

Interrogations Week 8
Mar/Weber Amalgam #2: Michael Mann

Interrogation	Commenters
Adam Slez	Sarbani, Rudolfo, You-Geon
Sarbani Chakraborty	Rudolfo, You-Geon, Joe
Rudolfo Elbert	You-Geon, Joe, Charity
You-Geon Lee	Joe, Charity, Ann
Joe Ferrare	Charity, Ann, Adrienne,
Charity Schmidt	Ann, Adrienne, Adam
Ann Pinkus	Adrienne, Adam, Sarbani
Adrienne Pagac	Adam, Sarbani, Rudolfo
Michael Callaghan Pisapia	Jorge, Elizabeth, Fabian
Jorge Sola	Elizabeth, Michael, Fabian
Elizabeth Wrigley-Field	Michael, Jorge, Fabian
Fabian Pfeffer	Michael, Jorge, Elizabeth
People below	should write comments on interrogations by:
Assaf Meshulam	Adam, Sarbani, Rudolfo
Johannes Glaeser	Charity, Ann, Adrienne,
Rahul Mahajan	Jorge, Elizabeth, Fabian
Hsing-Mei Pan	Michael, Joe, You-Geon

1. Adam Slez

In an insightful critique of Mann’s model of ‘organizational materialism,’ Wright argues that “there is a disjuncture between the general programmatic discussions of class in which Mann lays out the logic of his theoretical framework and at least some of the empirical analyses in which he concretely explores specific problems in class analysis” (Wright 2002: 1). More specifically, while Mann’s theoretical framework seems to suggest that “class analysis...should be almost entirely concerned with the formation of classes as collective power actors” (Wright 2002: 4), in practice Mann often explains economic processes in terms of their relationship to objective class structures. While I agree with Wright, I wonder if this type of critique can be pushed further on the basis of Mann’s initial discussion of the organization of economic power.

According to Mann, the main “sociospatial peculiarity” of economic organization is that it combines extensive and intensive forms of power (Mann 1986:25). Extensive power is defined by Mann as “the ability to organize large numbers of people over far-

flung territories in order to engage in minimally stable cooperation,” whereas intensive power is “the ability to organize tightly and command a high level of mobilization or commitment from the participants” (Mann 1986:7). Describing economic organization in terms of “*circuits of praxis*,” Mann argues that “[g]roups defined in relation to the circuits of praxis are classes” (Mann 1986: 25). The effectiveness of class as an organizational crystallization of economic power ultimately depends on “the tightness of the linkage between intensive local production and extensive circuits of exchange” (Mann 1986: 25).

Presenting the divide in terms of a distinction between the Marxian (production-based) and Weberian (exchange-based) models of class, Mann refuses to assign theoretical primacy to either the intensive or extensive forms of economic power, respectively. What is interesting is that while Mann’s theoretical framework restricts class analysis to a study of class as a collective actor (Wright 2002), he insists on giving equal weight to an exchange-based model of class which, at least as it is presented by Weber, gives little indication as to how “class situations” come to be translated into “class organization” (Weber [1922]1978). As Wright (2003:850) notes in his critique of Weber’s model of class, the individual power of workers and the collective power of labor is derived from the fact that “[b]ecause workers always retain some control over the expenditure of effort and diligence, they have a capacity to resist their exploitation; and because capitalists need workers, there are constraints on the strategies available to capitalists to counter this resistance.” If Wright’s analysis is correct then, at least for the case of workers, there is a degree of asymmetry in terms of the extent to which intensive and extensive forms of economic power matter for the formation of classes as collective actors (in other words, because the power workers derive from exploitation is located at the point of production, we should expect labor to collectively organize around intensive rather than extensive sources of power). Mann acknowledges that this is an empirical possibility and, consequently, it is not surprising that much of his analysis of the historical data focuses on the way in which changes in the relations of production influence the organization of economic power into classes.

[NOTE: The reader should be warned that my opinion of Michael Mann’s work is in constant flux. On the one hand, I think that Mann is brilliant for rejecting conscious theory-building (Wright is correct to note that Mann’s analytical framework is more like a “menu” than it is an actual “theory”), instead focusing on developing a coherent narrative of world history. On the other hand, whenever I think about Mann’s framework in terms of theory proper, I am continually frustrated by the fact that he never seems to revise his own model in light of his data. My suspicion is that Mann himself is more concerned with the types of goals suggested in the former position than he with those in the latter. With that in mind, I think that I am willing to give him the benefit of the doubt.]

Sarbani Response to Adam

While I agree that workers might have the capacity to resist, that capacity should not however be taken for granted. The principal-agent mechanism operates on the actorhood and agency of the workers, which in turn is embedded in the work-place culture. That

culture may shape actions of the workers and its capacity to act as an agent of the principal actor. Therefore, as it seems, both intensive and extensive power may be understood as possibilities but neither can be assumed to take precedence over the other because it would depend on the triggering conditions. Exploitation or expenditure of labour themselves may not be enough reasons to resist. The rationalization process of the industry may naturalize such processes and can stem possibilities of resistance in any form. Also, assumption of capacity to resist automatically assumes an agentic perception of humans, not to mention certain responsibility to act on that capacity to resist. Such assumptions of responsibility may also require analysis as to whose responsibilities to organize are we referring to and why. This probably is the problem when you mention, “we should expect labor to collectively organize [...]”. I have the same expectation myself but then we must realize probably that such expectations are misplaced or we can at least question why is there such an expectation? Where is the thought coming from? I have myself dwelled into the issue of actors but I increasingly feel that before even analyzing the question of action, we need to discuss the problematic of agency and actorhood.

Adam

Assaf Meshulam comments If I understood you well when you say that “this type of critique can be pushed further”, you mean that already in his theoretical framework Mann uses Marx’s and Weber’s respective concepts of class using production and exchange. Though I think that I understand where you try to go and do agree with you, it didn’t seem to me that Mann necessarily presents a “divide” in the distinction between the Marxian and Weberian models. I understood the distinguished concepts as necessarily interrelated and not as a division and believe there is in Mann’s description room for asymmetry that you note between the two, as well as fluctuations in the balance between the two.

Rodolfo Elbert

Your interrogation points out the distinctiveness of Mann’s approach to class analysis: classes are collective organizations. Framed in this discussion, you first point out the contradiction between Weber’s neglect of defining classes as social actors and Mann’s study of classes exclusively as collective organizations. I think we should discuss how this contradiction is related to Wright’s critique about the disjuncture between Mann’s theorization and his historical analysis. The second topic you raise is about the relationship between class relations at the point of production and collective class formations. Since Marx (and more so since Gramsci, I think), the first instance of working class formation as collective actors is the joint experiences of exploitation in the point of production. For them there is continuity (and also a rupture in the level of consciousness) between the shared experience of subordination and exploitation and the following organization of workers as a collective actor that can even intervene in the political sphere. Even if Mann does not frame his analysis in the Marxist tradition, we can discuss how this historical fact of collective organization of workers that do share the same situation in the production process is understood by his analysis.

2. Chakraborty

What does state as an actor mean? Does it mean the executive or rather a small coterie within the executive, who can take decisions without consulting or negotiating with the civil society? Or does State as an actor mean a small minority of individuals “at the top” from military, executive, legislative, legal and diplomatic sectors? It seems that state becomes an actor through a separate class of power elites as powerful actors. This seems to be the case as Mann uses the phrase “classes and other major power actors” (emphasis mine. p.67). In this sense a class constitutes members with power i.e. constituting of individuals with distributive rather than collective power. But then the State still remains an abstraction and it seems only a space within which the power actors as a class of individuals play their roles. How does State assume a life of its own and if at all it does, does an individual state also assume a class position with respect to other states?

