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Review of Peter Evans, Embedded Autonomy.

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which they grew to try their luck in world markets.

The book fully accomplishes its purpose in demonstrating the significance of state action and in providing a sociological counter to economistic theories of the political system. Where it fails is in providing a compelling alternative theory. With neo-utilitarian excesses put firmly behind us, we are left with the reasonable assumption that state actions are important and with the prediction that developmental states will develop and predatory ones will predate. To get out of this tautology, Evans calls into play the concept that gives title to the book—"Autonomous" bureaucracies displaying Weberian-like features should lead to developmentally positive effects. Fair enough, since this prediction is amenable to testing and falsification. One can, in principle, construct measures of state autonomy along these lines and seek to relate them to developmental outcomes. But then he hopelessly complicates the picture with the postulate of "embeddedness." The concept is attractive but, in practice, embeddedness turns out to be anything. It encompasses, for example, fuzzy relationships between Japanese bureaucrats and *keiretsu* executives, but also the arms-length and authoritarian treatment of Taiwanese firms by Kuomintang officials.

This definitional imprecision defies any attempt at empirical falsification and puts us right back where we started: Embedded autonomy is when state action has desirable economic consequences; otherwise it did not happen. As in so many areas of sociological theorizing, an earnest attempt to account for a complex phenomenon comes to acquire a suspicious circularity.

The empirical chapters do not help much either. To provide support for "embedded autonomy" as a theory, the research design should have selected cases on the basis of the presence or absence of each half of the duet and then shown contrasting developmental results. Instead, one country (South Korea) is set up as an example of having both, embeddedness and autonomy, and the others as also having them, but to a lesser degree. The convergent outcomes described in the relevant chapters convincingly show the significance of the state, but not the differential effects of each causal factor.

It may be too much to ask from a book that does such a good job of debunking a theoretical myth to put something compelling in its place. Evans has made a major contribution to economic sociology and the sociology of national development. His craft-like research style will be imitated with profit by professional sociologists and students alike. His clear-headed critique of rationalist excesses paves the way for significant progress in both fields. Among the next steps, however, none is more important than transforming sensitizing concepts into real theories by tightening definitions and daring to advance testable predictions about the role of states in national development.

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At the core of theoretical and empirical discussions about the state over the past 20 years has been a confrontation between Marxist and Weberian intuitions about what kinds of variations are most important for understanding the development and practices of the state in capitalist society. For Weberians, the crucial form of variation centers on the differential *capacity* for the state to do different kinds of things. States can be strong or weak, efficient or inefficient, farsighted or myopic. To understand these kinds of variations, the core empirical agenda has been to explore the dynamics of state-building—the ways in which political institutions (bureaucracies, parties, courts, constitutions, administrative agencies, etc.) are constructed and transformed. For Marxists, in contrast, the pivotal issue is understanding variations in the *class content* of what it is that the state does, given its capacity. Different segments of the capitalist class can have their interests more or less adequately represented in the state; states can be more or less successful in forging a project in the general interests of the capitalist class as a whole; states can be relatively unified and deeply fragmented internally, with different

parts being colonized by different particularistic capitalist interests; and to varying degrees states can accommodate the interests of subordinate classes through various types of "class compromise." To explore these variations the core Marxist empirical agenda has been the study of the ways in which state activities are interconnected with class forces in civil society, both through various "instrumental" linkages and through patterns of structural constraints on the state.

While he does not explicitly frame his agenda in these terms, Peter Evans's wonderful book, *Embedded Autonomy*, can be seen as a creative attempt at a serious integration of these two traditions of theorizing about the state. The objective of the book is to explain why some states in the Third World have been able to effectively foster trajectories of sustained economic development whereas others have not. The empirical focus is the study of the varying fates of the new information technology industries in three countries—Korea, Brazil, and India. The central concept Evans elaborates to explain this variation is "embedded autonomy." This concept is initially explicated in terms of a sharp, somewhat stylized contrast between two extreme cases: Korea, the prototypical developmental state, and Zaire, an almost pure case of what he terms a "predatory" state. The concept of "embedded autonomy" is then introduced as a way of identifying the development-facilitating features of the South Korean developmental state: This state form is *autonomous* insofar as it has a rationalized bureaucracy that cannot be instrumentally manipulated by powerful rent-seeking groups outside of the state, but it is also *embedded* insofar as state elites are enmeshed in social networks and other relations that put them in close contact with dominant players in civil society. This combination of traits enables the state to have a genuine capacity to formulate long-term goals, acquire the information needed to effectively pursue those goals (especially in the form of feedback from policy efforts), and yet be sufficiently constrained by forces outside of the state so that its actions do not simply foster the interests of state elites. South Korea is taken as the prototype of a state with such embedded autonomy, while Zaire is taken as the polar opposite. India and Brazil are then situated as "intermediary" cases between these extremes.

