

Building Transformative Capacity of the State in a Changing World

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. FDI is the Key for Growth, Effective Government is the Key for FDI
3. How to Build Modern Democratic Bureaucracy
4. State – Society Coordination Capacity
5. Conclusion

1. Introduction

Globalization underlies the economic competition among nations and eventually, what has become the major issue of competition is on how to build state capacity or the transformative capacity to respond to various circumstances through the joint institutionalized coordination mechanism between government capacity and private sector capacity. The level of institutionalization is the key issue dividing developed countries and developing countries and also among higher income developing countries and low and middle income developing countries. The key for institutionalization is a stable government and its policy implementation. For achieving that, the keys are political stability and the stability of administration. Many East Asian countries had the basic of bureaucratic capacity and institutionalization was easier to attain.

The present international development strategy is symbolized by the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) and the first among eight items is to “Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day.” According to the UN MDG Report 2006¹, the poor people decreased from 28% in 1990 to 19% in 2002. Largely, the decrease occurred in East Asia. But the UN insists that the focus should be on Sub-Saharan Africa where development is most difficult and has never happened since independence, except for scattered cases. The necessary focus should be to make clear why East Asia could success and as far as the question is the good governance, how some East Asian country governments could be effective (not all of course).

Table 1 Population by regions and poverty reduction rate from UNDP MDG Report 2006

Region	Population below poverty 2001, % in developing countries	Ratio of poverty decrease 1990, 2002	Necessary poverty decrease by 2015
East Asia	270 million (25%)	33%→14% (−19%)	Already over-attained
South Asia	430 million (40%)	39%→31% (−8%)	needs 11.5%
Sub Sahara	310 million (29%)	44.6%→44.0% (0.6%)	needs 21.4%
Total	1100 million (100%)	28%→19%, 9%	needs 5%

The UK DFID (Department for International Development) *White Paper for Eliminating World Poverty 2006: Making Governance Work for the Poor* notes that “The lesson from the last 50 years is that economic growth is the most powerful way of pulling people out of poverty.” “Over recent decades, Asia has seen dramatic economic

¹ UN. *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2006*. p.4.

growth... In the 1990s, economic growth helped reduce poverty in the region from just over 40% to around 30%.” “The picture is very different in Sub-Saharan Africa...Uganda and Ghana, for example, had high enough growth during the 1990s to reduce poverty by more than 10%. But the percentage of people living in poverty in the region as a whole has increased in the past two decades. There are now over 300 million poor people in Sub-Saharan Africa.”² “Much of the slow progress (in poverty reduction) observed in some region is due to low or negative growth.”³

It is very clear that poverty reduction occurred in East Asia following the economic growth in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, then in Thailand, Indonesia, then China, Vietnam etc. For considering the reasons of economic growth in these countries, there were two key words: FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) and social capability for technology adaptation. For example, China has been evaluated to be the world factory for its massive export of cheap industrial commodities throughout the world. In China, there are about 280 thousand foreign companies investing US\$2 trillion and exporting 57% of China's total export in 2007. At the same time, China has had a huge number of well developed human resources which can operate new foreign technologies with cheap labor cost.

But other factors are also necessary to be considered. According to the World Development Indicator 2007, 80% of FDI was concentrated in 20 countries among 152 low and middle income countries. Why does FDI concentrate in a small number of countries? The low level of labor cost is surely one of the causes but never as the major cause. The present labor process is highly mechanized and the labor cost consists only 10 to 20% of the total cost. More important factors include the higher quality of laborers (for understanding the labor process quickly, reliability to quality, and adapting time limit for delivery) and efficiency of government.

2. FDI is the Key for Growth, Effective Government is the Key for FDI

Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General (1997-2006), has underscored that “good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and

² Department For International Development. 2006. *White Paper: eliminating world poverty making governance work for the poor*. p.43.

³ *World Development Report 2000/01* (Attacking Poverty). p.6; “Building Interdisciplinary Development Studies through the Case of Poverty Reduction,” *Journal of International Development Studies*. No. 36.

