

Attempts on Non-Reductionist Marxist Theory of the State: A Stimulating Rehearsal or a Coherent Approach?

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Abstract: As an oversimplification of economic reductionism, the base/superstructure metaphor is over identified with Marxist theory of the state, and the state has been considered to be corresponding to the latter. This over identification was seen inconvenient by some Marxist theoreticians who have been looking forward to analyse the state through a non-reductionist perspective. In this article, those attempts are compared and contrasted by dividing them into two categories and by using open Marxism as the banner of a distinctive group among non-reductionists. The main theme of this article is to clarify major theses of non-reductionists and to address to the apparent tensions within themselves. Despite their points of differentiations, they share a commonality in their hostility towards 'traditional historical materialism' and even towards structural Marxism. The positions mentioned in this article may not be considered as a coherent and consistent non-reductionist theory of the state due to their variations within themselves; however, at least they are successful as contemporary 'attempts' of non-reductionist Marxist theory of the state that would pave ground to a more consistent theory. In this article, they are considered to be stimulating as they ground their unease with reductionism on appealing issues.

Keywords: Non-reductionists, Open Marxism, Theory of State

İndirgemeci Olmayan Marksist Devlet Kuramı Üzerine Çabalar: Ufuk Açıcı Bir Deneme mi, Tutarlı bir Yaklaşım mı?

Özet: Ekonomik indirgemeciliğin bir yalınlaştırması olan altyapı/üstyapı metaforu Marksist devlet kuramıyla aşırı özdeşleştirilmektedir ve bu bağlamda devletin üstyapıya denk düştüğü düşünülmektedir. Bu aşırı özdeşleştirme, devleti indirgemeci olmayan bir bakış açısıyla çözümlemeye çaba gösteren bazı Marksist kuramcılar tarafından uygunsuz bulunmuştur. Bu makalede, bu çabalar sınıflara ayrılarak karşılaştırılmıştır ve açık Marksizm, indirgemeci olmayan yaklaşımlar içinde farklı bir grubun etiketi olarak kullanılmıştır. Bu makalenin ana teması, indirgemeci olmayan yaklaşımların temel tezlerini ortaya koymak ve bunlar arasındaki görünür gerilimlere dikkat çekmektir. Farklılaştıkları noktalar olmasına karşın 'geleneksel tarihsel maddecilik' ve yapısalcı Marksizme

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karşı tutumları ortaktır. Bu makalede ele alınan yaklaşımlar kendi aralarındaki çeşitliliklerden ötürü açık ve tutarlı bir indirgemeci olmayan devlet kuramı olarak değerlendirilmeyebilir; ancak, bunlar en azından daha tutarlı bir indirgemeci olmayan çağdaş Marksist devlet kuramına doğru evrilecek başarılı ‘çabalar’dır. Bu makalede, bu çabalar sorunları ele almada indirgemeciliğe karşı tedirginliklerini temellendirdikleri ölçüde ufuk açıcı görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İndirgemeci Olmayan Marksist Yaklaşımlar, Açık Marksizm, Devlet Kuramı

Introduction

Ascription of ‘economic reductionism’¹ to Marxism as a demoting ill led to a search for alternative ‘modes of explanation’ in which “multiplicity of factors to have ‘causal primacy’ depending upon particular circumstances” have been highlighted to come to terms with the state (Yalman, 2010, pp. 28–29). As ‘single-factor’ causal explanations are inadequate in depicting out the changes in the nature of social reality, the need for providing ‘radical methodological re-evaluation’ is underlined. Disaffirming a ‘general theory of history’ outlined in the ‘traditional’ historical materialism is parallel to such pursuit (cf. Sayer, 1987, p. 2). Similarly, attacking the prevalent metaphor of base/superstructure implying determination of the latter by the former, as in the case of coupling this metaphor with economic/political, is in line with the above-mentioned pursuit. In this sense, Marx’s critique of political economy is not seen sufficient anymore since the borderlines between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ are getting increasingly ‘blurred’ (Yalman, 2010, p. 30).

In his *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Karl Marx (1999) underlines the distinction between base and superstructure as such:

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social

¹ Economic reductionism implies that some Marxists continue to identify the totality of social relations of production as ‘the economic’ (Yalman, 2010, p. 109).

consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life.

This distinction has been determining the major axis of the basic classifications within western Marxism. Likewise, the ultra-economistic lines of interpreting Marx's work led to reductionism that every social relation was attempted to be explained from an economic perspective and historical materialism turned into a premise that every development in history was to be expounded with the economic phenomena. While this vulgar and oversimplified interpretation of historical materialism overemphasized means of production, forces production and development of technology in the structure of capitalist society, the prominence of political, ideological and hegemonic elements in society is depreciated (Gülenç, 2017, pp. 242–243). Therefore, it became necessary to re-examine the concepts that have usually been considered within the superstructure. The state has been the most prevalent one among them.

For this purpose, in this article, some contemporary attempts for a non-reductionist Marxist theory of the state are analysed. The subject matter is divided into two major parts: the first part is composed of Bertell Ollman's, Philip Richard Corrigan's, Claude Denis's, Derek Sayer's, Ellen Meiksins Wood's approaches, whereas the scholars in the second part assert for a distinctive label, i.e. open Marxism. In other words, the reason for such a classification stems only from the preference of the former group of authors in attempting to reclaim non-reductionist approach to the state on their own. However, the latter group of non-reductionists sharing common denominators, such as prioritising struggle over structure, came together to form a school of thought within Marxism.

1. 'A' Group of non-Reductionists

In this part of this article, I refer especially to Ollman's, Sayer's, Corrigan's and Denis's non-reductionist approaches as "a group of non-reductionists" since they do not assert for a distinctive label unlike open Marxists. Indeed, they are not eager to form a group as well. Nonetheless, their common grounds on which they built their theories allow me to group them. This part begins with a methodological discussion on Marx's abstraction. The methodological discussion encompasses topics like: attitude towards history, processual and relational approach; moments; philosophies of internal and external relations; reification, fetishism, 'violence of

abstraction'; base/superstructure metaphor; relations between essence and appearance; and structures as phenomenal forms of social relations. With reference to Ellen Meiksins Wood, I elaborate on the separation of the 'economic' and the 'political', and on 'class as a relation'. The link between 'bourgeois civil society', nations and state is touched upon with reference to Corrigan *et al.* This part ends with Denis's approach on state, i.e. state as society.

1.1. Method of Abstraction

One of the most striking peculiarities of non-reductionist Marxists is to be depicted from the way in which they draw concepts out of processes. In this section I will show how non-reductionists differentiate between their understanding and the philosophy of external relations of the reductionists. In this respect, I would like to begin with a methodological discussion raised by Ollman and Sayer. Ollman's analysis of Marx's method of abstraction is a considerable work. He (1993, p. 23) notes that the subject of dialectics is change and interaction. For Ollman (1993, p. 24), the key problems addressed by dialectics are how to think adequately about change and interaction and how to capture them in thought. As a resolution to these problems, Marx puts forward the process of abstraction (Ollman, 1993, p. 24).

Marx's method of abstraction departs from 'real concrete,' which is "the world as it presents itself to us" (Ollman, 1993, p. 24). Then, through abstraction, that is "the intellectual activity of breaking this whole down into the mental units with which we think about it", 'thought concrete' is reached (Ollman, 1993, p. 24). Thought concrete is "the reconstituted and now understood whole present in the mind" (Ollman, 1993, p. 24). To put it in another way, real concrete is the world we live in, thought concrete is Marxism as Marx's construction of that world, and abstraction is the bridge between the two (Ollman, 1993, p. 24).

Marx uses abstraction in three senses: first one refers to "the mental activity of subdividing the world into mental constructs with which we think about it" (Ollman, 1993, p. 26). Secondly, it means the results of this process: the divided actual parts of reality (Ollman, 1993, p. 26). The third usage of abstraction is "a suborder of particularly ill fitting mental constructs. Whether because they are too narrow, take in too little, focus too exclusively on appearances, or are otherwise badly composed,

these constructs do not allow an adequate grasp of their subject matter" (Ollman, 1993, p. 26).

