

An Anatomy of Power

The Social Theory of
Michael Mann

Edited by
John A. Hall
and Ralph
Schroeder



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Michael Mann is one of the most influential sociologists of recent decades. His work has had a major impact in sociology, history, political science, international relations and other social science disciplines. His main work, *The Sources of Social Power*, of which two of three volumes have been completed, will provide an all-encompassing account of the history of power from the beginnings of stratified societies to the present day. Recently he has published two major works, *Fascists* and *The Dark Side of Democracy*. Yet unlike that of other contemporary social thinkers, Mann's work has not, until now, been systematically and critically assessed. This volume assembles a group of distinguished scholars to take stock, both of Mann's overall method and of his account of particular periods and historical cases. It also contains Mann's reply where he answers his critics and forcefully restates his position. This is a unique and provocative study for scholars and students alike.

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521850001

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First published in print format 2006

ISBN-13 978-0-511-14496-7 eBook (Adobe Reader)

ISBN-10 0-511-14496-2 eBook (Adobe Reader)

ISBN-13 978-0-521-85000-1 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-85000-2 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-61518-1 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-61518-6 paperback

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1 Introduction: the IEMP model and its critics

Ralph Schroeder

This volume brings together essays that critically assess Michael Mann's sociology. The major works discussed here are *The Sources of Social Power, Volume I: A History from the Beginning to 1760 AD* (1986) and *Volume II: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760–1914* (1993). We shall have to wait for Volume III, which will take us to the present day, because Mann has concentrated for the last decade on another project: two volumes which have just been published entitled *Fascists* (2004) and *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (2005). *Fascists* is a comparative historical sociology of the six main fascist regimes, and the companion volume, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, covers the main modern instances of ethnic cleansing. He has now returned to working on the third volume, to be called 'Globalizations'. Still, we already have some indications of what is to come in the third volume from various articles (see the list of his publications at the end of this book) and from his recent book *Incoherent Empire* (2003), an analysis of America's role in the world today.

This introduction is intended for orientation. In the first part, I provide a brief introduction to Mann's sociology. In the second, I will give an overview of the contributions to the volume.

Mann prefers historical narrative to sociological model-building, but in the opening chapter of the first volume of the *Sources of Social Power* he puts forward what he calls the IEMP model, named after the four sources of social power: Ideological, Economic, Military and Political. In my exposition, I will concentrate on modern Europe, and especially on Volume II, or what Mann calls the 'age of popular modernity', from 1780 onwards (2000: 16), because that is where his IEMP model ties up most closely with contemporary debates in social theory.

Three of the four sources of social power – economic, ideological/cultural, and political – will be familiar to students of social theory. This is the way that Marx, Weber, Durkheim and most contemporary theorists analyse society. The most distinctive part of Mann's model is that he conceptualizes militarism as a fourth and separate source of social power.

From our vantage point after the end of the Cold War, it may be easy to overlook the importance of militarism, which has recently been very much neglected in sociology. Mann, however, treats it of equal weight with the other three sources, and we will see later that his separation of military power from political power is contentious. Moreover, we will need to wait until Volume III, when Mann covers the two World Wars, which he has labelled the period of 'citizen warfare', and the Cold War's 'nuclear age' (1988: 166–87), to find out how he analyses war on a global scale. It can be anticipated, however, that these periods of mass mobilization, and what he has called the 'deterrence-science' militarism of nuclear warfare, which almost put an end to history altogether, will go some way towards vindicating his separation of military power from the other forms of power.

Mann argues that militarism – along with economic power – was one of the primary determinants of social change in modern Europe up to the period ending with the Napoleonic Wars (1993: 251). The resources devoted to preparing for and making war in Western societies peaked at the end of this period, both in fiscal extraction and manpower (1993: 215), not to be matched again, as Mann is fond of pointing out, until present-day Israel and Iraq. This peak in military power coincided with the state's greatest relative size *vis-à-vis* civil society (1993: 504).

Apart from its role as a dominant power organization, the importance of militarism – and here Mann is in agreement with a school of thought which includes Theda Skocpol, Charles Tilly and Jack Goldstone (see Collins 1993) – is that up to and including the French Revolution, the function of the state was primarily military and geopolitical (1986: 511). His break with this 'state-centred theory', in which the power of the state is determined from the outside in (i.e. from the relations between states to internal state power), comes mainly, as we will see below, in the nineteenth century with the growth of the infrastructural and collective power of the state.

But militarism shares determining the relations between states with a different type of power, the outward-facing side of political power which he labels 'geopolitical diplomacy'. For Mann, there are two types of political power: outward-facing, or how the relations between states are governed depending on whether these powers are more equal or highly unequal, and inward-facing political power, power within the state, which will be discussed in a moment. The outward-facing form of political power organization, outside the bounds of territorially centralized units, alternates between hegemonic empires and multi-state civilizations. These two constellations have quite different 'rules of the game', rules by which relations between states are governed *apart from* the military

strength with which they are enforced. This, the level of the most ‘macro-’ relations of power, also partly falls outside what can be theorized in sociology, as it seems that Mann wants to allow for a degree of contingency here (hence Mann’s dotted rather than solid causal arrow in his diagram of the IEMP model, 1986: 29). One example is the ‘over the top’ – over the top of all four sources – slip into World War I (1993: 740–802).

The importance of geopolitical diplomacy is that it may prevail over militarism when it is controlled by the shared norms of transnational elites. Examples are the middle of the nineteenth century (1815–1880) when transnational capitalism plus British ‘near hegemony’ and a balance of power allowed the shared norms of diplomats to maintain relatively pacific geopolitical competition. Another possible example is today’s ‘soft geopolitics’ after the Cold War (see Mann 1997). On the other hand, when, as often in modern times, militarism is autonomous and beyond the control of (civilian) political elites, and/or when society – the ‘nation’ – is mobilized for war, military power prevails over geopolitical diplomacy.

This brings us to the most well-known part of Mann’s work, his analysis of political power *within* the state, and in particular his distinction between despotic and infrastructural power, or power ‘over’ as against power ‘through’ society (1993: 59–60). Pre-modern imperial and European absolutist states had much despotic power *over* a – laterally insulated – civil society, but little infrastructural power to penetrate civil society or implement its control on the ground. Feudal states had little despotic *or* infrastructural power. Authoritarian states – such as Nazi Germany and the Soviets – had *both*. The key question is: how do we arrive at today’s ‘bureaucratic–democratic’ state, which is low on despotic power and high on infrastructural power?

Mann identifies several stages en route: after the puny feudal ‘coordinating state’, political power expands with the rise of the ‘organic state’ from the Reformation to the Napoleonic Wars. During this period, militarism and geopolitics centralized the state and added to its despotic power, but also deepened its reach down into civil society – infrastructural power. But militarism and geopolitics, and not domestic politics, remained the major causes of state-building into the nineteenth century.

This is the first part of the story, to borrow from the title of one of his essays, of ‘the rise and rise’ of the state: the organic state (up to 1780) expanding and reaching downward. The next period, from 1780 to 1815, as mentioned earlier, saw the high point of the state’s power *over* civil society as well as a peak in military power. After this period, in the middle of the long nineteenth century, there was a further ‘rise’ with the ‘tightening’ of the state–society relationship, ‘caging social relations’ (1993: 61). This was the advent of the ‘polymorphous’ state: ‘polymorphous’ in

the sense that the scope and the functions of the state expanded, but also in as much as it is no longer possible to speak of *the* state in the singular, but only of its ‘crystallizations’, the state’s functioning in different capacities.