It remains a little unclear to me how Mann conceptualizes the relationship between class and social identities. In p. 51 of chapter 3, he states, “[...] social identities cannot be reduced to class”. But he also seems to imply that class is a social identity when he says, “Statesmen had social identities, especially of class and religious community [...]” (p. 69). In the latter statement does class as a social identity is meant to operate through the IEMP model? It seems that Mann is saying that while class is a form of social identity, not all social identities form a class. Then again Mann seems to say that class is an interest group: “most early theorists expected that modern capitalist or industrial society would be dominated by transnational classes and other interest groups [...]” (emphasis mine, p. 71). But can class be conceived as both a social *identity* and an interest *group*?

Mann lucidly brings out the distinction between Weberian and Parsonian concepts of power. But when I am trying to understand the concept of class within these two frameworks simultaneously, I am struggling to conceive of class as both distributive and collective aspects of power as Mann seems to suggest. That is because the distributive aspect requires an individualistic conceptions of power whereas the collective, Parsonian form seems to perceive of class as a network of alliances and disjuncture to attain power within the IEMP model of society. The former is particularistic in its orientation but the latter is more universally oriented. A dual framework of individual and network orientation of class may mean that managerial class is both a particular class with specific skill orientation and is also a network of people across organizations/states/countries etc. But that is not possible. So how do we conceptualize class in this case?

Mann has raised important possible ways of understanding the concept of class, but can all of them be situated in one particular class like as a social identity, as a power actor, as an interest group, and as a network?

Joe comments

"How does state assume a life of its own and if at all it does, does an individual state also assume a class position with respect to other states?"

JJF: Are you asking if a state can have agency and if so, from a global perspective, can we situate states within a set of relations among all states? Assuming that is what you are asking, then I would argue that, yes, states do have agency in that individual states, as well as collective alliances among states, are able to mobilize various forms of resources to exercise power over other states. To use Mann's terminology, they could monopolize military power, employ ideological power, or rely on the strength of their local economy. Now, one could make the argument that "states" are nothing but a group of individuals who make decisions on how to exercise their collective power. However, this would ignore the fact that states are institutions with a specific structure, and that these institutions have sets of relations with other states. A state is not merely the sum of the actors "elected" by the state; it also includes its history, governing norms, and so on. However, I would like to stress that states do not always act in unified ways (I think Mann would agree with this), so I think each "state" has multiple "agencies". So, to speak directly to the first part of your question, I think states assume multiple lives of its own, not just one.

"It remains a little unclear to me how Mann conceptualizes the relationship between class and social identities."

JJF: I think Mann's point in this section is that social actor's have as many identities as there are power relations in which they are involved. So, when he says social identities can not be reduced to class, I think he is saying that actor's have a class identity, but they also have identities shaped by their race, religion, language, and the list goes on. This seems consistent with his overall theme that class does not have ultimate primacy in understanding sources of social power.

Assaf Meshulam comments "It seems that state becomes an actor through a separate class of power elites as powerful actors. This seems to be the case as Mann uses the phrase "classes and other major power actors." There seems to be an internal contradiction in this idea: if Mann distinguishes between *classes* and *other* (i.e., not-classes) major power actors, then how does the state, which you say seems to become an actor through a separate *class* of power elites, fall into the latter category? Are you saying, then, that "other major power actors" are actually class as well?

Your comment: "In p. 51 of chapter 3, he states, "[...] social identities cannot be reduced to class". But he also seems to imply that class is a social identity when he says, "Statesmen had social identities, especially of class and religious community [...]" (p. 69)." Could this be another example of Wright's critique that in his empiric analyses, in contrast to what his theoretical framework implies, Mann often resorts to objective class structures.

Rodolfo Elbert

You raise interesting questions about the nature and characteristics of the state in Mann's framework. One interesting topic to discuss is the relationship between the state and the other power-organizations of society. Is the state a different power organization that influences and is influenced by others, or the state is itself formed by other power organizations like the military and the powerful classes? The second seems to be more accurate but it contradicts Mann's argument, I believe. In second place, you write about Mann's concept of class. I don't think that Mann gives a relevant place to the notion of class as social identity or interest group. I believe that he defines class as a collective actor; this is, as economic power organizations. I don't think this definition leaves place for the notion of social identity or interest group, but it is an interesting topic to discuss.

3. Rudolfo

Wright and Goldthorpe are the two main contemporary frameworks in class analysis, having different theoretical foundations but sharing some assumptions, which are: i. the theoretical and empirical relevance of studying the economic structure of societies; ii. the idea that this study consists on defining individuals' locations in the class structure. I believe that Mann's work is an extreme example of a different approach to society in these two dimensions of analysis. In first place, the author questions class analysis as the identification of class location of individuals. For Mann, classes "are not sets of locations within social relations, nor are they demographically closed economically hierarchical groups, rather, they are a particular kind of collective actor formed into organizations that deploy economic power resources" (Wright, 2002:7) I understand the difference as framed in Mann's overall framework. However, I would like to discuss what the analytical consequences of this critique are: Is it that there is no point in studying the class structure of a society at a certain point in history? What is the relationship that Mann sees between the class structure of a society and the formation of classes as collective actors? Does he think that the collective action of classes can modify the class structure of a society but the class structure of a society does not limit the action of these collective organizations? In second place, Mann's work allows us to question the relevance that the economic dimension of society takes for the class analysis frameworks previously mentioned. Even if these frameworks are not based on economic determinism, they do develop the social analysis of societies based on their economic character. This is quite different for Mann, who believes that a general account of societies, their structure, and their history can best be given in terms of the four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military and political relationships (1986:2) For Mann, these four sources of power interact and modify to each other. Taking this into account I would like to discuss what are the consequences of this perspective for the class analysis of capitalist societies. Is it still possible to talk about class analysis as a distinctive project of analysis or we necessarily have to study the four dimensions of power at the same time? It is true that there are many relevant dimensions of power distribution in society, but: are all of them equally important as the economic dimension in capitalist societies? Is this theoretical stand empirically justified in Mann's historical analysis?

Joe Comments

"Is it still possible to talk about class analysis as a distinctive project of analysis or we necessarily have to study the four dimensions of power at the same time?"

JJF: I think Mann would argue that you can still analyze class as a distinct topic, but that it would not make much sense unless you understood how the economic power network was shaped by the other networks at the specific historical moment of interest. He would probably go on to say that since classes are a particular kind of collective actor that make use of economic resources, then your results would be incomplete unless you knew how the economic power network shaped and was shaped by other networks of power.

"Are all of them (four dimensions) equally important as the economic dimension in capitalist societies?"

JJF: I don't think Mann claims that they are all equally important in capitalist societies. Rather, I think he is saying that to some extent the power networks are intertwined and that different power networks will have more explanatory power at different historical moments. He is not necessarily arguing that economic power is not a key driving force in capitalist societies, just that economic power is not the key driving force in all histories of society (i.e. as Marx argued in the Communist Manifesto: the history of all societies is the history of class struggle...). After all, doesn't he claim that economic power was one of the fundamental shaping forces in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (along with military and political power, respectively)?

Charity's Response:

I too, was perplexed by the differences between Mann and Wright's concept of class. However, I believe that their differences remain more in their approach to class analysis than their definitions. Mann is a historical sociologist, interested in the organization and effects of class, while Wright is an analytical sociologist, interested in the more (relatively) micro aspects of class formation. I think you make a good point when you say that perhaps Mann only sees the relevance of class in its historical context, how classes behave within a social framework. I don't think Mann really discusses the relationship between class structure and its formation as collective actors. However, I would understand how his 4 major power sources could also be applied to the formation of classes and not only the formation of nations, recognizing the influences of economic, military, political and ideological power aspects in class organization. This would fit his social power framework, since he does not think that mere interests unify classes, but more often shared norms and values (or ideology) (p. 31). I don't know if Mann would say that class organizations are limited by the class structure of society, that's a good question which points to your earlier criticism of Mann's avoidance of the relationship between class formation and structure.

I think the question of primacy of economic power in analyses of capitalist countries is a fascinating one. Personally, I believe economics plays a central role in social evolution, yet it can not be viewed as disconnected from other determinants of social formation, like ideology and politics.

