

ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF NEOLIBERALISM: A CRITICAL REALIST  
MARXIST APPROACH

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

BAVER YEŞİLYURT

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

MARCH 2022



Approval of the thesis:

**ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF NEOLIBERALISM: A CRITICAL REALIST  
MARXIST APPROACH**

submitted by **BAVER YEŞİLYURT** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of **Master of Science in Economics, the Graduate School of Social  
Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI  
Dean  
Graduate School of Social Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Şirin SARAÇOĞLU  
Head of Department  
Department of Economics

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Serkan KÜÇÜKŞENEL  
Supervisor  
Department of Economics

---

**Examining Committee Members:**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muammer KAYMAK (Head of the Examining Committee)  
Hacettepe University  
Department of Economics

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Serkan KÜÇÜKŞENEL (Supervisor)  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Economics

---

Assist. Prof. Dr. Çınla AKDERE  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Economics

---



**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

**Name, Last Name:** Baver YEŞİLYURT

**Signature:**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF NEOLIBERALISM: A CRITICAL REALIST MARXIST APPROACH**

**YEŞİLYURT, Baver**

**M.S., The Department of Economics**

**Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Serkan KÜÇÜKŞENEL**

**March 2022, 132 pages**

The present thesis dwells upon the conviction that an appropriate understanding of neoliberalism should consider capital-labor relations, intra-capital relations, relations between social classes and the state, and last but not least, international capitalist system in its totality. Although Marxist political economy tradition embraces the multidisciplinary research efforts, Marxist definitions of neoliberalism are somehow under the risk of slipping into reductionism. In this thesis, which adopts a Marxist political economy view, a new understanding of the notion of neoliberalism is introduced by considering the multiplicity of social structures, generative mechanisms and strategies of various agencies regarding the class struggle, in a way that is consistent with the Critical Realist approach of Roy Bhaskar's. However, this conception also refrains from reducing the notion to mere social structures or accumulation strategies. Neoliberalism itself is defined as a system, a catalyst that mediates structure and agency. Neoliberalism is a market-oriented project without subject, led by collective imperialism, dominated by financial capital, subjugated by labor, supported by the economic regulatory role of the authoritarian state and market

ideology. The essence of this system will be sought in the tension between commodification and resistance to commodification that is through double movement.

**Keywords:** Neoliberalism, Critical Realism, Accumulation Strategies, Marxist Political Economy, Double Movement

## ÖZ

### NEOLİBERALİZMİN ONTOLOJİK STATÜSÜ: ELEŞTİREL REALİST MARKSİST BİR YAKLAŞIM

YEŞİLYURT, Baver

Yüksek Lisans, İktisat Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Serkan KÜÇÜKŞENEL

Mart 2022, 132 sayfa

Bu tezde, yeterli bir neoliberalizm anlayışının, sermaye-emek ilişkilerini, sermaye içi ilişkileri, sosyal sınıflar ve devlet arasındaki ilişkileri ve son olarak, bütünsel olarak uluslararası kapitalist sistemi dikkate alması gerektiği kanaati üzerinde durmaktadır. Marksist politik ekonomi geleneği çok disiplinli araştırma çabalarını kucaklasa da, neoliberalizmin Marksist tanımları bir şekilde indirgemeciliğe kayma riski altındadır. Marksist ekonomi politik bakış açısını benimseyen bu tezde, sınıf mücadelesine ilişkin toplumsal yapıların, doğurgan mekanizmaların ve çeşitli aktörlerin stratejilerinin çokluğu ele alınarak, Roy Bhaskar'ın Eleştirel Realist yaklaşımı ile tutarlı olarak, neoliberalizm kavramına yeni bir anlayış getirilmektedir. Ancak bu anlayış, kavramı salt toplumsal yapılara veya birikim stratejilerine indirgemekten de kaçınır. Neoliberalizmin kendisi bir sistem, yapı ve failliği dolayımlayan bir katalizör olarak tanımlanır. Neoliberalizm, kolektif emperyalizmin önderlik ettiği, finansal sermayenin egemen olduğu, emeğin boyun eğdirildiği, otoriter devlet ve piyasa ideolojisinin ekonomik düzenleyici rolüyle desteklenen, öznesi olmayan, piyasa odaklı bir projedir. Bu sistemin özü, metalaştırma ile çifte hareket yoluyla metalaşmaya karşı direniş arasındaki gerilimde aranacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Neoliberalizm, Eleştirel Realizm, Birikim Stratejileri, Marksist Politik İktisat, Çifte Hareket

*To Ahmet YILDIZ*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Hüseyin ÖZEL, who is my co-advisor, for his endless patience that he has donated me. Especially, for his patience for listening to what he already knows. It will always be a great honor to be his pupil. I would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Serkan KÜÇÜKŞENEL for his full support and great tolerance. I would like to thank Assist. Prof. Dr. Çınla AKDERE for her tolerance.

I would like to thank my mom, Fezile. But for her great dedication, it would have been impossible for me to educate myself. I would like to thank my father Melik and uncle Bülent. I started to read books from their library for the first time. I would like to thank my twin brother, Rohat. I experienced whole the life's toughness together with him. I would like to thank my uncle Fuat RESULOĞULLARI and aunt-in-law Ayşe RESULOĞULLARI. I have always felt their kindness and support throughout my education life.

I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Arzu AKKOYUNLU WIGLEY, Prof. Dr. Sevinç MIHCI, Prof. Dr. Hakan MIHCI, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muammer KAYMAK, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Özgür TEOMAN, Assist. Prof. Dr. Aykut ATTAR for their great support during my Hacettepe undergraduate years.

I would like to thank my colleagues from Hacettepe İktisat, Umut GÜNDOĞDU, Melis YILDIZ, Kadir DİKİCİ, Onurcan YAZICI, Oğuzhan ATA, Furkan ÇUBUKCU and Betül ÖZTÜRK for their full support during writing thesis.

I would like to thank to Emre Can DENİZHAN for illuminating me with his brilliant mind. I would like to thank Duygu ÇELİK, who accompanied me throughout my economics education.

And lastly, I would like to thank Dr. Hakan ARSLAN. Probably, I would not have decided to be a scholar if I had not met his wise brilliance.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
ÖZ.....	vi
DEDICATION.....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	x
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiii
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. ABSTRACT ANALYSIS .....	18
2.1. Abstract Structures and Mechanisms .....	19
2.1.1. Bhaskar’s Critical Realist Ontology and Epistemology .....	20
2.1.2. Marx’s Level of Abstractions and Shaikh’s Real Competition.....	22
2.2. Formal Structures and Mechanisms .....	32
3. CONCRETE ANALYSIS .....	36
3.1. Overdetermination and Contradiction.....	37
3.2. Actualization of Mechanisms.....	45
3.2.1. Actualization .....	46
3.2.2. Otopoiesis.....	51
3.2.3. Apparatuses as Topos .....	57
4. NEOLIBERALISM: A NEW LOOK .....	65

4.1. Empirical Domain-Structure Level: Institutions as Locus.....	66
4.2. Empirical Domain-Action Level: Agency and Accumulation Strategies.....	68
4.2.1. Structure-Agency Articulation.....	69
4.2.2. Agency and Accumulation Strategies.....	75
4.3. Empirical Domain-Meso Level: Commodification and Double Movement...	90
4.4. Neoliberalism .....	94
5. CONCLUSION .....	105
REFERENCES.....	114
APPENDICES	
A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET .....	121
B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU .....	132

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Levels of Abstractions in Marx-Shaikh <sup>(1)</sup> .....	24
Table 2.2 Levels of Abstractions in Aglietta-Baran, Sweezy <sup>(1)</sup> .....	33

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Schema of Neoliberalism <sup>(1), (2)</sup> .....	99
--	----

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Neoliberalism has been a research topic that has remained on the radar of Marxist political economists since the 1970s, when it became involved in the lives of societies. Since the day it became the subject of research, the definition of neoliberalism has run the risk of being identified with or reduced to various other events. Among these, it is possible to count financialization, flexible production and accumulation by dispossession at the first moment. The method proposed in this thesis will draw attention to the drawbacks of examining neoliberalism in a causal relationship with events such as financialization. Accordingly, in order to understand root causes of these events, we need to understand the real mechanisms that generate these events, and how these events are created by them. Financialization itself should be conceived not as a mechanism that generate neoliberalism, but as an event born out of a certain way of conjunction of various mechanisms.

The definition of the current stage or phase of capitalism as neoliberalism led researchers to conclude that the events that took place in this period were generated by neoliberalism. Nevertheless, it will be argued in this thesis that the current stage or phase of capitalism can only be defined by the transformation that will occur in capitalism's mechanisms and neoliberalism is not one of these mechanisms. Consequently, it would be wrong to describe the current phase of capitalism as neoliberal capitalism.

When appropriate, neoliberalism has been tried to be theorized as an accumulation strategy among others implemented for capital accumulation. From this perspective, neoliberalism is sometimes identified with flexibility in employment, sometimes with financial accumulation strategies, and sometimes with dispossession. In this thesis, it

will be argued that although neoliberalism is in contact with all these dimensions of agency, it cannot be reduced to one of them. On the other hand, accumulation strategies are not distinguishing characteristics of neoliberalism. In this thesis, while it is accepted that neoliberalism is in contact with accumulation strategies and social structures, an autonomous status will be offered to it.

The main aim of this thesis is to define neoliberalism as a catalyst which is a point of contact that mediates structural tendencies of laws of motion of capital accumulation and accumulation strategies which refers to agents' struggles. This definition of neoliberalism can be reorganized in order to specify the role of specific structures of current phase of capitalism. Neoliberalism is a market-oriented project without subject led by collective imperialism, dominated by financial capital, subjugated by labor, supported by the economic regulatory role of the authoritarian state and market ideology. 'Process without subject' concept is a theoretical invention of Althusser in order to emphasize the role of contradictions and corresponding social classes in societies' complexity. According to Althusser, objective places of social classes are determined by aspects of contradictions (Althusser, 1976b, p. 50). Therefore, existence of class struggle implies that "there is no subject *of* history, there are subjects acting *in* history" (Althusser, 1976b, p. 94, italics original). Therefore, referring to 'process without subject', Althusser does not deny the role of subject in history, but emphasize the plurality of subjects in history and the complex outcome which results from complex process of class struggle. Neoliberalism is a project without subject, because it is not a project of single class or class fraction. That is, it is a project which is a complex outcome of class struggles. In the end, no class fraction can fully control neoliberal policies. The essence of this system will be sought in the tensions between commodification of labor, land and money; and resistance to commodification process mediated through Karl Polanyi's notion of double movement.

Defining the determinations of neoliberalism requires, first of all, the definition of a model that explains the relationship between social structures and agents, which are components of social reality. For this purpose, Roy Bhaskar's 'The Transformational Model of Social Activity' is used. In order to form the arguments for this thesis, it is sufficient, for now, to put forward the most general proposition of this model. According to Bhaskar, there is an ontological hiatus between social structures and

agents (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 40). Consequently, social structures and agents cannot be reduced to each other. On the one hand, the determinations of structures and agents are treated separately; on the other hand, a system that mediates between structures and agents must be defined. This idea forms the most general framework of this thesis, which aims to define the ontological status of neoliberalism. In this thesis, it will be argued that neoliberalism is a system that mediates between structures and agents. Accordingly, neoliberalism mediates between contradictions of current phase of capitalism such as capital-labor contradiction or banking-industrial capital and accumulation strategies such as financial accumulation or accumulation by dispossession.

In order to understand the determinations of the social structures with which neoliberalism interacts, an analytical framework and a set of concepts in which the philosophy of science and political economy are considered together is needed. On the philosophy of science side, Bhaskar's Critical Realist ontology offers the possibility of considering social structures as ontologically separate from the intentional and conscious actions of agents. The reason for using this ontology is that neoliberalism, the product of the intentional and conscious actions of the agents, presupposes social structures as the material conditions for its emergence. This assumption is realized in two ways. First, neoliberalism presupposes the social structures of capitalism in general. Second, neoliberalism presupposes the social structures of the particular phase of capitalism. In this thesis, as a result of the first assumption, an abstract analysis method will be proposed to understand the general social structures and structural tendencies of capitalism. As a result of the second assumption, a concrete method of analysis will be proposed to understand the social structures of the particular phase of capitalism. The determinations of these social structures can also be treated independently of neoliberalism through critical realist ontology.

The method of exposition of this thesis is 'from abstract to concrete method'. For this reason, the abstract analysis method, which primarily deals with the general social structures of capitalism, is used. The aim of this thesis is limited to understanding neither the general social structures of capitalism nor the social structures of its particular phase. In this thesis, a wider framework of social reality in which neoliberalism is determined is presented. Therefore, there is a need for a philosophy

of science that starts with understanding the determinations of social structures, but does not limit itself to this. The ontology of critical realism, as will be seen later, offers the analytical framework and set of concepts suitable for this purpose.

Bhaskar's ontology divides reality into three domains: real, actual, and empirical (Bhaskar, 2008). He argues that the aim of scientific activity is to grasp the generative mechanisms that make up the real domain and the causal laws that manifest themselves tendentially (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 6). According to Bhaskar, empirical regularities of events are not needed to conclude that generative mechanisms are real. On the contrary, mechanisms may not actualize, and if they do, they may not be observed (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 7). For this reason, scientific activity focusing on the reality of mechanisms should build models and decide which of the mechanisms imagined in these models are real through empirical testing rather than starting from empirical regularity (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 4). Besides, Bhaskar argues that the mechanisms that generate certain events and phenomena are stratified among themselves. Therefore, scientific activity aims to reach the knowledge of the deeper mechanisms (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 160). Summarizing Bhaskar's ontology and epistemology contributes to the needs of this thesis in some ways. Social structures are not static, they generate effects through generative mechanisms. These mechanisms, on the other hand, are tendential, that is, they depend on certain conditions to generate an effect. The determination relationship between mechanisms is hierarchical and is analyzed through the metaphor of depth-shalowness. The theoretical process of identifying the mechanisms is carried out independently of neoliberalism. However, the fact that mechanisms come into play and produce effects is related to neoliberalism, to which 'certain conditions' refer. It is important for Marxism that the answer to the question of which of the 'imagined' mechanisms are real requires empirical research. The fact that the mechanisms represent reality in strata is also a guide when thinking about Marxism. Finally, the actual and empirical domains are also 'real'. Determining their ontological status is crucial to an understanding of neoliberalism, but these domains will be discussed in following paragraphs.

Critical realist ontology and epistemology's emphasis on the complexity of social reality on the one hand, and its emphasis on mechanisms and tendencies on the other, are convincing as to the appropriateness of applying the critical realist schema to

Marxism. Through this scheme, it is possible to define the tendential laws of motion and mechanisms of capital, which refer to the general structure of capitalism. Finding an answer to this problem means answering the questions of what tendencies neoliberalism activates and to which structures it mediates. The final step in abstract analysis is to apply critical realism to Marxism. In this thesis, it is argued that critical realism is compatible with Marxism and this harmony contributes to the understanding of neoliberalism.

Identifying the mechanisms and tendencies that give capitalism its dynamism is possible through the application of critical realist ontology and epistemology to Marxism. An analogy is made with the strata of reality in Bhaskar in order to identify the mechanisms of capitalism from deep to shallow. This analogy finds its counterpart in Marx's levels of abstraction, although it does not provide one-to-one correspondence. Every abstract mechanism does not directly determine more concrete mechanism, but constitutes its material basis; for example, competition mechanism which refers to the competition of productive capitals presupposes the extraction of surplus value which derives from exploitation mechanism. However, exploitation mechanism cannot determine how competition mechanism regulates the distribution of surplus value to competing capitals. Therefore, each mechanism has its own particular determinations. In this thesis, five mechanisms and various structural tendencies are defined to be associated with neoliberalism. These mechanisms and tendencies are located in the real domain of critical realism. These mechanisms can be ordered from more abstract to more concrete or from deeper to more shallow as follows: exploitation, competition, credit, state power, uneven development. These mechanisms are not presented directly by Marx. They are derived by modifying the passage of the theme of '*Capital*' and the method of political economy quoted in '*Grundrisse*' (Marx, 1904, 1990, 1991, 1993). The aim in doing this is to achieve a compatibility in the transition from abstract analysis to concrete analysis, on the one hand, and to expose these mechanisms in their most appropriate form to deal with neoliberalism, on the other hand. Understanding the pro-capitalist economic and political policies of neoliberalism is possible by defining the mechanism of exploitation inherent in capitalism. Likewise, the material conditions of neoliberal policies that accelerate competition are possible with defining the structural determinations of the competition mechanism. The credit mechanism expresses the

determinations of the articulation of productive capital and interest bearing capital in capitalist relations of production. The last two mechanisms which are the state power and the uneven development are not detailed in Marx's methodology. But these two mechanisms are needed to examine the relationship of neoliberalism with the state form and imperialism. The tendencies can be listed as follows; firstly, exploitation mechanism results in 'formal' and 'real' subsumption of labor under capital (Marx, 1990, pp. 1019–1021). Capital accumulation structurally tends to subordinate labor to its own product, capital. The capacity of labor to transform nature is brought under control for the purposes of raising the mass of profit and expanding capital accumulation. Under the material conditions of this structural tendency, anti-labor neoliberal policies gain meaning in terms of maintaining capitalist production relations. Another tendencies are the tendential law of equalization in the rate of profit and the tendential law of general rate of profit to fall (Marx, 1991, pp. 273, 319). Accordingly, the profits of capitals operating in different sectors tend to equalize regardless of how much surplus-value they extract. Also, capitals improve production techniques to produce cheaper. As advanced production techniques use less living labor and more dead labor, extraction of surplus-value with respect to aggregate capital decreases. This leads to a decline in general rate of profit. This tendency is crucial in addressing to the notion of 'monopoly capitalism', which partially defines the current phase of capitalism. Although neoliberal policies prioritize the interests of monopoly capital, this structural tendency of equalization in general rate of profit serves as the cement that holds all capitals together. Neoliberal policies that fuel competition cannot overcome this tendency; on the contrary, fueling competition removes the factors that are obstacles to this trend. Tendency of general rate of profit to fall, on the other hand, has a double meaning in the context of neoliberalism. First, neoliberalism fuels competition, accelerating technological development, and induces the tendency of falling profit rates. Second, it activates the counter-tendencies to this tendency. The neoliberal policies followed by the state weaken labor and act in favor of capital in distribution relations. Within the context of the thesis, the last tendency, that is control of social labor and capital by financial capital, comes into play with the credit mechanism. Interest bearing capital facilitates the organization of production on the one hand, and results in control over social labor and social capital on the other (Marx, 1991, p. 570). Capital using credit accesses control not only over its own capital, but

also over social capital. This results in the control of social labor. This tendency is activated by pro-finance capital neoliberal policies. Interest-bearing capital, which is liberalized with deregulation, adds the short-term profit-seeking aspect to the aspect of organizing production and causes instability.

The arguments of the thesis up to this point are limited to expressing the structural tendencies of the laws of motion of capital abstractly. Without these structural tendencies, it is not possible to explain which tendencies and mechanisms neoliberalism relates to. However, although the existence of neoliberalism presupposes the general and abstract tendencies of capitalism, neoliberalism is responsible for mediating the structures and agency of the current phase of capitalism. In this case, there is a need for a method of analysis that is limited by and does not violate the abstract tendencies of capitalism. This analysis method is defined as the method of concrete analysis. This analysis method associates the mechanisms and tendencies, the determinations of which are explained in abstract analysis, with the structures of the concrete situation limited to a particular time and space. The social structures of the concrete situation are explained by contradictions. Mechanisms and tendencies give structural dynamism to these contradictions. Concrete analysis differs from abstract analysis in two aspects. These two aspects express themselves in the ontology of critical realism. First, mechanisms that are treated as hierarchical strata of reality in abstract analysis are not treated as hierarchical strata in concrete analysis. Rather, at a single level, contradictions establish complex relations of determination with each other. As a result, the relationship of domination-subordination arises. A mechanism that is not located in the deepest stratum in the method of abstract analysis has the opportunity to correspond to the principal contradiction in concrete analysis. Secondly, in the context of this thesis and neoliberalism, the determinations of the actual and empirical domains of critical realist ontology are explained in concrete analysis. In order to answer the question of how neoliberalism mediates between contradictions, mechanisms, tendencies and agency, the determinations of the actual and empirical domains must be explained. In this thesis, it is argued that neoliberalism mediates between contradictions, mechanisms, tendencies in the real domain and agency through institutions in the empirical domain. Contradictions, tendencies and mechanisms can be visible to the agents which are located in empirical domain. Institutions are spaces which are both empirical manifestation of elements in real

domain and fields of struggles of agents who own their accumulation strategies or capacity to resist these strategies. By being a shared place of structure and agency, institutions mediate between contradictions, mechanisms, tendencies and agents. The details of this proposition will be explained later.

The concrete situation in which neoliberalism also has its space is characterized by given time and space. This characterization, in the final analysis, refers to the current phase of capitalism. In this thesis, it is claimed that the current phase of capitalism is a social whole consisting of contradictions articulated through complex relations of determination. As in abstract analysis, in concrete analysis, the determinations of contradictions corresponding to the real domain are treated separately from neoliberalism. But the extent to which these contradictions generate an effect depends on the way neoliberalism mediates between contradictions and agency. Mao's analysis of contradiction and Althusser's concept of 'overdetermination' are needed to grasp contradictions and their interrelations. It is possible to summarize the most general determinations of the concept of contradiction. First, there is uneven development between contradictions. While one of the contradictions that make up the social whole is principal contradiction, the others are secondary contradictions. Second, there is uneven development within a contradiction. One aspect of the contradiction is the principal aspect, while the other aspect is the secondary aspect (Mao, 1975, pp. 311, 331–333). It is also possible to summarize the main argument of the overdetermination thesis. A contradiction is not empirical manifestation of another contradiction; in addition, contradictions cannot be studied by reducing it to another. Contradictions have internal coherence and form the social whole as a result of the complex articulation process (Althusser, 1969, pp. 100–101). Application of the concepts of contradiction and overdetermination to the current phase of capitalism clarifies why these concepts are needed in understanding neoliberalism. In this thesis, the contradictions that make up the social whole of the current phase of capitalism are listed as follows: capital-labor, monopoly-non-monopoly capital, banking-industrial capital, authoritarian state-democratic state, dominant nations-subordinated nations. The principal aspects of these contradictions characterize the structure of the current phase of capitalism. Therefore, it is possible to characterize the current phase of capitalism with monopoly, financialization, authoritarianism and imperialism. The mechanisms defined in the abstract analysis, respectively, give contradictions their

structural dynamism. The exploitation mechanism is matched with the capital-labor contradiction. The competition mechanism is matched with monopoly-non-monopolist capital. The credit mechanism is matched with the banking-industrial capital. State power is matched with the authoritarian state-democratic state. The uneven development mechanism is matched by the dominant nations-subordinated nations contradiction. In the abstract analysis, it has been stated that generation of effects by mechanisms depends on certain conditions. In the concrete case, the effects of mechanisms inherent in contradictions depend on the extent to which neoliberalism articulates agency to contradictions. Capital can exploit labor in cheap and flexible conditions through neoliberal policies. The competition mechanism fueled by neoliberal policies, on the one hand, strengthens monopoly capital through the concentration and centralization of capital; on the other hand, non-monopoly capital can survive owing to the subcontractation model. Neoliberal deregulation policies accelerate the free movement of money. In this way, banking capital, on the one hand, plays a role in the organization of production; on the other hand, it is partially disarticulated from production processes and seeks for short-term profit. This dual tendency contributes to the dominance of banking capital over social capital and social labor. The state power, which has gained an authoritarian form with monopoly capitalism, has to have a content that highlights anti-democratic tendencies in the implementation of neoliberal policies. Neoliberal policies that are generally pro-capitalist, and that specifically emphasize the interests of banking capital, invent contents that exclude public control. In this way, state power, which has a structurally authoritarian form, is mediated by neoliberal policies. At the international level, neoliberal policies that liberalize capital movements in particular of financialization result in the fragility of subordinated nations against imperialism. In this way, neoliberalism exhibits policies that pave the way for the uneven development mechanism to generate effects in the current phase of capitalism.

In order to grasp the ontological status of neoliberalism, it is insufficient to explain the determinations of the contradictions and mechanisms in the real domain. Although neoliberalism mediates between contradictions, mechanisms, tendencies and agency, it presupposes the existence of economic-political systems to take on this role. In summary, the material conditions of neoliberal economic-political policies are constrained by structural mode of articulation of economic-political systems in the

current phase of capitalism. In this thesis, it is argued that the determination of mode of articulation of economic and political systems should be treated with structural elements which are separate from neoliberal policies. However, the extent to which these elements generate some effects depends on how neoliberalism mediates between structures and agency. In order to construct a theoretical framework, the actual domain of Bhaskar's critical realist ontology and Bob Jessop's 'Otopoiesis' theory will be utilized. It is possible to summarize determinations of the actual domain. The actual domain is composed of events generated by mechanisms that add dynamism to the contradictions and structures in the real domain. These events lack the power to determine each other. Therefore, what manifests itself as a relation of determination and power between events is actually the actualization of determination and power relations between contradictions and mechanisms (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 155). The theory of 'autopoiesis' provides an analytical framework and set of concepts for applying critical realist schema to the Marxist tradition. Accordingly, economic and political systems are systems that have the capacity and purpose to reproduce themselves. Each system is operationally autonomous systems with their own operational codes (Jessop, 1990, p. 321, 2001c, p. 217, 2008b, p. 26, 2008a, p. 332). The operations of any system are not carried out by another system. However, these systems are structurally coupled within an ecology. Systems related through this coupling have the capacity to influence each other. The result is the emergence of an ecological dominance-subordination relationship between systems. It is possible to summarize the determinations of ecological dominance in three criteria. First, the system with the highest internal complexity tends to have ecological dominance. Second, the system with the highest capacity to transfer the costs of its operations to other systems tends to have ecological dominance. Finally, if the possibilities of other systems to reproduce themselves depend on the reproduction of another system, that system tends to have ecological dominance (Jessop, 2000, pp. 328–329, 2001b, p. 90). It should be remembered that the ecological dominance relationship between systems in actual domain is the actualization of the dominance-subordination relationship of contradictions, mechanisms and tendencies in the real domain. It is possible to derive conclusions from this. First, the complexity of exploitation, competition, credit, and international economic relations corresponding to the value-form make the economic system ecologically dominant. Secondly, all the contradictions of the current phase of

capitalism operate to postpone economic crises or to transfer their costs to the whole of social life. Systems such as politics, culture, nature, sports and religion bear the costs of the economic system. Finally, other systems within wider social life have to sustain the economic system in order to reproduce themselves. The systems of social life outside the economy keeps economic system alive by becoming economized. Neoliberalism produces policies that activate the tendency of the economic system to establish ecological dominance over other systems. Neoliberalism ensures the commodification of labor-power, money and land under the most flexible conditions. In this way, firstly, the degree of complexity of exploitation, competition, credit and international economic relations increases relative to other systems. Second, the economic system transfers its own costs to nature and other components of society. Environmental pollution and migration are the first examples that come to mind. Third, other systems must sustain the economic system in order to reproduce themselves. Neoliberalism marketize politics, sports, cultural activities and religious organizations. These systems hold on to life only by internalizing the determinations of the law of value.

Defining the actual domain of critical realism only with systems leads to incomplete understanding of this domain. In this thesis, it is argued that the relationship of neoliberalism with systems is realized through economic and state apparatuses. In the context of the thesis, economic apparatuses are limited to banking and corporate apparatuses; state apparatuses are limited to ideological state apparatuses and economic state apparatuses. In order to comprehend the determinations of apparatuses, the views of Althusser and Poulantzas on the apparatuses will be discussed (Althusser, 2014; Poulantzas, 1974, 1976). The determination relationship between apparatuses, like the relationships between systems, is actualization of the relationship that contradictions in the real domain establish with each other. Structurally, tendential ecological dominance of the economic system over the political system is ensured through tendential ecological dominance of the economic apparatuses over the state apparatuses. In the monopoly stage and financialization phase of capitalism, the operational capacities of banking and corporate apparatuses exceed the capacities of economic and ideological state apparatuses. This is especially evident in the maneuverability and the speed of decision-making processes of economic apparatuses. Banking and corporate apparatuses transfer the costs of their own operations to state

apparatuses. In order to delay the crisis tendencies, economic apparatuses transfer costs of contradictions that produce the crisis to the state apparatuses. Finally, state apparatuses have to sustain economic apparatuses in order to reproduce themselves. Neoliberalism implements the commodification and marketization policies that activate these tendencies. The worldwide commodification of labor-power in the most flexible terms increases the worldwide mobility of the corporate apparatus. This mobility increases the operational complexity of the corporate apparatus compared to state apparatuses. The commodification of nature and land provides the corporate apparatus with the opportunity to impose its operational costs on society. The corporate apparatus creates temporary solutions to the competition problem by privatization of the common spaces of the society. The commodification of money increases the mobility and maneuverability of the banking apparatus. Increasing operational complexity destabilizes state apparatuses constrained on a national scale. Finally, neoliberal commodification and marketization make the reproduction of state apparatuses dependent on the reproduction of economic apparatuses. As long as the economic state apparatuses do not respond to the demands of the banking apparatus, which has increased mobility and maneuverability, they cannot realize their own reproduction processes. Likewise, as long as the economic state apparatuses do not respond to the demand of the corporate apparatus for the flexible marketization of labor-power and land, the possibility of an economic crisis comes to the fore. This means the drying up of the economic resources that sustain the economic state apparatuses. As long as ideological state apparatuses do not carry out ideological operations in accordance with the requirements of marketization and commodification, they are deprived of the economic resources to reproduce themselves.

The arguments of this thesis put forward up to this point have been directed towards the structural tendencies of the current phase of capitalism and how neoliberalism activates these tendencies. However, neither the ontological status of neoliberalism has been determined, nor the determinations of neoliberalism have been put forward. In this thesis, it is argued that the determinations of neoliberalism can be clarified by examining the determinations of institutions, agents and their modes of articulation. Analysis of them begins with identifying the ontological status of institutions, agents, and the system that mediates between them. In this thesis, it is argued that the empirical domain of critical realism covers these determinations. It has been argued that

neoliberalism mediates between social structures and agents. More specifically, neoliberalism mediates between structurally tendential laws of motion of capitalism and capital in its current phase and accumulation strategies of agents through institutions. This mediation process takes place in the empirical domain. This perspective requires an analytical framework and set of concepts that explain institutions, accumulation strategies and neoliberalism. For the analysis of institutions, Vefa Saygın Öğütle's theses, which define institutions as a 'locus' or field of struggle, will be referred (Öğütle, 2019, 2021). Accumulation strategies will be grasped via Alain Lipietz's concept of 'chance discovery' and Jessop's theses on accumulation strategies (Jessop, 1991; Lipietz, 1987). Neoliberalism will be considered together with Bhaskar's 'position-practice system' thesis and Karl Polanyi's 'commodification' and 'double movement' concepts (Bhaskar, 1998; Polanyi, 2001).

On the one hand, institutions are empirical manifestations of structural tendencies, mechanisms and contradictions; on the other hand, it is the field of struggle of the agents. Contradictions, mechanisms, tendencies in the real domain remain qualitatively stable throughout the current phase of capitalism. The same is true for systems and apparatuses. However, since institutions are also a field of struggle, their boundaries are constantly changing quantitatively. For this reason, institutions are more unstable than systems, apparatuses, and structures.

In this thesis, it will be argued that neoliberalism cannot be reduced to accumulation strategies. Neoliberalism, like accumulation strategies, is a complex product of intentional and conscious actions of the agents. But neoliberalism is not an accumulation strategy. Neoliberalism is the catalyst that mediates between accumulation strategies and objective laws of motion of capital. At this point, it is useful to remind Bhaskar's thesis of 'the Transformational Model of Social Activity'. For the purpose of this thesis, there are two elements that characterize this model. First, the actions of the agents are not reduced to structures in this model. The agents act intentionally and consciously. Structures limit but do not determine agents' behavior (Bhaskar, 2008, pp. 100–103). Second, there is a need for a 'position-practice system' which mediates between structures and agents. Jessop's concept of value-form, which refers to structural limits, and the concept of accumulation strategies, which refer to the conscious and intentional action of agents, contribute to the first element. Polanyi's

double movement and commodification theses contribute to the position-practice system.