<http://www.gsid.nagoya-u.ac.jp/bpub/research/public/forum/36/01.pdf>

promoting development.”⁴ Dr. Nishimizu Mieko, the Vice-President of the World Bank for South Asia (1997-2003), summarized her experience as follows: “The most important lesson I learnt in the World Bank is that without good governance, we can’t promote healthy nation building.” “The bottom reason of the poverty in South Asia is bad governance in public policy and institution.”⁵

The Commission for Africa Report (2005) notes, “Africa is poor, ultimately, because its economy has not grown.” “One thing underlies all the difficulties caused by the interactions of Africa’s history over the past 40 years. It is the weakness of governance and the absence of an effective state.”⁶

The UK DFID *White Paper for Eliminating World Poverty 2006: Making Governance Work for the Poor* notes, “Effective states are central to development. They protect people’s rights and provide security, economic growth and services like education and health care. Building better governance takes time and has to come from within each country, but international partners can help.”⁷

The World Bank Survey of over 3600 firms in 69 countries establishes the primary discouraging factors for private investment in developing countries. The results indicated four primary insecurities⁸:

- (1) Predictability of rule-making
- (2) Crime against persons and property
- (3) Reliability of judicial enforcement
- (4) Freedom from corruption

As a conclusion, it says Africa is the riskiest region for FDI to come.

So, what kind of (good) governance is necessary? The UK DFID argument cited above suggests three fields where the government should work on.

- (1) protect people’s rights and provide security;
- (2) promote economic growth and
- (3) provide services like education and health care

Item (1) corresponds to building the legal and political infrastructure like the rule of

⁴ UN. World Governance Assessment

http://www.odi.org.uk/wga_governance/About_WGA.html

⁵ Nishimizu Mieko, Governance leadership Ko(Considering), Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry, <http://www.rieti.go.jp/users/nishimizu-mieko/glc/001.html>

⁶ Commission for Africa. 2005. *Our Common Interest: The Report of the Commission for Africa*. pp.1, 24.

⁷ DFID. 2006. *White Paper: eliminating world poverty making governance work for the poor*. p.21.

⁸ Heather Marquette. 1999. “Feature Review: Corruption Eruption: Development and the International Community.” *Third World Quarterly*. 20(6). p.1217.

law, police and military with civilian control, reduction of corruption, democratic political process and building civil society with free media. Item (2) corresponds to building the economic infrastructure through preparing Statistics, Macro Economic Policy, road, water service, drainage, power, public market, irrigation, government cheap loan, regional development, promoting SMEs (Medium & Small Enterprises) etc. Item (3) corresponds to building the social development infrastructure like education, health, urban planning and housing, community development, labor policy, social welfare, gender and pro-poor policies. Environmental policy can be categorized into item (3).

Once the government's major job is set as above, the next problem is the arrangement and implementation of these policies within the limitations of government finance. It is the politicians' concern to prepare a comprehensive policy design and to decide the priority-setting over the sectors/ departments. But the actual plan-do-monitor cycle is the responsibility of the administration. Amid the political instability and immature party politics often seen in developing countries, it is actually the bureaucrats who often take the initiative of deciding comprehensive planning with priority setting. In that case, they are called "state bureaucrats" who are not always subordinate to politicians in reality.

As David Held notes, "For democracy to flourish today it has to be reconceived as a double-sided phenomenon: reform of state power and the restructuring of civil society."⁹ People who think of democratization as only about fair election and multi-party system misunderstand the total structure of government that has to be managed well. Electing political leadership through elections which is responsible to civil society is one thing. "Far from democracy being the basis for the potential development of all citizens, democracy is best understood as a key mechanism to ensure effective political and national leadership."¹⁰ Building effective administration to operate government is another important thing. It is the total structure of government which makes up its responsive power or transformative capacity on various issues coming one after another. The imperative is how to build the transformative capacity in response to the changing world economy.

In Weber's vision, the state's ability to support markets and capitalist accumulation depends on the bureaucracy being a corporately coherent entity. Corporate coherence requires that individual incumbents be, to some degree, insulated from the particularistic

⁹ David Held. 1996. *Models of Democracy*. Second Edition, p.316.