So, if I understand correctly, you are implying here that Mann doesn't give enough primacy to the economic dimension? Is there a way to discuss class/social formation of capitalist societies focused on economics while still allowing for other dimension of power relations, or would such analyses always resort to an economic argument?

Assaf Meshulam comments

I share with you some of the questions you raised about the place of agency in Mann's theory.

You raise a series of questions: "Is it still possible to talk about class analysis as a distinctive project of analysis or we necessarily have to study the four dimensions of power at the same time? It is true that there are many relevant dimensions of power distribution in society, but: are all of them equally important as the economic dimension in capitalist societies? Is this theoretical stand empirically justified in Mann's historical analysis?" I believe that Mann's reply to this set of questions would be that you conceive of society as a defined social system, unit, rather than "networks of power," and he stresses that "we can never find a single bounded society" and, consequently, he might say that there is no place for discussion (or questions) about economic or any other dimension of society.

4. You-Geon Lee

Mann's scheme emphasizes much on a classification of four power resources including military, economic, political, and ideological power. He seems to understand world history, identifying and concentrating on these four power sources as organizational realizations of power. In terms of his theoretical approach, he seems to conceive of these power resources as ways in which human beings pursue their goals and set up many networks of social interaction (Mann, 1986: 27). This way of thinking seems to put less importance on social structure which does not necessarily contribute to social actors' goals, but affect their behaviors. Furthermore, in his class analysis, Mann (1993: 26) emphasizes that "if classes are significant power actors in the real world they must be organized, extensively or politically." As Wright (2002) points out, Mann seems to dismiss the analysis of objective properties of class relations and the relationship between these properties and formation of collective actors. However, one can believe that social structure or class structure generate real effects. I agree with Wright's criticism of Mann's strategy of class analysis that Mann dismissed "the relevance of worrying about the best way to understand what he calls 'latent' classes (Wright, 2002: 11)." Wright suggests his work on contradictory class locations as an alternative strategy of understanding the general properties of class structures which generate limits on possible formation of collective class actors. Is it possible for Mann to be able to adopt Wright's suggestion without changing his own strategy? If Mann accepts Wright's framework, what would happen in his scheme?

ANN'S COMMENTS: I think it would be feasible for Mann to incorporate Wright's work into his strategy. To me Mann's lack of interest in "objective properties of class relations" reflects his macro-level focus. Wright (2002) argues very persuasively that

Mann implicitly analyzes such relations in his discussion of the 19th century middle class despite his purported disinterest in them. Wright also illustrates how class contradictory locations could help maintain the complexity of the link between class relations and their formation into collective class actors. I do not think Mann and Wright are at odds but that Mann's theory is so broad and attempts to explain so much, he did not get to the somewhat more micro-level analysis of explaining how aspects of class relations impact class formation, as part of his theory at least.

Joe comments

"Is it possible for Mann to be able to adopt Wright's suggestion without changing his own strategy? If Mann accepts Wright's framework, what would happen in his scheme?"

JJF: I don't think Wright's scheme is necessarily incompatible with Mann's framework. I think it is important to recognize that Mann's analysis of the sources of social power is much broader of an agenda than Wright's work on class structure and class locations. That is not to say that one is more important than the other, just that they have different scope in mind. Mann seems to be more interested in how classes as collective actors make use of economic resources to exert power, and how this mobilization is shaped by the economic power network, which itself shapes and is shaped by ideological, political, and military power networks to varying degrees at different historical periods. I think in some ways Wright's work could be complimentary to Mann's analysis in that by identifying actors' location within a set of relations, class analysts could understand how it is that some classes are able to make use of economic resources to exert power and others are not. Mann seems to only pay attention to those who do have power (hence referring to other classes as "latent").

Charity's Response: I think Rudolfo's interrogation is helpful in responding to this critique. Rudolfo points out that Mann doesn't see the need to look at classes at any particular point in history. Mann is more interested (as I say in my interrogation) in the affects and effects of classes as organizational efforts. His work is to put class in a historical context, not a social context. I don't feel qualified to apply Wright's framework to Mann's, but I don't think they are mutually exclusive and may even prove compatible within an analysis that includes more levels of analysis than they each address on their own, starting at the micro-foundation of class location, moving to class organization within a macro social framework.

5. Joe Ferrare

Through social-historical analysis, Mann argues that four sources of social power structure societies: ideological, economic, political, and military. Mann is critical of sociologists who use the term *society* to mean a unitary whole. Instead, after suggesting the abolition of the term *society* altogether, he claims that societies should be thought of as "overlapping and intersecting power networks" (Mann, 1986:2). Despite suggesting

the abolition of the word, he proceeds to speak of “society” and “societies” for the remainder of his work. It is interesting how difficult it is to speak about “overlapping and intersecting power networks” without using the term “society.” I tried for a while to think about social scientific phenomena without using the word “society,” and had a difficult time. In many respects it is similar to the word “class” in social scientific discourse. The word gets used frequently yet few people seem to agree what it means. Nevertheless, I thought Mann’s definition of society as a constant process of intersecting power networks to be intriguing, though not necessarily new.

One of the central themes in Mann’s analysis is that no single power network has absolute primacy. He makes this claim in direct opposition to the Marxists who believe society is structured around the particular mode of production of a given historical period. Hence, for Mann the history of society is not the history of class struggle; that is just one key network of power that intersects with political, military, and ideological power networks. From this, then, I think it is fair to say that Mann does not give class any primacy beyond the fact that it is one of the four key networks (that in itself is a form of primacy). For the most part I am sympathetic to this claim. At different historical moments class will be of great importance, while at other moments ideological and/or other combinations of power networks will be the principle determinant in the structure of intersecting and overlapping power networks (i.e. society).

Power plays a key role in Mann’s social theory. Borrowing from Parsons he distinguishes between distributive and collective power. Distributive power is referred to as a “zero-sum game” and basically refers to the process of exploitation. Collective power is seen less as a zero-sum game and more as a cooperative effort to exert or increase power over another individual or group or nature. I would like to refine this definition. To begin, I do not think that distributive power has to always be “zero-sum,” although this is often the case. For example, person “A” can enter into an exchange with person “B” and even though person “A” has more power, person “B” may still be able to negotiate some benefits to him/herself in the exchange. Therefore, although person “A” may still come away with a more profitable exchange, person “B” can also acquire some profit and therefore increase their power to some extent (though not as great as person “A”). In this case, then, person “A” does not carry out the entirety of her will, but instead has to settle for a compromise that results in some loss of power even though the exchange still resulted in a net profit for person “A”.

Collective power is defined by Mann as a “functional” form of power. A good example of collective power is a union. Members of a union form a collective to increase their joint power in an exchange with an employer. It seems to me, though, that collective power can also be exploitative. It was not clear to me whether or not Mann would agree with this statement. He argues the two forms of power are intertwined and then goes on to say that the relationship between the two is dialectical, but he doesn’t give a direct indication as to whether or not collective power can be exploitative.

As a side note, I found his argument that the military and the state should be thought of as separate power networks very interesting. He demonstrates that states have not always had a monopoly over military power. This was helpful in thinking about how the different power networks can not only change the trajectory of other power networks, but also change their overall shape (i.e. the example of the pool balls). For example, one could argue that at this historical moment in the United States, the economic power

network has a monopoly over the state since the proliferation of neoliberalism. If we thought this through I would imagine we could find connections with the ideological power network and the military (i.e. since the state currently has a monopoly over the military).

ANN'S COMMENTS:

(1) I think Mann argues the novelty of his theory of society is not how he defines it (a constant process of intersecting power networks) but rather how he conceives of it having no unitary, bounded totality in space or time (therefore not really being an "it"). At least, that was the novelty of the theory to me.

(3) I think that's right that Mann would conclude that class (or economic power more generally) has no primacy in determining the structure of intersecting and overlapping power networks (i.e. society) generally although it may be more pronounced at certain times in history.