Agents who are not directly determined by structures have to discover accumulation strategies that regulate social structures and tendencies. Neither of these discoveries guarantees regulating social structures. Lipietz's concept of 'chance discovery' takes its name from these two determinations (Lipietz, 1987, p. 15). Each accumulation strategy makes various and diverse demands for the commodification of labor-power, money, and land. What characterizes neoliberalism is that it mediates between these diverse and various demands and structurally tendential laws of motion of capital. Therefore, how accumulation strategies will be integrated into social structures is determined by the extent to which neoliberalism, which is a position-practice system, mediates between them.

In this thesis, it is argued that in order to theorize neoliberalism, a 'meso level' must be added to the empirical domain of critical realism. The purpose in doing this is to theoretically fit the empirical domain of critical realism into Bhaskar's 'position-practice system'. Bhaskar expresses the position-practice system as a system that mediates between structures and actions. The structures have 'slots' into which the agents will slip. The agents act in these slots (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 44). The scheme of this thesis has been designed to consider institutions within the 'structure level'. The accumulation strategies has been designed in the 'action level'. The 'meso level' is proposed for the 'position-practice system' that mediates between 'structure' and 'action'.

In the following pages, neoliberalism will be discussed in terms of degrees of marketization and commodification. The material condition for the existence of capitalism, its tendencies, mechanisms and structures is the incessant commodification of labor-power, money, land (Polanyi, 1947a, 2001). The process of commodification and marketization, just like the formation of accumulation strategies, is not a process that develops under the monopoly of any fraction of capital. For example, productive capital may propose a strategy for the commodification process of money that adapts it to the extended reproduction process of productive capital. However, financial capital may propose a strategy for the commodification of money in which money

circulates freely. A fraction of productive capital may propose a strategy for the commodification of land that 'fixes' it and opens it up to productive activity. On the contrary, yet another fraction of productive capital may propose a strategy for the commodification of land, based on land speculation. Therefore, the existence of contradictions between the fractions of capital obstruct the existence of a single subject 'planning' neoliberalism. On the contrary, there are subjects who cannot monopolize the entire process of neoliberalism. This process is expressed as 'neoliberalism as a process without subject' in the current phase of capitalism. On the other hand, neoliberalism, which includes commodification and marketization, is confronted with the anti-neoliberal 'protective counter movement' that society creates to protect itself from the logic of the market (Polanyi, 2001, pp. 79–80). There are two aspects to this encounter. First of all, anti-neoliberal movements question the existence of the tendencies of capitalism as they develop against commodification, which is the condition of existence of capitalism. Second, anti-neoliberal movements target levels involved in the empirical domain. They do not seek to transform structures and contradictions that are qualitatively relatively stable in the real domain. Likewise, apparatuses and systems that are actualizations of elements in the real domain maintain their relative stability. Therefore, it is possible for capitalism to save itself from anti-neoliberal movements, by developing alternative accumulation strategies or by implementing new commodification projects.

In chapter two, Bhaskar's Critical Realism will be elucidated by mainly focusing on transfactual nature of social structures, generative mechanisms and its theory of knowledge (Bhaskar, 1998, 2008, 2011). It will be argued that social structures have determinations independent of agency. As regards its theory of knowledge, it will be argued that process of having knowledge of mechanisms is incomplete, if 'imagined' models is not completed with empirical scrutiny. Bhaskar's ontology and epistemology provides wider horizon in re-reading Marx's method of political economy. Marx's level of abstractions will be revealed by analogy with strata of reality of Bhaskar. Bhaskar's thesis on causal law's tendential nature will be revealed to laws of motion of capital. Then, it will be argued that Anwar Shaikh's theory of real competition is a candidate to complete Marx's imagined models with empirical scrutiny (Shaikh, 2016). This chapter will be concluded with two theoretical results. First of all, mechanisms and laws of motion of capital do not determine agents' action,

but limit it. Secondly, abstract laws of motion of capital is present throughout capitalism.

In the third chapter, relations between mechanism will be redesigned so that hierarchic nature of mechanism can be analyzed at one level with dominance-subordination relations. Each mechanism will be embedded into contradictions. For this purpose, Althusser's overdetermination and Mao's analysis of contradiction concept will be utilized (Althusser, 1969; Mao, 1975). It will be argued that specific phase of capitalism's social whole is composed of unity of unevenly developed contradictions. Then, it is argued actual domain of critical realism is filled by economic-political system which are actualization of contradictions. In order to understand power relation between systems Bob Jessop's theory of otopoiesis will be introduced. Otopoiesis refers to the asymmetrical power relations of systems which are self-regulating and operationally autonomous (Jessop, 1990, 1991, 2001b, 2001c, 2010b). Space of economic-political system are filled by economic and state apparatuses. In concluding the third chapter, it will be argued that social classes objective places are actualized in apparatuses with asymmetrical balance of forces.

In the fourth chapter, institutional architecture of society will be elaborated. Ontological status of institutions will be placed to empirical domain of critical realism. Institutions' functions will be proposed to be the mediating concept between social structures and agents. Therefore, it will be argued that institutions have twofold nature. First of all, institutions are empirical manifestation of contradictions. Therefore they internalize contradictions' determinations. Secondly, it is the locus in which causal agents struggles. It will be argued that this dual nature of institutions makes them unstable. Given the nature of institutions, Karl Polanyi's commodification and double movement theories will be discussed. Aim of this introduction is to determine a system which articulates structural tendencies of laws of motion of capital and accumulation strategies. Lastly, Polanyi's theory will be applied to understand neoliberalism's determinations. It will be concluded that neoliberalism is a market-oriented project without subject, led by collective imperialism, dominated by financial capital, subjugated by labor, supported by the economic regulatory role of the authoritarian state and market ideology.

The fifth chapter concludes theoretical results of analyzing neoliberalism by method proposed in this thesis.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **ABSTRACT ANALYSIS**

The purpose of this chapter is to lay bare the laws of motion of capital. Contribution of this chapter to the grand body of this thesis can be expressed as follows. Misunderstanding or rejecting the determinations of the laws of motion of capital causes misinterpretation of relations between social classes, class fractions and imperialist chain. Each stages and phases of capitalism has its particular structural environment. However, these stages and phases of capitalism cannot violate the abstract laws of motion of capitalism. Therefore, true understanding of particular phase of capitalism's environment requires an understanding of universal or abstract laws of motion of capital accumulation. However, abstract laws of motion of capital does not determine particular stages of capitalism's relational environment. Therefore, the purpose of analyzing the abstract laws of motion of capital is to lay bare the structural constraints of capitalism that can just limit or control particular stages of capitalism's environment.

It is argued here that understanding of the laws of motion of capital and its tendencies requires an ontological and methodological intervention. Bhaskar's ontology of critical realism endows fruitful ontological framework to the stratification of society's constitutive structures and mechanisms. Critical Realist ontology argues that mechanisms of society is to be investigated in isolation from events and agencies. In addition, Critical Realist epistemology regarding knowledge of structures of society also contributes to the understanding of this stratified reality. It argues that structures

of societies can be known through transfactual arguments which are independent of any empirical regularity.

In this thesis, it is argued that perspective of Marxist political economy towards society's complexity and its knowledge is compatible with Bhaskar's ontology and epistemology. Therefore, Marx's method of political economy will be reassessed in the light of Bhaskar's ontology and epistemology. In order to show the laws of motion of capital, method of Marx's political economy will be utilized. However, this thesis' purpose is not just to lay bare the laws of motion of capital. It aims at proposing a model to understand the neoliberal dynamics of a current phase of capitalism including class struggles and institutional architecture. For this purpose, this chapter will be limited to reveal the objective tendencies of capital accumulation. At the end of this chapter, five mechanisms will be proposed in order to understand the determinations of structural environment in which neoliberalism has been experienced. These mechanism are exploitation, competition, credit, state power and uneven development.

In the first section, first, Bhaskar's ontology and epistemology will be introduced. Emphasis will be put on the stratified character of reality and its knowledge through transfactual arguments and its empirical testing. Then, Marx's method of political economy will be introduced as an application of Bhaskar's ontology and epistemology, particularly as an application of transfactual argumentation. Stratification of mechanism will be replaced by levels of abstraction of mechanisms. Lastly, Anwar Shaikh's real competition theory will be briefly introduced as an empirical testing of Marx's arguments regarding competition.

In the second section, Aglietta and Baran-Sweezy's theories of political economy will be critically examined in order to show that dissociation from Bhaskar's mechanisms and Marx's level of abstraction results in misunderstanding of current stage of capitalist relations of production.

## **2.1. Abstract Structures and Mechanisms**

It is argued that societies are composed of social structures and mechanisms. Understanding of these structures requires isolating these from what is empirical. In order to grasp these mechanisms, Bhaskar's critical realism will be introduced. Then,

Marx's method of political economy will be elaborated within critical realist ontology and epistemology. It is argued that his method of political economy is compatible with critical realism since Marx argues that laws of motion of capital can be understood by isolating it from surface phenomena.

### **2.1.1. Bhaskar's Critical Realist Ontology and Epistemology**

In this subsection, critical realism's ontology and epistemology will only be briefly examined. Because, in each section of chapter three and four, additional determinations of critical realist ontology which regards related discussions will be covered. In this subsection, structures and mechanism, tendency, stratum, and knowledge of mechanisms will be investigated.

Bhaskar configures three ontological domains which correspond to the realities of societies. First domain is the empirical domain which is open to experience of people. Second domain is the actual domain which is not open to experience but refers to event. Third domain is the real domain which embraces generative mechanisms and social structures of society (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 2). Each domain of social reality is ontologically distinct from each other. According to Bhaskar, "there is a ontological distinction between scientific laws and patterns of events" (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 1). Therefore, what constitutes real domain must be conceptualized independently of the actual domain. In addition, according to Bhaskar, "the statements that describe their operations, which may be termed 'laws', are not statements about experiences" (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 6). Therefore, mechanism and their operations as laws are also independent of empirical domain.

Object of the scientific inquiry must be constituents of real domain which are generative mechanism and social structures (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 6). Bhaskar argues that "generative mechanisms are . . . nothing other than the ways of acting of things" (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 3). In the case of examining societies, Bhaskar argues that "society must consist of an ensemble of powers" (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 9). Generative mechanisms and social structures exist independent of the causal agents' intentions. Therefore, critical realist ontology stands on philosophically materialist position. According to Bhaskar, "these objects are neither phenomena (empiricism) nor human constructs

imposed upon the phenomena (idealism), but real structures which endure and operate independently of our knowledge” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 15)

As regards tendencies, causal laws and generative mechanisms are tendential. According to Bhaskar, “tendencies may be possessed unexercised, exercised unrealized, and realized unperceived (or undetected) by men” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 7). Bhaskar defines tendency as “power o liabilities of a thing” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 3).

According to Bhaskar, generative mechanisms and structures are stratified in reality. Bhaskar claims that “the historical order of the development of our knowledge of strata is opposite to the causal order of their dependence in being” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 160). Scientific inquiry, each time, come up with a deeper mechanism on which more shallower mechanisms find their bases. However, Bhaskar argues that even if there exists a ultimate of all mechanisms, scientist cannot know what she has discovered is the ultimate (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 162).

As regards knowledge of generative mechanisms, Bhaskar proposes a method which involves “creative model building, in which plausible generative mechanisms are imagined to produce the phenomena in question” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 4). On the other hand, modelling ‘imagined’ models are not enough to prove that imagined generative mechanism is real. Bhaskar refers to a step “in which the reality of the mechanisms postulated are subjected to empirical scrutiny” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 4). At the end of empirical scrutiny process, some imagined mechanism are proved to be unreal. However, “under certain conditions some postulated mechanisms can come to be established as real” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 1).

Bhaskar’s mechanisms concept is fruitful concept in that exploitation, competition and credit mechanism and its tendential characters can be grasped as ontologically real entity. Stratification of reality, with a margin of safety, can be projected to levels of abstraction of Marx. In the following subsection Bhaskar’s perspectives on mechanisms, tendencies, stratification and knowledge of mechanism will be revealed to Marx’s method of political economy.

### **2.1.2. Marx's Level of Abstractions and Shaikh's Real Competition**

Two objectives are pursued in this subsection. The first objective is to draw attention to the levels of abstraction of Marx's method. The reason for this is that misunderstanding the levels of abstraction leads to misunderstanding of the struggle between social classes and the imperialist chain. Our aim in dealing with levels of abstraction is limited to clearing up this misunderstanding. Therefore, instead of presenting a comprehensive framework of levels of abstraction, the focus will be on the process of formation of the general rates of profit, which is the key to misunderstandings. The second objective is to draw attention to the tendencies of the laws of motion of capital. This is because the class struggles in the current phase of capitalism are the class struggles of the way these tendencies are experienced. The first aim will form the structural boundaries of what is expressed in the fourth chapter of the thesis. The second aim will provide insight into understanding how the class struggles expressed in the fourth chapter experience these tendencies.

Bhaskar's epistemology and ontology have been covered in the previous subsection. In this subsection, it is argued that the exploration of the economic mechanisms of the real domain is possible through Marx's political economy. Based on this, three points will be mentioned in this subsection. First of all, the method that paved the way for Marx's research on the levels of abstraction will be conveyed by referring to Marx. Secondly, a light will be thrown on the levels of abstraction in Marx's 'Capital', in particular on the tendential equalization of profit rates and the production of surplus-value. Here, while shedding light on the levels of abstraction, tendencies will also be expressed. Finally, it will be argued that Anwar Shaikh's theory of real competition offers empirical tests of Marx's tendential law of equalization in rates of profit. In this way, it will be possible to develop arguments against perspectives that misunderstand abstraction levels in the next section. At the same time, the abstract boundaries of the concrete analysis to be explained in the third chapter will be drawn.

What distinguishes and characterizes Marx from his predecessors is the discovery of the method of political economy. Marx proposes a methodology that progresses from the concrete to the abstract and reaches the concrete again. Accordingly, the simplest and most abstract determinations, such as exchange value, are reached from the

complex unity of the concrete (Marx, 1993, pp. 100–101). Then it moves back to the concrete. In this way, the concrete, which is the unity of complex diversity, is reproduced in the mind (Marx, 1993, p. 100). Starting from this, Marx proposes levels of abstraction for the study of political economy. At the first level, the most general determinations specific to all societies are considered. At the second level, determinations specific to the class structure of bourgeois society are considered. There are also categories of distribution between social classes. The third level is the state. At the fourth level, there is the international division of labor. Finally, at the fifth level, the world market and crises are discussed (Marx, 1904, p. 305).

These levels will be revised to ensure consistency with the structural forms in the next part of the thesis and the contradictions in the third part. For a discussion of method beforehand, reference should be made to Marx and Engels again. In *Capital*, Marx uses the levels quoted above to determine the objective laws of motion of capitalist society. According to Marx, the cell form of bourgeois society is the value-form or is the commodity-form (Marx, 1990, p. 90). Marx's aim is to understand the anatomy of bourgeois society by starting from the cell-form. Marx defines the ultimate purpose of 'Capital' as "to reveal the economic law of motion of modern society" (Marx, 1990, p. 92). There are tendential laws inherent in the anatomy of bourgeois society. According to Marx, "it is a question of these laws themselves, of these trends winning their way through and working themselves out with iron necessity" (Marx, 1990, p. 91). So, as long as capitalist societies exist, tendencies continue to operate. Marx emphasizes the objective aspect of society's laws of motion: "Individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, the bearers [Träger] of particular class-relations and interests. . . however much he may subjectively raise himself above them" (Marx, 1990, p. 92).<sup>1</sup> This quote can be cited as evidence for seeing Marx's method of political economy close to the ontology of Bhaskar's critical realism. It has been stated above that Bhaskar considers the mechanisms of social structures to be 'transfactual'.

---

<sup>1</sup> The problematic of the individual and subjectivity will be re-examined in the agency subsection of the fourth chapter. The purpose of this quote is to emphasize that mechanisms should be handled independently of individuals. The idea that individuals are only bearers is not included in the acceptance of this thesis.

It is not enough for Marx to choose value-form or commodity-form as his starting point. To this extent, Marx's contribution to political economy would be incomplete. Starting from the value-form, the greatest contribution to the demystification of bourgeois society is its transformation of the way political economy studies surplus-value. According to Engels, starting from the value-form, Marx succeeded in establishing the value-money-capital line (Marx, 1992, pp. 98–99). Starting from value also transformed the way capital and surplus-value were studied, making the dynamism of capitalism intelligible (Marx, 1992, pp. 98–99).

**Table 2.1 Levels of Abstractions in Marx-Shaikh<sup>(1)</sup>**

Levels	Unit of Analysis	Mechanism	Motor of Mechanism	Distribution
0	Commodity - Use-Exchange Value			
I	Capital-Labor	Exploitation	Absolute-Relative Surplus Production	Surplus Value-Value of Labor Power
II	Different Composition of Capital in Different Branches of Production (Regulating Capitals)	Free (Real) Competition	Variation in the (Incremental) Rate of Profit	General-Average (Incremental) Rate of Profit
III	Interest Bearing Capital - Industrial Capital	Credit	Disposal over Social Capital, Command over Social Labor	Interest-Profit of Enterprise
IV	State	Organization of Bourgeois Society in the formation of a State, in its Relation to itself	Taxes, Public Debt, Public Credit	Unproductive Classes, Taxes
V	International Organization of Production-World Market	International Division of Labor – World Market	Import-Export	??

*Source: Marx, 1990, 1991, 1993; Shaikh, 2016*

*(1): Shaikh's contributions are covered in Paranthesis*

Bhaskar constructs the hierarchy between mechanisms as 'strata' of reality. We construct Marx's strata as levels of abstraction. Whether the levels of abstraction ontologically correspond to strata is a secondary issue in the context of this thesis. It also seems reasonable to continue with a terminology that remains within the Marxist literature. The number of mechanisms is determined as six. The identification of the first mechanism with 0 refers to its being the starting point of capitalist society. In addition, after the use and exchange value of the commodity is taken as a starting point, it does not disappear. The other reason why the commodity is defined as 0 is that it is in contact with all mechanisms, let alone being in a hierarchy. Both capital and labor (or labor-power) have exchange and use values. The last reason why commodity is defined as 0 is for this definition to contribute functionally to the third chapter of the thesis. In the third chapter, the contradictions will be limited to five; and contradictions will be linked to the mechanisms introduced here. The fourth and fifth mechanisms will not be introduced as they are irrelevant in this subsection of the thesis. Our purpose in this section is limited to relating labor, productive capital, and interest bearing capital and identifying tendencies.

Commodities are the unity of use and exchange values. According to Marx, "the usefulness of a thing makes it a use-value" (Marx, 1990, p. 126). Marx defines exchange-value as follows; "all commodities are merely definite quantities of *congealed labour-time*" (Marx, 1990, p. 130, italics original). Marx distinguishes two types of circulation of commodities. The first type of circulation is selling to buy. The aim here is to obtain 'use-value' (Marx, 1990, p. 250). The other type of circulation is buying to sell. The aim here is to obtain 'exchange value' (Marx, 1990, p. 250). For Marx, it is the pursuit of profit that makes the second circulation the dominant type of circulation. Profit is only possible with the commodification of labor power (Marx, 1990, p. 170). The point that distinguishes capitalism from its historically predecessor modes of production is the commodification of labor-power. For Marx, labor-power is "the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the living personality, of a human being, capabilities which he sets in motion whenever he produces a use-value of any kind" (Marx, 1990, p. 270). Since labor-power is also a commodity, "the value of labor-power is determined ... by the labor-time necessary for the production, and therefore also the reproduction, of this specific article" (Marx, 1990, p. 274). The reproduction of labor-power is directly dependent

on the subsistence of the worker. For this reason, the value of labor-power, in other words, “is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of its owner” (Marx, 1990, p. 274). In the final analysis, the difference between the exchange-value of the commodity produced by the labor and the exchange-value of the labor-power gives the 'surplus-value'.<sup>2</sup> ‘Absolute surplus value’ refers to producing surplus value by keeping wages low. ‘Relative surplus value’ refers to producing surplus value by reducing the value of labor-power through technological development.

The concepts of use-value, exchange-value, exchange-value of labor power, absolute-relative surplus value have been introduced. From this point of view, the first tendency of capitalism to dominate social life can be derived. Marx introduces 'the formal subsumption of labor under capital' and 'the real subsumption of labor under capital'. 'Formal subsumption' is inherent in all forms of capitalism and refers more to the production of 'absolute surplus value'. According to Marx, “the labor process becomes the instrument of the valorization process, the process of the self-valorization of capital” (Marx, 1990, p. 1019). For Marx, who is aware that the accumulation of capital is the accumulation of surplus-value, one aspect of the 'formal subsumption' is that; “*living labour* appears to be put to work by *objectified labour*” (Marx, 1990, p. 1021, italics original).

'Real subsumption' refers to a more complex mystification. The production of 'relative surplus value' requires a developed division of labor and full socialization of labor. The commodity produced by this division of labor is a product of socialized labor, from doing science to designing machines. This socialization process of labor refers to human development. According to Marx, “This entire development ... of *socialized labour* ... and ... the *use of science* (the *general* product of social development), in the *immediate process of production*, takes the form of the *productive power of capital*” (Marx, 1990, p. 1024, italics original). As a result, 'real subsumption' and 'formal subsumption' have reduced the socialized labor process of humanity to the position of appendage to capital accumulation. Bearing in mind that the only factor of production that creates value is labor, the conclusion is this: as a result of the domination of

---

<sup>2</sup> At this level of abstraction, only labor-power constitutes costs.

capitalism, labor is reduced to the position of an appendage to its own accumulated value.

Before concluding the analysis of the capital-labor contradiction, parenthesis should be opened for 'primitive accumulation'. Marx defines 'primitive accumulation' as "economic original sin" (Marx, 1991, p. 873). For production of surplus-value assumes the existence of initial surplus value. Commodification of labor-power and transformation of money into capital are the outcome of the process of 'primitive accumulation' (Marx, 1991, pp. 873–874). In chapter three, we will refer Harvey's 'accumulation by dispossession' process to emphasize primitive accumulation's more comprehensive and incessant aspect. In addition, Polanyi's commodification thesis regarding labor, land and money will play crucial role in analyzing neoliberal class struggle.

The tendency of the capital-labor contradiction that directs social life has been defined as 'real' and 'formal' subsumptions. 'Primitive accumulation' has partially been added to this. Another aspect of the laws of motion of capital refers to competition between capitals. Competition has two tendential consequences. First, the result of competition in different industries is 'the equalization of the general rate of profit through competition' (Marx, 1991, p. 273). The determinations of this tendency need to be summarized. Capitals operating in different industries invest in 'constant capital' as machinery and intermediate goods; and in 'variable capital' as labor power. Hypothetically, the former capital uses more labor power and the latter uses more machinery, even though the total capital investment is the same. According to the Marxist theory of value, since there is no other value-generating production factor other than labor, capital using more labor produces more surplus-value in terms of value. However, both capitals realize equal profits since they have the same amount of total capital investment. This can only be achieved by transferring surplus-value from capital using high labor-power intensive to capital using low labor-power intensive. The interesting point here is that the capitalists are unaware of the fact called surplus-value, they only chase for profit. Indeed, equal capital investment yields equal profits (Marx, 1991, p. 253). Competition between capitals exhibits a motion that tendentially equalizes the general profit rates. It operates in the depth of social life.

Marx makes observations about this equalization process. First, “no such variation in the average rate of profit exists between different branches of industry, and it could not exist without abolishing the entire system of capitalist production” (Marx, 1991, p. 252). According to Marx, as long as capitalist relations of production exist, the process of equalization will be in place. Second, “With the whole of capitalist production, ..., as an average of perpetual fluctuations which can never be firmly fixed, that the general law prevails as the dominant trend” (Marx, 1991, p. 261). According to Marx, the process of equalizing the rates of profit is a tendency, at the same time it is the prevailing tendency that determines the law of motion of the process of competition. Third, “in reality, this is only an approximation; but the approximation is all the more exact, the more the capitalist mode of production is developed” (Marx, 1991, p. 275). According to Marx, as capitalist relations of production develop, elements that violate this tendency do not emerge. On the contrary, this tendential law imposes itself as capitalism develops. Insisting on the tendential law of 'the equalization of the general rate of profit through competition' is of great importance. For, as will be seen in the next section, misunderstanding the ideas of state and imperialism are those that tend to abandon this law more or less.

Another consequence of the competition law of capital is that; 'the law of the tendential fall in the rate of profit'. This law can be summarized as follows; as a result of the pressure of competition, rival capitals use machinery and intermediate goods more intensively per value of labor-power used to increase their productivity. When the ratio of machine and intermediate goods, whose unit value is assumed to be constant, increases, the surplus-value produced does not increase, since quantity of labor power used does not increase. As a result, capitals have a lower rate of profit per capital invested (Marx, 1991, p. 318). After defining this law, Marx makes three observations. First, “tendency for the general rate of profit to fall is thus simply *the expression, peculiar to the capitalist mode of production*” (Marx, 1991, p. 319, italics original). This tendency imposes itself as the dominance of capitalist relations of production increases. Second, “The course of ... accumulation requires increasingly large-scale labor processes ... The ... concentration of capitals ... is therefore both ... conditions and ... results ...” (Marx, 1991, p. 325). Concentration is both the cause and the result of capitalist production. In addition, Marx refers to the process of centralization; “Hand in hand with this ... goes ... expropriation of ... immediate producers” (Marx,

1991, p. 325). The emphasis on centralization and concentration is important. Marx does not distinguish between these processes and the law of the tendency to decline in the rate of profit. Therefore, this point should be kept in mind while examining the theory of 'monopoly capitalism', which conceives the processes of centralization and concentration as monopolization process. Increasing in concentration also increases productivity. Since this in turn lowers the value of the commodity, other conditions being equal, it also lowers the price of the commodity (Marx, 1991, p. 337). But as the number of commodities increases, the total profit increases. The last point is about the subjectivity of this relationship. According to Marx, “the matter is then conceived as if the capitalist *voluntarily* made less profit on the individual commodity, but compensated himself by the greater number of commodities which he now produces” (Marx, 1991, p. 337, italics added). The result here is: The laws of motion of capital have no subjectivity. The articulation of the laws of motion of capital with subjective processes does not modify these laws.

Marx also lists the counter-tendencies against the tendency of rate of profit to fall. The importance of these counter-tendencies will be expressed in the third and fourth chapters, even though they are not considered individually, but in a logical manner. For now, the following can be said. The costs of the contradictions of capital accumulation do not circulate in empty space. The relations of production put the rest of social life under their control while delaying the crisis tendencies. This causes resistance. First, capital may increase absolute surplus value extraction through “intense exploitation of labour” (Marx, 1991, p. 339). Second, capital may reduce wages below the value of labor-power (Marx, 1991, p. 342). Third, technological improvement may reduce the value of constant capital. Fourth, relative surplus value may reduce wages (Marx, 1991, pp. 333–334). Fifth, foreign trade may increase profit rate in that it cheapens the value of constant capital and variable capital as well. Advance country with higher technology usage may sell its commodities to foreign countries at a price which is higher than its value but still below foreign countries' commodity's value. Advanced country may carry its production facilities to foreign countries where cheap labor exists (Marx, 1991, pp. 344–345). And sixth, the increase in 'share capital' may increase profit rate. According to Marx, not all capital returns to productive activity to gain profit. Some portion of capital seeks to place a long-term project as an interest-bearing capital. Revenues of this capital is smaller than profits

but, since it is not included in the formation process of general rate of profit, it increases the rate of profit automatically (Marx, 1991, pp. 347–348). This last counter-tendency will be briefly elaborated in the third chapter while discussing ‘spatio-temporal fix’ concept.

The last tendency will be derived from interaction of productive and interest bearing capital. At first glance, relation between productive capital and interest bearing capital resembles itself as an relation of distribution. Profit rate is distributed to two parties as profit of enterprise and interest. The credit system has an active place in the production process. At least three contribution of credit mechanism to production can be count. First, it contributes to process of equalization of rate of profit since it accelerates the movement of capitals maneuvers. Second, it reduces the circulation costs, especially by accelerating the speed of circulation of monetary transactions (Marx, 1991, p. 566). And lastly, through joint-stock companies, it collects vast amount of capital from savers in order to invest in large-scale production units which is impossible for individual capital (Marx, 1991, p. 567). Understanding the credit mechanism in terms of supporting production will gain importance in the fourth chapter of the thesis. What should be understood from financialization is not the separation of financial capital from production, although it has such an aspect. However, the relationship of a well-developed credit mechanism with social capital and social labor has a tendency to transform. Marx examines the relationship of credit with social capital and social labor in the context of expropriation. The credit system either abolishes the individual capitalist or puts the control of social capital and labor in the hands of a small number of capitalists. The capitalist using credit controls not only his own capital, but also social capital and labor (Marx, 1991, p. 570). In addition, this process also speeds up the expropriation process. Capitalism completes the expropriation process, which it started with primitive accumulation, with credit (Marx, 1991, pp. 570–571). Consequently, according to Marx, “the actual capital that someone possesses, ... , now becomes simply the basis for a superstructure of credit” (Marx, 1991, p. 570).

The tendencies we have discussed in Marx up to this point fall short in accessing the knowledge of generative mechanisms in the context of Bhaskar's epistemology. Knowledge of these mechanisms is currently 'imagined'. These mechanisms must be shown to be 'real' through empirical testing. It is only in this way that it can be

explained in the next section that the abandonment of 'real' mechanisms causes theoretical deviations in Marxist analysis. What is needed in the continuation of this thesis is to show that the competition mechanism is real. The view that Anwar Shaikh's 'real competition' theory empirically tests Marx's 'imagined' model will be defended.

Shaikh introduces the concept 'regulating capital'. Shaikh defines regulating capital as "a set of capitals representing the best generally reproducible condition of production in that industry" (Shaikh, 2016, p. 265). According to Shaikh, there are vast amount of choice of technology in investment decision. But the determinant one is regulating capitals of diverse industries since they have the best reproducible condition, that is lowest cost reproducible (Shaikh, 2016, p. 268). Therefore, profit rates corresponding to these capitals will be the barometer of new investment decisions (Shaikh, 2016, p. 265). Shaikh argues that regulating capital has the right to set prices and being price leader (Shaikh, 2016, p. 268). Therefore, rest of the capitals within industry are non-regulating capitals and price takers (Shaikh, 2016, p. 268). According to Shaikh, what regulates the coordination of capitals between industry is regulating capitals' profit rate. Shaikh calls it "incremental rate of profit". Shaikh states that incremental rate of profit "is a good approximation to the rate of return on new investment" (Shaikh, 2016, p. 272). Incessant motion of capitals through differential profit rates of regulating capitals end up with "the turbulent equalization of actual rates of profit on new investments" (Shaikh, 2016, p. 296).

In the context of this thesis, Shaikh's real competition has one major importance with two aspects. First, it empirically measures the turbulent tendency of equalization of the profit rate of regulating capitals between sector. Hence, this thesis have support to go on with classical political tradition. Second, while achieving this, he allows for the structural decomposition of capitals into non-regulating price takers and regulating price-setters capitals. In the next section, perspective of monopoly capitalism will be rejected in that concentration and centralization of capital may not necessarily abolish Marx's concept of free competition. On the contrary, concentration and centralization, as shown while discussing Marx's perspective on competition and equalization of profit rates, is both condition and result of equalization of general profit rates.

## 2.2. Formal Structures and Mechanisms

In this section, methodology of Aglietta and Baran-Sweezy will be briefly examined in the context of their perspective on ‘tendential equalization of general rate of profit’. It will be argued that including agency into analysis of tendential laws of accumulation disrupts the perspective of level of analysis and causes misunderstanding of laws of motion of capital. Equally, periodization of capitalism cannot be made relying on so-called modification in the abstract laws of motion of capital.