Marx incorporates history to his method since how something develops or, in other words, "its real history is also part of what it is" (Ollman, 1993, p. 29). For Marx, history not only refers to past time, but also to future time (Ollman, 1993, p. 29).² This means that becoming involves *to be coming*. "Marx often uses the qualifying phrase 'in itself' to indicate the necessary and internal ties between the future development of anything and how it presents itself at this moment" (Ollman, 1993, p. 30). While 'moment' in the terminology of post-structuralism refers to an element having differential positions of an articulated discursive structured totality (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 106),³ Ollman (1993, pp. 30–31) explains 'moment' as such:

To consider the past and likely future development of anything as integral to what it is, to grasp this whole as a single process, does not keep Marx from abstracting out some part or instant of this process for a particular purpose and from treating it as relatively autonomous. Aware that the units into which he has subdivided reality are the results of his abstractions, Marx is able to re-abstract this reality, restricting the area brought into focus in line with the requirements of his current study. But when he does this, he often underlines its character as a temporally stable part of a larger and ongoing process by referring to it as a 'moment'.

In other words, moments are isolated parts of a process and process is

² Sayer asserts for the centrality of history by contrasting his approach with Althusserianism. He (1979, pp. 24–25) writes: "Althusserianism links, in a more or less systematic fashion, a conventionalist epistemology, an aprioristic methodology, and a repudiation of history. This melange is well-known and regrettably influential. I have sought to reversal a radically different set of connections: between a materialist epistemology, a methodology governed by strict criteria of empirical adequacy, and a recognition of the centrality of history to social theory and socialist practice."

³ Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxist or post-structuralist challenge to the 'closure' of the structuralist linguistic model reducing *elements* to the internal *moments* of the system is built upon the idea that meaning which thought natural is not fixed but contingent. Such closure "implies that every social action repeats an already existing system of meanings and practices, in which case there is no possibility of constructing new nodal points that <partially fix meaning>, which is the chief characteristic of an articulatory practice" (Howarth, 2000, p. 109). Although Marxist scholars like Wood (1998, p. xii) perceived post-Marxism as "just a short pit-stop on the way to *anti-Marxism*", one way or another, we can set a minor link between post-structuralism and conceptualisation of 'open' Marxism in contrast to 'closed' structuralism.

composed of moments (Ollman, 1993, p. 32). Therefore, thinking in terms of processes is an important aspect of Marx's abstractions (Ollman, 1993, p. 31). In addition to the 'processual' aspect, Marx's abstraction is relational (Ollman, 1993, p. 32). For example, "capital as a process, is also a complex relation encompassing the interaction between the material means of production, capitalists, workers, value, commodity, money, and more -and all this over time" (Ollman, 1993, p. 32).

At this point, it should be noted that since Marx's abstractions are processes, they cannot be seen as 'things'.⁴ In this respect, Marx's method is an antidote to reification. Making use of philosophy of internal relations, Marx argues that the tie between workers and means of production is a necessary and essential one; therefore it is an internal relation (Ollman, 1993, p. 34).⁵ Ollman (1993, p. 34) says:

To grasp capital, as Marx does, as a complex relation which has at its core internal ties between the material means of production and those who own them, those who work on them, their special product, value, and the conditions in which owning and working go on is to know capital as a historical event, as something that emerged as a result of specific conditions in the lifetime of real people and that will disappear when these conditions do.⁶

However, for Ollman (1993, p. 44), there are some Marxists that are unable to establish such line of thought due to their assumption that "Marx is operating with a philosophy of external relations, in which the boundaries between things are taken to be of the same order as their other sense-perceptible qualities hence determined and discoverable once and for all." This ill-treatment is not peculiar to some Marxists since there are other lines of thoughts adhering to positivism as an epistemological position

⁴ As Ollman (2006, p. 31) puts it, "dialectics restructures our thinking about reality by replacing the common sense notion of 'thing' (as something that has a history and has external connections with other things) with notions of 'process' (which contains its history and possible features) and 'relation' (which contains as part of what it is its ties with other relations). (...) It is a matter of where and how one draws boundaries and establishes units (the dialectical term is 'abstracts') in which to think about the world." Hence, in the philosophy of internal relations, all parts of the processes are conceived in relation to mutual dependence (Ollman, 2006, p. 41).

⁵ Sayer (1987, p. 19) notes that Marx perceived the world "as a complex network of internal relations, within which any single element is what it is only by virtue of its relationship to others."

⁶ Both Ollman and Sayer refer to Marx's criticism of economists who treat relations as being external and contingent (Ollman, 1993, p. 33; Sayer, 1987, p. 20). For them, social relations of production are internal and necessary (Sayer, 1987, p. 25).

reflect the impact of this philosophy as well (Yalman, 2010, p. 43). ‘Liberal political economy’ could be considered as a vivid example as it envisages the relationship between ‘endogenous’ and ‘exogenous’ variables (Yalman, 2010, p. 43). In order to go all round the Marxist analysis on its own, one has to go beyond the limits of positivist epistemology and dwell on the internal relations in Marxian terms and on the processes that give impetus to concepts and abstractions. Otherwise, isolation from processes, closure and thus fixation would mean fetishized concepts.

Another example to be mentioned is from within Marxism: the base-superstructure metaphor is seen as a misconception within Marxism due to implicit adherence of such a philosophy of external relations (Clarke, 1991, p. 39; Yalman, 2010, p. 43).⁷ Ollman (1993, pp. 44–45) notes two widespread agreements on this metaphor: “(1) that the first term in each pairing is in some sense determinant of the latter, and (2) that the boundaries between the terms in each case are more or less set and relatively easy to establish.” Ollman (1993, p. 45) rejects these since Marx did not use clear-cut boundaries and usually used them in an intersecting environment. To put it in another way, “the role played by the process of abstractions is completely ignored in drawing such boundaries between different aspects of phenomena in question” (Yalman, 2010, p. 44).

Ollman (1993, p. 45) mentions a similar problem: the insistence on “a single fixed boundary between essence and appearance.” In this respect, the problematic dimension of fixed or ‘closed’ boundaries is addressed by non-reductionists. “For Marx, the absolute division of reality into appearance and essence does not exist, since his main units of analysis include both appearance and essence” (Ollman, 1993, p. 46). If it had not been the case, mistaking appearance for essence, which is fetishism, would have emerged (Clarke, 1991, p. 39). Ollman (1993, p. 46) refers to an example: “the fetishism of commodities, where the price of things gets substituted for the relations between the people who made them.” When this approach to the process of abstraction is transposed to theorising the state without ending up in fetishism, it becomes necessary to adequately integrate form and content in a relational way. The following argumentations focus on these relations.

⁷ Also Derek Sayer (1987, p. 14) argues that Marx used this metaphor inconsistently between texts and it was not like a precise concept for Marx. Bearing in mind his realist ontology, it is nonsense to think that his concepts “refer unambiguously or consistently to different, and mutually exclusive, bits of empirical reality as they would in an atomistic ontology” (Sayer, 1987, p. 22).

Like Bertell Ollman, Derek Sayer concentrates on abstraction. Sayer's book, *The Violence of Abstraction* (1987), is a Marxological work. Sayer (1987, p. ix) is against "all attempts to freeze his ideas into formulaic and dogmatic moulds. The book's point of departure is Marx's 1859 *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in which Marx put forward the concepts of forces of production, relations of production, economic structure and superstructure. For Sayer (1987, p. x), these concepts are fetishized within mainstream Marxism and historical materialism is drawn on these fetishized concepts.⁸ These fetishized concepts "are 'idealizations' or 'abstractions' which falsely generalize from the misleading phenomenal forms our social relations take under capitalism" (Sayer, 1987, p. xii). For example, economic structure in fetishized sense accommodates technological determinism⁹ and it is functional rather than being causal (Sayer, 1987, p. 5). According to Sayer (1987, p. xi), these fetishisms "have done enormous violence to what is most innovative and emancipatory in Marx's social thought." In this respect, Sayer (1987, p. xi) is critical to the so-called 'traditional historical materialism' outlined by G. A. Cohen (1978) in his work *Karl Marx's Theory of History: a Defence*.

