursive practices, wherein 'a radical dispersal of the notion of power' to 'everywhere' turns into a form of reduction upward, a form that appeared in Foucauldian and Derridean threads of post-structuralist thinking.

In Hall's own words, Foucault applied a notion of 'difference' without having a concept of 'articulation' as 'unity-in-difference' (*ibid*.). Because of this, post-structuralist discourse theory built only on a play of differences with regard to power used in the discursive field. What Foucault lacked was Gramsci's fleshed-out conception of hegemony hinging on consent in the ethico-political sphere. The latter takes account of 'the economic' and the actions of individuals in organising the state and civil society. The notion of articulation found in Derrida's writings is similar to that of *différance*, a difference that cannot be

heard, only seen. Thereby, Derrida and other philosophers challenged those structuralist and semiotic interpretations concentrating on speech and other systems structured in the manner of a language. In post-structuralism, the subject's identity is not fixed and the meaning is always deferred. This view leads to the idea of a decentred subject and the endless play of signification. By showing the theoretical limits of structuralism, post-structuralism supplemented it and made a significant contribution, but at the same time it has given birth to a new problematic, which I have addressed in the previous chapter as 'flat ontology'. At the same time, however, post-structuralist critique of structural Marxism needs to be taken seriously. According to Grossberg, for example, investments in a discursive field such as those of popular culture are not only ideological, but also affective, which means that they matter in different ways to different people, in line with certain 'structures of feeling' (Williams 1977). For Grossberg (1992, 61), cultural analysis of articulations means mapping out these interrelated vectors that point in many directions and considering numerous real-world connections. According to Grossberg (1986b, 72–73), anti-reductionism of the sort found in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy is horizontal and multi-dimensional; it builds on a process ontology that is not vertically aligned, in a contrast to structural Marxism. According to its critics, the structural-Marxist paradigm takes a narrow theoretical approach, homing in on mere ideological effects, while the post-structuralism-inspired cultural analysts and discourse theorists have taken account of real-world experiences with notions such as affect and affectivity that go beyond mere representation, signification, and culture.

In structural linguistics, which was a pilot science for the French structuralist movement, 'articulation' was first an anatomical conceptual metaphor for the linguistic parts of language; these link formless thoughts and sounds to form distinctive signs via language, which forms a system of differences. The 'social action is language' conceptual metaphor has its roots in Saussure's book *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) and its structuralist reading, wherein language occurs in 'a domain of articulations'. The latter conceptual metaphor is built on the structuralist paradigm, which became fashionable with the reappearance of structural linguistics together with social anthropology and psychoanalysis in 1960s France. For French structuralism, as in structural linguistics, language is a system of differences. Instead of following a linear representation of time, language is synchronic, which means that history became a 'process without a subject'. One problem of this approach was the universalistic notion of the subject, which structuralists' anti-humanism was an attempt to eliminate but

instead ended up highlighting. It did not take account of actors' subjective meanings. Structuralists' failure to articulate an alternative to phenomenology for coming to terms with the transcendental subject led to post-structuralist critique. This built on the structuralist idea of social action as language, but it also took into account the phenomenological approach that the structuralists had rejected. This conceptualisation is criticised in those imageries that portray action as within a discursive field (as in a language-game or a play of differences). In this context, there is an epistemic shift from 'articulated language' as 'a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas' (Saussure 1916/1959, 10) to a discursive practice, wherein a discourse is articulated from the signifiers that float freely in a discursive field until they are temporarily fixed.

'Articulation' is neither a substantial concept addressing self-subsistent wholes that act under their own rules and norms nor one to do with social interaction wherein the action of individuals does not affect the political. Instead, it was an integral part of ideological and theoretical controversies in discussions that opened a space for hegemonic struggle. In the 1960s, as politics and ideology began changing in Europe in the age of new social movements, Marxism opened itself to a critique of ideology, as addressed in the third chapter. This opened ground for other struggles, in which the working class was no longer a privileged and universalistic subject. This, in turn, freed a discursive space for political articulations that seemed a negation of the Marxist premises wherein the economic and class determine the political objectives or hegemonic task of a certain group of people. Now, post-Marxist discourse theorists have replaced the complex notion of society with the idea of antagonisms – that is, with negativity at the core of the social that is a product of articulations. At the same time, a fully discursive position leads to a form of reductionism wherein society reduces to mere discussion about society. While conflation of actors with structure implies a self-sufficient whole without any actors other than classes, post-Marxist discourse theory appears to conflate structures with action in a manner that is blind to structure other than a 'play of differences'.