Aglietta introduces the concept of regulation that refer to “formulate in general laws of the way in which the determinant structure of a society is reproduced ... specifying the historical conditions of their validity” (Aglietta, 1979, pp. 13, 15). Aglietta argues that the perspective of regulation theory is no limited to investigatin of “abstract economic laws” (Aglietta, 1979, p. 16). Therefore, the vital point is to seek for the knowledge of “the laws of accumulation and laws of competition” (Aglietta, 1979, p. 17). Aglietta introduces the concept of ‘structural forms’ to refer to “the complex social relations, organized in institutions, that are the historical products of the class struggle” (Aglietta, 1979, p. 19). Then, in order to specify the historical conditions of capital-labor relations the concepts of ‘regime of accumulation’ and ‘mode of regulation’ are introduced. Regime of accumulation refers to the “long-term stabilization of the allocation of social production between consumption and accumulation” (Lipietz, 1987, p. 14). Regimes of accumulation are classified with respect to their inclination towards the production of absolute or relative surplus value. An accumulation regime is predominantly ‘extensive’ if it is oriented towards ‘absolute surplus value production’; and ‘intensive’ if it is oriented towards ‘relative surplus value production’ (Aglietta, 1979, pp. 71–72). However, this accumulation regimes cannot reproduce itself through abstract laws of accumulation, but requires complex intervention of class struggle. At this point, concept of ‘mode of regulation’ of ‘structural forms’ is introduced. The object or structural forms of mode of regulation can be revealed, from abstract to concrete, as wage relations, form of competition, money, the state and international regime (Petit, 1999, p. 226). Lipietz defines ‘mode of regulation’ as “the set of internalized rules and social procedures which incorporate social elements into individual behavior” (Lipietz, 1987, p. 15). In the context of this thesis, the perspective of regulation theory can be evaluated as follows. The regulation

theory shifts its inquiry from abstract laws of motion of capital to reproduction process of this laws of motion of capital which are historically specific. Usage of ‘regulation’ concept makes reference to the role of social classes as agents, instead of self-reproduction capacity of structural forms’ or abstract laws of motion of capital. Therefore, it is important to grasp how complex outcome of class struggle regulates laws of motion of capital. Therefore, the perspective on ‘general rate of profit’ can be described as a shift from automatic equalization of it through abstract laws of capital accumulation to condition of historical conditions of mode of regulation by agents.

**Table 2.2 Levels of Abstraction in Aglietta-Baran, Sweezy<sup>(1)</sup>**

Levels	Unit of Analysis	Structural Form-Mechanism	Motor of Mechanism	Distribution
0	Commodity - Use-Exchange Value			
I	Capital-Labor	Wage Relation	Extensive-Intensive Accumulation	Surplus Value-Value of Labor Power
II	Monopoly-Competitive Capitals	Form of Competition-Monopolistic Regulation (Monopoly-Competition)	Centralization of Capital + Increase in Money Wages (Control over Supply-Absorption of Surplus)	Surplus Profit (Surplus)
III		Money Form		
IV	State	State – (Apparatus of Oligarchy)	(Civil Government, Militarism)	(Absorption of Surplus)
V		International Regime	(Imperialism)	(Absorption of Surplus)

*Source: Aglietta, 1979; Baran et al., 1966; Sweezy, 1962*

*(1): Baran and Sweezy’s contributions are covered in Paranthesis*

According to Aglietta, combination of regulating wage relation as extensive accumulation and form of competition as centralization of capital respectively ends up

with ‘monopolistic regulation’ (Aglietta, 1979, p. 305). This complexity characterized with high level of money wages and power of making prices of oligopolies results in the differential rate of profit rather than tendential equalization process (Aglietta, 1979, pp. 307–312). It is possible to derive the following criticisms from Aglietta's analysis: The objective laws of motion of capital cannot be modified by the modes of regulation of the actors. On the contrary, the mechanisms of capitalism are in the real domain, an ontological domain where actors are absent. Thus, even if the argument that capitalism has its own laws of motion for each period is to be accepted, these laws of motion must be studied in the real domain.

An erroneous perspective on levels of abstraction can be found in the theory of monopoly capitalism. Theory of monopoly capitalism also argues that stages of capitalism have its own law of motions. Monopoly capitalism theory investigates the laws of motion of capital relying on real domain. Big corporations are also included into analysis as well as the concept of monopoly capital. According to Sweezy, monopoly capitalism characterizes itself as a rupture from free competition to “monopolistic or semi-monopolistic control over markets by small number” (Sweezy, 1962, p. 257). Emergence of monopoly capital is the result of combination of concentration and centralization of capital. Concentration refers to increase in constant capital relative to variable capital and increase in fixed portion of constant capital relative to circulating portion (Sweezy, 1962, p. 254). Centralization of capital refers to increase in scale of production unit through amalgamation of separate capitals (Sweezy, 1962, p. 256). Monopoly capital has the power of determining price level contrary to the period of competitive capitalism. Therefore, if it is assumed that the total surplus-value extracted by capital in general is constant and, that the value of labor power is equal to wage levels, then it is concluded that monopoly capital transfers surplus capital from competitive capital (Sweezy, 1962, p. 273). Therefore there exist no such a thing as equalization of profit rates but exist multiplicity of profit rates which is positively correlated with level of monopoly (Sweezy, 1962, p. 274). Power of big corporations to ‘make prices’ combined with cost reduction through technological improvement donates the economic system with “the tendency of surplus to rise” (Baran et al., 1966, pp. 71–72). It is because, power of making price prevents big corporations from reducing prices when value of a commodity declines via technological improvement. Hence, ‘profit margins’ are higher in big corporations.

Monopoly capitalism, as a result, discards ‘the tendential law of profit rates to fall’ in favor of ‘tendency of surplus to rise’. Hence, the counter-tendencies of this tendency are made up of mode of ‘absorption of surplus’. Since monopoly capital is responsible for secreting surplus, the state which absorbs this surplus is to be seen as serving “the interest of monopoly capital” (Baran et al., 1966, p. 66). Civilian government’s role is assigned to be absorber of surplus by generating ‘effective demand’ in Keynesian sense. Lastly, since the most monopolized capital is in the U.S.A., imperialism of current stage of capitalism is called the U.S.A imperialism.

Baran and Sweezy violates the levels of abstraction in Marx’s ‘Capital’ at a point on which the most crucial dynamic of laws of motion of capital rests, namely ‘the tendential equalization of profit rate’. This violation, in turn, causes a deviation towards grasping the state as the instrument of oligarchy. Furthermore, while passing from the state to more concrete level of abstraction, namely international organization of labor or imperialism, Baran and Sweezy identify current stage of capitalism’s imperialism as the U.S.A imperialism.

Until now, we have examined a deviation from critical realism in favor of agency. Aglietta’s work has argued that factor that refers to agency may modify the laws of motion of capital. Another examination has referred to monopoly capitalism’s structural analysis. It is not the agency but the very structures of monopoly capitalism causes a modification of abstract laws of motion of capital.

In concluding this chapter, it is argued that abstract laws of motion of capital cannot be violated through agency factor. It is also argued that, even if structural forms can be specified for historically specific stages and phases of capitalism, specific structural environment of relations of production cannot violate the abstract laws of motion of capital. On the other hand, it is also acknowledged that abstract laws of motion of capital does not determine the action of agents. Agents are intentional. Therefore abstract laws of motion of capital does only limits the agents’ behavior.

In the third chapter, structural forms such as wage relation, forms of competition, money, the state and international regime will be transformed into contradictions between classes and class fractions. Respective mechanisms will be as follows: exploitation, competition, credit, state power and uneven development.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCRETE ANALYSIS

Marx, in his famous passage, argues:

Men make their of history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past (Marx, 1972, p. 10).

One aim of this chapter is to form the theoretical framework in which the objective conditions will be revealed. Objective conditions are not a harmonious whole, but a unity of opposing parts. From this point of view, objective conditions will be conceptualized with the concept of contradiction. But a theoretical intervention is needed to deal with the contradiction that carries us from the abstract analysis to the concrete analysis plane. The contradiction will be made available for consideration after the presentation of Althusser's overdetermination thesis. Then, the determinations of contradiction will be examined through Lenin and Mao's views on dialectics. In this study, the emphasis will be on the need to examine the contradictions both within themselves and in the context of their connection with other contradictions. Another consequent emphasis will be that contradictions develop unevenly, both among themselves and in their opposite aspects. Considering contradiction together with overdetermination is complementary in characterizing Marx's concept of contradiction. In this case, the answer to two questions is postponed. The first is the question of why the concept of contradiction is now used while the concepts of structure and mechanism are used in abstract analysis. The second is how history is

made under given conditions. The answers to both questions will be investigated in the agency and accumulation strategies section of the fourth chapter.

Second aim of this chapter is to define and analyze the determinations of the spaces in which objective places of social classes are given. It is argued that contradictions do not take place in a vacuum, on the contrary, they generate spaces by actualizing. In this chapter, it will be argued that this space is the actual domain of critical realism.

### **3.1. Overdetermination and Contradiction**

According to Althusser, Marx's concept of contradiction is more than a materialist grounding of Hegel's idealist contradiction. The discussion begins with the passage in which Marx explains the relation of his method in *Capital* to Hegel; “with him it is standing on its head. It must be inverted, in order to discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell” (Marx, 1990, p. 103). In his 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right', Marx presents his critique of Hegel's idealism to grasp the state as follows:

At the most ... speculative level it therefore appears necessary when the most abstract determinations, ... the natural bases of the state ... , appear to be the highest, immediate Idea-become-man (Marx, 1982, p. 40).

Marx's critique of Hegel's analysis of the state becomes a critique of Hegel's method in general; “... the true method is turned upside down. What is most simple is made most complex and vice versa. What should be the point of departure becomes the mystical result, and what should be the rational result becomes the mystical point of departure” (Marx, 1982, p. 40). After these criticisms, the problem turns into what Marx's dialectic is. Is it enough to invert the Hegelian dialectic? For Althusser, Marx's dialectic is more than Hegel's 'inversion'. This 'inversion' is found in all its purity in Marx's 'Poverty of Philosophy'; “the hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist” (Marx, 1969, p. 122). According to Althusser, if Marx's intervention in the Hegelian dialectic had remained at this level, the result would have been economism, even technologism (Althusser, 1969, pp. 107–108). Accordingly, ontological status of political and ideological contradictions of a society would have been reduced to pure empirical manifestation of economic contradictions and level of technology of that society. Althusser argues that Marx's dialectic, unlike Hegel's reductionism, is one that, though materialist, does not reduce

social complexity to the simple phenomenon of one contradiction (Althusser, 1969, pp. 100–101).

Althusser proposes the concept of overdetermination to understand the concept of contradiction in Marx. What is tried to be expressed with this concept is the following; Contradictions derive from relations of production, in this respect they are the 'terms' of relations of production. But at the same time, once these contradictions arise, they are the conditions of existence of relations of production and have their own consistency and effectivity (Althusser, 1969, pp. 100–101). For this reason, the social whole is the sum of the contradictions that form the conditions of existence of each other, and one cannot be separated from the other. Each of the contradictions determines the other and is determined by the others. From this perspective, every contradiction is an overdetermined contradiction (Althusser, 1969, pp. 100–101). Althusser applies this theoretical contribution of Marx's concept of contradiction to political economy. According to Althusser, the capital-labor contradiction is influenced by the concrete forms of the historical period in which it developed, such as the state, ideology, and religion (Althusser, 1969, p. 106). World context is also included in this influence.

Althusser's analysis of overdetermination contributes to understanding the complexity of neoliberalism at the structural level. The idea that the contradictions deriving from the relations of production are not its pure phenomena, on the contrary, that the relation of determination is reciprocal, carries us from abstract analysis to concrete analysis at the structural level. The next theoretical step to be taken at the structural level will be to reveal the determinations of the contradiction. The purpose of this step is to map the objective conditions in which the class struggles of neoliberalism take place and to mark the location of the crucial elements on this map. Class struggles can be open to the right strategies only with the right understanding of this objective map.

Mao states that “the law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the basic law of materialist dialectics” (Mao, 1975, p. 311). According to Lenin, “dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradiction *in the very essence of objects*” (Lenin, 1976a, pp. 251–252, 1976b, p. 357, italics original). To grasp the conditions is to grasp the contradictions. Contradictions are defined as the unity of

opposites. Revealing the determinations of contradiction, then, is necessary in order to understand the objectivity of Marx's statement of what is "given and transmitted from the past" (Marx, 1972).

Mao argues that contradictions move according to their internal dialectics, but this motion is also influenced by the external, that is, by interactions with other contradictions. Inner motion is primary, while interactions are secondary (Mao, 1975, p. 313). Therefore, the effect of the external on the internal movement of the contradiction depends on the extent to which the contradiction internalizes the external (Mao, 1975, p. 314). This determination of contradiction plays a significant role in understanding the economic and political spheres of social life. While political life continues to operate with its own operational codes, on the other hand, the acceleratingly growing capitalist relations of production are increasingly internalized in the operations of the political field. It is only through the presupposition of the interaction of contradictions within the social whole that it will be possible to exhibit the determinations of the interactions between the spheres of social life. Therefore, the capitalist economy supported by neoliberalism is effective in the neoliberal transformation of the non-economic sphere of social life.

Another determination of contradiction is its universality and particularity. Neglecting either the universality or the particularity of contradiction gives rise to two theoretical faults. First, it risks reducing the concrete relations of capitalist production to their determination valid for all capitalist societies. Second, it risks treating each phase of capitalism in complete isolation from the next.

The universality of contradiction has two meanings. First, according to Mao, "contradiction exists in the process of development of all things" (Mao, 1975, p. 316). Contradiction itself is absolute, there is no area of social life that is not based on contradiction. In the words of Engels, "Motion itself is a contradiction" (Marx et al., 1987, p. 111). Second, if the absoluteness of the contradiction is accepted, it is the absoluteness of the unity of the opposite aspects of the contradiction (Lenin, 1976b, pp. 357–358). The method applied in handling the universality of contradiction is exhibited in *Capital*. Marx began his analysis with the contradiction of the commodity, valid for all bourgeois societies. The commodity, on the other hand, exposed the

contradictions of the remaining parts of bourgeois society. The universality of contradiction points to the absoluteness of its movement. Particularity, on the other hand, reveals itself as the contradiction of certain forms.

Each social form is distinguished from another through qualitative change in the particularity of contradiction (Mao, 1975, pp. 319–320). In addition, the particularity of contradiction differs from the universality of contradiction in terms of the particularity of its aspects. When the form of the contradiction changes qualitatively, the particularity of the aspects constituting its unity also changes.

Considering the universality and particularity of the contradiction in the context of this thesis, the following conclusions can be reached. The theory of real competition represented in Anwar Shaikh considers the contradiction of competition only in its absolute and universal aspect. This abstract analysis empirically proved the universal aspect of the laws of motion of Marx's theory of competition by showing the formation of average rates of profit through competition between regulatory capitals. But the same abstract analysis neglected concrete analysis, ignoring the particularity of the contradiction of competition, its temporal concrete forms. This glitch prevents understanding of the value form, state form and form of imperialism in the current phase of capitalism. In addition, it prevents the determination of the objective places of the existing classes and the subjective positions to be taken for the class struggle.

The School of Regulation, and in particular Aglietta, ignored the universality of contradiction. This error has led them to consider the periods of capitalism only with their particular contradictions. Consequently, the process of formation of average rates of profit, which is universally inherent in the competition of capitalism, has been treated as a particular tendency belonging to only one stage of capitalism. According to Mao, “it is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides” (Mao, 1975, p. 316). The combined analysis of the universality and the particularity of contradiction, that is, the unity of abstract and concrete analysis, is the appropriate method of understanding the form of value, the state and, the objective places of classes, in accordance with the objective laws of motion of capital.

Another determination of the concept of contradiction is the asymmetry of the interaction of contradictions, on the one hand, among themselves, and on the other hand, in their own aspects. This thesis of Mao will be the key to understanding the power asymmetries of the contradictions between and within the economic-political systems and the economic-political apparatuses. Moreover, this thesis of Mao plays a crucial role in conceptualizing the current phase of capitalism.

Mao argues that more than one contradiction determines the development process of a complex whole. The crucial point here is that one of these contradictions comes to the fore as the principal contradiction. What makes the contradiction the principal contradiction is the power of its existence and development to influence or determine the existence and development of other contradictions (Mao, 1975, p. 331). While the principal contradiction plays the decisive role, other contradictions remain in the secondary or subordinate position, yet they play their own roles (Mao, 1975, p. 332). Mao identifies one of the criteria determining the stages of capitalism as the displacement of the principal contradiction or the emergence of new contradictions. For example, with the emergence of imperialism, the contradiction of monopoly and non-monopoly capital emerged; In addition, the labor-capital contradiction was also influenced by imperialism and intensified (Mao, 1975, p. 325). Accordingly, imperialism became principal contradiction in current phase of monopoly capitalism.

A similar analysis is proposed for the principal and secondary aspects of the contradiction. The aspects of the contradiction develop unevenly, and therefore one of the aspects becomes the principal aspect and plays the dominant role. It is the extent of their strength in their mutual struggle that decides which aspect is principal in the development of things (Mao, 1975, p. 333). Another criterion in the periodization of the phases of capitalism is the displacement of the fundamental and secondary aspects of a contradiction. Here, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of principal and secondary aspects. According to Mao, “to be *superficial* means to consider neither the characteristics of a contradiction in its totality nor the characteristics of each of its aspects” (Mao, 1975, p. 324, italics added).

At the same time, Mao expresses the error of the subjectivist analysis as follows; “For all objective things are actually interconnected and are governed by inner laws, but, .

. . . , some people only look at things one-sidedly . . . know neither their interconnections nor their inner laws, and so their method is *subjectivist*” (Mao, 1975, p. 324, italics added). Lenin proposes to embrace all aspects, connections and mediation, so as not to risk error and rigidity (Lenin, 1973, p. 94).

An intermediate conclusion can be drawn from the analysis of the principal and secondary aspects of the contradiction. In the second chapter of this thesis, Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy's views on the state were criticized in the context of neglect at the levels of abstraction. To this critique we can now add, in Mao's light, the critique of one-sidedness and subjectivism. Baran and Sweezy portray the state as an instrument of the oligarchy. The reason here is that they fall into a subjectivism that deals with the monopoly capital-competitive capital contradiction with only one aspect of the contradiction, or they accept monopoly capital as the subject of the monopoly capitalism process. Their conclusion was that, in their next concrete step, they understood the state as an instrument of the oligarchy. Subjectivism and instrumentalism are two aspects of the same theoretical deviation. While discussing the agency part of the thesis, Althusser's process without subject thesis will be used in order not to fall into the deviation of subjectivism and thus instrumentalism. Let's just summarize this concept for now. If there is a contradiction, there are aspects of the contradiction. If the contradiction has aspects, there are corresponding social classes. If there are social classes, there are class struggles. If there are class struggles, no class can determine a stage in the history of capitalism as the sole subject of the process. In summary, there is no subject of history, but there are subjects who struggle in history (Althusser, 1976b, pp. 49–50).

Principal and secondary contradictions and their principal and secondary aspects do not follow the predetermined path of a given system, goal or circularity. This process develops aimlessly and ambiguously as a result of the struggles of classes representing contradictions and directions, once the set of relations is given objectively. Here, Arrighi can be criticized to consolidate the theoretical position of this thesis.

Arrighi mainly studies trends in capitalism that he sees as developing cyclically. According to Arrighi, capitalism was not constructed as an articulation of national economies, but as a world economic system from the very beginning (Arrighi et al.,

2001, p. 56). Thus, the world political system is formed not by the articulation of the economies of certain states, but by the unity of the interstate system from the very beginning. In summary, if the economy is the world economy, the political system is the interstate system (Arrighi et al., 2001, p. 56). The capitalist world economy is defined by the succession of certain systemic cycles of accumulation throughout its life. This corresponds to the existence of a hegemonic country in the interstate system (Arrighi, 2010, p. 28). A systemic accumulation cycle consists of two phases. The first phase is the material expansion phase of the world economy under the leadership of the hegemonic country (Arrighi, 2010, p. 6). This phase corresponds to a production-based capital accumulation where competition stagnates and profit rates are high. This phase ends with a crisis in which profit rates fall due to increased competition, on the one hand, and class struggle and rising wages on the other. Arrighi describes this crisis as a signal crisis because it signals that the hegemony of the hegemonic country is in danger (Arrighi, 2010, p. 220). A second and final phase of systemic accumulation under the leadership of the hegemonic country is the financial expansion phase. Financial expansion implies that the capitalist world economy has matured and, in Braudel's words, is in its autumn (Braudel, 1984, p. 246). The beginning years of the financial expansion phase are stagnant and painful because the competition left over from the material expansion phase is intensifying and solutions continue to be sought within the same paradigm. Financial expansion, on the other hand, means that companies that are overwhelmed by competition financialize and solve the profitability problem (Arrighi, 2003, p. 26). Starting from this moment, Arrighi refers to the *belle-époque* between the moment of financialization and the moment when the hegemonic country enters a crisis. It is a *belle-époque* because there is an unexpectedly large growth from financialization, but its crisis is also extremely heavy. This is a terminal crisis because it is the last station for the hegemony of the current hegemonic country (Arrighi, 2010, p. 221, 2007, pp. 150–151). However, while terminal crisis hegemon puts an end to the hegemony of the state, it may not end its domination. In this case, a situation of dominance without hegemony occurs where the hegemony is not transferred to another country (Arrighi et al., 1999, pp. 26–27). A future hegemonic country, on the other hand, makes its presence felt for the first time in the financial expansion period of the current systemic accumulation cycle. This hegemonic country is emerging, bearing within itself the seeds of the material expansion of the next

system's cycle of accumulation. As systemic cycles of accumulation are transferred to another, the country that carries the hegemony of the interstate system moves from being a city-state to a world state during the 'longue durée' of capitalism (Arrighi et al., 2001, p. 73). While Venice is a city-state, the USA is very close to being a world state. This is the contradiction of the world capitalist system, which cannot be completed with a world state. This process itself divides the 'longue durée' of capitalism into four systemic accumulation cycles, and each accumulation cycle exists with a hegemonic state.

This point of view can be criticized from three points in the context of Mao's concept of contradiction, let alone the importance of attention it draws to the longevity of capitalism. First, the particularity of contradiction is subordinated to its universality. The particularity of the contradictions of each systemic accumulation cycle has to be examined by subordinating it to the universality of a pre-given scheme of accumulation cycles. Second, the interaction of contradictions that constitute the universality of systemic accumulation cycles becomes mechanical rather than dynamic. When will hegemony be gained and lost; phases of competition, material and financial expansion are given in advance. What remains is the adaptation of the accumulation cycles of the concrete system with certain nuances. From this point of view, subordinating the particularity of contradictions to its universality and mechanising the universality leads to the conclusion that the system becomes a subject that explains itself and partially directs the process (Özdemir, 2010, p. 211; Yalman, 2009). Third, like any view that fails to emphasize the particularity of contradiction, Arrighi's system prevents concrete analysis. Because concrete contradictions and the course of their aspects are more or less predetermined.

In the previous chapter, we had determined the structural forms and aspects based on the abstract analysis. After introducing the concept of contradiction, we can add new determinations to these forms. Contradictions of current phase of capitalism can be listed as follows; capital-labor, non-monopoly capital-monopoly capital, banking capital-industrial capital, authoritarian state-democratic state, USA-EU dominant nations-subordinated nations. The principal contradiction is imperialism. The first aspects of contradictions are the principal aspects. It is possible to express the interplay of contradictions by taking support from Althusser's overdetermination thesis. In the

presence of imperialism, the labor processes of the subordinated nations are strongly influenced by their relations with the dominant nations. The state form is influenced by the articulation of banking and industrial capitals. The state form also overdetermines the reproduction of labor power on the one hand and the expanded reproduction of capital on the other. The states of the subordinated nations, on the one hand, are affected by the articulation of their national capitals, and on the other hand, they overdetermine the financialization strategies of the dominant nations in their own country. Banking capital, on the one hand, affects the distribution problem of the capital-labor contradiction, on the other hand, it is affected by the profitability of industrial capital. More examples of the set of relationships that can be derived from the interaction of contradictions can be given. The important point here is: collective imperialism has a greater power of determination over other contradictions. Collective imperialism is defined as the internationalization of capital and states through USA-EU imperialism under USA hegemony. For this reason, a correct understanding of the relationship with imperialism is critical in understanding neoliberalism. We can express a consequence of this determination of the social whole in understanding neoliberalism as follows: Neoliberalism is not identical with financialization, nor is it even a project in which banking capital is the sole subject. In the world dominated by collective imperialism, the neoliberal project also bears the stamp of industrial capital, which is included in the monopoly capital of the dominant nations, secondarily. This point will be re-emphasized when discussing neoliberal, market-oriented policies.

Two points will be discussed in the next section. First, contradictions do not take place in a vacuum, on the contrary, they generate spaces by actualizing. Therefore, these spaces and their determinations should be defined. The second point is by what criteria a contradiction or the aspect of the contradiction has the principal position. The criteria of our analysis, which has so far referred to imperialism hypothetically, will also be investigated in the next section.

### **3.2. Actualization of Mechanisms**

It is important to carefully define the determinations of actual domain. Because, in the next sections, it will be argued that this area is filled by systems and apparatuses. Any point that is overlooked in the determination of the actual domain will cause systems

and apparatuses to be misunderstood. The main thesis to be put forward in this section can be summarized as follows: Actual domain is nothing but the actualization of contradictions corresponding to real domain. The interactions within and with each other of the systems and apparatuses that make up the actual domain are, in essence, the actualization of the interactions of contradictions with each other. Therefore, the determinations of the contradictions discussed in the previous section will be internalized in the actual domain.

### **3.2.1. Actualization**

According to Bhaskar, the actual domain consists of the actual flows of phenomena generated by mechanisms (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 6). Events within this domain do not have the power to explain each other. On the contrary, every event that is generated in the actual domain is created by the conjunction of more than one mechanism through the multiple-determination in the open-system (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 155). An open-system is a system in which no mechanism is isolated or controlled, and mechanisms interact freely. What is understood from the closed-system is a controlled system in which only the event generation process of these mechanisms is observed by isolating the mechanisms (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 2). In the context of this thesis, open-system refers to the complexity of social life and the events arising from it. The closed-system refers to an experimental system in which a part of social life is isolated and the events generated through these experiments..

According to Bhaskar, mechanisms should be considered independently of both Humean constant conjunctions and pattern of events (Bhaskar, 2011, p. 16). It is understood from the constant conjunctions that the mechanisms constantly interact in the same way to create an event (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 23). Pattern of events indicates that this interaction always generates the same series of events. Since the mechanisms are tendential, the mode of interaction do not remain the same. In other words, while some mechanisms actualize in the open-system, some are do not (Bhaskar, 2011, p. 16). For this reason, even if the mechanisms are determined and taken for granted, it is not certain that they will produce the same event series.

The relationship between the mechanisms in the real domain and the events in the actual domain is unidirectional. Mechanisms are tendential, that is, those that actualize

under certain conditions and are independent of events. Events, on the other hand, are only generated by the actualization of mechanisms. Events have neither the power to determine each other nor the power to generate mechanisms. In the introduction to this subsection, it has been argued that not understanding the actualization process of mechanisms correctly would lead to a misconception of the determination relationship between contradictions, apparatuses and systems. Therefore, it is useful to understand Bhaskar's position regarding the actual domain through a discussion he conducted.

Bhaskar calls the explanation of mechanisms by reducing them to the actual domain as 'actualism'. Bhaskar defines actualism as “the doctrine of the actuality of causal laws; that is, to the idea that laws are relations between events or states of affairs” (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 54). Then, he defines two positions as strong and weak in actualism (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 140). The reasoning process for both positions begins with the question of what will happen to the status of the laws that make up the real domain of critical realism if a certain pattern of events or constant conjunctions of mechanisms are not found as a result of empirical research. Strong actualism constructs its theoretical model in open-system conditions. According to strong actualism, the actual is the real. Therefore, if there is no pattern of events or regularity that defines the actual, there is no law (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 82). There is no law because empirical research has been done under open-system conditions. Weak actualism constructs its theory in closed-system conditions. According to weak actualism, if there is no pattern of events or constant conjunction, although the existence of laws can be mentioned, these laws are not universal (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 82). It is not universal because it can sustain the status of law under different closed-system conditions. In critical realism, on the other hand, since laws are not related to empiricism, constant conjunction or pattern of events are not sought in the determination of laws or mechanisms. Since the mechanisms exceed the actual domain, Bhaskar describes the mechanisms as transfactual (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 82). However, mechanisms actualize under certain conditions may not have a constant conjunction; may not display patterns of events. Yet the mechanisms are real.

What apparatuses, systems are and their relations with each other will be discussed in the following sub-sections. However, it is useful to note some intermediate results derived from Bhaskar's critique of actualism and his own position. In this thesis, the

actual domain will be filled with systems and apparatuses. Thus, pattern of events means the formation of a set of apparatuses or systems. From this point of view, the first criticism is directed towards the relationship of this thesis with strong actualism. A theory, which is developed by following strong actualism, erroneously concludes that if there is no apparatus or system, then, there is no contradiction. If there is no corporate apparatus, then there is no contradiction of capital and labor. If there is no strike, there is no exploitation. Moreover, the aspects of the contradiction, labor and capital, are absent. If there is no banking apparatus, there is no contradiction, which is formed by banking and industrial capital. Likewise, there is no financial and industrial capital. If there is no war of liberation, there is no imperialism. There are no dominant and subordinated nations. If there is no banking and corporate apparatus, there is no economic system. From the point of view of critical realism, this perspective is flawed. There is a capital-labor contradiction, but under certain conditions it may not actualize in the corporate apparatus, for example in times of economic crisis. There is the contradiction of imperialism, likewise there are dominant and subordinated nations which are aspects of the contradiction. But under some circumstances, a war of liberation does not take place. Imperialism may generate events other than war under other circumstances.

The second criticism is directed towards weak actualism. It has been argued that weak actualism, operating under closed-system conditions, problematize the universality of laws. Given that the pattern of events is detected in the closed-system, when this pattern of events does not repeat itself in the open-system, weak actualism leads to the externality thesis. Accordingly, an element external to the system causes deterioration. Weak actualism expects the pattern of events derived within the closed-system as well as in the open-system, which refers to the complexity of social life. Two close positions can be taken regarding apparatuses and systems when considered from within weak actualism. What is problematized here is whether apparatuses and systems interact regularly in the context of patterns of events. This problematization is conducted under conditions in which apparatuses and systems are not the actualization of contradictions. The first position can be called functionalism. Apparatuses and systems are defined by their specific functions in the closed-system, and apparatuses and systems in constant conjunction with these functions also generate patterns of events. However, this situation, which has reached the status of law in the

closed-system, does not give the same results in the open-system, because externalities have created distortion in the open system. The result is two-folded. The functionalism theses can be set aside. Alternatively, social engineering can be done to file the externalities of the complexity of social life in favor of the laws of the closed system. The second position is to attribute nature to apparatuses. The natures of apparatuses are defined in closed-systems in which experiment, or some kind of modeling in social science, is conducted. However, the situation in the first position arises because the pattern of events corresponding to this nature is not observed in the open-system. Either this research method will be abandoned, or social life will be designed to correspond to the nature of this apparatus. For example, some apparatuses are marked as democratic within the closed-system. However, in the open system, these apparatuses do not exhibit a democratic pattern of events. Therefore, the apparatus is tried to be transformed to exhibit this democratic pattern of event. Some corporate apparatuses exhibit labor-capital consensus-friendly patterns of events in a closed system. If a labor-capital consensus pattern of events is not exhibited in the society concerned, such a friendly apparatus can be imported from somewhere else.

In critical realism, mechanisms and contradictions are neither determined by the constant conjunction of the relations between apparatuses and systems, nor should these contradictions generate the same series of apparatuses and systems as a pattern of event every time (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 82). Contradictions are independent of apparatuses and systems, and because they are tendential, they generate different sets of apparatuses and systems under certain conditions. For example, the contradiction between monopoly capital and non-monopoly capital does not consistently generate centralization of capital through the bankruptcy of non-monopoly capital, although this tendency is strong. On the contrary, under the conditions of subcontracting, non-monopoly capital can survive under monopoly capital domination for a certain period of time. The banking apparatus can survive under certain conditions dominated by the expanded reproduction of productive capital. The free circulation of money may come to the fore, while the conditions of reproduction that expand under other circumstances are of secondary importance. It is all about the conditions under which contradictions, their aspects and tendencies will actualize and generate apparatuses and systems.

