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tured. It is also a work of true scholarship, and constitutes a largely successful blend of deep theorizing and detailed empiricism. His appendix on methodology is refreshingly honest and sensitive.

University of Melbourne

LESLIE HOLMES

Forging Industrial Policy: The United States, Britain, and France in the Railway Age. By Frank Dobbin. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994. 262p. \$39.95.

Politics and Industrialization: Early Railroads in the United States and Prussia. By Colleen A. Dunlavy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. 303p. \$39.50.

These two studies, one by Frank Dobbin, a sociologist, and the other by Colleen A. Dunlavy, an historian, engage a question that has been an object of great interest and controversy in political science over the past several decades—the relationship of political structure to industrial development and policy. Perhaps the most dominant theme in this literature is the role of interests. Interestingly enough, both authors, coming from different directions, basically reject this view. They both seek to make a case for looking beyond the immediate context of politics and the politics of interest to explain the variations in industrial policy across societies.

For Dobbin, the problem is viewed through the lens of his unhappiness with a literature that relies heavily on culture and tradition as residual variables to explain the variance left unexplained “after theoretically important factors are used to explain a tiny proportion of cross-national variance” (p. 1). He thus begins by rejecting the view of social actors that stresses that action is “governed by universal laws of interest and rationality” (ibid.). Dunlavy, on the other hand, comes to the issue with a specific problem in mind—the paradox presented by the experience of the United States and Prussia with regard to railroad development in the first half of the nineteenth century. She notes that while the Prussian central state “had adopted a largely hands-off policy,” the American state, in contrast, “had taken a comparatively interventionist stance” (p. 4). The more liberal state was the more interventionist. Why so, when we would expect it to be the other way around? She answers by saying that the key to the paradox “lies neither in the realm of national cultural nor in the actions of the state, but in the structuring presence of the two states themselves. . . . To contemporary nations, early American and Prussian railroad development shows how the constitutional structure—the larger, overarching structure of national political institutions—plays a constitutive role in industrial change” (ibid.).

This being said, the authors now take quite different paths. Dobbin’s argument is that industrial policy is isomorphic to state institutional structure: “Policy approaches are reproduced because state institutions provide principles of causality that policy makers apply to new problems, and not simply because institutions give policy makers the organizational resources to repeat history” (p. 3). The isomorphism is generated by political culture that determines the “kinds of economic and industrial *problems* nations would perceive and by delimiting the *solutions* that nations would conceive to those problems” (p. 20). The values enshrined in the institu-

tions that brought political order were brought to bear when it came to problems of economic order (p. 21).

To substantiate this view, Dobbin examines the development of state policy with regard to railroad development in the United States, Great Britain, and France in the nineteenth century. His premise is that each of these countries proceeded on the road to the development of an industry with relatively small technological variations in a manner that mirrored its political institutional values and structure. In the United States, political institutions reinforced the values of community sovereignty, while in Great Britain they reinforced individual sovereignty. French political institutions reinforced state sovereignty. Dobbin describes the isomorphic character of the structures of political values and railroad development policy. Each society’s political culture leads its citizens to perceive a unique series of problems that are resolved in that society’s political cultural image.

Dunlavy proceeds in a different manner. She tries to solve her paradox by comparing the role of the state in early railroad development in Prussia and the United States. After a careful examination of what she views as functional equivalents—the Prussian central state and American state governments—she concludes that the United States was considerably more interventionist in the 1830s and 1840s. Dunlavy compares different possible explanations. She concludes that it was not a question of difference of interests: “On the whole, neither the prevailing pattern of support for early railroad development nor the varied sources of opposition differed much in the United States and Prussia during these years” (p. 125). Nor were there significant differences in ideology or tradition concerning railroad or transportation development between the two countries. Instead, she argues that the difference between the two countries’ policies was a function of their overarching political structures. The more liberal American political structure offered greater capacity for the expression of opposing interests: “This is why the American state promoted early American railroads with greater energy, and, because it promoted, it was able to regulate” (p. 131). The Prussian state could not promote railroads in the same way without yielding to demands for political liberalization. The cost of development would have made it necessary to call for cooperation of interests in raising new taxes. This would have opened the door for greater political participation. Prussian state officials thus found it prudent to allow private capital to organize railroad development with a modicum of state interference.

Dunlavy goes on to show how the unity of the Prussian state made possible the early formation of national railroad associations, while the decentralized character of the American system made the formation of a more or less permanent railroad association come quite late. These same holds true, she argues, for the diversity in technological styles between the two countries. The centralized Prussian state shaped a more homogeneous engineering community than the decentralized disparate engineering community produced by American diversity. Institutional structure, rather than political culture, is the dominant constraint in railroad development policy.