The tightening of the state–society relationship, slowly replacing despotic state power over civil society, means that the power of different groups in civil society can crystallize *in* the state. Put differently, the infrastructural power of the polymorphous state – in contrast with the power of the organic state – reaches not just downward but upward. Again, this is a form of power ‘through society’. When deciding which groups are dominant in society, or which distinctive paths the state thereby takes, Mann looks to ‘higher level crystallizations’ (1993: 76) which prevail among the various functions of the state. Thus the state becomes much more powerful during this period, but also ‘morphs’, develops in different directions, and loses its coherence (1993: 79). Losing coherence means both taking on a variety of new functions (1993: 79) and no longer being subject to the control of a single autonomous regime.

This is an evolutionary view of the state and political power – the state has become ever more powerful – but it has also become less autonomous from, more entwined with and more promiscuous with the other sources of social power. And its size *relative* to civil society *declined* over the course of the nineteenth century, even while its scope increased (1993: 504).

States were more diverse at the end of the nineteenth century with their different ‘higher level crystallizations’ than they are today, after being ‘compromised’: some regime types were, according to Mann, defeated by two World Wars. Thus we have arrived at ‘bureaucratic–democratic’ state, low on despotic and high on infrastructural power, or at ‘democratic–party states, routinely controlled by civil society’ (1993: 61), or at the ‘age of institutionalized nation-states’ (1995). Northern states after World War II have converged on liberal-democratic and social democratic norms (2000: 48). They are more homogenous as they all have ‘democratic party’ regimes, and their coherence has increased – even while new functions have been added and there are more inputs from civil society.

Political power is thus the most complex part of Mann’s IEMP model. But the main point here is simply that Mann puts much more weight on political power than any other classical social theorist with the possible exception of Weber, and than any other contemporary school of social theory apart from the ‘state-centered’ school – though this school professes comparative history rather than ‘theory’.

So we can move on to ideological power or ‘culture’; Mann seems to think that either term can be used. There are two types of ideological

power, which Mann calls ‘sociospatially transcendent’ and ‘immanent morale’. Here it is best to give some key examples: the ‘sociospatially transcendent’ ideology of Christendom and its ‘normative pacification’ was ‘necessary’ for the rise of modern Europe (1986: 506–7), but its role was gradually replaced by the shared norms of the state-system in a multi-state civilization (1986: 512–13) which played such a decisive role, as we saw above, by the middle of the nineteenth century. ‘Immanent morale’ is a less autonomous form of power, strengthening existing social organizations. The street-level organizations of the fascist paramilitary social movements, as we shall see in a moment, are a prime example.

The place where comparative historical sociologists would most expect ideological power to play a decisive role is in relation to the world-religions. The foremost thinker associated with this view is Weber. But in the chapter on the world-religions in Volume I (1986: 341–72), Mann is sceptical towards assigning a key role to the world-religions in social development, and a comparative approach to world-civilization also falls outside his – narrowly evolutionist – narrative of power. The second place where we might expect a major role for ideology is during the French Revolution. But again, while acknowledging its local morale-boosting role, Mann is doubtful about its transcendent role in subsequently spreading the impact of the revolutionary message beyond France.

Ideological power provides a good opportunity for a brief digression from the IEMP model to discuss Mann’s ideas about networks and power. The most famous statement in Mann’s sociology is that ‘societies are constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting networks of social power’ (1986: 1). Networks are thus the ‘containers’ (my word, not Mann’s) of the four power sources. In relation to ideological power, this means that ideology must be contained in an organizational form to have an impact. As has just been mentioned, Mann distinguishes between two types of ideological power, ‘sociospatially transcendent’, covering a larger territory in a diffuse manner, and ‘immanent morale’, which is more intensive than extensive. And we have already encountered two types of political power, ‘despotic’ and ‘infrastructural’. The other sources of social power also come in different types, so that in addition to ‘intensive’ and ‘extensive’ types of power, Mann distinguishes between authoritative and diffused power, and between collective and distributive power. The various combinations of authoritative/diffused and intensive/extensive yield four combinations of what Mann calls the ‘organizational reach’ of networks (1986: 9). We will also come back shortly to the zero-sum or A over B nature of authoritative power, which can be contrasted with Mann’s notion of collective power, adopted from Parsons, ‘whereby persons in cooperation can enhance their joint power over third parties or

over nature' (1986: 6). At this point, we should merely note that Mann has described his approach as 'organizational materialism', which means – again, in my interpretation – (a) that power always has to be contained in an organizational form, it is never free-floating, and (b) that the types of power are not ideal types in Weber's sense, constructs that are imposed on reality, nor are they a reality separate from human beings and imposed upon us, but they are rather, to use Mann's term, 'emergent'.

We can now return to Mann's scepticism about the ideological reach of the French Revolution. He is willing to concede that ideological power played a world-historical role on this occasion, but the wider ideological ramifications of this event were limited because the organizational networks could not carry this ideology very far in practice, which was in any case hemmed in by France's geopolitical defeat in 1815 (1993: 246). As the contributions to this volume will make clear, ideological power is where Mann is at the receiving end of the strongest criticisms, but I would point out here that this organizational materialism, the idea that ideology, like the other sources of power, is always contained within the reach of networks, is also an excellent tool for eliminating excessive claims for the power of ideology or culture: briefly put, if it is not in a network or in an organization, it can't *do* anything.

The only other place in Mann's sociology where the power of ideology comes into the foreground as a determining source of social power is among the fascists. In this case, ideology took the form of providing the immanent morale for a social movement, which boosted authoritarian statist parties into power and ultimately, in the Nazi case, aimed at the transcendence of their national cages. Mann makes an important though highly contentious contrast with the role of ideological mobilization in the other authoritarian statist surge of the twentieth century – communism – which, he argues, was primarily oriented to transforming everyday life (and failed partly for not delivering on this aim), and not towards transcending its borders. Again, we see ideological networks, some sociospatially transcendent and others providing immanent morale, some seeking to transform other power networks, others being contained within them.

When it comes to economic power, the faultline in social theory has been between those whose analysis focuses on capitalism and those who prefer the label 'industrial society'. Capitalism in Marxist thought means the economic determinism of classes and their conflict. For liberal social thought, on the other hand, capitalism often consists of a frictionless plane of atomized market relationships. The alternative 'industrial society' view is that economic growth is produced by science and technology and the division of labour – without the state's developmental assistance.

The IEMP model goes along with Marxism in defining classes in relation to capitalism and economic power. Yet ‘commercial’ and ‘industrial’ (1993: 250) capitalism consists of diffused rather than authoritative power, and therefore does not fundamentally reorganize other power relations, including distributive – class – relations (1993: 219). Mann’s downplaying of social change as a result of modern capitalism brings to mind Ernest Gellner’s comment that the concept of capitalism is much overrated (for some comparisons between Mann and Gellner, see Schroeder 1998).

This distinction between capitalism and industrialism in Mann’s account of the nineteenth century – and his bracketing industrialism together with the increase in collective (rather than distributive) power – makes all the difference in setting his position apart from that of Marxists. But it also sets him apart from liberal social thinkers, who argue that markets or civil society provide an important balance *against* the modern state – after the increased productivity of the industrial revolution and the division of labour in the market has made possible the transition from a pre-modern (despotic and Hobbesian) state to the modern liberal state of Locke, Tocqueville and the pluralists. Instead, we need to recall the ‘promiscuity’, as Mann calls it, of political power that was mentioned above: the economy bolsters the collective/infrastructural power of the state, and the state, in turn, ‘tightens’ its relationship with the economy/civil society.