To avoid 'reductionism downward', a problem typical of vulgar-Marxist thought, one has to acknowledge that the ideological and political do not reduce to the economic, as Gramsci and Althusser both have pointed out in their readings of Marx. In economism, the class conflict between capital and labour determines society in a way that leaves no discursive space for other types of contradictions, such as race/ethnicity and sex/gender. Articulations structure individuals as the subjects of ideological discourses in a manner contingent on the social relations

and forces of production that bind people together and change the ways in which they conceive of themselves and others. At the same time, the process is an aleatory one, not fixed but open to changes. The concept of articulation adds constraints and affordances to thinking about these relations and their formation in relation to structures (e.g., of feelings) like language. From the structural-Marxist standpoint, stressing the 'articulation of modes of production', for example, it seems that the economic modes of production can articulate as a language does without the researcher falling into the reductionism of a fully discursive position (i.e., condensing society to mere discussion of society). In other words, the economic refers to a relatively independent structure articulating with other instances of the social formation in such a manner that the notion of society does not disappear. Next, I discuss this spatial dimension of the conceptual metaphor of articulation via an excursion to more recent discussion, from the 1990s.

In gender studies, the concept of intersectionality is often employed instead of that of articulation. Only on rare occasions do the two appear in tandem (e.g., Verloo 2006). Work on intersectionality focuses mainly on structural inequality that is directly related to the experiences of people and political action in respect of change. In intersection theory (e.g., Davis 2008), such discriminating and naturalising social categories as race, class, and gender connect and interact with each other. In work to advance sexual, racial, and gender equality, law educator Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the notion of intersectionality in the late 1980s. From the standpoint of this black feminist, for white middle-class women, sexual equality had turned into a struggle with men for equal rights and racial equality was a struggle against police violence for black men.

Work on intersectionality challenged the politics of the feminist and civil-rights movements, which were blind to their privileged identities, identities that did not take account of such experiences as domestic violence perpetrated against women of colour, who were excluded from both of these struggles. Challenging the notion of the political as an instrumental action that requires given universal subjects such as women or working-class people at the outset, work on intersectionality became a method wherein race, class, and gender articulated with one another by tying them all into the same discussion on subordination of black / working-class / female / homosexual people under the predominant norm of whites / the middle-class / heterosexuals / men. One problem in articulating these identity issues with the experiences of class-, gender-, and race-based oppression, however, is the use of discursive post-structuralist deconstruction of

the categories instead of assessment of the implications of actual policies that lead to inequalities in practice. Approaching the question of ethnicity as a class-based and gendered category, or sex as a racialized and heteronormative issue, can lead to a viewpoint from which all differences become the same (i.e., each is a sign of oppression), which makes the theory of intersectionality indifferent to their political articulations.

Empirical studies (e.g., Verloo 2006; Farris & de Jong 2014) have shown that the above-mentioned intersectional differences are much more complex and meaningful than some theorists have suggested. In policy documents on the anti-discrimination laws in the EU, for example, gender is a binary and naturalised category based on sex while sexual orientation has a broader spectrum (e.g., LGBT). Race, in turn, is a more biological notion than ethnicity is, whilst class is a dichotomous social division that can be crossed via social mobility. These social categorisations in policy documents are products of political articulations by social movements (Verloo 2006, 219). Political articulation stitches things to one another in such a manner that their identity changes, or it unstitches the closure by emphasising negativity at the core of every identity (in anti-essentialism). Class as a social category results from the struggles in workers' movements that have brought it to the heart of the political party system, while race and ethnicity are only just emerging on the political agenda, as fruit of social and discursive categorisations. Contrastingly, some institutionalised distinctions based on sexual orientation have been revoked via same-sex marriage (*ibid*.). Discussion of gender as a socially constructed category comes from feminist discourse theorist Judith Butler, whose *Gender Trouble* is one of the most cited pieces of feminist literature, one that has informed feminism in both theory and practice.

