

GLOBALIZATION, TRANSNATIONALIZATION AND IMPERIALISM:
EVALUATION OF SOCIOLOGY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
IN THE CASE OF TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

GLOBALIZATION, TRANSNATIONALIZATION AND IMPERIALISM: EVALUATION OF SOCIOLOGY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD IN THE CASE OF TURKEY

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This study aims to evaluate conceptual considerations of the sociology of agriculture and food from inside and outside of the literature in relation to transnationalization and its claim on the emergence of a transnational state. Although the history of the literature can be traced back to mid-1970s, its development corresponds to 1990s which is also the period that witnessed the hegemony of the concept of globalization in social sciences. This study argues that the claim on transnationalization reflects the intimate relationship of sociology of agriculture and food with the globalist interpretation of the concept of globalization or globalization theory which suffers from methodological and theoretical problems mainly in relation to the analysis of immanent contradictions and distinctive features of capitalism. With the criticism of the concepts of globalization and transnationalization, this study aims to break the intimate relationship of the sociology of agriculture and food with the globalization theory and suggests that the concept of imperialism is a powerful analytical concept in comprehending the transformation of capitalist relations, particularly the agrifood relations since late 1970s. In other words, this study

aims to reevaluate the concepts (agrifood system and food regime) and problematics formulated in the sociology of agriculture and food literature within the theoretical framework based on the concept of capitalist imperialism exemplified in the analysis of transformation of agrifood relations since 1980 in the case of Turkey.

Keywords: globalization; transnationalization; neoliberalism and capitalist imperialism; agrifood system and food regime; sociology of agriculture and food

ÖZ

KÜRESELLEŞME, ULUSÖTESİLEŞME VE EMPERYALİZM: TARIM VE GIDA SOSYOLOJİSİNİN TÜRKİYE ÖRNEĞİNDE DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

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Bu çalışma tarım ve gıda sosyolojisinin ulusötesileşme ve ulus-ötesi devlet oluşumu iddialarına ilişkin kavramsal mülahazalarını içeriden ve dışarıdan bir değerlendirmesini amaçlamaktadır. Tarım ve gıda sosyolojisi literatürünün tarihi 1970'lerin ortalarına kadar uzansa da, olgunlaşması sosyal bilimlerde küreselleşme kavramının hegemonyasına tanıklık eden 1990'lara tekabül etmektedir. Bu çalışmaya göre, ulusötesileşme iddası, tarım ve gıda sosyolojisi ile kapitalizmin karakteristik özelliklerinin ve içkin çelişkilerinin analizine ilişkin metodolojik ve kuramsal sorunlarla malul olan küreselleşme teorisi veya küreselleşme kavramının küreselleşmeci yorumu arasındaki içkin bağı yansıtmaktadır. Küreselleşme ve ulusötesileşme kavramlarının eleştirisi yoluyla bu bağı kırmayı hedefleyen bu çalışma, 1970'lerin sonlarından itibaren kapitalist ilişkilerde, özel olarak da tarım-gıda ilişkilerinde yaşanan dönüşümlerin kavranmasında emperyalizm kavramının analitik olarak güçlü bir kavram olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Diğer bir ifadeyle, bu çalışma tarım-gıda sosyolojisi literatürü içinde formüle edilmiş olan kavramları (tarım-gıda sistemi ve gıda rejimi) ve sorunsalları kapitalist emperyalizm kavramı temelinde

oluřturulmuř ve Trkiye’de 1980 sonrası tarım-gıda iliřkilerinin dnřmnn analizinde rneklenmiř olan teorik ereve ierisinde yeniden deęerlendirmeyi amalamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kreselleřme; ulustesileřme; neoliberalizm ve kapitalist emperyalizm; tarım-gıda sistemi ve gıda rejimi; tarım ve gıda sosyolojisi

*Tohumun ve toprağın binlerce yıllık bilgiğini
alçakgönüllülikle taşıyan o güzel insanlara...*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ÇAYKUR	Çay İşletmeleri Genel Kurulu (General Directorate of Tea Enterprises)
EBK	Et ve Balık Kurumu (Meat and Fish Institution)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GATTs	General Agreement on Trade and Tarriffs
IMF	International Monetary Fund
İGSAŞ	İstanbul Gübre Sanayii A.Ş. (İstanbul Fertilizer Industry I.C.)
MNCs	Multi-National Corporations
NAFTA	North America Free Trade Aggreement
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ORÜS	Orman Ürünleri Sanayii A.Ş. Genel Müdürlüğü (General Directorate of Forest Products Industry I.C.)
PCPs	Petty Commodity Producers
SAF	Sociology of Agriculture and Food
SEK	Süt Endüstrisi Kurumu (Institution of Milk Industry)

TEKEL	Tütün, Tütün Mamülleri, Tuz ve Alkol İşletmeleri Genel Müdürlüğü (General Directorate of Tobacco, Tobacco Products, Salt and Alcohol Businesses)
TİGEM	Tarım İşletmeleri Genel Müdürlüğü (General Directorate of Agricultural Enterprises)
TMO	Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi (Turkish Grain Board)
TNCs	Trans-National Corporation
TSKB	Tarım Satış Kooperatif ve Birlikleri (Agricultural Sale Cooperatives and Associations)
TÜGSAŞ	Türkiye Gübre Sanayii A.Ş. (Turkey Fertilizer Industry I.C.)
TÜSİAD	Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association)
TŞFAŞ	Türkiye Şeker Fabrikaları A.Ş. (Turkey's Sugar Factories I.C.)
TZDK	Türk Zirai Donatım Kurumu (Turkish Agricultural Equipment Institution)
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization
YEMSAN	Yem Sanayii Türk Anonim Şirketi (Feed Industry Turkish I.C.)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this study is to confront the concept of ‘globalization’ and the arguments on transition from multi/inter-national phase of capitalism to a transnational one, with the concept of *capitalist imperialism* with respect to the analysis of transformations of capitalist relations, particularly agriculture and food relations, since the 1970s, through a critical engagement with the *sociology of agriculture and food* (or contemporary *political economy of agriculture and food*) literature. The general argument of this conceptual study with respect to this confrontation is that, although the concept of ‘globalization’ and the arguments on transition to a transnational phase of capitalism *reflect* the changes occurred within capitalism since the 1970s, they are not able to *explain* these changes due to the methodological and theoretical problems inherent in these arguments; basically misconceptualization and/or abstraction of distinctive features and immanent contradictions of capitalism. This study argues that, though further elaborations are necessary in the light of new developments within capitalism since the late 1970s, the concept of imperialism is still a powerful one both analytically and politically, since the immanent contradictions and distinctive features of capitalism are at the centre of the analysis. Throughout the study I will try to explain this general argument through an analysis of transformation of agriculture and food relations since the 1970s, particularly the case of Turkey, and through a critical engagement with the related sociology of agriculture and food literature.

The specific focus on agriculture and food relations and the related literature, namely the sociology of agriculture and food (hereafter, SAF), is chosen for two important reasons. Firstly, agriculture and food (agrifood) relations provide an extensive empirical basis for the analysis of transformations of capitalist relations since they comprehends both the production and reproduction spheres. In other words, it is possible to analyze differentiating ways of production, distribution, marketing and consumption processes of capital accumulation on an extensive empirical basis through an analysis of agrifood relations. Secondly, the related SAF literature provides the possibility of conceptualization of these transformations within the context of capitalist imperialism through problematics and concepts produced within the literature. However, this study argues that a critique of the SAF literature (arguably, a reconceptualization of its major problematics and concepts) is necessary to make this possibility apparent. This is because the argument on transition to a transnational phase of capitalism – which according to this study is mainly a product of the idea of ‘globalization’ – is one of the essential claims of the literature from its inception in the early 1990s. To put it differently, this study is an attempt to break the inherent relationship between the SAF literature and the idea of ‘globalization’ which reflects itself in the conceptualization of transition to a supra/trans-national phase and the emergence of a transnational state through re-conceptualization of its major problematics and concepts within the context of capitalist imperialism.

Through this reconceptualization, this study will be able to contribute to the SAF literature in two ways. Firstly, the problematics which I will try to summarize in the third chapter and the concepts, mainly agro/agri-food system and food regime, produced within the literature will, arguably, gain their real theoretical significance. Secondly, this study argues that there is a disconnection problem between the peasant/agrarian question literature, that is the literature on agriculture and food relations before the 1980, and the SAF literature which emerged in the mid 1970s but matured with the 1990s. According to this study, this disconnection problem, which reflects itself in the underestimation of the conceptualization of class position of petty commodity producers and

underdevelopment within the SAF literature, arises from the inherent relationship between the idea of 'globalization' and the SAF literature. Thus, reconceptualization of the concepts and problematics of the SAF literature within the context of imperialism, arguably, can also overcome this disconnection problem since the concept of imperialism embodies both the class struggle and 'underdevelopment'.

This introduction chapter aims to provide a brief summary of the arguments of this study that are mentioned above in a very general manner, and the organization of the study in relation to these arguments.

To begin with, the time period between the early 1990s and the mid-2000s witnessed the rise and the hegemony of the idea of 'globalization' in social sciences as well as the intellectual sphere, politics and the daily life. This rise and the hegemony of the concept of 'globalization' reflect itself in what Held and McGrew (2003) calls the "great globalization debate". Clearly, there are various approaches within this debate to the term 'globalization', which consist of different methodologies and theoretical positions. Since, it is not possible to review this massive literature, this study shares the distinction provided by Rosenberg (2000) both for the sake of simplicity and for the categorization of the literature on 'globalization' on a broader methodological standpoint. Rosenberg (2000) makes a distinction between "globalization theory" and "theories of globalization" on the basis of the logical construction of the arguments. According to this distinction, while "globalization theory" refers to the literature that tries to explain 'globalization' as an outcome, through the 'globalization' itself as a process that will inevitably result in that outcome (Rosenberg, 2000: 2; 2005: 12); a theory of globalization "might be constructed out of anything presumed to generate the spatio-temporal phenomena involved" (Rosenberg, 2000:3). In other words, within the "globalization theory" – best known authors of which are Antony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, David Held, Tony McGrew, Manuel Castells and Zigmunt Bauman – the term 'globalization' is used both as the "explanan" and the "explanandum"; while "theories of

globalization” approaches globalization as the “explanandum” (Rosenberg, 2000, 2005). This distinction between “globalization theory” and “theories of globalization” also, at least partially, corresponds to the categorization of Held and McGrew (2003) of the literature as “globalists” and “skeptics”, and also to the Giddens’ (2001) categorization as “radicals” and “skeptics”. This study claims that, it is the “globalization theory” or “globalist” interpretation of ‘globalization’ that dominated the literature on ‘globalization’ and provided the concept of ‘globalization’ its analytical power. Moreover, according to this study, it is this version of the literature that resulted in severe consequences for the “theories of globalization” as well.

The main claims of the “globalization theory” can be briefly summarized as follows. The contemporary world is characterized by a qualitative (epochal) shift in terms of spatio-temporal constitution of human societies through the process of ‘globalization’ that “variously manifested in the collapse of military and ideological divisions, the transnational integration of the world to form a single social space, and the rise of new patterns of ‘deterritorialized’ social relations enabled by the new means of communication” (Rosenberg, 2005: 4; see Giddens, 2002; 2003; Scholte, 2003; Held and McGrew, 2003; Bauman, 2006 for arguments in this manner). The critical point in these arguments is the claim that the existing social sciences in general and the concept like nation-state and imperialism in particular are not useful to understand the characteristics of contemporary world. Rather, according to students of the “globalization theory” what is needed is a new, post-classical social theory since even the very concept of *society* is territorially bounded (Scholte, 2003). This study argues that the emergence of the SAF literature, at least partially, reflects this search for a new perspective in general within the rural sociology; since the main aim of the students of the SAF literature is to analyze the consequences of the globalization process for agriculture and food relations (Bonanno, 1991). It is on this basis that, this study argues, the argument on transition from a multi/inter-national phase of capitalism to a supra/trans-national one that is one of the constitutive claims of the SAF literature has its roots in the “globalization

theory”. In other words, the inherent relationship between the SAF literature and the globalization theory lies in the conceptualization of transnationality which this study rejects on the basis of the concept of imperialism.

In fact, the inherent relationship of the SAF literature with the “globalization theory” results from a more general problem, which, arguably, is the influence of “globalization theory” over the “theories of globalization” of which Marxists constitute an important portion. This influence best reflects itself in the conceptualization of the core feature of the “globalization theory” that is the “retreat” of or “withering away” of the nation-state (Savran, 1996) in Marxist terms. In other words, the inherent relationship of some versions of Marxist interpretations of contemporary capitalism and for the case of this study particularly the SAF literature with the “globalization theory” lies in the conceptualization of the future of the nation-state; since the emergence of a transnational state is the constitutive claim of the argument on transition to a transnational phase of capitalism (Bonanno, 1991, Bonanno et al 1994a, 1994b; McMichael, 1991; Friedland, 1991, 2004; Llambi, 1993; Moreira, 1994, 2002, 2004; Ecevit, 2006). Thus, the main reason of the attempt to confront the idea of globalization, particularly the argument on transition to a transnational phase of capitalism with the concept of imperialism, that is the general aim of this study, lies at this point.

In addition to this, this study argues that the influence of globalization theory over the SAF literature also reflects itself in the disconnection between the SAF literature and the peasant/agrarian question literature. As mentioned above, the students of the “globalization theory” easily and relentlessly turned their back on the previous theoretical knowledge, since they argue for a qualitatively different world. Arguably, this point reflects itself in the disconnection with the SAF literature and the peasant/agrarian question literature that mainly aimed to conceptualize petty commodity producers (PCPs) and ‘underdevelopment’. Thus, this study argues that a return to the concept of imperialism can also help to overcome this disconnection.

In relation to these points, the second chapter of this study is dedicated to the analysis of the followings: the rise of the concept of ‘globalization’; the main claims of the “globalization theory”; the inherent relationship of particular versions of Marxism and the SAF literature with the “globalization theory”, and the historical and intellectual conditions that give rise to this problematic relationship; the general methodological and theoretical problems of the idea of ‘globalization’ *as such*, the arguments on transnationality and the emergence of a transnational state. Through the analysis of these points, in that chapter, I will claim that, the main methodological and theoretical problem of the concept of ‘globalization’ and transition to a transnational phase is the misconceptualization of (if not total abstraction of) the distinctive features and immanent contradictions of capitalism; particularly the relationship between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’; the state and capital; and the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the multi-state system consists of nation-states. In other words, I will argue that the general problem of the idea of ‘globalization’, and the SAF literature’s claim on transition to a transnational phase of capitalism and the emergence of a transnational state is the inconsistency with the general theory capitalism.

On the basis of this critique, in the second chapter, I will argue that *capitalist imperialism* is still a powerful concept in the explanation of transformations of capitalist relations since the 1970s since it provides the opportunity for a conjunctural analysis consistent with the general theory of capital accumulation. The details of this argument will be provided in the third chapter through an attempt to reconceptualize the major concepts of the SAF literature (that are the agrifood system and food regimes) within the context of capitalist imperialism. In other words, in the third chapter I will claim that the general problem of the SAF literature is not the attempt to conceptualize contemporary features of capitalism, and the particular forms that distinctive features of capitalism have taken since the 1970s (otherwise will lead to an analysis of capitalism on the basis of abstract modeling); but rather its inconsistency with the general theory of capitalism that reflects itself in the argument on transition to a transnational

phase. Thus, the third chapter of this study is dedicated to positioning the problematics and concepts of the SAF literature within the context of capitalist imperialism. In this chapter, I will argue that transformation of capitalist relations, particularly agrifood relations should be conceptualized in terms of neoliberalism and 'lean colonialism', that is borrowed from Özuğurlu (2005), as the new phase of capitalist imperialism rather than 'globalization' as such and transnationalization. Moreover, I will argue that the SAF literature itself provides the basis of this conceptualization through its problematics and formulation of two successive food regimes. Thus, I argue that this study can also be seen as an attempt to criticize the main theoretical and methodological standpoint of the SAF literature on transnationalization *through* the SAF literature itself. It is on this basis that I will argue transformation of agrifood relations can be conceptualized under the name of *neoliberal food regime* corresponding to the lean colonial phase of capitalist imperialism. In the third chapter, I will also try to analyze the implications of neoliberal food regime for the peasant question and 'underdevelopment' in 21st century. In other words, this study argues that reconceptualization of the problematics and concepts of the SAF literature within the context of capitalist imperialism also provides an analysis that takes the major problematics of the peasant/agrarian question literature as the departure points and extending them with the problematics formulated by the SAF literature.

The fourth chapter of this study is an attempt to apply the theoretical framework of this study formulated in the second and the third chapters to the case of Turkey. In other words, in the fourth chapter I will try to summarize transformations of capitalist relations, particularly agriculture and food relations in Turkey and question whether they are consistent with the neoliberalism and the neoliberal food regime. In that sense, the case of Turkey will also strengthen the rejection of the concepts of 'globalization' and transnationalization. With the analysis of the case of Turkey, the main task of the thesis, that is the criticism of the sociology of agriculture and food literature will be finalized.

To put it differently the chapters of this study is shaped with a struggle within the theoretical framework of this study itself. The second chapter is dedicated to a general criticism of the idea of ‘globalization’ and the SAF literature’s claim on transition to a transnational phase and the emergence of a transnational state on the basis of misconceptualization of the general distinctive features and contradictions of capitalism. However, such a criticism has its own problems as well. To put briefly, criticizing the idea of ‘globalization’ and transnationality on the basis of distinctive features and contradictions of capitalism can lead to the analysis of capitalism on the basis of an abstract model that is valid for the whole history of capitalism since its inception. Thus, the next chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the particular forms that those distinctive features and contradictions of capitalism have taken since the 1970s in terms of capitalist imperialism, neoliberalism in general; and particularly in terms of neoliberal food regime which I derived from the reconceptualization of the concept of food regime within the context of capitalist imperialism. In other words, in the third chapter I will try to formulate a conjunctural analysis of capitalist relations, particularly agrifood relations in a consistent manner with the general theory of capital accumulation. However, such an interpretation on the basis of capitalist imperialism and neoliberalism has also its own problems, since it can lead to conceiving nation-state and bourgeoisie of ‘underdeveloped’ countries as passive recipients of imperialist and neoliberal politics. Moreover, since arguing for a neoliberal food regime is clearly a product of regime type of interpretations, it also embodies the possibility of totalizing a particular period of capitalism and underestimating the differentiations from that regime. Thus, the fourth chapter is dedicated to the analysis of a particular, more concrete case that is the case of Turkey, to avoid these problems.

In the concluding chapter of this study, I will try to formulate not only a general overview of the arguments provided throughout the study, but also provide a reformulation of the critique of the arguments on transition from multi/international phase of capitalism to a transnational one and particularly the emergence of a transnational state from a different and arguably broader point

of view. Briefly put, the general problem of the SAF literature as well as Marxism in general especially after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, is to analyze capitalism by centering the analysis upon the capital rather than the labour. In other words, rather than conceiving it as a social relation, capital has been conceptualized as if it is beyond and above the labour, which simply means abstraction of class struggle from the analysis. This point, arguably, reflects in the argument of the SAF literature on transnational state, which means not only the state is tried to be derived from fetishized phenomenal relations of circulation of capital (Clarke, 1991) but more importantly the politics of labour are also tried to be derived from these fetishized and phenomenal relations. This general problem, that is analyzing capitalism by centering the analysis upon the capital rather than labour inherent in the idea of 'globalization' and the SAF literature, is the general problem that this study also, at least partially, suffers from. In other words, in the conclusion chapter, I will also try to mention the inadequacies of this study, and based on these inadequacies I will try to formulate possible future problematics that further studies can be built on.

CHAPTER 2

IMPERIALISM BACK IN: A CRITIQUE OF THE ARGUMENTS ON TRANSITION TO A TRANSNATIONAL PHASE OF CAPITALISM

2.1. Introduction

Throughout the late 1970s and the 1980s, especially within the body of International Sociological Association, there emerged a growing literature on the transformation of agriculture and food relations as a response to new developments and contradictions within capitalist relations and also to the inadequacy of mainstream Western/American rural sociology, particularly modernization theory, in grasping those developments and contradictions. However, it is only through the 1990s, with the rise of the globalization debate and within this context, that this literature has reached its maturity and has gained its real power within rural sociology as a major perspective under the name of *sociology of agriculture and food* (hereafter SAF). Although, theoretical sources like Neo-Marxism, Neo-Weberianism, Dialectical and Critical Theory, and Phenomenology (Bonanno, 1989; Editorial, 1991) that this literature has benefited from are “multi-stranded and highly variegated” (Buttel, 2001:14), it can be argued that mainly political economic perspectives has dominated the literature (Buttel and Goodman, 1989:86). This fact can also be seen in various names attached to the literature like ‘agrarian political economy’ (Buttel, 2001), ‘sociology and political economy of agriculture’ (Buttel and Goodman, 1989), ‘political economy of food’ (Friedmann, 1993), ‘new political economy of agriculture’ (Friedland et. al. 1991). Based on political economic

perspective, the literature has been focusing on the contradictory development of agricultural and food production which reflects itself in the important innovations and increase in the production and their adverse consequences for the world population and the environment (Bonanno, 1989). Through an analysis of agriculture and food (agrifood) relations and their changing aspects, the literature, at a higher abstraction level, tried to problematize contemporary characteristics of 'global capitalism' and by doing so became a part of the debates within the general social science literature.

In terms of agrifood relations, some of the major problematics that the literature highlighted are the followings¹: the reconvergence of agriculture and industry (one of the most important social division of labour) through the rising food industry under the control of the multinational corporations ('transnational corporations'); increasing role of commercial capital within agrifood system especially through super(hiper)markets; penetration of capital into culture and reproduction sphere through further commodification of food; technological change (among others substitution and developments in seed) and its consequences for the labour process in agricultural production and also for penetration of capital into new spheres through product differentiation; changing aspects of the conditions of agricultural producers and the class position of the petty commodity producers (particularly penetration of capital to agriculture in the form of contract farming); the emergence of a new international division of labour within the world capitalist system based on these changes; the increasing importance and changing role of women labour power; and environmental degradation².

¹ It is, in fact, very difficult to find the listed problematics within the literature as such. These problematics are put forward here based on Ecevit's comprehensive and innovative review and conceptualization of the literature formulated throughout the EBA (Ekin Besin Atölyesi) seminars (Ecevit, unpublished EBA discussion papers). The critical point is that, although these problematics rarely become explicit within the literature, it can be argued that the sociology of agriculture and food literature has paved this way.

² In chapter two these problematics will be analyzed in details through an historical investigation of the transformation of capitalist relations particularly in relation to agriculture and food based on the conceptual framework formulated in this chapter.

Based on theoretical assumptions derived mainly from globalization debate and empirically substantiated studies on these problematics, the literature has tried to show that contemporary capitalism is characterized by a transition to a qualitatively different phase as a result of the 'globalization' process, particularly a transition from inter/multi-national phase to a supra/trans-national one³ (Bonanno, 1991, Bonanno et al 1994a, 1994b; McMichael, 1991; Friedland, 1991, 2004; Llambi, 1993; Moreiro, 1994, 2002, 2004; Ecevit, 2006). Thus, it can be stated that the contemporary literature on agrifood relations is important in two ways. Firstly, at a more concrete level, the literature sheds important light on new developments within capitalism concerning the agrifood relations. In other words, changing aspects of social relations around agriculture and food are problematized in a comprehensive manner with a political economic perspective which was neglected within the political economy literature of the late twentieth century (Magdoff et. al., 2000: 7). Secondly, at a higher level of abstraction, with the help of the richness of the problematics formulated through the analysis of the agrifood relations, the literature can provide us with insights to understand the characteristics of contemporary capitalism and substantiate the ongoing debates within the social science literature in general.

However, it is the claim of this study that there is a tension between these two levels of analyses that the literature works through. In other words, the general theoretical and methodological starting points concerning the characteristics of contemporary capitalism are problematic in a way that they hinder the further progress of the discussion on agrifood relations and the problematics formulated above. This study claims that, the theoretical assumptions of the SAF literature on the transition to a transnational phase of capitalism, which is a product of the idea of 'globalization', ironically, prevent the students of the SAF even from problematizing the agrifood relations that is the main aim of the literature itself.

³ The literature is not a homogenous one and there are various approaches to contemporary capitalism but still it can be argued that the dominant idea on contemporary capitalism is the claim on transnationalization.

The major reason of the fact that the problematics highlighted by the literature listed above rarely become explicit, arguably, lies at this point. In other words, agrifood relations are taken only as an instrument to provide an empirical ground to the assumptions formulated within the globalization debate at a higher level of abstraction. Thus, in order to make the potential theoretical expansions of the literature and the problematics listed above apparent, a critique of its theoretical claim on transition to a qualitatively different phase of capitalism in general and transnationality in particular is a must. This necessitates a critique of the general context that the contemporary literature was born into, which is mainly the globalization debate. The main aim of this chapter is to provide a basis for such a critique which will, arguably, help to advance the literature.

At this point it should be mentioned that the SAF literature, in fact, does not make such a distinction between two levels of analyses, as the analyses of agrifood relations at a more concrete abstraction level, and analysis of contemporary capitalism at a higher abstraction level. Rather, it simply analyzes the 'globalization' process and its consequences for agrifood relations. The distinction between these two levels of analyses is made here in analytical terms in order to reveal the potential theoretical expansions of the literature and to clarify the main claim of this study. To state in different terms, the main claim of this study is that once the critique of the theoretical assumptions of the literature is accomplished, concepts like *food regime* and *agrifood system* will gain their real theoretical significance in terms of understanding the agrifood relations and, more generally, the characteristics of contemporary capitalism.

In addition to this, such a theoretical critique will also help to relate the contemporary literature with the previous Marxist discussions on agriculture held mainly before the 1980s⁴, under the name of *agrarian/peasant question*.

⁴ The periodization of the literature as pre-1980 and post-1980 does not capture the continuity and the rupture within the political economic understanding of agrifood relations precisely. The general problem belongs to the act of periodization itself since it has a totalizing effect over the object of the periodization. In addition to this, the literature concerned here is mainly a product of the 1990s which also corresponds to the rise of globalization debate which according to this study provided the theoretical ground for the main claims of the literature. But still, it is clear

This point is also of crucial importance since there is a lack of adequate dialogue between the agrarian/peasant question literature and the sociology of agriculture and food literature⁵, which according to this study results mainly from the theoretical departure points of the contemporary literature that suffer from important methodological and theoretical problems. Relating the two body of the literature with each other will also help us advance the problematics put forward by the contemporary literature through the help of extensive theoretical knowledge of the pre-1980 literature.

At this point, it is important to note that agrarian relations has always been an important problematic for Marxism both in theoretical and political terms throughout the twentieth century. Especially until the 1980s, under the name of *agrarian/peasant question*, Marxists mainly problematized the persistent continuity/survival of petty commodity producers characterized by their non-commodity family labour under capitalist conditions and their differentiated ways of articulation with capitalist relations (Ecevit, 1999). Through an analysis of survival conditions and characteristics of petty commodity producers, characteristics of capitalism, especially in underdeveloped countries, were problematized (Aydin 1986a, 1986b; Ecevit, 1999). The major motive behind all these discussions was a very political question⁶: how to conceptualize

that the late 1970s is the starting point of the neoliberal transformation of capitalist relations which have important effects on the transformation of the agrifood relations. These transformations are the material conditions that gave way to the SAF literature and the globalization debate. When we also consider that the students of the contemporary literature also trace their history back to late 1970s such a periodization corresponds to a historical turning point.

⁵ The lack of an adequate dialogue between *peasant question* literature and the *sociology of agriculture and food* literature can be seen with a cross reference search based on keywords representing the problematics put forward by the contemporary literature and the peasant question literature within two journals: *Journal of Peasant Studies* and the *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, the former represents the peasant question literature and the latter represents the SAF.

⁶ It should be mentioned that besides the political motive there is also an important theoretical question concerning the petty commodity producers in capitalist societies. Simply put, the persistent continuity of petty commodity producers was, in fact contradictory to the classical expectation of Marxism which mainly states that penetration of capitalism into the rural relations will result in two major classes in agriculture as in the case of industry; rural proletariat the big land owners.

capitalist societies especially in underdeveloped countries, answer of which will lead to the proper strategy to destroy capitalist relations (Seddon and Margulies, 1982). One of the major questions for this proper strategy was the conditions of alliance of proletariat and rural classes. Although there are different ways of formulating the peasant question (Watts and Goodman, 1997; Araghi, 2000), in this study it is understood as the question of the alliance of the rural classes and the proletariat⁷.

It is true that these Marxist debates never became a dominant and widely accepted perspective in rural sociology, but they constituted an important political agenda through the problematization of underdevelopment and the questioning of the alliance of the proletariat and the rural classes. In that sense, it can be stated that it is the legacy of these debates that gives the contemporary literature its political character and political economic perspective (Büke and Özügürü, 2007: 94). But, the much more apparent and critical point is the rupture and differences between agrarian/peasant question literature and the contemporary literature. For the sake of this thesis, the rupture between these two literatures mainly manifests itself in the conceptualization of the petty commodity producers⁸. In relation to this point, this study argues that contemporary literature has little attempt to conceptualize the class position of the petty commodity producers and ‘underdevelopment’ in contemporary capitalism and arguably this is why there is little reference to the peasant question literature. In fact, the contemporary literature mainly claims that the peasant question is not a valid one as it was before the 1980s (Araghi, 2000; Byres, 1996 cited in Watts and Goodman, 1997) since the globalization process altered the capitalist relations radically. On the other side, students of the peasant/agrarian question rarely take the problematics highlighted by the contemporary literature into consideration and that means new developments

⁷ It should be noted that this is not only a political question but also a theoretical one since conceptualization of rural classes and underdevelopment is determinant in this alliance.

⁸ See Buttel (2001) and Ecevit (2006) for a general comparison of the contemporary literature and the peasant question literature.

within agrifood relations which are very important for the peasant question today left unproblematized (Ecevit, 2008).

It is possible to compare and contrast theoretically the contemporary literature with the agrarian/peasant question literature on the basis of historical conditions and major motives that lead to these literatures, their theoretical resources, and major problematics that they focus on. But, since the main task of this thesis is a critical examination of the theoretical claim of the contemporary literature on the transition to a qualitatively different phase of capitalism, this comparison will not be provided in details. Rather, for the sake of this thesis, the critical point is the problematic that lies behind the theoretical questioning of the contemporary literature in terms of globalization and transnationality: the elaboration of the peasant question in the twenty-first century. In other words, conceptualization of the peasant question under the new conditions of capitalist relations, particularly in terms of agrifood relations is still an important theoretical and political task⁹. The importance of the theoretical questioning of the contemporary literature and an attempt to link these two bodies of literatures with each other through a theoretical confrontation of the concepts of transnationalization and imperialism, lies, *inter alia*, at this point.

To accomplish the tasks mentioned above, the chapter is organized basically in three parts. First of all, the general relationship between the globalization debate and the argument on transnationalization and the sociology of agriculture and food literature will be provided through an analysis of the rise of the concept of 'globalization'. In this part, the general problems inherent in the idea of globalization will also be provided. In the second part, the arguments on transition to a qualitatively different phase of capitalism in terms of transnationalization within the sociology of agriculture and food literature will

⁹ I am well aware of the fact that questioning the conditions of alliance of rural classes and the working class may seem as a forced theoretical attempt within the historical conjuncture that we are living in. But still we can argue that especially with the food crisis capitalism faced recently there is a growing attention on this issue. This study argues that conceptualization of rural classes and the conditions of the alliance with the proletariat will take its place in the political and theoretical agenda of the Marxists in the upcoming years again.

be summarized and the inherent relationship of this literature with the globalization debate will be presented. Methodological and theoretical critique of the argument on transition to a transnational phase of capitalism and the emergence of a transnational state as the decisive feature of this new phase will also be provided in this part; and this critique will also further strengthen the rejection of the idea of ‘globalization’ in general. And finally, despite the fact that further elaboration in the light of the new developments within capitalist relations is needed, it will be claimed that *imperialism* is still a powerful concept both analytically and politically in understanding and changing the contemporary capitalism based on the ‘renewed’ Marxist debates on imperialism (Callinicos, 2007) and the critiques of the globalization literature formulated especially throughout the 2000s.