¹⁰ David Held. p.172.

demands of the surrounding society. The concentration of expertise in the bureaucracy through meritocratic recruitment and provision of opportunities for long term career rewards is also central to the bureaucratic effectiveness... Something that stands between chaos and majority voting rules should produce, in theory, the stability. That is “institutions.” Douglass North is one prominent proponent: “Institutional frameworks are the critical key to the relative success of economies.”¹¹ The bureaucracy may be inefficient, but it plays a key role in stabilizing the political economy of the nation¹².

3. How to Build Modern Democratic Bureaucracy

All developing countries had kept the features of a pre-modern bureaucracy even after their independence. The piled pre-modern bureaucracy started from pre-colonial ancient or medieval bureaucracy of the kingdom, followed by colonial bureaucracy, and then by post-independent neo-patrimonial bureaucracy.

The bureaucracy in all pre-modern states can be characterized as “patrimonial bureaucracy.” (Patrimonial means politically organized paternal system.)¹³ Paternalism is the basis where the head of family has the absolute power and the duty for the protection of family members. When the logic goes up, at the village level, the village head was the father of the village; the district head was the father of district people; the king or the president was the father of the nation. Bureaucracy was a social class. First, there was a nobility class (noble, warrior), who got livelihood from the government and secondary, they got job (They were not recruited when jobs were there). Bureaucrats were recruited only from the noble (or warrior) class. In developing country bureaucrats, such logic is still alive. First, bureaucrats are employed and get salary and only as secondary, they work.¹⁴ Even after the independent republic was found, often times the bureaucrats (public officials) behaved loyal to the president (kept the same attitude to king).

Eventually, the issue on how to reorganize the pre-modern bureaucracy to a modern bureaucracy has emerged. The model of a modern bureaucracy (or administration) is

¹¹ Peter Evans.1995. *Embedded Autonomy: States & Industrial Transformation*. pp.30,33; Douglass North. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*.

¹² Mark Turner & David Helm. 1997. *Governance, Administration and Development: Making the State Work*. p.234.

¹³ Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1922, Chapter 9 (The Sociology of Rule 邦訳『支配の社会学』) its first concept.

¹⁴ Stephen Milne 1990. Forward to Ahmed Shafique Huque. *Paradoxes in Public Administration*. p.ix.

characterized as follows by Max Weber:

- (a) Bureaucratic neutrality: bureaucrats work for any ruler = departure from personal royalty
- (b) Professionalization of administration: securing the status of rendering duty for the public, not for a specific political party
- (c) Transparency: documentation and participation of staffs in the policy making process

Administrators are professionals, whereas politicians are amateurs and generalists. The task of bureaucrats is to counter the effects of inefficiency, amateurism and incompetence due to democratic procedures¹⁵. Anglo-Saxon (including South Asia) has the understanding that “government” means elected parliament members, while the European Continent (East Asia too) understands that government means administration.

If you understand NPM (New Public Management: the new trend since 1980s introducing private sector management style into public administration) in the sense of pursuing 3Es (economic, efficient and effective), privatization, and CS (Customer = People Satisfaction), NPM remains to be a technical problem. But if you connect NPM with the principle of subsidiarity¹⁶ and building civic infrastructure, it is the departure from 20th century model of the state = bureaucratic state and connect with the introduction of building a new political system based on associative democracy which is the symbol of “good governance” by adding:

- (a) information disclosure (+ institutionalization = transparency)
- (b) people’s participation
- (c) decentralization = reducing the size of central government (The standard is that 75% of all the government staffs belong to local governments)

Government ability to attract, develop and maintain talented personnel is as follows¹⁷:

- (1) The public bureaucracy’s first challenge is to attract, motivate and retain the

¹⁵ Michiel S. de. Vries. 1996. “Democracy and the Neutrality of Public Bureaucracy.” In Halie Asmerson & Elisa Reis eds., *Democratization and Bureaucratic Neutrality*. pp.85,80.

¹⁶ Principle of Subsidiarity means the bottom family and community should be the basic of politics and the major public matters should be decided and implemented at the bottom with participatory way. Public matters which are not possible or suitable at the community should be sent up to local government. Public matters which are not possible or suitable at the local government should be sent up to provincial government. Public matters which are not possible or suitable at the provincial government should be sent up to national government. Public matters which are not possible or suitable at the national government should be sent up to EU government.