(4) It seems like rather than refining the meaning of distributive power you have identified a third type of power (maybe negotiated power?) in which some person or group gains at the expense of the other but everyone comes out ahead of where they otherwise would be. Of course, this scenario could still be exploitative (eg. working is better than being unemployed). Your addition of this type of power makes sense to me logically – I can think of economic, ideological, political situations where this sort of negotiation and compromise is crucial to achieving the end result.

(5) I think Mann would regard collective power as exploitative. In chapter 1, p. 2 he explains: "But collective power is the joint power of actors A and B cooperating to exploit nature or another actor, C."

(6) Perhaps power of neocon ideology over the military?

Charity's Response-

It would be very difficult to talk about 'social' analysis without the word society. This may be one of those rare academic moments where accuracy gives way to convenience and common language.

I too sympathize with Mann's framework addressing power networks of society outside (perhaps around is a better term) of the economic sphere. A concentration on the economic nature of classes continues to allow us to avoid other, perhaps equally powerful, dimensions of social formation and this may actually impede movements to strengthen class-based action. While economic interests are compelling, humans can be more deeply inspired by those ideological beliefs often reflecting their class location.

I was unsure as to Mann's concept of collective power as well. You are right, I was waiting for the discussion on how collective power can be very effective in exploiting

other groups, and how it is this type of power that changes the nature of society more so than the distributive, but it never came.

I'm glad you brought up the military power dimension in that sense. For me, I thought a lot about how Chavez in Venezuela rose through the ranks of the military, won an election with the support of the military and was perhaps saved (literally) through the military's loyalty (not to mention the millions of citizens pouring into the streets) during the 2002 attempted coup. Mann's discussion put into perspective for me the importance of this movement, where the military power network takes over the political and transforms to the political. While the opposition (to Chavez) remains in control of Venezuela's economy, the movement has been rooted in the military, political and mostly, the ideological dimensions of social power. Perhaps we could respond here to Rudolfo's interrogation, which questioned Mann's decision to NOT give primacy to economic power networks. Venezuela would be one fine example of a capitalist country whose social transformation can not be attributed to economic power. What, then, does this say about Venezuela's revolution? Does it pose a potential move away from capitalism? Or does it offer an alternative for social movements, showing that social change does not always depend on economic power and (applying Mann's framework) the other 3 sources can be conjured up to overpower the economic dimension?

Adrienne response to Joe Ferrare

I agree that one of Mann's central points concerns his belief that no one network of power will reorganize and restructure social relations—it is the interaction and influence each of the four sources of social power that they have upon the other(s). As such, I also agree that Mann gives very little power/importance to class *within* his theoretical model. I guess some of my discomfort with this claim involves the following: given that we have four sources of social power through which human beings are supposed to achieve their desired goals, the suggestion that class is not important seems to me to eliminate the ability for a whole slew of actors to push for and accomplish their ends, as class might be the only avenue of social power (economic power) they have access to. I guess I see ideological and military power solely belonging to the dominant/elite groups, political power somewhat so, but economic power could potentially be exercised by either the dominant/ruling groups or those who are ruled. If that ceases to be important/have little importance, then do those actors who would benefit from its action cease to be important too?

Concerning the distributive power definition: it does not have to be solely a zero-sum outcome (good point). But, in the end of your definition re-write, person A still ends up with more of the pie than person B, so in that way, it is not 100% exploitative/unequal, but there is still a power differential favoring one person (A) over another (B), no? The more I think about it, I would almost say that your new definition could fit into the collective power framework (as persons A & B come together and in the end both positions are better than before—perhaps their gain was at the expense of a third actor). Honestly, I obviously do not know, but I think Mann's dichotomy here of distributive/collective power is his nod to Marxian/Weberian influences, respectively.

Lastly, I would think that Mann would accept that collective power can be exploitative at times (esp. it seems to me if you shift focus from the cooperation of the two actors to the effect such cooperation has on the third actor).

Hsing-Mei Pan response to Joe Ferrare

“In this case, then, person “A” does not carry out the entirety of her will, but instead has to settle for a compromise that results in some loss of power even though the exchange still resulted in a net profit for person “A”. “(According to my understanding, distributive power indicates the asymmetrical power relations among people who belong to the same organization. That is, people in an organization have different rights/power to give orders.)

“It was not clear to me whether or not Mann would agree with this statement.” (As I know, collective power is a sort of power that a group of people possess to fight against other groups to get their own interests. In fact, I do not really understand what you mean here.)

“This was helpful in thinking about how the different power networks can not only change the trajectory of other power networks, but also change their overall shape (i.e. the example of the pool balls).”(I do not completely understand your interpretation of his arguments here. But I think he wants to distinguish the different characteristics between the two types of power networks. On the other hand, he wants to show that political power and military power do not always combine together in different periods of history.)

6. Charity Schmidt

I'll make this interrogation easy for the person who has to review it, as I have little to Critique of Mann's Analysis. I appreciated the manner in which Mann is able to put into perspective the complexities of social relations, class formation and state/nation formation contextualized in (western) history. Or perhaps, it was such a complex analysis that it is difficult to absorb it in such a way as to question it.

***One criticism I do have, however, reflects what he left out of his analysis. While focusing on a core of Western 'nations,' Mann leaves out their relation to periphery countries. No doubt that what was taking place in those countries had its affects on the core, with respect to military, political, ideological and economic relations. Yet, in none of the chapters I read, was this included in the analysis and it was only mentioned twice. On page 18 he states; “Power actors now debated whether further revolutions were repeatable or avoidable. Colonial revolutions are outside of this discussion, but I do consider industrial and political revolutions.” He is most likely alluding most specifically to the slave revolution on St Domingue (he surprisingly mentions the revolt in Haiti later on page 218 but just as quickly drops the subject). An analysis of especially French, but Western political evolution in general during this period can not be complete without

considering the influence of a successful slave revolt on a prosperous sugar colony. The event shook power-holders across the globe, both on an economic and ideological level.

Mann himself insists that geopolitics in a necessary aspect of state/nation formation, yet he uses the state itself as his point of entry, giving little explanatory agency to outside influence. Is this a weakness in his analysis? Would including the periphery benefit his already complex explanation of class and nation development? I think this line of questions is particularly relevant to Mann's two dominant political crystallizations; representative (who will be represented) and the national issue (where?), as the slavery question was formative in the development of many nation's politics.

***I'm not so sure that Mann and Wright are actually disagreeing in their concepts of class (Wright page 8). Perhaps their disconnection stems from their differences in approach. Mann's analysis is an example of historical analysis, so it seems more relevant to focus on "the effects of collectively organized power actors" when looking at the macro-development of nations and classes. While Wright is coming from a Sociological approach which addresses the "effects of objective properties of the locations of people within social structures." While Wright takes account of the context in which people are categorized and the manner in which classes form and, Mann is more interested in the effects of those class categorizations and formations.

***On page 29, Mann states that "There has never been one great transnational bourgeoisie or proletariat." Do we think that his volume III would include the discussion of a rising global proletariat in present times? Do we see the formation of the global bourgeoisie and thus the potential for a rising global proletariat in the contemporary context?

ANN'S COMMENTS:

(1) Mann's lack of discussion of non-Western nations in his analysis does seem like a glaring omission, especially given his professed concern with geopolitics more generally. I did not find a good theoretical explanation for the omission either – hopefully other students (or Erik) will have some theories or will be more familiar with Mann's other work to know if he does discuss non-Western nations elsewhere.

(2) You identify important distinctions between Wright and Mann's respective approaches to class categories and form. I see it also as sort of a macro/micro distinction: where Mann is concerned about macro effects, Wright is concerned with complex micro-level distinctions around class relations, locations, and structures, class formation, and class actors. Both frameworks pack in a lot of explanatory value and do not seem fundamentally inconsistent.

(3) The question of whether a transnational proletariat has emerged/is emerging today is really interesting. I hope we discuss it in class!

Jahannes

[Before next to last paragraph] I think you are right to criticize that Mann left out to focus countries in the Periphery. But I he had to restrict himself on the empirical material.

Focusing on the Western countries filled already two books. But probably it is always worth to test his explanation on many cases. Since Mann tries to describe society as being entwined of all kinds of power sources it seems as if we can easily add outside influence to his explanation.