Depending on the ontological position adopted, social structures are perceived as either 'artifacts' or 'social facts' (Yalman, 2010, p. 109). However, this leads to obstruction of developing a position through which supremacy of social relations in theoretical sense is admitted and these 'structures' are seen as phenomenal forms of these relations (Sayer, 1987, p. 34; Yalman, 2010, p. 109).

Following this line of analysis, Yalman (2010, p. 110) argues for a non-essentialist realism based on internal relations in order to grasp 'essential relations'. The essential relations -not existing independently of their phenomenal forms and constituting *explanans* for them- help us to understand why phenomena should take such forms, rather than implying specific substance, or hidden level of reality (Yalman, 2010, p. 110). As Yalman (2010, p. 110) puts it, "a realist epistemology is, therefore,

⁸ For Sayer (1987, p. 23), the above-mentioned fetishized concepts of historical materialism are "necessarily empirically open-ended and multi-referential, they cannot then officiate as the building-blocks of an overarching 'theory of history' in the traditional way."

⁹ Sayer (1987, p. 17) refers to Colletti in order to argue that social production is turned into production techniques and materialist conception of history appears to be technological conception of history. Also in Wood's (2008, p. 43) argumentation a relation of production is not merely technology; it is social order of productive activity and form of exploitation is a power relation.

necessary since essential relations, unlike phenomenal forms, need not be transparent to direct experience and observation.” To put it in another way, for Marsden (1992, p. 359),

the foundation, and driving force, of Sayer’s Marxism is the ontology of realism, which has developed in critique of idealism and empiricism. Particularly relevant in this context is realism’s conception of the relationship between non-empirical social relations, their empirical forms of appearance and corresponding categories or between social being and consciousness, or the material and the ideal. Categories are an integral part of social reality and, in need of explanation as the social relations they express.

Likewise, as Kurtul Gülenç (2017, p. 241) maintains, in order to overcome the problem of fixed, closed, isolated and thus fetishized categories, concepts and theory, their relationship to the dynamics of social reality is to be re-established. Similarly, Karl Korsch (1991, p. 129) raises the criticism of becoming fetishized and superficial against Marxist orthodoxy. For him (1991, p. 54), dialectic is to be applied to the Marxism itself which was dogmatised due to the ill of economic reductionism. The reason for this ill is the perception and interpretation of Marx overly positivist than actuality (Gülenç, 2017, p. 241). For Gülenç (2017, p. 242), this has been the major problem of the twentieth century western Marxism. In this sense, non-reductionist Marxist attempts to theorize the state is a reasonable orientation to look for a way out of prevailing problem.

1.2. Separation in Service of Capitalism

After this brief elaboration on the method of abstraction outlined by Ollman and Sayer, I would like to touch upon Ellen Meiksins Wood’s non-reductionist approach. The aforementioned methodological discussion is helpful in depicting how philosophy of external rations paved the ground for originally a liberal assumption of separation of politics and economics as if it is an appearing reality and how by structuralists this taken for granted assumption overshadowed the specific social reality of capitalism depending on formal-institutional separation of economic coercion from repression. While liberal theory accepts this as given, liberal analyses are made through this problematic assumption (Akbulut, 2005, p. 160). Although economic coercion and repressive power are not one and the

same, together they complement each other as a historical imperative.¹⁰

To come to terms with formal separation in capitalist social reality via rejecting teleological history understanding of the structuralist Marxists, the basic agenda of Wood's (2008, p. 27) book, namely *Capitalism Against Democracy*, is the separation of 'economic' and 'political' spheres in capitalism. In line with Ollman's and Sayer's approaches to the relation between economic and political spheres, Wood (2008, p. 35) argues that the tendency within Marxism to rigidly separate the economic and the political serves capitalist ideology. Capitalist property ownership and forms of exploitation separates economic and political and transforms them as purely economic issues (Wood, 2008, p. 36). For Wood (2008, p. 36), this structural separation is a very effective defence mechanism of capitalism. With the help of structuralist separation, the social relations that are represented or formed by economic mechanism are treated as externally related (Clarke, 1991, p. 39; Wood, 2008, p. 38). Therefore, social content of economy is emptied, economy is depoliticized, and capitalist relations of production are universalized (Wood, 2008, p. 38).¹¹ In other words, rather than capitalist imposition of fragmentation of human experience into alienated forms of 'ideology', 'politics' and 'economics', unity of experience has to be taken as pivotal (Clarke, 1991, p. 38). Due to the tendency of traditional Marxism to see the state as corresponding to the political sphere, it is necessary for us to elaborate more on the issue of separation of the political and the economic in capitalist

¹⁰ Unlike the liberal theory, the apparent reality in the form of separation of politics and economics, this separation is to be conceptualised as the political sphere complementing economic coercion with legal, representative and administrative and the economic sphere meaning the capitalist mode of production. Therefore, it is argued that the expressions of political and economic spheres encompass the capitalist social reality as a whole, whereas they do not reflect the content and reality that the separation of politics and economics harbours (Akbulut, 2005, p. 161).

¹¹ For Wood (2008, p. 65), base-superstructure metaphor turned to be a nuisance rather than being helpful. She (2008, p. 65) states that although Marx used it only in implicational formulations, above its capacity, it became to carry theoretical weight. This problem was intensified as Engels tended to use economic, political and ideological levels externally related to each other (Wood, 2008, p. 65). When Stalin evaluated the economic sphere as independent and the other levels as passive reflections of it, then made the primary principle of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the problem was intensified (Wood, 2008, p. 65). This tendency also made history more or less a mechanical process of technological development (Wood, 2008, p. 65). She (2008, pp. 67–68) criticizes both Althusserian structuralist Marxism as it sustained the problem of Stalinist Orthodoxy, and post-Marxists as they excluded historical materialism and even Marx himself.

social reality.¹²

In capitalism, the unique differentiation of the economic sphere has several meanings:

(1) that production and distribution assume a completely 'economic' form, no longer 'embedded' in extra-economic relations, in a system where production is generally production for exchange; (2) that the allocation of social labour and the distribution of resources are achieved through the 'economic' mechanism of commodity exchange; (3) that the 'economic' forces of the commodity and labour markets acquire a life of their own; (4) that, to quote Marx, property receives its purely economic form by discarding all its former political and social embellishments and associations; (5) that the appropriation of surplus labour takes place in the 'economic' sphere by 'economic' means. (Wood, 2008, p. 45)

Within this context, the process of appropriation of surplus value takes place in a 'free' environment of contractual relations. Absolute property, contractual relations and their legal system are legal prerequisites of capitalist relations of production; and these are new relations of authority domination and subjection between appropriator and producer (Wood, 2008, p. 47). In this respect, capitalism needs state.

Wood (2008, p. 48) defines the state as "the complex of institutions by means of which the power of society is organized on a basis superior to kinship – an organization of power which means a claim to paramountcy in the application of naked force to social problems and consists of formal, specialized instruments of coercion." In this respect, it is the earliest systematic formation of appropriation of surplus and organization of distribution of it (Wood, 2008, p. 49). Seeming not to be assertive about whether state or class precedes the other, Wood (2008, p. 49) wants to emphasize the point that "the existence of a state has always implied the existence of classes." For Wood (2008, p. 49), this statement necessitates "a definition of class capable of encompassing all divisions between direct producers and the appropriators of their surplus labour."

¹² In both structuralist Marxist and liberal accounts, economy is perceived solely as a technical phenomenon and historical transformations are reduced to impersonal technological processes of rationalisation, whereas the political 'level' is put forward as the articulating element of mode of production (Akbulut, 2005, p. 167). The political level also encompasses the 'technical' administrative matrix as its instrument (Akbulut, 2005, p. 167).