2.2. Globalization, Transnationality and the Sociology of Agriculture and Food

It is clear that ‘globalization’ constituted one of the biggest debates in social sciences which spread over many different fields and disciplines. Throughout the debate, the term ‘globalization’ is presented as the key concept to understand the contemporary world (Waters, 1995; Sklair 1999; Bauman, 2006; Giddens, 2002, 2003; Held and McGrew, 2003). For the sake of this thesis, the concept of ‘globalization’ is important in two related ways¹⁰. First of all, “the great globalization debate” (Held and McGrew, 2003), specifically ‘globalists’ or ‘radicals’ within this debate¹¹, at the most abstract level, claimed that

¹⁰ It is possible to discuss the ‘globalization’ in many different ways. An important part of the contemporary literature on ‘globalization’ focuses on the empirical evidences concerning whether ‘globalization’ is a real phenomena or not. Though, this discussion is also important to understand the positions of the different sides of the debate, it is not concerned here since this study tries to conceptualize the problems of the theoretical conclusions based on the idea of ‘globalization’. It is for sure that these conclusions are derived from the reality of new developments and contradictions within capitalist relations and in that sense, the reality of change is out of question throughout the study.

¹¹ Held and McGrew (2003: 2) categorizes the participants of the globalization debate in two groups with the precaution that these categories refer to ideal types: “emerging fissure between those who consider that contemporary globalization is a real and significant historical development – the *globalists* – and those who conceive it as a primarily ideological or social

'globalization', "variously manifested in the collapse of military and ideological divisions, the transnational integration of the world to form a single social space, and the rise of new patterns of 'deterritorialized' social relations enabled by the new means of communication", is resulting in a qualitative (epochal) shift in "the spatio-temporal constitution of human societies" (Rosenberg, 2005: 4). It is clear that the logical conclusion of this argument would be the inadequacy of the existing social science literature as a whole, in understanding this emerging new kind of society, since the very concept of society is territorially bounded (Giddens, 2002; Scholte, 2003) and existing social science literature suffers from 'methodological territorialism' (Scholte, 2003). Therefore, it is argued that with the 'globalization' process there emerged a "need for a new, post-classical social theory, in which the categories of space and time would receive the central explanatory role which they had always deserved" (Rosenberg, 2005: 4)¹². And it is the claim of this study that the emergence of sociology of agriculture and food is, at least partially, a product of such a search (Editorial, 1991; Bonanno, 1994). The second point is a more concrete claim when compared to this qualitative shift argument, namely the transition to a transnational phase of capitalism discussed basically with the demise of the nation-state argument which is the essence of the idea of globalization (Savran, 1996: 10-11), and one of the constitutive argument of the SAF literature as well (McMichael 1991, 2001; Bonanno, 1991, 2004; Friedland, 1991; Llambi, 1993; Moreira, 1994). Thus, to position the globalization debate in its historical context, and a critical examination of these two founding ideas of globalization will also provide us with the opportunity to evaluate the strong and weak aspects of the SAF literature.

Before starting to analyze the idea of globalization, and methodological and theoretical problems that it suffers from, one critical point should be mentioned.

construction which has marginal explanatory value – the *skeptics*". Giddens (2002) makes the same categorization as 'radicals' and 'skeptics'. It should be noted that, although this study criticizes the idea of globalization, it does not share the position of the skeptics as well.

¹² For arguments in this manner see Giddens, 2002, 2003; Scholte, 2003; and Bauman, 2006.

Specifically concerning the first claim, only a particular version of the literature is concerned here. It is “the literature of Globalization Theory” as Rosenberg (2000, 2005) named it, or ‘globalism’ as Savran (1996) named it, best-known writers of which are Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, David Held, Tony McGrew, Manuel Castells and Zigmunt Bauman (Rosenberg, 2005:4). Rosenberg (2000: 2-4) makes the distinction between *the globalization theory*, and *theories of globalization* based on the logical structure of the argumentation. According to this distinction, globalization theory refers to the literature that tries to explain globalization as an outcome, through the globalization itself as a process that will inevitably result in that outcome (Rosenberg, 2000: 2; 2005: 12); while a theory of globalization “might be constructed out of anything presumed to generate the spatio-temporal phenomena involved” (Rosenberg, 2000:3).

Focusing on a particular version of the debate can be criticized on the basis of the fact that this version does not represent the whole literature and the problematics concerned throughout the debate, but, on the contrary, represents even the ideas of a marginalized group of social scientists. This criticism has a valid ground, but still, the important point here is that although there are few social scientist who interpret and presented ‘globalization’ in this manner, it is this version that dominated the literature and gives the particular analytical importance, meaning and the power of the concept. It is this version of the literature that understands ‘globalization’ as an analytical term reflecting an inevitable process of a transition to a new, qualitatively different phase in which previous concepts like imperialism and nation-state has no meaning anymore (Özüğurlu, 2005: 86). Following Rosenberg (2005: 4), it can even be argued that the overall success and power of the term globalization depends upon “the strategic position” that this version of the literature holds on.

In addition to this, there is a close relationship between globalization theory and theories of globalization in which the hegemonic position of the globalization theory has severe consequences for the students of the theories of the

globalization as well, an important portion of which is composed of Marxists with the claim that “Marx has some claim to the status of the first major theorist of globalization” (Bromley, 1999: 280). It is the argument of this study that the argument on transition to a transnational phase of capitalism is one of the most important severe consequences mentioned above. Thus, a theoretical criticism of this version of the literature will also help to clarify the theories of the globalization side of the literature and the argument on transnationality as well.

2.2.1. The Rise of the Concept of Globalization

Although its first appearance in *Webster* is in 1961¹³ (Koç, 1994: 265), it is only through the early or the mid-1980s that the term ‘globalization’ entered into academic studies (Waters, 1996: 2), but its real popularity came with the 1990s. Waters (1996:2) points out that “as at February the catalog of the Library of Congress contains only 34 items with that term or one of its derivatives in the title”, and none of these publications were published before 1987. Therborn (cited in Fine 2004: 215) also states that globalization is even “a concern of the second half of the 1990s... The Social Science Index records only a few occurrences of ‘globalization’ in the 1980s but shows its soaring popularity from 1992 onwards”. Fine’s (2004: 222) search within Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) citations based on keyword search using ‘globali’, since it comprehends terms like globalization, globalized, globalizing, also verifies this fact. According to this search, the appearance of ‘globali’ in SSCI from 1990 to 2003 is respectively 23, 47, 52, 68, 72, 100, 173, 669, 1350, 1521, 2088, 2366, 2835, 2664. The numbers alone do not and never can tell the whole story, but it can be derived from these points that globalization is mainly a concept of the 1990s, even the second half of the 1990s. For instance, Waters (1996: 1) states that “just as postmodernism was *the* concept of the 1980s, globalization may be *the* concept of the 1990s, a key idea by which we understand the transition of human society”. Almost a decade after Waters, in his powerful article that

¹³ It should be noted that the word ‘global’ is over 400 years old; but words like ‘globalization’, ‘globalize’, ‘globalizing’ did not started to be used until the 1960s (Waters, 1994: 2).

critically examines the rise and the fall of the concept of 'globalization', Rosenberg (2005:3) defines globalization as the *Zeitgeist* of the 1990s. This point is important in establishing the link between the globalization literature and the SAF literature since the SAF literature is also mainly a product of the 1990s¹⁴. In short, the term globalization, in a very short period, started to be conceived as a key to a new social theory that will transcend the classical territorially bounded one and conceptualize the contemporary world (Giddens 2002); and demanded exemption from questioning (Bauman 2006: 7).

Within this context, the usage and acceptance of 'globalization' as an analytical term, extended far beyond the writings of 'globalists' or 'radicals' and became one of the key concepts used in many different methodologies, one of which is Marxism. For instance, Harvey (2000: 13, cited in Fine 2004: 213) states that globalization "is now one of the most hegemonic concepts for understanding the political economy of international capitalism" which means globalization took its place within Marxist methodology as well. This fact can be best seen in Bromley's (1999: 280) study in which he tries to show that "Marx has some claim to the status of the first major theorist of globalization". Then it is necessary to find an explanation for the question posed by Harvey (2000: 13, cited in Fine 2004: 213): "So where did this concept come from?" One more question should also be added to understand the positions of political economic perspectives in response to 'globalization': How could it be possible that the concept of 'globalization' which suffers from serious methodological problems let aside the political and ideological implications, became so widely accepted by the Marxist methodology as well? The answers to these questions can establish the link between the idea of globalization and the sociology of agriculture and food as well.

To answer these questions, historical conditions of the 1990s and the intellectual heritage of the previous decades mainly the 1980s should be taken into

¹⁴ It is not a coincidence that *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, the official journal of the Research Committee on Sociology of Agriculture and Food, started to be published in 1991.

consideration¹⁵. For the historical conditions of the 1990s, Rosenberg (2005: 6) argues that “the Soviet collapse in the East and the deregulating thrust of the neoliberalism in the West” were the central events, and much more important was their combination which produced “a distinct, in some ways self-contained historical conjuncture, in which the filling of a socio-political vacuum (generated by the Soviet collapse and its effects) created an enormous sense of temporal acceleration and spatial compression”. The role of finance, developments in information, communication and transportation technology should also be added. Under these conditions, the intellectual heritage of the previous decades was mainly the literatures on postmodernism and neoliberalism (Fine, 2004: 213). Fine (2004: 213) establishes the link between postmodernism, neoliberalism and globalization as follows:

‘[G]lobalization’ neatly captures two intellectual trends, the dual retreat from the excesses both of the neoliberalism and of postmodernism. From preoccupation with deconstruction and semiotics across the social sciences, attention has been directed towards understanding the nature of contemporary capitalism as a system of power and conflict, of poverty and inequality, of environmental degradation, and so on. ‘Globalization’ predominantly represents a return in emphasis to the study of material realities other than as a system of signs. Interest has focused on how the world is organized and functions internationally and nationally, reflecting intellectual departure from a ‘virtual’ world of increasingly free and unconstrained markets. Such concerns have also reduced the appeal of neoliberalism, the idea that the world could and should be run as if a perfectly functioning set of markets with at most a light, facilitating touch by the state.

It is at this point, that the term globalization appealed Marxism in general and areas using political economic perspectives like sociology of agriculture and food literature so much. And that is why Fine (2004), despite the fact that he is well aware of the problems of it, conceives the concept of globalization as an opportunity for political economy rather than a threat to Marxist analysis¹⁶. When the heavy criticisms of holistic understandings within social sciences in

¹⁵ This study rejects the understanding of globalization as a merely ideological term as sceptics see it. See Hirst and Thompson (1998) and Savran (1996) for examples of this understanding.

¹⁶ Fine’s (2004) position and elaboration of his position are important because his ideas represent a general understanding among Marxists who use the term globalization. See Aydın (2005) for a similar understanding.

general and Marxism in particular; and the loss of self-esteem that Marxism faced with the collapse of the Soviet Union are also taken into consideration, this interpretation can be understandable. However, the critical point is that although with the globalization debate Marxism has found a way to reconstitute itself this could only be possible with serious problems that reflect itself in the conceptualization of transnationalization with Marxist terminology, because of the hegemonic position of the globalization theory. Although, Fine's ideas concerning the relationship between neoliberalism, postmodernism and globalization has an important point, the idea of globalization and globalization theory embody problems of both neoliberalism and postmodernism reflecting itself most importantly in the understanding of contradictions within capitalism as I will try to formulate in the next sections. Another important point in relation to this is the fact that, globalization paved way to the studies of material world which consists of inequalities only through criticism of itself. Simply putting, the problem of the interpretation of the concept of globalization exemplified in Fine (2004) is the confusion of the idea of globalization and its criticisms with each other.

In addition to this, the following question should also be posed: "Is there a need for a new concept for Marxism to study and understand "the nature of contemporary capitalism as a system of power and conflict, of poverty and inequality, of environmental degradation, and so on" (Fine, 2004: 213). To give a positive answer to this question a qualitative change within social relations should be accepted as the idea of globalization implies. To argue that contemporary capitalism is a system of power and conflict is a tautology since according to Marxist methodology by definition capitalism is a system of power and conflict. Moreover, arguing that we are living in a capitalist society is by itself contradictory to the idea of a qualitatively different and totally new world. For further elaboration, it is necessary to analyze the general problems of the idea of globalization and the arguments on transition to a transnational phase.

2.2.2. The General Problems of the Idea of Globalization

To understand the problems of the idea of globalization it is better to start with some definitions that are widely accepted¹⁷. For instance, Scholte (2003: 85) defines globalization as ‘deterritorialization’, and “the growth of ‘supraterritorial’ relations between people”; Giddens (2003: 60), one of the most cited definitions, sees globalization “as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”; Waters (1996: 3) states that globalization is “a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding”; and Held et. al. (2003: 68) conceptualize globalization as “a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of the social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and the exercise of power.”

It can be derived from these definitions that ‘globalization’ is mainly “a geographical term denoting a process over time of spatial change – the process of becoming worldwide” (Rosenberg, 2005: 11). As Rosenberg argues, the critical point is that besides space, time and the shape of the planet there is no other explanatory category in these definitions that the analysis can be based upon, which means ‘globalization’ is presented as an outcome which results from ‘globalization’ itself. It is at this point that the general problem of the globalization theory lies. In other words, as far as the globalization theory is concerned the general problem of the logical structure of the argumentation is as follows:

In the logical structure of their argumentation, what presents itself initially as the *explanandum* – globalization as the developing outcome of some historical process – is progressively transformed into the *explanans*: it is globalization

¹⁷ These definitions are chosen not only because they are mostly known. These are chosen also because the authors of these definitions are well aware of the problem concerning the differentiation of the term globalization from terms like universalization, modernization, internationalization. See Sklair (1999) for a similar attempt.

which now explains the changing character of the modern world – and even generates ‘retrospective discoveries’ about past epochs in which it must be presumed not to have existed. (Rosenberg, 2000:3)¹⁸

Giddens (2002:4), for instance, states that “globalization is restructuring the ways in which we live, and in a very profound manner” which only means becoming worldwide is reshaping our lives and how are we becoming worldwide is totally out of question within this argumentation. The logical conclusion of such an argumentation is best reflected in Hoogvelt’s (1999, cited in Rosenberg 2000: 4) words:

If, previously, global integration in the sense of a growing unification and interpenetration of the human condition was driven by the economic logic of capital accumulation, today it is the unification of the human condition that drives the logic of further capital accumulation.

It is clear that Hoogvelt - let aside his economic deterministic understanding of capital rather than as a social relation - uses globalization as an ‘explanan’ like Giddens and many other students of globalization theory. But what he and many others do not take into consideration is the fact that, in order to use a term as an analytical concept, that term should consist of relations of different variables and should explain those relations at a higher level of abstraction (Özüğurlu, 2005: 265; Ecevit, 2008). Moreover, it should also have certain differences with other concepts of that level of abstraction (Özüğurlu, 2005: 265). To clarify this point, Rosenberg gives the example of the concept of capitalism which basically implies a social relation between wage labour and capitalist. Through an analysis of this relationship the concept of capitalism implies a particular kind of society; and time and space phenomena are also conceptualized according to this relationship. In that sense, globalization neither implies a set of relations nor can differentiate itself from other terms like internationalization or universalization. This is why a systematic conceptualization of globalization

¹⁸ Rosenberg (2000:3) also highlights that it is not possible to reject the claims of the globalization theory a priori on purely logical grounds, because of the inversion of the explanan and the explanandum. To show that, he gives the example of Marx’s conceptualization of capitalist social relations, which are themselves products of particular historical developments, i.e. explanandum, as fundamental to the understanding of modern societies, i.e. explanan.

could never come into existence, not because of the lack of the attempt but because of the problem of the logical construction of the argument (Rosenberg, 2005). And this is why the literature is full of contesting conceptualization of globalization and contradictory statements concerning the trends in a 'globalized world' which is best reflected in the term 'glocalization'. In other words, the authors of globalization theory, immediately after claiming that a qualitatively different spatio-temporal condition is emerging in which space is not important anymore, list trends in favor of localization, and nationalization that clearly undermine the interpretation of globalization as such. In short, even when it is assumed that we are now living in a qualitatively different and a new kind of society the term globalization *as such* cannot be the basis of a new kind of post-classical social theory.

The other methodological critical point of the idea of globalization which has close relationship with the logical problems concerned above is the exclusion of contradictions from the analysis of the society. The most important aspect of Marxism as a methodology, and politically of course, is its focus on contradictions in the analysis of the society. But since the idea of globalization has no concern for a particular society, contradictions became out of discussion. In other words:

Globalization theories, no matter the differences among them, share a common methodological problem: abstraction of contradictions that are at the heart of the integrated world capitalist system. In these theories, world capitalist system as a given totality is presented in an evolution process from one phase to another based on a functionalist adjustment process understanding. According to these theories, developments in technology or changes in economy policies make evolution of world system to a new phase inevitable. Here, what is portrayed is an 'evolution' process in the narrow sense of the term. For as much as the new conditions necessitates capitalism will certainly globalize! Of course, all globalization theorists mention some difficulties of transition and labour pains. But these difficulties in these theories are not structural contradictions of the systemic totality that put forward by them. These difficulties do not result from the nature of the system. Rather, for these theories what is at stake is simply the resistance of the old to the emerging new. In short, globalism, decontaminate 'globalized' capitalism from **its inherent, essential contradictions resulting from its own nature.** (Savran, 1996: 3)

The details of this second point will be provided in the next section through the analysis of the argument on transition to a transnational phase and the emergence on the transnational state since in a close relationship to the idea of globalization, the main problem of these arguments lies at this point.

2.3. Transnationalization, Transnational State and Sociology of Agriculture and Food

Within the globalization debate, in a close relationship with the idea of a qualitative shift in the spatio-temporal condition of human societies, at a more concrete level, it is argued that the contemporary capitalism is characterized by a transition from a multi/inter-national phase to a supra/trans-national phase. This study argues that, the most intimate theoretical and methodological relationship between globalization theory and particularly critical political economic perspectives, and a partial answer to the widespread acceptance of the term globalization among Marxists lies at this point. This relationship represents itself in the conceptualization of surpassing of the national scale and the ‘withering away’ or ‘retreat’ of the nation-state, which is one of the most essential claims of the idea of globalization, in Marxist terms. That means a qualitative shift argument of the globalization theory at the extreme, transformed into a moderate debate within a capitalist society and Marxism, which, arguably, in turn strengthened the globalization theory and the idea of globalization rather than Marxism. Since the future of nation-state is at the center of this argument and sociology of agriculture and food literature from its inception centered its analysis of globalization on the basis of this argument¹⁹ and comprehends most of the arguments formulated throughout the debate I will briefly summarize ‘the retreat of the nation-state’ and the formation of a

¹⁹ The first issue of the *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food* with a forum section on ‘Globalization and the State’ shows the fact that transition to a transnational phase of capitalism with the demise of nation-state is one of the most important constitutive argument of the SAF literature.

transnational state that suits to the new phase of capitalism arguments within the literature in relation to the general debate and provide a critique of it.

2.3.1. Transnationalization and the Emergence of a Transnational State: A Brief Review of the SAF

Sociology of agriculture and food literature, similar to the criticism put forward by the globalization theory to the existing social science literature (methodological territorialism), started with a general criticism towards the existing Marxist literature on state. The students of the SAF claimed that existing Marxist perspectives towards the conceptualization of state, namely the instrumentalist approach, the relative autonomy approach, and the state-centered approaches, share a common problem that is conceptualizing the state in national terms²⁰:

[I]n Marxist analyses the State has been conceptualized as a **predominantly domestic entity** which regulates the process of reproduction of capital. (Bonanno 1991: 18; see also Friedland, 1991, McMichael, 1991; Bonanno et. al, 1994a, 1994b Bonanno, 2004)

According to this criticism, with the globalization process the historical conditions that created the state as a ‘domestic entity’ at the national level has been surpassed which means the importance of the nation-state is not prevailing anymore. In other words, according to this understanding, the conceptualization of state within Marxism reflects the historical development of capitalism following a path as follows: a national phase that reflects itself in conceptualization of the development of capitalism in Britain, best example of which is Marx’s *Capital*; a multi/inter-national phase reflected in theories like Theories of Imperialism, Dependency School, World System Theory, Unequal

²⁰ Robinson (cited in Cammack, 2007: 1) who also argues for a transition from “a nation-state phase of world capitalism” to a transnational phase best reflects this criticism since he argues that understanding the contemporary world in the opposite manner is becoming a part of “nation-state centrism”, a mindset that should be abandoned according to him. See Held (1983) for a general review of state conceptualizations; and see Jessop (1977) for a review of Marxist conceptualizations of the state.

Exchange, and The Articulation of Modes of Production (Bonanno, 1991). Thus, according to this understanding, it was not wrong to conceptualize state as a “domestic entity” for this conceptualization reflected the historical conditions of the time, but it is argued that since capitalism has surpassed the multinational phase and passed to a transnational phase (transnational character of capital accumulation by-passed the State authority at the national level) with the globalization process the conceptualization of the state as a historical entity should be reconsidered (Bonanno, 1991; McMichael, 1991). According to students of the SAF literature, such reconsideration will point out the formation of a transnational state.

At this point it is important to note that, the discussion on the formation of a transnational state formulated within the SAF literature is not simply a reproduction of the demise of the nation-state argument of the globalization idea but rather an attempt to interpret the relationship between the state and capital as an historical one. The contribution of political economic perspectives to the idea of globalization and the debate around the future of the nation-state lies at this point in which the relationship between the nation-state and the capital is not conceived, at least totally, as an external one. Rather, an intimate relationship between the state and the capital is established on the basis of the functions of the state fulfilled on behalf of the capital and the society in general. These functions are formulated as accumulation legitimization, mediation of inter- and intra-class conflicts, and social reproduction. The literature mainly claimed that with the globalization process it is not possible for the national-state to fulfill these functions since the transnational character of capital accumulation by-passed the nation-state and there emerged a need for a transnational state which will function at the same level that the capital moves through. Thus, although there is an intimate relationship with the globalization debate and there are serious methodological problems within this debate as this study argues, it would be a mistake to conceive this debate as the same with the globalization debate. On the basis of the general criticism formulated above and with the

question of the formation of a transnational state four different theoretical positions emerged within the SAF literature.

The first position, mainly exemplified by Friedland (1991, 1994, 2004), conceives the state in terms of the “class control” (Bonanno et al 1994: 15) and the role of the state concerning the maintenance of the capital accumulation. According to this position the emergence of the state as a domestic, national entity is the result of the attempts to “minimize the uncertainties in the accumulation of capital to create climate of a business control”. In other words, for capital accumulation not to face with “unbearable contradictions” (contradictions between various fractions of capital, particularly between domestic capital and transnational one; and contradiction between capital in general and the subordinate groups) the state as a regulatory power which maintains the mediation, legitimization and accumulation functions should continue its existence. But since with the globalization process the capital accumulation move beyond the multinational phase and entered a transnational one, it is not possible to maintain these functions at the national level anymore. Thus, an appropriate form of the state for the transnational character of the capital accumulation, that is the transnational state, should emerge. According to this position organizations like FAO and OECD can be seen as “embryonic forms” of transnational state.

Second position exemplified by McMichael (1991, see also McMichael and Myre, 1991), argues that the existing nation-state and the state system has already been transformed into a transnational state by “the transnationalization of the economic sphere”. According to this understanding of the state, this process is based upon the integration of the nation-state into the capital circuits that are increasingly transnationalized. Two basic examples for this integration are the finance sector and the agrifood relations both of which are out of the control of the nation-state. The implication of this process of becoming transnational for the state is the fact that the state is not anymore a mediator

between the global capital and national bourgeoisie and the working class but rather a “facilitator of the requirements of the global capital”.

Third position, as opposed to the first two positions mentioned above, emphasizes the limits of the formation of a transnational state in relation to the functions performed by the nation-state in favor of the capital. Koç (1994) as a proponent of this position argues that the state at the national level still performs critical tasks for the accumulation of the capital which are difficult to be resolved at the transnational level. First of all the nation-state through creating a more or less homogenized society on the basis of nation has an important power at the national level. With this power the state is able to maintain coherence and legitimacy on behalf of the capital within a given territory which otherwise would be full of contradictions among variety of religious, ethnic, and political groups. According to this position the power that the nation-state holds in relation to this point is difficult to establish at the international or transnational level. In addition to this, this position highlights another important point that is the role of the nation-state in relation to the control and the reproduction of the labour power. The most important point in this argument is that despite the fact that barriers to the mobility of capital at the transnational level are mostly eroded, barriers to the mobility of the labour still continue to exist. In other words, according to this position, “transnationalization of the production process has not been accompanied by the transnational mobility of the labour”. This position, thus, argues that although some segments of capital have moved beyond the control of the nation-state which has brought the emergence of the transnational state into question, as far as the labour is concerned just the opposite can also be expected since the restrictions on the mobility of the labour can result in nationalist and even racist reactions within the working class.

The fourth position exemplified by Bonanno (1991, 2004, Bonanno et al 1994a), arguably starts from this criticism put forward by Koç and tries to conceptualize the emergence of the transnational state as an outcome of the contradictory but convergent interests of both bourgeoisie and the working class

in the formation of a transnational state. In other words, Bonanno (1991, 2004, Bonanno et al 1994a) argues that the formation of a transnational state would be the result of the relationship between TNCs, the state and the subordinate groups in which both TNCs and the subordinate groups has a strong interest in this formation. For Bonanno (1991, 2004, Bonanno et al 1994a), the previous three positions mentioned above focus only to the transnational capital and its interest when conceptualizing the transnational state which puts the subordinate groups and their interests out of the analysis. Simply put, Bonanno (Bonanno et. al 1994: 19) argues that:

TNCs need a political mediator/facilitator at the transnational level to provide a business climate of accumulation and mediate legitimation demands from subordinate classes and between capitalist class fractions. Subordinate classes need a transnational state to help regain many of their losses centered around health and safety for workers, consumer protection and environmental regulations which the transnationalization of the economy accomplished.

Formulated in this way, Bonanno (1991, 2004, Bonanno et al 1994a) sees the emergence of ‘supranational organizations’ like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and particularly European Community (EC) as the early attempts of the transnational state.

From this brief summary of the literature within the sociology of agriculture and food, it can be derived that the formation and conceptualization of a transnational state have not been accomplished yet; but rather the conceptualization has been based upon possible trends as the literature itself also mentions. In addition to this, as stated before the literature conceives the relationship between the state and the capital as an internal and a necessary one. Thus it would be a mistake to conceive this literature as simple reproduction of the idea of the retreat of the nation-state formulated within the globalization debate, but the critical point is that this attempt still suffers from serious problems which are the legacy of the idea of the globalization as concerned in this thesis and its relationship with the neoliberal and postmodern understandings as Fine argues. Simply put, the relationship between the idea of globalization, neoliberal understandings and postmodernism can be established

in terms of the conceptualization of contradictions inherent and essential in capitalism. Now I will try to show how contradictions inherent in capitalism are conceptualized in a problematic manner.

2.3.2. Problems of Transnationalization and Transnational State

It is possible to criticize the SAF literature concerning the arguments on qualitative change and the transition to a transnational phase of capitalism on three points: the general problem in the argumentation that reflects itself in the shallow conceptualization of the transition to a transnational phase; problematic conceptualization of the relationship between (or the separation of) the economic and the political in a capitalist society, and in relation to this point, conceptualization of the state as a fetishized and separate form within capitalism through a one sided analysis of the contradictory relationship inherent to capitalism that is the contradictory existence of the multi-state system and the tendency of capital to extend at the global level²¹. Following these three steps both the transition to a transnational phase of capitalism and the emergence of a transnational state argument will be rejected. Once these arguments are rejected the idea of globalization will also lose its analytical power and meaning.

Similar to the globalization theory case, it is very difficult to find an explicit explanation of the transition to a transnational phase. Rather such a strong argument - transnationalization of the socio-economic sphere - is taken for granted without any attempt to clarify it and the analysis starts after this acceptance. This fact can be attributed to *Zeitgeist* of the 1990s but without such a clarification the analysis of the future of the nation-state or the emergence of a

²¹ At this point, it should also be noted that the general criticism of the SAF literature towards the existing Marxist literature on conceptualization of the state mentioned in the previous section has a valid ground. It can be argued that relative autonomy, instrumentalist, and state-centered approaches to the conceptualization of the state, one way or another, also share the problem of a one-sided interpretation of the contradictory relationship between global character of capital accumulation and national form of the state. In other words, the problem of interpreting this relationship in a one-sided manner can also be traced back to the history of Marxist state conceptualizations. It can be argued that, the intellectual roots of the conceptualization of the emergence of a transnational state lies in this problematic interpretation of this contradictory relationship inherent in Marxist analysis.

transnational state becomes weaker. This fact become apparent when we ask the literature following question: what are the points of departure that makes multi/inter-national and supra/trans-national qualitatively different phases?

The second problem is the misunderstanding of the relationship between the economic and the political within capitalism. The claim on the emergence of a transnational state that variously manifests itself in organizations like EU, OECD, FAO, NAFTA starts with a problematic assumption concerning the separation of the 'economic' and the 'political'. According to this assumption, which echoes the distinction made between base and superstructure, economy and the political are conceived as separate spheres so that a development in one of these spheres should be accompanied with a development in the other. In the case of the SAF literature, this formulation represents itself in the claim that transnationalization of the socioeconomic sphere has bypassed the authority of the nation-state which necessitates the emergence of a transnational state. In other words, it is argued that, the emergence of a transnational state has become possible and necessary with the development in the economic sphere which is 'economic globalization'. The result of this argument is conceiving the relationship between capital (economic) and the state (political) as an external one, although the literature tries to avoid this problem through establishing this link on the basis of the functions that the state performs. In addition to this, another problem appears within such an understanding that results in conceiving capital as an economic category and economy in abstract terms, rather than a social relation, that is the central point in Marx's criticism of classical political economists²² (Wood, 2000: 20). This point, in turn, results in the exclusion of the class struggle from the analysis of capitalism and the state. The overall result of these problems is the exclusion of the contradictions inherent in capitalism from the analysis or perceiving these contradictions only peculiar to a particular period of capitalism rather than inherent in capitalism from the very beginning.

²² These problems can not be attributed only to the SAF literature but rather they have existed within Marxism after Marx (Wood, 2000: 21)

First, it should be stated that these problems arise from the distinctive characteristics of capitalism when compared to the pre-capitalist societies. One of the most important characteristics of capitalism is the fact that all actors within capitalism are dependent on the market conditions which functions through certain imperatives like accumulation, competition, and profit maximization (Wood, 2003: 21-22). This dependence on the market basically rests upon the separation of producers from the means of production. This separation is also the basis of the ‘contractual’ relationship between the capitalist and the worker in which the former has all the equipments and the capital needed for the production except the labour power; and the latter has only labour power in his/her hands. Under these conditions, the capitalist and the worker meet in the market to make a contract on the usage of the labour power that the worker own. This point has important consequences for the exploitation process in capitalism when compared to the pre-capitalist societies:

[T]he social allocation of the resources and labour does not, on the whole, take place by means of political direction, communal deliberation, hereditary duty, custom, or religious obligation, but rather through the mechanisms of commodity exchange. The powers of surplus appropriation and the exploitation do not rest directly on relations of juridical or political dependence but are based on a contractual relation between ‘free’ producers – juridically free and free from the means of production – and the appropriator who has absolute private property in the means of production. (Wood, 2000: 29)

The whole power of capitalism in establishing its hegemony over the working class lies at this point. Once the separation of producers from means of production is accomplished, in a clear contrast to the pre-capitalist relations, predominantly market mechanisms regulate the relations between the workers and the capitalist; and that means exploitation takes place in ‘economic’ terms. This point is also important to note that the state cannot be derived from logical necessities of capital accumulation since capital accumulation rests upon mainly market mechanisms not the existence of a state. However, to state that exploitation within capitalism does not rest upon the coercive power but rather rests on the mechanisms of the commodity exchange does not mean that “political dimension is somewhat extraneous to capitalist relations of

production” (Wood, 2000). Rather it simply means that the moment of coercion is separate from the moment of appropriation within capitalism. The best example to see that political dimension is intrinsic in capitalism is the primitive accumulation process that Marx tells us in *Capital* which shows us how great and bloody was the effort to ‘free’ producers from means of production and establish commodity exchange relations. Thus, from its inception capitalism rests upon coercive and political power both to establish and to maintain the commodity relations which in effect mean the separation of the economic and the political as formulated above. In other words, it can be stated that the unique character of capitalism is the separation of the economic and the political, a separation which necessitates continuous political intervention which means simply class struggle. This point is important for conceptualizing the state as a capitalist state in which the relationship is an inherent and dialectical one in a way that even transcends the understanding of the base and the superstructure distinction²³ (Wood, 1995).

From this brief discussion on the separation of the economic and the political within capitalism, it can be argued that the basis of understanding state as an external entity, which reflects itself in the relative autonomy, state-centric and instrumentalist approaches, lies at this point²⁴. However, since the very separation of the economic and the political is based on a dialectical relationship between the moment of coercion and the moment of appropriation; these approaches concerning the state conceptualization are problematic. The SAF literature is well aware of the problem of conceiving capital and the state as separate, as mentioned before since they have been trying to establish the link

²³ This point is also important in understanding the unique capacity of the capitalist imperialism to expand as Wood (2003) argues and it will be mentioned in the next section of this chapter.