In going beyond the use of ‘industrialism’ or ‘capitalism’ as master concepts, with the respective ramifications of each, Mann is in line with an emerging consensus among economic historians that looks more closely at the different phases of the two industrial revolutions and at regional variations in industrialization during the long nineteenth century. Without going into this complexity, it is possible to say that Mann provides a response to the question of the relation between economic power and the other forms of power in society, or a response to what has been possibly *the* key question in social theory – the *primacy* of capitalism or industrialism in the transition to modernity. His answer is both, neither, and more: *both*, inasmuch as he wants to use both concepts to argue that the increase in collective power that was made possible by the industrial revolution and by capitalism was such that it revolutionized the other sources of social power, and especially the infrastructural/collective powers of the state; *neither*, in so far as capitalism and the industrial revolution did not fundamentally transform distributive power, and that although industrialism was transnational and uniformly imposed changes on society, it was also adapted by nation-states to their own ends. And *more* than these two concepts are needed since this transition was also

determined: (1) up to 1820, by geopolitical diplomacy and military power which remained in the control of an elite; and (2) thereafter by political power because the state, in the form of the strategy of dominant regimes which controlled it, and by means of its increasing scope and infrastructural power, was central to how the relations between citizens/classes were institutionalized (see 'Ruling Class Strategies and Citizenship', Mann 1988: ch. 7). Thus the state is also gaining infrastructural strength as it becomes democratized by incorporating citizens/classes.

This last argument is also the key to the transition to 'popular modernity'. This transition is a product not of economic but of *political* power, conceived not as 'power over' or despotic power, but 'power through' or infrastructural power. This allows Mann to avoid a one-sidedly economic determinist explanation which relies on the combination of class and power, and a one-sidedly political or 'elite theory' explanation whereby the ruling elite forces social change from above. Further, it allows him to propose that there is variation in the paths to 'popular modernity' – a variety of state forms or state 'crystallizations' – within an overall pattern towards an increase in infrastructural/collective power.

Perhaps 'popular modernity', power from below as opposed to elite power, will thus turn out to be a more important concept than capitalism or industrial society for Mann's theory. If so, it will cement the dominant place of political as opposed to economic power in his social theory, at least on the question of the transition to modernity, and set him apart from most major modern social thinkers – the closest perhaps being (the relatively neglected) Carl Schmitt, whom Mann discusses at length in *Fascists*.

Yet there remains – and this is why the focus on the age of popular modernity (or the transition to modernity/capitalism/industrial society) is so central to an assessment of Mann – a question which leads to a potential criticism: what is the *lever* of this transformation? Mann seems to argue that it is (a) a much longer-term process (at least in the crucial case of England/Britain) reaching back to long before this transition (1993: 214). But then (b) he also does not want to downgrade the revolutionary character of the two industrial revolutions (1993: 94, 597) in enhancing collective power – but in this case, the burden of the explanation lies on science and technology which are extra-social forces (see also Goldstone's chapter in this volume), and part of the traditional explanation of 'industrial society' theorists. Or finally it is (c) a chain of factors – a state with stronger despotic power gained from militarism enables state-led economic development, which allows economic growth, which, in turn, enhances the infrastructural collective power of the state (1993: 251). Yet such a chain of causes, though it comes closest to

Mann's view and may be closest to the truth, fails to satisfy in the sense that it does not allow us to go from history to a theory of society, where theory supplies both the analytical tools as well as an explanation of 'how we got here'. Put differently, this 'chain' puts Mann among the multi-factorialists or multi-causalists like Gellner (1986) or neo-Weberian institutionalists, rather than among theorists of power who identify 'primacy' in the course of history.

Mann often insists that he uses and needs all four sources to explain social change, but his aim is still 'primacy' (Mann, 1986: 3–4). For the long nineteenth century, which is covered in the second volume, this becomes very complex. If there is nevertheless an overall pattern, then, as we have seen, it is the 'tightening' state–society relationship. There is also a broader pattern that can be discerned with the help of his recent series of lectures entitled 'Modernity and Globalization' (2000), which is the shift from elite to popular modernity. With *Fascists* and *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, Mann has now extended both patterns into the twentieth century. He argues that the democratization of the state of 'popular modernity' has a 'dark side', the violence used in the name of 'the people' – in some cases by colonial settlers, but increasingly centred on the state, to suppress and eliminate others who are not part of 'rule by the people'. 'Tightening' and 'caging' can therefore be positive – a democratization of power from below whereby power becomes laterally shared or compromised (even here, there is a negative side – 'others' may need to be displaced or eliminated 'sideways'). Or it can be negative, as when the pressures of war and from below squeeze 'statists' upwards into the tops of their national cages such that they coerce and remove 'others' in the cage below – at the extreme murdering them – or in their aggressive outward expansion. In his *Fascists* and *The Dark Side of Democracy*, political power thus constitutes the most important part of Mann's explanation of the twentieth century's (non-war) atrocities. If political 'caging' and 'popular' democratization are also the master trends – outside war when militarism trumps the other sources – of the third volume, as they are for the nineteenth century and for *Fascists* and *The Dark Side of Democracy*, then it can be anticipated that this volume will go strongly against the congratulatory self-image – the end of history and the global triumph of democracy and markets – of our age.

Overview of the contributions

The volume is divided into four parts. The first two cover Mann's theoretical background, method and the four types of power. In the third part there are three essays that assess Mann's view of the rise of

the West. And in Part IV, there are three contributions which discuss the prospects for analysing contemporary change in the light of Mann's sociology.

Collins sketches how Mann's theory fits in with and advances upon some key findings of contemporary sociology. Mann's central contribution, he says, is to trace how one power network – the state – crystallized more strongly in modern Europe than did the other power networks. This process, for Collins, culminates in today's states as the targets of social movements. Collins anticipates Mann's Volume III in suggesting that today these social movements are not, as in classical social theory and in Mann's second volume, classes and nations, but rather gender, ethnicity, environmentalism, religion and many more. Even in this cacophonous struggle, Collins argues, the key aim of social science must be to continue along the lines Mann suggests: to find the major cleavages in politics-centred struggles that define contemporary social change. Here I would remind the reader of a point I made earlier: that Mann's focus during 'popular modernity' is above all on political power.

Hall begins by contrasting Mann's view with the disenchantment thesis held by Weber and Ernest Gellner, whereby modern society does not allow for all-embracing political ideologies – regrettably for the Nietzschean Weber, thankfully for the Popperian Gellner! Mann's early empirical research on the British working class, Hall points out, made him, too, stay clear of the ideological fervour of the social sciences in the 1970s, and put him close to a pragmatic and reformist version of democratic socialism. But Hall also suggests that Mann underplays the ideological implications of different regimes: socialism, in Hall's view, often took a more statist form than Mann allows, and ideology on the right, rather than being merely technocratic (Mann's view), did in fact have a strong – anti-statist – appeal. Hall worries about Mann's failure to analyse some of the drawbacks of socialism; in Hall's view, entrenching the rights of some social groups may be at the expense of other groups (for example curtailing the rights of immigrants) and may also foment industrial conflict. At the same time, he notes the absence of alternatives to the liberal American post-war political order – even if he also recognizes its short-falls. Hall thus follows Collins' highlighting of state-centred struggles with a different argument: there may be illiberal consequences if state struggles permanently entrench the rights of some social groups to the detriment of others.

