1   Introduction: the IEMP model and its critics

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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.

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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

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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 des-
potic 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 auton-
omous 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 pro-
fesses 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

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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 net-
works 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
statists' 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 trans-
cending its borders. Again, we see ideological networks, some sociospa-
tially 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 tech-
nology 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

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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 shortfalls. 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