²⁴ Since this thesis mainly concerns Marxist understandings of the state, liberal views are not taken into consideration. But it is clear that liberals understand capitalist relations in abstract terms in which market are capable of regulating itself and the society perfectly. In this context, the intervention of the state to the market is seen as the worst that can happen. For a general support of this argument see Hayek (1992), for agrifood relations see TÜSİAD (2008). The conceptualization of the relationship between the economic and the political formulated above clearly rejects liberal views both historically and theoretically. For a comprehensive criticism of Marxist discussions on state in this manner see Clarke et. al. (1991).

between the state and capital in terms of the functions of the state. But the position of the SAF literature which is clearly a functionalist one is also problematic. We can state that there are two major problems of functionalist understandings. Firstly Clarke (1991) argues that functionalist understandings mainly tries to conceptualize the state in terms of the rational needs of capital which result in conceiving the necessity of state in capitalism in formal and abstract terms. Rather, according to Clarke (1991: 231), the capitalist state is a product of the development of class struggle and a historical necessity resulting from the class domination in collective terms through subordination of the state under the rule of money and law. This point is also important in understanding the second problem concerning functionalist understandings of the state, which is their inadequacy in the explanation of why did a particular form appeared to maintain that function. For the case of the SAF literature, this means, despite the fact that the functions that the state performs in capitalism as the SAF literature argues, corresponds to a reality it cannot give an adequate explanation for the particular form that the state take, that is the nation-state and the multi-state system (Clarke, 1991; Callinicos, 2007). The establishment of the link between capital and the state through class struggle, (i.e. conceptualization of the state in capitalism in terms of class struggle) provides an opportunity to answer this question. The analysis of the third problem of the SAF literature mentioned above can help to elaborate on this point.

The last but not the least problem in the SAF literature and the idea of globalization concerning the characteristics of capitalism is related to the conceptualization of a major contradiction within capitalism that is the contradictory existence of the nation-state system and the tendency of capital to extend at the 'global' level (Savran, 1996; Bromley, 1999; Clarke, 2001; Wood, 2003; Harvey, 2003; Callinicos, 2001, 2007; Mercan, 2007). As it is summarized above the whole argument on transition to a transnational phase and the emergence of a transnational state that corresponds to this new stage starts with a statement on the "contradiction between the global character of capital accumulation and the national level form of the state" (Clarke, 2001: 76).

Although the mentioned contradiction is a real one, the problem arises in the one-sided understanding of this contradiction. The SAF literature, conceives this contradiction as a new one emerged with the culmination of the history of capitalism which signals a transition to a new phase, rather than seeing this contradiction inherent to the capitalism from its inception. In other words, it is argued that global character of capital accumulation has come to a point, matured we may say, that it has transcended the nation-state and national economies. It is also argued that the crises that capitalism faced in the early 1970s was also reflecting this situation and in order to overcome this crises capitalism is in a search of new regulation forms other than nation-state (McMichael, 1991; McMichael and Myre, 1991). Thus, it can be argued that the claim on transnationalization of the socio-economic sphere and the transcendence of the nation-state is based on a one-sided understanding of this contradictory relationship which is also an important problem of the general globalization literature. This study argues that the problem of conceptualizing contradictions and distinctive features of capitalism in an evolutionary manner also lies in this problematic one-sided analysis.

To understand the contradictory relationship between “the internationalization of capital and the national form of the state” (Clarke, 2001: 77), it is necessary to return to the defining characteristics of capital and the role of class struggle in the transformation of state into a capitalist state. Two things should be mentioned: first, class character of the nation-state is not defined in national terms but rather in terms of global character of the capital accumulation since capital accumulation is global in character from its inception; and second the multi-state system is not totally a product of capitalism but rather it is the heritage of pre-capitalist relations and through the class struggle in capitalism it has gained its capitalist character. For the first point, Clarke (2001) argues that, despite its constitution on a national basis, the class character of the modern nation-state “is not defined in national terms.” Following Clarke (2001), it can be argued that the determinant factor in the class character of the nation-state is “the separation of the state from civil society, and the corresponding

subordination of state and civil society to the rule of money and the law” which transcends the regulations on the national level because of the internationalization of capital. Thus, the following conclusion is critical in understanding the contradictory relationship of the capital and the nation-state:

Thus the subordination of the state to the rule of money and the law, which is the foundation of constitutional form of the capitalist state, confines the state within limits imposed by the contradictory form of the accumulation of capital on a world scale. Consequently the national form of the capitalist state can be defined only as a condensation, or nodal point, of an international state system. In this sense, the formation a truly international, transnational or world state would mark not a rational adaptation of the capitalist state to the global character of capital accumulation but a fundamental transformation of the state form, which could only be based on an inversion of the relationship between capital and the state, between politics and economics, an inversion which could hardly be consistent with the continued existence of the capitalist mode of production. (Clarke, 2001: 79-80)

The second point is related to a discussion on the multi-state system, which will also help to move beyond a fetishized discussion on the state. In other words, at a higher level of abstraction this contradictory relation within capitalism can be formulated with the following questions that Callinicos (2007: 545) formulates: “Why are there many states? Is it merely a contingent historical fact inherited from the pre-capitalist processes of ‘political accumulation’? Or is there anything inherent in capitalism that tends to keep states plural?” To answer these questions, Callinicos (2007: 545) reminds us another definitive character of capitalism that is the tendency to uneven and combined development:

[C]apitalism tends to unify the globe in a single world system where access to investment and markets is extremely unequally distributed geographically. It is interesting to see the role this plays in Lenin’s critique of Kautsky’s theory of ultra-imperialism. Lenin concedes that the ultimate formation of a single world monopoly as a result of the progressive organization of capitalism is theoretically conceivable, but argues that to base political analysis on such a possibility is profoundly misleading. International agreements and cartels register the existing correlation of forces among the capitalist powers, but—given that the dynamism of capitalist development is constantly altering the global distribution of power—such arrangements are necessarily temporary and liable to give way to periods of instability in which the new correlation can be established only through the proof of force. (Callinicos 2007: 544)

The critical point here is that, the state system is not a product of capitalism but rather capitalism appeared in a world which is characterized by the already existence of the multi-state system. But once the state is subordinated to capitalist relations through rule of money and law which could only be possible through severe class struggles the relationship became an inherent one rather than a contingent relationship. Moreover with the tendency to uneven and combined development this inherent relationship is enhanced and gained a permanent character. The result of this argumentation for the claim on the emergence of a transnational state is as follows: “The tendency not simply to uneven development, but to destabilizing shifts in its pattern, would constantly subvert attempts to construct a transnational state” (Callinicos 2007: 545).

Besides the problems mentioned above another problematic understanding of the SAF literature should be mentioned which has close relationship with the peasant question. As mentioned before, one of the major methodological problems of the arguments on transnationalization and the emergence of a transnational state is the conception of capital in economic deterministic terms rather than as a social relation. This methodological problem reflects itself in the analysis of the TNCs in isolation of class struggle with a great power to determine the future of the capitalist relations. This position is best exemplified in the studies of Friedland (1991, 2004) and his associates (Friedland et al 1994) who argue for the importance of the commodity chain analysis in general and in relation to the agrifood relations in particular. According to this understanding, with the globalization process, the unit of analysis should be TNCs and their activities in order to understand contemporary capitalism. The underlying idea of this argument is that – similar to the ‘methodological territorialism’ criticism of globalization theory to the existing social science literature – the analysis of capitalism has been limited to the national level and the nation-state which is not possible anymore as a result of the transnationalization process of capital. This criticism, in fact, as I mentioned before has a valid ground when we consider the state centric analyses formulated within Marxism like Dependency School and World System Theory, but when we consider Marxist methodology

in general it would be seen that there were always attempts to analyze capitalism in its totality. In other words, based on conceptualization of the relationship between the political and the economic as formulated above and capital as a social relation there were always attempts to analyze capitalism starting from the premise that capitalism is a mode of production (Callinicos, 1999) and the unit of analysis should be capitalism itself as a mode of production. This means, a reversed criticism can be formulated to the SAF literature in particular and the idea of transnationalization or globalization in general as follows: to understand the contemporary capitalism or any particular period of capitalism the corporations and their activities should always be analyzed, however the analysis can never be limited to or most importantly centered on this level. Rather the analysis of capitalism and capital as a social relation always necessitates perceiving capitalism in its totality and as a mode of production. In other words, it can be argued that, both the SAF literature and the globalization literature in general share a common methodological problem that is being global character of capital accumulation centrism on the basis of a one-sided understanding of contradictions inherent in capitalism. Arguably, it is through such a problematic conception of capitalism that it became much more easier to conclude that peasant question is over in a period in which one of the most militant struggles to the liberalization process was given by the petty commodity producers.

In addition to this, attributing great power to the TNCs results in the ignorance of a major distinction made by Marx between the real subsumption and the formal subsumption of labour to capital (Cammack, 2007: 2). This distinction is made based on the control over the labour process. In the formal subsumption of labour to capital, capital appropriates the product, but the critical point is that production process itself is not “the specifically capitalist mode of production in its developed form” (Marx, 1976: 1019; cited in Cammack, 2007: 3). Capitalist mode of production in its developed form basically includes:

“the revolutionary development which features the increasing application of machinery (capital) to the production process, rising productivity, and a

fundamental switch in the character of exploitation (and the source of profit) from the extraction of absolute surplus value to the extraction of relative surplus value” (Cammack, 2007: 3).

In this case, labour is subjected to capital in real terms which also necessitates the separation of producers from the means of production and moreover the capital has a definitive control over the labour process. This distinction is very important in conceptualization of petty commodity producers in capitalist societies since the very starting of point of the whole literature on peasant question is mentioning that this is not the case in agricultural production. Once a great power attributed to TNCs in relation to their control over all aspects of capitalist relations the logical conclusion would be the whole process of production both in industry and agriculture is under the control of capital. This result in the argument that differentiation among rural classes is not the case anymore but they are also subjected to capital in real terms which is the basis of the argument that peasant question is not a valid one anymore. At this point as I will try to formulate in the next chapter, it should be mentioned that this study does not reject that the power of corporations has increased and still continuing to increase, but it rejects the theoretical claim that the SAF literature derived from this increase in power: that is the end of the peasant question. Rather, according to this study, what is needed is simply a reconsideration of the peasant question in twenty-first century in the light of the new developments highlighted by the contemporary literature and the help of extensive theoretical knowledge on this subject that the agrarian/peasant question literature has.

In conclusion, although there are important distinctions between the SAF literature and the general globalization literature in terms of conceptualization of the relationship between capital and the state, this study argues that when the criticisms put forward above are considered, the literature could not be able to overcome the problems inherent in the idea of globalization. Through a problematic conceptualization of the contradictory relationship between the economic and the political, capital and the state, and the internationalization of capital and the national form of the state, in the overall, problems of the idea

globalization are reproduced. These problems can be summarized as follows: an understanding of the state as an external to capitalist relations through an ontological separation of the economic and the political, a one-sided analysis of the contradiction between the global character of capital accumulation and the nation-state system by focusing only to the former side of the relationship which resulted in the argument on transition to a transnational phase, attribution of great power to the TNCs which rests upon on a problematic analysis of capitalism rather than analyzing capitalism as a mode of production, in a close relationship to this point the exclusion of class struggle from the analysis of capitalism which results for our case the omission of the analysis of the class position of the petty commodity producers which in turn means the rejection of the peasant question.

2.4. Imperialism Back In

To overcome the problems mentioned above this study argues that the concept of imperialism though further elaboration is needed, is a powerful analytical concept in understanding the contemporary capitalism and its inherent contradictions. The criticisms put forward in the previous sections towards the concepts of globalization and transnationalization can be restated from a more general point as follows: the problem of the globalist interpretations of the idea of globalization and the SAF literature in relation to its arguments on transnationalization and the emergence of a transnational state is not their attempt to analyze the particular forms that the contradictions and the distinctive features of capitalism have taken in a particular period but the inconsistency of this attempt with the general theory of capital accumulation. In the next chapter this point will be detailed in relation to the concepts of food regime and agrifood system. The critical point here is that the concept of imperialism provides the opportunity to analyze a particular period of capital accumulation with a consistent manner with the general theory of capitalism. Based on the criticism put forward towards the transnationalization argument above, three important aspects of the concept of imperialism that represents the general

theoretical and methodological point mentioned above can be listed as follows: firstly, the concept of imperialism implies that there is an inherent and a compulsory relationship between the international relations and the tendency of capital to expand continuously; based on this inherent and compulsory relationship, the arena of international relations is conceptualized as a polarized and hierarchical arena determined by the inequalities within the economic and the political relations; and finally, through the concept of imperialism the transfer of wealth and surplus through the higher ranks of the pyramid within this hierarchical relations is emphasized (Özüğurlu, 2005: 87). When the criticisms formulated above are considered, the first aspect mentioned above corresponds to the relationship of the economic and the political in capitalism. In other words, contrary to the transnationalization argument the concept of imperialism provides us with opportunities in understanding the relationship between the economic and the political in a dialectical manner. The second aspect of imperialism mentioned above corresponds to the contradictory relationship between the multi-state system and the global character of capital accumulation which results in a hierarchical international arena mainly because of the tendency of capital to uneven and combined development. The third aspect gives the opportunity to interpret the position of underdeveloped countries like Turkey within this hierarchical international arena and their ways of articulation to the world capitalist system.

Hence, the critical conclusion that can be derived from this very brief discussion on globalization, transnationalization, and the emergence of transnational state provided in this chapter is the following: contradictions inherent to the capitalist relations lies at the core of the analysis in the concept of imperialism which the idea of globalization in general and the SAF literature in particular are not able to problematize. This point is also mentioned by Boratav (2000) when he compared the globalization literature and the literature on imperialism. Boratav (2000: 15-16) argues that the students of the globalization literature and the imperialism literature both try to conceptualize the capitalist relations in terms of trade, capital flows and finance at the world level, but the critical difference

appears when we ask the following question: “what kind of a world?” The students of imperialism theories²⁵ conceive this world capitalism as a system of hierarchical and unequal relations among its basic actors which result in asymmetric relations and contradictions (Boratav, 2000: 16). Since these hierarchical and unequal relations continue to exist, according to Boratav (2000: 25) we cannot talk about the end of the international phase of capitalism and imperialism but rather the demise of the usage of the concept of imperialism lies at the political conjuncture that we are living in (i.e. not because of a fundamental shift in the character of capitalism). This study mainly claims that this political conjuncture, i.e. the *Zeitgeist* of the 1990s best reflected itself in the idea of globalization, is behind us. In other words, the ‘age of globalization is over’ (Rosenberg, 2005: 1) which reflects itself in the ‘renewed’ debates on imperialism especially throughout the 2000s (Wood, 2003; Panitch and Gindin, 2003; Harvey, 2003; Brenner, 2006; Mercan 2007; Callinicos, 2007). This fact can also be seen in the writings of the students of the SAF literature itself. Ironically, with the 2000s, students of the SAF literature, who are the most energetic supporters of the argument on transnationalization, started to use the concept of imperialism to understand the contemporary characteristics of agrifood relations (see for instance, McMichael, 2004).

At this point one critical point should be mentioned. Although there is an increase in the studies on imperialism and in the attempts to conceptualize the contemporary world on the basis of this concept; I am well aware of the fact that imperialism is not a magic concept that will solve the problems mentioned throughout this chapter, since, surprisingly in fact, a systematic and detailed conception of imperialism in critical political economy does not exist²⁶.

[J]ust as we have not yet seen a systematic theory of imperialism in a world of universal capitalism, we have no theory of imperialism that adequately

²⁵ See Brewer (1990) for a brief and helpful review of Marxist theories of imperialism.

²⁶ Özüğurlu (2005: 88) goes one point further by saying that developing a systematic and detailed theory of imperialism is much more difficult than developing a general capitalism theory; and it is even impossible since it should comprehend both political, economic and cultural aspects of dependency relations.

comprehends a world that consists of not imperial masters and colonial subjects but of an international system in which both imperial and subordinate powers are more or less sovereign states. (Wood, 2003: 171).

It can be argued that this problem also related to the conceptualization of the relationship between the 'economic' and the 'political'; and the contradictory relationship between multi-state system in which states have a national form and the global character of capital accumulation which still needs further elaboration. Arguably, further elaboration of capitalist imperialism in contemporary world should be established neither on the basis of nation states, national economies, and their interactions; nor on the basis of the tendency of capital to extend on the global level. Rather this elaboration should be based on the dialectical relationship of these two which is a massive task that Marxism should handle. Thus, I will not going to provide a detailed conceptual framework for imperialism, since it is out of the limits of this study and my own.

However, one critical point can be added to the general framework that the concept of imperialism should be developed. Once the argument that the concept of imperialism should be developed on the basis of a dialectical understanding of the relationship between the economic and the political, and the relationship between the multi-state system in which states has a national form and global character of capital accumulation (Wood, 2003; Callinicos, 2007) is accepted the logical conclusion would be that imperialism cannot be conceptualized as a particular phase of capitalism since these contradictory and dialectical relations mentioned above are inherent in the capitalism from its inception. Rather capitalism is imperialist in character since the very beginning (Amin, 2000). It is, in fact, much more correct to state it as *capitalist imperialism* rather than *imperialist capitalism* since imperialism has a much longer history than capitalism (Wood, 2003). This point is very critical in periodizing capitalism since the underlying idea within the globalization debate and transnationalization arguments is that imperialist phase of capitalism is over. If capitalism is imperialist in character, than the periodization of

capitalism can only be based on the forms of capitalist imperialism appeared throughout the history of capitalism. This point is also important in conceptualizing imperialism not only as a political concept but as an analytical concept since it implies an analysis of particular social relations in a particular period (an analysis of social formations).

In relation to this point, and being aware of the inadequacy of Marxism in the conceptualization of imperialism as mentioned above, I will use Özuğurlu's (2005: 81-95) analytical distinction between imperialism and colonialism in order to establish the link between theoretical framework formulated in this chapter and the second chapter which analyzes the historical transformation of agrifood relations on the basis of *food regimes* and *agrifood system* concepts formulated by the SAF literature.

Özuğurlu (2005: 88) also mentions that imperialism is not as a particular phase of capitalism and in relation to this point he makes a distinction between imperialism and colonialism. According to this distinction, imperialism is conceived as the politics of capital accumulation in broader sense or "capital in action"; and colonialism is conceived as the particular forms that politics of capital accumulation, i.e. imperialism, takes in particular conjunctures. Based on this distinction, Özuğurlu (2005: 88-89) argues that periodization should be based upon the politics of colonialism as particular forms of imperialism rather than imperialism itself and he mentions two major periods of the capitalist imperialism: direct (classical) imperialism and the indirect (new) imperialism²⁷. The former corresponds to the period (roughly, from 1870s to 1940s) in which classical theories of imperialism, particularly Lenin and Bukharin's conceptualization of imperialism, are formulated and the latter corresponds to the period (roughly from 1940s to the 1970s) in which Dependency School, World System Theory, Theories of Unequal Exchange are formulated (Özuğurlu, 2005; Brewer, 1990; Wood, 2003). The critical point in this periodization is that it reflects the separation of the 'economic' and the

²⁷ See also Wood (2003) for a similar periodization.

‘political’ within capitalism as Wood (2000, 2003) argues, since the transfer of wealth or extraction of surplus in the direct (classical) phase of capitalist imperialism is, basically, based upon military power, i.e. non-economic force; while in the indirect phase it is based on basically, ‘economic’ mechanisms that are distinctive features of capitalism when compared to the pre-capitalist societies. When we start to analyze the developments in capitalism since the late 1970s, we face with the problem of Marxist conceptions of imperialism again that is how to conceptualize imperialism in a world that is composed of more or less sovereign states and in which separation of the ‘political’ and the ‘economic’ has been moved to a further point with the neo-liberal policies since the late 1970s²⁸. This study does not have an answer to this problem as mentioned before, but the critical point is that imperialism and periodization of capitalist imperialism on the basis of colonial politics provide us with opportunities to understand contemporary characteristics of capitalism much better than the idea of globalization and the arguments on transnationalization. In addition to this, within this theoretical framework the potential theoretical expansions of the contemporary literature can become much more apparent and the concepts like food regimes and agrifood system can gain their real theoretical significance through operationalizing the theoretical framework tried to be formulated in this chapter.

Within this framework, in the next chapter, I will try to analyze the implications of the methodological and theoretical problems discussed above for the concept of food regime and try to reformulate this concept within framework of capitalist imperialism. The transformations of agrifood relations since the 1970s will be analyzed in the light of this theoretical framework.

²⁸ It should be mentioned that, this problem does not belong to the period starting from the late 1970s with the neoliberal transformations only, but rather it can be traced back to the previous phases of capitalist imperialism.

CHAPTER 3

AGRIFOOD SYSTEM AND FOOD REGIMES: AN HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION OF TRANSFORMATION OF AGRIFOOD RELATIONS

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter it was argued that, although, they reflect the ‘experience’ of the 1990s²⁹, the idea of globalization in terms of “globalization theory” and the arguments on transnationalization do not help us to understand the contemporary characteristics of capitalism; contemporary transformations within agrifood system; peasant question in twenty-first century; and positions of ‘underdeveloped’ countries like Turkey within the complex relations of contemporary capitalism. The main reason of this inadequacy of the idea of globalization and transnationalization has been presented as the problematic conceptualization (if not totally left unconceptualized) of the contradictory relations immanent in capitalism, particularly the relationship between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ and the relationship between the multi-state system and the global character of capital accumulation that are resulting from

²⁹ In relation to this point Rosenberg (2005: 3-4) states that: “Huge changes did indeed occur during the 1990s. The international system itself underwent a major restructuring. But the idea, so current at the time, that underlying this restructuring was a spatio-temporal transformation of human existence, ‘globalization’, which was carrying us rapidly into a post-Westphalian or even post-international ‘global’ future, seems to be passing away. It no longer clearly speaks to what is happening in international relations. In retrospect it will perhaps increasingly be seen as a conjunctural phenomenon of the 1990s – *reflecting but not explaining*, the experience of those years.” (emphasis is mine)

distinctive characteristics of capitalism. However, once the idea of globalization and transition to a qualitatively different world, particularly to a transnational phase of capitalism is rejected, there emerges a huge theoretical question: how to understand contemporary capitalism, particularly contemporary transformation of agrifood relations, if the terms globalization and transnationalization are not to be used? At this point, this study argues that we should turn back to the massive theoretical knowledge of social sciences, particularly to the concept of imperialism that the theorists of globalization easily and relentlessly turned their back on; since they energetically argue for a qualitatively different world in which territories, nation-states, and even capital accumulation have no determinant role. I argued that the SAF literature that emerged within the context of globalization, the *Zeitgeist* of the 1990s, shares a similar problem in terms of its relationship with the past theoretical knowledge, which reflects itself in its criticism of the existing Marxist literature on the state, and most importantly for our case, in the disconnection between the SAF literature and the peasant question literature. In other words, I argued that, the disconnection between the peasant question literature and the SAF results from the inherent relationship between the SAF literature and the globalization theory which reflects itself in the arguments on transnationalization. Thus, I argued, a criticism of the arguments of the SAF literature on transnationalization and a return to the extensive theoretical knowledge of social sciences based on this criticism will help us not only to understand the contemporary transformation of agrifood relations better but, arguably, also to overcome the rupture between the peasant question literature and the SAF. Moreover, I argued that potential theoretical expansion of the SAF literature, which lies in the problematics implicit in the literature and the concepts of *agrifood system* and *food regime*, can become apparent on this ground. The main aim of this chapter is to generate tentative arguments in relation to this point through a reconsideration of *agrifood system* and *food regime* concepts formulated by the SAF literature within the context of capitalist imperialism³⁰.

³⁰ This can also be seen as an attempt to analyze the contemporary transformation of agrifood

To do so, in this chapter, firstly, I will try to position *agrifood system* and *food regime* concepts within the context of the theoretical framework formulated in the previous chapter. Then, I will try to argue that the transformation of capitalist relations since the 1970s should be analyzed within the context of neoliberalism which was predominantly a response of the capitalists to the crisis of accumulation appeared in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. This argument will also be the basis of characterizing the post-1980 capitalist imperialism as “lean colonialism” (Özuğurlu, 2005). Later, I will try to summarize the historical transformation of agrifood relations, particularly from the late 1970s onwards based on this framework. Finally, I will try to mention the theoretical significance of the problematics formulated by the SAF literature in that sense; and I will try to formulate the implications of these transformations for the peasant question and ‘underdevelopment’.

3.2. Agrifood System, Food Regimes, and Imperialism: A Conceptual Framework

One of the most important merits of the *sociology of agriculture and food* literature is its emphasis on the totality of the agricultural and food relations which reflects itself in the name as well³¹. In other words, contrary to the particularistic approaches, the contemporary literature insists that social relations around agriculture and food should be understood as a system composed of different parts and should be analyzed on the basis of their intrinsic relations (Fine et. al. 1996: 41). This point is also one of the most

relations taking the main problematics of peasant question literature (peasant question itself and underdevelopment) as the point of departure but extending them with the help of problematics formulated by the SAF literature.

³¹ The name *sociology of agriculture and food* first appeared in the XII World Congress of Sociology held by International Sociological Association with the change in the name of the Research Committee on Sociology of Agriculture (RC 40) of the International Sociological Association through affiliation of *food*. The formation of sociology of agriculture, which in fact unofficially goes back to the 1970s, reflects a “significant scientific departure from the parent discipline of rural sociology” and the affiliation of *food* into its name indicates the maturation of this scientific departure rather than a simple name change (Editorial, 1991).

important criticisms put forward by the students of the SAF towards the mainstream rural sociology:

Rural sociology has been traditionally concerned with rurality and has been understood as a discipline which studies phenomena as they occur in rural settings. Sociology of Agriculture and Food is not directly interested in the study of rurality. Though rural events may take center stage in some of its studies, its emphasis is on the totality of the processes of production and distribution of food and their relationship to society. (Editorial, 1991: 9-10)

Based on the holistic approach of the SAF literature highlighted above, Magdoff and his associates define this totality in terms of “agriculture and food system”:

[The agriculture and food system] consists of the farmers who produce the food, but also the huge industry that supplies farmers with inputs, from seeds to fertilizers to tractors, to fuel, and even the larger industry that processes, packages and distributes the food. (Magdoff et al., 2000: 9)

When the consumption processes is included within this system as Fine and his associates insist (Fine et al. 1996) this understanding gives the opportunity to analyze almost all aspects of social life through an analysis of agrifood system³² since both the production and reproduction spheres are included (Ecevit, 2008). In addition to this, including consumption to the analysis can also help us to analyze the realization processes of capital. Thus, the *agrifood system* can be defined as the entirety of the agrifood relations consist of production, distribution and consumption processes (Fine et. al., 1996; Magdoff et. al., 2000; Lewontin, 2000). In simple terms, the concept of *agrifood system* implies that in the analysis of the position of wheat producers, for instance, not only the production process *per se* should be taken into consideration, but the whole agrifood system including the backward linkages that is the supply of “inputs from seeds to fertilizers to tractors, to fuel”, and the forward linkages that is the transformation of wheat to flour and then to lasagna (i.e. “the larger industry that processes, packages and distributes the food”), and its final realization (let’s

³² I prefer to use agrifood system rather than agriculture and food system not only because of its simplicity but also because of the fact that it reflects a much more integrated understanding of the relationship between agriculture and food.

say its realization in a supermarket or in a luxury restaurant or at home)³³ should also be included (Magdoff et al., 2000: 9). However, this definition is clearly a descriptive one. Although, it implies a set of capitalist relations in relation to agrifood relations, it gives us nothing for the qualitative aspects of these relations for more concrete levels of abstraction, but rather it provides us a general perspective in the analysis of social relations around agriculture and food. At this point, this study claims that, the concept of food regime, one of the central concept of the SAF literature, can help us to conceive the particular forms that agrifood system has taken throughout the history of capitalism (corresponding to the periodization of capitalist imperialism mentioned in the previous chapter) and to understand major contradictions appeared in particular periods (especially in periods of crisis) as well as the immanent ones. However, since the current usage of the concept of food regime within the SAF literature, embodies methodological and theoretical problems discussed in the previous chapter, it needs further elaboration.

3.2.1. The Concept of Food Regime and Its Problems

Although the history of the term food regime goes back to the late 1970s, the first appearance of this concept within the SAF literature, which in fact represents a turning point in the political economy of food (Buttel and Goodman, 1989: 88), is in 1989³⁴. In their paper presented at the VII World

³³ This example, which is taken from Ecevit (2008) needs a caution since agrifood system can be seen as a simple application of commodity-chain analysis to the agricultural and food commodities. While commodity chain analyses mainly focus on a particular commodity and analyze production, distribution, marketing, and consumption processes in relation to that commodity only, the conceptualization of agrifood system implies a broader analysis through including these processes in relation to other commodities as well.

³⁴ The emergence of the concept of food regime, in fact, was the product of the attempts to understand the food crisis of the first half of the 1970s. Within that context, Hopkins and Puchala (1978), in their article published in the issue of *International Organization* that was devoted to food crisis and food regimes, first offered the concept in order to explain the food crisis of the time and defined it in terms of “set of rules, norms or institutional expectations that govern a social system.” Harriet Friedmann (1982: 254) who later conceptualized the term with Philip McMichael, first rejected to use the term since, according to her, it rests upon a normative interpretation: “Since the definition of the regime relies heavily on normative agreement

Congress for Rural Sociology, Friedmann and McMichael (1989: 93-95) suggested the term food regime to analyze “the role of agriculture in the development of the capitalist world economy and in the trajectory of the state system” by arguing that the concept of food regime “links international relations of food production and consumption to forms of accumulation broadly distinguishing periods of capitalist transformation since 1870” with reference to Aglietta (1979) one of the most prominent figures of the regulation school. McMichael (2004: 57) later simplified this definition by stating that “the food regime concept defines a historically specific geo-political-economic organization of international agricultural and food relations”. Friedmann (2005: 1), in her later analysis, has provided us a detailed definition of the term:

Food regimes – like larger periods of stability in relation of power and property – are above all historical. Since their origins in the world grain and meat markets of the 19th century, agrofood systems have been shaped by relations among states (the inter-state system), among enterprises (the world market) and among populations migrating, buying, selling, and adapting to life across political borders by reshaping cultures of farming and eating. These sets of relationships fall into specific periods of relatively stable unfolding followed by contradictions and new possibilities. These periods, which are sustained but nonetheless temporary constellations of interests and relationships, are food regimes.

Two theoretical conclusions can be derived from these understandings and definitions of the concept of food regime. Firstly, the concept of food regime gives us opportunities to analyze the inherent relationship between the agrifood relations and the capitalist world economy. Most importantly, at a more concrete abstraction level, it helps us to understand particular forms that agrifood system has taken throughout the history of capitalism in relation to immanent contradictions of capitalism like the global character of capital accumulation and the multi-state system consists of nation-states, and its crisis-ridden character. When considered together with the conceptualization of agrifood system mentioned above, the potential theoretical expansion of the SAF literature, arguably, lies at this point. In addition to this, it is also on this

(Hopkins and Puchala, 1978), those studies emphasizing production and distribution are not easily incorporated within the analysis of actual regime changes.”

ground that the term food regime can be reconceptualized within the context capitalist imperialism formulated in the previous chapter. However, in order to use the concept of food regime properly within the theoretical framework of this study the methodological problem inherent in these understandings have to be re-mentioned and overcome: that is the conceptualization of contradictions immanent in capitalism within an evolutionary understanding as if they are following a predetermined path, which is mainly the legacy of the globalization debate as discussed before³⁵. This problem has also close connections with the second conclusion that can be derived from the definitions mentioned above: that is the fact that the concept of food regime is clearly a product of the regulation school, i.e. it reflects the influence of the regulation school over the political economy of food. Thus, a short discussion on the conceptual framework of the regulation school can help us to understand the background of the concept of food regime and to overcome the methodological problem implicit in it.

Briefly, the main theoretical claim of the regulation school is that the capitalist mode of production is not “comprehensible in terms of a single set of laws that remain unchanged from its inception until its eventual supersession” (Brenner and Glick, 1991: 46). Rather they conceptualize the history of capitalism in terms of “succession of phases, each distinguished by certain historically developed, socio-institutionally defined structural forms that give rise, so long as they are maintained, to distinctive economic trends and patterns” (Brenner and Glick, 1991: 46). In other words, students of the regulation school emphasize the socially embedded and socially regularized nature of capital accumulation and focus on the totality of the historically contingent mechanisms and practices that make capital accumulation stable for relatively long periods (Jessop, 2005: 189). In that sense, the ‘language’ of the regulation

³⁵ Since a general criticism of this point has been provided in the previous chapter, I will not go into details but rather focus on the implications of this methodological problem for the concept of food regime in order to position the concept within the theoretical framework of this study.

school makes it easier to comprehend the highly complex and dynamic relations of capitalist system:

This kind of language is useful, in the first instance, as heuristic device. It focuses our attention upon the complex interrelations, habits, political practices, and cultural forms that allow a highly dynamic, and consequently unstable, capitalist system to acquire sufficient semblance of order to function coherently at least for a certain period of time. (Harvey, 1999: 144)

It is clear that, the attempt to conceptualize the history of capitalism in terms of successive phases with distinctive characteristics does not belong to 'Regulationists' only, but rather has a long history in Marxist tradition³⁶. However, the regulation school diverges from earlier attempts within Marxist tradition, in terms of the phases they identify and the mechanisms that give rise to these phases and transition from one to another (Callinicos, 2001: 230). To understand this point and its relationship with the concept of food regime, a very brief summary of the conceptual framework of the regulation school which rests upon mainly three concepts can be helpful. These three concepts are the followings: *mode of regulation*, *regime of accumulation*, and *mode of development*.