The program of the multi-dimensional conflict sociology that Collins advocates, I would argue, is above all Weberian in inspiration, even if Collins also detects the ghost of Marx. The next two contributors concentrate on Mann's method. Kiser, who also argues for a Weberian

sociology, is more interested in method than content. Kiser's preference is for an 'analytical Weberianism' which can steer between a 'verstehen'-based cultural Weberianism and a macro-'structural' Weberianism that gives no room to agency. Kiser's analytical Weberianism meshes with a rational choice agenda in social science, in which the rationally maximizing actor is the basic unit for causal analysis. And while he concedes that Mann's social actors often follow *broadly* rational goals, they do not always do so. For Kiser, then, Mann only partly lives up to the scientific aim of rational choice historical sociology, which is to find causal explanations in the light of pre-specified goals of individual actors.

Bryant, like Kiser, notes that the building blocks of Mann's theory at the micro-level are minimal; actors pursuing their well-being. Yet the main criticisms that have been directed at Mann's method in the past have not attacked these foundations as such, but have rather come from positivist and Marxist epistemology, charging him with too much theory (or too little empiricism) from the positivist side and too little materialism from the side of Marxist theory. Bryant defends him against both charges and points out how theory and evidence discipline each other as much as they can in Mann's historical narratives. Yet he also faults Mann for paying insufficient attention to ideology, using early Christianity as an example. He argues that the beginnings of Christian belief were less uniform and they had a more insecure appeal than Mann allows, and that to cope with this he could have paid more attention in this case to the complex *content* of ideology or culture.

Gorski also wants to put more emphasis on ideological power. To do this, he reviews Mann's explanation of the rise of the West; the normative (ideological) pacification achieved by Christianity in the Middle Ages, the growth of state muscle with military competition from the sixteenth century onwards, and the subsequent increase of the state's infrastructural capacity in the nineteenth century. In place of this, Gorski offers a religion-centred explanation not, as in Weber's case, of economic change, but rather of patterns of state-formation; and more specifically, of religion's society-organizing capacity or Mann's 'infrastructural power'. Further, Gorski argues that ideological power played a role for longer, and more forcefully, than Mann allows, including its entwining with secular ideologies like nationalism, right up into post-war welfare states. Finally, he suggests that many forms of ideology – religion and its substitutes in the form of everyday transcendences and rituals – still play a role today, against Mann's implicit argument, shared by many contemporary social thinkers, that modernization entails secularization.

Hobson and Weiss both also criticize Mann's downplaying of the bottom-up capacity of civil society at the expense of the increasing

top-down capacity of the state. Weiss does this by arguing that the state can gain power from the coordination of economic relations, while Hobson suggests that ‘realist’ power between states can be softened by the civil societies within states. Hobson begins by making the case against the static ‘billiard ball’ logic of realist international relations theory, but he also thinks that Mann shares some of its faults. Geopolitics is too much of a separate arena for Mann, Hobson argues, which consists only of power interests. Hobson’s alternative is to recognize that states sometimes shape the international arena as well as being shaped by it. And like several other contributors, Hobson thinks that Mann pays insufficient attention to ideology, in this case the norms and shifting identities of the actors in the international arena. Still, Hobson thinks that there are considerable payoffs for an international relations theory informed by historical sociology.

Weiss addresses the topic of state power and economic globalization. She highlights Mann’s point that ‘transnational and national interaction has surged together’ (Mann 2000: 44) in the twentieth century, instead of being two zero-sum processes as they are for most others in the debate about globalization. What she criticizes is that Mann still sees the state as constrained by globalization, and proposes instead that states’ enabling role, and especially industrial governance, has grown and made states stronger in the face of globalization. The state has not only become a top-down regulator – Mann’s view – but also in Weiss’s view a coordinator of economic activity which is responsive to civil society. This is an important challenge not only to Mann’s ideas, but also to current thinking about globalizing economic forces.

Poggi challenges Mann’s separation of military power. The political implication of Mann’s argument that Poggi wants to avoid here is that a separate source of military power can override the democratic accountability of the state. This is also an empirical issue: military elites are not separate, he says. They are, with a few isolated empirical – not theoretical – exceptions, subordinate to political elites. Poggi may be suggesting good reasons against separating military power and sticking to the holy trinity of economy, ideology/culture and politics. Yet I cannot help briefly intervening here to argue that there is, to my mind, an unassailable argument in Mann’s sociology for keeping military power separate: first, as Mann shows, the idea that the domination of the South by the North was due to economic exploitation is one that the evidence forces us to abandon (see also O’Brien 1997). It seems that even at the height of colonialism in the late nineteenth century, geopolitical interests far outweighed economic ones. If this is so, then we *must* have military power as a separate source of power to explain this domination, since clearly political power won’t do (the legitimate monopoly of power *within* states), and cultural/ideological

power, as Mann shows in *Modernity and Globalization* and *The Dark Side of Democracy*, also cannot explain the colonialist domination of the South. (It can be added that international relations theory also does not help us here since it cannot explain *systematic* relations of domination. The only international relations theory which *could* explain this domination is world-systems theory, which was ruled out under economic power above.) Logic combined with evidence may therefore force us to treat military power separately – that is, of course, *if* we do not want to abandon the idea of Northern or Western domination altogether.

The political implications of the next section, ‘European Exceptionalism?’, are more oblique, though they are most obvious in Brenner’s Marxist attack. Brenner revisits some key debates in the transition from feudalism to capitalism and restates the case for economic primacy. He argues for the mutual dependence of – or overlap between – the propertied and ruling elites. This ruling class, he argues, was critical to the economic-cum-political transition from feudalism to capitalism. He agrees with Mann on the importance of political power and inter-state competition, but contends that he ignores the economic dimension of this factor. According to Brenner, ‘warfare was, for the lords of medieval Europe, a great machine for economic aggrandizement’. With this argument, he puts economic exploitation at the centre of social change, in contrast with Mann’s (and Tilly’s) emphasis on state-formation and militarism.

Two further chapters challenge Mann’s account of European exceptionalism, Goldstone from a comparative perspective (as we will see in a moment), and Epstein on the European turf itself. In the place where Mann emphasizes the Christian ideological or normative umbrella fostering economic exchange, Epstein stresses trade beyond this normative zone. He also adds a role for religion which Mann overlooks: the corporate form of the early modern church, which ultimately lent itself to the institutionalization of property beyond the religious sphere. He further questions Mann’s argument (though from a different perspective than Brenner’s) that the state’s economic power was driven by military competition. Instead, Epstein argues, there was a delicate balance between the state’s economic and political power such that the most successful states were those that could overcome prisoners’ dilemmas and coordination failures; where elites were not entrenched in zero-sum rent-seeking *and* the state could efficiently gather taxes.

Epstein’s chapter provides an interesting example using rational choice theory in historical sociology. But while Kiser’s chapter in this volume (discussed earlier) advocates rational choice as a method, Epstein’s argument is an application of the method: he charts European states’ ability to extract taxes in terms of ‘transaction cost analysis’ (a concept

that lies broadly within the rational choice paradigm) about the costs of coordinating economic activity by different types of institutions.

For Goldstone, the strength of Mann's method, the focus on networks of power rather than reified 'societies', is also its weakness. Mann must trace these networks over time, rather than being able to compare them synchronically as bounded units. In Goldstone's view, this handicaps Mann's account of the rise of the West: in place of Mann's narrative of England's emergence as the leading edge of power, Goldstone presents evidence that Holland had more impressive economic growth than England up to 1750. Even more importantly, China's economic growth was more powerful and, according to recent scholarship, China also had higher levels of consumption than England up to roughly the same period. The explanation for the breakthrough to modernity must therefore be located after 1800, when a divergence in economic growth, uniquely high in England/Britain, took place. Goldstone thinks that the crucial factor here is knowledge, and in particular the technologies of the steam engine and coal, thus suggesting a further source of social power that must be added to Mann's four-fold schema.

