1 Introduction

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This volume brings together critical assessments of Michael Mann's sociology. It focuses on Volumes 3 and 4 of his major work, *The Sources of Social Power*, which cover the late nineteenth century to the present day. It is a follow-up to an earlier volume, *An Anatomy of Power: The Social Theory of Michael Mann* (co-edited by John A. Hall; 2006), which was put together before Mann's Volumes 3 and 4 had been published. The earlier volume was therefore in a sense premature. In this one, it has become possible to take stock of Mann's 'Sources', though he is now working on a fifth volume where he will reflect on his project. But apart from these further reflections, we can now examine his project as a whole and his analysis of our present condition in particular.

Mann's work does not need much by way of introduction. There are already several overviews of his work. Smith's essay (Chapter 3) puts Mann's 'Sources' into the context of similar macro-historical projects, and I have also provided an introduction to his sociology (Schroeder 2007). Further, there are essays on Mann's background (Hall 2006) and interviews with Mann which add some of the biographical and academic contexts to his work (Mann 2011; and the video and text of an interview with Alan McFarlane at www.alanmacfarlane.com/ancestors/mann.htm; last accessed 20 October 2014). Mann (2013) has himself described how 'Sources' developed over the course of time. Chapter 2, by Heiskala, also gives an excellent account of how Mann's project has progressed from the first volume to the fourth. Here, it can be added that Mann reflects on the fact that, unlike in Volume 2, where he pulled together much data, especially about changes in state expenditure, this is not needed for his two volumes about the twentieth century: there is such an abundance of data as we get closer to the present that the main task is rather to make sense of these data.

Various themes and criticisms emerged in the 'Anatomy' volume that are worth briefly recapitulating here by way of setting the scene for this volume. One is the relative neglect of ideological power. In the 'Anatomy' volume, this criticism was made in relation to early

Christianity (by Joseph Bryant), to the role played by religion in the rise of the modern state (by Phil Gorski) and to Islamist fundamentalism and other ideologically or normatively driven movements (Jack Snyder). There is a also a different aspect to the neglect of ideology which was highlighted by Jack Goldstone, which is the absence of scientific knowledge as a factor in the rise of the West (a criticism that I repeat here). But it is also possible to overplay this criticism: Mann has always resisted the temptation to invoke free-floating ideology, ideology without the backing of organizational capabilities, as a factor in social change. His position in this respect goes against the grain of much contemporary sociological analysis that focuses on culture and identity, but Mann's position is also a useful brake on seeing short-term cultural and ideological shifts – which tend to wax and wane – as indications of larger important changes.

One shortcoming of the 'Anatomy' volume that has already been mentioned was that it could only deal with history up to the First World War, even though two books outside the 'Sources' sequence, *Fascists* (2004) and *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (2005), had been published. Only one essay in the 'Anatomy' volume, Laitin's, directly engaged with Mann mainly on a predominantly twentieth-century topic, and he criticized Mann's association between democracy and ethnic cleansing citing counter-examples. Critical assessment of Mann's work on 'Fascists' is also a gap in the current volume. Further, there is still little engagement (apart from Malesevic's essay in this volume) with military power, which is often left to other disciplines like international relations and war or strategic studies. Yet these disciplines treat war in isolation from underlying social changes. This is also true for historians of militarism (van Creveld 2008), who treat war and the preparation for war as a separate topic without integrating it with broader social changes. Mann is therefore among the few sociologists who has given us an account of how the two world wars in particular caused major changes, such as the extension (and sometimes a regress in the extension) of citizenship rights and the economic rise and decline of nations. Still, the interplay between economic and military fortunes is covered in many chapters of 'Sources', including chapters on the First and Second World War (Chapters 5 and 14) in Volume 3.

The global purview of Mann's analysis was still missing in the first two volumes which focused on the 'great powers'. Nowadays, global history has become a major focus of historians, particularly in synoptic works about the long nineteenth century by Bayly (2003) and Osterhammel (2014). But such a global purview is still missing among historians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Yet scholars from any discipline who are interested in the shape of the twentieth century and in understanding

the present in a longer-term perspective will now need to engage with his work. This is particularly so since the weakness of other sociological works about globalization is their thinness concerning longer-term patterns (Walby 2009; Martell 2010). Other treatments of globalization tend to be highly theoretical without being grounded in history (Giddens 1990). Mann has resisted the label 'theory', and, apart from adopting a comparative historical approach, he does not practice a particular method (but see Lange 2013 for a state-of-the-art overview). Whether historical sociology is currently due for a revival is still open to question (Lachmann 2013). Mann's reflections in the concluding chapter of Volume 4 about how history enables us to recognize the constraints and possibilities we face are revealing, even if he also notes the limits of social scientific knowledge in this respect.