Wood (2008, p. 95) states that class can be seen in two ways: either as a structural location or as a social relation. The former is more widespread and it is treated, in a hierarchical structure, as stratification based on 'economic' criteria, market opportunities, occupation (Wood, 2008, p. 95). Contrary to this geological model, class in the latter way is treated as a social-historical relation between appropriators and producers, through which surplus labour is extracted (Wood, 2008, p. 95). Class as relation requires two relations: relation among classes and relation within a class among its members (Wood, 2008, p. 115). She appreciates E. P. Thompson's theory of class, which is the latter case. Thompson had a 'cultural' rather than a 'structural' conception of class (Sayer, 1987, p. 3). Wood (2008, p. 101) notes that Thompson perceives the class formation as a historical process that is formed by the logic of material determinations. In other words, class is a phenomenon that is only seen within processes (Wood, 2008, p. 101). Therefore, rather than in structural location, the essence of class needs to be searched in exploitation, contradiction, struggle relations that initiate the process of class formations (Wood, 2008, p. 114).

As Balibar (1994, p. 140) puts it, "there is no 'pure' process of exploitation; there is always some domination involved."¹³ The immediate economic and political nature of relation of exploitation implies that the forms of both economic community and state evolve simultaneously from this basis (Balibar, 1994, p. 138). However, unique to the development of capitalism, the differentiation of class power and state power implies "power of surplus extraction not directly grounded in the coercive

¹³ It should also be noted that as a structuralist Marxist, Balibar makes a distinction between "young Marx" and "old Marx" concerning the political aspect of exploitation, i.e. domination. In his works like *The German Ideology* and *Poverty of Philosophy*, young Marx saw "politics and the state as an alienated representation of the real conflicts and interests that constitute society. This implies that the 'political state' be thought of both as an illusion or as the 'locus' where all the revolutionary practice becomes an illusion, and as the material instrument of an oppressive domination" (Balibar, 1994, p. 131). Old Marx after 1870 rectified this attitude towards politics with a positive concept of politics where mass practice of workers can transform and expand it rather than its abolition (Balibar, 1994, p. 131). Maintaining its aspect of domination, bourgeois state is no more seen as an illusion (Balibar, 1994, p. 131). Power of the bourgeoisie is sustained through the existence and structure of a state apparatus (Balibar, 1994, p. 132). In this respect, for Balibar (1994, p. 132), "Marx's discourse is literally contradictory." In order to invalidate the separation of economic and political, which was established by political economy and was misunderstood by Marxists, Marx's 'critique of politics' became 'critique of political economy' (Balibar, 1994, p. 137). Balibar (1994, p. 138) refers to Marx's theoretical 'short circuit' as his critical endeavour was to deny the institutional distance that separates the 'base' of the social organism from its 'summit'.

apparatus of the state" (Wood, 2008, p. 50).¹⁴ The state representing "the coercive 'moment' of capitalist class domination, embodied in the most highly specialized, exclusive, and centralized monopoly of social force, is ultimately the decisive point of concentration for all power in society" (Wood, 2008, p. 64). This kind of an approach should be considered as an effort for avoiding the tendency of camouflaging Marx's attitude towards state power as an integral part of "the constitution and the reproduction of the market economy as a form of the capitalist relations of production" (Yalman, 2010, p. 32).

In the western feudalism, there was "the privatization of political power" following the collapse and fragmentation of the Roman Empire as political power was concentrated in the hands of land-owning aristocracy while their political, legal and military functions were means of organization of production and extraction of surplus (Wood, 2008, pp. 54–55). This transformed many *free* farmers into feudal masters' subjects and thus the relation between them was both political and economic (Wood, 2008, p. 56). Wood (2008, p. 56) explains the transition from feudalism to capitalism as such:

The essential characteristic of feudalism, then, was a privatization of political power which meant a growing integration of private appropriation with the authoritative organization of production. The eventual development of capitalism out of the feudal system in a sense perfected this privatization and integration—by the complete expropriation of the direct producer and the establishment of absolute private property. At the same time, these developments had as their necessary condition a new and stronger form of centralized public power. The state divested the appropriating class of direct political powers and duties not immediately concerned with production and appropriation, leaving them with private exploitative powers purified, as it were, of public, social functions.

For Wood (2008, p. 62), the unique separation of economic and political in capitalism serves capitalism since the scope of conflict is limited to the economic sphere and class struggle is tamed by imprisoning it within local and particularistic domains. The 'neutral' state is preserved due to remaining within the 'economic' (Wood, 2008, p. 62). For Wood (2008,

¹⁴ Wood (2008, p. 51) sees Asiatic mode of production as the opposite pole of capitalism since the state directly extracts the surplus and in this respect, it is the case of least differentiation between economic and extra-economic, and between class power and state power.

p. 63), the reason for emergence of modern revolutions in places where capitalism was underdeveloped, is the role of 'extra-economic' coercion in the appropriation of surplus. She (2008, p. 63) argues, "where economic struggle has been inseparable from political conflict and where the state -as a more visibly centralized and universal class enemy- has served as a focus for mass struggle."

Wood's historical materialist analysis shows the role played by the state in the reproduction of capitalist relations of production by appearing as if it is separated from economic coercion in the process of surplus appropriation, whereas the teleological understanding of history in structuralist accounts sees the political not only as a reflection of western capitalist societies, but also treat it as a condition for modernity to admit that the political or administrative realms are separate 'forms' to be reached. To be aware of such risks, Wood's contribution cannot be overlooked in working on a contemporary non-reductionist Marxist theory of the state.

1.3. Bourgeois Civil Society, Nations and the State

Discussion on state with reference to Wood's analysis helps me to link it to Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer's approach to state as a relation of production. They (1980, p. 1) argue that state is not a simple structure, but a changing pattern of relations between classes, it is an organization or orchestration of the relations of production. For them (1980, p. 3), it is impossible to separate forces of production from political, cultural and other social relations. They (1980, pp. 2-4) also underline the need for escaping from metaphorical use of base-superstructure in order to set the historical and material link between production and state forms. The relation between the two is not external, contingent or accidental, but rather internal (Corrigan et al., 1980, p. 5). They (1980, pp. 5-6) note that state coercion, only in appearance, is separated from production. It is evident that these points that are raised by Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer are consistent with those of Wood's.

Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer (1980, p. 8) mention the link between state formation, class structure and development of nations. The class structure of state is concerned with bourgeois interests and development of nations is important in a sense that "bourgeois civil society must assert itself in external relations as nationality and internally must organize itself

as state" (Corrigan et al., 1980, p. 8). These appearances or phenomenal forms of state become natural (Corrigan et al., 1980, p. 10). They (1980, pp. 12–13) suggest that in order to go beyond the phenomenal forms surrounding us, there is a need to "make connections with what is experienced as separate and individual, and prise apart that which we live and think of as fundamentally unified."

Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer (1980, p. 13) say that they are against both instrumental and superstructural perceptions of state.¹⁵ The former sees the state as an instrument of the dominant class, as a machine or a thing, while for the latter the state reflects 'facts' of economic sphere, it is ideational, a mere disguise hiding 'reality' (Corrigan et al., 1980, p. 13). However, both views end up in fetishism, "the denial of the human and historical, i.e. conditional and changeable, quality of social relations in favour of their *naturalization*" (Corrigan et al., 1980, p. 14).

To put it briefly, they are for analysing the state forms relationally, contrary to their separateness or institutional effectivity. Their (1980, p. 24) conception of historical materialism rests on the claim that it should be understood in the light of historical experience, not as holy books.

1.4. State as Society

Another example of this line of thought is Claude Denis's analysis of the state. He (1989, p. 328) sees the state as a vague concept, by discarding the dichotomies like state/civil society and base/superstructure. Owing much to Philip Abrams, who is not a Marxist, he writes that in order to overcome reification of the state, one should take it for granted as historically constructed (Denis, 1989, p. 344). For him (1989, p. 344), "historical investigation of the political practice of class and other relationships" seems to be important. Claude Denis (1989, p. 344) says that Gramsci "came closest to provide an alternative to the conventional wisdom of the state" by indicating that "in actual reality, civil society and state are one and the same, and civil society is the state itself." For Denis (1989, pp. 344–345), while Gramsci rejected state/civil society opposition, Marx maintained this dichotomy as "the state exists outside of the mechanisms

¹⁵ They (1980, p. 20) note that there are some 'ambiguities' and 'shifts' in Marx's Engels's, Lenin's and others' understandings of the state. Their critical attitude towards reductionists stems from these ambiguities and shifts. They (1980, p. 13) criticize reductionists since they were not congruent with Marx and their reductionism led to dangerous political consequences. Their attempt of developing a non-reductionist Marxist theory of state is to avoid such ills.

of civil society, which is structured by capital.”