The concept of *regime of accumulation* indicates "a distinct pattern of economic evolution which, though limited in historical time, is relatively stable" and which consists of particular series of regularities (Brenner and Glick, 1991: 47). In Lipietz's terms (cited in Callinicos, 2001: 233) regime of accumulation "describes the fairly long-term stabilization of the allocation of social production between consumption and accumulation". According to the students of regulation school, a regime of accumulation should be "materialized in the shape of norms, habits, laws, and regulating networks" in order to "ensure the unity of the process" and to "guarantee that its agents conform more or less to

³⁶ Callinicos (2001: 230) reminds us that classical Marxist texts formulated by Lenin (*Imperialism*), Hilferding (*Finance Capital*), Bukharin (*Imperialism and The World Economy*); and also "the revival of Marxist political economy in the 1960s", particularly, Baran and Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital* and Mandel's *Late Capitalism* all share "the habit of ... distinguishing between species of capitalism".

the schema of reproduction in their day-to-day behaviour and struggles”; and the concept of mode of regulation corresponds to these institutionalized “set of internalized rules and social procedures” (Lipietz, cited in Callinicos, 2001: 233). In other words:

What is distinctive about the Regulationists’ standpoint is that the content of the regularities defining the pattern of economic growth that constitutes a regime of accumulation is viewed largely as an expression of institutional structures governing intra- and inter-firm, relations, the relations among capitals and the relationship between capital and labour – namely, *the mode of regulation*. (Brenner and Glick, 1991: 47)

Within this framework the combination of regime of accumulation and mode of regulation corresponding to that regime, gives us the concept of mode of development, a distinctive phase of capitalism “with a distinctive type of cyclical, non-threatening and self-regulating crises”. Transition from a mode of development to another one is explained in a similar manner with Marx’s (1993) conceptualization of transition from one mode of production to another one in terms of the contradictory relationship between *social relations of production* and *forces of production*. In terms of the regulation school, transition from a mode of development to another results from the contradictory relationship between the mode of regulation and the regime of accumulation. In other words, throughout the history of a particular mode of development, mode of regulation which was previously appeared as appropriate starts to impose fetters upon the corresponding regime of accumulation. (Brenner and Glick, 1991: 45-48)

The extension in time of each mode of development ultimately issues in a series of ever more crippling contradictions, which results from the fetters imposed by the already existing mode of regulation upon the regime of accumulation. As the mode of development reproduces itself, hitherto virtuous circles thus give way to increasingly vicious circles. The outcome is a structural crisis, which – precisely because the old mode of regulation has broken down – is accompanied by the necessarily unregulated and conflictual action of classes, firms, political groups and governments. Out of these historically indeterminate process of competitive economic war and socioeconomic and political struggle, one out of a range of alternative resolutions of the crisis is eventually hit upon. A new, historically given mode of regulation – which, by governing the historically developed regime of

accumulation, makes possible a new mode of development – is the result. (Brenner and Glick, 1991: 48)

Based on this conceptual framework students of the regulation school has defined two mode of developments: one based on *regime of extensive accumulation* and *competitive mode of regulation*, roughly corresponding to the period between the 1870s and the 1920s; and the second (mostly known as ‘Fordism’) based on *intensive regime of accumulation* and *monopoly mode of regulation* roughly corresponding to the period between the 1940s and the 1970s³⁷. It can be argued that the distinction between *extensive* and *intensive* regime of accumulation and *competitive* and *monopoly* mode of regulation rests mainly upon the distinction between absolute surplus value and relative surplus value (Clarke, 1988: 65). This point is also mentioned by Brenner and Glick (1991: 49):

Under the extensive regime of accumulation, growth takes place predominantly on the basis of artisanal productive techniques via the application of methods of lengthening the working day and intensifying labour, as well as expanding the size of the labour force. Productivity growth therefore limited, as is the potential for mass consumption. Under the intensive regime, growth takes place predominantly via investment in fixed capital embodying technical advance – which creates the potential for regular increases both in productivity and mass consumption. The competitive mode of regulation is distinguished from the monopoly mode, most crudely, as follows: in the former, there is craft control and the competitive determination of prices and especially of wages; in the latter, there is scientific management, an oligopolistic system of pricing, and most characteristically, the determination of wages through a complex system of capital-labour and governmental institutions – the social regulation of the mode of consumption.

³⁷ There is an intermediary period, roughly corresponding to the 1920s and the 1930s, between the two modes of development as we can see from the time interval they correspond to. According to the Regulationists, this intermediary period, results from the fact that the crises of the first mode of development had not been resolved yet, which reflected itself in the transition from an extensive accumulation to an intensive one, but with the continuing existence of the competitive mode of regulation that is incompatible with the intensive regime of accumulation (Brenner and Glick, 1991: 75-86).

It is within this briefly summarized theoretical framework³⁸ that the concept of food regime has been produced within the sociology of agriculture and food. This theoretical background reflects itself in the definitions of the concept of food regime as mentioned before. Moreover, the influence of regulation school and the problematic conceptualization of contradictions immanent in capitalism best reflect themselves in Friedmann and McMichael's (1989; see also Friedmann, 2004; McMichael, 2004) initial formulation of two successive food regimes: the first food regime with the extensive form of accumulation (1870-1914), the second food regime with the intensive form of accumulation (1945-1973)³⁹.

In terms of the influence of regulation school, one of the most critical point is the distinction between extensive form of accumulation and intensive form of accumulation which mainly rests upon the distinction between absolute surplus value and relative surplus value as mentioned above. However, this study rejects periodization of capitalism as *extensive* and *intensive* form since the production of relative surplus value, which is the basis of the intensive regime of accumulation according to regulation school, is one of the most important distinctive characteristics of capitalism from its inception. In other words, contrary to the arguments of regulation school, the production of relative surplus value, the growth of mass consumption, and the dominance of credit

³⁸ I am aware of the fact that this brief summary of the main theoretical claims of the regulation school does not reflect the whole literature and it is inadequate to understand the problematics formulated by the regulation school and its critiques. See Brenner and Glick (1991) not only for a summary of the main theoretical claims but also for a detailed theoretical, methodological and historical critique of the regulation school. See also Clarke (1988) and Callinicos (2001) for similar critiques. See Jessop (2005) for a general overview of the regulation school and for a partial response to these critiques; and see Harvey (1999) for a distinguishing interpretation of regulation school and phases of capitalism.

³⁹ Both Friedmann (2005) and McMichael (2004) tried to reconceptualize the term food regime in response to critiques formulated within the political economy of food (see Goodmann and Watts, 1994; and Araghi, 2003). In their later attempts, Friedmann (2005) called the first food regime *diasporic-colonial food regime* and the second one *mercantile-industrial food regime*; while McMichael (2004) called the first one *British-centered food regime* and the second one *US-centered food regime*. Although the problematic conceptualization of contradictions immanent in capitalism and the influence of regulation school can be seen in these renewed attempts too, we can argue that these renewed attempts can be seen as approaching to the theoretical framework of this study in terms of capitalist imperialism as we will see in the following section.

money which are “the crucial features of the regime of intensive regulation were well established features of accumulation throughout the nineteenth century” (Clarke, 1988: 70). This point is important in understanding the general problem of regulation school. According to Brenner and Glick (1991: 105-106) the problem of periodizing capitalism in terms of extensive and intensive regime of accumulation is the inadequacy in the consideration of “the general and distinctive features of capitalist mode of production”. In that sense, within the framework of regulation school, what is in fact, mainly ‘the classical development of capitalism’; the subordination process of social relations, labour and the state to capital is conceptualized as the extensive form of capitalism. To state it differently, the time period that *capitalism developed* is conceptualized as a phase of *developed capitalism*. Hence, the distinctive features of capitalism which in fact made the very development and the extension of capitalist relations (the extensive form of capitalism according to the regulation school) possible are conceptualized as a different phase of capitalism, namely the intensive form. This point is best exemplified in Friedmann and McMichael’s terms:

[The concept of the food regime] allows us to characterize late nineteenth century capitalism as an extensive form constructing capitalist production relations through quantitative growth of wage labour; and mid-twentieth century capitalism as an intensive form reconstructing consumption relations as a part of the process of capital accumulation. (Friedmann and McMichael, 1989: 95)

It is clear from this quotation that the extensive form of capitalism, according to Friedmann and McMichael (1989), mainly implies the formation and the extension of capitalism. In that sense, it can be claimed that for Friedmann and McMichael (1989) the concept of *extensive* is used merely in geographical terms since it mainly implies the geographical extension of capitalism in the world scale. What is left unexplained here is the features of capitalism that made the mentioned “quantitative growth of wage-labour” possible. In other words, the distinctive features of capitalism that made its very extension possible in the world scale are left unexplained and even attributed to another phase of

capitalism. This usage of the term extensive in geographical terms can also be seen in conceptualization of two opposing movements that characterizes each food regime according to the students of the SAF.

Friedmann and McMichael (1989) argues that each food regime was characterized by “two simultaneous and contradictory movements”: the first food regime was characterized by the contradictory relationship between ‘the culmination of colonialism’ and ‘the rise of the nation-state system’; and the second food regime was characterized by the contradictory relationship between ‘extension of the state system to former colonies’ and ‘transnational restructuring of agricultural sectors by agro-food capitals’. It is within this framework that the crisis of the 1970s is conceptualized as if it is resulting in a transnational regulation (transnational state) consistent with the transnational restructuring of agriculture and industry (Ecevit, 2007). To state it differently, it can be argued that, according to the students of the SAF literature, the first food regime is characterized with the extension of capitalism through culmination of colonialism and the extensive regime of accumulation which paradoxically resulted in the rise of nation-state system and the end of colonialism. The second food regime is characterized with the extension of the nation-state system to the world scale with an intensive regime of accumulation which paradoxically resulted in the transnationalization of the capitalist relations and, arguably, the end of the nation-state system with the emergence of a transnational regulation. In other words, arguably, a weird combination of the influence of regulation school through the concepts of extensive and intensive form of accumulation; and the heritage of globalization debate in terms of transnationalization resulted in a problematic conceptualization of the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the multi-state system for the students of the SAF literature.

This study argues that the underlying problem that made this weird combination of the regulation school and the heritage of the idea of globalization possible is the conceptualization of the relationship between the ‘economic’ and the

‘political’. In relation to this point, it can be argued that although the main aim of the regulation school is to criticize the neo-classical economy and economic deterministic Marxist understandings in terms of their conceptualization of the relationship between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ as external (Jessop, 2005), what in turn we have is, arguably, a reproduction of this externality in a sophisticated manner. This sophisticated understanding of the regulation school can be seen in the conceptualization of regime of accumulation (i.e. the ‘economic’ or, arguably, the base) and a mode of regulation corresponding to that regime of accumulation (i.e. the ‘political’ or, arguably, the superstructure). Although, it is not so easy to criticize the regulation school in terms of sophisticated economic determinism due to more complex understanding⁴⁰ of the students of the regulation school, we can argue that, at least, the application of its conceptual framework to the political economy of food through the concept of food regime suffers from this problem. This sophisticated economic determinism within the SAF literature reflects itself in the conceptualization of the transition to a transnational phase in general as discussed in the previous chapter, and in the conceptualization of two successive food regimes in terms of two opposing movements, first colonialism and the nation-state system; and then the nation-state system and transnationalization⁴¹. Arguably, it is on this basis that, the students of the SAF literature easily accepted the arguments on transnationalization which is mainly the heritage of the globalization theory; and tried to conceptualize the transition to a transnational phase since the mode of regulation corresponding to the ‘transnationalization’ of accumulation should also be transnational. In other words, the problematic conception of the relationship between the economic and the political (particularly capital and the

⁴⁰ In relation to this point, for instance, Jessop (2005: 218) states that conceiving the framework of the regulation school as a sophisticated version of economic determinism, at least partially results from confusing the term *régulation* with the term *réglementation*. In French *régulation* means social regularization while *réglementation* means juridical and state regularization.

⁴¹ It can be argued that the disconnection between the SAF literature and the peasant question literature, at least partially, is a result of this sophisticated economic determinism since within this framework there is no place for class struggle. In other words, instead of conceiving the particular forms that the distinctive features of capitalism has taken in particular periods as a product of class struggle, within the framework of the SAF literature, class struggle can only be conceptualized as a product of the structural features of capitalism.

state and global character of capital accumulation and the national form of the state) is the core of the evolutionary understanding of the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the national form of the state.

3.2.2. Reconceptualization of the concept of *Food Regime*

The points mentioned above bring us back to the problematic conceptualization of distinctive features of capitalism that is implicit in the regulation school and the globalist interpretation of globalization, combination of which resulted in the arguments on transnationalization for the SAF literature. That is the problem of periodizing capitalism through an inadequate conception of capitalist social-property relations in general (Brenner and Glick, 1991). However, criticizing regulation school and the idea of globalization in this manner has its own problems as well. Arguing that capitalism has distinctive characteristics when compared to pre-capitalist societies and the analysis should be based on these distinctive features in general, can lead us to the problem of conceiving capitalism in abstract terms only. This in turn means particular forms that these distinctive features and contradictions of capitalist mode of production have taken in particular periods left unproblematized. This point is mentioned by Callinicos (2001: 243) who criticize the regulation school as well as Brenner and Glick's (1991) criticism of the regulation school:

[T]he weakness of the kind of approach pursued, for example, by Brenner and those influenced by him is that it relies on an abstract model of capitalist property-relations and the rules of reproduction they entail for individual actors which is applied to a wide range of historical cases.

The problem here, in fact, is a more general one, namely the tension between the general theory and the conjunctural analysis (Rosenberg, 2005). In other words, the tension between constructing a general theory and analyzing historically a particular period in a manner consistent with the general theory does not belong to Marxism only. However, Rosenberg (2005: 30) states that Marxism has a distinctive way of dealing with this tension:

[I]f the idea of conjunctural analysis itself is thus not distinctive to Marxism, there certainly is a distinctively Marxist form of conjunctural analysis with regard to modern world history. What makes it Marxist is the central explanatory role accorded to the organic tendencies of capitalist development as identified Marx himself: namely its unique characteristics of geographical expansion, unending technological revolution, and alternating ways of accumulation and socio-economic crises.

In relation to Rosenberg's (2005) emphasis on the central role accorded to the organic tendencies of capitalist development, Callinicos (2001: 237) states that search for intermediary levels of analysis to link the general theory of capitalism with the analysis of particular periods based on these organic tendencies can help us to overcome the tension. In that sense, Callinicos (2001: 237) argues that the regulation school has an important point since the search for intermediate concepts is one of the main points of the regulation school (Harvey, 1999; Jessop, 2005). However, arguably, the problem is the fact that it suffers from inadequate conceptualization of capitalist mode of production which in turn results in an inconsistency with the general theory of capitalism that reflects itself both theoretically and empirically as briefly discussed above. Problems of the regulation school or a criticism of it, which deserves a comprehensive review of the regulation literature that is not provided here, is beyond the task of this study. Rather, this study concerns, particularly, the application of its conceptual framework to the political economy of food in combination with the idea of globalization. At this point, this study mainly argues that, although the attempt of the SAF literature to analyze particular forms that the agrifood system have taken throughout the history of capitalism is meaningful in terms of avoiding the problem of abstract modeling, its analysis is not consistent with the general theory of capitalist mode of production. Arguably, this is the core of the problem dealt with throughout this study. In other words, the inadequacy of the SAF literature in conceptualization of the organic tendencies and contradictions inherent in capitalism has resulted in an evolutionary perspective that reflects itself in the arguments on transition to a qualitatively different phase of capitalism, namely the transition from an inter/multi-national phase of capitalism to a transnational one. In relation to this

point, Harvey (1999: 146) states that it is always possible to confuse transformations that are in fact temporary and instantaneous with the more fundamental ones within the political-economic life. In that sense, the underlying reason of this confusion for the SAF literature was, arguably, the weird combination of the conceptual framework of the regulation school and more importantly the *Zeitgeist* of the 1990s, namely the idea of globalization that is discussed in the previous chapter.

Then, simply put, the problem for the SAF literature is not the attempt to analyze agrifood relations in relation to capitalism in general and in terms of particular forms that appeared within particular periods, but the inconsistency between their conjunctural analysis and the general distinctive characteristics of capitalism. This study argues that the theoretical significance of the concept of imperialism and the merit of positioning the concept of food regime within the context of capitalist imperialism lies at this point.

In order to overcome the tension between the general theory of capitalism and more concrete analysis of particular periods mentioned above, Callinicos (2001: 240-244) argues that the intermediary level of analysis is the “theory of the world economy” that can be developed on the basis of the concept of imperialism⁴²:

The significance of the classical theory of imperialism is precisely that it seeks to meet such a need [the need for the theory of the world economy] by constructing a model, more concrete than that of *Capital*, of a distinctive phase of capitalist development on a world scale.

In the previous chapter it was argued that imperialism should not be considered as a phase of capitalism, but rather “as a process” arising from the distinctive characteristics of capitalism from its inception (Callinicos, 2001). In addition to this, it was argued that the concept of imperialism is consistent with the general theory of capitalism since it is defined by both the global character of capital

⁴² See Harvey (2001: 237-266) for a brief review of the Marxist theories of imperialism on the basis of the tension between the general theory of accumulation and historical analyses.

accumulation and the national form of the state (Wood, 2000, 2001, 2003; Callinicos, 2001; Boratav, 2000; Özüğurlu, 2005). In that sense, the concept of imperialism as the way that capitalism operates at the world scale through the distinctive characteristic of the relationship between the economic and the political within capitalism and the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the multi-state system is helpful in the analysis of particular phases of capitalist development on a more concrete abstraction level consistent with the general theory of capitalism. In relation to this point, this study argues that the concept of food regime can be reconceptualized within this framework to understand not only the implications of these particular phases of capitalism for agrifood relations but also the role of agrifood relations in the emergence of these particular phases. Such a conceptualization of the concept of food regime is in fact consistent with Friedmann and McMichael's (1989: 93) initial suggestion of the term in order to analyze "the role of agriculture in the development of the capitalist world economy and in the trajectory of the state system". However, this understanding of the concept differs from the SAF literature in the way of its conceptualization of contradictions as immanent in capitalism and indecipherable rather than as specific to particular periods of capitalism and decipherable through transition to another phase⁴³.

Thus, the merit of positioning the concept of food regime within the framework of capitalist imperialism, and analyzing the particular forms that contradictions immanent in capitalism have taken in terms of agrifood relations through this concept lies within this framework. In that sense, it is the claim of this study that both the conceptualization of the contradictions immanent in capitalism in an evolutionary manner and the possibility of reconsidering the concept of food regime within the context of capitalist imperialism underlie within the framework of the SAF literature itself. In other words, this study claims that, if

⁴³ Ercan (2007) calls the attempt to analyze transformation of capitalist relations for a particular time period consistent with the general characteristics of capitalism "change within order" or "change in continuity". In the next chapter, I will turn this issue back in the analysis of transformation of agrifood relations in Turkey, particularly since 1980.

the methodological problem of conceiving the contradictory and immanent relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the existence of multi-state system in an evolutionary perspective is avoided, the concept of food regime and periodization of the history of agrifood system can be reconsidered within the context of capitalist imperialism. Moreover, we can analyze the transformation of agrifood relations since the 1970s on this ground rather than in terms of transnationalization of capitalist relations and the emergence of a transnational state. In relation to this point, it can be argued that one of the most important points that make this study theoretically meaningful is its reconsideration attempt of the agrifood system and food regime concepts formulated within the SAF literature on the basis of a criticism formulated *through* the SAF literature itself. I am well aware of the fact that this attempt may appear paradoxical. However, I argue that the conceptualization of two opposing movements that, according to the students of the SAF characterize each of the two successive food regimes are nothing but the reflection of the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the national form of the state. In other words, what SAF literature in fact narrates us through the concept of food regime are the facts that internationalization of capital and the formation of nation-states goes hand in hand, this process creates inequalities and hierarchies at the international arena due to uneven and combined development, and agrifood relations play a critical role in this process. In addition to this, this study argues that the return of the concept of imperialism to the SAF literature itself, can also be seen as the reflection of the possibility of reconsideration of the concept of food regime within the context of capitalist imperialism through the studies of the SAF literature itself:

[A]*grifood imperialism* is central to the coercive use of *institutional mechanisms* to monopolize control of the world agriculture and flows of food. It primarily serves the interests of the corporate sector and a global minority of 600 million affluent consumers primarily concentrated in the triadic core of the

world economy (Western Europe, North America and Japan). (McMichael, 2000: 127)⁴⁴ (Emphases are mine.)

Now, I will try to analyze the transformation of agrifood relations since the 1970s within the context of neoliberalism and ‘lean colonialism’, and also through the problematics implicit in the SAF literature itself.

3.3. Transformation of Agrifood Relations since the 1970s

This study argues that, the key concept, in order to understand the transformation of agrifood relations since the 1970s, is neoliberalism which is predominantly a response of the bourgeoisie to the crisis of capitalism, particularly Keynesianism, started to be felt in the late 1960s and became apparent in the early 1970s (Holloway, 2007). Thus, it is better to start with a brief discussion on the crisis-ridden character of capitalism and how neoliberalism was a response of the bourgeoisie to the crisis of the 1970s. This discussion will also be the basis of labeling the period since the 1970s onwards as “lean colonialism” phase of capitalist imperialism on the basis of the analytical distinction between colonialism and imperialism provided by Özügürü (2005) as briefly mentioned in the previous chapter.

3.3.1. The Rise of Neoliberalism as a Response to the Crisis of Capitalism

To begin with, crises are not resulting from malfunctioning of capitalism at a particular moment, but, rather, they are inherent in capitalism so that they result from ‘normal’ functioning of the capitalist mode of production itself (Harvey, 2001; Saad-Filho, 2003; Fine and Saad-Filho, 2004; Radice, 2008). In other words, crises arise from unique characteristics of capitalism and tensions inherent in the accumulation process. In the previous chapter it has been

⁴⁴ This point is, also, of crucial importance in order to claim that the mood of globalization is already behind us as discussed in the previous chapter, since ironically the international institutions which in fact conceived as the ‘embryonic forms’ of transnational regulation, namely the transnational state in the 1990s, started to be conceptualized as the central mechanisms of imperialism in the 2000s.

mentioned that the distinctive feature of capitalism is the dependence on the market which imposes certain “impersonal systemic requirements” to all actors; competition, accumulation and profit maximization (Wood, 2003: 11). These requirements simply means that accumulation in capitalism is done for accumulation’s sake and production for production’s sake; which in turn implies that capital accumulation is inevitably expansionary in its character (Harvey, 2001: 238). However, accumulation which is the basis of economic growth in capitalism is not aside from contradictions. In order to understand the contradictions in the accumulation process Harvey (2001: 238) mentions that “the progress of accumulation depends upon and presupposes”, at least the followings: “the existence of a surplus of labour – an industrial reserve army which can feed the expansion of production”; “the existence in the marketplace of requisite quantities of, or opportunities to obtain means of production – machines, raw materials, physical infrastructures, and the like – to permit the expansion of production as capital reinvested”; and “the existence of a market to absorb the increasing quantities of commodities produced”. The critical point is the fact that the progress of capital accumulation “may encounter a serious barrier” in each of the three aspects mentioned above due to its anarchic character and the class struggle. And when this occur, the result will be crisis in the accumulation process which simply means that circulation process of capital is “totally disrupted” (Harvey, 2001: 239-240; 314-315).

Conceiving crisis of capitalism in terms of class struggle is of crucial importance to avoid the problem of conceiving capital as an economic category which operates through certain laws, rather than as a social relation. In addition to this, it is also very important in understanding the transformation of agrifood relations since the 1970s as a product of struggle for control over the production process and the ‘nature’ rather than logical conclusion of mere technological developments in isolation of class struggle. Hence, I will try to summarize the arguments of Harvey (2001: 313-316) in relation to “the core features of the circulation of capital” in order to conceptualize the crisis of capitalism as a result of class struggle. Harvey (2001: 312) defines circulation of capital:

as a continuous process in which money is used to buy commodities (labour power and means of production such as raw materials, machinery, energy inputs, and the like) for the purpose of combining them in production to make a fresh commodity that can be sold for the initial money outlay plus a profit.

The profit at the ‘end’ of the circulation of capital simply arises from the “application of living labour in production”. Since labour power is the only commodity that produces more value than its value, the value of the ‘fresh commodity’ that appeared at the end of the sequence “is greater than the value of commodities absorbed in production”. And, this increase in the value of the commodities “is captured in the money form of profit”. Hence the source of the profit is clearly the “exploitation of living labour in the production”. The implication of this point is that the circulation of capital “is predicated on a class relation” which mainly arises from the separation of the majority of people from the means of production and imposition upon them wage labour relation as mentioned before. This point is important to note that:

without the capital-labour relation expressed through the buying and selling of labour power, there could be no exploitation, no profit and no circulation of capital. Since all the latter are fundamental to commodity production and social reproduction, so the class relation between capital and labour is the most fundamental social relation within the complex weave of bourgeois society.

The problem for the capitalists and the circulation of capital is that being predicated on class relation simply means “opposition, antagonism and struggle”. The struggle between capital and labour is basically over two issues: “How much do capitalists have to pay to procure the rights to labour power and what, exactly, do those rights comprise?”⁴⁵ In other words:

Struggle over the wage rate and over the conditions of labouring (the length of the working day, the intensity of work, control over the labour process, the perpetuation skills, and so on) are consequently endemic to the circulation of capital.

⁴⁵ It should be noted that the struggle between capital and labour can not be resolved within capitalism since it implies something more than the conditions of labour process and the wage rate. Rather it arises from the fact that wage-labour form is an alienated form since it is the most important barrier in front of the creative human labour. (Holloway, 2007)

The technological dynamism inherent in capitalism arises mainly from this struggle between capital and labour, combined with the competition (struggle) between capitalists. Constant 'improvements' in the technology and the organization of labour process help capitalists both to take advantage over their rivals and "secure their profits in the market"; and "to control the intensity of work and to diminish the power of workers in production through the replacement of monopolizable skills". In addition to this, these 'improvements' also help capitalists "to exert leverage over the supply of labour power (and consequently the wage rate) through creation of technologically-induced unemployment". This technological dynamism of capitalism is a continuous process since the capital-labour struggle and intercapitalist competition are fundamental and endless features of capital accumulation. However, the attempt of capitalists to secure their profit and to control labour process through technological and organizational 'improvements' simply means supplanting living labour that is "the real agent of expansion" from the production. This simply means that "growth and technological progress, both necessary features of the circulation of capital, are antagonistic to each other". Here lies the core of the problem leading to the crisis of accumulation. In other words, capitalists "tend to expand the mass and total value of commodities on the market" through application of living labour in the production (Harvey, 2001: 239). This mainly means accumulation for the sake of accumulation and results in the "tendency to produce without regard to the limits of the market" (Marx, cited in Harvey, 2001: 239). However, since application of living labour in production simply means struggle with workers, capitalists also tend to control this process through technological and organizational 'improvements' which results in supplanting living labour from production. In turn, the result of this contradictory relation between "growth and technological process" is the surplus of capital on the one side and surplus of labour on the other which Harvey (2001: 315:316) calls the state of overaccumulation; and he also explains the crisis of capitalism in the 1970s on this ground:

The crisis is typically manifest as a condition in which the surpluses of both capital and labour which capitalism needs to survive can no longer be absorbed. I call this a state of overaccumulation. Surplus capital and surplus labour power exist side by side with apparently no way to bring the two together to accomplish socially-useful tasks. The irrationality that lurks at the heart of a supposedly rational mode of production comes to the surface for all to see. This is the kind of irrationality, with massive unused productive capacity and high unemployment, into which most western economies have sunk these past few years [the late 1970s and the early 1980s].

Up to here, I just tried to mention that crises are endemic to capitalist mode of production through a summary of Harvey's (2001: 237-240; 312-316) formulation; and most importantly try to argue that they mainly arises from intercapitalist competition and class struggle⁴⁶. Now I will try to mention that the rise of neoliberalism was predominantly a response of capitalists to the crises of the early 1970s.

In order to understand neoliberalism as a response to the crisis of capitalism in the early 1970s we have to mention the 'positive' role that crises play in the course of accumulation process. In other words, although, crises are endemic to the capitalist mode of production this does not mean that capitalism inevitable will collapse due to its crisis generating tendencies inherent in the accumulation process. The outcome will be product of class struggle. Within this context, crises, which simply means disruption of circulation of accumulation, also generates the conditions of "corrections to the course of accumulation" both economically and politically⁴⁷. In other words, periodic crises of capital accumulation "have the effect of expanding the productive capacity and

⁴⁶ See Holloway (2007) for an interpretation of the rise and the demise of 'Keynesianism' in terms of class struggle. See also Gamble (2001) for a similar point in terms of the rise of neoliberalism.

⁴⁷ This function of crises, that is generating conditions of correction to the course of accumulation are always explicitly mentioned by the capitalists and the liberals. For instance, TÜSİAD (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen Association) in its report (2008: 172) on agriculture and food in Turkey – prepared by A. Halis Akder, Erol H. Çakmak, Haluk Levent and Filiz Karaosmanoğlu, and published immediately after the food crisis in the second quarter of 2008 – states that: "The fact that the prices of basic agricultural commodities are steering at a higher level compared to the previous years [which is, in fact, the reflection of food crisis] provides the necessary conditions to accomplish the agricultural transformation. For that matter, it has become easier, at least politically, to abandon the price determination of in agriculture to the markets." (emphasis is mine)

renewing the conditions of further accumulation”, which means “shifting the accumulation process onto a new and higher plane”. Harvey (2001: 241) mentions that this ‘new plane’ will be a certain combination of four points that are result of the crisis itself. First of all, with the help of crisis “the productivity of labour will be much enhanced”. The advance in the productivity of labour will be possible through application of “more sophisticated machinery and equipment”, and moreover, “the older fixed capital equipment will have become much cheaper” due to “a forced devaluation”. Secondly, the cost of labour power “will be much reduced because of the widespread unemployment during the crisis”. This will help capitalists to extract “a larger surplus” which in turn will help for further accumulation. Thirdly, “the surplus capital which lacked opportunities for investment in the crisis will be drawn into new and high profit lines of production”. Finally, “an expanding effective demand ... will easily clear the market of all goods produced”. (Harvey, 2001: 240-241)

These four points are all important to understand neoliberalism and the transformation of agrifood relations in terms of responses to crisis, but the last point which in fact means construction of a “new plane of effective demand” that “can increase the capacity to absorb products” is the most essential one both in terms of establishing the link between transformation of agrifood relations and also establishing the link between the framework of capitalist imperialism formulated in the previous section. Harvey (2001: 241-242) argues that the construction of this “new plane of effective demand” can be achieved through “a complex mix of four overlapping elements”:

1. The penetration of capital into new spheres of activity by (1) organizing pre-existing forms of activity along capitalist lines (e.g., that transformation of peasant subsistence agriculture into corporate farming), or by (2) expanding the points of interchange within the system of production and diversifying the division of labour (new specialist business emerge to take care of some aspects of production which was once all carried on within the same factory or firm).
2. Creating new social wants and needs.

3. Facilitating and encouraging the expansion of population at a rate consistent with long-run accumulation.
4. Expanding geographically into new regions, increasing foreign trade, exporting capital and in general expanding towards the creation of what Marx called ‘the world market’.

Within this framework, this study argues that the rise of neoliberalism should be seen predominantly as a result of the attempts of capitalists to shift the accumulation into a ‘new plane’, and particularly to construct a “new plane of effective demand”, in response to the crisis of capitalism. In addition to this, complementary to the discussion in the previous chapter, the relationship between neoliberalism, postmodernism and the ‘globalist’ interpretation of globalization can also be established on this ground as well. Firstly, I will try mention how neoliberalism was a response to the crisis in that sense in a very brief manner. Secondly, I will try to establish the link between neoliberalism, globalization and postmodernism on this ground. Finally, I will try to argue that we can call the period of capitalist imperialism since the 1970s onwards as “lean colonialism” within this framework.