¹⁷ Jon S.T. Quah. 1996. “Public Administration in Singapore: Managing Success in a Multi-Racial City-State.” in Ahmed Shafiqul Huque ed., *Public Administration in the NICs*. p.82.

“best and brightest” personnel in the face of competition from the private sector and other countries.

- (2) Non-monetary rewards and recognition (spirit of challenge, spirit of pursuing social justice, spirit of popularity among the people) instead of depending only on salary revision and rapid promotion.
- (3) Responsibility for constantly improving the quality of service provided to the public.
- (4) Making clear that ‘corruption has a deleterious effect on administrative efficiency and political economic development’.

The book of Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (1990), which was awarded the Nobel Prize in the field of economics, provided a profound influence in the recognition of governance. North emphasizes the level of transaction cost (like banking, insurance, finance, wholesale, retail trade, lawyers, accountant etc. which accounts for more than 45% of the national income in the US economy).¹⁸ “Low cost enforcement of contracts is the most important source of both historical stagnation and contemporary underdevelopment in the Third world.” “Enforcement in the Third World economies is uncertain not only because of ambiguity of legal doctrine (a measurement cost), but because of uncertainty with respect to behavior of the agent.” “Formal rules, in even the most developed economy, make up a small part of the sum of constraints that shape choices.” “It should be stressed that creating an institutional environment that induces credible commitment entails the complex institutional framework of formal rules, informal constraints, and enforcement that together make possible low-cost transaction.”¹⁹ The distinction between advanced industrial and developing countries is that... the level of institutionalization is of major significance.²⁰ In 1997 East Asian economic crisis, it was either the state’s transformative capacity or the weakness of domestic institutions which differentiated between severely hit Indonesia and slightly hit Malaysia. States differ in their capacities by the difference in the degree and type of institutional depth (insulation of state organizations from larger society) and institutional breadth (density of links between state and society).²¹ From these observations, it can be argued that the key of economic development in developing countries is to build institutionalization in the economy, society and politics.

¹⁸ Douglas North. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. pp.27-28.

¹⁹ North. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. pp. 54, 57-59, 36.

²⁰ Linda Weiss. 1999. *The Myth of the Powerless State*. p.18.

²¹ Linda Weiss. 1999. pp. xiii, 19.

4. State – Society Coordination Capacity

Australian AID (Agency for International Development) notes, “Good governance requires policies to promote broad-based economic growth, a dynamic private sector and social policies that will lead to poverty reduction.”²² For building a developmental state, and enhancing its transformative capacity, it must have the ability to coordinate with society. Economic growth should be a joint effort between government and business. Building the coordination mechanism with business is decisive. The question is on the preparedness on the side of the private sector. Are they well organized to coordinate with the government or are they looking for personal benefits with the connection economy disregarding the common benefit of the private sector? The state can promote a dynamic private sector by providing economic development supporting policy that prioritizes government loans, tax incentives, infrastructure development, promotion of R&D, human resource development etc.

For building a reliable partnership between state and business, the relationship should not be based on political capitalism or connection economy. The necessary relationship to be established is an institutionalized coordination mechanism. In many places, business has much dissatisfaction against government saying the latter only thinks of using business as a milking cow for getting rent and doesn’t deliver government services or public policies for pursuing economic development. On the other hand, government people say business always think about short-sighted benefits disregarding its social responsibility or CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) including environmental protection and always think of how to cheat the government to reduce or evade tax.

The best model for promoting a developmental state is the institutionalized coordination between institutionalized government and institutionalized business. Indonesia has had the lack of this mechanism among East Asian countries where Chinese business, the major private sector, was not well organized into a CCI (Chamber of Commerce and Industry). Eventually, CCI was weak organizing only indigenous businessmen. The lack of an established organization among the private sector could not gain the trust of the government for institutionalized coordination. For strengthening CCI, the necessary thing is to organize associations along the various economic sectors like the association of banks, tourism industry, transportation, etc.