According to Bhaskar, events are subject to multiple control (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 102). An event is generated through actualization of more than one mechanism. This process means multiple determination. Multiple control, on the other hand, refers to the control hierarchy among the mechanisms that generate the event. Accordingly, a control relationship is established between at least two mechanisms as higher-order and lower-order (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 102). The mechanism defined as high-order determines the boundaries of the operation area of the mechanism defined as lower-order. Bhaskar relates the rules of the game of cricket to the weather conditions in London to concretize his theory. To play cricket, the rules of cricket are needed, but it is the weather conditions of London that set the limits of where the rules of cricket will be applied (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 102). As a result, weather conditions refer to higher-order mechanism and cricket rules refer to lower-order mechanism. The determination relationship between the higher order and the lower order paves the way for the contradictions that establish a dominance relationship among themselves in the real domain to actualize in the actual domain through this determination relationship, to form apparatuses and systems. Accordingly, for example, in the era of imperialism, the monetary policies of the subordinated nation are controlled by the financial capital-industrial capital contradiction whose borders are controlled by imperialism.

Finally, Bhaskar's ordering of mechanisms provides the mediating link to articulate the concept of dominance in contradiction to the ecological dominance in systems in 'Otopoiesis' theory.

The determination of the actual domain has been discussed. The following subsection takes one step closer to considering the concepts of Marxist political economy within the ontology of critical realism. It has been argued that the actual domain was filled with systems and apparatuses. The next step, given the actual domain's determinations, will be to set out the determinations of the systems and apparatuses and detail their relationship to the contradictions. The relationship between systems will be discussed in the second subsection, and the apparatuses that fill the systems will be discussed in the third subsection.

### 3.2.2. Otopoiesis

So far, the irreducible character of contradictions in real domain have been emphasized. These emphases have been made by frequently referring to the terminology of philosophy of science, and a discussion of method has been especially carried out. The objective is to problematize, on the one hand, how to relate economic and political systems in social life dominated by capitalism, and on the other hand, capitalism as a whole and the rest of social life. In this subsection, the relationship between the systems in the actual domain will be discussed through the theory of autopoiesis. In accordance with the actual domain analysis of critical realism, it will be argued that the power relations between the systems in the actual domain are the actualization of the power relations between the contradictions in the real domain.

Two points have been overshadowed in the analysis up to this point. First of all, while discussions on the categories of philosophy and method were carried out, the developments on political economy were expressed only as an intermediate result. Second, theses and arguments are handled only at the level of structure-contradiction and agency is neglected. In this subsection, the first step towards overcoming the first deficiency will be to overcome this through its contact with the categories of political economy, after the theory of 'autopoietic systems' is explained. Although there is a strategic aspect of 'autopoietic systems' that refers to agency, this aspect will be discussed in the next section. The main thesis of this subsection is: capital versus labor, financial capital versus productive capital, and capitalism structurally tends to dominate in the integrity of social life. Arguments are needed to support this thesis. For this, first of all, Bob Jessop's theory of 'otopoiesis' and the interaction processes of these systems will be discussed. Autonomously operating systems will be introduced, and then the determinants of their articulation styles that derive a dominance relationship will be expressed. Secondly, David Harvey's 'spatio-temporal fix' and 'time-space distantiation and compression' theses will be added to this theory while the implications of the articulation style on the relationship of dominance are discussed. As a result of this examination, arguments that build bridges with the categories of political economy will be put forward.

Otopoiesis expresses the self-regulation, self-production and radical autonomy of sub-systems such as economy, politics, culture (Jessop, 2001c, p. 217, 2008b, p. 26). Autonomy does not exclude interdependency, but refers to the operational aspect of autonomy, that is, each subsystem has its own operational codes (Jessop, 1990, p. 321, 2008a, p. 332). Accordingly, once an autopoietic subsystem emerges, it carries out its operations according to its own laws of motion, in other words, its operations are not controlled by an external subsystem (Jessop, 1990, p. 320). On the other hand, the main purpose of sub-systems is not to control other sub-systems, but to realize their self-production (Jessop, 1990, p. 321).

The critical problem with subsystems, given self-production determination and capacity, is how they articulate to each other. Because, in the light of the interdependence of the elements of social life, this articulation process has to express more than simply juxtaposition. Jessop proposes the concept of 'structural coupling' to examine the articulation process. He also uses the concept of 'ecological dominance' in order to reveal the determinations of the dominance relationship, which is an output of the articulation process. Jessop defines structural coupling as a process “between two or more mutually indifferent systems which none the less form part of each other's environments and so must co-exist and co-evolve in the same ecological system” (Jessop, 1990, p. 328). Given this co-evolution, it is only through the internalization process of the externalities by operationally autonomous system structural coupling occurs. Through the process of structural coupling, “the system tends to react to environmental changes in such a way as to maintain its autopoiesis” (Jessop, 1990, p. 328). Although operational autonomy is preserved in the structural coupling process, the systems are substantively interdependent (Jessop, 2001b, p. 86). Systems do not have to come into contact with each other as completely separate from each other. While the state is included in the economic system through taxation and government expenditures, it is included in the political system through elections, and in the legal system through legal obligations (Jessop, 1990, p. 330). While explaining the concept of contradiction, it is argued that every contradiction is the unity of its opposites. With the concept of over-determination, it is argued that contradictions have their own consistency and effectivity. It is then argued that every contradiction is an overdetermined contradiction. With the concept of ‘structural coupling’, it is argued that systems reproduce themselves and evolve together as a result of internalizing the

effects of other systems. In this case, economy and politics can be defined as two systems operating with their own operational codes. While a system is structurally coupled with another, it cannot control the system it is coupled with. Production relations are driven by the value form and prevail within economic apparatuses. The operational code of the political system comes from the political power and prevails in the state apparatuses (Jessop, 1990, p. 323). For this reason, according to Jessop, “it is so hard for the state to master the circuit of capital as easily as the issue of why capitalists find it hard to control the political system” (Jessop, 1990, p. 333).

It remains to understand the dynamics of the dominance relationship between structurally coupled systems. According to Jessop, systems relate asymmetrically to other systems in terms of the degree of complexity of their own dynamics, the degree of their power to externalize the costs of their own complexity, and the degree of response they show to the complexity of other systems. Jessop defines ecological dominance as follows:

Ecological dominance refers to the capacity of a given system in a self-organizing ecology of self-organizing systems to imprint its developmental logic on other systems' operations through structural coupling, ... , to a greater extent than the latter can impose their respective logics on that system (Jessop, 2000, pp. 328–329, 2001b, p. 90).

The system that creates more problems on other systems than other systems create on it is the ecological dominant system (Jessop, 2008b, p. 26). In this case, the failure of the ecological dominant system has negative consequences on other systems rather than itself (Jessop, 2019, p. 897). In addition, the ecological dominance relationship is not the dominance relationship of a given dominant system with other systems; on the contrary, ecological dominance is relational and contingent and therefore must be studied in historically specific situations (Jessop, 2000, p. 329, 2007c, p. 74, 2010a, p. 177, 2010b, p. 28).

Jessop lists a set of criteria that make a system ecologically dominant. The criteria are respectively related to the internal dynamics of the system, the externalization dynamics of the system, and finally the internalization dynamics of the other systems. The purpose of presenting the criteria in this thesis is to establish the primary and secondary aspects of the relations between and within the contradictions. Three criteria

regarding internal dynamics can be evaluated. According to Jessop, a criterion can be defined as “scope for continuous self-transformation because internal competitive pressures...” (Jessop, 2007c, p. 76). He defines another criterion concerning internal dynamics as “capacity to distantiate and/or compress its operations in time and space ... to exploit the widest possible range of opportunities for self-reproduction” (Jessop, 2000, p. 329). Harvey understands time-space compression and distantiation as shortening the decision-making processes and increasing the mobility of capital through flexible production processes (Harvey, 1992, p. 147). After citing the third criterion, it will be possible to examine the three criteria with Harvey's theses. Jessop constructs the third criterion on externalizing the internal contradictions of the system towards other systems or postponing it towards the future (Jessop, 2007c, p. 76). Competition between capitals in capitalism causes capitals to create new productive forces through centralization and concentration, as stated in the second chapter. Capital in general transforms itself by inventing a 'spatio-temporal fix' within the context of 'inner' and 'outer' transformation, if we are to borrow Harvey's terminology. Inner transformation refers to capital's self-transformation out of its internal contradictions within the given territory (Jessop, 2007a, p. 147). Outer transformation refers to the postponement of internal contradictions by transferring the over-accumulated capital out of the geography where it originated (Jessop, 2007a, p. 147). With these three criteria, capital transforms itself in order to postpone its own crisis tendencies, on the other hand, it delays its contradictions.

Harvey considers spatio fixes in terms of both inner and outer dimensions. In the dimension of inner transformation, Harvey establishes a link between fixed and circulating capital. On the one hand, long-term fixed investment is made in transportation and communication, and surplus capital is absorbed. On the other hand, this investment accelerates commodity circulation by reducing socially necessary turnover time, expands the market and increases profit rates (Harvey, 1985, pp. 145–147). There is also a temporal displacement aspect of the investment made in transportation and communication. In these investments, which remain as fictitious capital created by the credit mechanism until they start productive activity, there is a delay for a certain period of time until they turn into 'real capital' and start to increase overaccumulation (Harvey, 1992, p. 182, 2004, p. 63; Jessop, 2007a, p. 148). This aspect of spatio fix is constantly repeating itself. Capital which belongs to existing

long-term investments is destroyed and devalued, and new spatio fixes are put into effect (Harvey, 1995, p. 6, 2001a, p. 25).

After showing the limits of the inner transformation dimension of spatio fix, Harvey turns to outer transformation analysis, which will open the doors of the theory of imperialism. Outer transformation has the same purpose as inner transformation; to prevent the crisis of overaccumulation of capital. The crisis of overaccumulation is for Harvey the essence of capitalist crises. The crisis of overaccumulation, capital; means to be devalued as commodity, money, labor-power or productive-capacity. This manifests itself as the falling welfare of labor, under-utilized capacity and unsold products and inflation (Harvey, 2001b, p. 300). Spatio-fix, in terms of outer transformation, is the export of surplus capital through geographical expansion outside the territory in which it was extracted. Although it creates a short-term solution, the crisis deepens as outer transformation ultimately means exporting the contradiction.

Harvey develops spatial fix analysis with the concept of temporality. The importance of the concept of temporal fix lies in; With this concept, Harvey conceives of financial capital as a capital that prevents the crisis of capitalism on the one hand and deepens the crisis by dominating productive capital on the other (Jessop, 2007a, p. 151). According to Harvey, the credit mechanism refers to "... embracing discontinuity in production, circulation and consumption of commodities. By way of the credit system, all turnover times are reduced to 'socially necessary turnover time'" (Harvey, 2006, p. 264). In this respect, the credit system connects with the fluidity of circulating capital. On the other hand, the credit system also has to connect with fixed capital. According to Harvey, interest bearing capital loses its flexibility by turning into fixed capital investments, that is, a barrier is placed in front of the circulation process of interest bearing capital (Harvey, 2006, pp. 266–267). This barrier is overcome through fictitious capital. When the papers referring to commercial credit start to circulate, credit money is in circulation. At this point, a 'gap' is formed between commodity money and credit money, which refer to fixed capital that has not yet been realized and has not entered the accumulation process. If credit money itself is loaned out as capital, fictitious capital is derived. From this point on, Harvey draws attention to the drawbacks of fictitious capital. According to Harvey, "future surplus value production is uncertain ... Yet, even in the face of such uncertainty, the money capital must be

advanced for at least the lifetime of the fixed capital” (Harvey, 2006, p. 267). Speculative and fictitious capital flows can make territories fragile in the continuation of this process (Harvey, 2004, p. 67).

The last two criteria to be discussed regarding ecological dominance are about how other systems internalize the contradictions of the current system. Jessop defines the first criterion for the external as follows: “extent to which other actors accept its operations as central to the reproduction of the wider system and orient their own operations to its reproduction 'needs'” (Jessop, 2007c, p. 76). Jessop defines the last criterion to be evaluated together with the previous one as “extent to which a given system is the biggest source of external adaptive pressure on other systems ...” (Jessop, 2007c, p. 76). In the context of this thesis, it is possible to refer to Poulantzas' analysis of authoritarianism of the state for the related criteria. Poulantzas identifies the authoritarianization of the state form with the prominence of the executive power against the legislative and judicial powers, in the transformation in the relations of production that led to the emergence of monopoly capital (Poulantzas, 2000, pp. 203–204). The positions of the economic system, which refers to the relations of production, and the political system, which refers to the state power, changed in such a way that the state has to intervene more in the relations of production in order to sustain itself (Poulantzas, 2000, pp. 166–168).

Structurally, capital can dominate labor through its potential to produce a reserve army of labor or a relative overpopulation and to lower the wage level below the value of labor-power. In the competition between productive capitals, monopoly capital can dominate non-monopoly capitals by transcending the tendency of rate of profit to fall by internationalizing its production by consuming cheaper labor force and inputs. Banking capital, through the credit mechanism, meets the needs of productive capital arising from the field of circulation, the demand for money required for fixed capital and infrastructure investment, by activating the economic state apparatus. However, through speculative and fictitious capital, it controls social labor and can control productive capital. The state form loses its character as a capitalist state if it cannot regulate the production relations of monopoly capital or the expanded reproduction of capital and the reproduction of labor power. Not to suffer this loss also makes the tendency of authoritarianism dominate in the state. Finally, the internationalization of

capital paves the way for collective imperialism through the internationalization of states. More than ever, the interstate system is in need of the expanded reproduction of capital, subject to the dominance of financial capital. All the contradictions mentioned above are reproduced in the interstate arena and strengthen the privileged position of the collective imperialist wing.

The discussion in this subsection has been tried to be kept at the level of contradictions and systems, trying to isolate it from state and economic apparatuses as far as our level of abstraction allows. In the next subsection, economic and political systems will be filled by economic and state apparatuses. Apparatuses will be defined as 'topos' which is generated by contradictions through actualization.

### **3.2.3. Apparatuses as Topos**

It has been argued that the contradictions in the real domain of the critical realist ontology actualize and forms the actual domain. It has been revealed that the actual domain consists of economic and political systems. It has been concluded that since they do not have the power of determination, their only determination is the actualization of determinations specific to contradictions. From this point of view, it has been concluded that the tendency of the economic system to dominate the political system is the tendency of the contradictions that make up the relations of production to dominate the other contradictions of social life.

The rationale for writing this subsection is that establishing the relations between the economic and political systems requires defining objective places of social classes. Class struggles become intelligible by mapping the objective places of classes. It is argued that objective places are found in economic and political apparatuses. The main theses on the determination of apparatuses can be summarized as follows. First, the apparatuses are not the instruments of classes, but rather the actual grounds of class struggles. Second, the apparatuses develop unevenly among and within themselves, just as in contradictions. Therefore, apparatuses establish a relationship of dominance and subordination among and within themselves. Understanding the determinations of economic and political apparatuses correctly is important in terms of understanding the structural conditions of the period in which neoliberalism is experienced. Because neoliberalism is a process in which the dominant apparatuses and the classes that

represent the dominant aspect of the uneven development within these apparatuses assume leading roles in determining the neoliberal project. This point will be mentioned again after the determinations of the apparatuses are discussed.

The organization of this sub-section will be as follows. First, apparatus will be defined. Secondly, by defining what apparatus is not, the position of the thesis in the ontology of critical realism will be strengthened. Third, the apparatuses will be divided into economic and state apparatuses. State apparatuses, on the other hand, will be limited to ideological and economic state apparatuses. Finally, the unequal development, domination and subordination relations between apparatuses and within themselves will be examined. Interim results will be presented at each step. This subsection will conclude by associating the determinations of apparatuses with neoliberalism.

Vefa Saygın Öğütte defines an aspect of institutions as the actualization of mechanisms as 'Topos' (Öğütte, 2019, pp. 2–3, 2021, pp. 95–96).<sup>3</sup> According to Öğütte, the topos aspect of institutions is defined as “a ground on which social structures materialize their causal powers, and on which the co-determination of mechanisms, and thus actual social causation are realized” (Öğütte, 2021, pp. 2–3). The definition of institutions as ground in the context of topos is related to the emphasis on the topography of the relations established by institutions with each other (Öğütte, 2021, pp. 9–10). Accordingly, the distances between institutions and the boundaries between them are determined according to which mechanisms are actualized in order to create institutions through multiple determination (Öğütte, 2021, p. 12).<sup>4</sup> In the real domain, the distances of the contradictions interacting through overdetermination determine the distances of apparatuses from each other. While some apparatuses are intertwined, some apparatuses are far from each other and close to being unrelated.

---

<sup>3</sup> Vefa Saygın Öğütte's discussion, which defines institutions as mediators between structures and agency, will be critically examined in the next section. In the present subsection, we argue that his analysis of associating institutions with mechanisms as 'topos' fits apparatuses in our thesis. Therefore, determinations of institutions as 'Topos' in Öğütte's analysis characterizes the determinations of apparatuses in this thesis.

<sup>4</sup> In this thesis, we have found it appropriate to use the concept of contradiction instead of the concept of mechanism in order to distinguish the concrete analysis of the concrete situation from the determinations of the abstract analysis. Its purpose is to make contact with Mao's terminology, which offers a wealthy treasure in the concrete analysis of the concrete situation.

It is possible to use the conceptual framework we have adopted in the concrete analysis to produce intermediate results. The formations of apparatuses occur with actualization of more than one contradiction and its aspects. Since these formations are tendential, the contradictions and their aspects do not always have to actualize and form apparatuses. In this case, contradictions continue the overdetermination processes in the real domain, but corresponding apparatuses do not exist. Secondly, it is known that a contradiction consists of the unity of opposite aspects. In this case, apparatuses cannot be defined as instruments, even if they are only actualization of a contradiction. Because each apparatus is actualization of more than one aspect of the contradiction, and these aspects necessarily require the struggle of the aspects.

In order to consolidate the position of this thesis in critical realist ontology, what apparatus is and what it is not should be expressed by revealing. The discussion at this point is about the direction of the determination relationship between the contradictions in the real domain and apparatus in the actual domain. Poulantzas criticizes institutionalism. His main objection is that, according to the institutionalist perspective, institutions determine the objective places of social classes (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 25). This theoretical positioning erroneously derives the place of classes by observing institutions, and then conceives the relations between classes as relations derived from institutions. Thus, this observation process starts its analysis procedure from empirical domain and deviates to idealism (Poulantzas, 1976, pp. 25–26). It starts from empirical domain, because it derives the objective place of classes only through observation of institutions. It is idealistic, as we have seen in Bhaskar's critique of actualism, because it attributes to institutions the essence that will determine class relation. According to Poulantzas, “the apparatuses are never anything other than the materialization and condensation of class relations” (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 25). Poulantzas expresses the direction of the determination relation as “primacy of the class struggle over the apparatuses” (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 34). In the abstract analysis, it has been argued that the mechanisms are relational. In concrete analysis, contradictions also carry this determination and, in Poulantzas's words, they materialize and intensify, forming apparatuses. So, transforming society means transforming the contradictions that make up the social whole and the corresponding relations; not transforming institutions.

The most general determination of apparatuses in the context of the real domain-actual domain relationship has been revealed. In this way, the next step is to classify apparatuses. We classify apparatus as economic and state apparatuses. Economic apparatuses are divided into corporate and banking apparatus. We limit state apparatuses to economic state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses. After the determinations of these apparatuses are explained and the intermediate results are drawn, the dominance relationship between apparatuses will be explained.

Poulantzas defines the economic apparatuses as materialization and embodiment of economic relations (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 25). Following this definition, Poulantzas makes a discussion on the impact of 'multinational firms' on the 'Nation State'. According to Poulantzas, the problematics that establish the relation of determination between the firm and the state, which are apparatuses, are fundamentally wrong. According to Poulantzas, “*the institutions or the apparatuses do not 'possess' 'power' proper but do nothing but express and crystallise class powers*” (Poulantzas, 1974, p. 164, 1976, p. 70, italics original). In this context, neither state nor corporate apparatus in the actual domain have intrinsic natures. The problematic turns into an examination of the transformation in the structure of the production relations that generate multinational firms, which in turn derives from the labor-capital relations and inter-capital relations. For Poulantzas, “rooted in production ... power relations are ... concretized in ... apparatuses: ... production units that are the site of the ... surplus value and of the exercises of ... powers” (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 36). The transformation that takes place in the contradictions that form the production relations in the real domain also overdetermines the state power on the real domain. State power also internalizes the effects of this transformation in the economy, whose ecological dominance we have mentioned in the previous subsection. Therefore, the transformation of the nation-state consists of class struggles directed towards state power, on the one hand, and overdetermined by the relations between capitals, which refer to the relations of production, on the other hand. Multinational firms are also born through the actualization of contradictions that make up the relations of production in the real domain and are overdetermined by the contradictions corresponding to state power.

Althusser defines the ideological state apparatus as “a system of defined institutions, organizations, and the corresponding practices” (Althusser, 2014, p. 77). In terms of critical realism, the relevance of this thesis to Althusser is as follows: According to Althusser, institutions do not produce ideologies corresponding to them, on the contrary, “realized in the institutions, organizations, and practices of this system is all or part ... of the State Ideology” (Althusser, 2014, pp. 77, 82).<sup>5</sup> Finally, according to Althusser, “the Ideological State Apparatuses are the realization, the existence, of the ideology formations *dominating* them” (Althusser, 2014, p. 85, italics added). Althusser also establishes the determination relation from the real domain to the actual domain in this context.

It is known that the contradictions in the real domain actualize and form actual domain in a tendential manner. The first point is the relationship between state power and state apparatuses. From a critical realist perspective, it is clear that class relations cannot be derived from state apparatuses. Likewise, it is clear that the transformation in state power will not necessarily actualize to form state apparatuses. According to Poulantzas, transformation in state apparatuses is not possible without seizing state power (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 26). Likewise, the seizure of state power does not have an automatic transformation in state apparatuses. Radical transformation in society is possible by 'revolutionizing' state apparatuses (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 26). Althusser gives an example of the tendentiality of actualization of the real domain in his critique of Stalin. Althusser's discussion is about what should be the principal aspect of the productive forces-production relations contradiction. According to Althusser, Stalin causes deviation by answering this question as productive forces. (Althusser, 2014, p. 214). Capturing the productive forces through a political revolution does not directly lead to socialist relations of production. Transforming economic apparatuses is possible only through transforming the contradictions that make up the relations of production in the real domain.

---

<sup>5</sup> Institutions also produce ideological 'by-products'. But these are secondary to understanding the nature of apparatuses. In the next section, the relationship of apparatuses to institutions will be discussed through the analysis of institutions as 'Locus'. The secondarity of 'by-product' or sub-formation will be discussed here. The fragility of ideological apparatuses is the prominent element as a result of class struggles.

Poulantzas adds economic state apparatuses to the ideological state apparatuses. The main point of Poulantzas's criticism of Althusser in the context of critical realism in which this thesis is located is this: According to Althusser, who limited the state apparatus to ideological and repressive apparatuses, the economic field, which refers to the contradictions of production relations, is “an instance capable of self-production and self-regulation” (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 30). Accordingly, the contradictions corresponding to the real domain, those belonging to the economic relations of production and those belonging to the political relations, are contradictions that have closed intervals in themselves, but are articulated only by the contacts at their borders. For this reason, economic and state apparatuses are likewise distinct entities, articulated only by the contact of their borders. According to Althusser, “the superstructure ensures the conditions of this reproduction... the entire superstructure is grouped around, and centered on, the state...” (Althusser, 2014, p. 149). But, according to Poulantzas, the state apparatus refers to more than reproduction of the conditions of production relations. Thanks to its economic function, the state plays a constitutive role in production relations and intervenes in the reproduction of capital (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 30). We can relate economic apparatus and economic state apparatus to the ontology of critical realism as follows: The multiple determination process is not limited to a process where contradictions of production relations form economic apparatuses in the economic system, and political contradictions form state apparatuses in the political system. On the one hand, economic contradictions determine the economic state apparatus, on the other hand, political contradictions determine the economic apparatuses. In this way, the economic and political systems are articulated as intersecting clusters. This is achieved by the penetration of economic state apparatuses into the economic system and economic apparatuses into the political system. The necessary consequence of the overdetermination process of contradictions in the real domain is that the systems and apparatuses in the actual domain are initially intersected.

The final discussion to conclude this subsection is about the dominance-subordination relations that apparatuses enter within and among themselves. Poulantzas considers the domination-subordination relations in state apparatuses in two directions. The first aspect is formed in the relations between apparatuses through the internalization of the

transformation in the structure of the production relations into state apparatus. The second aspect refers to the class struggle over state power.

In the current phase of capitalism, with the acceleration of commodification, almost all of social life falls within the scope of the valuation process of capital. This indicates the expansion of the system of the economy (Poulantzas, 2000, pp. 167–168). State apparatuses play a constitutive role in the expanded reproduction of capital and the reproduction of labor power. Therefore, the expansion in the system of economy also causes a parallel expansion in the system of the politics and transfers the contradictions of the capital relation to the state apparatuses (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 168). With this transformation, the economic function of the state comes to the fore in the interconnection of state apparatuses. Other state apparatuses organize themselves according to the transformation in the economic state apparatus (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 168). In the context of this thesis, in which we have limited the state apparatuses as economic and ideological apparatuses, it can be said that it is the capital relations that dominate the political system, that establishes the dominant position of the economic state apparatuses. The second aspect concerns the class struggles towards state power. Leaving this aspect missing leads to a deviation, which implies that the state's intervention in the economy can be explained by purely technical processes (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 13). The processes of overdetermination between political and economic contradictions in the real domain, on the one hand, cause the dominance of the economic system, placing the state in the relations of production more than ever before. On the other hand, class struggles towards state power give political character to the economic interventions of the state (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 173). The state's dedication to the reproduction of capital creates tensions with the capacity of ideological state apparatuses to produce consent (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 168). Therefore, this reciprocal relationship should also be mentioned.

Althusser assigns the dominant role to the school system within the ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 2014, p. 145). If all ideological state apparatuses form one orchestra, they all have a common note: state ideology (Althusser, 2014, p. 145). Althusser lists ideologies such as nationalism and liberalism as alternative state ideologies. Combined with the dominance of economic state apparatuses, it is reasonable to assume that which of these ideologies will come to the fore is decided

by the current phase of the capital relation. A consequence of this is that, whatever bourgeois ideology (nationalism, liberalism, conservatism) is, they all come under the control of the 'market ideology', which is also a state ideology. Market ideology cuts across all ideologies.

In closing this chapter, it would be appropriate to make a balance relate it to neoliberalism. First of all, the determinations of the actualization processes of the contradictions in the real domain has been revealed. Two-way emphasis has been made here; First, it has been argued that contradictions are tendential and do not have to actualize. Second, it has been argued that the contradictions are not determined by the elements of the actual domain, but rather these elements are actualization of the contradictions. The determinants of contradictions and their dominant aspects in the real domain has been revealed. Here, the theory of autopoiesis and the concept of ecological dominance has been covered. Two-way emphasis has been placed; the initial emphasis is on the self-reproducing capacities of systems; contacts with other systems are expressed as the internalization process of related systems. The second emphasis is directed towards a system gaining ecological dominance within the ecological environment based on certain criteria. According to these criteria, the economic system dominates the political system, financial capital dominates productive capital, and capital dominates labor ecologically. The ecological dominance thesis can be applied to contradictions and their aspects. The determination of the principal contradiction as imperialism is the result of this analysis. In the last subsection, the determination relation that goes along the contradiction-system line is extended to the contradiction-system-apparatus line and the determinations of the previous discussions are reflected in apparatus discussion. According to this, economic apparatuses are dominant over state apparatuses, and economic state apparatuses are ecologically dominant over ideological state apparatuses.

When combined with the 'Overdetermination and Contradiction' section, the following definition will emerge. Neoliberalism is a project led by collective imperialism, dominated by financial capital, subjugated by labor, supported by the economic regulatory role of the authoritarian state and market ideology.

## CHAPTER 4

### NEOLIBERALISM: A NEW LOOK

The analysis up to the fourth chapter has focused only on the interaction of mechanisms, structural forms, contradictions; and focused on the processes of actualization of contradictions. The missing point is the involvement of the agency in this whole process and the determination of its interaction with contradictions. In this section, the following roadmap will be followed. First, the determinations that institutions have through their interaction with agency will be conveyed. In this way, institutions that accept the empirical manifestation of apparatuses as a condition of existence, on the one hand, is determined through the reciprocity of their relationship with agency, on the other hand. Secondly, the determination of the interaction aspect of the institution-agency interaction will be conveyed. Then, only the determinations of agency will be discussed. Finally, the determinations of the system that mediate social structures and actors will be conveyed. At the end of this whole theoretical process, the ontological status of neoliberalism will be revealed by Marxist political economy, which is grasped within critical realism. In the third chapter, it has been argued that neoliberalism is a project led by collective imperialism, dominated by financial capital, subjugated by labor, supported by the economic regulatory role of the authoritarian state and market ideology. At the end of this chapter it will be argued that Neoliberalism is market-oriented project without a subject that cannot be reduced to social structures and accumulation strategies.

#### **4.1. Empirical Domain-Structure Level: Institutions as Locus**

According to Bhaskar, the empirical domain is the domain where events are empirically opened to experience (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 2). In the context of this thesis, it is understood that apparatuses as topos are opened to experience. First of all, it should be noted that if there is no apparatus, there is no institution. Institutions presuppose the existence of apparatus as a material condition of existence.

However, institutions are not just about opening up to experience of apparatuses defined as topos, which are formed through the actualization of mechanisms. Institutions gain their own determination through interactions with agency placed in the empirical domain. Öğütte defines locus aspect of institutions as the field of struggle and uses the game metaphor to understand the locus (Öğütte, 2021, p. 12). It is possible to talk about two aspects of the game. First, the game has the character of a game only as long as the players play it (Öğütte, 2021, pp. 12–13). Second, the game exists objectively. The game establishes the inclinations of the players and order of itself (Öğütte, 2019, p. 125, 2021, pp. 12–13). These two aspects of the game make one ask the question that will come to an intermediate conclusion at the end: how to draw the boundaries of the playing field? Öğütte answers this question with the interaction of the players and the game. Therefore, the boundaries of the playing field are determined not by open space conditions, but by in-game dynamics that refer to the interaction of the game's rules and players' actions (Öğütte, 2021, p. 13). In the context of this thesis, it is possible to draw an intermediate conclusion from this point. When apparatuses has been defined as topos, reference has been made to the interaction of contradictions with each other to determine their distances and boundaries from each other. However, the boundaries of institutions as locus where apparatuses are opened to empirical experience include the process of the agency's action as well. Therefore, class struggles that act and create an event within apparatuses and systems in actual domain are mediated by the institutions as locus. This mediation process is also affected by the boundaries of institutions. Depending on the boundaries of the institutions, some actions do not reach apparatuses at all, some reach them directly, and some reach them through being transformed. Therefore, it is important to understand correctly how borders stabilize as a result of the influence of the institutions that establish the inclinations and routines of the agency, on the one hand, and the influence of the

agency's struggling within and above these borders, on the other. Details of this process will be the subject of the next subsection.

An instance of the transition from apparatus as topos to institution as locus is found in Althusser. Althusser has been shown to derive state apparatuses as the realization of state power. However, Althusser's examination of the determinations of institutions is possible by taking state power for granted and having partial distance from it. Ideological state apparatuses are the realization of the 'primary ideology', which corresponds to the dominant ideology of the class or class fractions having state power (Althusser, 2014, p. 83). Institutions are material bodies of apparatuses that are open to empirical observation (Althusser, 2014, pp. 76, 246). Apparatuses do not consist of individual institutions, but a system of institutions (Althusser, 2014, p. 76). Understanding the institutions is not possible by examining them individually, but in the integrity of the apparatuses in which they are included in the system. However, institutions produce ideological sub-formations, secondary ideology or by-products other than the 'primary ideology' external to them (Althusser, 2014, pp. 83–84). What causes this, in the final analysis, is the class struggles that take place within institutions, which are the empirical body of the apparatuses, while the state power is given (Althusser, 2014, pp. 83–84). In this case, it is the instability created by the class struggles that take place in the institutions, given the state power, that gives the ideological state apparatuses its instability. Because, although the state power and ideology have relative stability, the contradiction does not come to an end; and the struggle within state apparatuses continues in institutions and produces sub-formations (Althusser, 2014, p. 88). Another observation of Althusser in the context of our thesis is that an institution is not only component of one apparatus, but a component of more than one apparatus (Althusser, 2014, pp. 84–85). Each institution constitutes the empirical body of more than one apparatus.