The rise of neoliberalism has reflected itself in “the rise of conservative political forces in the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries”⁴⁸, and in “the growing influence of mainstream theory within economics, both in its traditional form and through new institutionalism”. International institutions, mainly International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and World Trade Organization (WTO), have played a critical role in the spread of neoliberal policies through “the increasing use of aid, debt relief and foreign investment as tools with which to extract policy reforms from foreign governments”. Moreover, the spread of neoliberalism “was facilitated by the perceived failure of Keynesianism in the rich countries and developmentalism in the poor ones, and by the collapse of Soviet Bloc”. Within this context,

⁴⁸ At this point it should be noted that Turkey is one of the first countries that started to employ neoliberal policies (Savran, 2004).

neoliberal policies are primarily based on the “dichotomy between markets and the state”. According to the neoliberals, the state and the market “are distinct and mutually exclusive institutions, and that one expands only at the expense of the other”. In that sense, since markets are the most efficient way of organizing economy, according to the neoliberals, the state should retreat from the organization of economy. (Saad-Filho, 2003: 7)

Since I mentioned that the state in capitalism is primarily capitalist state and there is an inherent relationship between capital and the state both in the previous chapter and the previous sections of this part as well; I will not return to this discussion⁴⁹. The critical point here is that the dichotomy between markets and the state in neoliberal arguments “imply that certain economic policies are ‘naturally’ desirable” (Saad-Filho, 2003: 7-8):

These include, first rolling back the state in order to institute ‘free markets’, for example, through privatization and deregulation of economic activity. Second, tight fiscal and monetary policies, including tax reforms and expenditure cuts, in order to control inflation and limit the scope for state intervention. Third, import liberalization and devaluation of the currency rate, to promote specialization according to comparative advantage, stimulate exports and increase competition in the domestic market. Fourth, liberalization of capital flows, to attract foreign capital and increase domestic capacity to consume and invest. Fifth, liberalization of the domestic financial system, to increase savings and the rate of return on investment. Sixth, labour market flexibility, to increase the level of employment. Seventh, overhauling the legal system, in order to create or protect property rights. Eighth, political democracy, not in order to safeguard freedom and human rights but, primarily, to dilute state power and reduce the ability of the majority to influence economic policy.

Thus, it can be argued that privatization, deregulation, monetarism, liberalization, flexibility, and political democracy on behalf of property rights are the core features of neoliberalism. In the previous chapter it was mentioned that capitalism rests upon the separation of the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’, and this separation needs continuous political intervention. It is important to note that, although, this separation predominantly rests upon the dispossession of the majority of the people and imposition of alienated wage form upon them,

⁴⁹ See Gamble (1979), Picciotto (1979) and Gill (2002) for the same claim through a discussion on constitutionalism and the rule of law supported by Hayek (1992) and Buchanan (1985).

it implies more than that. It can be argued that the separation of the economic and the political in capitalism is a continuous process which is shaped by the class struggle. In other words, based on the struggle between capital and labour what can be organized in terms of market mechanisms *per se* can be brought back to the field of ‘political’. In that sense, neoliberal policies primarily served to further separation of the economic and the political, and that simply means recapturing process of the rights of the working class gained through intense struggles⁵⁰. This further separation has been achieved through the policies of liberalization, privatization, deregulation and flexibilisation which are the core features of neoliberalism as mentioned above⁵¹. This further separation of the economic and political through neoliberal policies, combined with the collapse of Soviet Bloc⁵² provided capital great opportunity to shift capital accumulation to “a new and higher plane” since combination of these two resulted in “penetration of capital into new spheres” and “expanding geographically into new regions, increasing foreign trade, exporting capital and in general expanding towards the creation of what Marx called ‘the world market’” (Harvey, 2001).

Arguably, the relationship between neoliberalism, the idea of globalization in terms of ‘globalization theory’ and postmodernism lies within this framework as well. In the previous chapter, this relationship has been established theoretically in terms of abstraction of contradictions in the analysis of society. Now, this relationship can also be established on the basis of this shift in the accumulation to ‘a new and higher plane’. In that sense, it can be argued that the globalist interpretation of globalization corresponds to (and also reflects) the creation of

⁵⁰ See Perelman (2003) and Özügürü (2005: 92) for the same point in terms of primitive accumulation. Harvey (2006) conceptualizes this point in terms of ‘accumulation by dispossession’.

⁵¹ See Teichman (1997), Burnham (2000), Harris (2004), Polillo and Guillen (2005) for detailed analysis of these processes in different countries and in different areas in terms of new trends in the economic management, consistent with the theoretical framework of this study. I will try to analyze these processes in a much detailed manner in chapter three within the context of Turkey.

⁵² Collapse of the Soviet Bloc is very important not only in terms of providing ‘a new plane’ for capital accumulation through opening new fields but also in terms of establishment of political hegemony for the liberals through the collapse of socialism/communism.

‘a world market’ through neoliberal policies (Rosenberg, 2005; Saad-Filho, 2003) and postmodernism, at least partially, corresponds to the cultural form of the creation of “a new plane for effective demand” (Harvey, 1999). In terms of the idea of globalization it is much easier to point out this relationship since the literature on globalization mainly emphasized the material conditions in terms of unification of social relations at the world scale. This point is clearly consistent with the transformations of capitalist relations on the basis of neoliberalism since these transformations mainly imply the creation of a world market mainly through liberalization. Moreover, the time period that both the term globalization and neoliberalism became hegemonic, that is the 1990s, also overlaps. In relation to this point, Gamble (2001) states that the rise of neoliberalism could not come out so easily, rather it faced with important resistance not only from the working class but also from the Keynesians as well, since Keynesianism was the hegemonic political and economic form of the capital-labour relation between the 1940s and the 1970s. In that respect, Gamble (2001: 130) states that it is only with the 1990s (even at the end of the 1990s) that neoliberalism could become dominant, particularly through the return of “the triumphalism of US capitalism”. This point also explains why the term globalization was the ‘Zeitgeist’ of the 1990s as discussed in the previous chapter with reference to Rosenberg (2005).

For the case of postmodernism, linking it up with globalization and neoliberalism is much more difficult. This difficulty arises from two points. First of all, there was almost no discussion on the economic policies within the literature on postmodernism (Fine, 2004)⁵³. Secondly, the literature on postmodernity comprehends more general discussions on modernity. However, it can be argued that the emphasis of the postmodernity literature on flexibility and temporality in its criticism of modernity overlaps with the creation of new

⁵³ Fine (2004) argues that the connection between neoliberalism and postmodernity lies in this fact. In other words, according to Fine (2004) the fact that there is almost no discussion on economy policies within the postmodernity literature shows us the complementarity of neoliberalism and postmodernity on behalf of neoliberal transformations; rather than their disconnection.

social wants and needs in order to shift the accumulation process to a new and higher level as a response to crisis of capitalism (Harvey, 1999). Here, I do not want to formulate a reductionist interpretation of postmodernism (or the idea of globalization) by arguing that postmodernism was invented by the capitalists and the liberals in order to create a new plane of effective demand through creation of new social needs and wants. For such an interpretation corresponds to a more general problem that is conceiving ideology in terms of false consciousness which this study rejects⁵⁴. Moreover, this understanding cannot explain us problematics and criticisms formulated by the postmodernity literature towards modernity. Rather I just want to argue that although both globalization and postmodernism correspond to a reality and also play a critical role in the formation of that reality (that is the basis of rejecting ideology as false consciousness) they do not explain that reality which reflects in the arguments on “postmodern society” or “globalization as the new phase of spatio-temporal conditions of human societies”. Moreover, I want to argue that the relationship between neoliberalism, postmodernism and globalization lies in the reality that they corresponds to in different ways, that is the transformations within the capitalist relations since the 1970s.

In the previous chapter, I argued that imperialism is still a powerful concept in order to understand the contemporary capitalism both theoretically and politically. In that sense, this study argues that, these transformations of capitalist relations on the basis of neoliberalism – which result in creation of a world market and penetration of capital into new spheres – can also be seen as the basis of “lean colonialism” with respect to the periodization of capitalist imperialism. Özüğurlu (2005: 85-95), in his analysis of ‘globalization’ as an empirical concept⁵⁵, summarizes the transformations since the late 1970s in a

⁵⁴ See Yeğen (1999: 25-37) for a review of Marxist conceptions of ideology and criticism of ideology in pejorative terms. For a similar criticism in terms of attitudes towards the concept of globalization see Yıldızoğlu (1996).

⁵⁵ Özüğurlu (2005) rejects the usage of the term globalization as an analytical concept implying a transition to a qualitatively different phase, rather he uses the term to point out the empirical transformations that are mentioned by the term neoliberalism in this study.

consistent manner with the framework formulated above in terms of neoliberalism, in six points. First of all, the division of labour between the North and the South – in which the South specialized in raw materials and commercial agricultural products while the North specialized in the manufacturing industries – and the form of trade have faced with important changes through neoliberal policies. But the critical point is that this does not mean the disappearance of inequalities, hierarchies and dependency relations in the international arena; since the metropolitan countries still hold the monopoly over technology, financial control, natural resources, media, communication, and weapons of mass destruction. Rather, this means that, mainly through the liberalization process, the exportation and importation of commodities have been totally integrated into the capitalist production relations; and the barriers in front of global sourcing⁵⁶ have been almost totally eliminated.

Secondly, Özüğurlu (2005: 89) states that the key characteristic of the contemporary period is the frustration of the nation-state⁵⁷ as the main organizer of the capital-labour relations and the state system as the institutional framework of the capitalist development. This point, which has been discussed in relation to further separation of the political and the economic through neoliberal policies above, is important in periodization of capitalist imperialism in terms of the contradictory relationship between global character of capital accumulation and the nation-state system. In relation to this point, Callinicos

⁵⁶ Global sourcing can be simply defined as the search at the world scale for the conditions that would give the highest profit rates. Heffernan and Constance (1994: 41) provides a detailed definition as follows: “Global sourcing refers to the ability of TNCs both to obtain inputs and to market outputs at various sites around the globe, thereby reducing the uncertainty of commodity procurement and product sales, as well as to their ability to play different nation-states against one another to obtain maximum profits.”

⁵⁷ Özüğurlu (2005: 91) states that this does not mean the disappearance of nation-states, but rather transformation of them in terms of neoliberal state. This is consistent with the framework of this study, however, he also, in a similar manner with McMichael (1991) as discussed in the previous chapter, mentions that nation-states, through their new neoliberal forms, are being integrated within a transnational state, the emergence of which can be seen in the institutions like IMF, WB, WTO, EU, UN, OECD, NAFTA. As discussed in the previous chapter this study rejects this understanding for two reasons. Firstly, nation-state has always been a condensed form of (nodal point of) international state system (Clarke, 1991). Secondly, this understanding do not consider inter-imperialist rivalry which is one of the most important barriers in the formation of a transnational state (Savran, 1996; Mercan, 2007).

(2001: 242) argues that since imperialism is defined by two tendencies, both internationalization and the statization of capital, “each tendency must set limits to the other”. Hence, Callinicos (2001: 242) defines three periods within capitalist imperialism:

that reflect the balance between the national organization and the global integration of capitalism: 1914-45, in which the statization of capital predominates in the context of military conflicts among the imperial powers so intense that they threaten the very survival of the system; 1945-73, when both tendencies are held in check against the background of the Long Boom and the cold war partition of the world; 1973 to the present, where the tendency towards globalization of capital comes to prevail amid successive world recessions and growing political instability⁵⁸.

Although, the frustration of the nation-state system and interstate system in Özuğurlu’s (2005) terms or the prevalence of the tendency of globalization of capital in Callinicos’s terms is the key feature of the contemporary capitalist imperialism this does not mean the state system and the nation-state system has been transcended⁵⁹. Rather, the tension in the capitalist imperialism in terms of “governing by economic imperatives and administered by a system of multiple states” still continue to exist, but have taken a new form in the terms of neoliberalism and ‘neoliberal states’ (Wood, 2003: 128-129).

Thirdly, Özuğurlu (2005: 92) states that, this frustration of the nation-state and the state-system, through liberalization and financialization of capitalist system resulted in the re-integration of ‘underdeveloped’ countries to the world capitalist system in terms of neoliberal states rather than developmentalist social

⁵⁸ It can be argued that since the vacuum created by the combined effect of the collapse of Soviet Bloc and the deregulation thrust of neoliberalism has been fulfilled (Rosenberg, 2005), and since the crises of neoliberalism are started to be discussed with the recent crisis of capitalism (Radice, 2008) a new trend within the capitalist imperialism on behalf of the statization tendency and interimperialist rivalry can emerge in the upcoming years (cf. Carchedi, 2001).

⁵⁹ Savran (1996) in relation to this point mentions that the nation-state system and national economies have become even more important. According to Savran (1996: 15) the rising significance of nation-state system and national economies can be seen in three areas: (1) foreign direct investments, since the differences among nation-states started to play a much more important role in the decisions of multi-national corporations; (2) international trade, since the structure of national economy has become more important through the elimination of protective tariffs; (3) finance, since the specificity of national economies has become more determinant in an integrated world economy.

welfare states. Debts played a critical role at this point, since in order to generate necessary foreign exchange reserves to pay debts, underdeveloped countries organized their production structures in terms of export orientation. In addition to this, institutions like IMF and WB imposed certain policies that are summarized above in terms of neoliberalism, through credit and debt mechanisms. In relation to this point, Wood (2003: 131) states that debt should be seen as “the principle instrument of the new imperialism”.

Fourthly, according to Özuğurlu (2005: 92), the transformation of nation-state in terms of neoliberalism resulted in a legitimacy problem since flexibilization of capital-labour relation, liberalization of the circulation of commodities, and deregulation thrusts of neoliberalism in favor of capital resulted in degradation of the living conditions of the majority of the people. This is so because while the mobility of capital has been increased enormously at the global level, labour mobility is restricted at the national, or even local, level. This point is important to note that we cannot talk about a ‘global capitalism’ as such. In relation to this point, contrary to the ‘globalist’ interpretation of contemporary capitalism, Wood (2003: 135-136) argues that:

But let us accept that the speed and extent of capital movements, especially those that depend on new information and communication technologies, have created something new. Let us even accept that the world is more ‘interdependent’, at least in the sense that the effects of economic movements in the heartlands of capital felt throughout the globe. There remains one overriding indication that the global market is still far from integrated: the fact that wages, prices and conditions of labour are still so widely diverse throughout the world. In a truly integrated market, market imperatives would impose themselves universally, to compel all competitors to approximate some common social average of labour productivity and costs, in order to survive in conditions of price competition.

We can argue that, the core of the legitimacy problem in the contemporary capitalism lies, at least partially, in the restrictions over labour mobility. Özuğurlu (2005: 92) argues that the legitimacy problem in contemporary capitalism has lead capitalism to push a competitive individualistic culture forward, and collective norms and values back.

Fifthly, the increase in the mobility of capital enhanced further by what Harvey (1999) calls *time-space compression* which simply means the shortening of the turnover time of circulation of capital. This has been accomplished with the help of developments in information and transportation technology combined with the liberalization and deregulation policies (Özuğurlu, 2005: 92). These developments, according to Özuğurlu (2005: 92-93) resulted in the emergence of global production chains in which *lean production system* is the dominant form. The essence of lean production according to Özuğurlu (2005) is its ability to combine the advantages of scale economies and field economies with the advantages of flexibilization. According to Özuğurlu (2005: 93), what is new in this production system – core features of which are total quality management, team work, subcontracting and flexibility – is the continuous search for decreasing costs through continuous reorganization of the labour process.

Finally, Özuğurlu (2005: 93) argues that through these processes mentioned above, daily life is characterized by the hegemony of speed, productivity and money, which in sum resulted in the hegemony of capitalist relations.

It is through these transformations that Özuğurlu (2005: 93) argues that contemporary capitalist imperialism on the basis of neoliberal transformations can be labeled as ‘lean colonialism’:

With respect to features listed here, we can define ‘globalization’ as an imperialist strategy directed towards settlement of a new international division of labour; transformation of regulatory mechanism (nation-state); emergence of new trends in the organization of capitalist relations (global commodity chain and lean production system); real subsumption of the social life as well as labour as a whole to capital (proletarianization, commodification, financialization); cleansing of social aspects of labour, public sphere and the state (social exclusion, commercialization, small state). In relation to labeling the imperialist strategy, i.e. labeling the mechanisms that impose and sustain relations of exploitation and power at the world scale (colonialism) I find it acceptable to call this *lean colonialism*. In other words, I think, it is possible to decipher theoretically the economic and social processes that are empirically identified by the term ‘globalization’ with the concept of *lean colonialism*.

This point is also emphasized by Wood (2003: 134) – who uses the term globalization in empirical terms in a similar manner with Özuğurlu (2005) –

through her conceptualization of contemporary capitalism in terms of capitalist imperialism with a particular emphasis on liberalization:

Actually existing globalization, then means the opening of subordinate economies and their vulnerability to imperial capital, while the imperial economy remains sheltered as much as possible from the obverse effects. Globalization has nothing to do with free trade. On the contrary, it is about the careful control of trading conditions, in the interests of imperial capital.

Thus far, I tried to mention that the concept of food regime should be conceptualized within the context of capitalist imperialism, and tried to point out the characteristics of contemporary capitalist imperialism (lean colonialism) in a consistent manner with the general theory of capital accumulation and on the basis of neoliberal policies. Now, I will try to mention how transformation of agrifood relations is consistent with the framework formulated up to here in terms of neoliberalism as a response to crisis of capitalism and “lean colonialism”; and also try to mention the role of agrifood relations within these transformations.

3.3.2. Transformation of Agrifood Relations within the Neoliberal Context and Lean Colonialism: A Neoliberal Food Regime?

In the previous chapter, some of the major contemporary problematics in relation to agrifood relations highlighted by (but mostly implicit in) the SAF literature were listed as follows:

- technological change (among others substitutionism and biotechnology) and its consequences for the labour process in agricultural production; and also for penetration of capital into new spheres through product differentiation;
- penetration of capital into culture and reproduction sphere through further commodification of food;

- increasing role of commercial capital within agrifood system especially through supermarkets;
- the reconvergence of agriculture and industry (one of the most important social division of labour) through the rising food industry under the control of the multinational corporations ('transnational corporations');
- the emergence of a new international division of labour within the world capitalist system;
- changing aspects of the conditions of agricultural producers and the class position of the petty commodity producers, particularly penetration of capital to agriculture in the form of contract farming;
- the increasing importance and changing role of women labour power; and
- environmental degradation.

Although, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive review of these problematics, they are of crucial importance to understand the transformation of agrifood relations from the 1970s onwards within the framework formulated in the previous section. These problematics are also important for the claim that agrifood relations and the related SAF literature is important in understanding the contemporary capitalism, argued at the very beginning of the previous chapter. Thus, I will try to elaborate on these problematics respectively, and try to establish their relations with neoliberalism and 'lean colonialism'. With respect to this point, this study argues that transformations of agrifood relations since the 1970s can be conceptualized under the name of *neoliberal food regime* implying the particular form that agrifood system has taken corresponding to the 'lean colonialism' phase of capitalist imperialism.

In the previous section, I mentioned that technological dynamism in capitalism mainly arises from the distinctive features and immanent contradictions of

capital accumulation. These can be stated briefly as accumulation for the sake of accumulation (production for production's sake), intercapitalist competition, and class struggle. In other words, capitalists tend to revolutionize technology in order to remain in the market, to increase their profits, to take an advantageous position against their rivals, and most importantly to control the labour process which mainly means maintaining power over the labour. Technological 'innovations' or changes in agrifood relations should also be interpreted within this context, but this time the 'nature' should also be included. Factors that limit or slow down the development of capitalism in agriculture can be listed as follows: the gap between the labour process and the production process⁶⁰; the givenness of the amount of the land; impossibility of conservation of agrifood products for longer periods of time due to their perishability which is the result of their organic character (Aydın, 1986). Lewontin (2000: 95) also lists five factors in relation to failure of capitalist concentration in capital: the unattractiveness of owning the land for land "cannot be depreciated, and investment in farmland has very low liquidity as a consequence of the thin farm real estate market"; the difficulty in the control of "labour process on very large farms" due to the fact that "farming operations are spatially extensive"; difficulty in increasing economies of scale beyond the level that "has already been realized by medium-scale enterprises"; the difficulty in the control of the external risks like weather conditions, new diseases, and pests; and the fact that the time for the circulation of capital "cannot be shortened because it is linked to an annual growth cycle in plants, or a fixed reproductive cycle in large animals". These factors, combined with the struggle with the labour, result in a necessity for capital to continuously search for new ways of organization of labour process and technological innovations in agrifood relations. Thus, technological change in agrifood relations, particularly substitutionism and developments in biotechnology should be conceptualized within this framework.

⁶⁰ This simply means that, the product cannot be produced immediately at the end of the labour process due to the vegetation process (Aydın, 1986).

Substitutionism mainly implies that “agricultural products being turned into industrial inputs, and/or the inputs replaced by non-agricultural elements” (Ecevit, 2006: 2). The significance of substitutionism lies in the fact that it facilitates “transformation of food from local, perishable form into a product that is globally marketed, frozen and processed” (Ecevit, 2006: 2). With that respect, substitutionism provides capital with opportunity to eliminate one of the most important barriers in front of its penetration to agrifood relations. Moreover, we can argue that through substitutionism capital increase its ability to combine the advantages of scale economies and field economies with the advantages of flexibilization, since through changing ingredients (whether organic or inorganic) it can increase product differentiation as well as the ‘productivity’. This point, arguably, can be seen as corresponding to ‘lean production system’ briefly mentioned in the previous section and also as consistent with the response of capital to the crisis in terms of creating new social wants and needs, and also in terms of dealing with the overaccumulation problem⁶¹.

Developments in biotechnology, arguably, are much more significant than substitutionism in relation to control over the labour process. Biotechnology can be defined broadly “to include techniques that use living organisms to improve plants, animals, or products” (Middendorf et. al., 2000: 121). In that sense it is not something new; however, new trends can be listed as “technologies that use rDNA, cell fusion techniques, new bioprocesses, monoclonal antibodies, plant and animal cell and tissue culture, and embryo transfer, splitting and sexing” (Middendorf et. al., 2000: 121). Within this framework, developments in biotechnology most importantly reflect themselves in the field of seeds. Lewidow (2003: 100) mentions that seeds have always been “a site of struggle over the entire agro-food system” simply because “the inherent reproducibility and variability of seeds, their natural characteristics have provided an

⁶¹ It should be noted that overaccumulation problem of capital accumulation can only be resolved for a short period of time, since these developments in technology will in turn result in a new, and arguably, even a bigger problem overaccumulation simply because of the tension between technological dynamism and growth mentioned in the previous section.

opportunity for farmers to improve varieties through selective breeding, while developing their skills in cultivation methods”. Thus, development in seeds, particularly development of hybrid seeds, and most importantly biotechnology should be seen predominantly as the result of struggle of capitalists against the independence of farmers, which mainly aimed “uncoupling seeds from farmers’ control, thus capitalizing natural resources into commodities” (Lewidow, 2000: 100). The critical factor in hybrid seeds, which was the product of ‘green revolution’, is the fact that they cannot “breed true, so that farmers had to buy them anew each season” (Lewidow, 2000: 101). Middendorf and his associates (2000: 113) point a further development in that respect in terms of ‘terminator technology’ which “encodes within each seed’s DNA a gene that kills its own embryos, thereby sterilizing the seed and forcing growers to return to seed companies on a yearly basis to purchase new seeds”. With respect to this point, ‘terminator technology’ is different from hybrid seeds in two fundamental ways. Firstly, “in principle all crops could be modified with the Terminator gene”, while hybrid seeds “have only been successful with a few crops” (Middendorf et. al., 2000: 112). Secondly, the ‘Terminator technology’ provides an opportunity for “a few chemical/seed companies to control all crop seeds worldwide” due to its high cost, while hybrid seeds “are relatively easy to produce by conventional breeding” (Middendorf et. al., 2000: 113).

The principle mechanism to impose these hybrid seeds and ‘Terminator technology’ upon producers, and also rival corporations, is intellectual property rights⁶² (Yenal, 1999; Middendorf et. al., 2000; Lewontin, 2000; McMichael, 2004). With the help of intellectual property rights, corporations not only increase their control over producers, but also guarantee their position in the market and gain even a monopoly power⁶³. Thus, it can be argued that genetic

⁶² Standards in the name of *food quality* can also be seen as one of the most important mechanisms in the maintenance of market share and also in the careful control over trade that Wood (2003) mentions in terms of the characteristics of ‘globalization’ process as mentioned in the previous section.

⁶³ At this point, it should be noted that, despite the fact that biotechnology necessitates high investment levels to enter the market, in capitalism it is not possible to maintain a monopoly position in the long run, predominantly because of competition.

intervention to seed and their legislation through intellectual property rights have mainly three critical consequences. Firstly, through these developments in biotechnology the independence of petty commodity producers are being sharply reduced (Middendorf et. al., 2000). Secondly, they lead to increase in the concentration and centralization tendency of capital (Middendorf et. al., 2000; Lewontin, 2000; Heffernan, 2000). Thirdly, and arguably most importantly, they result in penetration of capital into new spheres which were previously non-commodity in character. This last point is very important to conceptualize the developments in seed and intellectual property rights in terms of further separation of economic and political (Wood, 2003), or primitive accumulation (Perelman, 2003) or accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2006) which have been conceptualized as the main aim of the neoliberal transformations in the previous section. In other words, through “displacement of customary forms of knowledge and moral economy” capital could be able to open new spheres itself to penetrate (McMichael, 2004: 58). In addition to this, these developments have important consequences for the peasant question and underdevelopment that will be mentioned in the next section.

Other developments in biotechnology include the rise of ‘identity preserved (IP) crops’ and biotechnology used in the animal field (Middendorf et. al., 2000). Recent research areas in biotechnology used in animal field includes increasing the ‘productivity’ of milk production through, for instance, bovine growth hormone; improving or changing meat characteristics through, for instance, porcine growth hormone; using animals to produce pharmaceuticals through, mainly, transgenic pharming based on transgenic animals⁶⁴ (Middendorf et. al., 2000: 114-115). In other words, through biotechnology capital can change the traits of animals, or even ‘recreates’ them to create the most suitable conditions to make the highest profit possible. In a similar manner, IP crops are those:

which have been engineered with specific altered traits, such as tomatoes with delayed ripening (e.g., Flavr Savr), or canola with high lauric acid (an

⁶⁴ Middendorf et. al., 2000: 122) mentions that “transgenic animals are animals into which foreign DNA is implanted into the fertilized egg”.

ingredient in cosmetics), such as Calgene's Laurical. IP crops are a way of adding value to a crop because the altered trait commands a premium in the market. (Middendorf et. al., 2000: 113)

Thus, we can derive a general conclusion based on the processes and techniques mentioned above in terms of developments in biotechnology. These developments combined with the substitutionism serves mainly to 'compression of time and space' in agrifood relations (Middendorf et. al., 2000: 108). In the previous section, I mentioned that crises are endemic to capitalist accumulation, but they also create the conditions to shift the accumulation process to 'a new and higher plane' (Harvey, 2001). With respect to this point, developments in biotechnology, intellectual property rights, and substitutionism all help capital to accomplish this shift in terms of agrifood relations. In addition to this, they are also critical in further commodification of food which in fact implies culture and reproduction sphere are being further commoditized through commodification of relations that were previously non-commodity in character. Thus, the meaning of the problematic of penetration of capital into culture and reproduction sphere lies also at this point. All these points are, as mentioned above, also critical in the ways that capital deals with overaccumulation problem since they both provide capital opportunities for creating new social wants and needs, new spheres of capital accumulation and also new opportunities to employ labour power⁶⁵.

In sum, this brief discussion on the problematic of technological change, particularly substitution and new trends in biotechnology points out that they are of crucial importance in relation to penetration of capital to agrifood relations and also concentration of capital. At the very beginning of this chapter agrifood system is defined as the totality of production, distribution and consumption processes. In relation to this point, it can easily be argued that substitutionism and developments in biotechnology have resulted in an enormous increase in the

⁶⁵ At this point, it should be noted that although capital open new areas for labour power to work through technological developments, it also creates an enormous reserve army of labour by the same means. This is why overaccumulation problem in capitalism cannot be resolved totally.

power of corporations over the entire agrifood system and over the petty commodity producers through concentration and centralization of capital. This concentration of capital mainly arises from the inherent relationship between different 'spheres' of agrifood system. For instance, corporations (e.g., Dupont, Monsanto, Cargill, ConAgra) those operate in the field of biotechnology are also operating in the supply of fertilizers and chemicals, and also in the processing field (Heffernan and Constance, 1994; Lewontin, 2000). Ecevit (2006: 2) mentions that the rise in the power of corporations is also enhanced by the "new mechanisms and relations" in relation to "extended involvement at the retail level by centralized purchasing of large retail chains, connected with large hypermarkets" (i.e., increasing role of commercial capital within agrifood system especially through supermarkets as mentioned above⁶⁶). The result of this concentration and the role of substitution can also be seen in the changing portions of the total value-added throughout the entire agrifood system. In relation to this point, Lewontin (2000: 95) mentions that:

Farming⁶⁷ itself now accounts for only about 10 percent of the value added in the agrifood system, with 25 percent of the food dollar paying for farm inputs and the remaining 65 percent gained by transportation, processing, and marketing that converts farm products into consumer commodities. At the beginning of the century [20th century] the value added on the farm was around 40 percent of the total food dollar, and many of the inputs were produced directly on the farm in the form of seed, draught animals, feed for the animals, manure and green manure for fertilizer, and family labour.

With respect to this point, it is clear that technological developments in terms of substitutionism and biotechnology have played a critical role in penetration of capital into new spheres and also in the rise of the power of corporations. However, the real spread of this power could only be achieved through neoliberal policies. In the previous section, I mentioned that neoliberalism implies that certain policies, mainly liberalization, privatization, deregulation,

⁶⁶ See also Kalaylıoğlu and Yeşildal (2007) for the changing aspects of retail chains.

⁶⁷ Lewontin (2000: 95) defines farming as "the process of turning inputs like seed, feed, water, fertilizer, and pesticides into primary products like wheat potatoes, and cattle on a specific site, the farm, using soil, labour and machinery."

financialization, flexibilization, are ‘naturally desirable’; and international institutions mainly WTO, IMF and WB have played a very critical role in the spread of these policies through “the increasing use of aid, debt relief and foreign investment as tools with which to extract policy reforms from foreign governments” (Saad-Filho, 2003). In that respect, through neoliberal policies agriculture of third world countries are being opened up to the ‘global’ capital which are empowered by the technological developments mentioned above and protected by intellectual property rights and legislations imposed by IMF, WTO, and WB. In a broader sense, we can argue that neoliberal transformations of agrifood relations played a critical role for “US-led global capital” to overcome its own crisis through penetrating into underdeveloped countries (Wood, 2003: 133):

In what came to be called ‘Washington Consensus’, and through the medium of the IMF and World Bank, the imperial power demanded ‘structural adjustment’ and a variety of measures which would have the effect of these economies even more vulnerable to the pressures of US-led global capital: for instance, an emphasis on production for export and the removal of import controls, which made producers market dependent for their own survival, while opening them, *especially in the case of agricultural production*, to competition from highly subsidized western producers; the privatization of public services, which would then become vulnerable to takeover by companies based in the major capitalists powers; high interest rates and financial deregulation, which produced vast gains for US financial interests, while creating a debt crisis in the third world (and ultimately, in one of the perennial contradictions of capitalism, a recession at home in the imperial centre); and so on. (Emphasis is mine)

Since the GATT process which in turn resulted in the emergence of WTO, the role of IMF and WB through credits and ‘structural adjustment policies, the implications of ‘Washington Consensus’ and ‘Post-Washington Consensus’ in relation to privatization, liberalization, deregulation, transformation of the role of the state in terms of subsidies, and protection of agricultural production will be tried to be summarized in the next chapter within the context of Turkey I will not provide the details of these processes here. For our case three critical conclusions can be derived from these points. Firstly, these neoliberal policies in turn, for our case, particularly penetration of ‘global’ capital to the agricultural production of ‘developing’ countries have the effect of further

strengthening of corporations. Arguably, the claim of students of the SAF literature (e.g., Friedland, 1991, 2004; Heffernan and Constance, 1994) that the unit of analysis for agrifood relations and contemporary capitalism should be TNCs lies at this point. This argument was criticized in the previous chapter on the basis of the fact that unit of analysis of capitalism is the capitalist mode of production itself (Callinicos, 2001). Wood (2003: 135) also mentions that “so-called ‘transnational’ corporations generally have a base, together with dominant shareholders and boards, in single nations and depend on them in many fundamental ways.”⁶⁸ Although, whether corporations like Cargill, Dupont, Monsanto, ConAgra, Continental Grain should be named as TNCs or not is also very important for the debate on ‘globalization’; this study argues that the critical point here is the fact that agriculture and industry are being reunited through these corporations with the help of neoliberal policies and technological developments mentioned above. Thus, the problematic of the reconvergence of agriculture and industry (one of the most important social division of labour) through the rising food industry under the control of the multinational corporations (‘transnational corporations’) lies at this point.