[after last paragraph] Mann's IEMP-Model would be suitable to do a discussion of a rising global class, since he is able to explain different forms of power organization, like over large territories (extensive) and a global market is developing allowing diffused power. The four power sources might offer die potential powerful organizational means for a global bourgeoisie. It might be possible to detect how power configurations become globally institutionalised.

Adam:

I'll try and answer and/or commend on each of your points in turn. First, I am categorically wary of the omitted variable critique. I don't think that paying attention to core/periphery relations would fundamentally alter Mann's conceptual menu. It might, however, change his historical narrative. In other words, if Mann were to take a world-systems view, he would be forced to tell a very different story. The problem is that adopting the types of assumptions which make the notions of a core and a periphery meaningful would be inherently at odds with Mann's own theoretical framework. In other words, if we take Mann on his own terms, I'm not certain that the idea of a world-system is even valid. Second, while I think Mann's historical approach might help to explain his unique orientation to theory, I am not clear on why it would necessarily entail adopting a model of class that purports to focus solely on class actors. There is nothing in the practice of historical research which restricts the researcher to macro-level analysis. In fact, one of the defining characteristics of the subfield of social science history is its focus on micro-level analysis. Finally, I would point you to your first comment to look for answers to your question regarding the possibility of a global proletariat. According to Wallerstein (1974), the divide between the core and the periphery is defined in part by the absence of developed peripheral states. I think that the emergence of welfare states in the core undermines the possibility of a global proletariat, in that it binds labor in the core to different core states. To use Mann's terms, we might say that this type of process can be understood as a form of political segmentation.

Adrienne response to Charity Schmidt

I think your point concerning his omission of countries other than the five powers he focuses on here in Volume II is interesting, esp. in light of the fact that he seems very much intent on being able to empirically show that they four sources of social power explain the (re)structuring of human social relations. What does it mean when he gives primacy to power exercised by dominant/elite nations while ignoring power exercised in 'subordinate', colonized nations (as you give evidence of)? Why aren't they important/valid/contributory to the networks of power at play in the dominant/elite nations?

Re: geopolitics, I am not sure I quite understand what you mean when you say Mann does not provide much ‘explanatory agency to outside influence’—do you mean that Mann does not flesh out the mechanisms by which geopolitics shape state formation? If you do, then I think I may disagree (but only in part)—I think he does consider geopolitics but that related to the other dominant/elite nations only. As you have suggested, he does not seem to grant much influence to the impact of subordinate nations’ interactions with ‘the top’. And, would Mann consider dominant/elite nations relations with other dominant/elite nations as geopolitics? As the only geopolitics? Not geopolitics at all?

7. Ann Pikus

Mann defines classes as “groups with differential power over the extraction, transformation, distribution and consumption of objects of nature.” Mann chooses to use class to reflect an economic power grouping (p. 25 of intro) yet he acknowledges that interrelations between classes and other groupings within power relations could be further explored. A study of how power is concentrated in the same groups of individuals across sources of power seems important when considering how dominant power configurations become institutionalized.

On another note, Mann’s framework (i.e. viewing societies are constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power whose structure and history can best be given in terms of the interrelations of the four sources of power: ideological, economic, military and political power relationships) seems valuable for evaluating the development of power as measured by changes in sociospatial capacity for organization. However, given Mann’s emphasis on how dynamic this process is, I am surprised by his need to try to identify the primary powers that structure society at any given time. Would it be consistent with his theory and mode of analysis to consider how the sources of power interrelate via their organizational forms without attributing causal primacy to a single one?

Sarbani Response to Ann

“Would it be consistent with his theory and mode of analysis to consider how the sources of power interrelate via their organizational forms without attributing causal primacy to a single one?” I think Mann is trying not to attribute primacy to any single source of power. This probably is evident in his argument on the polymorphous crystallization model. What he did however primarily focus on was the concept of “imagined” nation-states but there too he rightly noted the problem of nations within a nation-state, where one particular logic that of capitalism, military or any other for example could not operate. Also, he further situated nation-states within a “global” framework, and hence the geopolitics, such that the foreign and national policies and politicization processes have significant influences in generating multiple power dynamics. For Mann, capitalism as a diffused organization also makes it possible for proletarians to organize around class or sectionalism or segmentation.

What he did not focus more on, I think, is on the Weberian notion of power and status. Your point on the institutionalization of dominant power and “same groups of individuals

across sources of power”, I think can be understood through a more elaborate Weberian notion. Mann rightly says that Weber’s concepts of “penetration” and “power” of bureaucracy does not take into account the distinction between despotic and infrastructural power (p. 59). But what he does not mention is that the penetration of bureaucracy besides increasing the “collective state power” also increases levels of details for state’s power of supervision and scrutiny of individual and collective actions. This is not the same as collective state power, which he says “coordinates” social life. The scrutiny of actions and social lives needs formation of detailed layers of functionaries at each domain of the nation-state (IEMP), who supervise and are supervised as well and through which the mechanisms of dominance may be said to be grounded.

The discursive networking and status attainment aspect of class is not mentioned by Mann. Also, it is not clear how the interactive networks of power may force commensurability of class interests and individual self-interests, which may help in the reproduction of power-structures or how might the roles of inheritance and process of credentialization reproduce the power structure. These issues may help answer the points you have raised.

Adam: I think it is an interesting question to ask what Mann’s work would like without the IEMP model. To some extent, I think it would change very little of his empirical analysis. Mann himself notes that you can read the narrative on its own and simply flip back to the introduction to look up key conceptual terms. With respect to the question on consistency, I’m not clear as to whether you are asking if it would be consistent to reject the primacy assumption or inconsistent. If you are asking the former, then it is entirely consistent. If you are asking the latter, then I would say that it is inconsistent with the theoretical framework laid out by Mann, but potentially consistent with his empirical findings, in that the trajectory of history implies the emerging primacy of political and economic power.

Adrienne response to Ann Pikus

I think it is really important that you mention institutionalization because it part of Mann’s conceptualization of how society/human social relations reorganize themselves (and upon reflection, I have questions about it as well). I am not exactly sure how it occurs.

It seems to me that it is quite possible to ‘consider how the sources of power interrelate . . . without attributing causal primacy to a single one’, as by my understanding, Mann sees the dynamic nature of history and human social relations as billiard balls on a pool table—they ricochet off one another (and the table), and in each contact, shape/influence the other’s outcome or direction.

In The Sources of Social Power, Michael Mann offers an explanation of power relations in human history (and/or society—though Mann himself seems hesitant to use this word). Mann begins with two premises: “societies are constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power” and that these networks of power are comprised of interactions among “the four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military, and political relationships.” Mann 1-2. Borrowing somewhat from Weber, Mann sees power (generally) as the means to obtain a desired result. Mann suggests that these sources of social power are embodied in organizations that facilitate actors to realize their goals. As I understand, when the current organizations of power cannot ‘solve’ or fulfill goals, new organizations of power emerge between existing networks of power thereby implementing a reorganization of social life. As a result, the interplay of these four sources of social power generates desired outcomes, happy accidents or harmful consequences.

Now for the questions (very general to specific):

I can understand that Mann’s theory and accompanying model are incredibly complex in order to avoid ascribing one thing explanatory primacy for a particular outcome, but isn’t some ‘power’ of the explanation lost in that way? This goes back again to our discussion of the overdetermination. So, if collectivities of workers were not just shaped by their own economic positions, but instead were influenced/shaped by capitalist/old regime strategies employed against them, the workers, and those strategies in turn were influenced by the other social powers (Mann 724-5), then how helpful is the ‘answer’?

It seems to me that Mann’s formulation of ‘class’ presupposes markets in that a class position would involve production, exchange or both of a good/service (Mann’s definition I think is more elaborate). As such, how then does he think defining capitalism as having *diffused* power and not authoritative power goes along with that formulation? Capitalism is inherently exploitative and therefore should have some degree of authoritative power, no? Granted, Mann qualifies his omission by stating that he focuses less on “labor processes” in favor of the diffusion of capitalist relations across society. Mann 512.