Denis (1989, p. 345) sees Corrigan and Sayer effectively shattering “the isolation of the state from civil society.” However, with reference to Abrams, Denis (1989, p. 346) argues that Sayer in *The Violence of Abstraction* (1987), a rereading of Marx, systematically reified the state. I do not consider Denis’s criticism of Sayer’s ‘reification’, with reference to Abrams, as a well-developed one; rather he seems to brush over this point. Contrary to Denis, Marsden (1992, p. 364) points out that “there is a clear congruence between Abrams’s argument concerning reification of the ‘idea of the state’ and Sayer’s interpretation of ‘superstructures’ as abstracted, reified ideal forms of relations of production.” Sayer (1991, p. 53) tend to refer to ‘the idea of the state’ by going beyond Abrams’s usage: “the idea of the state is what Philip Abrams playing on Durkheim, called a collective *misrepresentation* of bourgeois society, whose real content remains the inequities of capitalism.” Marsden furthers comparison of Abrams and Sayer on grounds of their attitude towards abstraction. He (1992, p. 364) mentions two of the several varieties of abstraction: the first one is “abstraction as a generalisation from the empirical”, whereas the second is abstraction as an attempt to come to terms with the nature of non-empirical objects. For Marsden (1992, p. 364), Sayer makes use of abstraction in both senses:

When he (Sayer) says the state is an abstraction, he means that it is an ideal form that is divorced from its constitutive social relations and reified. When he says the state is an essential relation of production, I take him to mean that it is a non-empirical –i.e., ‘abstract’– social structure. In rejecting the state as an abstraction, Abrams reject the possibility of non-empirical structures or objects, such as social relations of production.

Differentiating his approach from that of Sayer, Denis (1989, p. 348) proposes that “states are a historically specific type of society, whose institutions take the legal-constitutional discursive form which has enabled capitalism to rise – a state not in or above society, a state is a society. (...) A society that is shaped by juridico-legal discourse is a state.” According to Denis’s (1989, p. 349) proposal, the state as his theoretical object has two inseparable dimensions: “it is capitalist in content and juridico-legal in form.” In other words, economic and political-legal dimensions of society are “unified through juridico-legal discourse, which articulates power

relations with the presentation that society gives of itself" (Denis, 1989, p. 349).¹⁶ As Marsden (1992, p. 365) rightfully addresses, Denis departs from problem of dual abstraction of state/civil society, but examines only one side of it.

Marsden (1992, p. 358) too concludes that 'civil society' and 'the state' are Janus-faces of production relations. He (1992, p. 359) sets the dichotomy of base/superstructure matching with civil society/the state and rejects seeing them as externally related. For Marsden (1992, p. 359), the novelty of Sayer's interpretation of Marx's 'superstructure' is seeing it as an ideal form of social relations which is reified and acquires an apparently independent existence.¹⁷ One should be aware of the intention that the "very separation of 'civil society' and 'political state' is an ideological superstructure on capitalism's component relations" (Marsden, 1992, p. 360). Hence, for Marsden (1992, p. 361), "the problem is not 'the state' *per se*, conceived as a mystification above the reality of civil society." The mystification is the separation of civil society and the state, conceived as distinct socio-economic and political institutions, above the reality of relations of production (Marsden, 1992, p. 361).

So far, I have examined the first group of non-reductionist Marxists with references to Ollman, Sayer, Corrigan, Ramsay, Wood, Denis and Marsden. The initial methodological discussion contributed to deduction of non-reductionist approach to the separation of the political and the economic specific to capitalist societies and to reason for circumventing the philosophy of external relations. How the class structure of state in capitalism blurs and presents itself as neural appearances or phenomenal forms that are externally related to the other levels of social reality become clear with these analyses of non-reductionist Marxists. In the following part, this inquiry will continue with the second group of non-reductionist Marxists, namely open Marxists.

¹⁶ Denis (1989, p. 350) improves this discursive line of analysis by referring to language of state. Speaking the language of state means reformism: furthering interests via changing laws and regulations. On the other hand, refusing to speak language of state means being revolutionary (Denis, 1989, p. 350). However, for Marsden (1992, p. 365), "contrary to Denis, the language we live in is law, not the state."

¹⁷ There is a terminological difference between Sayer and Marsden to be mentioned: Marsden sets the internal relations between material and ideal rather than base/superstructure, or economic/political/ideological.

2. Open Marxism

This second part is composed of various points raised by open Marxists. The use of the label 'open' in reference to openness of categories and non-deterministic view of history is mentioned in the introduction section. There is also a discussion on methodological issues like rejection of critical realism, and of empiricist and rationalist abstraction. Open Marxists' central debate rests on the dualism of structure/struggle, which is discussed in relation to their criticisms on structuralists and Bob Jessop. With reference to Holloway, I examine 'state as form of global totality'. And finally, the last section is about Gerstenberger's approach of merging historical analysis with logical analysis.

2.1. Methodological Issues

In open Marxism, the main point of departure is the 'openness' of categories of Marxism entailing "a critique of the social world because it refuses to accept the idea that the world moves through relatively stable periods which can be methodologically explored through a bourgeois scientism that rests upon trans-historical and dualist categories" (Roberts, 2002, p. 89). As Bonefeld, Gunn and Psychopedis (1992, p. xii) put it, 'closed Marxism'

accepts the horizons of a given world as its own theoretical horizons and/or it announces a determinism which is causalist or teleological as the case may be...These two aspects of closure are interrelated because acceptance of horizons amounts to acceptance of their inevitability and because determinist theory becomes complicit in the foreclosing of possibilities which a contradictory world entails.

In this respect, openness implies a non-deterministic view of history. Marx (1966, p. 791) writes:

The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers to ruled, as it grows out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element. Upon this, however, is founded the entire formation of the economic community which grows out of the production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form.

Class struggle arises from this contradictory social relation but cannot be reduced to it (Gerstenberger, 1992, pp. 154–155). For this reason the social world is structured through ideological and contingent social forms that are, at the same time, contradictory and therefore open.

In the preceding part, I touched upon Ollman's approach to abstraction. Concerning open Marxism, abstraction as a method should be examined as well. What Gunn (1992, p. 12) conceptualises as 'determinate abstraction' refers to an abstraction *in time*. It means abstracting from within a specific mode of production. Therefore, categories that are set are unique to a mode of production (Bonefeld, 1993, pp. 24–25). In other words, the categories that are developed are contextual. Roberts (2002, p. 92) notes, "determinate abstraction rejects both empiricist and rationalist abstraction perpetuated by bourgeois social science" (2002, p. 92). He (2002, p. 92) criticises this feature of open Marxism:

The hostility shown by open Marxists towards empiricism propel them to adopt the same sort of animosity towards empiricist philosophy as is generally articulated by schools of thought dismissed by open Marxists as 'bourgeois' such as critical realism. Both reject empiricism for being an ultimately illusionary way of viewing the world because of its excessive concern with appearances. But, (...) this standpoint throws the empiricist baby out with the illusionary bath water. As both Hegel and Marx were apt to argue, empiricism should be congratulated in one important sense for making great strides forward in setting out a rigorous argument for taking sensory experience very seriously indeed. By stressing the point that knowledge flows from contact with the world through our experience, empiricism opened the way forward for the development of a materialist theory.

Open Marxists also emphasize the point that 'substantive abstraction'¹⁸ should search out "an inner connection which constitutes social phenomena and their relation to each other as modes of existence of this very inner connection" (Bonefeld, 1993, p. 29). In other words, it is "the inner nature of phenomena themselves; their constitution and process" (Bonefeld, 1992, p. 100). For open Marxists, 'social form' simply means a

¹⁸ This kind of abstraction is against 'abstract materialism' of structuralism since it reproduces fetishism; it does not move within the object of its thinking; and does not risk the assertion of reality through abstraction, an abstraction which is well within that reality and which exists in practice (Bonefeld, 1992, p. 115).

mode of existence (Roberts, 2002, p. 99). Open Marxists also maintain that social form as an analytic category captures how each object exists not only through another object, but also exists in and through all other objects. In other words, there is an explicit assertion that objects exist within a contradictory unity of concrete objects that can be explored at different levels of abstraction (Bonefeld, 1992, p. 98; Roberts, 2002, p. 99). "That is, one (object) may exist in and through another which contradicts it" (Gunn, 1992, p. 23), or to put it in another way, "social existence is constituted as a movement of contradiction in and through the presence of labour within capital" (Bonefeld, 1992, p. 102). This 'substantive abstraction' seems to have parallels with the philosophy of internal relations outlined in the previous part by Ollman.