Interim results to be derived from the present section will enable us to examine the institution-agency relationship and the agency's determinations in the next section. First, contradictions and their aspects ensure the objectivity of social classes. The asymmetrical determinations of these power relations are first actualized to form apparatuses and then become observable in institutions that are their material bodies. In this case, just as with the dominant apparatuses, there are dominant institutions and

their corresponding asymmetrical class relations. These institutions emerge with actualization of more than one apparatus. This aspect of the transition from the apparatus to the institution transfers the determinations internal to the apparatuses to institutions. However, with this determination, institutions impose the asymmetric set of relations they inherit from the apparatuses as the routines or inclinations of the agents. But even when the balance of forces, i.e. the contradictions and aspects of the current phase of capitalism, is given in the apparatuses, the boundaries of institutions are not drawn automatically. On the contrary, there is class struggle within and along the boundaries of institutions, even if it does not transform the balance of power. The point to note is that whether the boundaries of these institutions have somehow stabilized is only the outcome of struggle waged at the institutional level, unless class struggles transform the balance of power to transform the apparatuses. Keeping these borders stable ensures a smooth internalization of the balance of power within institutions, on the one hand, and a relative stability of the relationship between the laws of motion of capital and the structural tendencies of the value form and the agency oriented towards them, on the other.

In this situation, the stability of the boundaries of institutions becomes critical in understanding neoliberalism. As will be shown later, neoliberalism is a project that provides the articulation of structural tendencies derived from the laws of motion and value form of capital, and the accumulation strategies that agents develop to connect with these tendencies, under the conditions of stability of institutional boundaries.

#### **4.2. Empirical Domain-Action Level: Agency and Accumulation Strategies**

Two points will be highlighted in this section. First, alternatives for the articulation of structures and agents will be evaluated; and a model in which institutions and agents interact at the locus level will be proposed. Secondly, a critique will be made of the structure-agency model, in which critical realism assigns agents only the reproductive-transformer role. Nevertheless, an approach enriched by the concept of accumulation strategies of the regulation school will be proposed to the model, which remains within the boundaries of critical realism. In this way, agents will be assigned the role of regulating mechanisms and contradictions.

#### 4.2.1. Structure-Agency Articulation

The problematic of interaction of structure and agency is a problem that aims to grasp the transformation and dynamism of social structures and thus material life. Determining the weight of individuals or social classes in the processes of transformation or reproduction means making the theory of transforming it. In this sub-section of the thesis, three models discussed by Bhaskar regarding the determinations of the structure-agency relationship will be reconsidered within the Marxist tradition. Then, a variant within the 'transformative model of social activity' of critical realism will be proposed. In the next subsection, a secondary criticism will be brought to this model and the concept of accumulation strategies of the regulation school will be added to the model. The aim is to establish the role of agents towards structures. Since, accurate understanding of agents as well as structures or contradictions is important for understanding the ontology of neoliberalism.

Bhaskar refers to the first model of the society-individual relationship as 'voluntarism'. In this model, society is derived as a result of individuals' behaviors and conditions are not emphasized in the analysis of individual actions (Bhaskar, 1998, pp. 34, 40). The closest position to voluntarism was criticized by Poulantzas. According to Poulantzas, it means subjectivism to deal with the contradictions between capitals inherent in capitalist production relations via the 'motivation of conducts' of capitalists. This fallacy prevents observing objective distribution of agents into social classes based on the objectivity of the relations of production. In summary, explaining social movement with individual motives is to move away from Marxist methodology. According to Poulantzas, the point to start with is the objectivity of concepts such as financial capital and monopoly capital, which point to the relations between capitals (Poulantzas, 2008, pp. 176–177). The same subjectivist method manifests itself in examining state apparatuses. Accordingly, the relationship of state apparatuses with capital is reduced to the relationship of bureaucracy with capitalists. The representation of capital in state apparatuses is associated with the fact that capitalists are actually settled in the bureaucracy (Poulantzas, 2008, p. 178). It is possible to convey the criticism of this model from the language of critical realism. The direction of determination begins with the interaction of agents in empirical domain. From this, the determinations of the state and economic apparatuses in actual domain are derived. Then, based on the

state and economic apparatuses in actual domain, the determinations of economic relations and state power in the real domain are derived. In summary, the ontology of critical realism is reversed. Here we can recall the famous passage of Marx; “Men make their of history, but they do not make it just as they please; ... under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past” (Marx, 1972, p. 10).

Another model that Bhaskar examines is the 'reification' model. According to this model, there are conditions, but individuals do not act (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 40). In this model, societies have their own lives and are external to individuals; they also 'coerce' individuals (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 34). Lipietz criticizes the Althusser variant of structuralism, which is one of the closest perspectives to this model. According to Lipietz, Althusser uses the concept of 'structural causality' in his book, 'Reading Capital', and comprehends the relation of the social whole as relations between structures (Lipietz, 1993, p. 104). Althusser removed the concept of the Subject from the analysis and defined the individual as passive 'supporters' of the structures and the individuals were assigned the role of only the reproducers of the structures (Lipietz, 1993, p. 106). According to Lipietz, the major problem in this analysis is that 'contradiction' and 'overdetermination' are used synonymously with 'structural causality' and 'relation' (Lipietz, 1993, p. 104). With this misuse, the concept of contradiction is emptied. According to Lipietz, the school of regulation re-employs concept of contradiction and constructs the problematic on the subjects' discovery of accumulation strategies that stabilize contradictions (Lipietz, 1993, p. 117). The concept 'process without subject' will continue to be adopted in the production of the arguments of this thesis, but this will be in favor of class struggles and contradictions, not structuralism. Structuralist-reification model takes a step forward by capturing the reality of social structures in real domain. However, while problematizing the reproduction-transformation of social structures, it reduces the role of agents to the 'support' of social structures. In this model, actors do not have autonomy. In concluding the critique of this model, it is useful to remember Marx's 'Thesis on Feuerbach'. The first thesis of Marx on Feuerbach is as follows:

The chief defect of all previous materialism . . . is that, . . . , reality, sensuousness are conceived only in the form of the *object, or of contemplation,*

*but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively* (Marx et al., 1998, p. 569, italics original).

A part of Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach is as follows:

The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances . . . forgets that circumstances are changed by men . . . The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity . . . can be conceived . . . only as revolutionary practice (Marx et al., 1998, pp. 569–570).

The third model that Bhaskar examines establishes a dialectical relationship between society and individuals. Society produces actors and actors create society (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 35). Deepening the determinations of this model provides the key to how we will embed Jessop's the 'strategic relational approach' into our thesis in the continuation of the thesis. In this model, social structures are only the result of human initiative. It cannot stand on its own apart from the human activity that produces it. In conclusion, "any specific social structure exists only insofar and as long as human beings realize it as part of their world" (Berger et al., 1965, p. 202). Once social structures are formed, they are confronted with the individual as a coercive factor in return (Berger et al., 1965, p. 202). According to Bhaskar, this model internalizes both while trying to escape the 'voluntarism' and 'reification' of the first two models (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 36). The common problem of the three models in general is that, in summary, they do not place an ontological hiatus between society and agency. Moreover, this model tries to grasp social structures and actors as two moments of one process, with their 'dialectical' interactions. In the continuation of this subsection, Bhaskar's 'transformational model of social activity' will be introduced first. Then, the structure-agency perspective of Jessop's strategic relational approach, which is partially exposed to the deviation of the third model, will be introduced and it will be argued that this perspective is only functional in the institution (as a locus)-agency tension..

The starting point of Bhaskar's 'Transformational Model of Activity' (TMSA) is the acceptance that there is an ontological hiatus between society and individuals and mode of connection mediating them (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 40). After this acceptance, problematization refers to three points: first, the definition of the determinations of society; second, defining the determinations of individuals; third, the mode of connection between these two. Bhaskar defines society as "is an articulated ensemble

of tendencies and powers” (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 42). Society refers to social structures. Individuals are dealt with by their actions. Human actions are characterized as “purposefulness, intentionality and sometimes self-consciousness” (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 38).

Through these definitions and the recognition of the ontological hiatus between them, Bhaskar departs from the three models he criticizes. When social structures are defined with 'powers' and 'tendencies', the role assigned to individuals breaks away from creating social structures. It turns out to assign individuals reproductive or transformative role (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 36). On the one hand, social structures “exist only as long as they . . . are being exercised; are exercised in the last instance via the intentional activity of human beings” (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 42); on the other hand, the actions of individuals are limited but not determined by social structures (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 39).

Bhaskar's aim is to propose a conceptual framework that will mediate the relationship between social structures and individuals. Bhaskar proposes two concepts that fit the above definitions, duality of structure and duality of praxis. According to Bhaskar, “society is both the ever-present *condition* (material cause) and the continually reproduced *outcome* of human agency” (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 37, italics original). Accordingly, social structure refers both to itself as being material conditions and, to human agency because social structure are the outcome of human agency. This dual gives reference to ‘duality of structure’. According to Bhaskar, “praxis is both work, that is, conscious *production*, and . . . *reproduction* of the conditions of production, that is society” (Bhaskar, 1998, pp. 37–38, italics original). The role of the individual's action in the transformation of social structures with the concept of production and their reproduction with the concept of reproduction gives reference to the "duality of praxis". Transforming or reproducing social structures takes place through the action of active subjects, not social structures. Since this process is not automatic, the problem for subjects, in short, takes the form of learning the mechanisms of social structures. According to Bhaskar, “the processes whereby the stocks of skills, ... necessary for the reproduction and/or transformation of society, are acquired ... could be generically referred to as *socialization*” (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 39, italics original).

Bhaskar categorically separates social structures from individuals. The remaining question is: what is the spatiality of individuals' orientation to structures through processes of socialization, reproduction and transformation given this hiatus between them? In summary, where do individuals act? Bhaskar proposes the 'position-practice system' as an answer to this question. According to this system, the categorical distinction between structures and individuals is not spatial, because there is a 'point of contact' where structures and active subjects interact (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 44). According to Bhaskar, this point should pave the way for the 'duality of praxis', that is, the transformative and reproductive role of the individual. However, this point should indicate spatiality, that is, it should designate the 'slots' in which active subjects exhibits praxis within social structures (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 44). As a result, the 'position-practice system' focuses on both the objective distribution of places in which active subjects exhibits praxis and the practices of the subjects in this places (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 44). For Bhaskar, these positions are of course places of structural conditions and are relationally distributed. Therefore, "it allows one to situate the possibility of . . . (and antagonistic) interests, of conflicts *within* society, and hence of interest-motivated transformations in social structure" (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 45, italics original).

Jessop criticizes Bhaskar's TMSA model for it neglect the dynamism of the spatio-temporal context. According to The TMSA, there is only past, present and future (Jessop, 2005, p. 48). Accordingly, the TMSA ignores the spatio-temporality of structures, strategies, and social practices that emerge with the inclusion of the spatio-temporal complex in the model (Jessop, 2005, p. 48). For this reason, Jessop extends the structure-agency perspective of critical realism towards conjunctural analysis by revising it through the 'dialectical' duality (Jessop, 2005, p. 49). At the given point of the conjuncture, there are 'structurally inscribed strategic selectivities' of the structures. Strategic selectivity, initially defines the boundaries of the actors. For Jessop, "institutions matter because they are . . . the points of crystallization of social forms, as defining the rules and resources of . . . action, . . . opportunity . . . and constraints on behaviour," (Jessop, 2001a, p. 1217) According to Jessop, strategic selectivity "involves examining how a given structure may privilege some actors, some identities, some strategies, some spatial and temporal horizons, some actions over others" (Jessop, 2005, p. 48, 2007b, p. 40). Similarly, agents are, during their strategic action, aware of this strategic selectivity as much as possible (Jessop, 1999, 2005, p. 48). This

dual perspective prevents institutions from establishing a one-sided determination relationship with agents. According to Jessop, “institutions cannot be meaningfully or productively analyzed without locating actors, identities, interests, strategies, or tactics in a wider strategic-relational context” (Jessop, 2001, p. 1230). At the end of this process, although there is a change in the strategic selectivity of the structures, the structures gain 'reflexively reorganized structural configurations', while the agency learns the process of 'recursively selected strategies and tactics'. That is, on the one hand, actors who internalize the strategic selectivities of structures after consecutive conjunctures now learn to choose tactics and strategies that reward them. On the other hand, structures gain stability as a result of these repetitive tactics and strategies. What emerges as a result is 'structured coherence' until tactics and structures are transformed (Jessop, 2005, pp. 49–50).

The concept of spatio-temporal fix up to this point has been discussed at the level of contradictions in real domain and systems in actual domain. According to Jessop, spatio-temporal fix can also be considered at the level of interaction of institutions and agents. The emergence of 'structured coherence' means that a certain spatio-temporal fix has been agreed (Jessop, 2001a, p. 1227). This consensus, whose temporal and spatial boundaries are clear, can push the contradictions of capital accumulations beyond the boundaries of space and time through institutions (Jessop, 2001a, pp. 1227–1228). Moreover, various social classes within the boundaries of consensus can be repressed and marginalized through institutions (Jessop, 2001a, pp. 1227–1228).

At first glance, the SRA model restores the 'dialectical' duality between structure-agency, which Bhaskar insists that it is wrong. As a matter of fact, Jessop also states that he examines structures in relation to action and actions in relationship to structures, and removes the gap between them (Jessop, 2005, p. 48). On the other hand, the SRA model offers a strong conceptual framework in the analysis of the short-term or conjunctural. In particular, the maneuver capabilities of agents corresponding to distributed places in structural conditions can be explained by SRA. However, it should be remembered that in the concrete analysis part of this thesis, what has been understood from the structures is the contradictions and their corresponding opposite aspects. In the current phase of capitalism, which also includes neoliberalism, these contradictions and aspects remain relatively stable. In other words, the balance of

power of the social classes corresponding to the aspects of the contradictions maintains its stability. Therefore, the TMSA approach grasps the contradictions and tendencies, and even though it neglects the conjuncture, it maintains the correct theoretical position by placing an ontological hiatus between structures and agents.

It should be remembered, however, that two observations have been made in the transition from apparatuses as actualization of contradictions to institutions as locus. First, it has been observed that the boundaries of institutions have an internal dynamic that is explained by the tension between the initial boundaries and agents. The second observation is that the apparatuses remain stable for a certain period as actualization of contradictions, but the institutions are unstable due to constant class struggle and secrete secondary sub-formations. It is precisely through the articulation of these determinations that we think that the SRA approach is suitable for explaining the dialectical relationship and conjunctural tension between the agents and institutions rather than structures. Using the SRA approach to comprehend the connection of the slots inherent in the position-practice system and the agents engaged in them will yield fruitful results. According to Jessop, “Institutionalization involves not only the conduct of agents and their conditions of action, but also the very constitution of agents, identities, interests, and strategies” (Jessop, 2001a, p. 1230). In addition, “institutionalization constitutes institutions as action contexts and actors as their institutional supports” (Jessop, 2001a, p. 1230).

#### **4.2.2. Agency and Accumulation Strategies**

So far, the ontological status of institutions has been revealed. In real domain, contradictions are related to each other through overdetermination, and this overdetermination process causes a domination-subordination relation as a result of uneven development among contradictions. The same process applies to the aspects of the contradiction. In the financialization phase of monopoly capitalism, principal contradiction is collective imperialism. In general, capital over labor; monopoly capital over non-monopoly capital; banking capital over industrial capital; authoritarian state over democratic state; collective imperialist bloc consisting of the USA-EU is objectively dominant over the subordinated nations. The objectivity of contradictions in the real domain structurally periodizes the current phase of monopoly

capitalism. World society is experiencing the collective imperialism phase of capitalism that is overdetermined by authoritarian state, financialization and monopoly.

Contradictions and principal aspects of the contradictions real domain actualize and form actual domain and economic-political systems. The overdetermination relations of contradictions also actualize as overdetermination process of economic and political systems. A point to be made here is: The economic system is not only created by actualization of contradictions of capital labor, non-monopoly capital, financial capital-industrial capital. On the contrary, the contradictions of the state power and the contradictions of imperialism, which point to the international situation, become actual and generate the economic system. Likewise, the political system is generate not only by actualization of the contradictions of state power and imperialism, but also by actualization of economic contradictions. The interactions of economic and political systems also are realized unevenly as a result of the uneven development of contradictions. The ability of the political system to reproduce itself is made dependent on its capacity to reproduce the economic system. The economic system can transfer the faults within itself to the political system.

The dominance-subordination relations between the economic and political systems in actual domain actually are realized as the dominance-subordination relations of the economic and state apparatuses that fill the systems in actual domain. One point should be repeated: economic apparatuses do not arise solely through actualization of capitals. Actualization of state power and imperialism also generate economic apparatuses. Likewise, state apparatuses do not arise only from actualization of state power and imperialism. Actualization of the contradictions corresponding to the relations of production also generate state apparatuses. Through capital relations transformed by monopoly capitalism, state apparatuses are subordinated to the reproduction of economic apparatuses. A natural consequence of this is that the ideological state apparatuses come under the control of the economic state apparatuses. Among the economic apparatuses, the apparatus that dominates the interaction is the banking apparatus over the corporate apparatus, representing production.

In the actual domain, the interrelation of systems and apparatuses is not yet ready for empirical experience. The transition from the actual domain to the empirical domain is made possible by the transition from apparatus to institutions that are its material and empirical body. It is important to accurately reveal the definitions of institutions, because institutions are also the point of contact with the agency located in the empirical domain. The objective locations of social classes are determined by the aspects of contradictions in real domain, actualized in apparatuses in actual domain, and manifested to experience in institutions in empirical domain. First of all, the objective aspects of institutions as the material bodies of apparatuses should be determined. Since institutions are, in a way, the empirical manifestation of apparatuses, they carry the determinations of apparatuses. Economic institutions are formed by the expression of not only economic apparatuses, but also state apparatuses. Likewise, state institutions are formed by manifestation of not only state apparatuses but also economic apparatuses. There is a domination-subordination relations that results from uneven development between and within institutions as well as between and within the apparatuses. The ability of state institutions to reproduce themselves is strongly determined by their ability to reproduce economic institutions. The ideological state institutions are also strongly tied to the reproduction of the economic state institutions. The objective condition in the relations between economic institutions is as follows; financial institutions have a high capacity to determine productive institutions. Among the institutions organized in production, large-scale institutions have a higher power to determine the small-scale ones.

The balance sheet drawn up to this point is a balance sheet of the objective conditions of the current phase of capitalism. But when it comes to the level of institutions, transformative and reproductive roles of actors come into play. For this reason, the institution as a locus has been opened to discussion and its mediation with agency has been discussed. Accordingly, agency modify the initial boundaries of the institutions with their actions, on the other hand, they are limited by the objectivity of the institutions. Let us remind that this tension experienced at the institutional level is not the kind of tension that transforms the power balances of social classes, the aspects of contradictions, and therefore the apparatuses. This tension points to a process related to the relative and temporary stabilization of institutions, which are the material body of apparatuses.

In this sub-section, it is aimed to shed light on two points. Firstly, the subjective determinations of agency whose objective places are known will be revealed and the situation of this subjectivity in the current phase of capitalism will be stated. For this purpose, Althusser's concept of 'process without a subject' will be employed first, and then the concepts of 'power bloc', 'hegemonic fraction' and 'people' that Poulantzas proposes to indicate class alliances in the current phase of capitalism will be utilized. Secondly, a perspective that sheds light on the agent aspect of the institution-agent duality will be revealed. For this purpose, firstly, the concept of 'dual control', used by Bhaskar in conceptualizing agency which is limited but not determined by structures and is autonomous, will be applied. The use of this concept in political economy corresponds to the accumulation strategies of agency that are constrained but not determined by the value form. Then, the determinations of accumulation strategies will be discussed. While introducing accumulation strategies, Lipietz's concept of 'chance discovery' will be applied. 'Chance discovery' implies that structures do not regulate themselves automatically, on the contrary, that agents have to discover solutions under structural constraints. Finally, two accumulation strategies that refer respectively to financial-production and to dispossession will be pointed out superficially.

Lipietz's criticism, which we quoted above, should be remembered. According to this critique, Althusserian structuralism empties the concept of contradiction by using contradiction and structures interchangeably. Agents, on the other hand, take place as passive receivers of social structures in this model. Agents do not have active transforming capacities. Althusser has received this criticism before and has offered his self-criticism. The essence of this self-criticism is as follows; Marxist theory has been grasped just as any other science has been; and the class struggles that form the pillar of Marxist theory have been ignored. (Althusser, 1976a, pp. 130–131).<sup>6</sup> The reason for this disregard is that the concept of contradiction is not taken into account (Althusser, 1976a, p. 141). Althusser states his current view on why Marx used the concept of 'Träger' as follows:

Marx constantly uses the concepts of position and function, and the concept of *Träger* ("supports"), meaning a support of *relations*: this is not in order to make concrete realities disappear, to reduce real men to pure functions of supports -

---

<sup>6</sup> This view parallels Bhaskar's assignment to agents a reproductive and transformative role that distinguishes social sciences from natural sciences.

it is in order to make mechanisms intelligible by grasping them through their concept, and *beginning with these* (since this is the only possible way) to make intelligible the concrete realities (Althusser, 1976a, pp. 129–130, italics original).<sup>7</sup>

According to Althusser, what characterizes Marxism is that the concept of contradiction, which gives Marx's dynamism to the process, points to tendencies or tendential laws (Althusser, 1976a, p. 130). It is this shedding light on the contradictions and tendencies that make Marxism a revolutionary science.

Althusser continues his claim to maintain a subjectless Marxism by abandoning the concept of 'structural causality' borrowed from Spinoza and embracing the concepts of contradiction and tendency. It does this by associating the status of the subject with the opposite aspects of the contradictions, not with the structures this time. Althusser begins his analysis by proposing two theses. The first thesis is: “It is the *masses* which make history” (Althusser, 1976b, p. 46, italics original). He puts forward the second thesis as follows: “The class struggle is the motor of history” (Althusser, 1976b, p. 47). According to Althusser's first thesis, there is no specific person or group or actor who makes history. The question of 'who' made history is outside the Marxist problematic (Althusser, 1976b, p. 48). According to the second thesis, there is class struggle and it gives its dynamism to history. But the point here is that the class struggle is the motor of history only in a given condition of history. Therefore Marxism, instead of the question of “who did it?”, asks “What are the concrete conditions of the class struggle?”. Because there are no classes preceding class struggle (Althusser, 1976b, p. 49). According to Althusser, “it affirms the primacy of contradiction . . . the class struggle is the historical form of the contradiction (internal to a mode of production) which divides the classes into classes” (Althusser, 1976b, p. 49). Accordingly, in order to understand a particular period of history, in the last analysis, the contradictions that refer to the productive forces and relations of production must be identified. In this way, the classes corresponding to the contradictions can be determined (Althusser, 1976b, p. 50). Althusser acknowledges that these classes are active subjects. At this point, he distinguishes between singular subject and plural subjects. According to this; there is no subject of subject, there are

---

<sup>7</sup> This point is parallel to Bhaskar's putting mechanisms in real domain of social sciences and isolating them from individuals. In addition, Shaikh's empirical studies, which we deal with in the abstract analysis, are also concerned with the laws of motion, not the actor level.

subjects acting in history (Althusser, 1976b, p. 94). As a result, “History really is a ‘process without a Subject’ . . . , where the given circumstances in which "men" act as subjects under the determination of social relations are the product of the class struggle” (Althusser, 1976b, p. 99). Althusser provides a clear summary; “History therefore does not have a Subject, . . . , but a motor : that very class struggle” (Althusser, 1976b, p. 99).

Before continuing with Althusser's method, it is possible to summarize his method very briefly. First of all, a given period of history is specified. Then, the contradictions of the relations of production belonging to this period are determined. Then, aspects of contradictions and the social classes corresponding to them are determined. Finally, the direction in which the struggle of these classes has taken history is examined. In the context of this thesis, the situation is as follows; Neither the authoritarian state, nor the firms, nor the banks, nor the international institutions are the inventions of one of the social classes. All of these elements are a complex product of class struggles corresponding to contradictions. In this respect, as we will see later, accumulation strategies and neoliberalism are also the product of class struggles without subject.

The process without subject concept has a critical place in understanding how the state gains its content through class struggles. Because, the main argument of this thesis is that institutions, apparatuses and neoliberalism are the products of the process without subject. The asymmetrical power relationship between classes will be kept by revealing Poulantzas' thesis on articulation of class struggles to state apparatuses below. On the other hand, despite this asymmetrical relationship, it will be shown that the decision-making processes and state apparatuses are not instruments of any class. The objective places of social classes is determined by analyzing the contradictions and their aspects corresponding to the current phase of capitalism. However, at the end of our method discussion, it is also argued that these objective places are not enough to understand the emerging class strategies and alliances. The question of which classes are capable of organizing accumulation strategies in the current phase of capitalism is a thorny one and requires first of all to examine the complexity of class contradictions. From this point of view, Poulantzas argues that a conceptual framework should be derived in order to understand the subjective aspects of social classes. For Poulantzas, there are subjective class positions on the other side of

objective class places. The other side of social classes is social forces. He proposes the concepts of 'power bloc' for dominant classes and 'people' for dominated classes (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 15). In addition, there is a 'hegemonic fraction' in the 'power bloc'. The 'hegemonic fraction' is articulated with monopoly capital in the era of monopoly capitalism (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 172). His aim in proposing these concepts is to develop a set of 'concepts of strategies' that articulate the objective places of social classes with class positions in specific conjunctures (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 24). Poulantzas warns; Concepts pointing to subjective class alliances neither directly reflect the objective places of the classes, nor are they completely detached from these objective places and formed on another ground (Poulantzas, 1976, p. 24). Accordingly, although the contradictions of the current phase of capitalist production relations and the objective places of the corresponding classes remain stable, subjective positions become more fluid with respect to conjunctures.

In the subsection of apparatuses, it has been seen that Poulantzas analyzes the objective aspect of the domination-subordination relations between apparatuses. Given this relationship between apparatuses, Poulantzas this time analyzes the class struggles between the 'power bloc' and the 'people', and within the 'power bloc', grasping the representation of classes in state apparatuses. The first point concerns the representation in the state of the class struggle between the dominant classes and the dominated classes. According to Poulantzas, the state power belongs only to the dominant classes, so the class struggle of the dominated classes cannot find its representation in the state in a direct way in an apparatus that has its own power (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 142). For this reason, the representation of the dominated classes in the state apparatus is possible by forming centers of opposition against the political power (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 142). Also, neither the 'power bloc' nor the 'hegemonic fraction' get rid of their own contradiction. From this point of view, the representation of dominated classes in the state apparatus is also possible through the mediation of these contradictions (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 143). This is a two-way mediation; First of all, although 'power bloc' and 'hegemonic fraction' agree in principle on the exploitation of dominated classes, they do not have the same view on exactly how to do this (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 144). Therefore, the class struggle of the subordinated classes creates different policy outcomes with respect to the level of contradiction in 'power bloc' and 'hegemonic fraction'. On the other hand, as a result of the conflict

within the dominant classes, the fractions that try to gain superiority over one another or resist it have to get support from the 'people' (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 144). In fact, this is also a condition of hegemony.

On the other hand, there are also contradictions within the 'power bloc'. Although the 'hegemonic fraction' objectively refers to monopoly capital, neither monopoly capital nor non-monopoly capital is free from contradictions within and among themselves. Because of these contradictions and the corresponding strategic differences, the state enjoys relative autonomy. Through this autonomy, it is responsible for organizing the interests of the bourgeoisie in general under the leadership of a hegemonic fraction (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 128). At this point, Poulantzas deals with the domination-subordination relations of state apparatuses, which he previously derived through the transformation in production relations. It deals with it for this time in the context of class struggles within the 'power bloc'. Accordingly, the dominant state apparatuses are open to the representation of the 'hegemonic fraction' consisting of monopoly capital. Accordingly, while the dominant state apparatuses prioritize the interests of monopoly capital, on the other hand, they prevent the outcomes of subordinated state apparatuses if they are against the interests of monopoly capital. On the other hand, subordinated state apparatuses show themselves as centers of resistance of non-monopoly capital (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 137). If it is remembered that the economic state apparatuses are the dominant apparatus, it can be concluded that monopoly capital has a privileged position in the economic state apparatus, based on this determination. However, since the economic state apparatus is responsible for the expanded reproduction of capital and the reproduction of labor power, non-monopoly capital must also be indirectly represented in the economic state apparatus (Poulantzas, 2000, pp. 171–172). When the economic state apparatus is considered in the context of institutional materiality, it can be concluded that the differing levels of unequal representation in each of these institutions may lead to instability and endanger hegemony.

It has been argued that the economic system dominates the political system, and the economic apparatuses dominate the state apparatuses. Accordingly, the ability of subordinated systems and apparatuses to reproduce themselves largely depends on their capacity to reproduce the dominant systems and apparatuses. Poulantzas puts at

the center of the economic function of the capitalist state the capacity of the state to introduce the counter-tendencies of the tendency of rate of profit to fall. Among these counter-tendencies cited in the abstract analysis chapter, the focus of the state is more towards the devalorization of capitals and the production of relative surplus-value (Poulantzas, 2000, pp. 173–174). State intervention in the relations of production is not limited to monopoly interests. Rather, this interference transcends monopoly interests; and it goes down to the heart of production relations by touching all the production-circulation-consumption moments of the reproduction of labor-power, and of the reproduction of capital by expansion (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 179).

In the last analysis, there are two structural obstacles to the smooth regulation of the relations of production by the state. First, the economic and political systems are relatively separate, and there are contradictions outside the state. These are the contradictions of production relations and crisis tendencies (Poulantzas, 2000, p. 190). Second, class struggles within state apparatuses are complex and the hegemony of monopoly capital is never guaranteed (Poulantzas, 2000, pp. 191–192).

At this point, it has been observed that the capacity to develop accumulation strategies belongs to a 'hegemonic fraction' consisting of monopoly capital fractions in the current phase of capitalism. However, it has been argued that representation in state apparatuses is mediated by contradictions and class struggles. Therefore, monopoly capital cannot be the subject of the current phase of the history of capitalism due to the complex class struggles it enters with its own fractions and other classes. On the contrary, as will be shown in economic apparatuses, subjects become the motor of capitalism by adding dynamism to the given concrete conditions. The other aspect of this determination is as follows; In the model where there is no subject, state apparatuses cannot be instruments of monopoly capital like economic apparatuses. The hegemony of monopoly capital is never guaranteed. This hegemony must pursue the interests of all fractions involved in the expanded reproduction of capital.

What the process without subject is like has been mentioned in the discussion of the state apparatus. In the following lines, a perspective that looks at the structure-agency duality from the agency side will be introduced from within critical realism. This dichotomy will then be concretized through Jessop's model, which articulates

accumulation strategies into the value form that points to the structure of relations of production. After this model, which will be extended to Lipietz's 'chance discovery' concept, the existence of various accumulation strategies will be pointed out.

Bhaskar's model of the TMSA showed that actors are constrained by structures but not determined. Bhaskar proposes a model for the autonomy and irreducibility of actors to structures. According to Bhaskar, laws are tendential and “impose constraints on the type of action possible for a given kind of thing, . . . , do not say which out of the possible actions will actually be performed” (Bhaskar, 2008, pp. 100–101). On the one hand, multiplicity of structures gives space to the agent so that they can act intentionally and, on the other, behavior of agents cannot violate or change the laws that govern the behaviors of the agents (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 103). The result is that the multiplicity of tendential laws leaves open space for agency's intentional action. However, the actions of agents cannot violate the law. Bhaskar expresses the reciprocal control of structure and agent as 'dual control'.