Thirdly, we can argue that the increase of power of corporations through neoliberal processes and technological developments results in a new international division of labour in terms of agrifood relations that is compatible with the needs of ‘global’ capital. In other words, neoliberal transformation of agrifood relations:

had a major impact on the organization of agricultural production in terms of generating a new division of labour between low-value and high-value products. While the core countries export mainly low-value cereals and oilseeds, the periphery specialized in exporting high-value products such as fruits and vegetables. For the latter the transnational corporations (TNCs) through mechanisms of global sourcing have been using various means to utilize cheap labour and raw materials as inputs. (Ecevit, 2006: 2; see also McMichael, 2000; and Bonanno, 1994)

⁶⁸ Savran (1996) also mentions the same point and he argues that we should call those corporations ‘Mega-capital’ implying a national base but operations at the world level.

Finally, based on all these points mentioned above, this study argues that, the transformation of agrifood relations since the 1970s can be conceived in terms of *neoliberal food regime* which implies elimination of barriers in front of the penetration of capital into the agrifood relations, particularly into the agricultural relations of ‘underdeveloped’ countries through liberalization, deregulation, privatization; further commodification of social life through commodification of food (real subsumption of culture and reproduction to capital); transformation of the role of nation-state in terms of agrifood relations; reunification of agriculture and industry through food industry; emergence of a new international division labour in terms of low-value and high-value agrifood products; and environmental degradation. Arguably, these are all consistent with the characteristics of lean colonialism phase of capitalist imperialism mentioned in the previous section. Whether all of these processes are resulting in the real subsumption of labour in agriculture to capital, that is the basis of peasant/agrarian question literature is another discussion which necessitates further more concrete researches. However, in the next section I will try to formulate at least partially, the theoretical implications of these transformations in terms of peasant question. Before that one point should be rementioned in order to prevent confusion. By *neoliberal food regime* I just want to imply the new trends and particular forms that defining features of capitalism have taken since the 1970s. In other words, all these aspects conceptualized in terms of neoliberal food regime are definitely not new within capitalism broadly in terms of expansion of capital and the real subsumption of social life to capital. Kautsky (cited in Goodmann and Watts, 1994: 1), for instance, in 1889 that is long before these debates in the political economy of food literature pointed out the general trend in capitalism in terms of agrifood relations in a very clear and farsighted manner:

Bold prophets, namely those chemists gifted with an imagination, are already dreaming of the day when bread will be made from stones, and when all the requirements of a human diet will be assembled in chemical factories ... But one thing is certain. Agricultural production has already been transformed into industrial production ... Economic life even in the open countryside, once

trapped in eternal rigid routines, is now caught up in the constant revolution which is the hallmark of the capitalist mode of production.

3.4. Implications for Peasant Question and Underdevelopment

In the previous chapter, I argued that there is a disconnection problem with the agrarian/peasant question and the SAF literature mainly arising from the inherent relationship between the SAF literature and the ‘globalization theory’. In relation to this point, I argued that, through a critique of the arguments on transnationalization and a return to the concept of imperialism can help us to overcome this disconnection problem since the concept of imperialism also implies political struggle in which the alliance of the rural classes and proletariat constitutes an important part of the discussion for this struggle. Then, for this study, the critical point in terms of the neoliberal food regime is its implications for the class position of the petty commodity producers and also for ‘underdevelopment’.

In the previous section, I tried to mention that distinctive features and contradictions of capitalism should not be conceived in terms of abstract models rather they should be conceptualized in terms of particular forms that they have taken throughout the history of capitalism as a result of class struggle. Thus, we can argue that as Keynesianism and social welfare states in broader sense were the product of the acceptance of the organized power of labour (Holloway, 2007) core features of the agrifood relations like protectionism in agriculture, subsidies provided to agricultural producers, policies with respect to self sufficiency in food were, arguably, also the product of the acceptance of the power of the labour in general and rural classes in particular (cf. Friedmann, 1982). In that sense, the critical point is that what it is aimed to be eliminated through the core features of neoliberal food regime is predominantly that power of agricultural producers. McMichael (2000: 150) mentions this point in terms of ‘global restructuring’ which has been conceptualized in this study in terms of neoliberalism:

Of particular importance to the world's peasantries, global restructuring has involved dismantling the "agrarian welfare state" which functioned in the first twenty-five years after the Second World War to counter the spread of peasant-based socialist/nationalist movements. (For a similar emphasis see also Aydın, 2001).

However, questioning the class position of petty commodity producers is still an important task since despite the developments in terms of real subsumption of labour to capital in agricultural relations mentioned in the previous section the ownership of the land and the form of the labour used in agricultural production are very critical in the conceptualization of the class position of agricultural producers. As in the case of a developed theory of capitalist imperialism, the peasant question in theoretical terms needs further studies to be conceptualized. However, we can still mention the core of the problem that further studies should be based on.

Within the peasant/agrarian question literature the core problem in terms of the class position of petty commodity producers (PCPs) is the persistence of non-commodity forms both in relation to labour and land (Ecevit, 1999). However, despite the existence of these non-commodity forms, students of the peasant question literature are all in agreement on the fact that petty commodity production does not reflect a distinctive mode of production, but rather it should be conceptualized within capitalism (Aydın, 1986a, 1986b; Ecevit, 1999). Then, the differentiation within the literature mainly rests upon different conceptualizations of differentiation of PCPs in terms of class positions and in terms of articulation with capitalist relations (Aydın, 1986a, 1986b; Ecevit, 1999; Bernstein, 2007). At this point, the reason of this differentiation among PCPs and consequently in the literature can be conceived in terms of the distinction between formal subsumption and real subsumption provided by Marx, which mainly rests upon the distinction between absolute surplus value and relative surplus value. Marx defines formal subsumption as follows:

I call the form which rests on absolute surplus value *the formal subsumption of labour under capital* because it is distinguished only formally from the earlier modes of production on the basis of which it directly originates (is introduced),

modes in which either the producers are *self-employing*, or the direct producers have to provide surplus labour for others. *The compulsion* exerted there, i.e. the method of extracting surplus labour, is of a different kind.

In other words, extraction of surplus is the most critical point in the distinction between formal subsumption and real subsumption of labour to capital; and in the formal subsumption case there is no direct organization of the labour process by capital (Cammack, 2007). What distinguishes real subsumption from formal subsumption is at this point:

What is generally characteristic of *formal subsumption* remains valid in this case too, i.e. the direct subordination *to capital of the labour process*, in whatever way the latter may be conducted technologically. But on this basis there arises a *mode of production* — the capitalist mode of production — which is *specific* technologically and in other ways, and *transforms the real nature of the labour process and its real conditions*. Only when this enters the picture does the *real subsumption of labour under capital* take place.

Then, it can be argued that the significance of both the developments in technology in terms of substitution and especially biotechnology; and the rise in direct confrontation of ‘global’ capital (strengthened by these developments and protected by intellectual property rights, standards, and other forms of legislations) with PCPs especially those of ‘underdeveloped’ countries through neoliberal policies lie at the point of transformation of “the *real nature of the labour process and its real conditions*.”

In relation to this point, for instance, Lewontin (2000: 97) mentions that “the essence of proletarianization is in the loss of control over one’s labour process and the alienation of the product of that labour”. Hence, according to Lewontin (2000), two closely related developments, those are the concentration of capital and the developments in technology mentioned in the previous section, resulted in the proletarianization of PCPs, through elimination of the control of PCPs in the labour process and alienating the product, which were previously the basis of the power of farmers against capital. Araghi (2000) also derives a similar conclusion through emphasizing the role of ‘global restructuring’ (which in this study has been conceptualized in terms of neoliberalism) in the elimination of

nonmarket access of underdeveloped nations' peasantry to means of subsistence. To emphasize this point and to relate it to the peasant question, Araghi (2000: 151) mentions the distinction between ownership of the means of production and ownership of the means of subsistence:

A peasant may own some of the means of production (e.g., title to a small plot of land) but have lost his or her nonmarket access to the means of subsistence. This is the case with respect to peasants who maintain their land ownership, but who have lost control of the labour process. What they produce are decided by the agro-food corporations (or their subcontractors).

Thus, pursuing Araghi's (2000) line of theoretical thinking combined with the Lewontin's (2000) argument it can be claimed that through technological developments and neoliberal policies PCPs of 'underdeveloped' countries lost their control in relation to what to produce, how to produce and even when to produce, despite the persistence of their ownership of the land. In relation to this point, Araghi (2000: 152-153) mentions that peasant question is over both in terms of differentiation of PCPs and in terms of political alliance of proletariat and peasantry:

Hence, if, by asking the 'peasant question' we mean to ask whether the peasantry of an 'underdeveloped nation' will differentiate into a rural proletariat and bourgeoisie (leading to national 'development') or whether peasants will always resist differentiation, then the question has increasingly become irrelevant. But, if we pose the "peasant question" in its political and substantive sense to address the problem of alliance building informed by an analysis of global class formation in the post-GATT era, then I contend that the peasant question is more relevant than ever.

In relation to "the problem of alliance building informed by an analysis of global class formation" Araghi (2000: 153) mention that "the peasant question has been transformed and differentiated into seven interrelated questions" that are: the housing/homeless question, the informal workers question, the refugee/migrant question, the 'identity' question, the question of global hunger, the 'green question', and the indigenous/landless question. According to this study, although there is an important theoretical claim in the arguments of Lewontin (2000) and Araghi (2000) which deserves further elaboration; the

theoretical conclusion derived from these arguments, that is the peasant question is over in terms of differentiation among ‘peasantry’ and in terms of alliance building reflects an extreme position. Bernstein (2007) for instance warns us for being careful in relation to deriving such a conclusion since differentiation should still be analyzed in more concrete situations. This point was also mentioned in the previous chapter in terms of attributing great power to so-called ‘transnational capital’ in the sense that they are capable of doing whatever they want beyond and above the class struggle. Thus, for the implications of neoliberal food regime for the peasant question, this study argues that there are important trends strengthened by neoliberal transformations in terms of dispossession and proletarianization of PCPs as mentioned above; however, there is still the need for further studies at a more concrete levels⁶⁹. Moreover, it should also be mentioned that the future of the peasant question will be the product of the class struggle since all of the developments conceptualized under the name of neoliberal food regime are themselves product of class struggle as tried to be mentioned in the previous section.

At this point in relation to the implication of neoliberal food regime for the peasant question one tentative theoretical argument that should be testified with more concrete analyses can also be added. That is, although, the developments conceptualized under the name of neoliberal food regime has strengthened the trends in dispossession and proletarianization they are not transforming both land and labour in agriculture into commodities (Ecevit, 1999). This point can also be interpreted with respect to class struggle, and also it has close relationship with the Marxists debates on the progressive character of capitalism mainly through revolutionizing the production relations. This point, as mentioned above, has also been the basis for the classical expectation within the agrarian/peasant question literature that penetration of capital to the agriculture will result in two major classes in agriculture as in the case of industry. However, despite the rising power of corporations through technological

⁶⁹ See Başaran (2008) for such an attempt in Düzce in Turkey.

changes and neoliberal policies against the PCPs the continuity of the non-commodity character of land and labour implies that the capital does not playing this expected progressive role in agrifood relations (or even in industry as well which reflects itself in the recent rise of informal sector, domestic sector, flexibility, and the like). In relation to this point, two relational points can be mentioned. Firstly, capital-wage labour relation is a contradictory one for capital. Although commodification of the labour power in the form of wage-labour through dispossession of the masses weakens the power of labour in relation to labour process and the product; bringing these labour powers together within a factory (or land in the case of agriculture) through dispossession itself re-empowers the labour through increasing the power of labour among the labour process and over the product (Clarke, 1991). From this theoretical argument, it can be argued that the preservation of land and the labour form in agriculture as non-commodity helps capital, at least partially, to overcome this contradiction inherent in the accumulation process, which means gaining an advantageous position in the class struggle. Whether this advantageous position of capital can be conceptualized as the “proleterianization without dispossession” or “proletarianization on the land”, implying the continuity of the ownership of the land and the non-commodity family labour while the control over the product and the labour process has been lost is the question that needs further studies (Ecevit, 2008). The second point is related to the arguments of the liberals. On the contrary to the liberal arguments that capital relation is the best one for the welfare of the society, for the efficiency in the usage of the resources, and for the ‘progress’ the mentioned point makes capital remain ‘backward’, not only in a particular place but at the global level (Ecevit, 2008). This second point has close relations with the debate on ‘underdevelopment’ as well.

In terms of the implications for the future of ‘underdevelopment’, rather than a discussion on ‘underdevelopment’, in relation to discussion formulated above I can only mention one general (but critical for the political struggle as well as the theoretical studies) argument based on the analysis of core features of

neoliberalism and neoliberal food regime provided in the previous sections. The political implication of the idea of 'globalization' has reflected itself mainly in the claim that national economies and the nation-states have been surpassed by the 'global' capital which simply means 'national developmentalism' is over (Keyder, 1996). Within this framework, it is claimed both from 'inside' and 'outside' the underdeveloped countries that integration to the globalization process means taking an advantageous position in the 'globalized' world. However, both the analysis of neoliberalism in general neoliberal food regime indicates the opposite in relation to this claim since neoliberalism (or 'globalization') simply implies a further deepening of the gap between 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' ('developing') countries. This deepening of the gap arises from the fact that core countries still hold their monopoly over finance, research and development (technology), natural resources, media, communication, and weapons of mass destruction as mentioned in the previous sections. In relation to this point, the most critical factor in terms of agrifood relations is the technological developments, particularly biotechnology in which core countries have a monopoly. In other words, the huge cost that is necessary to develop biotechnology plays a critical role in the rise of "the inequalities that currently exist between developed and developing countries" (Middendorf et. al., 2000: 5).

In addition to this, it has been mentioned in the previous section that neoliberalism implies a careful control on trade rather than a free trade, which reflects itself in the agrifood relations in terms of intellectual property rights and standards in the name of food quality (Wood, 2003; Bain et. al. 2005).

However, there is still a need for more concrete analyses both in terms of how far the concept of neoliberal food regime is useful and also in terms of its implications for underdevelopment. These will be the main tasks of the next chapter that will try to summarize transformations of capitalist relations, particularly agrifood relations since 1980 through a review of the related literatures.

CHAPTER 4

TRANSFORMATION OF AGRIFOOD SYSTEM IN TURKEY AFTER 1980 WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF LEAN COLONIALISM AND NEOLIBERAL FOOD REGIME

4.1. Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I mainly tried to formulate a conceptual framework to understand contemporary characteristics of capitalism in general and transformation of agrifood relations in particular in a dialectical manner. In order to achieve this, I tried to pursue a critical engagement with the related literature, namely the *sociology of agriculture and food*. In that respect, I argued that the SAF literature can provide insights to conceive the core features of contemporary transformation of agrifood relations and contemporary characteristics of capitalism through the problematics and the concepts formulated within the literature itself. However, I claimed that the literature suffers from serious methodological and theoretical problems arising mainly from the conditions that it was born into – that is the 1990s characterized by the hegemony of the ‘globalization theory’. According to this study, these methodological and theoretical problems of the SAF literature reflect themselves in the arguments on transition from a inter/multi-national phase of capitalism to a supra/trans-national one, which mainly reflects the influence of the hegemonic position of the ‘globalist’ interpretation of globalization over the SAF literature (and particular versions of Marxist interpretations of the

contemporary capitalism in general as well). In that sense, I argued that a criticism of the arguments on transnationalization is necessary in order to break the connection of the SAF literature with the ‘globalization theory’ and make the possible theoretical expansions of the SAF literature apparent, which are implicit in the problematics and the concepts (mainly agrifood system and food regime) formulated by the literature itself.

The second chapter of this study, thus, mainly dedicated to the criticism of the ‘globalization theory’, which mainly argues for a transition to a qualitatively different world; and to the criticism of the arguments on transnationalization and the emergence of a transnational state within the SAF literature. In that respect, I argued that the problem of the arguments on transnationalization and the emergence of a transnational state, *inter alia*, is the misconceptualization of the contradictions immanent in capitalism, or even the abstraction of these contradictions that are arising from distinctive features of capitalism from the analysis. However, in the third chapter, I claimed that criticizing the ‘globalization theory’ and particularly the SAF literature on the basis of misconceptualization of the distinctive features of capitalism has its own problems as well. With respect to that point, I argued that such a criticism can lead us analyzing capitalism in terms of an abstract model that is valid for the history of capitalism from its inception till now. On this ground, I claimed that, the problem of the SAF literature is not to attempt to analyze the particular periods of capitalism and particular food regimes appeared in these periods, but rather the inconsistency with the general theory of capitalism. It is on this basis that the third chapter is mainly dedicated to the positioning of the concept of food regime within the context of capitalist imperialism, since capitalist imperialism provides an intermediary level of analysis to analyze the particular forms that the distinctive features and contradictions of capitalism have taken in particular periods in a consistent manner with the general theory of capital accumulation. Thus, I argued, we can reconsider the concept of food regime within the context of imperialism implying the particular forms that agrifood system has taken throughout the history of capitalist imperialism. I argued that

this reconceptualization is possible not only for the renewed debates on imperialism within Marxist literature provide greater insights but also for the SAF literature itself embodies this possibility through its narration of two successive food regimes and problematics formulated throughout the literature. In that sense, in the third chapter, I argued that this study can also be seen, at least partially, as an attempt of criticizing the conceptual framework of the SAF literature through the SAF literature itself.

Within this framework, in the previous chapter, I claimed that the transformation of capitalist relations in general and agrifood relations in particular since the 1970s can be analyzed in terms of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has been conceptualized predominantly as the response of the capitalists to the crisis of the late 1960s and the early 1970s with an attempt to shift the accumulation process to ‘a new and higher plane’. I claimed that, these neoliberal transformations, combined with the collapse of Soviet Bloc, also aimed the recreation of a world market consists of hierarchies and inequalities; and mentioned that this point can be related to Özuğurlu’s (2005) conceptualization of “lean colonialism” as the new phase of capitalist imperialism. It is within this framework that I returned to the problematics listed in the second chapter that are mostly implicit in the SAF literature; and argued that these problematics are consistent with the framework of this study on formulated mainly on the basis of neoliberalism and “lean colonialism”. In that respect, I argued that transformations of agrifood relations since the 1970s can be conceived under the name of *neoliberal food regime* corresponding to the “lean colonialism” phase of capitalist imperialism; and the tried to formulate implications of this neoliberal food regime for the peasant question and ‘underdevelopment’.

Despite the fact that, the arguments on neoliberal food regime corresponding to the contemporary phase of capitalist imperialism is consistent with the general theory of accumulation since it is conceptualized on the basis of distinctive features and immanent contradictions of capitalism; it still can be misleading in

two ways: one is mainly political and the other is mainly theoretical. Politically, combined with the lean colonialism conceptualization, interpretation of transformation of agrifood relations in terms of neoliberal food regime can lead to conceiving the nation-states and bourgeoisie of ‘underdeveloped’ countries merely as passive recipients; as if they have nothing to do with the neoliberal transformations and the formation of the neoliberal food regime. This understanding arguably corresponds to an important portion of the political reactions against ‘globalization’ in Turkey, what famously has been labeled as ‘nationalism’. In other words, neoliberal transformations can be seen as if they are merely imposed by the global forces that are ‘outside’ of the control of the nation-state of that particular underdeveloped country, for our case Turkey. Well, arguably, there is a point in ‘nationalist’ understandings since they correspond to a reality that is the fact that, neoliberal policies have been imposed by the global character of capital accumulation. However, this reality that ‘nationalistic’ interpretations correspond to is not arising from the ‘neutrality’ of the nation-state; rather it arises from the simple fact that the state in capitalism is capitalist state. In addition to this, nation-state is a condensed form of (a nodal point of) the multi-state system which simply means that it has an inherent (though contradictory) relationship with the global character of capital accumulation. Still, as mentioned in the previous chapters, this inherent relationship does not mean that there is a predetermined path that capitalist relations within the territory of a nation-state will follow since capitalism does not rest upon a general logic; or does not mean that there is nothing can be done at the national level. This is so because the determinant factor in the path that would be followed is the class struggle, and national level plays a very critical role in this struggle. In that sense, the problem of nationalistic understandings is not their emphasis on the national level⁷⁰ but rather their conceptualization of

⁷⁰ This study rejects nationalist reactions to the ‘globalization’ process or neoliberal transformations; however, it rejects the arguments of those who mainly claim that the national level is unimportant in terms of struggle of the working class in the name of internationalism as well. Şengül (2007, see also 2000) in one of his unpublished interviews states the same point as follows: “Arguing that the national level is important in terms of struggle does not make us necessarily nationalist like defending the local does not mean being localist”. This point, in fact,

the nation-state as neutral in terms of capitalist relations⁷¹. Thus, besides the theoretical significance, the political significance of conceptualizing the nation state as a capitalist state and as a condensed form of multi-state system lies at this point.

The theoretical problem of conceptualization transformations within the agrifood system in terms of neoliberal food regime belongs to regime-type of interpretations (or we may say periodization attempts) in particular and social theory in general. For the simple fact that social relations are highly complex regime-type of interpretations or periodization attempts have a totalizing affect over the subject of periodization. In other words, it can lead us to the problem of abstract modeling in a similar manner with the general theory of capitalism as mentioned in the previous chapter, but this time at a more concrete abstraction level. To put it in a different way, such an understanding embodies the possibility of abstraction of deviations and differentiations from the main features of neoliberalism and neoliberal food regime from the analysis. In simple terms, two questions that are corresponding to two different abstraction levels are valid ones: (1) To what extent and to what degree transformations within the capitalist relations since the 1970s can be conceptualized in terms of neoliberalism? (2) How far the neoliberal food regime is neoliberal? We can give a broad answer to these questions and the problem of homogenizing and totalizing effect implicit in the regime-type of explanations.

corresponds to a more general problem in terms of struggle – which arguably played an important role in the rise of arguments on the emergence of a transnational state within the SAF literature – which I will try to formulate in the conclusion part.

⁷¹ See Bedirhanoğlu (2008) for a critical analysis of the reactions of the nationalist interpretations as well as the reactions of the Turkish left that she categorizes into two groups as ‘libertarian left’ and ‘anti-imperialist left’ in terms of their problematic conceptualization of the class structure/basis of the nation-state. See Keyder (1996) who arguably corresponds to ‘libertarian left’ within the categorization of Bedirhanoğlu (2008) See Kansu (1999) for a collection of ideas of major social scientists from different disciplines in Turkey some of whom arguably more or less correspond to ‘anti-imperialist left’ within the categorization of Bedirhanoğlu (2008), including Gencay Şeylan, Korkut Boratav, Haluk Geray, Cem Eroğul, Alpaslan Işıklı, Anıl Çeçen. See also Somel (2003a) for a review and critique of the reactions against ‘globalization’ in Turkey.

The first question, in fact, implies the totalizing effects of conceptualization of transformations of capitalist relations since the 1970s in terms of neoliberalism. In other words, it implies that deviations from neoliberalism can be seen as if they are underestimated or unimportant within this framework. In addition to this, the interpretation of the transformations under the name of neoliberalism, can lead us to the problem of conceiving neoliberalism as a homogenous process with strictly defined features. Then, the general answer that can be given to the first question is as follows. Social science in general, predominantly operates through abstraction and establishment of relations. This simply means that there is always the problem of comprehending the complexity of social relations. At this point, the example of the concept of capitalism can be given, which, simply put, implies a social relationship between capital and the wage labour. However, it is clear that in a capitalist society the only labour form is not the wage labour, rather it exists side by side with domestic labour, informal sector, and petty commodity producers, all of which are characterized predominantly by their non-commodity character. The critical point here is the question of whether can we continue to talk about capitalism or capitalist societies despite this fact, or not. According to this study, the answer is yes since the capital-wage labour relation dominates all aspects of social life and the conditions that other forms of labour exist. In a similar manner this study argues that the transformations of capitalist relations can be conceptualized under the name of neoliberalism despite the existence of variations. With respect to second aspect of the first question this study argues that neoliberalism should not be seen as a homogenous process with strictly defined features, rather neoliberalism and transformations on this basis themselves have a history, which simply means analyses at a more concrete level are necessary.

The second question mentioned above mainly implies the consistency of transformations of agricultural and food relations with the general neoliberal transformations. The underlying idea of this question, in fact, is a broader one. It is clear that agricultural relations have always been at the centre of the discussions on the extent of capitalism. In other words, agriculture has

predominantly conceptualized as a rather unique sphere which does not reflect the characteristics of capitalist relations, particularly those in industry. This was also the main basis of the peasant/agrarian question literature. Goodmann and Watts (1994), for instance, mainly criticized the regime type of explanations provided by the SAF literature on this ground, since according to them, agriculture cannot be understood with the concepts produced mainly to understand industrial relations for agricultural relations have unique characteristics. This point has relations with the general problem mentioned above with respect to first question in terms of conceptualization of differentiations and variations. However, the problem of this criticism is that it leads us to “agrarian exceptionalism” that is “symptomatic of the post-modern turn towards abstract particularism and depoliticized micronarratives”(Araghi, 2006: 6). Thus, this study argues that transformations of agrifood relations since the 1970s can be (and even should be) analyzed within the context of neoliberalism and neoliberal food regime since they both reflects and plays a critical role in these transformations as discussed in the previous chapter.

However, these broad answers to the possible political and theoretical misleadings of the argument on neoliberal food regime do not remove the necessity of an analysis at a more concrete abstraction level. Thus, the main aim of this chapter is to provide this level of analysis through an investigation of the transformation of capitalist relations in general and agrifood system in particular within the context of Turkey. In that respect, this chapter can be seen as an attempt to apply the theoretical framework formulated throughout the previous two chapters to the case of Turkey. To accomplish this task, in this chapter, firstly I will try to summarize the transformations of capitalist relations in Turkey since 1980 within the context of neoliberalism through a brief review of the related literature. This section will also show to what extent and to what degree transformations of capitalist relations in Turkey corresponds to neoliberalism, and vice versa. Secondly, I will try to summarize the transformations of agrifood relations in particular, within the context of Turkey through a brief review of the related literature. This section will also show to

what extent the concept of neoliberal food regime is useful for analysis of particular cases. Finally, I will finish this chapter with an overall conclusion on the basis of previous two sections of this chapter. When these tasks achieved the criticism of sociology of agriculture and food, both from inside and outside of the literature, will also be finalized.

4.2. Neoliberal Transformations in Turkey in General

Before starting to analyze the transformations of capitalist relations in Turkey since 1980 within the context of neoliberalism, one general theoretical problem in relation to the related literature should be mentioned. To put it briefly, the related critical literature on neoliberal transformations in Turkey, arguably, suffers from a one-sided (no matter the side preferred) analysis of the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and national form of the state (multi-state system composed of nation states), which is the very basis of the concept of imperialism as understood in this study as well. In other words, neoliberal transformations in Turkey are being conceptualized either mainly as the imposition of ‘global capital’ implying the corporations of imperialist countries and the institutions like IMF, WB, WTO that are under the control of these countries (best reflected in Güler, 2006; for agrifood relations see Günaydın, 2002; Aysu, 2008), or mainly as the product of the attempts of particularly large scale capital in Turkey to create more surplus value and to appropriate the previously produced value and the transformation of the nation-state in this context (see Ercan, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b)⁷². Thus, firstly, I will try to briefly elaborate on this point in relation to the

⁷² To prevent misunderstandings and exacerbation two points should be mentioned in relation to this distinction between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ based analyses. Firstly, this argument should be detailed through a comprehensive review of the literature. Secondly, either of the sides mentioned above are well aware of the reality of the other side. In other words, those who explain the neoliberal transformations in Turkey mainly as the result of the imposition of global capital or imperialist countries are well aware of the fact that ‘local’ capital in Turkey is a part of these transformations; and similarly those who explain these transformations mainly as the result of the attempts of capitalists in Turkey (class struggle within Turkey) are well aware of the fact that core countries and their capital have an interest in these transformations. The problem here is a problem of emphasis which, arguably, arises from different political strategies behind these analyses.

problem of theory of imperialism mentioned in the second chapter; and then try to summarize neoliberal transformations in Turkey since 1980 mainly based on a (re)reading of the conceptual framework provided by Ercan (2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) within the context of capitalist imperialism.

4.2.1. The Problem of Theory of Imperialism Back In Within the Context of Turkey

Throughout the previous two chapters, I tried to argue that the concept of imperialism, when compared to the ‘globalization’ and transnationalization, can help us to analyze both the contemporary characteristics of capitalism and the position of countries like Turkey within the complex relations of capitalism consistently with the general theory of capital accumulation. In other words, I tried to argue that the concept of imperialism provides an opportunity to analyze the particular forms that the contradictions and distinctive features of capitalism have taken in particular periods of capitalism (Callinicos, 2001; Harvey, 2001). Within this framework, throughout the study the concept of imperialism has been mainly understood as an intermediary concept for the analysis of “the world economy” (Callinicos, 2001) which consists of inequalities, power relations, hierarchies, dependency relations, and the like. However, in the second chapter of this study, I also mentioned that the concept of imperialism is not a magic one since a systematic and developed theory of imperialism “that adequately comprehends a world that consists of not imperial masters and colonial subjects but of an international system in which both imperial and subordinate powers are more or less sovereign states” does not exist (Wood, 2003: 171). In other words, although the concept of imperialism is based upon the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the existence of a multi-state system composed of sovereign nation-states (Callinicos, 2001), a theory of this contradictory relationship, particularly a conceptualization of the form that this contradictory relationship has taken since the 1970s, has not yet appeared in its developed and systematic form (Wood, 2003b). This inadequacy or lack of a systematic and developed

theory of imperialism become most apparent in the analysis of more concrete levels, like the analysis of neoliberal transformations in Turkey. Arguably, the inadequacy of the theory of imperialism mentioned above is the core of the problem of the one-sided analyses (no matter the side preferred) that dominates the critical literature on the neoliberal transformations in Turkey. In other words, conceiving neoliberal transformations in Turkey mainly as the consequence of developments that had occurred 'outside' of the country or mainly as the consequence of the developments that occurred 'inside' the country reflects the general problem of the theory of imperialism, that is, to repeat, the inadequacy in comprehending the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the sovereign states.

In the previous two chapters, I tried to mention that although a developed and systematic theory of imperialism does not exist the "renewed" debate on imperialism provides insights for the ground that this theory should be based upon (Callinicos, 2007). That is simply put, the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation (internationalization tendency) and the multi-state system consists of nation-states (statization tendency) itself; rather than any particular side of this relationship. Once the concept of imperialism is understood in this way, arguably, the points mentioned by both 'inside' and 'outside' based explanations of neoliberal transformations in Turkey since 1980 should be seen as correct in their own terms. The problem, thus, is not being right or wrong but remaining partial; and this partialness, according to this study, arises not from the inadequacy of particular scholars analyzing these transformations, but from the inadequacy of the theory of imperialism mentioned above. Thus, the broad answer to this problem of the concept of imperialism is that while conceptualizing the neoliberal transformations in Turkey the totality of the contradictory relationship between global character of capital accumulation and the national form of the state should be kept in mind.

Nonetheless, the analysis should move beyond this broad answer. At this point, within the framework reformulated above, this study argues that despite the fact that it also remains partial⁷³, the conceptual framework provided by Ercan (2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) can help us to understand the transformations of capitalist relations in Turkey within the context of capitalist imperialism much better than the ‘outside’ based analyses. This may seem paradoxical, since Ercan (see particularly 2006b) rejects analyses of transformation of capitalist relations in Turkey based on the concepts of imperialism or *dependency*. Rather he argues that the analysis of capitalist relations at the world level should be conceptualized in terms of a complex *network* in which individual capitals of ‘underdeveloped’ countries like Turkey are active participants as well.

Dependency school and some Marxist analyses always analyze “late-capitalized” societies departing from the influences of “early capitalized” societies. The epistemological basis of these analyses is *one-sided determinism*. While orthodox theorists attribute positive values to the center, the ones who use the concepts of dependency and imperialism emphasize the negative properties of center. In this context, social relations at different levels of capital accumulation are defined in terms of unilateral and hierarchal power relations. ... If we consider these explanations within a historical process, this language determinism would be valid to some extent for earlier periods with respect to the development of capitalism; however we can say that this validity has disappeared especially after the transformation of late capitalized nations in the last twenty or thirty years. Rather than one-sided determinism, we have to speak of a plural network of relations that have become evident with the historical development of capital accumulation. (Ercan, 2006b 204; for a similar criticism, particularly of dependency school, see also Brewer, 1990)

This study argues that Ercan’s (2006b) very criticism to the analyses based upon the concept of imperialism or dependency can be seen (or read) as consistent with the concept of imperialism as understood in this study since his criticism in fact reflects the inadequacy of theory of imperialism mentioned above.