Central theme of open Marxism is 'struggle' which is presented as having priority over 'structure' in theorising of the state. For example, Werner Bonefeld (1992, p. 93) sees "the problematic issue of the relation between structure and struggle" as "the central question for any attempt to understand capitalism." For Clarke (1991, p. 44), the reason for such an assertion is that structures and struggles are inseparable since structures are realised in and through class struggles. Bonefeld's (1992, p. 93) approach seems closer to Clarke's in this regard: "structures should be seen as mode of existence of class antagonism and hence as result and premise of class struggle." In this sense, he (1992, pp. 94–95) is critical to the dualist view of structure/struggle clearly expressed in German state derivation debate and Poulantzasian theories.

Due to prioritising struggle, open Marxists are against economic determinism and thus, they reject any clear separation of the 'economic' and the 'political' by asserting for the inseparability of ideological, political and economic struggle (Clarke, 1991, p. 32). For Clarke (1991, p. 35), the struggle goes far beyond 'economic' and to be seen as a social struggle. It is a "struggle over the reproduction of the worker as a worker for capital, a struggle on the part of capital to decompose 'collective labourer' as the self consciously organised subject of the labour process and to recompose it as the object of capitalist exploitation" (Clarke, 1991, p. 35). This means that the struggle should not be seen as if taking place only within the factory.

2.2. Critique of Structuralism

At this point, I would like to touch upon the tension between open

Marxists and 'structuralist' counterparts. It is evident that open Marxists set the categorisation of non-reductionist Marxist theories of the state in relation to structure/struggle dualism and to respective attitudes towards this dualism. They subsume French Regulation School along with Althusserians-Poulantzasians, German state derivation debate, 'new realists', and other non-reductionist Marxists like E. P. Thompson, Ollman, Sayer, Corrigan, and Wood under the same category, whereas they, as open Marxists, differentiate themselves as privileging struggle.

It is argued that the point of departure for such an approach is critical examination of Poulantzasian theories of the state and German 'state derivation' debate (Clarke, 1991, p. 35). Poulantzas's 'politicism' is pointed out by arguing that "a materialist analysis of the state must not be confused with an economic analysis, for both the 'economic' and the 'political' functions of the capitalist state are founded in the contradictory nature of capitalist commodity production" (Holloway, 1976, p. 18). Same criticism is raised against Bob Jessop. Although Jessop does not accept this challenge, I would like to mention his brief summary of what to be understood from criticism of 'politicism'. Jessop (2008, p. 23) writes:

It was Poulantzas's influence that promoted some Marxist critics, notably Bonefeld, Clarke, and Holloway, to accuse me of 'politicism'. For them, this deviation accords primacy in theory and practice to the state and politics without grounding these in the capital relation and/or its associated class struggle. Above all, politicism is said to derive from taking for granted the separation of the economic and political institutional orders of modern societies rather than seeing them as deeply interconnected surface forms of capitalist social formations and, in this context, from focusing one-sidedly on the political realm to the detriment of those interconnections and the determining role of the capital relation *vis-à-vis* its economic and political moments considered in isolation. This leads in turn, it is claimed, to voluntarism in theory and practice because it focuses on the power of political action to transform the world.

Prior to open Marxists' examination of Jessop's strategic-relational approach, I prefer to refer to what Jessop said about the state and his approach. Rejecting one-sided explanations of the state by only taking its institutional forms into account, Jessop (1990, pp. 340–341) defines the state as such: "The core of the state apparatus comprises a distinct ensemble of institutions and organisations whose socially excepted function is to

define and enforce collectively binding decisions on the members of a society in the name of their common interest or general will." He (1990, p. 351; 2008, p. 24) makes use of Gramscian definitions of 'the state in its inclusive sense as political society + civil society' (integral state) and of "the state power as hegemony armoured by coercion", in order to address the need for analysing "both state apparatus and state power in relational terms." His neo-Gramscian inspiration led him to his strategic-relational definition of 'economy in its inclusive sense' as 'an accumulation regime + social mode of economic regulation' and to analyse capital accumulation as the 'self-valorisation of capital in and through regulation' (Jessop, 2008, p. 24).

Referring to *raison d'état* as internal logic of state, Jessop (1990, p. 353) also argues, "the state is a strategically selective terrain which can never be neutral among all social forces and political projects." For him (1990, p. 353), state structures and operating procedures determine the strategically selective limits within which outcome of state power depends on balance of forces in politics. Therefore, without any examination of form and balance of forces, 'capitalist' character of the state cannot be clarified (Jessop, 1990, p. 353). He (1990, pp. 354–355) writes:

State power is capitalist to the extent that it creates, maintains or restores the conditions required for capital accumulation in a given situation. (...) Thus, when we assess the capitalist character of the state, it is essential to specify which particular conditions deemed contingently necessary either for a specific accumulation strategy and/or a particular regime of accumulation are being secured in what respects, over which time period and to what extent. (...) We must consider the dynamics of the structural coupling or co-evolution of changing capitalist economies and state forms to form specific historical blocs.

Jessop (1990, p. 361) refers to 'material' and 'ideological' bases of state: "the constitutionalised monopoly of physical force" and hierarchical organisation of this capacity, which reminds us Weberian definition of state, is the material basis of its responsibility for the whole. The "ideological basis and motor force is the construction of the state and and/or state managers to which this overall responsibility can be attributed" (Jessop, 1990, p. 361). However, construction of the state as a juridical subject or its political responsibilities cannot be seen as a guarantee that it

is a real subject capable of independent action since structural constraints and resistances limit inevitably its ability to master the social formation (Jessop, 1990, p. 361; 2008, p. 37).

Within this theoretical context, explicitly showing his discomfort with structuralism, Jessop (1990, p. 364) underlines the need for the examination of how the state power is realised in and through specific social practices and forces in order to prevent it from going unexplained or explained away in terms of structural guarantees and/or functional imperatives. For Jessop (1990, p. 364), by seeing the state in capitalist societies as essentially capitalist and attempting to account for it in terms of 'speculative' categories like 'determination in the last instance' or state as 'ideal collective capitalist', structural Marxism and German capital logic school failed. He (1990, p. 364) asserts that "the way to overcome this impasse is through the strategic-relational approach with emphasis on the continuing interplay between strategies and structures." His (2008, p. 22) approach is premised on a critical realist philosophy of social science having a dialectical attitude towards "the material and discursive interdependence of structure and strategy." This structure/strategy dualism is one of the bases of open Marxist criticisms addressed to Jessop.

Bonefeld (1992, p. 96) criticises Jessop since he equates, "in its most extreme version, not only struggle with strategy, but class struggle with capital strategies." However, for Bonefeld (1992, p. 98), 'structures' are modes of existence of class antagonism of capital and labour. Moreover, "equation of capitalist strategies with class struggle is the dismissal of an understanding of history as the history of class struggle" (Bonefeld, 1992, pp. 126–127). For Clarke (1991, p. 50), the line Jessop draws between structure and struggle is an arbitrary one. Both Bonefeld (1992, pp. 96–97) and Clarke (1991, p. 50) argue that Jessop's 'failure' is due to structural-functionalism which he derives from Poulantzas, and to functionalist and voluntarist¹⁹ view of capitalist reproduction. As Bonefeld (1992, p. 97) puts it, "while Poulantzas referred to the class struggle as mediating the unfolding of the objective laws of capitalist development, Jessop sees the mechanism of social practice in terms of the individualised and pluralist allocation-interests of different capital logicians."