One could argue that Jessop made an attempt to apply Bhaskar's 'dual control' to the political economy framework. Jessop states that there is a need for concepts that will enable the articulation of the value-form of capital accumulation and content-related strategies. According to Jessop, “the value form is the fundamental social relation that defines the matrix of capitalist development” (Jessop, 1991, p. 158). Value-form expresses the determinations of the law of value at the high level of abstraction of capital accumulation. These include the law of value, the formation of production prices, the value of labor-power, and the determination of the value of the commodity (Jessop, 1991, p. 158). But value-form has no content, it merely describes the laws of accumulation of capital; however, in order to understand how capital accumulates in certain periods, it is necessary to deal with the content of capital accumulation (Jessop, 1991, p. 159). According to Jessop, “the value form constitutes a terrain for various attempts to reproduce the capital relation” (Jessop, 1991, p. 159). To explain these attempts, Jessop proposes the concept of 'accumulation strategy'. According to Jessop, accumulation strategy “defines a specific economic 'growth model' complete with its various extra-economic preconditions and outlines the general strategy appropriate to its realization” (Jessop, 1991, p. 160). The criterion of a successful accumulation strategy is the successful articulation of all the moments of capital accumulation. This

articulation process takes place under the hegemony of a fraction of the capital. The determinant of 'economic hegemony' is that it ensures the short-term interests of other fractions of capital without jeopardizing the circulation of capital in the long run (Jessop, 1991, p. 160). The key criterion here is that the hegemonic fraction must guarantee the expansion of industrial capital. Otherwise, an economic crisis occurs and the accumulation strategy is replaced by another strategy (Jessop, 1991, p. 162). The last element that makes a strategy hegemonic is that it takes into account the power balances of the non-hegemonic fractions in the 'power bloc' and dominated classes (Jessop, 1991, pp. 162–163).

While discussing systems and apparatuses, we discussed the spatio-temporal fix, which is a determinant of the ecological dominance relations they establish over each other. This analysis of the spatio-temporal fix has been limited to the structural and actualization aspects. Then, in the sub-section that articulates institutions and agency, it has been argued that spatio-temporal fix is only realized through institutions. Finally, in this sub-section where accumulation strategies are discussed, it is possible to analyze the determinations of the strategic aspect of spatio-temporal fix.

First, accumulation strategies marginalize the interests of certain fractions of capital for the sake of the 'general interests' of capital (Jessop, 2000, p. 335). It does this by displaying varying approaches to the temporal and spatial horizons of the fractions of capital (Jessop, 2000, p. 335). According to Jessop, "a short-term constraint for a given agent or set of agents could become a conjunctural opportunity over a longer time horizon if there were a shift in strategy" (Jessop, 2001a, p. 1227). For example, financial capital's profit-seeking time horizon is narrow, but productive capital waits for the circuit of capital to be completed in order to realize its profits. The people, on the other hand, waits for election times to oppose the state power. What temporality will the accumulation strategy prioritize? According to Jessop, "accumulation strategies and hegemonic projects typically displace and defer their material and social costs beyond the social, spatial and temporal boundaries of . . . compromise" (Jessop, 2000, p. 335). Spaces left out of compromise can be opened to overexploitation. Necessary regulation can be established to postpone the crisis tendencies of accumulation to a future date. Finally, even social classes that remain within space of consensus can be marginalized (Jessop, 2000, p. 335). The tendencies of the laws of

motion of capital and the structural aspect of the spatio-temporal fix, when considered together with its strategic aspect, are complete. When these elements are taken together, theoretical tools are compiled to explain the dominance of capital over labor and the dominance of capitalist economy over social life in the current phase of capitalism.

Jessop, on the other hand, criticizes the mechanism perspective of critical realism. According to critical realism, mechanisms can only be reproduced or transformed. According to Jessop, firstly, since the mechanisms are interrelated, they cannot guarantee their existence without coming into contact with each other (Jessop, 2002, p. 101; Jessop et al., 2006, p. 310). Second, each of the mechanisms is contradictory, so they cannot guarantee their existence (Jessop, 2002, p. 101; Jessop et al., 2006, p. 311). Third, mechanisms generate systems, but these systems, which are in conflict with other systems, cannot guarantee themselves (Jessop, 2002, p. 101; Jessop et al., 2006, p. 311). Therefore, it is not the reproduction of mechanisms that is the scope of content of accumulation, but their regulation.

Provided that the above criticisms are kept in mind, we find Jessop's relations between value-form and accumulation strategies to be compatible with Bhaskar's thesis of autonomy of agents and 'dual control'. At the same time, this perspective paves the way for integrating Poulantzas' analysis, whose views on the state we have discussed above, into the economic system and apparatuses. In summary, first of all, accumulation strategies have to emerge from monopoly capital. This is the result of aspects of contradictions that characterize the current phase of capitalism. Second, accumulation strategies are multiple, but there is only one hegemonic strategy among them. Third, the hegemonic accumulation strategy, although achieved through the hegemonic fraction, is a strategy without subject since it has to articulate all the moments of the capital's cycle and internalize the class struggle of the dominated classes. Every accumulation strategy is a strategy without subject in which a hegemon fraction comes to the fore as a result of class struggles.

Lipietz's concept of 'chance discovery' brings together the right pair of words to understand the formation and hegemony of accumulation strategies. Strategies have the character of 'discovery' because they do not have a predetermined destiny. It is

possible for the strategies to be formed not this way but another way. Strategies have the character of 'chance' because the perfect articulation of the regimes of accumulation and modes of regulation that are its constituents is rarely possible. For Lipietz, accumulation regimes and modes of regulation do not emerge as a result of the fate of capital's laws of accumulation. According to Lipietz, "regimes of accumulation and modes of regulation are *chance discoveries* made in the course of human struggles" (Lipietz, 1987, p. 15, italics original). 'Chance discoveries' include the interests of dominant classes and sometimes dominated classes into a regime of accumulation (Lipietz, 1987, p. 20). Lastly, Lipietz argues that 'strategies' can include more than one accumulation regime (Lipietz, 1987, p. 26).

So far, the contradictions, the apparatuses, the institutions and the determinations of the actors and strategies of accumulation have been covered. There are two points remaining. The first is to provide examples of accumulation strategies. The second is to explain how accumulation strategies hold onto structural tendencies. The first point will be shed light on in this subsection. The second point can only be made after understanding neoliberalism.

The first accumulation strategy to be considered is the financialization strategy. In accordance with the context of this thesis, the theory of financialization, which can be said to be far from reductionism, belongs to Lapavistas. Lapavistas does not think within the conceptual framework of the regulation school. But thanks to its emphasis on the complexity of contradictions and class struggles, it should be considered in the context of this thesis.

Before describing Lapavistas' theory of financialization, we must repeat the mechanisms that drive the contradictions of the current phase of capitalism. These mechanisms are; exploitation, competition, credit, state power, uneven development. According to Lapavistas, financialization is an event that emerges through the actualization of these mechanisms. However, the content of the regulation that puts the mechanisms into play is the element that gives the current financialization its character. The exploitation mechanism came into play by keeping real wages constant (Lapavistas, 2013b, p. 793). The credit mechanism has overdetermined exploitation. The poorest income groups of the working class were indebted and surplus-value were

transferred in the circulation area (Lapavitsas, 2009b, p. 129). The credit mechanism, on the other hand, came into effect by regulating the purchase of small firms by multinational corporations, which is the empirical manifestation of monopoly capital, non-monopoly capital and financial capital as well (Lapavitsas, 2013a, p. 38). This process is another aspect of the financialization of banks. The competition mechanism came into effect with a regulation in which multinational corporations finance themselves with their own profits (Lapavitsas, 2013a, p. 38). This is another aspect of multinational corporations other than the acquisition of small companies. In this way, the competition mechanism has overdetermined the credit mechanism. Banks had to give loans to the working class in order to increase their profits, and they also directed firms' purchases of each other (Lapavitsas, 2011, p. 622). The state has deregulated the labor market and financial markets (Lapavitsas, 2013b, p. 793). In this way, it overdetermined both the exploitation mechanism and the credit mechanism. In this way, firms were able to employ cheap labor and banks increased their profits in non-productive derivatives markets through investment banking. Technological developments, on the other hand, accelerated financial transactions by putting the circulation sphere ahead of the productive sphere (Lapavitsas, 2009a, p. 104).

The financialization framework drawn by Lapavitsas almost perfectly expresses both the overdetermination processes of contradictions and mechanisms, and the regulations through which these formal mechanisms are put into effect within the context of our thesis. Capital dominated labor, monopoly capital dominated non-monopoly capital, and financial capital dominated industrial capital. The point to be noted in Lapavitsas' model is the following; According to Lapavitsas, in the era of financialization, the expanded reproduction of productive capital has not been replaced by financial growth. On the contrary, these two continued to grow through mutual interaction. Therefore, Lapavitsas does not reduce financialization to the free movement of money capital from production. For this reason, we accept this financialization model as a productive model in which financial capital grows and expands under financial capital hegemony.

The alternative accumulation strategy is presented by Harvey as 'Accumulation by Dispossession'. According to Harvey, accumulation by dispossession came into play at a time when expanded reproduction of capital was blocked (Harvey, 2004, p. 64).

Harvey, recalls Marx's primitive accumulation and its being as an incessant process. According to Harvey, dispossession includes wide range of privatization and commodification activities. Among these, Harvey counts:

the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations; conversion of various forms of property rights – common, collective, state, etc. – into exclusive private property rights; suppression of rights to the commons; commodification of labor power and the suppression of alternative, indigenous, forms of production and consumption; colonial, neo-colonial and imperial processes of appropriation of assets, including natural resources; monetization of exchange and taxation, particularly of land; slave trade; and usury, the national debt and ultimately the credit system. The state, with its monopoly of violence and definitions of legality, plays crucial role in both backing and promoting these processes (Harvey, 2003, p. 145, 2004, p. 74).

The credit system and finance also contributes to the dispossession process through mediating mergers and acquisitions of small firms by large companies; through debt management of working classes (Harvey, 2003, p. 147, 2004, pp. 74–75). Commodification of land, air and water refers to the huge inclination of multinational monopolies to the global environmental commons (Harvey, 2003, p. 148, 2004, p. 75). Public assets, including universities, hospitals, education units also experienced the accumulation by dispossession. Financial capital exerted its dominance on working class and on productive capital by its greater capacity of being fluid (Harvey, 2004, pp. 77–78). Finance capital of imperialist countries heavily transformed internal social process of production and distribution in periphery countries through debt management during crisis periods of these countries (Harvey, 2004, p. 78).

Therefore, according to Harvey, current phase of monopoly capitalism can be described as a period in which the primacy of accumulation of dispossession over expanded accumulation of productive capital holds. Exploitation of people by power bloc mostly took the shape of dispossession of what had owned by people previously. Commodification and marketization of public assets are specific instance of dispossession. Credit mechanism through financialization of people's income overdetermines exploitation mechanism. Exploitation mechanism of periphery countries is overdetermined by imperialist chain of credit mechanism. State's monopoly power of violence overdetermines the exploitation mechanism through being regulated by implementing hard power on the resistance against

commodification of land and nature. Exploitation mechanism is regulated by commodification of labor-power and marketization of public assets. State power mechanism is regulated by anti-democratic governance. Uneven development mechanism is regulated by international institutions.

In chapter two, the tendencies of capital accumulation have been laid bare. Among these tendencies, real and formal subsumption of capital over labor; and control of financial capital over social capital; and lastly, the disposal of financial capital over social labor has been emphasized. These tendencies have been elaborated as structural tendencies intrinsic to the law of movement of capital accumulation. In chapter three, these abstract tendencies have been concretized for current phase of monopoly capitalism. Ecological dominance and spatio-temporal fixes concepts have been introduced for this purpose. Even at this level, agency side of analysis has been neglected to emphasize the causal power of contradictions. In the subsection introducing the articulation of agency and structures, analysis has been extended to include institutions as a mediating concept between structure and agency. And lastly, accumulation strategies have been introduced. Spatio-temporal fixes analysis has been extended to strategic aspects of these fixes in order to re-emphasize the dominance-subordination relation within societies.

The question is what is determinant in deciding which strategies' which aspects are to be articulated to the structural tendencies of law of movement of capital accumulation. Therefore, we need a mediating concept which is not included to structures and, which is a outcome of complexity of class struggles, and which is not an accumulation strategy as such. What is needed is a social catalyst which is used for generating a reaction in society's chemistry by articulating social structures and accumulation regimes. This catalyst will be defined as neoliberalism.

#### **4.3. Empirical Domain-Meso Level: Commodification and Double Movement**

The ultimate purpose of why this thesis has employed critical realism's ontology and epistemology is to determine the ontological status of neoliberalism. Confusions on the status of neoliberalism may result in identifying neoliberalism with social structures and contradictions of capitalism and, with accumulation strategies such as financialization or accumulation by dispossession. In this thesis, it will be argued that

neoliberalism is ontologically located to the empirical domain where institutions have mediating status. Institutions mediate the objective places of social classes derived from contradictions of capitalist relations of production and subjective class positions and corresponding actions. However, what institutions mediate is not limited to social classes' places and positions. It also mediates the tendencies of objective laws of motion of capital and vast amount of accumulation strategies.

Mode of articulation of tendencies and strategies, as a result, gives an answer to the following question: Which tendencies actualized? Polanyi's double movement theory will be analyzed. It will be argued that a society which is subordinated to the principles of self-regulating market is inclined to demolition.

According to Polanyi, society was not always subordinated to the determination of self-regulating market. On the contrary, until the industrial revolution, markets were subordinated to the wider social principles, even if societies cannot reproduce themselves without economic activity (Polanyi, 2001, pp. 45, 48). Sociological elements such as custom, law and religion limited the activities of exchange relations (Polanyi, 2001, p. 64). Emergence of self-regulating markets was not caused by market relations internal dynamics but was "the effect of highly artificial stimulants administered to the body social in order to meet a situation which was created by the no less artificial phenomenon" (Polanyi, 2001, p. 60). Once institutional separation between economic and political spheres relatively has established, then it means that societies are approaching to demolition. According to Polanyi "once the market organization of industrial life had become dominant, all other institutional fields were subordinated to this pattern" (Polanyi, 2001, p. 126).

Polanyi's central argument is that "the idea of a self-regulating market is a stark utopia" (Polanyi, 2001, p. 3). But for self-protection of humanity against self-regulating market, "it would have physically destroyed man and transformed his surroundings into a wilderness" (Polanyi, 2001, pp. 3–4). According to Polanyi, what drags a society, which is subordinated to the self-regulating market, into dissolution is the strains between expansionary movement of self-regulating market and self-protective movement of society (Polanyi, 2001, p. 4).

Therefore, first task the task is to lay bare the conditions through which self-regulating market disembeds itself from wider social life and subordinates society to itself. It is because, “market economy can function only in a market society” and “only in the institutional setting of market economy are market laws relevant” (Polanyi, 2001, pp. 40, 60). Then, it is the second task to shed light on dynamics of society’s counter-movement against self-regulating market.

According to Polanyi, “institutional separation of society into economy and political sphere” is what is required for the formation of self-regulating market (Polanyi, 2001, p. 74). This process is also true for the formation conditions of market society. Establishment of market economy requires a change in the social status of labor, land and money. Labor, land and money must be subordinated to the demands of industry. Polanyi argues that “labor and land are . . . the human beings themselves . . . and the natural surroundings . . . to include them in the market mechanism means to subordinate the substance of society itself to the laws of the market” (Polanyi, 2001, pp. 74–75).

Whole process of subordination of labor, land and labor into demands o industry refers to the concept of commodity. According to Polanyi, labor, land and money which are organized in markets are not in their essence produced for sale (Polanyi, 1947b, p. 110). Therefore, “the commodity description of labor, land and money is entirely fictitious” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 76). Organization of labor in market and within market rules means that the whole organization of the society must be organized by market system since “labor is only another word for the forms of life of the common people” (Polanyi, 1947a, p. 100, 2001, p. 79). The result of commodification of labor is, then, clear; “human society had become an accessory of the economic system” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 79).

A market system revolving around the commodity fiction is unsustainable. According to Polanyi, “human society would have been annihilated but for protective counter-moves which blunted the action of this self-destructive mechanism” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 79). Sooner or later resistance from society gets into picture. What Polanyi refers as ‘double movement’ is the contradictory process between extension of markets and self-protection of society against market economy. Polanyi argues that “society

protected itself against the perils inherent in a self-regulating market system” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 80).

Therefore, determinations of protective counter-movement is to be elaborated. Polanyi defines the countermovement as “a reaction against a dislocation which attacked the fabric of society, and which would have destroyed the very organization of production that the market had called into being” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 136). Countermovement consists of economic and political intervention the self-regulating market mechanism with respect to labor and land. Laws regulating working conditions and wages in order to protect working classes; legal regulations which protect natural resources are instances for protective counter movements. The interesting point is that capitalist production is also to be protected from itself. Polanyi argues that “central banking and . . . monetary system were needed to keep . . . productive enterprises safe from the harm involved in the commodity fiction as applied to money” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 138). Then, who are agents of double movement? According to Polanyi, “each of them setting itself specific institutional aims, having the support of definite social forces and using its own distinctive methods” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 138). In the context of our thesis, agents are fluid with respect to sides of double movement. Industrial capital might demand neoliberalism for more flexible labor market, but might not demand it for money market. On the other hand, for the subordinated classes, or people, Polanyi’s agency for productive countermovement applies. Polanyi defines the side of countermovement as “the conservation of man and nature as well as productive organization, relying on . . . those most immediately affected by the deleterious action of the market . . .” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 139). Drivers of countermovement is the product of market logic. Separation of man from determination of whole social environment and subordinate him to “the laws of the market was to annihilate all organic forms of existence and to replace them by different type of organization, . . . individualistic one” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 171). Subordination of the natural environment of man to the “real-estate market was as vital part of the utopian concept of a market economy” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 187). Modern central banking is also an institution protecting “its own children, the business enterprises of all kinds” (Polanyi, 2001, p. 187).

If the root cause of market society is hidden under the institutional separation of society into economic and political spheres, what is the solution? In his Great

Transformation, Polanyi's perspective is to subordinate the exchange value moment of fictitious commodity to use value moment. One must be careful on that, since Polanyi's argument does not refer to the abolishment of exchange value moment of commodity fiction. According to Jessop, in his trial to embed Polanyi into autopoiesis theory, Polanyi proposes a society which "seeks to constrain . . . the free market by subjecting it to various forms of extra-economic regulation that . . . sustain capital accumulation" (Jessop, 2001c, p. 215). In his early writings, offers two possible solutions for his generation. Abolishment of democratic political sphere refers to the unique existence of capitalist economy which is the fascist solution (Polanyi, 2018, p. 106). The other solution is the extension of democratic society to the economic sphere in such a way as to abolish the private property over means of production (Polanyi, 2018, pp. 105–106)(Polanyi, 2018, pp. 105–106). In that case, only democratic political sphere remains. This is the socialist solution.

Polanyi somehow forecast the determinations of society by neoliberalism. Polanyi argues:

State and government, marriage and the rearing of children, the organization of science and education and religion and the arts, the choice of profession, the forms of habitation, the shape of settlements, the very aesthetics of private life – everything had either to comply with the utilitarian pattern or at least not interfere with the working of the market mechanism (Polanyi, 1977, p. 12).

Polanyi do not have an accumulation theory that rest on the objective laws of motion of capital. Instead, its perception of demolition rests on laws of self-regulating market encountered by social struggles. In this thesis, our perspective will be to embed Polanyi's double movement between tendencies of capital accumulation which favors the exchange moment of commodity production and circulation and accumulation strategies which exhibits diverse mode of articulation to these tendencies.

In the last section, Polanyian commodification and double movement thesis will be applied to neoliberalism analysis.

#### **4.4. Neoliberalism**

The aim of this section is to define neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is not a direct outcome of the contradictions that make up the social whole. Neoliberalism is not an

accumulation strategy that stabilizes the contradictions that make up the social whole. The two theses that will be put forward in this section are as follows. First, neoliberalism is the point of contact that mediates the structural tendencies of laws of motion of capital accumulation and the accumulation strategies that are candidates to regulate them. Second, neoliberalism is a market-driven project without subject. Neoliberalism is market driven because it subordinates the use value of fictitious commodities of labor, land and money to exchange value.

The social whole consists of the unity of contradictions. Contradictions are contradictions of social classes. Therefore, neoliberalism is not a project planned by any social class or faction alone. Rather, it is a chaotic outcome of class struggles expressed in the complexity of contradictions. In this context, neoliberalism is a project without a subject. Neoliberalism is a project because it is a process carried out by capital against labor, albeit without a subject. This perspective has required defining what contradiction, structural tendencies of capital accumulation and accumulation strategies mean before grasping neoliberalism. It then entails defining the content of the social action required for this mediation to occur.

People perform their actions under certain conditions. These conditions are objective conditions inherited from the past, independent of their will. Therefore, since neoliberalism is also the action of people, the conditions under which neoliberal action takes place has been defined. The concept of contradiction and tendencies of capital accumulation have been used to describe these objective conditions. Contradictions and tendencies reveal contradictions between social classes. First, grasping the social whole by isolating contradictions leads to an incomplete understanding of it. The contradictions of the social whole are interconnected. Second, the relations between contradictions develop unevenly. That is, one of the contradictions that make up the social whole plays a dominant role. Third, a contradiction exists only as a unity of opposites that compose it. The opposites here are social classes. Opposites in a contradiction also develop unevenly. That is, one of the classes constituting the unity of the opposition dominates the other. The contradictions that come into contact with these determinations constitute the objectively given social whole. The social whole, then, is the sum of the objective relations between classes. In our thesis, we have listed these contradictions as capital-labor, monopoly capital-non-monopoly capital,

financial capital-industrial capital, authoritarian state-democratic state, and the USA-EU oppressing nations (collective imperialism)-oppressed nations contradiction in the US hegemony. The primary contradiction is collective imperialism. We also have listed the structural tendencies of capital accumulation as ‘formal’ and ‘real subsumptions’ of labor under capital; tendency of profit rate to fall and its counter-tendencies and; lastly, control of financial capital over social capital and social labor through credit mechanism.

Contradictions has defined the social classes that make up the social whole. However, the objective places of social classes do not stand in a vacuum. Rather, it requires spaces. These spaces determine the objective places of social classes through the actualization of contradictions. We have limited these spaces to economic and political systems. The objective places of social classes are determined in the economic and political apparatuses embedded in these systems. The relationship of dominance between apparatuses and the identification of the dominant class within an apparatus are crucial in defining the social movements that define neoliberalism. Because, while attempts to commodify labor, money and land and resistances against it are practiced, it is possible to determine the places where social classes are objectively disadvantaged-advantaged. Not every social class is equally represented in every apparatus. To define the status of these apparatuses, it is sufficient to recall the determinations of the contradictions. First, the apparatuses are not isolated from each other either. Since each apparatus is, on the one hand, the actualization of more than one contradiction, and on the other hand, every contradiction is the unity of opposing classes, no apparatus determines the objective location of just one class. Second, because the relations between contradictions develop unevenly, the interrelation of apparatuses develops unevenly. In other words, one apparatus dominates other apparatuses. Third, because the opposite aspects of a contradiction develop unevenly within itself, the apparatus that is its actualization also develops unevenly. This creates a dual situation. On the one hand, the corresponding apparatus represents more than one class fraction. In this case, apparatuses cannot be instruments of any class fraction. On the other hand, since the aspects of the apparatus develop unevenly, there is a relation of dominance between classes within the apparatus.

In general, the economic state apparatus is dominated by the economic apparatus. In neoliberalism, economic apparatuses have an impact on the economic state apparatus and ideological state apparatuses in commodifying money, labor and land.

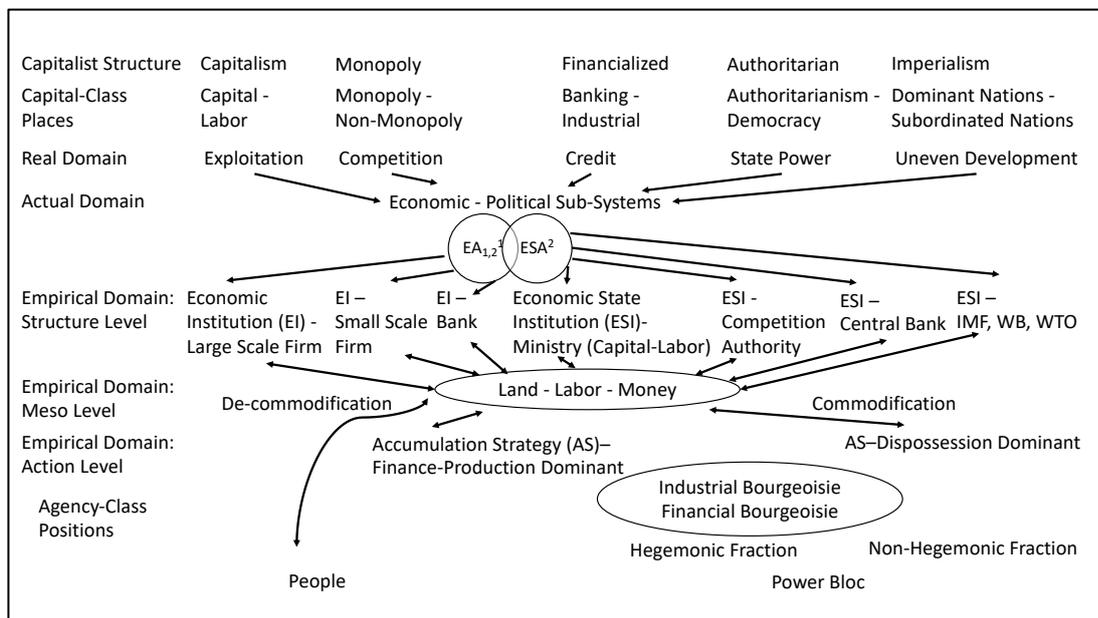
Although economic and state apparatuses are defined as the actualization of contradictions, contradictions do not automatically manifest themselves empirically in the empirical domain of critical realism. That is, there is a need for an empirical domain in which apparatuses wear their material bodies. The space of this empirical domain is filled by institutions. Neoliberal social movements and resistances also take place within tangible and visible institutions. Identifying the objective aspect of the uneven development of institutions and their multiple determination by economic and state apparatuses is important for understanding neoliberalism and the possibilities and limits of resistances to it. Because the resistances against neoliberalism and pro-neoliberal movements mostly take place within the institutions. Therefore, understanding which of these institutions, where neoliberalism is also experienced in the current phase of capitalism, came to the fore and why, requires the correct theorizing of institutions. Since institutions are in the empirical domain, they are suitable to be considered in two ways. First, institutions are the empirical manifestation of contradictions through the materialization of apparatuses. From this point of view, institutions are the empirical manifestation of the objective places of social classes. Whether they demand positions to support neoliberal policies or to be positioned in institutions against which they will resist, the objective places of social classes are distributed in institutions in the first place. These institutions internalize the determinations of the apparatuses, just as the apparatuses internalize the determinations of contradictions. First, institutions are not isolated from each other, although empirically they may appear separate. Essentially, every institution consists of an empirical manifestation of more than one apparatus.

Thus, every institution, be it state or economic, denotes the objective place of more than one social class. Second, we have stated that the apparatuses develop unevenly among themselves. Therefore, institutions are also manifested by their uneven development among themselves. In this case, there is a relationship of dominance between economic and state institutions, and there is a relationship of dominance within these institutions. Third, there is the uneven development of institutions within

themselves. Accordingly, whether it is an economic or a state institution, on the other hand, this institution is not an instrument of any class, and on the other hand, there is a dominance relationship in class representation within the institution. Large companies play an important role in the commodification of labor by establishing subcontracting relationships with small companies. Banks accelerate the commodification of money through their relations with central banks. Institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization commodify the land through privatization.

The definition of the contradiction, the apparatus and, the institutions provides the objective conditions of the social whole. But the contradictory social whole is not static and automatically stable. Social classes either transform these contradictions or regulate to stabilize them. They do this by developing strategies that are the subject of class struggles at the stage of their emergence. Since the purpose of these strategies is capital accumulation, these strategies are defined as accumulation strategies. A dual situation arises here. First, which social classes are capable of formulating an accumulation strategy? In other words, who are the subjects of accumulation strategies and how are their subjective positions determined? Second, what are the determinations of accumulation strategies? Although the class fractions that will form the accumulation strategy do not exactly overlap with the objective contradictions of capitalism, they gain ground on their objective ground. We define the subjective position of the objectively dominated classes as people. We define the subjective position of the dominant classes as power bloc. We define the subjective position of objectively monopoly capital within this bloc as hegemonic fraction. Since monopoly capital is the class that has the widest opportunity to represent objectively in institutions, fractions that can have accumulation strategies represented in institutions arise from fractions affiliated with monopoly capital. Three determinations are made regarding accumulation strategies. First, no accumulation strategy is formed as a strategy of just one class or class fraction. Every strategy in its formation stage is the product of class struggle. In this context, accumulation strategies are also without subject. On the other hand, accumulation strategies, like the oppositions of contradictions, are formed by the unequal intervention of classes. That is, an accumulation strategy occurs without a subject but under the hegemony of a class or class fraction. Second, accumulation strategies do not occur in a vacuum, they require

space. These spaces also consist of economic and state institutions. Accumulation strategies do not target only one institution. Just as apparatuses are manifested in more than one institution, accumulation strategies tend towards more than one institution. On the other hand, just as there is a relationship of dominance between and within institutions, accumulation strategies are selectively represented more advantageously or disadvantageously in objective places in institutions. Finally, accumulation strategies develop unevenly. In other words, one accumulation strategy dominates the others. These three determinations, especially the last one, when taken with the objectivity of contradictions, apparatuses and institutions, will pave the way for the final step necessary to determine the status of neoliberalism.



Source: Author's Illustration

(1) EA: Economic Apparatus; EA<sub>1</sub>: Corporate Apparatus; EA<sub>2</sub>: Banking Apparatus

(2) ESA: Economic State Apparatus

**Figure 4.1 Schema of Neoliberalism<sup>(1), (2)</sup>**

Capitalism needs the commodification of labor-power, money and land as a condition for its historical survival. The pace of commodification gained or lost momentum at certain stages and phases of capitalism. But it has always been the subject of class struggles. The processes of commodification were followed by the expansion of the

sphere of influence of the market, and classes and class fractions negatively affected by this sphere of influence, in one way or another, resisted marketization and commodification in the name of society. It is this violent attempt at commodification that we experience in the current phase of capitalism as well. On the one hand, capital throws the nets of capitalist production relations into every other area of social life through the value form, on the other hand, the influence of the value form has been permeated into social life more than ever by pro-commodification class struggles. Therefore, it is commodification itself that directly determines the sphere of influence of capital and the tempo of its motion in social life. The commodification and marketization of labor-power means bringing its exchange value to the fore and subordinating it to the production of surplus-value. The commodification of money means that at first it puts itself under the control of the production of surplus-value. However, money takes control of all social capital and labor and puts them at the disposal of its own expansion. The commodification of land means placing natural environment at the disposal of a narrow dominant social class fractions and capital's surplus-value production or speculation. It is this whole violent process of commodification that we experience with neoliberalism today so that the capitalist economy and capital can expand its sphere of influence on society. Moreover, various accumulation strategies can engage in such an expansion of sphere of influence of the structure of capital and capitalist relations of production. Productive accumulation strategies can find cheap and flexible labor they demand, financial accumulation strategies can sometimes disarticulate money from productive accumulation processes and gain freedom of movement, and sometimes dominate the productive capital and social labor of certain geographies. Accumulation by dispossession can plunder nature, unprecedented in the history of capitalism, speculate on land, leave the people without land and commodify them in the ranks of labor. It is this feat that makes neoliberalism neoliberalism. Structurally, neoliberalism detects how the value form, capital relations and tendencies of formal-real subsumptions, together with control of finance over social capital and labor, are manifested in institutions, and provides the point of contact for the accumulation strategies derived from the fractions of monopoly capital to hold onto these structures most comfortably. However, the crucial point of neoliberalism comes from this. Even at the stage of formation, the accumulation strategies that are formed by conflict also conflict among themselves and make different demands in the

commodification processes of labor, land and money. Roughly, for example, productive strategies pursue the domination of money by production, while financial strategies pursue strategies for the free movement of money. While accumulation by dispossession strategies tend towards land speculation, productive strategies seek to fix space. What makes neoliberalism irreducible to accumulation strategies, subjectless and unstable is the conflict between the monopoly class fractions and the development of different visions for these fictitious commodities. On the other hand, there are 'people' who resist on behalf of the society. The commodification of labor establishes the real subsumption of capital and constitutes man as an appendage of capital. The commodification of money causes the endless filing and transfer to capital of the values that the people have accumulated in the name of the public. The commodification of the land prevents the people from finding decent housing and causes them to be deprived of their natural habitats. The resistance of the people against this commodification manifests itself as anti-neoliberal movements today. However, there are limits to anti-neoliberal movements in geographies where capitalist production relations and state power exist. First of all, these movements are far from being movements that transform social structures; because the people as exploited classes limit anti-neoliberal struggles to struggles within institutions. These movements sometimes coincide with the crisis producing tendencies of objective laws of motion of capital, creating more destructive effects. However, since it theoretically neither possesses state power in state institutions nor the means of production in economic institutions, they do not go beyond producing secondary effects when they focus on intra-institutional struggle. This is included in our theoretical scheme as the protective counter-movement of the Polanyian double movement. The result is a tendency that distorts the balance in existing accumulation strategies, which causes accumulation strategies to disarticulate from structures, but cannot transform capitalist social structures. Capitalist social structures can get rid of these imbalances with alternative accumulation strategies.