Whatever the role of England/Britain in the rise of the West, its liberal path to modernity has a special place in Mann's theory. Trentmann thinks that Mann treats this case as too top-down, with an old regime elite reluctantly ceding some political power to the middle and later the working classes in the nineteenth century. In correcting this picture, Trentmann does not deny elite power, but he argues that this leaves out pressure from below, which shifted the ground among all political actors, not just the elite. Thus over the course of a series of crises in the nineteenth century, the very terms in which political conflict was negotiated were transformed, a change in the political culture which came to consist of an increasingly well organized and vocal civil society. Again, there are implications for contemporary politics since Trentmann refers to Mann's resigned – almost fatalist and certainly 'determinist' – dissection of the decline of British power. Yet Mann's refusal in his most recent work, *Fascists and Ethnic Cleansing*, to overlook the 'agency' of the perpetrators even if his explanation remains 'structural' is perhaps a sign that, as he gets closer to the present day, he will be able to rectify his relative neglect of our power to shape – rather than be shaped by – our social cages.

Snyder proposes that it is impossible to separate 'is' and 'ought' in the study of ideology. Although he couches his analysis in utilitarian and economic language – supply and demand, competitive advantage, salvation premiums, etc. – he in fact argues that ideology rests on non-utilitarian commitments and constitutes an attempt to surmount practical realities. And while ideology on occasion plays a decisive role in Mann's work,

Snyder thinks that he provides no convincing explanation of why this is so. His own view is that they are successful because groups infused with the force of beliefs are demonstrably stronger than those who are not. Snyder uses a number of examples, especially early Christianity, to illustrate his alternative view of the power of ideology. And while early Christianity is Snyder's main example, there are clearly implications of his view for today's ideologically riven world, with further implications for international relations, Snyder's home discipline.

Laitin takes Mann to task for his main thesis about ethnic cleansing, that 'murderous cleansing is modern, because it is the dark side of democracy' (Mann 2005: 2). In Laitin's view, Mann does not establish this link and in fact often presents evidence that goes directly against it; what Mann often *does* show is that ethnic cleansing is an abomination of the democratization process. Further, Laitin questions whether Mann's identification of genocide as the worst form of murderous violence is justified: this allows Mann to put cases with proportionately fewer killings into a category that is worse than more systematic killings in many instances of warfare, ethnicide and the elimination of enemy political classes. For Laitin, the value of Mann's recent work lies more in his subordinate theses and in empirical accounts of political violence.

Laitin's contribution brings us back to fundamental debates about theory and method. Yet what is remarkable about Mann's reply to his critics is the extent to which the debate remains on the terrain of substantive empirical issues, rather than theoretical or methodological ones – as with so many contemporary debates among social scientists. Put differently, there is much common ground here, and agreement that the way forward is by weighing the evidence. *The Dark Side of Democracy* also leads us back to the heart of today's most serious political conflicts, the civil wars of the post-war period in which all four sources have been blamed as root causes. Mann's focus on the infrastructural power of states in particular (or the lack thereof) will no doubt provide him with the tools to chart the strengthening of twentieth-century democracies as well as their continuing weaknesses and failures. He has synthesized an enormous amount of material to allow historical analysis to stay abreast with contemporary social change. We look forward to his third volume and to continued critical engagement with him as he tracks the sources of social power into the twenty-first century.

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank Dominic Lieven and Patrick O'Brien for helpful comments during the workshop at the LSE where some of the chapters in this volume were first presented. Thanks go also to Odul

Bozkurt for help with arranging the second workshop for the volume at UCLA, and Sophia Bengtsson at Chalmers University for assistance in preparing the final manuscript.

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Part I

Theory, practice, method

2 Mann's transformation of the classic sociological traditions

Randall Collins

Michael Mann's ongoing work is as close to classic sociology for our own day as anything one can find. This is so in several senses. It has the scope of classic themes: the major conditions and processes which shape the relatively stable social structures of each historical period, and propel their changes. Mann's work is also classical in a sense that connects it with what we have come to see as the main stream of macro-sociology; he sets forth that which we have learned from Marx and Weber that is worth preserving, and displays the state of our knowledge on Marxian and Weberian themes. This is not to diminish the considerable originality which is found in Mann. A living classic contains a balance of what is old and what is new; it gives a sense of continuity from the great issues of the past and the concepts that frame them, and a sense of growing intellectual sophistication. Scholarship is a collective enterprise; much of what makes Mann's work a contemporary classic is his exemplary statement of lines of research that have been pursued by many scholars. But this is true of any great classic. Weber was selected out by his successors from a large and sophisticated scholarly community doing related work in what we would now call historical sociology; he too was a packager and crystallizer of the work of that larger community.

The main analytical innovations in the later twentieth century have come from the part of the scholarly field where there is a strong admixture of Weberian and Marxian concepts in the research enterprise of historical sociology. We have been in a new Golden Age of historical sociology from the mid-1960s onwards, centred on such topics as the comparative sociology of revolutions (Barrington Moore, Skocpol, Goldstone, and others); social movements (Tilly, McAdam, Tarrow, and others); the development of the modern state (Mann and others); the capitalist world economy (Wallerstein, Abu-Lughod, Frank, Chase-Dunn, Arrighi, and others). The common focus on these world-determining, centrally important phenomena has brought Marxian and Weberian scholars into fruitful interchange, and into blending many conceptions.

In the last third of the twentieth century, a hybrid Marx/Weber conflict sociology came to dominate a large field of scholarship. Its home ground has been historical sociology, the wide-ranging kind of history that I have called 'macro-history'; in contrast to the more limited specializations of many disciplinary historians, historical sociologists have used the wide scope of long-term change, and the leverage of comparison among partly similar but differing world regions, to build a general theory. A common ground among Marx and Weber has proven fruitful: that examining conflicting social interests is the best way to understand the patterns of social change; and that stable patterns of social structure exist when those conflicts are demobilized, held latent or in tension, by the dominance of one set of interests over others. These patterns of conflict in Mann's terminology are called 'sources of power'; their stable formation in a particular historical period are called 'crystallizations'.

In what follows, I will review Mann's work as our contemporary standard of knowledge on four points: the expansion of class conflict theory into the four-dimensional model of economic, ideological, military and political power networks; globalizing the unit of analysis and dissolving the bounded society into a set of overlapping territorial networks; the military-centred theory of the modern tax-extracting and society-penetrating state; and the state-centred theory of conflict mobilization in the modern era.

From Marxian class conflict to Weberian three-dimensional stratification to Mann's four power networks

Mann's big synthetic work, *The Sources of Social Power*, has the feel of a contemporary classic, because it gives perhaps the best current statement of what sociologists have developed from the synthesis of the Marxian and Weberian traditions. By the 1970s, there was already considerable convergence between the camps that stratification has three aspects; Marxian theorists were largely concerned with the issue of the relative autonomy of ideological and political structures which made for flexibility in defence of class interests, for instance by the politically motivated reforms of the welfare state which preserved rampant market capitalism from itself. Mann's early work dealt with just these issues; his 1970 paper 'The social cohesion of liberal democracy' demonstrated that the upper and upper-middle classes are much more mobilized politically than the working and lower classes, and thus are ideologically committed to democracy without sacrifice of their class interests.