With this, we can turn to the present volume, which is organized as follows: Part I contains assessments of Mann's 'big picture' and also locates him in the landscape of contemporary historical sociology. Part II considers each of the four sources of power in turn, and then my own essay then interrogates how Mann sees the relation between the four powers, particularly in the recent trajectory of globalization. Part III tackles the question of American exceptionalism, which echoes the discussion of European exceptionalism that was a major theme in the 'Anatomy of Power' volume: both are important in different ways for the question of whether there was – and is – a 'Western' model of social development. The final part of the book contains three essays on empire, which Mann himself regards as one of the three master processes governing the twentieth century, alongside the rise and growing dominance of the nation-state and capitalism. The three essays in Part IV can also be read as reflections on how American empire is in keeping with how empires have functioned throughout large swathes of history – or if the American empire is exceptional.

Against this background, we can turn to the individual contributions: Part I, 'History and Theory', contains three chapters that put Mann's work into context and provides overall assessments. Chapter 2, by Risto Heiskala, not only summarizes and offers a commentary on all four volumes, but also urges Mann to engage with other contemporary theorists of power such as Michel Foucault and Bruno Latour. Heiskala also wants Mann to expand his ideas about gender, identity and nature and the environment which would bring his work into dialogue with a wider array of contemporary sociological thinking. Chapter 3, by Dennis Smith, contextualizes Mann's work differently, situating him in the tradition of the macro-historical sociology of Skocpol, Moore and Tilly and others (see also Collins 1999). Smith also counter-poses Mann's ideas with

those of Marxist world-systems theory, particularly as expounded by Wallerstein, which is arguably the main rival project to Mann's on the left, as well as with Gary Runciman's evolutionist theory, another theoretical tradition which has recently been revived.

Chapter 4, by Derlugian, Earle and Reno, also provides a long-term evolutionary perspective on Mann's work, though in this case an anthropological one (instead of Runciman's socio-biological approach). The authors argue that leading strata (or 'chiefs') have always been able to evade the strictures of lesser powers throughout the course of history and especially so in the twentieth century with great increases in the strength of bureaucracies and information technologies. They point out that even if these chiefs have always been 'personalistic', they will in the future be counteracted by the drive towards greater egalitarianism which has, during long-term social development, continued to gain strength as an ideological impulse 'from below'.

Part II takes a different approach, interrogating Mann's project through the lens of the different types of power. John Hall (Chapter 5) begins with politics. He has engaged with Mann's project from the beginning and in his own work developed a comparative historical sociology that presents a liberal alternative to Mann's more radical views. As Hall points out, there is often more agreement than disagreement between them, but in my view this makes his chapter all the more interesting as it highlights their somewhat different viewpoints on contemporary social democracies and the prospects of more and less liberal regimes. Liberalism, or rather economic neo liberalism, is also at the centre of Chapter 6, by Monica Prasad, which challenges Mann's account of neo liberalism and the financial crisis of 2008: what, she asks, can Mann's general theory of power and his macro-approach contribute to our understanding of a specific event that a more economics-based explanation of just this event or turning point cannot? Not much, she answers, and she proceeds to show how Mann does not really depart from the specific explanations of the crisis by economists, including neoliberal ones, whose explanations we might expect to differ quite substantially from Mann's.

One of the unique contributions of Mann's sociology is that he treats military power on par with economic, political and ideological power. Since Volumes 3 and 4 cover two world wars and the major revolutions of the twentieth century, he can explain better than most social scientists why wars and militarism have been such a decisive influence on social change. Siniša Malešević (Chapter 7) thinks that Mann's account of this macro-role of military power leaves out the solidarity of small units among soldiers on the one hand and the role of military ideology in everyday life outside of times of war on the other. He also points to the

rise of technocracy and surveillance in the twentieth century, which plays a minor role in Mann's writings.

David Priestland (Chapter 8) levels a different charge against Mann, and one that has been made before (in the 'Anatomy' volume), which is that he downplays the role of ideology or culture at various turning points covered in Volumes 3 and 4. Among Priestland's examples are the different elite factions during the final years of the Soviet Union, as well as how financiers and economic experts advocated different responses to the financial crisis of 2008, including a right-wing interpretation of the crisis which has remained intact in the several years since it took place. Chapter 9, by Ralph Schroeder, then gives an account of one of the main themes of Volumes 3 and 4, globalization, in order to challenge him on the absence of science and technology as a separate source of power (this is also done in Heiskala's Chapter 2) and about how globalization reinforces or goes against the overlap between the four (or, in my view, three) sources of social power.