The first conclusion that derives from our theoretical scheme is that naming neoliberalism in the periodization of capitalism may be objectionable. Periodization of monopoly capitalism, financialized capitalism, authoritarian capitalism, collective imperialism (US-EU imperialism in US hegemony) is more appropriate as it refers to the structures.

The second conclusion is that neoliberalism cannot be reduced to financial accumulation, flexible production, or dispossession. On the contrary, neoliberalism is the project that sustains these three.

Finally, while developing the contradiction perspective, it is said that collective imperialism constitutes the primary contradiction. From this point of view, it is emphasized that the problem is imperialism, even if it is limited to anti-neoliberal struggles. Therefore, it is argued that it is not enough to just defend the decommodification of money against financialization. Because the primary contradiction is not the financial capital-industrial capital contradiction. Understanding at first hand that it is necessary to fight against the accumulation strategies of imperialism as a whole will ensure that the anti-capitalist perspective towards the USA and the EU settles into place, especially for the people of a semi-colonial country like Turkey.

This chapter has dedicated to the analysis of determinations of institutional architecture, agency and social movements against or pro-neoliberalism. In analyzing institutions, its two-fold nature has been emphasized. First, institutions are empirical manifestation contradictions and material embodiment of apparatuses. Therefore, they internalize the complexity of inter and intra relations of contradiction. Thus, each institution has a character of being advantageous or disadvantageous place for different social classes. Even if each institution can be empirically observed as if it is a separate entity, it is argued that institutions as relations are embodiment of multiplicity of apparatuses. Second, institution as locus is the site of class struggle. Therefore each institutions' borders are capable of being modified by strategies of social classes. Both struggles of accumulation strategies and attitudes toward neoliberalism are realized within the borders of institutions. Given qualitative stability of balance of forces of classes, secondary quantitative changes in this balance modifies the borders of institutions. In this way, institutions gain their dynamics toward social classes.

Given the nature of institutional structure, agency's and accumulation Strategy's ontological status has been elaborated. It is argued that agents are not mere support or bearer of social structures of society. However, agents cannot form social structures voluntarily. It is argued that there is an ontological hiatus between social structures and

agents. Therefore, each has its own determination. Social structures are to be practiced by agents to exist. On the other side, agents are limited but not determined by social structures. Agent's actions are intentional and conscious.

Accumulation strategies are defined as contents of value-form or laws of motion of capital. Without practice of accumulation strategies, laws of motion of capital cannot exist. On the other side, it is laws of motion of capital in specific phase of capitalism that put limit to material conditions of existence of accumulation strategies. Therefore, in current phase of capitalism, hegemonic fraction within monopoly capital can only be capable of developing accumulation strategies. However, it is not the subject of its accumulation strategy because of its contradiction between people and power bloc. There exist diversity of accumulation strategies in hegemonic fraction of monopoly capital. Dominant accumulation strategy is the one which guarantees the interests of other fractions of capital throughout circuit of capital.

Until this point, nature of social structures, agents, articulation of these, and accumulation strategies have been discussed. It is argued that neoliberalism is a point of contact between structural tendencies of capital accumulation and accumulation strategy. However, determinations of this mode of articulation must be elaborated. For this purpose, It is proposed that Polanyi's double movement is a candidate to endow conceptual framework. Capitalism's existence depends on incessant process of commodification of labor, land and money. Laws of motion of capital reflect the structural tendency of subordinating labor to capital, social labor and social capital to credit mechanism. On the other side, social classes struggle in order to expand or restrict the sphere of commodity fiction.

As regards neoliberalism, it is argued that neoliberalism articulate structural tendencies of laws of motion of capital and various accumulation strategies. Neoliberalism prioritize exchange value moment of commodity throughout circuit of capital. Therefore, formal and real subsumption of labor under capital, control of social labor and social capital by finance capital are characteristics of current phase of capitalism. Anti-neoliberal struggles against capital, finance and imperialism are limited to disarticulate present accumulation strategies from structural tendencies of laws of

motion of capital. This is why social structures of current phase of capitalism are capable of being untouched and regulated by alternative accumulation strategies.

Lastly, neoliberalism is a market-oriented project without subject led by collective imperialism, dominated by financial capital, subjugated by labor, supported by the economic regulatory role of the authoritarian state and market ideology.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

Main purpose of this thesis has been to determine the ontological status of neoliberalism in a wider ontological environment of social reality. It is because misunderstandings and confusions about neoliberalism are thought to be related to confusion about its ontological status. Some researchers has described it as if neoliberalism is financialization. Some others has been arguing that neoliberalism is globalization or flexibility on conditions of labor process. Erroneously, this group of researchers try to construct a ‘causal’ relation between neoliberalism as an event and other events such as financialization. For this reason, it is crucial to rely on a solid philosophy of science and ontology together with a political economy perspective to construct a schema of capitalist society’s ontological environment in which neoliberalism roots its ontological status.

In this thesis, Marxist political economy and state theory has been embedded into critical realist philosophy of science in order to grasp society’s wide range of reality. This ontology together with political economy and state theory has been a fruitful analytical framework in understanding tendential laws of motion of capital, its contradictions, apparatuses, institutions, social classes and neoliberalism. At the level of neoliberalism, Polanyi’s commodification and double movement concepts have been the most promising candidate to explain ‘position-practice system’ of critical realist ontology.

Investigation of this thesis has begun by accepting that social structures and tendential laws of social science have their own determinations independent of agents action. Social structures, which have their own determinations, require the action of agents in order to be actualized. Likewise, the determinations of agency are not reduced to social structures and tendential laws. The actions of the agents are limited but not determined by social structures. Therefore, in this thesis, the determinations of social structures and agency are discussed separately from each other. For this reason, the investigation has started with abstract laws of motion of capital and its tendencies. In the context of competition, it is argued that 'imagined' model of Marx has been empirically supported by Shaikh's theory of real competition. It has been meaningful in the sense that the theories which argues that each specific phase of capitalism has only its own tendencies and laws have been proven to be wrong. Equally, the theories which argues that agent's involvement might modify the objective laws of motion of capital have been proven to be wrong. This has been the success of intertwined relation between ontology and epistemology of critical realism and Marxist political economy.

However, how specific phase of capitalism is to be examined has still remained as a concern. It has been argued that embedding mechanism concept into contradiction concept in real domain might provide a solid analytical framework in analyzing concrete situations. Contradiction concept has been reassessed in the light of overdetermination concept to emphasize its complex determination with its wider environment. Contradiction concept has also been characterized by its uneven development within itself and between other contradictions. With this observation together with its event generative capacity, it has been argued that asymmetric power relations between economic-political systems, economic-state apparatuses, economic-state institutions result from actualization and empirical manifestation of contradictions.

Actual domain of critical realism has been processed by the help of Jessop's otopoiesis theory which argues that each system is responsible of reproducing itself. Contradiction is argued to be also responsible for its development, but they are also internalize others' externalizations. Otopoiesis theory has endowed this thesis with analytical framework so that asymmetric power relation between contradictions can be revealed to actual domain of critical realism. Heritage of relational state theory has

also functioned in the same direction. Apparatuses thesis of Althusser-Poulantzas-Jessop has been reevaluated to be integrated into critical realist schema.

Conceptualization of institutions as both empirical manifestation of contradictions and playground of class struggles has provided an analytical framework in that, even if specific phase of capitalism can be defined with its relatively qualitative stable environment, institutional architecture of society, with its quantitative changes, is relatively more unstable than environment of apparatuses and systems. Class struggle is responsible for this instability through its intervention to borders of institutional architecture of society. These struggles has been defined as institutional struggles which do not aim at transforming the balances of forces, aspects of contradiction and therefore economic-political system and economic-political apparatuses. It is argued that in the absence of any intervention in real domain, and through it, actual domain, struggles which aims at institutional environment within empirical domain can be transpassed by new accumulation strategies. In this thesis, double movement theory has been placed to institutional framework to understand neoliberal and anti neoliberal tendencies within society. In current phase of capitalism given its concrete and objective conditions composed of unity of its contradictions, neoliberalism is responsible for mediating the abstract structural laws of motion of capital's tendencies and accumulation strategies. Structural tendencies of laws of motion of capital has been limited to 'formal' and 'real' subsumption of labor under capital, and control of social labor and social capital by finance capital through credit mechanism.

Neoliberalism is a market-mediated project in which collective imperialist bloc under the USA hegemony have a dominant role. In neoliberalization process of capitalism, financial capital has the support of economic regulatory role of authoritarian state. Market ideology also contributes to the neoliberal subjugation of labor by capital. However, in the last analysis, neoliberalism is a process without subject which means that neoliberal world is not planned solely by financial capital. Making a reference to Polanyi, 'neoliberalism was planned; planning was not'.

In this thesis, a concrete analysis of the concrete situation in which neoliberalism is also an element has been made. Abstract analysis has been carried out to understand the structural boundaries of the concrete situation and concrete analysis. The

articulation of abstract analysis to the concrete situation has been possible by embedding the mechanisms into contradictions. Now that this point has been made, it is possible to discuss the ultimate practical implications that derive from the theoretical framework of the concrete analysis of the concrete situation.

Before entering into this discussion, it is necessary to remind three premises. First, all domains of critical realism are as 'real' as any other. In other words, there is no such a thing as 'reality' on the one hand and 'illusion' on the other. The reality of each domain is binding on the tactics of the class struggle.

Secondly, although the ultimate destination and strategy of class struggles refer to the structures and long run of the current phase of capitalism, development of the tactics and maneuvers of class struggles refer to conjuncture. The conjuncture is the union of two aspects, one referring to mechanism and tendencies, the other to contradiction and aspects of contradiction. The aspect of the conjuncture that refers to the mechanism and tendencies can be understood as follows: The mechanisms and tendencies of capitalism are articulated differently according to the conjunctures. One end of the conjunctural spectrum can be defined as a conjuncture where there is an increase in profit rates, where the 'formal' subsumption of capital does not dominate, and where financial capital does not control social capital and labor. At the other end of the cyclical spectrum, the opposite may occur. The aspect of the conjuncture that refers to contradictions can be understood as follows: At one end of the spectrum, the tension between aspects of the contradictions does not yet acquire an antagonistic character. Capital can transfer some of the returns from capitalist expansion to labor. Competition between capitals does not yet manifest itself as a tendential to fall in profit rates. Likewise, in the conjuncture where profit rates rise, the distribution relationship between banking and industrial capital is reconcilable. Although the state form shows an authoritarian tendency, this is not yet a conjuncture in which the state's repressive apparatuses come to the fore. The relationship between dominating nations and subordinated nations can establish hegemony thanks to a relatively stable economic model. At the other end of the spectrum is an antagonistic tension between aspects of all contradictions. Economic, social and political crises deepen the capital-labor contradiction, the contradictions between capitals, the contradiction inherent in the state and the contradiction of the international situation.

The third and final premise should be evaluated with the previous two premises in mind. The third premise is the three pillars of the concrete analysis of this thesis; contradictions, mechanisms and structures of capital accumulation, accumulation strategies and neoliberalism as a catalyst.

Based on these premises, it is possible to draw conclusions about how to reason in the conclusion chapter of this thesis. With its huge capacity to emphasize the exchange value moment of commodity, neoliberalism is responsible for integrating finance's domination over productive capital, capital's domination over labor, and lastly capitalism's domination over wider social life. However, since anti-neoliberal movements have been practicing in empirical domain and at institutional level, even if it refers to imperialism and finance as usual suspects, it is highly probable that anti-neoliberal movements will be transpassed by alternative accumulation strategies while balances of forces of social classes remain intact. In addition, according to the concept of contradiction used in this thesis, anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly, socialist movements that transform social structures are movements that change the principal aspects of contradictions. The point to be emphasized is that even if the principal aspects of the contradictions change, the mechanisms corresponding to each contradiction have the potential to continue to generate effects. Accordingly, anti-imperialist gains that are not completed by socialist struggles may be lost due to the uneven development mechanism. If socialist relations of production that abolish capital relations are not organized, the gains of labor against capital may be lost due to the mechanism of exploitation. It should be remembered that contradictions are overdetermined. The relations of capital and exploitation, which has been completely eliminated in a given geography of the world, may come to the fore again due to the uneven development mechanism. Worldwide anti-imperialist gains that do not lead to socialism may be lost due to the mechanism of exploitation. Therefore, the ultimate destination cannot be to develop capitalist accumulation strategies with an anti-imperialist character. Likewise, the final destination cannot be to develop a socialist accumulation strategy that is integrated into the imperialist global accumulation strategy.

Like any thesis written with a Marxist perspective, the ultimate aim of this thesis is to contribute to the tactics and strategy of class struggles that focus on the transformation

of existing conditions. In this context, it is possible to comment on tactics and long term class strategies regarding Turkey's particularity. The first and long-term perspective is socialism. This perspective refers to the structural elements of the current phase of capitalism. The theoretical scheme of this thesis points to collective imperialism as the principal contradiction of the current phase of capitalism. Accordingly, anti-imperialist struggles form the backbone of the road to socialism. It is obvious that since 2002, the capital-labor contradiction peculiar to Turkey has been overdetermined by imperialism. The non-unionization of the working class, the creation of flexible employment conditions, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises are policies carried out by the AKP under the supervision of the collective imperialist wing of the USA-EU. The organization of Turkish agriculture has been partially cut off from the needs of the Turkish people. Small commodity producers and non-monopolist national agricultural capital were either turned into attachments to the international production-consumption networks of the imperialist agricultural monopolies or were eliminated. Nature was heavily sacrificed in this period to hydroelectric plant projects and mining for the sake of the interests of capital. The economy of indebtedness and financialization, which follows low purchasing power, make the wages of the working class open to the transfer of surplus-value. The lands of Istanbul, the country's megapolis, were sacrificed to the gulf capital's land speculation. In this context, imperialism has a dominant position in overdetermining other contradictions. Imperialism has a decisive role in the survival of non-monopoly capital as a subcontractor of monopoly capital. In this context, maintaining the national power bloc is possible by discovering national regulations that engage seamlessly with the monetary policies of imperialism. Since 2002, state apparatuses and institutions have been more outside of people or public control than ever before. Especially the liberal perspective, which started the so-called authoritarianization process of the state since 2013, is wrong. The reason they make this mistake is essentially the effort to equate imperialism, which dominates other contradictions, with democratic norms. Liberalism sees the solution at the point where the problem begins for the subordinated nations. The so-called authoritarianization of the state after 2013 is the result of a complex re-articulation of all contradictions. The monetary policies of the USA showing signs of change, the internationalization process of the gulf capital towards Turkey, the conjunctural balance of power between the international monopoly capital

and the national monopoly capital, slightly opening up space for national monopolies, shapes the current state of the authoritarian state. In addition, there has been no loud objection from the capital to the promotion of the repressive state apparatus against the rising class, national and popular movements since 2013. The most important theoretical results of this thesis are as follows; For socialism, which is a long-term perspective, it is necessary to pass through an anti-imperialist and anti-monopoly popular alliance stage. The first step in transforming capitalist social structures can be seen at this point.

But it should also be remembered that the tactics of class struggles are carried out conjuncturally. What effects the mechanisms produce in the current conjuncture, whether antagonism occurs between which contradictions, and the balance of power between classes are decisive. At this point, apparatuses, institutions, accumulation strategies and neoliberalism itself have to be included in the analysis. In February 2022, when this thesis was completed, Turkey has been in a crisis. The working class, the peasantry, the middle strata of the working class, the petty bourgeoisie have come to the brink of economic and social destruction. On the contrary, monopoly capital, the winner of the process of devaluation of capital, stands. On the one hand, all fractions of monopoly capital report high profits; on the other hand, the actions of the working class aiming at improving wages and living conditions are responded to by the repressive state apparatus. The representation of the people within the economic, ideological and repressive state apparatuses and institutions is hindered like never before. The central bank, which has been out of public control under the supervision of the IMF since the beginning of the 2000s, loses its balance as a result of the friction of the power balances between the fractions of the capital. Each accumulation strategy that focuses on construction, financial accumulation, and production-export demands different monetary policies. As in any crisis, an alternative accumulation strategy is tried to be activated in this crisis as well. An accumulation strategy focused on 'strong export-strong production-strong employment' is also beginning to be represented in the state.

It has been stated that accumulation strategies are created by hegemonic fractions composed of monopoly capital. Although these accumulation strategies exhibit different attitudes towards the commodification of land and money, the attitude

towards the commodification of labor is common. Today, there is no confusion in the power bloc on the commodification of labor, which is represented in neoliberalism, under the conditions of flexible employment and low wages. There is no confusion about the financialization of wages through indebtedness. There is also no confusion about the commodification of people's existing common spaces and their resale to the people. In summary, no matter which accumulation strategy it articulates, the only point that the power bloc has in common is the neoliberal attack against labor.

It is clear that in the current conjuncture, the possibilities of the people are limited. Anti-imperialist struggles leading to socialism are not on the horizon. Capital enters the structural crisis process in an advantageous position both objectively and subjectively. Both the political power of the country and the majority of the opposition propose political-economic strategies that reproduce the horizon of neoliberalism. Both groups undertake the task of representing the neoliberal policies of monopoly capital and imperialism with certain nuances. The current political power proposes the most brutal practices of neoliberalism in economy and political Islamist policies in ideology. The opposition proposes a revised or 'come back to early 2000's' neoliberalism in economics, and positivism and technocracy in ideology. Only by highlighting the deadlocks of neoliberalism can people prevent themselves from falling into the trap of different strategies of both political fractions. Neoliberalism is a catalyst that fuses the contradicting interests of monopoly capital and imperialism. In conjunctures where the possibility of socialism is thought to be structurally closed, the tendency of the people towards organizations with anti-neoliberal attitudes is not an option that should be ignored. Perceiving the distinction between capitals and ideologies as an Islamist-secular divide blocks the way for anti-neoliberal tactics. There is a need for tactics that stand against TÜSİAD projects and political representatives as well as against MÜSİAD. Alternatives that stand against technocracy and positivism, which are a secular market ideology as well as political Islamism, are needed within ideological apparatuses and institutions. In conclusion, existence of complex articulation of contradictions, mechanisms, accumulation strategies and neoliberalism requires complex articulation of temporality of tactics in order to achieve an ultimate strategy of socialist transformation.

The conceptual framework proposed in this thesis offers further research agenda. In this thesis, the determinations of any element whose ontological status have been mentioned has not been detailed in itself. The main purpose has been limited to the mapping the places and positions of the elements of the economic and political life of the society, in which neoliberalism also has its place. From this, two research agendas can be proposed. First of all, the determinations of the elements that find their place in this scheme developed with the critical realist-Marxist methodology can be researched. It will be possible to draw practical conclusions from this research agenda. What are the conditions and tactics of the transition from anti-neoliberal struggles to anti-imperialist and socialist struggles? Secondly, there is a message given in the subtext of this thesis. The ontological status, in which neoliberalism is addressed, exists in all phases and stages of capitalism. The existence of this catalyst opens the door to an economic history research. What are the determinations of the catalysts corresponding to the stages or phases of capitalism? What are the factors that differentiate their determinations?

## REFERENCES

- Aglietta, M. (1979). *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation*. London: NLB.
- Althusser, L. (1969). *For Marx*. London: Allen Lane.
- Althusser, L. (1976a). Elements of Self-Criticism. In *Essays in Self-Criticism* (pp. 101–162). London: NLB.
- Althusser, L. (1976b). Reply to John Lewis. In *Essays in Self-Criticism* (pp. 33–100). London: NLB.
- Althusser, L. (2014). *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. London; New York: Verso.
- Arrighi, G. (2003). The Social And Political Economy of Global Turbulence. *New Left Review*, 20(2), 5–71.
- Arrighi, G. (2010). *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times*. London: Verso.
- Arrighi, G., & Moore, J. W. (2001). Capitalist Development in World Historical Perspective. In R. Albritton, M. Itoh, R. Westra, & A. Zuege (Eds.), *Phases of Capitalist Development: Booms, Crises and Globalizations* (2001st ed., pp. 56–75). New York: Palgrave.
- Arrighi, G., Silver, B. J., Ahmad, I., Barr, K., Hisaeda, S., Hui, P., Ray, K., Reifer, T. E., Shih, M., & Slater, E. (1999). *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Arrighi, Giovanni. (2007). *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century*. London: Verso.

- Baran, P. A., & Sweezy, P. M. (1966). *Monopoly Capital: An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order*. U.S.A: Monthly Review Press.
- Berger, P., & Pullberg, S. (1965). Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness. *History and Theory*, 4(2), 196–211.
- Bhaskar, R. (1998). *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Bhaskar, R. (2008). *A Realist Theory of Science*. London: Routledge.
- Bhaskar, R. (2011). *Reclaiming Reality: A critical introduction to contemporary philosophy*. London: Routledge.
- Braudel, F. (1984). *The Perspective of the World*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Harvey, D. (1985). The Geopolitics of Capitalism. In D. Gregory & J. Urry (Eds.), *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* (pp. 128–163). UK: Macmillan Education.
- Harvey, D. (1992). *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harvey, D. (1995). Globalization in question. *Rethinking Marxism*, 8(4), 1–17. doi: 10.1080/08935699508685463
- Harvey, D. (2001a). Globalization and the “Spatial Fix.” *Geographische Revue: Zeitschrift Für Literatur Und Diskussion*, 3(2), 23–30.
- Harvey, D. (2001b). *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*. London: Routledge.
- Harvey, D. (2003). *The New Imperialism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2004). The “New” Imperialism: Accumulation By Dispossession. *Socialist Register*, 40, 63–87.

- Harvey, D. (2006). *The Limits to Capital*. London: Verso.
- Jessop, B. (1990). *State Theory Putting the Capitalist State in Its Place*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Jessop, B. (1991). Accumulation Strategies, State Forms and Hegemonic Projects. In S. Clarke (Ed.), *The State Debate* (pp. 157–182). New York: Palgrave.
- Jessop, B. (1999). The Strategic Selectivity of the State: Reflections on a Theme of Poulantzas. *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, 25(1–2), 1–37.
- Jessop, B. (2000). The Crisis of the National Spatio-Temporal Fix and the Tendential Ecological Dominance of Globalizing Capitalism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24(2), 323–360.
- Jessop, B. (2001a). Institutional re(turns) and the strategic - Relational approach. *Environment and Planning A*, 33(7), 1213–1235. doi: 10.1068/a32183
- Jessop, B. (2001b). State theory, regulation, and autopoiesis: debates and controversies. *Capital and Class*, 75(3), 83–92.
- Jessop, B. (2001c). Regulationist and Autopoieticist Reflections on Polanyi's Account of Market Economies and the Market Society. *New Political Economy*, 6(2), 213–232. doi: 10.1080/13563460120060616
- Jessop, B. (2002). Capitalism, the Regulation Approach, and Critical Realism. In A. Brown, S. Fleetwood, & M. Roberts (Eds.), *Critical Realism and Marxism* (pp. 88–115). London: Routledge.
- Jessop, B. (2005). Critical Realism and the Strategic-Relational Approach. *New Formations: A Journal of Culture, Theory and Politics*, 56, 40–53. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263691122>
- Jessop, B. (2007a). Spatial Fixes, Temporal Fixes and Spatio-Temporal Fixes. In N. Castree & D. Gregory (Eds.), *David Harvey: A Critical Reader* (3rd ed., pp. 142–166). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

- Jessop, B. (2007b). *The Future of the Capitalist State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Jessop, B. (2007c). What follows Neo-liberalism? The Deepening Contradictions of US Domination and the Struggle for a New Global Order. In R. Albritton, B. Jessop, & R. Westra (Eds.), *Political economy and global capitalism: the 21st century, present and future* (pp. 67–88). London: Anthem Press.
- Jessop, B. (2008a). Polanyian, Regulationist, and Autopoieticist Reflections on States and Markets and their Implications for the Knowledge-Based Economy. In *The Institutions of the Market: Organizations, Social Systems, and Governance* (pp. 328–347). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jessop, B. (2008b). *State Power: A Strategic-Relational Approach*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Jessop, B. (2010a). From Hegemony to Crisis? The Continuing Ecological Dominance of Neoliberalism. In K. Birch & V. Mykhnenko (Eds.), *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberalism: the Collapse of an Economic Order?* (pp. 171–187). London: Zed Books.
- Jessop, B. (2010b). The Continuing Ecological Dominance of Neoliberalism in the Crisis. In A. Saad-Filho & G. L. Yalman (Eds.), *Economic Transitions to Neoliberalism in Middle-income Countries: Policy dilemmas, economic crises, forms of resistance* (pp. 24–38). London: Routledge.
- Jessop, B. (2019). Primacy of the Economy, Primacy of the Political: Critical Theory of Neoliberalism. In U. H. Bittlingmayer, A. Alex Demirović, & T. Freytag (Eds.), *Handbuch Kritische Theorie* (pp. 893–905). Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Jessop, B., & Sum, N.-L. (2006). *Beyond the Regulation Approach: Putting Capitalist Economies in Their Place*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Lapavistas, C. (2009a). Financialisation, or the Search for Profits in the Sphere of Circulation. *EKONOMIAZ. Revista Vasca de Economía*, 72(3), 98–119.
- Lapavistas, C. (2009b). Financialised capitalism: Crisis and financial expropriation. *Historical Materialism*, 17(2), 114–148. doi: 10.1163/156920609X436153

- Lapavitsas, C. (2011). Theorizing financialization. *Work, Employment and Society*, 25(4), 611–626. doi: 10.1177/0950017011419708
- Lapavitsas, C. (2013a). *Profit without producing: how finance exploit us all*. London: Verso.
- Lapavitsas, C. (2013b). The financialization of capitalism: “Profiting without producing.” *City*, 17(6), 792–805. doi: 10.1080/13604813.2013.853865
- Lenin, V. I. (1973). Once Again On the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin. In *Collected Works* (Vol. 32, pp. 70–107). Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Lenin, V. I. (1976a). Conspectus of Hegel’s Book Lectures on the History of Philosophy. In *Collected Works* (4th ed., Vol. 38, pp. 243–302). Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Lenin, V. I. (1976b). On the Question of Dialectics. In *Collected Works* (4th ed., Vol. 38, pp. 355–362). Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Lipietz, A. (1993). From Althusserianism to “Regulation Theory.” In E. A. Kaplan & M. Sprinker (Eds.), *The Althusserian Legacy* (pp. 99–138). London: Verso.
- Lipietz, Alain. (1987). *Mirages and Miracles: the Crisis in Global Fordism*. London: Verso.
- Mao, T.-T. (1975). On Contradiction. In *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* (Vol. 1, pp. 311–347). Pergamon Press.
- Marx, K. (1904). *A Contribution to the The Critique of Political Economy*. Chicago: International Library Publishing.
- Marx, K. (1969). *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.
- Marx, K. (1972). *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (6th ed.). Moscow: Progress Publishers.

- Marx, K. (1982). Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marx, K. (1990). Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume One. London: Penguin.
- Marx, K. (1991). Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume Three. London: Penguin.
- Marx, K. (1992). Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume Two. London: Penguin.
- Marx, K. (1993). Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft). London: Penguin.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1987). Collected Works: Engels: Anti-Dühring, Dialectics of Nature (Vol. 25). New York: International Publishers.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1998). The German Ideology : including Theses on Feuerbach and introduction to The critique of political economy. New York: Prometheus Books.
- Öğütte, V. S. (2019). Kurumların Sosyal Gerçekliği: İlişkisel Realist Bir Yaklaşım. Ankara: Phoenix.
- Öğütte, V. S. (2021). Institution as Mediation between Social Structure and Agency: Toward a Realist Social Ontology of Institutions. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 51(3), 489–507. doi: 10.1111/jtsb.12293
- Özdemir, A. M. (2010). Ulusların Sefaleti. Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları.
- Petit, P. (1999). Structural Forms and Growth regimes of the Post-Fordist Era. Review of Social Economy, 57(2), 220–243. doi: 10.1080/00346769900000037
- Polanyi, K. (1947a). On Belief in Economic Determinism. The Sociological Review, 39(1), 96–102.

- Polanyi, K. (1947b). Our Obsolete Market Mentality: “Civilization Must Find a New Thought Pattern.” *Commentary*, 3, 109–117.
- Polanyi, K. (1977). *The Livelihood of Man* (H. W. Pearson, Ed.). New York: Academic Press.
- Polanyi, K. (2001). *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Polanyi, K. (2018). The Essence of Fascism. In M. Cangiani & C. Thomasberger (Eds.), *Economy and Society: Selected Writings* (pp. 81–107). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Poulantzas, N. (1974). Internationalisation of capitalist relations and the Nation-State. *Economy and Society*, 3(2), 145–179. doi: 10.1080/03085147400000008
- Poulantzas, N. (1976). *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (2nd ed.). London: NLB.
- Poulantzas, N. (2000). *State, Power, Socialism*. London: Verso.
- Poulantzas, N. (2008). The Problem of the Capitalist State. In J. Martin (Ed.), *The Poulantzas Reader: Marxism, Law, and the State* (pp. 172–185). London: Verso.
- Shaikh, A. (2016). *Capitalism: competition, conflict, crises*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sweezy, P. M. (1962). *The Theory of Capitalist Development: Principles of Marxian Political Economy*. London: Dennis Dobson Limited.
- Yalman, G. (2009). *Transition to Neoliberalism: The Case of Turkey in 1980s*. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University Press.

## APPENDICES

### A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Neoliberalizm, toplumların yaşamına girdiği 1970'lerden bu yana Marksist politik iktisatçıların radarında kalan bir araştırma konusu olmuştur. Neoliberalizmin tanımı, araştırmaya konu olduğu günden bu yana, çeşitli olaylarla özdeşleştirilme veya bunlara indirgenme riskini taşımaktadır. Bunlar arasında ilk anda finansallaşma, esnek üretim ve mülksüzleştirme yoluyla birikim sayılabilir. Bu tezde önerilen yöntem, neoliberalizmi finansallaşma gibi olaylarla neden-sonuç ilişkisi içinde incelemenin sakıncalarına dikkat çekecektir. Eleştirel realizmin ontolojisine göre, olaylar arasındaki nedensel ilişki her ikisini de doğuran nedenlerin anlaşılması ile mümkündür, olayların birbirleri ile ilişkilendirilmesi yoluyla değil. Buna göre, bu olayların kök nedenlerini anlamak için, bu olaylara neden olan gerçek mekanizmaları ve bu olayların onlar tarafından nasıl oluşturulduğunu anlamamız gerekir. Finansallaşmanın kendisi neoliberalizmi doğuran bir mekanizma olarak değil, çeşitli mekanizmaların belirli bir şekilde birleşmesinden doğan bir olay olarak algılanmalıdır.