Mann built explicitly on the Marx/Weber synthesis which treated all three dimensions as versions of struggle over social power: i.e. the left-Weberian

position which takes all forms of stratification as extensions or analogies to class conflict. Mann's major innovations were two: to split the political dimension into two further dimensions; and to conceptualize each dimension as a social network. Mann refers to this as the IEMP model, a convenient acronym for Ideological, Economic, Military and Political. Turning these back into the Weberian terminology, we have economic class, status group as cultural or ideological communities, and the dimension of 'party' or political power split into military power and political power *per se*. As Mann notes, although Weber defined the ideal type of the state as an organization monopolizing legitimate political force upon a territory, this is an abstraction from history; much of the time states lacked a monopoly of force, and military units of marauders, *ad hoc* coalitions, rebels, or bandits could build up outside states and shape new ones; states sometimes crystallized from military organization but were not coextensive with it. By the same token, the political dimension of power has its own organizational locus and its own forms of action; we get a more refined theory of politics when we separate it out for special consideration.

Like Weber at his best, Mann does not make these distinctions merely for the sake of taxonomic clarification; they are working tools by which he builds an *histoire raisonnée*, a narrative history of social institutions. Mann is more of a historical sociologist than Weber, in the sense that Mann shows the sequences by which the structures of power emerged in world history, and what went into their specific blends and crystallizations in particular places and times. Weber, by contrast, was primarily a comparativist using historical materials; although the comparisons are meant to contribute to explaining the crucial divergence in world history which gave rise to modern capitalism, Weber rarely gives much of an account of how processes of change actually worked themselves out. (The main exception to this is in *Ancient Judaism* (Weber 1952), which gives more of a sense of the series of political struggles that shaped Judaic religion than Weber does for any of his other studies of the world religions.) Mann thus gives more of a payoff to the Weberian style; whereas Weber provided a toolbox for analysing world history, Mann actually does the historical analysis.

Mann's move to separate military and political dimensions opens the way for a more systematic theory of both, and of their interaction. Geopolitical relations among states now come into their own. There has been a tradition of geopolitical analysis, to be sure, since the turn of the twentieth century; but it was for a long time a distinct, even segregated speciality. The nationalist and bellicose ideological predilections of some of its earlier practitioners gave geopolitics a nasty reputation in liberal and left circles; and even after the analysis of military 'international relations'

or 'interstate relations' became respectable in political science departments after mid-century, geopolitical research remained largely distinct from sociology, even though it had an undertone of resonance with Weberian historical sociologists. Mann's elevation of military power to a distinct dimension of the expanded Weberian model is a signal of the legitimation of geopolitical theory. The modern state developed from the ramifications of the military revolution of early modern times; this shows that the importance of the military involves not only the external relations among states – their geopolitics – but also the internal structuring which happens on a state's territory as it builds infrastructure to support its military forces. The sphere of politics, independent of the military, grows historically because of the institutionalization of the Weberian, force-monopolizing territorial state. As the state develops an administrative and tax-extracting apparatus, it becomes a target for social groups who attempt to control it; the state itself becomes a prize to be captured, and a tool to be used for the agendas of all politically mobilized groups. Thus the sphere of politics, which Mann has pulled out for consideration separate from military power, is emergent, increasingly autonomous from military power; this happens in an historical sequence in which military configurations are the crucial first steps.

Here is a further significance in the fact that Weber's 'Class, Status and Party' was a subsection within his chapter on 'Political Communities'. For Weber, classes, status groups, and 'parties' or political factions are all contenders for control of the state; one could define politics narrowly, but in an historically useful way for the modern era, as action to get control of the state apparatus, either as an end in itself or in order to use it to further one's ideologies and interests. But as Mann shows, only after the historical rise of the military-centred state could political interest groups of this sort become mobilized to contend over it. By separating the dimensions of military and political power, Mann generalizes them to lines of action which can occur in all historical periods and whether or not the state in any specific sense actually exists. As a result, we can see how various forms of power create structures, as well as operating within existing structures. Weber's analysis, with its tendency towards comparative statics, in Mann's hands becomes fluid and dynamic.

Each of the IEMP dimensions is a social network: which is to say, a chain of connections linking people together. One advantage of this conception is that power is never free-floating; we are never tempted to treat it merely as an abstraction, somehow existing inherently in the 'system', or in the 'logic' of social form, as in the tendency for scholars influenced by semiotic post-Marxism to talk about the logic of capitalist reproduction, or of feminist theorists to talk about the logic of patriarchy.

Networks do not have logics; they are real connections among people, empirically observable as to where they spread out in space. It is always possible, in principle, to examine the shape of a network of power; ideological power, for example, is not simply at one time in history the workings of religious belief, but has a structure of priests, monks, missionaries, people participating in religious ceremonies. Similarly with economic power; this is not simply a matter of the abstract logic of capitalism, but can be studied as the networks which exist among entrepreneurs, merchants, customers; among upstream and downstream flows through business organizations; and as specific circuits of capital which exchange particular currencies in particular kinds of transaction. Mann's conception of power networks, in the case of economic networks, resonates with the new economic sociology promoted through such work as Harrison White (2002), Viviana Zelizer (1994), and others. Networks are inherently processual; they exist as long as and to just the degree that action flows through them. They are emergent, but also ephemeral; they come into existence, expand by adding new links and intensifying the flow through them, but also contract, die down, fade out. In current economic sociology, markets (which economists theorize as following an abstract logic of competition) are seen more realistically as webs of connections through which non-competitive niches are established, regions of profits are constructed and sometimes defended against intruders. Mann's conception of economic power networks thus meshes with another currently flourishing theoretical research enterprise. Economic sociologists are building a distinctive, empirically grounded theory of how economic networks operate; connecting this with Mann's conception promises a way of seeing how the dynamics of economic networks interacts with the other three kinds of power networks: ideological, military and political.

Globalizing the unit of analysis

The concept of power networks leads us to another respect in which Mann's work exemplifies the leading conceptions of contemporary scholarship. There is a strong tendency to dissolve boundaries, to see structures as fluid, contingent, or at least historical constructions. Mann makes this abundantly clear in the case of the state. States in the Weberian sense, monopolizing force over a territory with clearly marked boundaries, came into being gradually between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries; earlier states were often a thin layer of military aristocrats, moving from place to place, maintaining alliances through feudal ties or dynastic marriages. Even the more centrally organized states that existed from time to time (the late Roman empire; some Chinese

dynasties) had a thin layer of bureaucracy that interfered little with local powers. Boundaries and jurisdictions of states were generally vague. In still earlier periods, proto-states consisted in ceremonial centres which sometimes amassed military as well as ideological power; but prehistoric peoples repeatedly evaded these crystallizing power centres by migrating away, as Mann shows in one of the stellar chapters of the first volume of *The Sources of Social Power*. The construction of states with boundaries, and with identities of people inside them as belonging to a particular state, occurred only because of special historical conditions (which we will come to below).

The example of states as contingent, historical constructions is important for social theory because it underlies a major scholarly misconception up through the mid-twentieth century. The unit of analysis was typically and unreflectively taken to be the 'society', a bounded system with a shared identity, culture, and economic and political institutions. The 'society' was a concept abstracted from the nation-state, the result of successful state-building culminating in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Functionalist and cultural anthropologists projected it onto tribal societies, disregarding or minimizing their relationships with other tribes; nationalist historians, even in parts of the world where states were clearly riven with ethnic and other divisions, projected the ideal backwards in picking out a clear channel of national development leading up to the unified society even if it were still a future project.

