

# THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF SOCIAL COMPACTS IN BUILDING A CAPABLE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

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**clear**



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ANGLOPHONE AFRICA

*“...Not a little of the barrenness of political philosophy is due to the failure of men to agree upon the meaning of their terms”*

Laski, 1960:20

# THE STATE

*“spectacularly unclear”*

*“elusive and contested concept”*

*“controversial and disputed”*

Ref: Abrams in Robinson, 2014; Flinders (2006:223); Dryzek and Dunleavy (2009:6)

# THE STATE

Weberian dominance:

*the existence of a bureaucracy and the monopoly over the use of physical violence, coercion or force*

# THE STATE

*Not simply the government or a regime*

*Poulantzas: **the state is relational** – that is, it is co-constituted by its relations with society*

Ref: Engelbert, 2000:4; Evans, 1995; Cloete, in Davids & Maphunye, 2005:52; Lee, Walter-Drop & Wiesel, 2014:637; Poulantzas, 1980:600

# THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

*“a state that puts economic development as the top priority of governmental policy and is able to design effective instruments to promote such a goal”*

*“ability to promote and sustain development, understanding by development the combination of steady high rates of economic growth and structural change in the productive system, both domestically and in its relationship to the international economy”*

# THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

Peter Evans (1995) *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Development*

*...a **different** set of state-society relations in the pursuit of developmental states*

# SOCIAL COMPACTING

*“has the attributes of a core agreement among **various** societal role-players and their government that outlines the rights and duties of each party”*

Ref: MISTRA (2014) in <https://indlu.storiesandscience.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Indlulmithi-2022-Take-Out.pdf>



# EMBEDDED AUTONOMY

*A state that is sufficiently embedded in a relationship of trust and intimacy with (a broad set of) non-state actors, yet remains autonomous and unfettered by private interests.*

*Such a state is more likely to achieve its development goals.*

# EMBEDDEDNESS

*A concrete set of social ties*

*The binding of the state both **intimately and aggressively** to society*

*The provision of **institutionalised channels** that allow for continuous negotiation over development goals and policies*

*Contested public/private divide; a higher value placed in **trust** as well as a **productive informal network***

# EMBEDDEDNESS

*Trust is therefore crucial in binding society together in a joint project of moral and social order, anchored in a dynamic civil society*

*Development success = state's ability to build intimate ties with civil society from the "bottom up".*

*An enduring form of "social capital" is created when the state and this broad base of non-state actors work together in collaboration*

# AUTONOMY

*trust is relational* (Granovetter, 1985)

*...but must be balanced by autonomy: ability of states to act independently, without undue external influence.*

# CRITICISM AGAINST AUTONOMY

*States, if in possession of excessive autonomy, will use it in ways that are detrimental to its citizens*

*If it is completely insulated from any non-state formations or society in general, it could actually fall into predatory behaviour*

*The close ties that develop between the state and any non-state actor replaces one set of elites with another - ties and connections are used for personal gain*

*May lean towards authoritarianism, alienate non-state stakeholders in policy processes and ultimately fail at achieving economic development outcomes*

# **CAPABLE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE**

*The competence of the bureaucratic machinery is the fulcrum around which service delivery results are achieved*

*State capacity the “cure” for predatory states*

# STATE CAPACITY

*Meritocratic recruitment, reward systems and incentives + the sustained pursuit of collective goals, “complemented by predictable career paths and long-term rewards for bureaucrats both of which help to generate a sense of corporate coherence”.*

*Bureaucratic coherence plus “democratically deliberative institutions” in a democratic developmental state, wherein “co-production” can thrive*

*Solid and sophisticated state apparatus*

# STATE CAPACITY

*Weak state capacity? Leads to capturing of the state by political elite:  
one of the greatest risks facing developmental states*

*Gramsci's concept of hegemony is a useful analytical tool in dissecting  
how civil society may provide a counter-balance to the risk*



# **WE KNOW – BUT PROGRESS IS SLOW**

*We know a lot, but is it enough for us to know, dialogue and engage – or are we at risk of pontification and self-reflection, yet not seeing any real progress?*

# TO PONDER...

*Do we have any good examples of social compacting that demonstrates the kind of embedded autonomy that Peter Evans proposes?*

*What kinds of mechanisms do we need to develop trust, intimacy and solidarity (balanced with autonomy) and a healthy, constructive partnership that allows for co-production between the state and non-state constituencies such as organised labour, civil society, academia and so forth?*

# THANK YOU

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