Kapitalizmin mevcut aşamasının veya evresinin neoliberalizm olarak tanımlanması, araştırmacıların bu dönemde meydana gelen olayların neoliberalizm tarafından üretildiği sonucuna varmasına neden oldu. Bununla birlikte, bu tezde kapitalizmin mevcut aşamasının veya evresinin ancak kapitalizmin mekanizmalarında meydana gelecek dönüşümle tanımlanabileceği ve neoliberalizmin bu mekanizmalardan biri olmadığı tartışılacaktır. Sonuç olarak, kapitalizmin mevcut aşamasını neoliberal kapitalizm olarak tanımlamak yanlış olur. Bu yanlış tanımlama bir sonraki adımda toplumsal yapıların dönüştürülmesine yönelik sınıf mücadelelerine yanlış strateji önermeye sebep olmaktadır. Bu tezde her ne kadar kıymetli olsalar da anti-neoliberal hareketlerin toplumsal yapıları ve sınıfsal güç dengelerini dönüştürmeyi hedeflemedikleri iddia edilecektir.

Neoliberalizm, yeri geldiğinde sermaye birikimi için uygulananlar arasında bir birikim stratejisi olarak kuramlaştırılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu açıdan neoliberalizm bazen istihdamda esneklik, bazen finansal birikim stratejileri, bazen de mülksüzleştirme ile özdeşleştirilir. Bu tezde, neoliberalizmin failliğin tüm bu boyutlarıyla temas halinde olmasına rağmen bunlardan birine indirgenemeyeceği ve birikim stratejilerinin neoliberalizmin ayırt edici özelliği olmadığı tartışılacaktır. Bu tezde neoliberalizmin birikim stratejileri ve toplumsal yapılarla temas halinde olduğu kabul edilirken, ona özerk bir statü önerilecektir. Bu özerk statü, kurumlar düzeyinde olacaktır ve sermayenin nesnel ve eğilimsel yasalarını failliğin birikim stratejileri ile dolayımlayacaktır.

Bu tezin temel amacı, neoliberalizmi, sermaye birikiminin yapısal eğilimlerini ve aktörlerin mücadelelerine atıfta bulunan birikim stratejilerini dolayımlayan bir temas noktası olan bir katalizör olarak tanımlamaktır. Neoliberalizm, kolektif emperyalizmin önderlik ettiği, finansal sermayenin egemen olduğu, emeğin boyun eğdirildiği, otoriter devlet ve piyasa ideolojisinin ekonomik düzenleyici rolüyle desteklenen, piyasa odaklı bir projedir. Neoliberalizm öznesi olmayan bir projedir, çünkü tek bir sınıf ya da sınıf fraksiyonu projesi değildir. Aksine, sınıf mücadelelerinin karmaşık bir sonucu olan bir projedir. Sonuç olarak, hiçbir sınıf fraksiyonu neoliberal politikalar üzerinde tam kontrol sahibi olamaz. Bu sistemin özü, çifte hareketin aracılık ettiği emeğin, toprağın ve paranın metalaşması ile metalaştırmaya karşı direnişler arasındaki gerilimlerde aranacaktır. Bir yandan sermayenin nesnel ve eğilimsel hareket yasaları metalaşmayı dayatacaktır. Diğer yandan çifte hareket, bu eğilimlerle birikim stratejileri arasında kısmen istikrarsızlıkla kısmen de başarılı eklemlenmeyle sonuçlanan salınımlar türetecektir.

İkinci bölümün amacı, sermayenin hareket yasalarını açığa çıkarmaktır. Bu bölümün bu tezin ana gövdesine katkısı şu şekilde ifade edilebilir. Kimi Marksist kuramcılar sermayenin nesnel hareket yasalarının yalnızca içinde bulunduğu dönemle ilişkilendirilebileceğini ifade etmektedir. Buna göre genel olarak kapitalizmin nesnel hareket yasaları yoktur. Yalnızca belirli dönemlerin özgül nesnel hareket yasaları vardır. Kimi Marksist iktisatçılara göre ise sermayenin nesnel hareket yasaları failliğin müdahalesi dolayımıyla modifiye edilmektedirler. Dolayısıyla nesnel hareket yasalarının anlaşılmasında odak noktası, onlara müdahalede bulunan failer olmalıdır.

Sermayenin hareket yasalarının tespitini yanlış anlamak veya reddetmek, sosyal sınıflar, sınıf fraksiyonları ve emperyalist zincir arasındaki ilişkilerin yanlış yorumlanmasına neden olur. Kapitalizmin her aşaması ve evresinin kendine özgü yapısal ortamı vardır. Ancak, kapitalizmin bu aşamaları ve evreleri, kapitalizmin soyut hareket yasalarını ihlal edemez. Bu nedenle, kapitalizmin belirli bir aşamasının doğru anlaşılması, sermaye birikiminin evrensel veya soyut hareket yasalarının anlaşılmasını gerektirir. Bununla birlikte, sermayenin soyut hareket yasaları, kapitalizmin ilişkisel ortamının belirli aşamalarını belirlemez. Kapitalizme belli biçimlerini veren nesnel hareket yasaları, bunları ihlal etmeden niyetlenmiş seçimler yapan faillerle eklemlenerek kapitalist ekonominin bir döneminin tümüyle anlaşılmasını sağlarlar. Bu nedenle, sermayenin soyut hareket yasalarını analiz etmenin amacı, kapitalizmin çevresinin belirli aşamalarını sınırlayabilen veya kontrol edebilen kapitalizmin yapısal kısıtlamalarını açığa çıkarmaktır.

Sermayenin hareket yasalarını ve eğilimlerini anlamanın ontolojik ve metodolojik bir müdahale gerektirdiği tartışılmaktadır. Bhaskar'ın eleştirel gerçekçilik ontolojisi, toplumun kurucu yapılarının ve mekanizmalarının katmanlaşmasına verimli bir ontolojik çerçeve sağlar. Toplumun mekanizmalarının olaylardan ve kurumlardan ayrı olarak araştırılması gerektiğini savunur. Ayrıca toplumun yapılarının bilgisine ilişkin epistemolojisi de bu tabakalaşmış gerçekliğin anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunur. Toplumların yapılarının, herhangi bir ampirik düzenlilikten bağımsız olan olguları aşan argümanlar yoluyla bilinebileceğini iddia eder.

Bu tezde, Marksist ekonomi politiğin toplumun karmaşıklığına ve bilgisine bakış açısının Bhaskar'ın ontolojisi ve epistemolojisi ile uyumlu olduğu tartışılmaktadır. Bu nedenle Marx'ın politik ekonomi yöntemi, Bhaskar'ın ontolojisi ve epistemolojisi ışığında yeniden değerlendirilecektir. Sermayenin nesnel ve eğilimsel hareket yasalarını göstermek için Marx'ın ekonomi politiğinin yönteminden yararlanılacaktır. Bu eğilimsel yasalar, sermayenin emeği 'biçimsel' ve 'gerçek' boyunduruğuna alması; finansal sermayenin kredi yoluyla toplumsal emeği ve toplumsal sermayeyi kontrolü altına alması ve kâr oranlarında düşme eğilimi yasası ile sınırlandırılacaktır. Marksist metodolojideki sapmalar özellikle genel kâr oranlarının oluşumunun geçerliğini yitirdiğine yönelik tezlerde kendisini göstermektedir. Anwar Shaikh'in gerçek rekabet kuramının Marks'ın 'hayal edilmiş' mekanizmalarının ampirik desteklerini sunduğunu

ifade ederek diğer görüşlerin hatalı olduklarını ifade edeceğiz. Ancak bu tezin amacı sadece sermayenin hareket yasalarını ortaya koymak değildir. Sınıf mücadeleleri ve kurumsal mimari dahil olmak üzere kapitalizmin mevcut bir aşamasının neoliberal dinamiklerini anlamak için bir model önermeyi amaçlar. Bu amaçla bu bölüm, sermaye birikiminin nesnel eğilimlerini ortaya koymakla sınırlandırılacaktır. Bu bölümün sonunda neoliberalizmin yaşandığı yapısal ortamın belirlenimlerini anlamak için beş mekanizma önerilecektir. Bunlar sömürü, rekabet, kredi, devlet iktidarı, eşitsiz gelişme mekanizmalarıdır.

Üçüncü ve dördüncü bölümlerde amaçlanan neoliberalizmi tanımlamaktır. Neoliberalizm, toplumsal bütünü oluşturan çelişkilerin doğrudan bir çıktısı değildir. Neoliberalizm, toplumsal bütünü oluşturan çelişkilere göreli olarak istikrar kazandıran bir birikim stratejisi de değildir. Bu bölümlerde ortaya atılacak iki tez şunlardır. İlk olarak neoliberalizm, toplumun çelişkilerini, sermayenin nesnel ve eğilimsel yasalarını ve onları yeniden üretmeye aday olan birikim stratejilerini dolayımlayan bir temas noktasıdır. İkincisi, neoliberalizm, piyasa-güdümlü öznesiz bir projedir. Neoliberalizm, birer hayali meta olan emeğin, toprağın ve paranın kullanım değerini, değişim değerine tabi kıldığı için piyasa güdümlüdür. Neoliberalizm, kolektif emperyalizmin önderlik ettiği, finansal sermayenin egemen olduğu, emeğin boyun eğdirdiği, otoriter devlet ve piyasa ideolojisinin ekonomik düzenleyici rolüyle desteklenen, piyasa odaklı bir projedir. Toplumsal bütün, çelişkilerin birliğinden oluşmaktadır. Çelişkiler ise toplumsal sınıfların çelişkisidir. Dolayısıyla neoliberalizm, hiçbir toplumsal sınıf ya da fraksiyonunun tek başına planladığı bir proje değildir. Aksine, çelişkilerin karmaşıklığı ile ifade edilen sınıf mücadelelerinin kaotik bir sonucudur. Bu bağlamda neoliberalizm öznesiz bir projedir. Neoliberalizmin bir proje olması, her ne kadar öznesiz de olsa, sermayenin emeğe karşı yürüttüğü bir süreç olmasındandır. Bu bakış açısı neoliberalizmi kavramadan önce çelişkinin ve birikim stratejilerinin ne anlam ifade ettiğini tanımlamayı gerektirir. Ardından bu dolayımın gerçekleşmesi için gereken sosyal eylemin içeriğini tanımlamayı gerektirir.

İnsanlar eylemlerini belirli koşullar altında gerçekleştirirler. Bu koşullar geçmişten miras kalan, iradelerinden bağımsız, nesnel koşullardır. Dolayısıyla, neoliberalizm de insanların eylemi olduğu için, neoliberal eylemin gerçekleştiği koşullar

tanımlanmalıdır. Çelişki konsepti ile bu nesnel koşulları tanımlamak için ilgilenilmektedir. Çelişkilerden, toplumsal sınıflar arasındaki çelişkiler anlaşılmaktadır. İlk olarak, toplumsal bütünü çelişkileri izole ederek kavramak, onu eksik kavramaya sebep olur. Toplumsal bütünün çelişkileri birbirlerine bağlıdır. İkincisi, çelişkiler arasındaki ilişkiler eşitsiz gelişmektedir. Yani, toplumsal bütünü oluşturan çelişkilerden biri hakim rol oynamaktadır. Üçüncüsü, bir çelişki ancak onu oluşturan karşıtların birliği olarak vardır. Buradaki karşıtlar ise toplumsal sınıflardır. Bir çelişki içindeki karşıtlar da eşitsiz gelişmektedir. Yani, karşıtlığın birliğini oluşturan sınıflardan biri diğerinin üzerinde hakimiyet sağlamaktadır. Bu belirlenimlerle temas kuran çelişkiler ise nesnel olarak verili toplumsal bütünü oluşturmaktadır. Öyleyse, toplumsal bütün ise sınıflar arası nesnel ilişkilerin bütünüdür. Tezimizde bu çelişkiler sırasıyla emek-sermaye, tekelci sermaye-tekelci olmayan sermaye, finansal sermaye-endüstriyel sermaye, otoriter devlet-demokratik devlet ve ABD hegemonyasında ABD-AB ezen ulusları (kolektif emperyalizm)-ezilen uluslar çelişkisi olarak sıralamaktayız. Hakim çelişki ise kolektif emperyalizmdir.

Çelişkiler sosyal bütünü oluşturan toplumsal sınıfları tanımlamaktadır. Bununla beraber toplumsal sınıfların nesnel yerleri boşlukta durmaz. Aksine uzamları gerektirir. Bu uzamlar, çelişkilerin somutlaşması aracılığıyla toplumsal sınıfların nesnel yerlerini tayin ederler. Bu uzamları ekonomik ve siyasal uzamlarla sınırlamaktayız. Toplumsal sınıfların nesnel yerleri ise bu uzamların içerisine gömülü ekonomik ve siyasi aygıtlarda belirlenmektedir. Aygıtlar arasındaki hakimiyet ilişkisi ve bir aygıt içerisindeki hakim sınıfın tespiti, neoliberalizmi tanımlayan sosyal hareketleri tanımlarken can alıcı öneme sahiptir. Çünkü emeğin, paranın ve toprağın metalaşmasına yönelik girişimler ve buna karşı oluşan direnişler sergilenirken, toplumsal sınıfların nesnel olarak dezavantajlı-avantajlı oldukları yerlerin tespiti bu şekilde mümkün olur. Her toplumsal sınıf her aygıtta eşit ölçüde temsil bulmaz. Bu aygıtların statüsünü tanımlamak için çelişkilerin belirlenimlerini hatırlamak yeterlidir. İlk olarak aygıtlar da birbirlerinden izole değildirler. Her bir aygıt, bir yandan birden fazla çelişkinin somutlaşması olduğu için, diğer yandan her çelişki karşıt sınıfların birliği olduğu için, hiçbir aygıt yalnızca bir sınıfın nesnel yerini belirlemez. İkincisi, çelişkiler arasındaki ilişkiler eşitsiz geliştiği için aygıtların karşılıklı ilişkisi de eşitsiz gelişir. Diğer bir deyişle, bir aygıt diğer aygıtlar üzerinde hakimiyet kurar. Üçüncüsü, bir çelişkinin karşıt yönleri kendi içinde eşitsiz geliştiği için onun somutlaşması olan

aygıt da eşitsiz gelişmektedir. Bu ikili bir durum yaratır. Bir yandan ilgili aygıt birden fazla sınıf fraksiyonunu temsil ediyor demektir. Bu durumda aygıtlar herhangi bir sınıf fraksiyonunun enstrümanı olamazlar. Diğer yandan, aygıtın yönleri eşitsiz geliştiği için aygıt içinde sınıflar arasında hakimiyet ilişkisi vardır. Hakim ekonomik aygıtlar bankacılık ve şirket aygıtlarıken hakim siyasi aygıt ise devletin ekonomik aygıtıdır. Genel olarak ise devletin ekonomik aygıtları, ekonomik aygıtların hakimiyeti altındadır. Neoliberalizmde, ekonomik aygıtlar paranın, emeğin ve toprağın metalaştırılması için devletin ekonomik aygıtına etkide bulunurlar.

Her ne kadar ekonomik ve siyasi aygıtlar çelişkilerin somutlaşması olarak tanımlansa da eleştirel realizmin somut alanında çelişkiler kendileri ampirik olarak dışa vuramazlar. Yani, aygıtların maddi bedenlerini giydikleri ampirik bir alana ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu ampirik alana ait uzam kurumlar tarafından doldurulmaktadır. Neoliberal sosyal hareketler ve direnişler de elle tutulur, gözle görülür kurumlar içerisinde gerçekleşirler. Kurumların kendi aralarında ve içlerinde eşitsiz gelişmesini ve ekonomik ve siyasi aygıtlar tarafından çoklu belirlenmesinin nesnel yönünü tespit etmek, neoliberalizmi ve ona karşı oluşturulan direnişlerin imkan ve sınırlarını anlamak için önemlidir. Çünkü neoliberalizm yanlısı ve onun karşısındaki direnişler çoğunlukla kurumların içerisinde gerçekleşmektedir. Dolayısıyla kapitalizmin mevcut evresinde neoliberalizmin de tecrübe edildiği bu kurumların hangilerinin ne sebeple öne çıktığını anlamak kurumların doğru teorize edilmesini zorunlu kılar. Kurumlar ampirik alanda bulunmaları sebebiyle iki yönden ele alınmaya müsaitlerdir. İlk olarak, kurumlar yapı tarafından gelen çelişkilerin aygıtların somutlaşmaları dolayısıyla dışa vurulmalarıdır. Bu yönünden bakıldığında kurumlar toplumsal sınıfların nesnel konumlarının ampirik olarak dışa vurulmasıdır. İster neoliberal politikaları destekleyecek konumları talep etsinler ister direniş gösterecekleri kurumlara konumlanmayı talep etsinler, toplumsal sınıfların nesnel yerleri ilk anda kurumlarda tahsis edilmektedir. Bu kurumlar, tıpkı aygıtların çelişkilerin belirlenimlerini içselleştirdikleri gibi, aygıtların belirlenimlerini içselleştirirler. İlk olarak, ampirik olarak her ne kadar ayırık dursalar da kurumlar birbirlerinden izole değildirler. Esasen her kurum birden fazla aygıtın ampirik olarak dışa vurulmasından oluşur. Dolayısıyla, ister siyasi olsun ister ekonomik, her kurum birden fazla toplumsal sınıfın nesnel yerini belirtir. İkincisi, aygıtların kendi aralarında eşitsiz geliştiklerini ifade etmiştik. Dolayısıyla kurumlar da kendi aralarında eşitsiz gelişmeleri ile dışa vurulurlar. Şu

durumda, hem ekonomik ve siyasi kurumlar içerisinde hakimiyet ilişkisi vardır hem bu kurumların kendi içerisinde hakimiyet ilişkisi vardır. Üçüncüsü, kurumların kendi içinde eşitsiz gelişimi vardır. Buna göre ister ekonomik ister siyasi bir kurum olsun, bu kurum bir yandan hiçbir sınıfın aracı olmamaktadır, diğer yandan kurum içindeki sınıf temsiliyetinde hakimiyet ilişkisi vardır. Emeğin metalaşmasında, büyük şirketler küçük şirketlerle taşeron ilişkiler kurarak önemli bir yer tutarlar. Bankalar, merkez bankalarıyla kurdukları ilişkilerle paranın metalaşmasına tempo kazandırır. IMF, Dünya Bankası, Dünya Ticaret Örgütü gibi kurumlar özelleştirmeler yoluyla toprağı metalaştırırlar. Bununla beraber kurumlar aynı zamanda kurumlar toplumsal sınıfların mücadele alanıdır. Kapitalizmin mevcut döneminde çelişkilerin yönlerinin nitel olarak dengeleri korunsa da kurumların sınırları nicel olarak sürekli dalgalanan sınıf mücadeleleri sebebiyle sürekli yeniden çizilmektedir.

Çelişkinin, aygıtın, kurumların tanımlanması sosyal bütünün nesnel koşullarını sağlamaktadır. Fakat, çelişik sosyal bütün durağan ve otomatik olarak istikrarlı değildir. Toplumsal sınıflar bu çelişkileri ya dönüştürmektedir ya da istikrar kazandırmak için onları düzenlemektedir. Bunu da henüz ortaya çıkma aşamasında sınıf mücadelelerine konu olan stratejiler geliştirerek yaparlar. Bu stratejilerin amacı sermaye birikimi olduğu için bu stratejiler birikim stratejileri olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Burada ikili bir durum ortaya çıkmaktadır. İlk, hangi toplumsal sınıfların birikim stratejisi oluşturmaya ehliyeti vardır? Bir başka deyişle, birikim stratejilerinin öznel kimlerdir ve özne pozisyonları nasıl belirlenir? İkincisi, birikim stratejilerinin belirleyenleri nelerdir? Birikim stratejisi oluşturacak sınıf fraksiyonları kapitalizmin nesnel çelişkileriyle birebir örtüşmese de onların nesnel zemininde hareket alanı kazanırlar. Nesnel olarak boyunduruk altındaki sınıfların özne konumlarını halk; hakim sınıfların konumunu iktidar bloğı; bu blok içinde nesnel olarak tekeli sermayenin özne konumunu ise egemen fraksiyon olarak tanımlıyoruz. Nesnel olarak kurumlarda temsil imkanını en geniş sınıf tekeli sermaye olduğu için birikim stratejilerini de kurumlarda temsil ettirebilen fraksiyonlar tekeli sermayeye bağlı fraksiyonlardan ortaya çıkmaktadır. Birikim stratejilerine ilişkin olarak ise üç tespit yapılmaktadır. İlk olarak, hiçbir birikim stratejisi sadece bir sınıf ya da sınıf fraksiyonunun stratejisi olarak oluşmaz. Henüz oluşum aşamasında her strateji sınıf mücadelesinin ürünüdür. Bu bağlamda birikim stratejileri de öznesizdir. Diğer yandan, birikim stratejileri de çelişkilerin karşıtlıkları gibi sınıfların eşitsiz müdahalesi ile

oluşurlar. Yani bir birikim stratejisi öznesiz fakat bir sınıf ya da sınıf fraksiyonunun hakimiyetinde oluşurlar. İkincisi birikim stratejileri boşlukta oluşmazlar, uzama ihtiyaç duyarlar. Bu uzamlar da ekonomik ve siyasi kurumlardan oluşmaktadır. Birikim stratejileri yalnızca bir kuruma yönelmemektedirler. Tıpkı aygıtların birden fazla kurumda dışa vurulduğu gibi birikim stratejileri de birden fazla kuruma yönelirler. Diğer yandan tıpkı kurumlar arasında ve kurumlar içerisinde hakimiyet ilişkisi olduğu gibi, birikim stratejileri de kurumlardaki nesnel yerlerde seçici olarak daha avantajlı ya da dezavantajlı temsil bulurlar. Son olarak, birikim stratejileri de eşitsiz gelişmektedir. Diğer bir deyişle, bir birikim stratejisi diğerleri üzerinde hakimiyet kurmaktadır. Özellikle sonuncusu olmak üzere bu üç tespit, çelişkiler, aygıtlar ve kurumların nesnelliği ile ele alındığında neoliberalizmin statüsünü belirlemek için gerekli son adımın önünü açacaktır.

Kapitalizm, tarihsel olarak varlığını sürdürme koşulu olarak emek-gücünün, paranın ve toprağın metalaştırılmasına ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Metalaştırma temposu ise kapitalizmin belli aşamalarında ivme kazanmış ya da kaybetmiştir. Fakat her koşulda sınıf mücadelelerine konu olmuştur. Metalaşma süreçleri, piyasanın nüfuz alanını genişletmesi tarafından takip edilmiş, bu nüfuz alanından olumsuz etkilenen sınıflar ve sınıf fraksiyonları da toplum adına öyle ya da böyle piyasalaşmaya karşı direnç göstermişlerdir. Kapitalizmin mevcut evresinde de tecrübe ettiğimiz olay, metalaşmaya yönelik işte bu şiddetli girişimdir. Bir yandan sermaye değer biçimi aracılığıyla kapitalist üretim ilişkilerinin ağlarını toplumsal yaşamın geri kalan her alanına atmaktadır, diğer yandan metalaşma yanlısı sınıf mücadeleleriyle değer biçiminin etki alanı hiç olmadığı kadar toplumsal yaşama nüfuz ettirilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, sermayenin etki alanını ve toplumsal yaşamdaki hareket temposunu doğrudan belirleyen metalaşmanın kendisidir. Emegın metalaştırılması ve piyasalaştırılması, onun değişim değerini öne çıkarılıp artı-değer üretiminin güdümüne sokulması anlamına gelmektedir. Paranın metalaşması, ilk anda onu artı-değer üretiminin emrine verirken, ardından paranın tüm toplumsal sermayeyi ve emeği kontrolü altına alması ve bunları kendi kendinin genişlemesinin emrine vermesi anlamına gelmektedir. Toprağın metalaşması, yaşam alanlarının sermayenin ve dar bir toplumsal sınıf fraksiyonunun artı-değer üretiminin ya da spekülasyonunun emrine verilmesi anlamına gelmektedir. İşte bugün neoliberalizmle tecrübe ettiğimiz tüm bu metalaşma sürecidir ki kapitalist ekonomi ve sermaye toplum üzerindeki etki alanını

geniřletibilmektedir. Dahası, çeřitli birikim stratejileri sermayenin ve kapitalist üretim iliřkilerinin yapısının bu denli geniřlemesine angaje olabilmektedir. Üretken birikim stratejileri talep ettikleri ucuz ve esnek emek bulabilmekte, finansal birikim stratejileri kimi zaman parayı üretken birikim süreçlerinden koparıp serbest hareket kabiliyeti kazanabilirken, kimi zaman belirli coğrafyaların üretken sermayesine ve toplumsal emeğine hükmedebilmektedir. Mülksüzleştirme yoluyla birikim stratejileri kapitalizm tarihinde eři benzeri görülmemiř bir doęa talanı yapabilmekte, arsaları speküle edebilmekte, halkı topraksız bırakıp emek saflarında metalařtırabilmektedir. Neoliberalizmi, neoliberalizm yapan bu marifettir. Yapısal olarak deęer biçimi ve sermaye iliřkilerinin kurumlarda nasıl dıřa vurulduęunu tespit eder, tekelci sermayenin fraksiyonlarından türeyen birikim stratejilerinin bu yapılara en rahat tutunacaęı kořulları saęlar. Bununla beraber neoliberalizmin can alıcı noktası řuradan ileri gelir. Henüz oluřma ařamasında bile çatıřarak oluřan birikim stratejileri kendi aralarında da çatıřır ve emek, toprak ve paranın metalařtırılma süreçlerinde farklı taleplerde bulunur. Kabaca, örneęin, üretken stratejiler paranın üretimin hakimiyetine girmesine uğrařırken, finansal stratejiler paranın serbest gezmesine yönelik stratejiler izlerler. Mülksüzleştirme yoluyla birikim stratejileri arsa spekülasyonuna yönelirken, üretken stratejiler mekanı sabitlemeye çalıřırlar. Neoliberalizmi daha oluřumunda birikim stratejilerine indirgenemeyen, öznesiz ve dengesiz kılan tekelci sınıf fraksiyonlarının kendi içlerindeki çatıřması ve bu hayali metalara yönelik farklı vizyonlar geliřtirmesidir. Dięer yanda toplum adına direniř gösteren halk vardır. Emeğin metalařması sermayenin gerçek boyunduruęunu gerçekteřtirme ve insanı sermayenin eklentisi haline getirmektedir. Paranın metalařması halkın kamu adına biriktirdięi deęerlerin bařsız sonsuz törpülenmesine ve sermayeye transferine sebep olmaktadır. Topraęın metalařması, halkın insanca yařayacak konut bulmasının önüne geçmekte, doęal yařam alanlarından mahrum kalmasına sebep olmaktadır. Halkın bu metalařmaya karři direniřleri de bugün anti-neoliberal hareketler olarak kendini göstermektedir. Bununla beraber kapitalist üretim iliřkileri ve devlet iktidarının olduęu coğrafyalarda anti-neoliberal hareketlerin sınırları bulunmaktadır. Öncelikle bu hareketler toplumsal yapıları dönüřtüren hareketler olmaktan uzaktır; çünkü sömürülen sınıflar olarak halk anti-neoliberal mücadeleleri kurumlar içindeki mücadelelerle sınırlı tutmaktadır. Bu hareketler, kimi zaman sermayenin nesnel hareket yasalarıyla çakıřıp daha yıkıcı etkiler yaratırlar. Fakat, teorik olarak ne siyasi

kurumlarda devlet iktidarına sahip olduğu ne de ekonomik kurumlarda üretim araçlarına sahip olduğu için, kurumlar içi mücadeleye odaklandıklarında ancak ikincil etkiler üretmekten ileri gitmemektedirler. Bu da Polanyici çifte hareketin koruyucu karşı hareketi olarak teorik şemamızda yer etmektedir. Sonuç, mevcut birikim stratejilerinde dengesizlik eğilimi baş göstermekte, bu birikim rejimlerinin yapılardan kopmasına sebep olmakta fakat kapitalist toplumsal yapıları dönüştürememektedir. Kapitalist toplumsal yapılar ise bu dengesizliklerden alternatif birikim stratejileri ile kurtulabilmektedir.

Teorik şemamızdan çıkan ikinci sonuç, kapitalizmin dönemselleştirilmesinde neoliberalizm adlandırmasının sakıncalı olabileceğidir. İç içe girecek şekilde tekelci kapitalizm, finansallaşmış kapitalizm, otoriter kapitalizm, kolektif emperyalizm (ABD hegemonyasında ABD-AB emperyalizmi) dönemselleştirmesi yapılara işaret ettiğinden daha uygundur. Neoliberal kapitalizm yalnızca kurumlar düzeyinde bir tanım vererek toplumsal yapıların ve dolayısıyla ekonomik sistem ve politik sistemin devlet aygıtları aracılığıyla dönüştürülmesinin önüne teorik engeller koymaktadır.

Üçüncü sonuç, neoliberalizmin ne finansal birikime, ne esnek üretime, ne mülksüzleştirmeye indirgenemeyeceğidir. Tam tersine, neoliberalizm bu üçünü ayakta tutan projedir. Mülksüzleştirme yaşam alanlarının metalaşmasına ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Esnek üretim henüz metalaşmamış emek gücünün güvencesiz koşullarda iş gücü piyasasına sürülmesini talep eder. Finansallaşma paranın üretimden kopmasını ve küresel ölçekte serbest gezebilme kapasitesinin gerçekleştirilmesini talep eder.

Son olarak, çelişki perspektifini geliştirirken kolektif emperyalizmin hakim çelişkiyi oluşturduğunu söylemiştik. Buradan hareketle anti-neoliberal mücadelelerle sınırlı kalacaksa bile, sorunun emperyalizm olduğunu vurguladık. Dolayısıyla yalnızca finansallaşmanın karşısında paranın metasızlaşmasını savunmanın yetmeyeceğini ifade ediyoruz. Çünkü hakim çelişki finansal sermaye-endüstriyel sermaye çelişkisi değildir. İlk elden bir bütün olarak emperyalizmin birikim stratejilerine karşı mücadele yürütmek gerektiğini kavramak, özellikle Türkiye gibi yarı-sömürge ülke karakterinde olan bir ülke halkı için ABD ve AB'ye yönelik anti-kapitalist perspektifin yerli yerine oturmasını sağlayacaktır.

Bu tezde önerilen kavramsal çerçeve, daha fazla araştırma gündemi sunmaktadır. Bu tezde ontolojik statüsü belirtilen herhangi bir unsurun belirlenimleri kendi içinde detaylandırılmamıştır. Temel amaç, neoliberalizmin de yer aldığı toplumun ekonomik ve siyasi yaşamına ait unsurların yerlerinin ve konumlarının haritalandırılması ile sınırlandırılmıştır. Bundan yola çıkarak iki araştırma gündemi önerilebilir. Öncelikle Eleştirel Realist-Marksist metodoloji ile geliştirilen bu şemada kendisine yer bulan unsurların belirlenimleri araştırılabilir. Bu araştırma gündeminden pratik sonuçlar çıkarmak mümkün olacaktır. Anti-neoliberal mücadelelerden anti-emperyalist ve sosyalist mücadelelere geçişin koşulları ve taktikleri nelerdir? İkinci olarak, bu tezin alt metninde verilen bir mesaj vardır. Neoliberalizmin tekabül ettiği ontolojik statü, kapitalizmin tüm evrelerinde ve aşamalarında mevcuttur. Bu katalizörün varlığı, bir iktisat tarihi araştırmasına kapı aralamaktadır. Kapitalizmin aşamalarına veya evrelerine karşılık gelen katalizörlerin belirlenimleri nelerdir? Bu belirlenimleri farklılaştıran faktörler nelerdir?

## B. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

### ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

- Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences
- Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences
- Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics
- Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics
- Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences

### YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Yeşilyurt  
Adı / Name : Bayer  
Bölümü / Department : İktisat / Economics

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English): ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF NEOLIBERALISM: A CRITICAL REALIST MARXIST APPROACH

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: Yüksek Lisans / Master  Doktora / PhD

1. Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır. / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide.
2. Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of **two years**. \*
3. Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for period of **six months**. \*

\* Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası teze birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir. / A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.

Yazarın imzası / Signature .....

Tarih / Date .....

(Kütüphaneye teslim ettiğiniz tarih. Elle doldurulacaktır.)  
(Library submission date. Please fill out by hand.)

Tezin son sayfasıdır. / This is the last page of the thesis/dissertation.