What does “sociospatial” mean (in all the pages Mann wrote, I do not believe he defined what he meant by this word)?

Sarbani Response to Adrienne

“Capitalism is inherently exploitative and therefore should have some degree of authoritative power, no?”

I think Mann would not disagree that capitalism should have some degree of authoritative power. What Mann is saying is that capitalism’s “diffused powers exceeded their authoritative powers [...]” (emphasis mine, p. 726). According to Mann, the capitalist mode of production does not have an extensive organization and tends to accommodate to rather than revolutionize other power organizations, as opposed to Marx’s conceptualization. The diffuseness of capitalism seems to be evident in its ‘products’ so to speak, the class actors. Mann says that, classes were not “pure” because they were not just economic entities but were emerged from ideological, military and political relations as well. Again, capitalism seems to be diffused due to institutionalized powers of the

ruling classes, assumed many to be capitalists. Mann mentions, “[...] where class conflict is relatively transparent [...] then that is where ruling classes and regimes can most effectively use their greater institutionalized power to repress and to divide their opponent” (p. 724). It seems that the diffuseness is a strategic component of capitalism to maintain itself.

JOHANNES comments:

[after next to last full paragraph] I think Mann wants to show that social reality is very complex. Mann tries to avoid the difficulties Marxist historians got into, when they tried to build a theory of history, in which the economical sphere was causing all change in history. The answer is helpful to bring some light into this complexity and not to forget other possible influences.

[after last full paragraph] I am not sure if I understood your statement. Does Mann really say capitalism has no authoritative power? I agree that in a production process with exploitation within a firm some authoritative power should be involved.

With capitalism as having diffused power he mean that power can be exercised without commands like in market exchanges. On page 511-2 Mann criticizes that there is no homogenous working-class, but sometimes interdependence between workers and employers is possible and skilled workers struggle against unskilled. I think Mann understands that as some kind of a diffused power. Therefore he prefers to focus on sectional and segmental labor movements and less to a class which is determined by the production relations within one firm.

Adam:

I don't think Mann ever set out to develop a theory that would allow for parsimonious explanations. As Wright (2002: 4) notes, Mann's theoretical framework is best described as a “conceptual menu,” meaning that his analytical framework serves more as means of guiding a historical narrative than it does to help create testable hypotheses. Mann's “answers” are helpful to the extent that they provide a generalizable conceptual model for framing processes of social change in specific, historically situated cases. I think that is important to remember that Mann's historical narrative is as much a part of the “answer” as his notion of organizational materialism. Your question about the presupposition of markets is a good one, though I think that you are right for the wrong reasons. The validity of your critique depends on whether or not exploitative relationships are, by definition, command relationships. I tend to think that exploitation can occur independently of command, but I don't have the sources in front of me to actually help me justify my answer. You might be right, however, on empirical grounds. I think the diffuseness of economic power in modern society is largely attributable to the existence of markets as a means of allocating goods and resources. Since the bulk of our reading for the week was taken from the second volume of *Sources*, it is hard to say how Mann addresses pre-market societies, even though they are clearly within the historical scope of the first volume. Finally, I think that Mann uses the term “socio-spatial” to qualify the more basic idea of social networks of power. In my mind, the spatial qualification is simply point out that different types of social power are subject to different boundaries.

For instance, states can only legitimately exercise power over individuals within a particular territory. By contrast, the exercise of economic power via circuits of exchange tends to span a much larger areas, whereas the exercise of economic power at the point of production (praxis) is obviously exercised at highly local level. The main idea is that we should take into consideration the ways in which these networks of power overlap one another across space (i.e. geography).

Rodolfo Elbert

First of all I completely agree that we have to clarify the idea of the "socio-spatiality" in Mann! I don't think he ever defines it but it is a widely used and relevant concept.

Your first general question addresses an important topic in order to deepen the discussion of a fundamental issue: Mann's treatment of the four different sources of social power as equally important. Is this decision applicable to any kind of society? Or should we modify our framework when we analyze different historical periods? For example, when we analyze feudalism we would give more relevance to the military and when we analyze capitalism the fundamental dimension would be the economic. Finally, it will be interesting to discuss what is the role of authority in economic power organizations. It is clear that Mann thinks that there is a mutual influence of the different spheres of social power. However, it is not clear how these spheres actually interact, as you clearly point out.

9. Elizabeth Wrigley-Field

I really appreciated Wright's critique that Mann's historical work treats objective class locations as a *determinant* of collective action, not only the *outcome* of collective class actors, much more seriously than his theoretical explications do. I would like to focus my interrogation on some related questions about the relationship between class location and collective action in Mann's historical work.

Specifically, I'm going to focus on Mann's work on bourgeois revolutions (my term, of course, since that's what Mann's denying, but if he proposes a good counter-terminology I missed it). Here, one of his main arguments is that the petty-bourgeoisie, not either the bourgeoisie as a whole or the "big bourgeoisie," led these revolutions. He counterposes this to Marx's picture of a rising bourgeoisie overthrowing the old feudal order. A couple questions about the interests underpinning the formation of collective action here:

Wright's point is that the logic of Mann's argument is still one based in objective class positions; whether his argument is right or wrong, it proceeds as an argument that the material interests of the middle classes (the petty bourgeoisie, careerists, and professionals) was such that they grouped together as a collective actor against the old order.

I agree with that critique but I am also interested in the implications for class theory of Mann's substantive point about what the interests that underlay the collective action are.

Mann's argument, as I understand it, is that the "big bourgeoisie" was able to integrate itself into the feudal order fairly well. It didn't lead the bourgeois revolutions because it could get along pretty well accommodating to those regimes and seeking power within and alongside them, while the middle classes found their interests more constrained. (I think this is why he has such a seemingly heterogeneous definition of "middle class"; the professionals and careerists were the ones who would benefit most from increasing bureaucratization of the state. That's why, I think, Mann makes such a big deal about decoupling the capitalist mode of production – from which the big bourgeoisie benefits most – from the political changes that Marxists and others have taken to accompany that economic setup – which he thinks the middle classes most benefit from, and not for purely economic reasons.) So first of all, is my reading of Mann on this point correct?

Second of all, if that's what Mann means, and if Mann is right about that, where does it leave us? It certainly is a different picture than the one you get reading Marx on these revolutions (from the readings I have done – not claiming that's exhaustive!). I think it raises a few questions that I will pose for discussion without attempting to answer:

- a. What does it mean to have a class as a collective actor? Wright concludes his essay by remarking that "one can believe that class relations and class structures are real and generate real effects without also believing that there is any one-to-one mapping possible between the complex structure of class relations and the formation of collective actors," and I think I agree. But then we need a good account of how the real causal processes generated by class locations are part of a causal structure generating class formation and class struggle.

Pointing out that the lack of a simple, deterministic link between class location and class action doesn't obviate the potential causal powers of class location (and, as one consequence of this, that if Mann is right historically that "sections" rather than full classes have led struggles, that doesn't refute these being class struggles in some meaningful sense) is important, I think. But obviously it only points us in the direction of what a good account of class struggle might look like. The real challenge is to actually formulate that account.

- b. To what extent is the Marxist argument about the class sweep of history (defining regimes by an analysis of what is taken to be their class content, and changes of regime type as changes in what class constituted the ruling class) dependent on the class that is taken to be put into power by a revolution also being the one who leads it? If this is not a necessary correspondence, what leads to a divergence of this sort – between who makes a revolution and who comes to power from it?