A number of commentators have pointed out that approximately a third of Mann's last two volumes are concerned with the United States, domestically and abroad. In Part III, 'American Exceptionalism', two papers confront Mann's version of this. Liliana Riga (Chapter 10) revisits an argument that has been made a number of times: that the reasons for America's 'Sonderweg' are the strong divisions by ethnic groups that outweighed the formation of strong economic class identities. Riga develops a new position in this debate, since she asks how ethnic immigrants were 'americanized' by the authorities and how their immigration status for the most part prevented them from union participation and participation in elections, denying them citizenship rights. Mann's account of the period in question, the late nineteenth century up to the New Deal, largely leaves out ethnicity, focusing instead on class compromises, a serious omission in Riga's view.

Edwin Amenta (Chapter 11) picks up this argument for the New Deal, which is often seen as the crux of the exceptionalism debate. Here, Mann argues that the United States did, in fact, achieve the build-up of a welfare state at this time that compares well with others. This nascent American welfare state only shrank for different reasons later, including that the economy picked up strongly during the Second World War and that the high unemployment rates of the 1930s were reversed (weakening pressures 'from below'). Amenta argues instead that the reasons for the development of the American welfare state are more to do with policy elites and the political opportunities they had at the time, which allowed these elites to shape the domestic agenda despite opposition. However, they could only do so episodically and slowly within a political system as

fragmented as the American one, unlike in the more centralized political systems in Europe. The different implications of these views for the contemporary possibilities to strengthen American welfare – notably President Obama's push for greater health care coverage – are in plain view in this debate about America's past (as are, perhaps more obliquely, the implications of Chapter 10 for the current debate about immigration).

Part IV, finally, is devoted to the role of empire, which is a shift in Volumes 3 and 4, because empire is much more central than in the first two volumes. This shift entails that Mann must revisit, in Volume 3, the period covered in 'Sources' Volume 2 (pre–First World War) to go back to the origins of (particularly British and American) empire in the late nineteenth century. Mann's view of history at the most macro-level, including in Volumes 1 and 2, charted the rise and decline of great powers. Yet his focus on external forces is quite different from conventional comparative historical sociology, which traditionally compares and contrasts the status of 'great power' nation-states (not empires) as units. Yet John Darwin (Chapter 12) wants to further amend Mann's account of empires by noticing the connections between imperial centres and their subject populations, including in terms of ideologies which travelled in both directions. In doing this, he also raises the question of whether the label empire can be applied to the contemporary United States at all, particularly as the American ideology has often been an anti-colonial one.

Mann, uniquely for a sociologist, sees American empire not as driven by economic forces, but rather primarily by military and ideological ones. This controversial view is challenged by Arne Westad and John Ikenberry in different ways: Westad (Chapter 13) argues that even if the Soviets and their empire turned out to be, post facto, less of a threat than the United States made it out to be (as Mann also argues), this does not mean that the threat was not a real one. The competition for control between the Cold War imperial powers for Westad was less one-sided than on Mann's view, with implications for the terrible human costs to the client regimes which the two Cold War sides supported. Perhaps, the balance sheet of American empire – if such it is – is still too early to tally. Chapter 14, by Ikenberry, presents the case for a positive balance sheet. He argues for the benefits of American empire in preserving and extending the liberal international order, while Mann's weighing of the costs and benefits goes in the other direction. Westad and Ikenberry therefore also disagree with Mann on the rivalry between the American empire and its current main rival, China: Westad thinks that China is now on a capitalist path (Mann thinks it is only half-capitalist), but he also suggests that there are opportunities for the Chinese state to pursue a course that departs from Anglo-American capitalism. According to Ikenberry, in contrast, the

United States can continue to shape the world order in a positive way through its liberal norms, whatever the case may be for the competition between American and other (including Chinese) variants of capitalist economy.

As will be evident from this short overview, Mann's 'Sources' will be a central point of departure for any discussions of the social order in the twenty-first century. This volume does not cover all the major powers or topics in Mann's Volumes 3 and 4. There is little on Japanese empire, for example, to which Mann devotes one and a half chapters in Volume 3. Yet the chapters here have focused on what will arguably be the most controversial topics for some time to come: the shape of history during the 'short' twentieth century and its legacies, the changing role of the United States, the nexus between empire and globalization and questions of capitalism and politics.

It remains for me to get out of the way of what I hope the reader will find a series of stimulating debates. I can only add my thanks to the contributors for their incisive contributions to these debates, and to Mann for a thorough and generous response. Finally, I have been fortunate in having a very astute reader at Cambridge University Press, who had a number of suggestions that improved the volume. Thanks also go to John Haslam and Carrie Parkinson at Cambridge University Press who did a great job in shepherding the project at various points.

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Part I

Theory and history