⁷³ To repeat, I should mention that Ercan (2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) does not argue for a partial analysis. In fact, his very analysis is based upon the criticism to the critical literature on neoliberal transformations in Turkey in terms of remaining partial either in terms of analyzing these transformations on the basis of peculiarity of Turkey or on the basis of ‘globalization’ as a factor external to Turkey (see particularly 2005: 374-375). The criticism of partialness for the case of Ercan (see particularly 2006b: 207-208) is based upon not his perspective but his underestimation of the link between transformations of capitalist relations in Turkey with the capitalist imperialism.

Throughout the previous two chapters I tried to mention that analytical importance of the concept of imperialism lies in the fact that it provides an opportunity to analyze the process of capital accumulation at a more concrete level of abstraction compared to the general theory of capital accumulation (Callinicos, 2001). This more concrete abstraction level is mentioned as the world economy consists of hierarchies, inequalities, and dependency relations. In other words, I tried to argue that the analytical power of the concept of imperialism lies not only in its consistency with the general theory of capitalism but also in its capability of conceptualization of inequalities, hierarchies and dependency relations among the international arena. However, mentioning that the world economy consists of power relations and dependency relations does not mean that individual capitals and nation-states of ‘underdeveloped’ countries are merely passive actors that are imprisoned to the politics of imperialist countries’ capitalists and nation-states. On the contrary, they are active participants of the creation of this world economy because of the very fact that individual capitals of underdeveloped countries are *capitals* and nation-states of these ‘underdeveloped’ or “lately capitalized countries” are *capitalist states*. Thus, the political as well as the theoretical significance of conceptualizing the concept of imperialism based on the totality of the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the statization tendency; and conceptualizing the nation-state as a capitalist state and as a nodal point of multi-state system lie at this point.

In relation to his criticism of one-sided analyses within the critical literature on neoliberal transformations in Turkey, Ercan (2005: 375-376) mentions the active role played by individual capitals of ‘underdeveloped’ countries in terms of his definition of ‘globalization’ as follows:

Analyses of long-range structural features of capitalism and class-practices that give these properties their particular forms in particular societies will uncover the fact that globalization is a phenomenon which is shaped by the simultaneous accumulation dynamics of capitals at different levels. Globalization process occurs in the existence of countries and regions which have differentiating capital accumulation levels. In other words, the global

institutionalization of capitalism constructed through legal processes, is not due to one singular-external intervention. Globalization is the product of all individual capitals, which take part in the worldwide circle of capital. In other words, globalization is a multi-level complex phenomenon performed by individual capitals that develop in different places and nation-states but still need and necessitate articulating to the social sum circle of capital.

In the previous chapters, I rejected to use the term ‘globalization’ as an analytical concept. Although, it is possible to use it in empirical terms (Wood, 2000, 2003; Özüğurlu, 2005, and to my read Ercan 2005) I tried to formulate the transformations of capitalist relations since the 1970s in terms of neoliberalism. However, the critical point here is the fact that Ercan’s point in terms of the active role played by individual capitalists and nation-states of ‘underdeveloped’ countries does not contradict to the conception of imperialism as used in this study. On the contrary, the conception of capitalist imperialism of this study extends the point mentioned by Ercan (2005) even to the history of capitalist imperialism rather than conceiving it as the product of transformations occurred since the 1970s. However, conceiving individual capitals and nation-states of ‘underdeveloped’ countries as active participants of the creation of “a world economy” (in Ercan’s terminology, ‘globalization’) does not mean that they should be conceived as equal and independent actors within a *network* type of relations as mentioned by Ercan (2006b: 206) himself: “With no doubt, power relations are continue to exist with an increase, but we can not define these power relations as one-sided relations existing between the active and the passive, anymore”. This is so, arguably, because of the fact that the distinction made by Ercan (2005, 2006a 2006b) between “early capitalized societies” and “lately capitalized societies” does not only imply a matter of time but power and dependency relations between these societies since in the capital accumulation process, at least generally, “success brings success”, which is also the core of the uneven and combined development (Callinicos, 2001). This point is also consistent with the Ercan’s (2006a) conceptualization of capital accumulation as a “structural-cumulative process” since Ercan (2005: 386-387) mentions that the analysis of capital accumulation as a structural-cumulative process at a particular moment should consist both the long-ranged dynamics and the

appearance of these long-ranged dynamics in the short-range. In other words, Ercan (2006a: 387) argues that “analyses that try to understand/interpret a particular moment” of a capital accumulation should simultaneously be structural-determinist in retrospect, and open-ended for the future including potentials and subjective elements. This point arguably, is a sophisticated methodological formulation of the general claim of Marx (2002) formulated in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: “Men make their own history, but not spontaneously, under the conditions they have chosen for themselves, rather on terms immediately existing, given and handed down to them”.

This study argues that the concept of imperialism as understood in this study is also consistent with these general claims on the analysis of capital accumulation. It is so because the very concept of imperialism is conceptualized as an intermediary one that can help to overcome the tension between the general theory of capital accumulation and conjunctural analysis of a particular period through centering the analysis of the world economy on the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the national form of the state (Clarke, 2001; Callinicos, 2001, Wood, 2003). Ercan (2004b: 34) mentions this contradictory relationship as follows:

In an age when capital accumulation processes take place on the world scale, the choices and strategies of capitals that have reached a certain level have begun to be determined by alliances on the world scale. The fact that political processes are still shaped at the national level has become both the continuity and the contradiction of the process. To sum up it in the words of D. Bryan: “The substance of class relations (the process of capital accumulation) is international while its expression as social relations between classes takes a national form. It is the distinction between substance and form which generates within a nation state the contradictions of the internationalization of accumulation”.

To repeat, thus, arguably, the concept of imperialism based on the totality of the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the existence of multi-state system not only provides opportunities to conceive the individual capitals and the nation-states of ‘underdeveloped’ or

“lately capitalized” countries as active participants but also their unequal and dependent positions within the world economy⁷⁴.

All these points mentioned above have also close relations with the possibility of the misleading of conceptualization of the transformations of capitalist relations, and particularly the agrifood relations on the basis of neoliberalism and neoliberal food regime mentioned at the very beginning of this chapter in terms of political implications. That is to conceive bourgeoisie and nation states of ‘underdeveloped’ countries merely as passive recipients of neoliberal policies that are imposed upon them. Thus, a brief discussion on this point was necessary; and the general conclusion of this discussion is the fact that without an analysis of the role of “inside capital” and “local economic groups”, or class struggle inside Turkey, neoliberal transformations since 1980 cannot be understood properly (Ercan, 2006b: 206; see also 2004, 2005, 2006a).

Up to here, through a re-reading of Ercan on this ground, I just tried to point out this general conclusion and its consistency with the general theoretical framework of this study formulated in terms of capitalist imperialism. Now, I can start to briefly summarize these neoliberal transformations in Turkey mainly based on the re-reading of the framework provided by Ercan (2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) within the context of capitalist imperialism, that is tried to be mentioned in a very general manner above.

4.2.2. Neoliberal Transformations in Turkey in General since 1980

In the previous chapter I tried to mention that crises are endemic to capital accumulation and arise mainly from the class struggle (Harvey, 2001a, 2001b; Fine and Saad-Filho, 2004). Moreover, I also mentioned that although crises imply a disruption of capital accumulation process they also create the appropriate conditions for capitalists to shift the capital accumulation to “a new

⁷⁴ Yılmaz (2005) also mentions that the relationship between the ‘outside’ and the ‘inside’ should be conceptualized on the basis of capital accumulation as a social relation at the world scale; and that is conceptualized in this study through the concept of imperialism.

and higher plane” (Harvey, 2001); and on this ground I tried to formulate neoliberalism and lean colonialism in relation to each other and as attempts to move capital accumulation to a new higher plane. At this point the critical point in the analysis of neoliberal transformations in Turkey since 1980 is the crisis of capital accumulation appeared in the late 1970s which has close relations with the crisis of capitalism in general (Ercan, 2004, 2005; see also Savran, 2004; and Boratav 2004 for a similar emphasis and analysis). Thus, it should be noted that, the case of Turkey is clearly not an exception for the general framework of this study in terms of neoliberalism mentioned in the previous chapter. To put it differently, crisis in capital accumulation in general reflected itself within the context of Turkey as well because of the contradictory and inherent relationship between the international character of “the substance of class struggle” (global character of capital accumulation) and the national form of its expression “as social relations between classes” (national form of the state). However, Ercan (2006a: 395) mentions that although it is possible to derive distinctive characteristics of capital accumulation in Turkey from the dynamics related to the general abstraction level of capitalism (i.e. to derive the distinctive features of the national form of the capital accumulation in Turkey from the global character of capital accumulation) the former cannot be reduced to the latter. In other words, although the global character of capital accumulation has consequences for (or determines) the expression of capital accumulation and its contradictions in a nation state it is the national level that will determine the final form of the distinctive characteristics of capital accumulation (i.e. the determination relation is shaped in the determinant not in the determiner Eroğul, 2002, Yılmaz, 2005). Simply put, while the world of possibilities in terms of neoliberal transformations in Turkey are determined by the global character of capital accumulation the final forms of these transformations have been determined by “the social relations between classes” within Turkey (Ercan, 2006a). Thus, to repeat the general conclusion derived from the discussion on the problem of theory of imperialism mentioned above, the analysis of neoliberal transformations in Turkey since 1980 should be based upon the class

struggle in Turkey while keeping in mind their inherent relationship with the global character of capital accumulation⁷⁵.

In fact, neoliberal transformations in Turkey since 1980 is, arguably, one of the best representatives of the contradictory and inherent relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the national form of the state, capitalist/class character of the nation state, active role of the individual capitalists in Turkey within this process since they have been based upon “a triple alliance”:

The decisive factor in the integration of Turkey with world capitalist capital and thereby the access that world capital has had the opportunities in Turkey was the military coup of 1980. The transformation necessary for the internationalization of Turkey was realized on the basis of a triple alliance. The major actors of this alliance were: (1) *large scale capital*, which had reached a certain hegemonic position, the continuity of which was unsustainable on the basis of the available conditions (2) *the state and the political structures*, which experienced a crisis of political representation and lost ground to the social opposition movements (3) *and the World Bank and the IMF*, the actors of market oriented restructuring on the world scale. (Ercan, 2004a: 25)

Although the term *alliance* is problematic since it implies an external relationship among these actors, this triple alliance mentioned by Ercan (2004a) is critical in understanding the inherent relationship between the global character of capital accumulation in which the capital of “early capitalized” countries has a decisive role, the national form of the state and individual particularly large scale capitals. Within this inherent relationship, through neoliberal policies which are the basis of what Ercan (2004a) calls “the regime of outward-oriented capital accumulation” in Turkey large capital in Turkey achieved to shift to a higher level the ‘global’ capital “has had the opportunities in Turkey” in relation to its attempt to shift the capital accumulation to an higher and new plane. In other words, both the global capital and the large scale capital in Turkey have interests in neoliberal transformations since the main aim

⁷⁵ It is on this basis that both the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ based analyses of neoliberal transformations in Turkey are correct in their own terms since both the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ has a determining role in these transformations as mentioned above. However, according to this study, it is also on this basis that they remain partial.

of these transformations has been the reduce the power of working class to create more surplus capital and to appropriate previously produced value (i.e. “to shift the capital accumulation to a new and higher plane”, Harvey, 2001). For instance, Ercan (2006a) mentions the increase in the rate of profits of large corporations in Turkey throughout the implementation of neoliberal policies, while Somel (2003b) emphasizes the transfer of surplus to core countries.

The role of the state in these neoliberal transformations points out clearly its class character. Within the critical literature on neoliberal transformations in Turkey the state is mainly conceptualized as if it has been transformed into a capitalist one with the neoliberal policies implemented since 1980 onwards. According to this study, although the state itself has been transformed with the neoliberal policies, the class character of the state was already capitalist since the very beginning. This point is obvious since the decisive factor in the very implementation of neoliberal policies was the military coup of September 12. In other words, in order to understand the class character of the state it is *not necessary* to analyze the neoliberal transformations since 1980 (though they are important in this analysis) since it is given in the very beginning of these transformations. To sum up, the very departure point of neoliberal transformations in Turkey and their history on the basis of class struggle best reflects the inherent and contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the national form of the state, which has a central role in the conceptualization of capitalist imperialism.

In the previous chapter of this study, I tried to mention that neoliberal transformations as the response of the capitalists to the crisis (to create new markets, new social needs and wants, a world market, penetration to new spheres and the like) should not be seen as the realization of a predetermined path but rather as a product of class struggle like the crisis itself. In relation to this point Ercan (2004b: 17) mentions that:

the concern with the articulation with the world economy is not a cause for capitalists but a consequence. The aim is not really so much to integrate with

the world economy as the creation of more surplus-value and the repartition of the produced values through outward-oriented capital accumulation.

In other words, the recreation of a world market or integration to the world economy; and repartition or appropriation of previously produced value is not a goal in itself but rather the consequence of the struggle with the labour to create more surplus value which simply means to shift the capital accumulation to “a new and higher plane”. This point is important in understanding that neoliberal transformations and neoliberalism have their own history as well, rather than being a homogenous process with strictly defined features. In relation this point, Ercan (2006a: 402) mentions that the attempts of large scale capital to internationalize mainly in order to create more surplus value have resulted in a process consists of different phases. These phases are internationalization of commercial capital, 1980-1988; phase of accumulation particularly based on movements of money-capital, 1988-1999; and the phase of accumulation based on productive-capital particularly direct foreign investment and exportation of intermediate commodities, 1999 onwards (Ercan, 2006a). Ercan (2006a: 403) mentions that these three periods can also be analyzed in two sub-phases in terms of capital accumulation and the changing/transforming functions of the state: the phase that deregulation mechanisms have been implemented, between 1980 and the mid-1990s; and the phase of re-regulation, since the mid-1990s onwards⁷⁶.

Although, the principle mechanisms that dominates the particular phases of neoliberal transformations within the context of Turkey vary like privatization and establishment of ‘autonomous’ boards, liberalization, financialization, flexibilization and the like, six critical conclusions can be derived from the history of neoliberal transformations in Turkey based on the analysis provided by Ercan (2005, 2006a).

⁷⁶ For a detailed analysis of the periodization of neoliberal policies in terms of deregulation and reregulation, or first generation structural reforms (Washington Consensus) and second generation structural reforms (Post-Washington Consensus) see Ercan, 2005 and also Bedirhanoglu, 2006.

Firstly, the critical point in all these transformations that have taken various forms since 1980 share a main aim, that is to reduce the power of working class to create more surplus value and to appropriate previously produced value (Ercan, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b; Savran, 2004; Boratav, 2004). In other words, transformation of capitalist relations in Turkey since 1980 should be conceptualized in terms of neoliberalism which has been conceptualized in terms of the response of capitalists to the crisis of capital accumulation in the previous chapter.

Secondly, those varying mechanisms and policies of neoliberalism mainly aimed the further separation of the 'economic' and the 'political' (which reflects itself mainly in privatizations and establishment of 'autonomous' boards, liberalization, financialization, further commodification) which simply means penetration of capital into new spheres, creation of new social wants and needs, appropriation or repartition of previously produced value that are the core features of shifting the capital accumulation to "a new and higher plane" in response to crisis in capital accumulation (Harvey, 2001).

Thirdly, this attempt to shift capital accumulation to "a new and higher plane" resulted in the (re)creation of a world market consists of power and dependency relations. However, it should be noted that, both the global capital and capital inside Turkey have had interests in this creation of the world market that is reflected for the global capital in the transfer of wealth to core countries (Somel, 2003b) and reflected for the capital inside Turkey in the rise in the profits of major large scale corporations (Ercan, 2004b). In other words, the major social groups that have suffered from neoliberal transformations are labouring classes.

Fourthly, although both the global capital and capital inside Turkey have had interests in the creation of a world market or internationalization a new international division of labour emerged mainly on behalf of the global capital since they enjoy a hegemonic position in the international arena through their power.

Fifthly, the analysis of neoliberal transformations, particularly the analysis of the changing role of the nation-state in Turkey points out that those neoliberal transformations on the basis of class struggle gained a structural, deterministic feature of capitalist relations since 1980, particularly at the end of the 1990s:

When we analyze the process that corresponds to more than a quarter of century in terms of change within process; we see that an important task has been accomplished on behalf of capital. While the emphases on structural adjustment which in turn led to the emergence of jungle laws of capitalism were effectively operating in the early 1980s; the manifestation of the effective operation of this process resulted in the institutional restructuring which implies structural transformation with a relative inner consistence at the end of the 1990s. (Ercan, 2006a)

Finally, and most importantly these points mentioned above are all consistent with the conceptualization of capitalist imperialism and the “lean colonialism” that corresponds to the period since the late 1970s as formulated in the previous chapter. Moreover, particularly the last point mentioned by Ercan (2006a) provides the opportunity to use the concept of neoliberal food regime implying the form that agrifood system has taken corresponding to this phase of capitalist imperialism since neoliberalism, at least since the mid-1990s imply a structural deterministic feature of capitalist relations.

The next section, will try to elaborate on the transformation of agrifood relations in Turkey which arguably, through its extensive empirical basis, best reflects all the points mentioned above in relation to general neoliberal transformation of capitalist relations since the 1980.

4.3. Neoliberal Transformations of Agrifood System in Turkey

To begin with, it should be noted that the debate on the class position of petty commodity producers (and on the characteristics of capitalism in Turkey on the basis of this class position) constitutes one of the most richest and important debates of the history of social science, particularly of Marxism in Turkey

before 1980⁷⁷. Unfortunately, however, this debate has not been renewed yet on the basis of transformations of agrifood relations within the context of neoliberalism and lean colonialism as discussed in this study. Although, there have been important studies on the neoliberal transformations of agricultural relations and the role of the state since 1980, these studies remain insufficient in the conceptualization of class position of PCPs when compared to the debates before 1980⁷⁸. Moreover, the related critical literature on the transformation of agrifood relations mainly emphasized the role of neoliberal policies in terms of liberalization and privatization for agricultural relations (which are very important in deciphering the class character of transformation of agrifood system since 1980) however they remain insufficient in the establishment of the link between these transformations and the rising food industry and corporations (both inside and outside ones) within this industry (Aydın, 2005; Günaydın, 2002, 2003, 2006; Kendir, 2003; Oyan, 2004; Oral, 2006; Önal, 2006; Minibaş, 2006; Özkaya, 2006, 2007; Aysu, 2008; Yıldızoğlu, 2008; Boratav, 2008; Güler, 2008)⁷⁹. In other words, the major problem with the related literature is the fact that there are very few (even none) studies that share the theoretical framework of this study in terms of agrifood system and food regimes formulated within the context of capitalist imperialism. Still, the related critical literature provides important insights to conceptualize neoliberal transformations of agricultural relations and the role of the state in terms of agrifood system and neoliberal food regime formulated in the previous chapter.

Thus, in this section of this chapter I will try to summarize these neoliberal policies and transformations in relation to agricultural and food relations since 1980 and try to mention that these transformations can be conceptualized under the name neoliberal food regime implying the particular forms that agrifood

⁷⁷ Here I refer to the Boratav-Erdost debate and the literature developed mainly on this debate. For not only a review of this debate but also comprehensive review of the literature on class position of PCPc within Marxism see Aydın (1986a, 1986b), Ecevit (1999). For an analysis of Turkish agricultural structure on the basis of village typologies see Akşit and Keyder (1981).

⁷⁸ For an attempt to avoid this problem see Aydın (2001).

⁷⁹ For an exception see Yenil (1999, 2001).

system has taken since 1980 in Turkey. In the next section, I will return to the problems mentioned at the very beginning of the chapter in relation to neoliberalism and neoliberal food regime conceptualizations and claim that although further studies are necessary, the theoretical framework formulated in the previous two chapters is useful and capable of explaining transformations in particular cases like Turkey well better than the concepts of globalization or transnationalization.

Though, neoliberal transformations of agriculture in Turkey started with the early 1980s it has started to gain a structural property only with the 1990s (Aydın, 2001; Oyan, 2004). It can be argued that these transformations have been best reflected in the reorganization of public administration of agriculture (deregulation and then reregulation), liberalization of agricultural trade, privatization of public corporations, changes in (elimination of) subsidies policies (Günaydın, 2001; Oyan, 2004; Kendir, 2003; BSB, 2006, 2008).

Günaydın (2001: 44) argues that the decisive point in the restructuring of public administration of agriculture is the reorganization of the Ministry of Agriculture started in 1984. According to Günaydın (2001) this reorganization aimed, among others, three things. Firstly, the reorganization of Ministry of Agriculture aimed to make the public administration inefficient through destructing the organization structure. In that respect, with this reorganization of the ministry, many key departments in the organization of the agricultural production like Agricultural Businesses, Agricultural Fight, Improvement of Animal Husbandry, Food Businesses, General Directorate of Water Businesses have been eliminated (Günaydın, 2001: 44). Following this, secondly, other institutions of the public administration like Council of Ministers, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Undersecretary of Treasury and Foreign Trade had also been made responsible from the administration of agriculture. The critical point here is that the public administration of agriculture became inefficient and ineffective due to the confusion of duties and responsibilities among various departments of the public administration (Günaydın, 2001: 44). According to

Günaydın (2001: 44-45) the main aim of these two points, which in fact mean deregulation, has been to re-regulate the agriculture in favor of the market, and thereby capital. It should be stated that this period that can be conceptualized under the name of deregulation also corresponds to what Ercan (2005) calls the emergence of the jungle law of capitalism. In relation to this point, the third point in the reorganization of the public administration of agriculture has been the establishment of ‘autonomous boards’ which according to liberals aimed to make the organization of agriculture efficient and effective. It is at this point that neoliberal transformations arguably started to appear in its mature and institutionized form in agriculture (gained a “structural-deterministic feature”). In that respect, Board of Agricultural Restructuring and Support, and Board of Agricultural Support and Guidance were established in 2001. The main argument in relation to the establishment of autonomous boards has been to prevent the negative effects of politics like corruption and paternalism on the economic through establishing the supremacy of technical knowledge (Teichman, 1997; Bedirhanoğlu, 2006). With respect to the framework of this study this point is of crucial importance to conceive the neoliberal policies in terms of the further separation of the economic and the political as formulated in the previous chapter. Establishment of ‘autonomous boards’ in administration of agriculture also reflects this point (Günaydın, 2001).

It should be noted that this restructuring of agriculture accelerated and became apparent with the 1990s especially with the GATTs Uruguay Round that started in 1986 and ended in 1993 (Kendir, 2003). This point also corresponds the fact that neoliberalism gained its hegemonic position only at the end of the 1990s (Gamble, 2001). The main subject of the GATTs Uruguay Round was agriculture and the struggle and bargains among the EU, the USA and the countries of Cairns Group⁸⁰ dominated the process⁸¹ (Kendir, 2003: 280). While

⁸⁰ There are 14 members of the Cairns Group which have a very large scale agricultural production like Australia, Canada, Brazil, New Zealand, Argentina (Kendir, 2003).

⁸¹ At this point it can be argued that GATTs Uruguay Round can also be analyzed in terms of inter-imperialist rivalry in relation to agrifood relations.

the members of Cairns Group and the USA supported for the liberalization of the trade of agricultural products, the members of the EU and Japan opposed this idea (Kendir, 2003: 280-281). At the end of this long process that is full of contradictions among core countries, 125 countries that attended the round signed the Marrakesh Agreement which brings about elimination of subsidies to export, transformation of non-tariff protections into tariffs, elimination of supports and increasing imports. Combined with the IMF (structural adjustment policies) and WB (credit agreements) policies these policies resulted in the liberalization and deregulation (and then reregulation) of the agriculture. Parallel to these processes privatization of state economic enterprises that had a decisive role in the support policies has been almost completed in the mid-2000s. These privatization combined with the reregulation are important to conceive that neoliberalism gained a structural feature in relation to agrifood relations which according to this study is also the basis of the neoliberal food regime conceptualizations. Hence, a brief summary of privatization of state economic enterprises would also reveal how far neoliberal food regime is neoliberal, that is the question posed at the very beginning of this chapter.

State economic enterprises that had been the key institutions in the organization and support of agriculture and agricultural producers can be categorized in three groups: (i) those operating in the animal husbandry like Et Balık Kurumu or Et ve Balık Ürünleri A.Ş. (EBK, Meat and Fish Institution), Türkiye Süt Endüstrisi Kurumu (SEK, Milk Industry Institution), Yem Sanayii (YEMSAN, Feed Industry Turkish I.C.), Gönen Gıda Sanayii A.Ş. (Gönen Food Industry I.C.) (ii) those operating in the production and distribution of inputs like Türkiye Zirai Donatım Kurumu (TZDK, Turkish Agricultural Equipment Institution), Türkiye Gübre Sanayii A.Ş. (TÜGSAŞ, Turkish Fertilizer Industry I.C.), İstanbul Gübre Sanayii A.Ş. (İGSAŞ, İstanbul Fertilizer Industry I.C.), T.C. Ziraat Bankası (Turkish Agriculture Bank), Tarım İşletmeleri Genel Müdürlüğü (TİGEM, General Directorate of Agricultural Enterprises), and (iii) those operating in the agricultural trade like Türkiye Şeker Fabrikaları A.Ş. (TŞFAŞ, Turkey's Sugar Factories I.C.), Tütün, Tütün Mamulleri Tuz ve Alkol İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü

(TEKEL, General Directorate of Tobacco, Tobacco Products, Salt and Alcohol Businesses), Çay Kurumu (ÇAYKUR, Tea Institution), Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi Genel Müdürlüğü (TMO, Turkish Grain Board) and Tarım Satış Kooperatifleri Birlikleri (TSKB, Agricultural Sale Cooperatives and Associations) (Günaydın, 2003: 141)⁸².

Through privatization of these institutions supports that were provided to agricultural producers almost totally eliminated. Rather than support through these institutions, direct income support has been started to applied in the early 2000s. Direct income support, in fact, means the link between support policies and production has been broken since direct income support is provided on the basis of the ownership of the land (Günaydın, 2001, 2003, 2006; Oyan, 2004; Oral, 2006; Aysu, 2008). In other words, while through state economic enterprises support was directly linked to the production (price support to the final product through setting a base price; input supports like fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, agricultural equipments) with the direct income support the state started not to intervene what to produce, the price of the product, where to spend this income and the like. The critical point in this shift in the support policies towards direct income is that the role of state in the backward and forward linkages of agricultural production has been eliminated and thereby the conditions for the penetration of capital into agricultural sphere have been prepared.

Penetration of capital should not be conceived in relation to 'global capital' only, but the national or local capital should also be included in the analysis as mentioned in the previous sections. In other words, all the neoliberal transformations like deregulation, re-regulation, liberalization, privatization, transition to direct income support listed above implies the further penetration of Turkish capital as well as the 'global capital' to the agrifood relations.

⁸² For a detailed analysis of privatization of each institution see Oral (2006).

In the previous chapter, agrifood system has been defined as the entirety of production, distribution, marketing and consumption processes which simply implies the backward and forward linkages. In that respect, it can be argued that those neoliberal transformations mentioned above have resulted in a significant change in the form of the agrifood system in Turkey after 1980. In that sense this study argues that the food regime (implying the particular form that agrifood system has taken in the history of capitalist imperialism) in Turkey after 1980 can also be conceptualized in terms of neoliberal food regime. In the previous chapter, among others key features of neoliberal food regime has been presented as the followings: elimination of barriers in front of the penetration of capital into the agrifood relations, particularly into the agricultural relations of 'underdeveloped' countries through liberalization, deregulation, privatization; further commodification of social life through commodification of food (real subsumption of culture and reproduction to capital); transformation of the role of nation-state in terms of agrifood relations; reunification of agriculture and industry through food industry; emergence of a new international division labour in terms of low-value and high-value agrifood products; changing aspects and the increasing role of women labour power; and environmental degradation. Each points can be exemplified in the case of Turkey.

In the case of Turkey, elimination of barriers in front of the penetration of capital into the agrifood relations have been accomplished through the reorganization of public administration of agriculture, GATTs process, IMF and WB policies, privatization of state economic enterprises, shift towards direct income support as mentioned above. This resulted in among other two things, penetration of capital to agrifood relations, and taking part for Turkey in the emerging new international division of labour.

In relation to penetration of capital into agrifood relations which implies further commodification of food Zafer Yenil's (1999, 2001) framework is very important since it is one of the very few studies that try to analyze agriculture

and food relations in relation to each other as formulated in this study in terms of agrifood system and food regime.

Yenal (2001: 37) mentions that, despite the fact that penetration of international capital into the food and input markets in Turkey goes back to 1950s, it remained limited up to 1980s. Up to 1980s some important foreign companies and the fields that they operate can be listed as follows: Unilever in the vegetable tallow production; Coca Cola in the production and distribution of soda; Ciba-Geigy, Bayer, Sandoz and Pfizer in the production of fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides (Yenal, 2001: 37). With the neoliberal policies listed above there has been a significant increase in the penetration of agrifood companies into Turkey's food market. Yenal (2001: 41) mentions that within a decade (1987-1998) the number of foreign companies and companies with a foreign partner increased from 32 to 65 in agriculture, from 38 to 169 in food processing, from 8 to 198 in catering. Moreover, the highest foreign direct investment rate was in food industry in 1998 (Yenal, 2001: 41). This increase in the number of food companies points out the inherent link between the neoliberal transformations in agriculture and the rise of penetration of multi-national food companies as well as large-scale capital in Turkey.

In the previous sections, I argued that neoliberal policies should not only be conceived as the imposition of global capital. Partnerships and joint ventures formed between foreign capital and large-scale capital in Turkey are very important to understand the active role played by Turkish capital. In the previous section, it has been mentioned that the need of Turkish capital to shift the capital accumulation to a higher plane has been decisive in the implementation of neoliberal policies. Through these policies and partnerships with the foreign capital large-scale capital in Turkey has also achieved to penetrate into agrifood relations in Turkey. In other words, with the neoliberal policies large-scale capital in Turkey has gained the opportunity to further penetrate agrifood relations (shift capital accumulation to a higher plane) with the help of massive financial and technological power of the multi-national

corporations (corporations of core countries). For instance, through these policies and partnerships Sabancı Corporation entered in oil production (Ona, Luna, Evin, Evet), water production (Hayat), coffee (Keyif), chocolate (Milka), retail sector (Carrefour), milk products (Tikveşli), and seed development. Koç Corporation, entered sauce production (Tat), meat products (Maret) macaroni (Pastavilla, Kartal), retail sector (Migros) and seed development. Yaşar Corporation entered milk products, meat products, water (Pınar), animal husbandry, feed production and poultry sector. Doğuş Corporation entered in frozen food production. Tekfen Corporation milk production (Mis), fertilizer production (Toros Gübre), retail sector (Makro). (Yenal, 2001: 44)

This increase in the penetration of capital into agrifood sphere has, arguably resulted in a trend towards re-unification of agriculture and food industry in Turkey and further commodification of food (real subsumption of social life to capital). In addition to this, as it can be seen from the fields that these large-scale companies are active, almost all of them are working on seed development. In the previous chapter I argued that seed has always been at the centre of the struggle between capital and agricultural producers since it provides producers a high level of independence from market relations. Through these studies on seed development and with the help of intellectual property rights this process also witnessed monopolization of seed (Özkaya, 2008).

The second result of neoliberal transformations for Turkey has been taking part in the new international division labour that implies production of high-value products for the Third World countries and production of low-value products for the core countries. Yenal (2001: 41) mentions that through liberalization of agricultural trade, particularly as a result of GATTs process, important changes has occurred in the composition of export products of Turkey⁸³. This change reflects itself in the decrease in the share of cereals (which are low-value products) and the rise in the share of fruits and vegetables (which are high-value products) in the export. The critical point in this new international division of

⁸³ See also Günaydın (2001) and Oral (2006).

labour on the basis of low-value and high-value products is the cost of labour power. In other words, while low value products are capital-intensive products, high-value products are labour-intensive products. Thus, it can be argued that the increase in the production of high value products in Turkey on the basis of cheap agricultural labour implies a wealth transfer from Turkey to the core countries.

At this point two critical points should be mentioned which has close relations with the lean colonialism conceptualization. The rise in the export share of high-value products (which points out the position of Turkey within the new international division of labour) implies a wealth transfer from Turkey to core countries that produce capital intensive products. It is clear that this is one of the most important features of capitalist imperialism in general as well as lean colonialism phase. In addition to this, the hierarchical, uneven relations between the producers of countries like Turkey and producers of core countries can also be seen in the support policies. In relation to this point, Oyan's (2004: 63) argument is very important:

It is a well-known fact that in the advanced countries agricultural support is around 2 % of GNP [this has been the case Turkey as well]. However, in those countries, the share of agricultural value-added in national income is also in that area. Hence, a more meaningful criterion for comparison would be the ratio of agricultural support to agricultural value-added. In Turkey this ratio has been around 10 % in recent years and 6 % for 2000. In the advanced countries, on the other hand, as a general rule it is around 100 %.