On the part of state derivation debate, it is argued that while German

¹⁹ For Bonefeld (1992, p. 97), the criticism of voluntarism in terms of structuration of hegemonic interests, stems from aiming at capturing the state and shaping a historically specific mode of articulation.

view emphasizes logical and historical derivation of state, open Marxists tend to assert for the primacy of class struggle (Bonefeld, 1992, p. 95; Clarke, 1991, p. 40). For them, German contributions are imprisoned within functionalist view of the state by regarding the limits to state as external and “explaining the capitalist state from either as a logical response to the needs of capital, or as the historical result of past class struggles” (Clarke, 1991, p. 41). Open Marxists, however, underline the “immediacy of the class struggle as a struggle not only within but also against the existing state form” (Clarke, 1991, p. 41). This means that form of the capitalist state is the object and consequence of class struggle (Clarke, 1991, p. 41). In other words, open Marxist critique of German debate rests on the overemphasis on the logic of capital ending up in negligence of class struggle “in giving this logic a content and an historical reality” (Clarke, 1991, p. 41).

It should also be noted that while they criticise functionalism in structural Marxism, in French Regulation School or in German debate, they cannot escape from functionalism due to privileging working-class. Moreover, open Marxists’ criticism of Poulantzas (1978) is highly selective since they do not consider his later works such as *State, Power and Socialism*. Concerning Jessop, they only point out Poulantzasian influences, but they are reluctant to see neo-Gramscian inspirations.

2.3. State as Form of Global Totality

Having parallels with Wood’s approach, open Marxists tend to see the capitalist state as the organised power of the capitalist class with specific fragmentation of class domination into the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ in order for the reproduction of capital (Clarke, 1991, p. 41). To remember Wood’s argument once more, the unique separation of economic and political in capitalism serves capitalism since the scope of class conflict is limited to the economic sphere and class struggle is tamed by imprisoning it local and particularistic domains. The ‘neutral’ state is preserved as class struggle remains within the ‘economic’.

Also the discomfort with separation of state from civil society, “which Marx took over from Hegel”, is a common ground for open Marxists (Gerstenberger, 1992, p. 151). Having resemblances to Wood, Holloway (1994, p. 28) argues that “existence of the state as a thing separated from society is peculiar to capitalism, as is the existence of the ‘economic’ as something distinct from overtly coercive class relations.” In this respect, in

order to avoid such a risk, he (1994, p. 28) focuses on the relation between the state and capitalist society, and discusses the state as a moment of the totality of the social relations of capitalist society. Therefore, for him (1994, pp. 27–28), this means a break with economic determinism implied by the base/superstructure metaphor.

It is also useful to elaborate on how state and society are conceptualised, and their relationship is set in Holloway's account. For him (2010, p. 131), "the society that is constituted by abstract labour, by the repeated transformation of our being-able-to into a power-over us, is an antagonistic society." This class antagonism "between those who are created by and benefit from abstract labour (the capitalists) and those who are forced to perform the abstract labour (the labourers)" cannot be restrained by the 'dull compulsion of economic relations' and an extra dimension of force is indispensable (Holloway, 2010, p. 131). Hence, externalisation of power in two distinct forms of the economic and the political leads to "an instance separated from society that seeks to secure the social order necessary for the rule of abstract labour. This instance is the state" (Holloway, 2010, p. 132). Therefore, "the constitution of the state is at the same time the constitution of the economic and the political as separate spheres, from both of which the abstraction of doing into labour, the transformation of our being-able-to into a power-over us, disappears from view" (Holloway, 2010, p. 133). This instance also hides the real determinant of society: "it is the way in which our everyday activity is organised, the subordination of our doing to the dictates of abstract labour, that is, of value, money, profit. It is this abstraction which is, after all, the very basis of the existence of the state" (Holloway, 2010, p. 133). I find this line of argumentation crucial in pointing out ills of the philosophy of external relations that overlook the intricacies of internal relations and the real story behind the scene.

Besides conceptualising the state as an instance, Holloway (1994, p. 25) argues that national state development can be understood only in relation to the development of global capital and that the key recent change in capitalist states is a radical change in the mobility of capital, a manifestation of the crisis of capitalist social relation. As Holloway (1994, p. 25) puts it, "to reach a satisfactory understanding of the changes taking place at the moment we need to go beyond the category of 'the state', or rather we need to go beyond the assumption of separateness of the different states to find a way of discussing their unity." In other words, the importance of the state and its relation to capital can only

be perceived in global context (Holloway, 2007, pp. 133–134). Similar to the aforementioned approaches, Holloway (1994, p. 26) too, argues for dissolving the state as a category to understand it not as a thing in itself, but as a form of social relations.

Holloway analyses the state or nation-states as form/forms of the global totality of social relations. He (1994, p. 29) notes that treating the state as if it existed only in the singular should be left since capitalism is a world system of states, and the form that the capitalist state takes is the nation-state. He (1994, p. 31) argues that the global nature of capitalist social relations does not stem from recent ‘globalisation’ or ‘internationalisation’ of capital; on the contrary, it has been a central feature of capitalist development since its bloody birth. Therefore, although it is fractured into territorially defined units, the “political as a moment of the relation between capital and labour, is a moment of a global relation” (Holloway, 1994, p. 31). In this context, the world cannot be seen as an “aggregation of national states or national capitalisms; rather the fractured existence of the political as national states decomposes the world into so many apparently autonomous units” (Holloway, 1994, p. 31). Holloway (1994, p. 32) asserts, “no national state can be understood in abstraction from its existence as a moment of the global capital relation.” It should not be considered that Holloway identifies the state with capital since he is aware that such identification is an impediment “to grasp the contradictory relationship between the internationalisation of capital and the nation-state” (Clarke, 1991, p. 55). Therefore, Clarke (1991, p. 56) writes that Holloway theorises “the relationship between capital and the state as neither an identity nor an autonomy but as the contradictory unity of differentiated forms of capitalist power.”

Holloway (1994, p. 33) also notes that his approach does not mean the relation between global capital and all nation-states is one and the same. The constitution of all nation-states as moments of a global relation does not mean that they are identical moments of that relation (Holloway, 1994, p. 33).²⁰ On the contrary, “the fracturing of the political into nation-states means that every state has specific territorial definition and hence a specific relation to people within its territory” (Holloway, 1994, p. 33).

It also attracts attention that open Marxists tend to use ‘crisis’ quite often along with ‘contradiction’ (Roberts, 2002, p. 102). Holloway (1992,

²⁰ The relation of the nation-state to capital is a relation of a territorially fixed state to a globally mobile capital (Holloway, 1994, p. 33).

p. 168) describes a crisis as “a breakdown in the established pattern of social relations.” “However, Holloway gives pre-eminence to a crisis in the mode of production wherein capital and labour confront one another” (Roberts, 2002, p. 102). This crisis is then said to reverberate into the state, family, morality, religion, trade unions, “of everything that previously seemed to ensure social harmony and is now no longer able to do so” (Holloway, 1992, p. 168).

The liquefaction of capital becomes the expression of crisis of production relations as relation between productive capital and financial capital implies a sharp change (Holloway, 1994, p. 40). This has repercussions on the relation between territorially fixed nation-states and mobile global capital (Holloway, 1994, p. 41). Collapse of Breton Woods system of fixed exchange rates based on a fixed parity of the dollar with gold, developments in the information technologies and increased integration of world markets are the reasons for this (Holloway, 1994, p. 41). There is a competition or a struggle between nation-states to attract a share of global capital since they depend both on reproduction of global capitalism and capitalism within their territory (Holloway, 1994, p. 34). The global capital is no more external to a nation-state, and therefore the relation among nation-states and between global capital and a nation-state cannot be understood as being external to it (Holloway, 1994, p. 35). Holloway (1994, p. 36) maintains, “distinction between inside/outside, endogenous/exogenous, internal/external reproduces the apparent autonomy of national states, and so reinforces the murderous rigidification²¹ of social relations which national boundaries represent, but is not adequate as an explanation of state development.”