Mann's conception of power networks provides a way of reconceptualizing the units that social scientists work with. It is not useful to go to the opposite extreme, after the fashion of some poststructuralist thinkers, declaring all structures to be mere labels of equal dubiousness; for in some historical periods units do become more bounded, not only more state-like but more society-like, with sharper cultural identities, more segregated economic institutions, a more intense circuit of local political action. The issue is to be able to see the scope of the social unit as a variable. Mann solves this problem by treating the four kinds of power networks as of varying and overlapping geographical scope. Each network spreads out in space, and has its own intensity of flows and exchanges. But the different networks need not have the same extensiveness, nor the same intensity.

Mann discusses this problem in posing the question of what is the leading or pattern-setting power network at a particular historical epoch. In the first millennium CE, ideological power networks were generally the most extensive and most dynamic, i.e. religious missionaries spread out widely beyond the boundaries of existing military and political agglomerations: Christian missionaries spreading into northern Europe,

and Buddhist monks spreading from India into China, and later into Japan, and within those places from royal courts and capital cities into the countryside; Islamic movements spreading, at one period along with military forces, but later in peaceful movements of Sufis and other popular religious organizations. This should not be regarded simply as the spread of belief, since indeed belief in these periods was often shallow, compromising and syncretist; more fatefully, it was the spread of ideological organization, of the structure of monasteries, lay religious orders, patterns of spreading rituals and texts, and the linking of these together into long-distance communities bound by pilgrimages and contributions.

We could multiply such examples. Some parts of the world, such as India, were much more structured by religious networks than by their regional and usually ephemeral state structures. One way of interpreting Weber's theory of religious influences on the growth of capitalist market economy is to see this as the development of religious networks which expanded their material component into a market economy; at the point where the economic character of the exchanges came to outweigh the religious exchanges – an event which I have argued took place several times in world history, in medieval Christian Europe, as well as in Buddhist China and Japan (Collins 1999) – a large-scale economic network cut loose from the ideological network, ushering in a different kind of leading edge of power and a different dynamism of historical change. One of the things we see from this illustration is that some historical power networks are larger and more expansive than others; but also that the leading network provides a way for other networks to piggyback upon it, to follow its geographical expansion, and at some points in time to become autonomous from it, outstripping the earlier power network in scope and dynamism.

What then is a 'society'? Better to say, what is it that sociologists, historians, and other scholars are studying? It is the shifting networks of military, political, economic and cultural action across the world landscape, and their degree of overlap. World-system theorists, like Chase-Dunn and Hall (1997), have been studying these processes in a similar way, looking at what they call (with a neo-Marxian tone) bulk goods networks (economic), prestige goods networks (ideological), political networks and geopolitical networks. There are considerable variations in patterns of relationship among such networks, but some generalizations also are emerging. Among these are the conditions which allow one network to break out of local bounds set by other types of networks – where religious networks can leapfrog the economy; and conversely where one type of network is a facilitator for the expansion of another. In the contemporary world, we see this in the expansion of ideological

networks of popular entertainment culture flowing from a few world production centres into mass world distribution; here a cultural network is also a component of the global economy, selling cultural products.

Mann and other scholars have documented that so-called globalization is not a distinctively recent process mainly characteristic of the late twentieth century. Globalization or world-system has always been a central process throughout history, in the sense that local units of social organization are typically structured 'from the outside in' by their relationship with long-distance networks of one kind or another. The problem isn't to explain the global networks so much as to explain the conditions which determine the kinds of local units crystallizing within them. There is no simple trend towards omni-globalization, since the predominance of long-distance processes have at various points in time shifted towards more intense, locally bounded units. Here states have been crucial, and are likely to continue to be so; precisely because modern states crystallized as organizations marshalling an escalating level of military resources, they had to penetrate deeply into local communities, with the result that they mobilized cultural and political networks that reinforced the focus upon the bounded state. Modern states generated a very strong zone of overlap, or coincidence, among cultural and political networks with units of military action; and although economic networks have often overlapped these states as parts of a world economy – indicating that the capitalist economy is less locally bounded than politics – states remain very engrossing centres for social action. Political mobilization is the most immediately practical way of trying to get what one wants; it generates high levels of emotional commitment because it shapes collective antagonisms, whether directed towards domestic rivals or foreign enemies; and these political mobilizations make people identify as cultural communities, thus countering the trends of the world cultural economy. Military links separate as well as connect; a geopolitical network is in an analytical sense causally connected together, but its outcomes often are to keep local state units tightly bounded and in place.

Even in a palpably global economy, and with a great deal of cultural flows across state borders, state units are too important as centres of action for them to fade away. The particular states which exist, of course, can change their forms; the European Union may well become a powerful federation, which given the right geopolitical conditions could conceivably become a strong state superseding the activities and loyalties of the older states which made it up. But these are changes in the distribution of borders among networks, not in the nature of the beast. There remains the potential for all of the different power networks to expand, contract and overlap in various ways, into the foreseeable historical future. But a

crystallized state, with its local overlap and mutual reinforcement of several if not all power networks, is too powerful an attractor of social action, too useful as an organizational resource, to be easily superseded. Whatever comes after, if anything does, is bound to have some state-like characteristics.

The rise of the military-centred, tax-extracting, society-penetrating state

The fully fledged ideal type of the force-monopolizing territorial state gradually developed from 1500 in the West, although there have been variations along this continuum elsewhere in world history. Mann is one of the spearheads of a movement of contemporary scholarship (along with Tilly 1990; Parker 1988; and others) focusing on the military revolution which drastically increased the size and expense of armed forces. State organization began to grow in order to extract resources to support current military expenses and past debts, above all by creating a revenue-extraction apparatus. This was the pathway towards bureaucratization and centralization. State penetration into society brought a series of effects in economic, political and cultural spheres. State apparatus now could increasingly regulate the economy, provide infrastructure, compel education and inscribe the population as citizens in government records.

Mann's account of the rise of the modern state is congruent with Weber's theory of the rise of bureaucracy. Considered in Weberian terms and on the level of organization, the rise of modernity is best characterized, not as a move from feudalism to capitalism, but from the patrimonial household to bureaucratic organization. What Weber called patrimonial organization exists where the basic unit of society is the household, and larger structures are built up as networks of links among households. It is important to note that the household mode of organization is not the same thing as the family mode of organization, although they are related. The household typically had at its core a family, the head of household with his wife (or wives) and children, perhaps with some other relatives; and thus property and authority were hereditary. But households could never be very large if the only people they included were family members. Patrimonial households were full of pseudo-familistic relationships; a household of the upper classes would include servants, retainers, guards, guests, hostages and others, all supported from the household economy, and all expected to provide some resource: work, loyalty or military force. An important house contained within it enough armed force to be powerful; it was a fortified household. Links to other households of lesser or greater power constituted the political

structure of the society; under certain legal arrangements, these might be called properly 'feudal', but a variety of other structures were possible. The economy too was organized in patrimonial households or their linkages; the labour force consisted of servants and apprentices under familistic protection and discipline rather than independent wage relationships. To refer to a great 'house' was both literal and metaphorical; the aristocracy and the great burghers or merchants were the possessors of the largest household units with the most retainers.