Jorge Commentary to Elisabeth's interrogation

Interesting questions, but it is difficult to find a satisfactory response. First of all, I'm not completely sure that "Mann's argument is still one based in objective class positions", because one could think that to Mann the interests shared by middle classes are a necessary condition but neither a sufficient condition nor the most important one. Mann is ambiguous and I just say that I am not sure, but it is important insofar as it is related to your question about the causality between class structure and class action. I absolutely agree with you in that this topic is one of the most important, and indeed most exciting, issues of class analysis. However, while I think Wright's theoretical schemas which relate class structure with class formation, consciousness and struggle are useful, I think the "good account" of these causal processes must be formulated in historical research, such as in Mann's. And, since historical reality is so messy and impure (an obvious truth repeated by Mann, but forgotten so many times), perhaps the best way is to be very careful with the theoretical generalizations in this field. I see a kind of asymmetry in this regard: while we take the objective interest as the criterion to define class locations in class structure, we have to recognize that it is not enough to explain class action, where such interests appear mixed with beliefs, norms, values, etc. which also might have causal power. Finally, I think there is more than one "Marxist argument about the class sweep of history". To the functionalist argument of *Prologue of 1859* systematized by Cohen it wouldn't be important who makes revolutions and who takes advantage of them; to the historicist argument of *Manifesto* Mann's criticism raises a problem; and last, I think Marx's historical works admit this kind of non-correspondence, as well as the unanticipated consequences of action.

Michael Response to Elizabeth:

[In response to your first question: for Mann, it is not just material or economic interests that put careerists and professionals in the same middle class, or which determines the interest of the big bourgeoisie; it is also their situation with respect to the "cage" of the nationalist-state, which had become fully militarized. The geopolitical drive of the military state generated certain fiscal crises and political opportunities that created nation-class linkages that are dually determined by capitalism and geopolitics. It is not so much that militarized political power and the economy are decoupled, as that they are entwined and determine one another, and also that the social groups that ideal-typically would conform to economy and state – class and nation – do not conform in a pure way, but rather impurely. Added to the mess is discursive literacy which generates impure classes by pulling the members of classes into a specific relation with the state that may matter more to them than interests they may have which are rooted in the relations of production. In response to 2a: when Mann argues that latent classes should not matter to sociologists, what he means, I think is that they do not do a very good job of explaining the collective actors we actually do see in historical struggles. For Mann, since collective actors are dually determined by a capitalist mode of production by the geopolitical maneuvers of states, objective class locations matter only insofar as they enter into a broader configuration of power combinations. Also, his specific argument about Europe is that capitalist power is too diffuse to account for social structure; in order to explain, one must refer to the authoritative power of the militarized state. In response to 2b: I don't know about this; my guess is that ideological power has something to do both with who

leads revolutions and who comes to occupy the positions of rule. Mann's Weberian argument about the changing nature of the state might also figure in here: the state shift from exerting despotic power to exerting infrastructural power would seem to entail a shift in political power from warrior or monarchical status group to a bureaucratic class who is good at managing. (Michael)].

RAHUL'S COMMENTS ON Elizabeth

Elizabeth: Mann's argument, as I understand it, is that the "big bourgeoisie" was able to integrate itself into the feudal order fairly well. It didn't lead the bourgeois revolutions because it could get along pretty well accommodating to those regimes and seeking power within and alongside them, while the middle classes found their interests more constrained. (I think this is why he has such a seemingly heterogeneous definition of "middle class"; the professionals and careerists were the ones who would benefit most from increasing bureaucratization of the state. That's why, I think, Mann makes such a big deal about decoupling the capitalist mode of production – from which the big bourgeoisie benefits most – from the political changes that Marxists and others have taken to accompany that economic setup – which he thinks the middle classes most benefit from, and not for purely economic reasons.) So first of all, is my reading of Mann on this point correct?

Rahul: It seems to me correct but incomplete. And I would state it differently. First, I think, his argument derives from the actual history of Europe during this period. The French Revolution wasn't led by the big bourgeoisie because it didn't exist. The revolutions of 1848 were led by workers, artisans, and journalists – and except for June 1848 they would be classified as bourgeois-democratic by orthodox Marxists. The bourgeoisie and the feudal classes accommodated with each other remarkably well, all things considered, in England, Germany, and elsewhere (see Arno Mayer's "The Persistence of the Old Regime").

For the rest, it is clearly the state and the "P" of IEMP that causes Mann to partly decouple the economic from the political changes and it's the P with a bit of the I that are involved in the new definition of the middle classes.

Another point he adds is that much of the political change in the nation-state can be understood simply in terms of the "caging" of people by the policing of borders and by making citizenship an official and carefully regulated status – the result being that, since people couldn't leave, they changed the places they were in. He doesn't make a strong argument here, however.

Elizabeth: What does it mean to have a class as a collective actor? Wright concludes his essay by remarking that "one can believe that class relations and class structures are real and generate real effects without also believing that there is any one-to-one mapping possible between the complex structure of class relations and the formation of collective actors," and I think I agree. But then we need a good account of how the real causal

processes generated by class locations are part of a causal structure generating class formation and class struggle.

Pointing out that the lack of a simple, deterministic link between class location and class action doesn't obviate the potential causal powers of class location (and, as one consequence of this, that if Mann is right historically that "sections" rather than full classes have led struggles, that doesn't refute these being class struggles in some meaningful sense) is important, I think. But obviously it only points us in the direction of what a good account of class struggle might look like. The real challenge is to actually formulate that account.

Rahul: Mann is not concerned to "obviate" class and class struggle as relevant political factors. He is simply saying that it is one of many and often, even usually, not the most important factor (let alone being the overriding factor that trumps all the others, as in the versions of some Marxists), and also saying that class struggle almost never happens in the Marxian sense of a battle between classes with clearly defined battle lines and identities.

Showing that there is no "simple, deterministic link" between class location and action doesn't mean that class is irrelevant, but it does, of course, reduce the importance of class and eliminate theories that suggest class is the overriding factor in political struggles and evolution. The lack of a straightforward link necessarily means that there are other factors that come into play and that those *at the very least* strongly condition the effect of class. Mann goes further and suggests that in general you can go further than this and actually give *more* importance to other factors than to class and argues it on the basis of a wide variety of historical examples.

Similarly, if sections lead struggles, if different sections of the same class are on opposite sides, that does refute the idea that they are *class* struggles. Class may still play an important role, but again in such a case there have to be other explanatory factors that don't get overridden by class and, in some cases, that may even overpower class (as, in general, nationalism).

10. Michael Callaghan Pisapia

The fundamental thesis of Mann's book is that the overall structure of societies is determined by "effective" combinations of various forms of power, traceable to ideological, economic, military and political sources (Mann 1993: 6). Power comes in six forms – collective or distributive, extensive or intensive, and authoritative or diffused – and different social organizations channel these forms differently: whereas markets channel diffused power, states channel authoritative power. These organizational forms, or institutions, are constituted by ideological, economic, military, and political actors, but over time, these institutions in turn constrain actors. This kind of argument seems less like an "agency-centered framework of social analysis," which is how Wright (2002: 5) characterizes Mann's work, and more like a historical institutional framework of social

analysis, which is more how Mann characterizes his own work, especially in Chapter 3, where he lays out an institutional theory of state power. The institutional approach applies not only in his theory of the state: for Mann, the timing at which different organizational forms (institutions) – such as militaries, markets, state bureaucracies, and middle class professions – “encounter” one another, matters when one is trying to explain social structure.

Towards explaining the structure of European civilization during the “long nineteenth century,” Mann gives primary causal weight to the “tension between market and territory, capitalism and geopolitics,” (Mann 1993: 33), i.e. between military and economic sources of power as they are “polymorphously crystallized” in the developing modern nation-state. In contrast to Marxist analyses, in Mann’s analysis, the “relations of production” are not given theoretical primacy in explaining the structure of societies; instead, his research program problematizes the question of “ultimate primacy: the extent to which social life was to be organized around, on the one hand, diffuse, market, transnational and ultimately capitalist principles or, on the other, around authoritative, territorial, national and statist ones,” (Mann 1993: 3). His conclusion is that neither capitalism nor militarized states ultimately determine social classes; instead social relations are “dually determined”, with militarism emerging happening with and between a commercial-capitalist phase and industrial-capitalist phase of history. A good example of a dually determined relation is his summary of the middle class’s relation to power resources: it is a relation characterized by “segmental middling participation in organizations generated by the diffused circuits of capital and more independent, varied participation in the authoritative nation-state. Once again the entwinings of diffuse capitalism and authoritative states were shaping the modern world,” (Mann 1993: 590).