In *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (2000), Butler describes the Gramscian notion of hegemony as aligned with the Foucauldian and Derridean branch of discourse theory, whereas Laclau and Žižek had committed to the notion of political articulation in line with Lacanian discourse theory.[30] From the

[30] In 1998, *Philosophy and Literature* recognised Butler for the worst academic writing of the year because of the following sentence on the notion of (re)articulation, from her correspondence with Laclau: 'The move from a structuralist account in which capital is understood to structure social relations in relatively homologous ways to a view of hegemony in which power relations are subject to repetition, convergence, and rearticulation brought the question of temporality into the thinking of structure, and marked a shift from a form of Althusserian theory that takes structural totalities as theoretical objects to one in which the insights into the contingent possibility of structure inaugurate a renewed conception of hegemony as bound up with the contingent sites and strategies of the rearticulation of power' (Butler 1997, 13). In my own less recognised words, there is an epistemic shift away from a theoretical Althusserian conception of social formation (i.e.,

latter Gramscian standpoint on intersectionality, inequalities are not all the same. Each is distinct, and this must be taken into account in political strategies and struggles for hegemony. In doing so, work in political articulation is not separate from feminist theory of intersectionality. In the end, why should one use the concept of articulation rather than synonyms such as 'connection', 'hinge', 'joint', 'juncture', or 'intersectionality', or, alternatively, 'enunciation', 'expression', 'pronunciation', 'performative', or 'utterance'.

The concept of articulation takes account of both spatial connections and of discursive links between differences and the acts of giving expression. Therefore, it compasses the relations of both structure and action and their change in a non-reductionist manner. 'Articulation' articulates its user to the structuralist and Marxist traditions but in such a way that its origins are lost. Because of the change in imagery of society and the social, structuralism and Marxism do not belong to theoretical education of social scientists who draw their concepts rather from contemporary French thought, which has been openly anti-structuralist and anti-Marxist since the mid-1970s. Because of the politico-historical conjuncture of recent years, structuralism and Marxism have not held favourable associations for social scientists since the late 1980s. In the years since, 'articulation' has been conceptualised as a discursive practice in line with the 'discursive turn' in the social sciences, wherein the identity of individual elements has come to be seen as contingent on the actions of individuals and changes by means of articulatory practices in an open discursive field of action. The contemporary usage comes from the Essex school of discourse theory and political analysis, which conceives of society as a structured totality and views 'the social' as a product of the articulations at the political level. The problem with this approach is that the 'society is an articulated whole' conceptual metaphor is consigned to the dustbin of history, from which any return to Marx becomes a difficult task. In this respect, the discursive turn is a turn away from Marxism. I argue that the structural-Marxist conceptual metaphor of society as an articulated whole is worth keeping if one is to avoid reduction upward wherein everything turns into the discursive (see Table 1, 'Two types of reductionism, in structural Marxism and its post-Marxist critique', in Section 6.2).

'structural totalities') and toward political articulation, which takes account of the contingency and temporality of structures that are not givens. In the above, lengthy sentence, which is indeed in need of some editing, she pins down the concept of hegemony in connection with the defeat of structural-Marxist philosophy (note that Butler defended her dissertation on Hegel; cf. Althusser's take on Marx's epistemological break, which formed a new problematic, that of the capitalist mode of production).

The contribution of my study of the imageries of society and social action and their metaphorical character in structural Marxism and its critique involves taking account of social and cultural theory and the problem of reductionism. The key lesson to be learnt from my work is that the conceptual metaphors for society and social action are more than theoretical building blocks. Conceptual metaphors take us back and forth between the abstract and concrete levels of meaning, and they serve as the points of reference in our sociological discussions. Their excess or surplus is subject to the theoretical and political struggles in the ways in which social theorists and political analysts do, or do not, portray society and the social. The imagery that we build shapes our understanding of what is going on in the circumstances in which we currently live. There is no point, however, in returning to academic and theoretical discussions of the past if the work does not articulate into a collective effort contesting the prevailing imageries of society and social action, both in theory and in practice. For the above-mentioned reasons, there is a collective imperative to contribute to a critique of economism and challenge the neoliberal premises of academic and public debates as changes in the state, government, and individual life (as in changes affecting work and unemployment) and other matters related to issues of well-being (e.g., health and social welfare) take place in more and more individualistic and competition-oriented terms. Because of new forms of economism, in which politics and ideology are presented as if separate from the economic (that is, from the capitalist mode of production and the related controversies), there is a call to look once more to critical theory and use it as an analytical weapon in a new politico-historical conjuncture.

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