²² Australian Government’s Overseas Aid Program, 2000, *Good Governance: Guiding Principles for Implementation*, p.3. http://www.aisaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/good_governance.pdf

Prof. Suehiro Akira promoted the “social ability of industrialization” where he proposed three necessary levels:²³

- (1) Government level: organizational ability of policy implementation among economic bureaucrats and their independence from politics (connection economy), shared information system through the coordination between government and private sector;
- (2) Company level: entrepreneurship, innovational combination ability of management resources (technology, wage, labor resources, marketing ability etc.), promotion of organizational reform;
- (3) Factory level: organizational ability to arrange technologies (organizing operations among engineers, technicians, skilled laborers, unskilled laborers), technology formation ability among society (accumulation of traditional technology, education system), technology learning ability among individuals (combination of OJT and OffJT).

Moreover, when these don't exist, how to organize them will be another issue the government and business should pursue.

Concerning the formation of social ability to adapt to new technologies, the Kaizen system (continuous improvements) of Japan's manufacturing culture is worth replicating. Without continuous improvements / innovation system in the private sector, the private sector can't become reliable and can't build the coordination mechanism with the government.

The following are excerpts from Kaizen written by Mr. Imai Masaaki²⁴:

In Kaizen, it is assumed that all activities should eventually lead to increased customer satisfaction. Soichiro Honda of Honda Motor says that management's role is to make a constant effort to provide better products at lower prices. Kaizen movements have been going on all the time in most Japanese companies, and most companies contend that management should devote more than 50% of its attention to Kaizen (p.xxxii).

TQC (Total Quality Control) in Japan is a movement centered on the improvement of managerial performance at all levels. As such, it has typically dealt with: (1) quality assurance, (2) cost reduction, (3) meeting production quotas, (4) meeting delivery schedules, (5) safety, (6) new-product development, (7) productivity improvement, (8) supplier management, (9) marketing, (10) sales, (11) after services (p.14). Inspection

²³ Suehiro Akira. 2000. *Catch Up gata Kogyokaron (Catch Up Model Industrialization)*. Chapter 3. Nagoya UP.

²⁴ Masaaki Imai. 1986. *KAIZEN: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success*.

alone does nothing to improve the quality of the product. Product quality should be built at the production stage. “Build quality into the process” was (and still is) a popular phrase in Japanese quality control. (p.12) The “high road” to Kaizen has been the practice of TQC. (p.43)

The role of QC (Quality Control) circles may be better understood as a group-oriented system for making improvements. One of the outstanding features of Japanese management is that it generates a great number of suggestions from workers and that management works hard to consider these suggestions. (p.15)

An example of Kaizen was the semiconductor laser for use in compact-disc players which cost ¥500,000 in 1978. In 1980, it was down to ¥50,000, 1981, ¥10,000 and 1982, ¥5000, 1984, ¥2000. During the same time, laser’s utility life was extended from 100 hours to 50,000 hours. (p.33)

Another strength of the Japanese technology is the close connection between development, design and production line. Hitachi has about 8000 R&D staffs but only 3000 work at its research center. The remaining 5000 are distributed among various factories and operation divisions. What this means is that the connection and understanding between development and production is very smooth.

Without understanding the above background, you can’t understand deeply the structural difference between Toyota cars and American cars.

Prof. Fujimoto Takahiro’s book (*The Competition of Capability Building*) on the strength of the Japanese car industry²⁵ developed the mixture of the following three factors in corporate organization especially in Toyota:

- (a) Continuity: the system that is adamant against any change is sustained over the generations.
- (b) Accumulated system of “kaizen” (improvement) and the mechanism changes occasionally.
- (c) Under certain changes of external circumstances like yen fluctuations or environmental issues, a mutation functions, producing an “emergence (sohatsu 創発)” as the mechanism of change. “Emergence” is a system being formed that is different from the original design or intention of designers.