Both explanations have problems. Regardless of how it is defined, Dobbin’s resort to political culture suggests that the agents of social action are conceived of as mere transition belts of internalized norms. Individuals very

early on acquire a set of norms that governs their behavior regardless of setting. Everyone acts in a subjective atomized fashion, since their understandings are mediated by internal constraints unrelated to the immediate social context in which they exist in a practical way. Thus, the engine of isomorphism is unchanging norms that makes it possible for Dobbin to speak of Americans, French citizens, and British subjects as universals and thus reduce conflict to trivial disputes over the range of internalized norms. It also makes it possible to ignore historical events of the greatest magnitude.

This view amounts to a determinism that cannot be sustained by the tautology of the argument. The tautology lies in the fact that the existence of the norms he cites is deduced from the isomorphism itself. There is no independent evidence of internalized political norms being the most salient constraint on the perception and solution to problems. If Dobbin means to say that there is a common understanding underlying differences of interest, then he ought to make this explicit and show how this common understanding generates different interpretations.

What is there instead? Dunlavy has an answer: institutions matter. They are not merely the unmediated consequence of internalized norms and values but are independent variables in themselves. While individuals may have norms about what constitutes an appropriate problem and the knowledge required to solve it, institutional rules and sanctions dissuade them from pursuing those norms regardless of what others do. Dunlavy argues that the nature of the political structure provides significant boundaries within which agents may operate. It is true that at bottom, Dunlavy is arguing that social actors are impelled by their interests. But these interests are shaped by an interaction with a social context with greater or fewer options for action. Nevertheless, Dunlavy also leaves us in a quandary. Her argument is that a more liberal constitution produces the capacity for greater interests. But it is not clear what is precisely meant by *liberal*. Does the existence of variegated interests indicate liberalism? At any rate, Britain's relatively liberal constitution did not seem to have produced anywhere near as broad a range of interests as in the United States. Nor does this appear to be the case in France under the Third Republic. Is it possible that it is decentralization of state authority that, as Dobbin would have it, allows for the emergence of such a broad range of interests? Smaller units make possible the organization of interests by smaller groups of people needing fewer resources than are required at a national level.

Despite some shortcomings, both analyses make important contributions to our understanding of the nature of state industrial policy formation. Dobbin's analysis makes us aware of a truism often lost to us—that every society does not have the same conception of efficiency or rationality. These are social or political constructs, not universal inherent qualities of technology. Dunlavy, on the other hand, makes us aware of the role of political institutions as holistic structures in determining the specific boundaries within which action can be formulated and organized. The result is that these two volumes give us a refreshingly different and significant perspective on the problem of the state and its relation to industrial policy.

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Governing Rural England: Tradition and Transformation in Local Government, 1780–1840. By David Eastwood. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. 311p. \$55.00.

In the 1980s, the Thatcher government made it a central goal to control local governments. The government did so both by controlling the levels of taxation and spending the local governments could set and, in some instances, by abolishing metropolitan local governments controlled by the Labour party. Opponents criticized these choices in part by appealing to a long tradition of local governance in Britain. However, some centralization had to have occurred already, else the Thatcher government could not have exercised that control over local governments. Indeed, in more limited ways, central governments have tried to impose controls on local governments in Britain throughout the twentieth century. They have done so through the presumption that the localities are subject to statutes from Parliament.

David Eastwood argues that the initial subjection of the local governments to central control came from a combination of social crisis and changing ideology in the early nineteenth century. He examines changes in central-local relations through focusing on policy areas. He chooses two policy areas central to governance: the administration of the poor laws and the administration of criminal justice. Local administration of the poor laws became unworkable in the face of massive and widespread unemployment and falling wages. Local magistrates and parishes struggled to maintain the poor while also addressing the rise of Malthusian ideology that argued it was pointless to try to support the poor. Furthermore, an allowance system made poor relief sometimes simply an addition to extremely low wages, ending up as a subsidy to employers. Parliament took over the administration of the poor laws by enacting reform statutes, in particular, the Poor Law of 1834. In doing so, Eastwood argues, Parliament participated in a transformation of the meaning of what made governing elites legitimate. Local elites had governed based on an assumption that they were the best people because of their social status. With the intractability of the local problems, Eastwood argues that the intervention of Parliament contributed to a meaning of governance as justified when based in effective management techniques. While he describes neither anything like today's concerns with expertise nor the jargon of quality management, Eastwood does suggest a move toward more central control and concern with effective management. Eastwood particularly develops the relationship between local governance and professionalization through Parliament in his discussion of police administration.

Police and prosecutions were organized differently from county to county. They were sometimes volunteers and often paid only through voluntary contributions. Local efforts to create professional police forces often ran into opponents who believed professionalization would encroach on liberty and would be pointlessly expensive. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw an increase in criminal committals, possibly in part as a result of the growth of prosecutors' associations. They were private associations formed to prosecute crimes. They increased in number in the early nineteenth century as a result of a sense that crime was on the rise. Increasing criminal committals and concern about crime taxed local police. In addition, stories of police incom-