2.4. Combining ‘Logical’ with ‘Historical’ Analysis

Heide Gerstenberger has, to some extent, similar attitude towards structuralism as it is the case in Clarke and Holloway’s aforementioned positions; however, she seems to put more emphasis on historical processes through which capitalism emerged out of pre-bourgeois societies.²² She (1992, p. 152) writes:

Historical materialist state analysis will not be able to transcend the theoretical limitation inherent in the structuralist conception

²¹ He mentions ‘rigidification’ of the state, which is fetishism in Marx’s terminology.

²² By ‘pre-bourgeois societies’, she (1992, p. 154) means “societies in which capitalism developed indigenously.”

of modes of production or social formations as long as classes of capitalist societies are assumed to have somehow been constituted by 'capitalism' and as long as 'bourgeois revolution'²³ is taken to be the result of a certain level of 'capitalist development'. It is the other way round: capitalism is the result of historical processes in the course of which capitalist class relations were constituted and made dominant.

Gerstenberger (1992, pp. 153-154) focuses on the historical development of 'bourgeois state'²⁴ out of historical preconditions and through class struggles over forms domination within the form of estates²⁵ leading to transformation of feudal societies to *Ancien-Régime* of pre-bourgeois societies. She (1992, p. 172) uses 'bourgeois state form' not in relation to "societies in which capitalism was implanted by colonial/imperialistic domination," but only to societies which evolved from specific structural type of *Ancien-Régime* or in other words, pre-bourgeois societies, that need to be characterised as 'capitalist societies' having "certain elements of interest-constituting dynamics that cannot be derived from any general logic of capitalist class relations."

Concerning the nature of class relations, for her, it cannot be confined merely to the 'economic', yet political and cultural relations are to be taken into account (Gerstenberger, 1992, p. 153). Reference to and emphasis on the 'cultural' along with 'discourse' is distinctive feature of Gerstenberger's approach. For example, she argues, "constitution of interests is not the outcome of exploitative relations, but of the public discourse about these relations" (1992, p. 152). I would like to note that Gerstenberger (1992, pp. 154–155) does not consider class struggle sufficient for comprehensive analysis of transformation of societies; structural or historical preconditions are important as well. To illustrate:

²³ The bourgeois revolution is used as "the expropriation of personal domination, be it monarchical power, seigneurial jurisdiction, noble privilege or guild master's power. In the process, domination was being impersonalised. It is this constitution of the state as an impersonal –and therefore public– power which constitutes the separation of the political from the economic" (Gerstenberger, 1992, p. 167).

²⁴ It is not used synonymously with the analytical notion of the capitalist state (Gerstenberger, 1992, p. 154).

²⁵ Gerstenberger (1992, p. 159) notes that estates did not coincided with class boundaries. "Instead, the divergence between social status and source of income constituted in itself part of the dynamics of social change and cannot therefore be neglected in any analysis of pre-bourgeois societies" (Gerstenberger, 1992, p. 159).

What distinguishes structural preconditions for social change in societies of the *Ancien-Régime* from feudal societies is the integration of personal domination in the materialist structures of the market on the one hand and the generalisation and thereby territorialisation of princely or monarchical power on the other. (Gerstenberger, 1992, p. 161)

Another example of structural preconditions is about capitalism. These preconditions were: a class of persons to sell their labour, a class of persons who had already owned means of production, and the separation of the economic from the political (Gerstenberger, 1992, p. 170). Gerstenberger (1992, p. 171) notes the role of this separation as such: "It was the historical specificity of the domination forms of the *Ancien-Régime* which made the claim to legal and political equality a structural precondition for capitalist exploitation to become dominant."

It should be noted that there are two open Marxist positions to be differentiated: the first position represented by Clarke and Holloway seems to deal with the issue of capital logic attaching importance to capitalist relations in the determination of social processes. Forerunners of the second position are Gerstenberger and Bonefeld who keep ahead historical analysis and underline the role of labour-capital relations as mode of existence in understanding what the state is.

It is interesting that while Gerstenberger (1992, p. 172) appreciates critique of German view on state derivation debate or Poulantzasian models of structuralist interpretations, she at the same time makes use of structuralist notions such as *Ancien-Régime*, and refers to structural preconditions where class struggle on its own is not seen as sufficient for transition from one form of society to the other. For her (1992, p. 172), the reason for such an approach stems from the "necessity of combining historical with logical analysis": to "demonstrate the shortcomings of any analytical conception which presupposes the possibility of conceiving of logical analysis as separate from historical analysis and hence of any possibility of 'combining' both forms of analysis."

However, then it may become troublesome to subsume the two positions within open Marxism under same rubric. That is because of the fact that the critique of structuralism and 'structure' is so central in the previous position. Yet one may argue that there is a common ground

between the two positions regarding this point: As I mentioned above, Simon Clarke's (1991, p. 44) assertion is that structures and struggles are inseparable since structures are realised in and through class struggles; and Gerstenberger's emphasis on the combination of logical and historical analysis, and making use of structuralist notions could be considered as sharing common grounds.

Conclusion

As Simon Clarke (1991, p. 185) notes, "the problem of the state is often posed as the problem the problem of reconciling the class character of the state with its institutional separation from the bourgeoisie." The vantage point of this article is this problem as highlighting internal relations that pave the way to non-reductionist Marxist theory of the state. Marx's legacy lacks an adequate theory of the state (Jessop, 2008, p. 56). Similarly Gerstenberger (2011, p. 61) addresses to the fact that Marx himself did make a theoretical conceptualization of the capitalist state whereas some Marxists as seen in 'derivation debate' of the 1970s tried to derive political form of capitalism from Marx's analysis of capitalism. However, it is unrealistic to refer to a single theory of the state named after Marx. Moreover, the tendency of the Marxist tradition to perceive state-economy, state-society or state-capital relations in terms of philosophy of external relations precluded a full-fledged Marxist theory of the state. On the contrary, the state is associated with the superstructure determined by economy, relations of production or type of production, i.e. the base.

Apart from the rejection of philosophy of external relations, another outstanding common ground of the attempts of developing contemporary theories of the state within Marxist tradition from 1960s to present is the tendency to come out against reification or subjectivation of the state (Yalman, 2012, p. 82). The methodological discussions raised above address to this tendency.

As a critique of economic reductionism having implicit premise of philosophy of external relations, in this article, I examined non-reductionist Marxist theories of the state with reference to two basic groups of scholars. The first group does not use any distinctive label, while the second group refers itself as open Marxism. Open Marxists set the central point of differentiation between them as attitude towards structure/struggle dualism while the first group does not keen on such an explicit

position. Rather than structure/struggle dualism, the first group attaches importance to the philosophy of internal relations, while open Marxists tend not to use this terminology in order not to appear as realists. It is also worth mentioning once more that existence of two positions within open Marxism is troublesome in incorporating them within the same rubric.

Despite their points of differentiations between the two broader groups or within the groups, they share a commonality in their hostility towards 'traditional historical materialism' and even towards structural Marxism. These groups and positions mentioned in this article may not be considered as a coherent and consistent non-reductionist theory of the state due to their variations within themselves; however, at least they are successful as contemporary 'attempts' of non-reductionist Marxist theory of the state that would pave ground to a more consistent theory. I find them stimulating as they ground their unease with reductionism on appealing issues. Moreover, unlike post-Marxists seeking strategies beyond class, these non-reductionist attempts would contribute (1) to the assertion for the class nature of the state; (2) to the transformation of social structures in an emancipatory orientation and (3) to the resistance to the attacks against pro-labour analyses on the grounds of outmoded reductionism.

To sum up, departing from methodological critique of classical political economy, it is not possible to accurately account for social reality without analysis of historical conditions and of social relations it brings in concrete levels such as class struggles. The attempts of developing non-reductionist Marxist theory of the state should be considered within this purpose. As a concluding remark of evaluating non-reductionist approaches, it should be noted that except for some open Marxists like Holloway and Bonefeld, together with territorial fixity of the state, the spatial non-concurrence between relatively global scope of capital and delimited realm of labour are usually ignored in the analyses. Unless the influence of such non-concurrences on states as forms of social relations of production, the non-reductionist attempts of theorising the state would reflect deficiency. In this respect, the endurance of open-Marxism as a distinctive school of thought within Marxism would remain under surveillance.

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