This is a powerful and interesting framework for understanding variations in states, variations that are enormously consequential for the fates of the societies within which they exist. I will not comment on the adequacy of the empirical argument itself, but I would like to draw out somewhat more explicitly than Evans does the implications of his analysis for a general conceptual framework for understanding variations across states. Specifically, I think at times Evans's treatment of India and Brazil as "intermediary" cases somewhat obscures the analytical sharpness of his two-dimensional concept, since to be intermediary between the two extremes of the predatory state and the developmental state gives the impression that there is a single dimension on which states vary. This image does not correspond to the actual conceptual space Evans has crafted. Clarifying this conceptual space will also help reveal the ways in which Evans's approach represents a synthesis of Marxist and Weberian ideas.

One way of picturing this conceptual space is given in Figure 1. The dimension at the top of the figure specifies a cluster of organizational properties of state apparatuses emphasized in the Weberian tradition. The core of this dimension is the idea of bureaucratic rationalization. At one extreme is the Weberian ideal type of rational-legal bureaucracy. At the other is the ideal-typical patrimonial state of precapitalist societies marked by personalistic relations of patronage and dependency. The dimension on the left of the figure specifies the extent to which there exist dense networks of ties between the policy-making personnel of the state and "civil society," specifically ties with powerful actors in civil society. Since in practice this dimension taps the interactions between dominant classes and state elites, it can be thought of as the Marxian dimension of the table.

Putting these two dimensions together generates the conceptual space in Figure 1. There are four ideal-type forms of the state: (1) The developmental state is both highly embedded in networks with dominant classes and organized as a highly rationalized bureaucracy. (2) The "Bourgeois Clientelist State" lacks the key institutional features of the

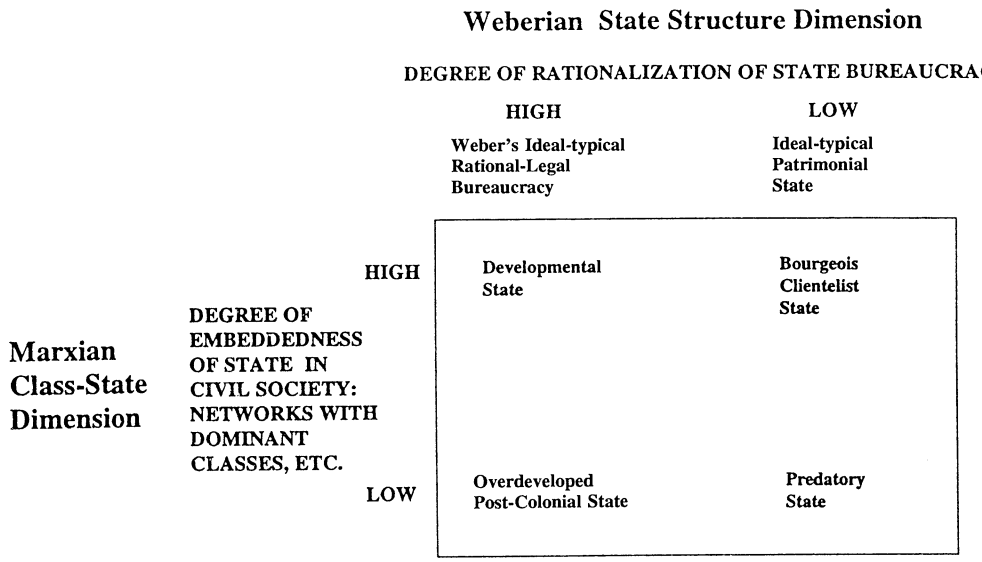

Figure 1. Theoretical Dimensions of "Embedded Autonomy"

Weberian rational-legal bureaucracy, but is closely linked to powerful actors in the dominant class. Personalistic patron-client relations remain central features of state organization, and these are closely hooked into networks with the dominant class. The result is that many agencies may be effectively captured by elite groups and used for rent-seeking purposes. (3) The "Overdeveloped State" has a relatively rationalized bureaucratic apparatus, but with only weak ties to the dominant classes of civil society. The bureaucracy therefore has considerable competence and autonomy, but this autonomy is not tempered by embeddedness. The state will often lack the necessary fine-grained information to act effectively and will frequently fail to gain the necessary cooperation from actors in civil society. (4) Finally, the "Predatory State" neither has a rational-legal bureaucracy nor is it embedded in social networks with a dominant class. The state thus has a largely unconstrained capacity to extract resources from society for the benefit of the patrimonial leadership inside the state itself. State power is wielded in an arbitrary manner, largely in service of the self-interest of state elites.