The rise of bureaucracy was the dismantling of the patrimonial household. Workplace was separated from home, private force was superseded by professional military and police units belonging to the state. The physical separation among buildings where production, consumption, politics and administration took place was also the creation of the divide between public and private spheres. Bureaucracy was the creation of offices separate from the persons who held them, the creation of a sphere of interaction apart from family ties and pseudo-familistic relationships of loyalty and subordination. The impersonality of bureaucratic organization depends upon paperwork, codifying activities in written rules and keeping count of performance in files and records. Bureaucracy is thus the source of modern ideologies: the rule of law, fairness, justice, impartiality; the previous practices of loyalty to the patrimonial household, and the consumption of organizational property became condemned as nepotism and corruption. Bureaucracy is the source of individualism since the unit of accounting and responsibility is the individual who can be appointed, promoted, moved from one position to another, paid, reprimanded and dismissed, all with reference only to a personal dossier rather than family and household connections.

Weber's explanation of the transition from patrimonial to bureaucratic organization has usually been interpreted as a series of material preconditions (existence of writing, long-distance transportation, a monetary system, etc.) or as a functionalist argument that bureaucracy arises because it is the most efficient way to coordinate large-scale and complex activities. Mann provides a more dynamic and better-rounded historical picture of the process. The state is a project, an attempt to control and coordinate force in as definite a manner as possible. Bureaucratization was a move in the struggle between whoever was the paramount lord at any particular moment and his allies and rivals among the other great patrimonial households. A crucial condition was the geopolitical configuration. Decentralized chiefdoms and hereditary feudal lineages raised less military resources for their paramount lords and thus tended to be conquered, or were forced to imitate the bureaucratizing manners of the more successful states. Dynastic states proved geopolitically weak

because farflung marriage ties produced scattered states, in effect subject to the effects of logistical overextension. History of course is more complicated than a simple winnowing out of non-bureaucratic states by bureaucratic ones; resource advantage is not the only geopolitical principle, and some states favoured by marchland positions might survive with more quasi-patrimonial structures (as Britain did down through the nineteenth century); and bureaucratizing states might nevertheless fail to expand their territorial power because of logistical overextension. Nevertheless, the long-run trend is towards the victory of the bureaucratizers. The successive waves of the military revolution were steps in the development of bureaucracy, first within the military itself (especially logistically intensive branches such as artillery), then in the revenue-extraction service. State penetration was largely bureaucratization at the expense of the patrimonial household. Extensive market capitalism and especially its industrial form prospered under particular versions of state penetration and military mobilization; in this way bureaucracy spread from government into the economic sector; and this in turn fed back into still further government bureaucracy.

The mobilization of modern social conflict

The process of state penetration into society, in Mann's terms, which is also the Weberian shift from patrimonial households to bureaucracy, via the intermediate phase of patrimonial bureaucracy, made possible modern mass politics: ideologically, it fostered the conception of the individual's rights to democratic representation and legal status apart from the jurisdiction of the household head; structurally, it made it possible for workers, women and youth to mobilize in their own places of assembly and their own cultural and political movements. Overt class conflict became possible in the modern era because penetration by the revenue-extracting state created a centralized arena for political action; a complementary reason was that class and other conflicts were mobilized by being freed from the constraints of patrimonial household organization (a point also developed by Tilly 1978; 1995).

State penetration mobilized people's collective identities into social movements operating at a national level: in part because the state itself now constituted a visible target for demands from below; in part because state penetration provided the mobilizing resources of communication, transportation and consciousness-raising. State penetration thus fostered both its own support and its domestic opposition; as Mann has demonstrated, both nationalism and class conflict were mobilized as part of the same process. The modern state became a breeding-ground for social

movements; and whenever a social movement has been successful, it has institutionalized its victories by creating new laws which are administered by the bureaucratic state.

Social movements became possible in the modern era in a way that they were not possible before the rise of the modern state. The nearest equivalent to social movements in a society organized around patrimonial households would have been religious movements; sometimes these had political ramifications, but in general they could only be aimed at attacking or reforming existing religious centres, or at setting up new religious centres; or sometimes such religious movements took the form of proselytizing groups spreading religious networks further into the hinterlands. Such religious movements typically connected more patrimonial households into a religious network; or drew out a few individuals to leave their households and become full-time religious specialists, usually by becoming monks living in their own self-contained communal households.

The modern era is a time of social movements, ranging from electoral party politics through single-purpose reform and protest movements, and out into revolutionary, breakaway utopian, and lifestyle movements. We live in an era of social movements because state penetration and the dissolving of the patrimonial household makes individuals available to be mobilized, without having to break away from constraining social structures on the level of everyday life. Unlike premodern monks or religious proselytizers, individuals do not have to radically break away from 'the world' of everyday life in order to participate in social movements; for most people, these are part-time activities that break no social ties and challenge no social authorities that live in close proximity to them. Consider the contrast with premodern households where servants, younger sons, and women, would have had little chance to participate in a conflictual collective activity mobilizing others of their own position, and apart from the full participation of the household and the community in which it was embedded.

Mann shows that all the major political movements were mobilized at the same time and by the same process. Class conflict movements and nationalist movements often got in each other's way, and sometimes fought each other violently, as in the left/right struggles of the early twentieth century; yet both were equally modern movements, reflecting complementary aspects of modern social organization. The rise of the bounded, population-inscribing, society-penetrating state could become an object of group loyalty, at the same time that it mobilized classes into a national arena where they could fight to subdue their class enemies and to seize the state apparatus to carry out their reforms. In the late twentieth century and into the next, these forms of group mobilization have not

been superseded, but they have been joined by many more movements: race and ethnicity (construed in various ways), gender, sexual preference, student, environmentalist, animal rights, anti- and pro-religious movements. All these operate under the umbrella of the overarching, society-penetrating state, and thus make an appeal to the same large public consciousness and to state enforcement of their demands.

This is why the late twentieth century has the character of political gridlock; there are too many movements, cutting across each other in too many ways for grand victorious coalitions to emerge; and even the attempts at grand protest coalitions (e.g. the 'rainbow coalition') are artificial constructs with little coherence. If we add into the mix the various kinds of entertainment movements which attract people's loyalties and enthusiasms, it is apparent that contemporary society is both highly mobilized, and in some sense highly conflictual, yet lacking in clear lines of politically organized conflict. A high degree of mobilization along multiple lines produces a situation which is not exactly static – indeed viewed locally in close detail there is always considerable ferment – but in which at the aggregate level conflict groups tend to cancel each other out. In trying to characterize this situation, it is not surprising that many observers have adopted the terminology of 'postmodernism', of a world of infinite perspectives, without grand narratives of historical change. The nihilistic epistemology that sometimes goes along with this rhetoric is oblivious to a rather clear sociological picture on the level of what has brought about this situation. It is not because we live in a postmodern society that there is a high level of group mobilization, resulting in a cacophony of ideological voices and for the most part blocking each other on the level of coherent political action. This high level of mobilization of conflict groups is a direct extension of the main political trend of modernization, the continuing penetration of state into society pulling individuals into framing their conflicts at the level of the largest public arena. That arena has become increasingly crowded.

Big dramatic confrontations, like the showdown of class war that Marxians once envisioned coming up on the horizon, are rare, not because economic class conflict isn't real, but because it is just one of many possible lines of conflict which become mobilized. The story that Mann tells is in a sense a continuation of the story of class conflict; but the later chapters of the story are not the victory of the working class (or even its defeat) that Marx would have comprehended. They are closer to what is implied in Weber's additional chapters, that conflicts go on in several dimensions. Yet Weber still has a rather tidy conception of class, status and party, which can indeed on occasion mutually reinforce each other. The chapters that Mann adds, nearly a century later, tell us that the main