

Subject and general aim

This book is about ‘full-fledged’ capitalism, which emerges when not merely trade but also the production process is dominated by the monetary dimension and profit. The book’s aim is to systematically identify the interconnection of the relations, institutions and processes that are necessary for the continued reproduction of the capitalist system – that is, the capitalist economy together with the capitalist state. This results in a synthetic outline of the constellation and functioning of the capitalist system. In short, the aim is to comprehend the capitalist system. Conscious change within and beyond the capitalist system requires its comprehension – in this I am an ardent pupil of Marx. In line with the systematic-dialectical method adopted to achieve this systematic comprehension, the book is therefore restricted to a systematic synthetic *exposition* of the capitalist system. The exposition’s systematic entails the abstraction from contingencies.

Part One presents the ‘capitalist economy’, and Part Two the ‘capitalist state’. In Part Three, these are considered in international context. Each of the subsequent chapters of Part One has its sequel in each of the subsequent chapters of Part Two.

In this summary of the book I adopt its rigorous order of the exposition, which is the zigzag one, that is the chapter order of the expositional levels [1;6], [2;7] and so on (General Introduction C§4).

The use of some uncommon terms cannot always be evaded in this summary; for a brief explanation the reader might turn to the Glossary. Some footnotes in this summary are addressed to readers acquainted with Marx’s *Capital* and current marxian political economy. These footnotes are starred (*) and can be skipped by other readers.

1 *The starting point: dissociated outward bifurcation (1D1 and 6D1)*¹

The starting point of the book is the ‘dissociated outward bifurcation’ (institutional separation) between households and privately owned enterprises. Enterprises claim the entitlement to property in the earth and other means of production. The capitalist state as extraordinary social institution grants these claims in the form of rights (1D1, 6D1, 6D2).² The rest of the book sets out how this separation is bridged such that the capitalist system can be a potentially continuous (a ‘reproducing’) constellation. The main elements

1 The reader who turns to this summary before having read anything else of the book is informed that 1D1 (etc.) refers to Chapter 1, Division 1; 1§1 (etc.) refers to Chapter 1, section 1.

2 The first ground of the state being an extraordinary social institution is presented in 6D3.