This model can then be applied to the four core cases of Peter Evans's book: South Korea, Brazil, India, and Zaire. The results appear in Figure 2. South Korea and Zaire remain at the corners of this table, but Brazil and India are not really "intermediary" in the sense of occupying a middle ground between the two poles. Brazil has a less rationalized bureaucracy than India, but a more embedded state, while India has a state apparatus that looks more like a rational-legal bureaucracy, but is less embedded. India and Brazil are not polarized into the respective off-diagonal corners of the conceptual space—they have somewhat intermediary values (to differing degrees) on each of the dimensions of the space, but nevertheless they are not simply "between" Zaire and South Korea.

This two-dimensional conceptual space gives Evans the capacity to make subtle diagnoses of the reasons for state failures and partial successes. The Indian state fails because its relatively low embeddedness makes it difficult for the state to acquire adequate information about how to act and get reliable feedback from its mistakes. The Brazilian state fails because its administrative apparatus is insufficiently rationalized and predictable. The Korean state, in contrast, is able to pursue predictable and efficient, yet accountable, policies.

I do not know if these accounts are empirically accurate. Edward Friedman, in a review of Evans's book (*Review of Politics*, forthcoming), is highly critical of Evans's empirical description of the Korean state, arguing that it was much more clientelistic and corrupt, and often much less efficient than Evans seems to think. In a seminar in which the book was discussed, students from

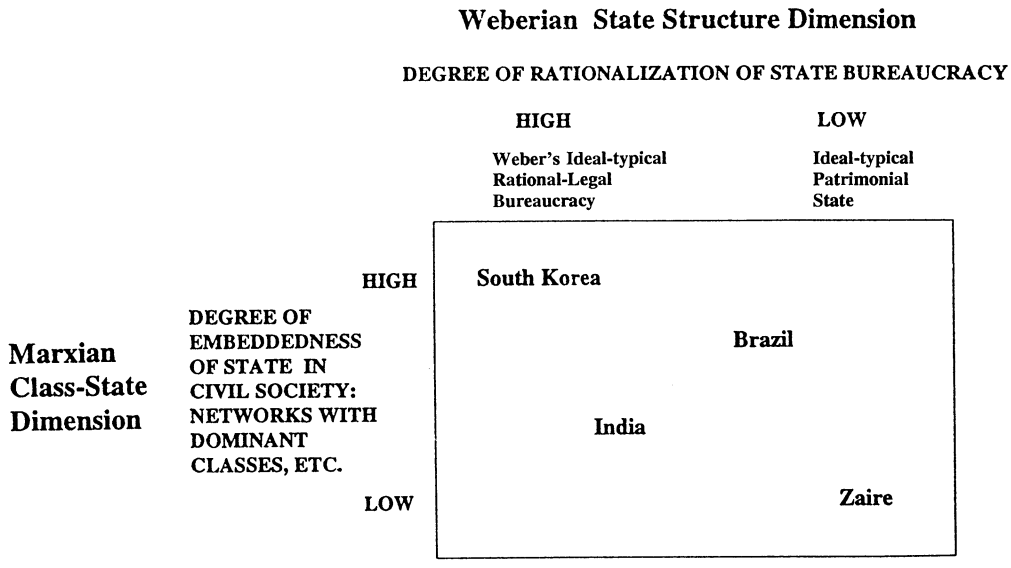

Figure 2. Location of Countries in Peter Evans's Analysis in Theoretical Space of Embedded Autonomy

India were skeptical about the administrative rationality of the Indian state. Nevertheless, as a work of theoretical clarification that proposes a specific way of articulating Marxian and Weberian concepts, *Embedded Autonomy* is an important and stimulating work. It is exemplary in treating the problem of analyzing the state as a problem of revealing the causally important dimensions on which states vary, and doing this in a way that recognizes the general importance of both class and state structures.