From this point, Oyan (2004: 63) concludes that

Under these circumstances, it is obvious that for the IMF and the WB acting on behalf of the advanced countries to state that agricultural support in Turkey is too high manifestly amounts to a classical case of double standart.

In other words, elimination of supports to agriculture and agricultural producers implies mainly elimination in underdeveloped countries which in turn means enhancement and deepening of the gap between core countries and underdeveloped countries. In the previous chapter, this point has been

conceptualized as one of the key features of capitalist imperialism and particularly lean colonialism that is the form it has taken since the late 1970s.

The second point in relation to lean colonialism conceptualization is the unequal and dependent relationship between the capitals of core countries and the large-scale capital in Turkey. Although, large-scale capital has been playing an active role in the neoliberal transformations (which is reflected in the rise of fields that they are functioning as listed above), it can be argued that they still remain in a dependent position when compared to the corporations of core countries. This dependent position arises from the fact that capitals of core countries still hold the monopoly, *inter alia*, over finance and technology (research and development, RD) especially through intellectual property rights. In other words, despite the fact that large scale capital in Turkey gains the opportunity to shift the capital accumulation to new and higher plane through neoliberal transformations and partnerships with MNCs, the superiority of MNCs in terms of finance and technology prevent them from gaining an equal position. It can even be argued that, in the long run, this symbiosis between large-scale capital in Turkey and MNCs ends on behalf of the MNCs in terms of further strengthening their already superior position (and even the extinction of the former through acquisition by the latter). Yenal (1999, 2001) exemplifies this argument in the relationship between Nestle and Mis Süt.

Yenal (2001: 48) mentions that Nestle had an insignificant position in Turkish food market up to 1990s. However, in 1995, Nestle bought 25 % of the shares of Mis Süt, one of the biggest producers of milk and milk products; and gained an important position in the market. Yenal (2001: 48) mentions that with this partnership with Nestle, Mis Süt has become able to increase its product composition, and started to produce fruity yogurt, different kinds of milk, milk puddings. When we consider the fact that Mis Süt was mainly producing milk and yogurt, we can see the benefits of this partnership to Mis Süt. In other words, Mis Süt has achieved to shift the capital accumulation into a higher plane through penetration into new spheres and creating new social wants

through the help of extensive power of Nestle in research and development. On the other hand, this partnership was also beneficial to Nestle as well, particularly for it used the extensive knowledge of Mis Süt in relation to market conditions, customer needs, distribution network and the like. However, this relationship which seems as a symbiosis at the very beginning ended with the total acquisition of Mis Süt by Nestle in 2000. at this point, it can be argued that the monopoly power of MNCs over finance and particularly technology and protection of this power through intellectual property rights strenghtens the position of MNCs themselves in the long run; and this is one of the main features of capitalist imperialism and thereby lean colonialism as well. (Yenal, 2001: 48-49)

Within this framework, this study argues that transformation of agrifood relations and particular forms that agrifood system has taken since 1980 in Turkey can be conceptualized under the name of neoliberal food regime⁸⁴. This simply means unbalancing the class relations on behalf of capital and against agricultural producers which tries to resist this process through worsening their life conditions (Aydın, 2001).

4. 4. Overall Conclusion

Up to here, I tried to summarize neoliberal transformations of agrifood system in Turkey and tried to discuss the relationship of these transformations with the neoliberal food regime and lean colonialism conceptualizations.

This study mainly aimed to criticize the sociology of agriculture and food literature in terms of its inherent relationship with the idea of globalization that reflects itself in the claim on transnationalization. Through this criticism I mainly aimed to break this intimate relationship, and reevaluate the concepts and problematics of the SAF literature within the framework of capitalist imperialism. In that respect while agrifood system has been defined as the

⁸⁴ For a similar argument see Yıldızoğlu (2008).

entirety of production, distribution, marketing, consumption processes, food regime has been conceptualized as the particular form that this system takes in a particular period of capitalist imperialism. This study argues that the theoretical framework formulated on the basis of the concept of capitalist imperialism and reconceptualization of agrifood system and food regime concepts within this framework are capable of explaining particular cases as exemplified in the case of Turkey above much better than the concepts of globalization and transnationalization. However, further studies in more concrete situations are necessary to reveal the details of these processes and the class position of PCPs in relation to these processes.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Alice never could quite make out, in thinking it over afterwards, how it was that they began: all she remembers is, that they were running hand in hand, and the Queen went so fast that it was all she could do to keep up with her: and still the Queen kept crying 'Faster! Faster!', though she had no breath left to say so.

The most curious part of the thing was, that the trees and the other things round them never changed their places at all: however fast they went, they never seemed to pass anything . . .

'Well, in our country,' said Alice, still panting a little, 'you'd generally, get to somewhere else, if you ran for a long time as we've been doing.'

'A slow sort of country!' said the Queen. 'Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run twice as fast as that!' (Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*; cited in Panitch, 1994: 60)

The general derive of this study has been to position myself within the extensive discussions on the characteristics of contemporary capitalism through a Marxist analysis of the transformation of agrifood relations since the 1970s. The specific focus on the agrifood relations has been chosen for the fact that they provide an extensive empirical basis for the analysis of capitalist relations since they comprehend both the production and the reproduction 'spheres' of social relations. Moreover, the related *sociology of agriculture and food* (political economy of agriculture and food) literature has had an important potential not only to conceptualize the contemporary transformations of agrifood relations but also to substantiate the ongoing debates on the contemporary characteristics of capitalism through its problematics and concepts.

However, throughout the review of the related *sociology of agriculture and food/political economy of agriculture and food* (SAF) literature, I realized that despite the variations in the argumentation, the general claim in relation to the general derive of this study mentioned above was that: the contemporary capitalism is characterized by a transition from multi/inter-national phase of capitalism to a supra/trans-national one (Bonanno, 1991, Bonanno et al 1994a, 1994b; McMichael, 1991; McMichael and Myre, 1991; Friedland, 1991, 2004; Llambi, 1993; Moreira, 1994, 2002, 2004; Ecevit, 2006). This claim on the transnationalization was centered upon the argument on the ‘demise’ (or the ‘withering away’, or the ‘retreat of’) the nation-state, which was clearly a product of a broader literature, namely “the great globalization debate” (Held and McGrew, 2003). Since the ‘retreat of the nation-state’ was holding a central position within the idea of ‘globalization’ it became a must to critically engage with the concept of ‘globalization’ and the related literature as well, in order to clarify the characteristics of contemporary capitalism and the changing aspects of agrifood relations since the late 1970s.

However, the debate on ‘globalization’ was a massive one and it was not possible to review the whole literature. Moreover, I should have found a way to review the literature on ‘globalization’ on the basis of my general derive and problematic (that is to specify the characteristics of contemporary capitalism); rather than a pointless reading of the whole literature. It is at this point that the distinction between “the globalization theory” and “theories of globalization” came to my help. According to this distinction provided by Rosenberg (2000, 2005), “globalization theory” refers to the literature that tries to explain ‘globalization’ as an outcome, through the ‘globalization’ itself as a process that will inevitably result in that outcome; and a theory of globalization “might be constructed out of anything presumed to generate the spatio-temporal phenomena involved” (Rosenberg, 2000:3). To put it differently, while within “the globalization theory” the term globalization has been used both as “explanan” and as “explanandum”, students of “theories of globalization” have been approaching the term as “explanandum”. Besides pointing a

methodological difference this distinction was also helpful in the categorization of the globalization literature on the basis my own problematic. In relation to this point, while students of “globalization theory” have been arguing for a qualitative/epochal shift in the character of capitalism and human societies in general (Giddens, 2002; 2003; Scholte, 2003; Held and McGrew, 2003; Bauman, 2006) the other side of the debate was highly skeptical to this claim (see particularly Hirst and Thomson, 1998). The critical point was that it was the former that holds a hegemonic position within the literature on ‘globalization’ and provides the analytical power of the concept of ‘globalization’. Moreover, it was the “globalization theory” that has severe consequences for the usage of the term among the “skeptics” and Marxists as well which according to this study reflect themselves in the conceptualization of the ‘demise of the nation-state’ and transition to a transnational phase. In other words, despite the variations in the methodologies and the dosages in the analytical power attributed to the concept of ‘globalization’ there was a more or less consensus on a qualitative shift in the character of capitalism towards transnationalization in which the concept of nation-state and imperialism are not analytically meaningful as they were before; and according to this interpretation the main feature of transnationalization was the emergence of a transnational state. Thus, the main problematic of this study has been constructed as the confrontation of the concepts of ‘globalization’ and ‘transnationalization’ with the concept of imperialism through an analysis of the transformation of agrifood relations since the 1970s, and a critical engagement with the related *sociology of agriculture and food literature*. The general argument in relation to this confrontation that has been tried to be formulated throughout the study is that the concepts of ‘globalization’ and transnationalization, though they reflect the changes in capitalist relations since the late 1970s, cannot explain those changes while on the contrary the concept of imperialism is still capable of doing this task. Moreover, I argued that a return to the concept of imperialism and a reconceptualization of the problematics and the concepts of the SAF literature within the context of capitalist imperialism can also make the potential

theoretical expansions of the SAF literature apparent. Thus, the chapters of this study is organized on this ground.

In that respect, throughout the second chapter of this study, in which the general theoretical framework formulated in relation to this confrontation, I tried to analyze the followings: the rise of the concept of ‘globalization’; the main claims of the “globalization theory”; the inherent relationship of the particular versions of Marxism and the SAF literature with the “globalization theory”, and the historical and intellectual conditions that gave rise to this problematic relationship; the general methodological and theoretical problems inherent in the “globalist” interpretation of the idea of ‘globalization’, in the arguments on transnationalization and the emergence of a transnational state.

In that chapter, I pointed out that the rise of the concept of ‘globalization’ in academic circles (as well as politics, media and daily life) mainly corresponds to the 1990s which can also be seen in the searches in citation indexes (Koç, 1994; Waters, 1996; Fine, 2004). In order to understand this rise of the concept of globalization, which in turn made it the *Zeitgeist* of the 1990s (Rosenberg, 2005), I argued that the historical conditions and the intellectual heritages of the previous decades should be taken into account. With respect to that point, for the historical conditions, I argued that the neoliberal transformations of capitalist relations and the collapse of the Soviet Bloc were the central events of the 1990s, combination of which produced “a distinct, in some ways self-contained historical conjuncture, in which the filling of a socio-political vacuum (generated by the Soviet collapse and its effects) created an enormous sense of temporal acceleration and spatial compression” (Rosenberg, 2005: 6). This sense of “temporal acceleration and spatial compression” was also enhanced by the developments in information, communication and transportation technologies (Harvey, 1999). Thus, I tried to argue that the rise of the idea of globalization should not be attributed to the ‘ideological’ attempts of the capitalists or liberals as the “skeptics” do (Hirst and Thompson, 1998; Savran, 1996); but rather to the reality of change. For the intellectual heritage of the

previous decades, I pointed out the hegemonic positions of neoliberalism and postmodernism; and with reference to Fine (2004: 213) I argued that the rise of the concept of 'globalization' can be attributed, besides the reality of change, to its ability to capture the two intellectual trends of the time: "the dual retreat from the excesses both of the neoliberalism and of postmodernism." At this point, I argued that the spread of the term among Marxists can also be attributed to its ability to capture this "dual retreat" from neoliberalism and postmodernity since this "dual retreat" was also implying a return to the analysis of material world consists of "power and conflict, of poverty and inequality, of environmental degradation, and so on" (Fine, 2004: 213).

However, I argued that although the concept of 'globalization' *reflects* the reality of change and opens up the possibility of analyses of the material world, it is not capable of *explaining* those changes and the characteristics of that material world. The main reason of this incapability, I argued, is the total abstraction and/or misconceptualization of the immanent contradictions and core features of capitalism. In other words, I argued that the core problem of the globalization theories is that they either totally abstract the systemic, immanent contradictions of capitalism from the analysis of society or present these contradictions that are arising from the nature of the capitalism itself in an evolutionary manner (Savran, 1996). I argued that it is particularly the latter point that the inherent relationship between the SAF literature and the globalization theory lies; and I mentioned that this inherent relationship reflects itself in the argument on the transition from a multi/inter-national phase of capitalism to a supra/trans-national one, on the basis of the emergence of a transnational state. Thus, an important section of the second chapter has been dedicated to a brief review of the arguments on the emergence of a transnational state within the SAF literature and their methodological and theoretical problems.

Throughout the discussion on the emergence of a transnational state I mainly tried to argue that the general methodological and theoretical problems of the

SAF literature are the misconceptualizations of the relationship between the 'economic' and the 'political'; capital and the state; and the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the existence of a multi-state system consists of nation-states respectively. Based on theoretical frameworks provided, *inter alia*, by Ellen Meiksins Wood (2000, 2002, 2003) Simon Clarke (1991, 2001) and Callinicos (2001, 2007) I tried to argue that although the SAF literature is not a simple reproduction of the "globalist" interpretation of the idea of 'globalization', students of the SAF literature reproduces the externality between the 'economic' and the 'political', and between capital and the state on the basis of the functions of the state. In other words, I argued that although the students of the SAF literature try to establish an inherent relationship between capital and the state on the basis of the functions performed by the state (accumulation, legitimization, mediation of intra- and inter-class conflicts, and social reproduction) their structural-functionalist conceptualization of the state still implies an externality. This externality, I argued, reflects itself in the argument on the emergence of a transnational state. According to the students of the SAF literature a transnational state should emerge/is emerging since through the globalization process which transnationalized the economic sphere of capital it is not possible for the state to maintain its functions at the national level. This is also the basis of the argument on the transition to a transnational phase of capitalism. To put it differently, for the students of the SAF literature a development in the economic sphere (capital) should be accompanied by a development in the political sphere (the state); and this is the point where the relation between the economic (capital) and the political (the state) is conceived as if they are external to each other.

Contrary to this understanding, I argued that the appearance of the economic (capital) and the political (the state) in capitalism as external arises from the distinctive features of capitalism. Briefly put, capitalism does not rest upon non-economic force in the appropriation process of surplus value as it was the case in pre-capitalist societies; rather it rests upon the separation of the masses from

means of production and imposition of alienated wage labour upon them (Harvey, 2001; Wood, 1995, 2000, 2003a, 2003b; Fine and Saad-Fiho, 2004; Radice, 2008). It is this separation of the masses from means of production that makes the 'economic' and the 'political' appear as external. However, I tried to argue that this point should not be conceived as an ontological separation but rather should be conceived as a dialectical totality of the moment of exploitation and the moment of coercion (Wood, 1995). Moreover, I argued that the separation of the 'economic' and the 'political' through the separation of the masses from the means of the production should not be conceived as a once and for all activity but rather as a process which necessitates a continuous political intervention, which simply implies class struggle. Thus, I argued, the state cannot be derived from the logical necessities of capital accumulation (core problem of the structural-functionalist understandings) but rather should be conceptualized as a historical product of class struggle (Clarke, 1991). Based on this theoretical framework, I tried to argue that while the content of the state is characterized by its class character on the basis of class struggle, its appearance as external and the functions it performs are the form implying the phenomenal characteristics of the state shaped through class struggle (i.e. its content). In other words, I tried to show that, the distinctive separation of the 'economic' and the 'political' in capitalism does not imply the externality of the state to capital but rather imply the fact that the state in capitalism first and foremost is capitalist state. It is on this basis that I tried to criticize the SAF literature as remaining structural-functionalist in terms of the state conceptualization. In relation to these points, I argued that the problematic conceptualization of the state in the SAF literature (that is the conceptualization of essential phenomenal/surface characteristics of the state as the essential features of it) lead them to the argument on the emergence of transnational state which according to the students of the SAF literature corresponds to the transnationalization of economic relations. This point, I argued, in return lead to the conceptualization of the contradictory relationship between the global

character of capital and the national form of the state in an evolutionary manner by the SAF literature rather than an immanent feature of capitalism.

Combined with the attribution of great power to the so-called transnational corporations (TNCs) this attempt to derive the state from the surface level of capitalist relations, I argued, have had severe political consequences for the SAF literature as well as the methodological and theoretical problems mentioned above. The main political implication of the argument on transnationalization and the emergence of a transnational state can be stated briefly as the reproduction of the idea of 'globalization' as such as an inevitable/irresistible process through an evolutionary conceptualization of the contradictions immanent in capitalism combined with the attribution of great power to the TNCs beyond and above the class struggle. To put it differently, within the framework of the SAF literature there was no place for the class struggle or at best class struggle was imprisoned to the structural features of capitalism. I argued that the disconnection problem with the agrarian/peasant question literature that reflects itself in the underestimation of the conceptualization of the class position of the petty commodity producers in the light of new developments in agrifood relations within the SAF literature mainly lies within this theoretical framework.

It is through these discussions on the relationship between the economic (capital) and the political (the state), and on the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the multi-state system consists of nation-states; and political implications that I argued for the analytical power of the concept of imperialism. In other words, I argued that the concept of imperialism, when compared to the concepts of 'globalization' and transnationalization, is capable of comprehending immanent contradictions and core features of capitalism in a consistent manner with the general theory of capital accumulation on the basis of class struggle. Thus, the third chapter of this study is mainly dedicated to reconceptualization of the problematics and the concepts produced by the students of the SAF literature within the context of

capitalist imperialism. Moreover, in the third chapter I tried to conceptualize the changing aspects of the agrifood relations since the 1970s through these revised problematics and the concepts.

In that chapter, I argued that criticizing the idea of globalization and the SAF literature on the basis of misconceptualization of the immanent contradictions and the core features of capitalism has its own problems as well. Simply put, I mentioned that this criticism can lead us to an analysis of capitalism on the basis of an abstract modeling in which the forms of these distinctive features and immanent contradictions of capitalism remained same throughout the history of capitalism. In other words, I argued that the problem of the SAF literature is not to attempt to analyze the particular forms that capitalist relations, particularly agrifood relations have taken throughout the history of capitalism but rather the inconsistency with the general theory of capital accumulation. In relation to this point, I argued that the analytical power of the concept of imperialism lies at this point since it provides an opportunity to analyze the particular forms that distinction features and contradictions of capitalism have taken throughout the history of capitalism through an analysis of world economy. In other words, I argued that the concept of capitalism can help us to overcome the tension between the general theory of capital accumulation and the conjunctural analysis through an intermediary level of analysis that it opens up that is consistent with the general theory of capital accumulation.

Within this framework, I argued that and the concepts of the SAF literature, that are agrifood system and the food regime, can be reconceptualized within the context of capitalist imperialism. In that respect, I mentioned that the concept of agrifood system defines the totality of the production, distribution, marketing and the consumption processes of the agrifood commodities; and implies that the analysis of any particular part of this totality should be based upon this totality itself. Given the generality of the concept of agrifood system I reconceptualized the concept of food regime as implying the particular forms that this agrifood system has taken throughout the history of capitalist

imperialism. In other words, I argued that the concept of food regime can be reconceptualized within the context of capitalist imperialism implying the particular forms that capitalist relations in agrifood relations have taken corresponding to the periodization of the capitalist imperialism on the basis of the distinction between imperialism and colonialism provided by Özuğurlu (2005).

Within this framework in the third chapter I argued that the transformations of capitalist relations since the late 1970s can be conceptualized in terms of lean colonialism phase of capitalist imperialism on the basis of neoliberalism and neoliberal transformations. In order to conceptualize neoliberal transformations and the emergence of a new phase of capitalist imperialism, namely the lean colonialism, a brief discussion on the crisis-ridden character of capitalism was necessary. Thus, in the third chapter before mentioning the core features of neoliberalism and the lean colonialism a brief section has been dedicated to the conceptualization of crisis as endemic to capitalism on the basis of class struggle, mainly with reference to Harvey (1999, 2001a, 2001b). Throughout this section, I argued that crises not only implies the disruption of circulation capital accumulation, but also creates the conditions for capitalists to shift the capital accumulation to a new and higher plane mainly through creation of a world market by geographical expansion; creation of new social wants and needs; penetration of capital to new spheres. On this ground, I argued that neoliberalism and neoliberal transformations can be conceptualized as the response of capitalists to the crisis in capital accumulation (started to be felt in the late 1960s and became apparent in the early 1970s) in order to shift the capital accumulation to a new and higher plane. It is through these attempts that, I argued, the new phase of capitalist imperialism as the lean colonialism emerged. With reference to Özuğurlu (2005) I mentioned the core features of lean colonialism as the emergence of a new international division of labour, transformation of the state on the basis of neoliberalism, further subsumption of social life to capital in real terms through commodification, financialization, liberalization, privatization policies on the basis of neoliberalism. I argued that

the changing aspects of agrifood relations that problematized by the SAF literature not also reflect these features of lean colonialism but also plays a critical role in the formation of this phase. Through an analysis of the problematics provided by the SAF literature thus I argued that the particular form that agrifood system has taken corresponding to the lean colonialism phase of capitalism is can be conceptualized under the name of neoliberal food regime among others implying the followings: elimination of barriers in front of the penetration of capital into the agrifood relations, particularly into the agricultural relations of ‘underdeveloped’ countries through liberalization, deregulation, privatization; further commodification of social life through commodification of food (real subsumption of culture and reproduction to capital); transformation of the role of nation-state in terms of agrifood relations; reunification of agriculture and industry through food industry; emergence of a new international division labour in terms of low-value and high-value agrifood products; changing aspects and the increasing role of women labour power; and environmental degradation.

However, I argued that neoliberal food regime conceptualization implying the particular form of the agrifood system has taken within the context of lean colonialism can be misleading in two ways. Firstly, it can lead to conceiving the nation-state and the capitalists of ‘underdeveloped’ countries as merely passive recipients of neoliberal transformations. Secondly, it can lead to conceiving neoliberal food regime and neoliberalism in general as a homogenous process with strictly defined features. Thus, the fourth chapter of this study has been dedicated to the analysis of neoliberal transformations in general and agrifood relations in particular at a more concrete level of analysis, namely the context of Turkey since 1980, to avoid these two possible misleading.

To avoid the first problem I returned to the problem of theory of imperialism mentioned in the second chapter of this study in a very brief manner. That is although the concept of imperialism provide an intermediary level of analysis, that is the analysis of a particular period of capitalism, consistent with the

general theory of capital accumulation, there is no a systematic and a developed theory of imperialism “that adequately comprehends a world that consists of not imperial masters and colonial subjects but of an international system in which both imperial and subordinate powers are more or less sovereign states” (Wood, 2003: 171). In other words, I pointed out that although the concept of imperialism is based upon the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the existence of a multi-state system composed of sovereign nation-states (Callinicos, 2001), a theory of this contradictory relationship, particularly a conceptualization of the form that this contradictory relationship has taken since the 1970s, has not yet appeared in its developed and systematic form. This inadequacy of the theory of imperialism, I argued reflects itself in the partialness in analyses of transformations of capitalist relations in Turkey since 1980. In other words, I mentioned that the related critical literature on the neoliberal transformations of capitalist relations in Turkey since 1980 explain these transformation either as mainly product of developments ‘outside’ the country or as mainly product of developments ‘inside’ the country. I argued that the problem does not belong to the particular scholars but the inadequacy of the theory of imperialism itself. On this ground I argued that although a systematic and developed form of the theory of imperialism has not yet emerged, the renewed discussion on imperialism provides the basis on which the theory should be developed. That is simply put, the totality of the contradictory relationship between the global character of capital accumulation and the national form of the state, rather than any particular side of this relationship. With respect to this point, I argued that the framework provided by Ercan (2002, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) can help us to analyze the context of Turkey much better than the ‘outside’ based analyses since he provides the opportunity to analyze the individual capitalists and the nation-states as active participant of the creation of lean colonialism phase of capitalist imperialism and the neoliberal transformations in Turkey within this context.

Through a (re)reading of the framework provided by Ercan (2002, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) on the basis of the framework of this study in terms of capitalist imperialism, I argued that the transformations of capitalist relations in Turkey since 1980 are not only consistent with the neoliberalism conceptualization but arguably are one of the best representative of these transformations. In other words, the analysis of neoliberal transformations not only pointed out the general consistency with the theoretical framework formulated in the second and third chapters of this study but also help to historicize these transformations which in turn help to avoid the second possible misleading mentioned above in relation to conceptualization of neoliberalism and neoliberal food regime. Within this context, I argued that although the literature on the transformation of agrifood relations in Turkey since 1980 embodies very few studies that share the framework of this study in terms of agrifood system and particularly food regime; this literature provides the opportunity the transformations of agrifood relation since 1980 within the context of neoliberal food regime. In other words, a brief review of the literature on the neoliberal transformations of agricultural and food relations in Turkey since 1980, I argued, show that the concept of neoliberal food regime can be used in the analysis of particular cases. The transformations in the case of Turkey that are consistent with the lean colonialism, neoliberalism, and neoliberal food regime conceptualizations can be listed as follows: reorganization of the Ministry of Agriculture through deregulation; privatization of public corporations like TMO, TEKEL, TŞFAŞ, ÇAYKUR, EBK, TİGEM, TÜGSAŞ, İGSAŞ, YEMSAN, TZDK which have had a decisive role in the support of agricultural production and producers; establishment of autonomous boards like Board of Agricultural Restructuring and Support, and Board of Agricultural Support and Guidance which means reregulation and the institutionalization of neoliberal food regime; liberalization of trade; transition to direct income support; the penetration of multi-national corporations to Turkish agriculture through partnerships and joint ventures with the national capital; further commodification of food; monopolization in seed, and the like.

To sum up the brief overview of the study, it can be stated that this study is a product of three years Master program and this time period witnessed the closure section of a dramatic change in relation to the conceptualization of the contemporary characteristics of capitalism. This dramatic change best reflects itself in the rise and the demise of the concept of ‘globalization’ and the arguments on transnationalization. The main aim of this study, that is to confront the concepts of ‘globalization’ and transnationalization with the concept of imperialism has been shaped within this context. While at the very beginning of the Master program it was very difficult to talk about imperialism it is obviously not so at the end. This confrontation of these concepts through a critical engagement with the *sociology of agriculture and food* (or contemporary *political economy of agriculture and food*) literature and through the analysis of transformation of agrifood relations in general and within the context of Turkey in particular also shows this point.

The last point mentioned above also reveals the point that this study can also be criticized and the ground that further studies should be conducted. That is the fact that this study also, at least partially, shares an instrumentalistic approach to the analysis of transformations of agrifood relations since the late 1970s and the changing aspects of class position of petty commodity producers with respect to these transformations. It has been formulated as one of the arguments of this study that the intimate relationship of the sociology of agriculture and food literature with the globalization theory resulted in an instrumentalist approach to the agrifood relations. This instrumentalist approach, I argued, reflects itself in the main task of the SAF literature that is to analyze the effects of globalization process to the agrifood relations and most importantly in the claim that peasant question is over. This point, according to this study, simply means that the analysis of class position of petty commodity producers in the light of new developments is either underestimated or even totally abstracted from the analysis of agrifood relations. This study aimed to prevent this problem through the criticism of the concepts of ‘globalization’ and transnationalization and through the reconceptualization of the concepts and problematics formulated by

the SAF literature itself within the framework of capitalist imperialism. However, it can be stated that the criticism and the reconceptualization attempts have gone ahead of the analysis of agrifood relations and the class position of PCPs. In other words, although the formulation of the conceptual framework that is consistent with the general theory of capital accumulation was very important in the analysis of transformations of agrifood relations and changing aspects of class position of PCPs with respect to these transformations, the attempt to establish this framework has meant for the latter remaining secondary throughout the study. Hence, this study can also be criticized in terms of reproduction of an instrumentality towards the agrifood relations and PCPs, but this time from the opposite direction. This criticism has a valid ground but at this point it should be kept in mind that this study is a conceptual one and mainly aimed the criticism of methodological and theoretical problems of the SAF literature. However, this broad answer does not remove the necessity for further studies that should be conducted on the problematics in relation to agrifood relations formulated throughout the study in relation to agrifood relations for more concrete cases. These further studies will not only help to overcome the instrumentality that this study is also a part of, but also will help to strengthen and/or revise the theoretical framework tried to be formulated throughout the study as well.

I want to complete this study with a reformulation of the methodological and theoretical problems immanent in the idea of globalization, and also the arguments of the SAF literature on transnationalization and the emergence of a transnational state from a broader perspective. This point, arguably, has also close relationship with the instrumentality towards agrifood relations mentioned above and important for further studies in this area. The quotation, stated at the very beginning of this chapter, taken from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* (cited in Panitch, 1994: 60) is very helpful for this reformulation.

In Carroll's story, Alice and the Red Queen at the beginning were running hand in hand in the garden of the Queen. However, suddenly Alice realizes that the

Queen went so fast. The interesting part for Alice and also for us in this story is that no matter how fast she runs, all the things surrounding her remain the same. When Alice mentions this problem to the Queen the response she gets is: “If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!”

Panitch (1994: 60) suggests that the Red Queen’s Garden can be seen as capitalism, which operates through a “relentless search for markets and profits” that “brings about faster and faster changes in production and space, industry and commerce, occupation and locale, with profound effects on the organization of classes and states”. Panitch (1994: 60) mentions that “it is through this ferocious process of extension and change that capitalism preserves itself, remains capitalism, stays the same system”. Panitch (1994: 60) mentions that this dialectic refers to the point what Marx and Engels (2005: 50) states in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: “bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby relations of production and with them the whole society”. On the other hand, Panitch (1994: 60-61) suggests that Alice, “frantically running alongside the Red Queen”, can be seen “as the labour *movement*, or the social *movements*, or the broadly defined ‘Left’” that aims to *move* somewhere else. With respect to this point, Panitch (1994:61) quite impressively mentions that “for all the running” and “for all the mobilization and reform, and even the moments of revolution and national liberation” that these movements have made in this century “the world today is most certainly very much capitalist, indeed it would seem ever more so”. Panitch (1994: 61) relates this fact to a “strategic misconception” which reflects itself in the attempt of “keeping up with or adapting to capitalist change”, in a similar manner with Alice who attempts to keep up with the Red Queen or adapt to the garden of the Red Queen. Contrary to misconception he argues that:

If effective forms of movement ever are to reemerge on the Left, they will have to be less about keeping up with or adapting to capitalist change, but rather more about developing the capacity to mobilize more broadly and effectively *against* the logic of competitiveness and profit in order eventually *to get somewhere else*, that is to an egalitarian, cooperative, and democratic social

order beyond capitalism. to run, even twice as fast, on capitalism's terms will not in fact lead somewhere else.

The point mentioned by Panitch (1994) should not be conceived merely as a political or strategic problem that belongs to the 'Left' but rather as a methodological standpoint. Arguably, all the attempts of the SAF literature to argue for transnationalization and the emergence of a transnational state have close relations with the attempt to keep up with or adapt to capitalist change. This point is best exemplified in Bonanno (1991, 2004) when he claims that the emergence of a transnational state would not only be for the interests of capital but also for subordinate classes since according to him transnational state would protect the rights of these classes as well. The crucial point in this argument is not only the derivation of the state from the surface level or phenomenal relations (Clarke, 1991), but also, and even more importantly, the imprisonment of the politics of the labour to the keeping up with and/or adapting to the capitalist change. However, what is needed is a radical break with such kind of attempts that do not lead somewhere else as Panitch (1994) mentions. At this point, it is better to return to Marx's contradictory relation with the classical political economy. Although, "there is an apparent continuity between Marx's work and the classical political economy, the relationship of Marx to the latter is no less contradictory than Marx's relationship with Hegel" (Araghi, 2006: 1). In other words, in a similar manner with the case of Hegel in which "he turned Hegel to stand on his feet", Marx "turned classical political economy inside out by shifting the vantage point of analysis from capital to labour" which helped him to conceptualize commodity fetishism (Araghi, 2006:1). This point, arguable, is of crucial importance in relation to the attempts of keeping up with capitalist change since in these attempts the analysis of capitalist change is centred upon the capital rather than labour as in the case of the idea of globalization and the arguments of the SAF literature on transnationalization and the emergence of a transnational state. However, the only possibility to get somewhere else both in theoretical and political terms lies in taking the labour as the vantage point of the analysis which necessitates more elaborations on the

space as well since taking the labour vantage point means also entrance to the “hidden abode of production on whose threshold there stares us in the face of “No admittance except on business”” (Marx, 1997: 178). Only through this methodological point that the labour, and thereby the class struggle can gain its central position in the analysis of society. For our case, only through this methodological point that the resistance and/or struggle of the petty commodity producers or rural classes in general can gain their central positions in the analysis of transformation of agrifood relations and in the creation of *somewhere else*. This is also the ground that further studies on this area can be or even should be based on.

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