During the world economic change under WTO and the rise of China as the world factory, concentrating FDI and promoting CAFTA (China ASEAN Free Trade Agreement), Thailand had to cope with the situation. Export based cheap labor was in

²⁵ Fujimoto Takahiro, 1991, *The Evolution of a Manufacturing Systems at Toyota*; 2003, *Noryoku Kochiku Kyoso: Nihon no Jidosha sangyo ha naze tuyoinoka (The Competition of Capability Building: Why Japanese Car Industry is so Strong?)* p.173.

the hands of China and Vietnam (or Cambodia and Laos). There was the necessity for structural change towards capacity for upgrading including shifts diversification within agriculture and / or manufacturing, expansion from downstream products to upstream intermediaries and capital goods, and moves from labor-intensive manufacturing to more capital- and technology- intensive production. Thai garment firms were told by foreign buyers to shorten time between order and delivery with lower price.²⁶ In upgrading the industry, the major part of laborers needs to change from women high school graduates (whose monthly salary is less than US\$100) to university or Master level graduates (whose monthly salary is US\$1000 or above). With this change of labor structure, the domestic market can be promoted. Garry Rodan called this as the second industrial revolution which was practiced in Japan in late 1940s and in South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore after 1986.²⁷ In coordination with business, government had to respond to such kind of industrial change and human resource development.

In the case of Taiwan, during 1985-87, Taiwan dollar rose by 28% against the yen and by 40% against the US dollar. The MOEA (Ministry of Economic Affairs) worked in concert with business associations to press forward the deepening of high technology and relocation of labor intensive production elsewhere. Recently, facing to join WTO, it is unavoidable for Taiwan to be threatened by the import of cheap Chinese products. Taiwan has to mobilize once again the government-business innovation networks to drive through a new round of technological upgrading.²⁸

These are examples of joint efforts both by government and business. Both need the transformative capacity side by side with upgrading the coordination mechanism. But the new international division of labor is not a clear cut phenomenon. Although China and India develop their IT industry and the per capita income of Shanghai district (having 16 million population) is much the same with that of Malaysia (having 21 million population), still they have a huge ground of poor people. Thailand is developing one of the global financial/ service centers including air transportation but at the same time, in coexistence with labor intensive sectors, traditional and export-oriented agriculture and tourism.

²⁶ Richard F. Doner and Ansil Ramsay, Chapter 6 The challenges of economic upgrading in liberalizing Thailand, in Linda Weiss ed., 2003, *States and the Global Economy: Bringing domestic institutions back in*, Cambridge UP, p.134.

²⁷ Garry Rodan . 1989. *The political economy of Singapore's industrialization : national state and international capital*.

²⁸ Linda Weiss, *States and the Global Economy*, pp.259-61.

5. Conclusion

The key for institutionalization is a stable government and its policy implementation. For achieving that, the key is the stability of politics and administration. Many East Asian countries had the basic of bureaucratic capacity and institutionalization was easier to attain. In that sense, states or administration in Sub-Saharan Africa are predatory and ineffective. So as states are unstable in Latin America where a huge number of government officials are replaced after every change of government. There has been a clear tendency that Europeans imagine developing countries in Africa, Americans in Latin America, while Japanese imagine in East Asia. It was natural for Europeans and Americans to imagine the state as ineffective but the population in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America consists only 25% among the total population of developing countries.

The importance of state is what the recent report by the Commission of Africa, cited above, underscores: underlying amid all economic difficulties and poverty is the weakness of governance and the absence of an effective state.

From this viewpoint, both Laos and Cambodia are underdeveloped but Laos has well developed bureaucracy while Cambodia has not. In Cambodia, the informal growing family ties run all the way to the top of Cambodia's political pyramid under Prime Minister Hun Sen and political nomination by the ruling People's Party is deeply rooted in bureaucracy.²⁹ Decentralization is just nominal.³⁰ The Philippines has followed US-Latin American style spoils system (political nomination system). Policy priority setting and actual financial expenditure are dominated by politicians which damage the infrastructure of institutionalization. The Philippines and Cambodia need to build "the expertise in the bureaucracy through meritocratic recruitment and provision of opportunities for long term career rewards as the central issue to the bureaucratic effectiveness"³¹ which is the basic of building transformative capacity of the state.

²⁹ Bertil Lintner, "One big happy family in Cambodia," *Asia Times Online*, May 20, 2007.

³⁰ Viral Plum, 2006. *Cambodia Decentralizes: Making Khum/ Sangkat Work Toward an Inclusive Design*. Ph.D. Dissertation. GSD, Nagoya University.

³¹ Peter Evans, 1995. *Embedded Autonomy. op.cit.*, p.30.