There is a lot to unpack in this definition of what the middle class is and does, but what stands out as a marked contrast from previous readings in this course, is Mann’s emphasis on the way in which “the state” pulls ‘citizens’ into a relationship with itself. Mann writes that because of expanding discursive literacy mediated by churches, military training, commercial transactions, and public schooling, and through war-prone geopolitics, the concerns of members of the middle class are traceable not only to economic hierarchies, but also to political relations involving nationalist (*vis a vis* other nations), and national (within the context of a nation) concerns. These political, national relations are as determining of class relations as are the relations of production. Rather than offer us an economic/structural definition of the middle class, Mann provides us with a historical institutionalist one: a commonly identifiable negotiation through a messy, muddled sea of overlapping economic, ideological, military and political institutions is what defines the middle class as a class, not “merely” its relation to the mode of production. What do we make of Mann’s emphasis on multiple overlapping institutions and his claim that it does more explanatory work than the Marxist focus on economic structure? Does he explain more or less about what social classes are and what we should expect them to do?

Jorge Commentary to Michael's interrogation

I don't have an answer to these questions, but I would like to raise them in another way (maybe it is just an excuse to avoid the answer, since although I consider myself a Marxist I like Mann's work very much). What do we (or Marxists) mean by "ultimate primacy" and what is "ultimate primacy" about? We can think that the "ultimate primacy" of a theory of history is the productive forces development and the change in economic structure, but Mann doesn't make a theory of history but a historical positive research. They are different levels, and it wouldn't make sense to say that World War I was produced by capitalism (like neither would it be possible to explain this without regard to capitalist relations). Of course, Marxists historians will give more importance to economic aspects (although, in my opinion, the best ones –including Marx– have been very sensitive to the political circumstances), but in the end it is a matter of empirical research to find what causes explain better than other ones a historic event or a social process. I think Mann's multicausal explanation is quite rigorous, since he doesn't say that everything is important, but that in each historical episode some causes (or some power networks) are more important than others. Finally, I agree with you in your disagreement with Wright's statement that Mann's point of view is one of "agency-centered framework".

Elizabeth's Response to Michael

I think you give a good explication of Mann's theory. I'm interested in your point that this is really a historical institutional analysis more than an agency-centered one. I guess I'm not sure how to think about the difference between these. Wright's point in calling it "agency-centered" seemed to be that the explanation of important social phenomena seems to start with agents' motivations (who, if they then organize themselves into organizations, will be able to put those motivations into practice in changing the world to suit their purposes). It seems like what Mann is really doing might be characterized as connecting agency and organizations. I like your point about timing: it seems like your motivation for keeping the focus on organizations (rather than agency) in Mann's work might be that organizations have characteristics that are "really causal" (in some sense I'm having trouble articulating) that goes beyond mere aggregate characteristics of actors with their own individual agency .

11. Jorge Sola

First of all, I'm amazed at Mann's ambitious work. True, sometimes what he says in programmatic chapters is different that what he does in empirical ones. True, there are some theoretical gaps, as Wright pointed out in his criticism. And true, some of Mann's historical statements or criticisms are quite questionable. In spite of these flaws, in my personal opinion his work is one of the best we have read in the course. Two little things:

1- Mann argues often with Marx's shadow, as his admired Weber did but more explicitly. I think he is unfair sometimes. For instance, while Mann stresses that the concepts he uses are "ideal types", he doesn't realize that some of the Marxian concepts he critics are also theoretical models (or "ideal types", in Weberian language), which doesn't attempt

to describe the whole messy reality. However in one point, I think Mann is more Marxist than many Marxists in his distinction between “authoritative power” and “diffused power”. Mann states “diffused power” appears typically in economic power organizations, like market exchange in capitalism (as well as it is also characteristic of ideological power networks). Unlike more Marxists of the 70’s, who were surprisingly obsessed with domination relationships in the workplace (“authoritative power” in Mann’s word), Mann is closer than they are to Marx, insofar as Marx stresses the impersonal, abstract and non-transparent character of domination relationships under capitalism. Marx wrote that “while roman slaves were subject to his owner by chains, wage workers are tied by invisible threads”, and these threads are woven in the market relationships which pervade capitalist society. That is the reason, moreover, why such domination relationships are not as clear as the slave or feudal relationships, as Marx emphasizes in “commodity fetishism” analysis; it is because power relationships are diffused (“a social hieroglyph”) and appear like a relationship among things which are exchanged in market, like an objective, anonymous and natural set of relations. I cannot articulate better this idea, but I think the concept of “diffused power” is a very interesting way to understand the capitalist relations within a Marxist framework.

2- I find it very interesting that Mann distinguishes “military power” and “political power”, in a provocative way which moves away from the canonical Trotsky-Weber definition of State. Perhaps it is because I am from a country used to the military insurrections and coups. What does this have to do with class analysis? It will be very interesting to use Mann’s tools, based in the four networks of power, to analyze the American foreign policies in Latin America in relation to national class struggles (for instance, the coup against Allende's government in 1973).*

Michael Response to Jorge

[In response to 1: I also think Mann’s concept of diffused power is useful for understanding the workings of capitalism. I wonder what you think about his larger argument about social structure being an effective combination of several forms of power. That seems to me to be part of why he looks to more than the diffuse (but also authoritative), extensive (and intensive at some points), and collective power of capitalism to other sources of power in order to explain the workings of the modern state. In particular, he stresses that national identities entwine with class identities, because of authoritative military power on the one hand, and because of the more diffuse infrastructural power of the state bureaucracy, which *partially determines*, in his view (but which *diminishes* the true interests of the objective middle class from Marx’s point of view) the middle class, by pulling it into a relationship with the state. In response to 2: Perhaps Mann would say that because not all states are equally militarized it is useful to distinguish between military power – violence that may be used against in internal population or in geopolitics – and the power of the state as a distinctive actor that naturalizes its activity and its population into nations. Here the ideological power of nation symbols that create an “imagined community” within a territory, geopolitical militarism, and a state infrastructure that pulls people into its folds, do seem to overlap in

complicated ways. I think his point is that military power is not concerned with imaginary community building, whereas states fundamentally are. (Michael)]

Elizabeth's Response to Jorge

I think your first point is a great observation! I'm sorry I have nothing to say about it other than that I hadn't thought of this at all, but I think you are right that Marx's commodity fetishism analysis uses a concept a lot like Mann's "diffuse power." (And despite your disclaimer, I think your explanation of this idea was very clear.)

About your second point, I wasn't quite sure what you had in mind about using the military/political power distinction to analyze the U.S. response to Allende. But your example made me think that the distinction has a certain resonance for the coup itself (and probably for any military coup). The Allende example might be especially helpful for trying to point to an answer to your question, "What does this have to do with class analysis?", to the extent that we understand the coup as representing business interests, represented in the military, rebelling against what they saw as the competing class interests represented in the state authority. You might also wonder, though, whether military vs. political is the most relevant distinction for class purposes. It seems to me that while certain state figures (like Allende) are elected and thus have whatever level of accountability that conveys (or doesn't, as the case may be), both the military and the bureaucracy (or large swaths of it) have no real accountability to "the people." I'm not sure whether Mann's distinction is the best way to analyze the sort of power that they have.

Rahul responses to Jorge

Jorge: Unlike more Marxists of the 70's, who were surprisingly obsessed with domination relationships in the workplace ("authoritative power" in Mann's word), Mann is closer than they are to Marx, insofar as Marx stresses the impersonal, abstract and non-transparent character of domination relationships under capitalism.

Rahul: I think this is true. Mann and Marx both do not focus very strongly on power/domination relationships in the workplace (Marx, of course, comes close to this with his extended discussion on absolute and relative surplus-value, the length of the working day, and intensification of labor, but still stays as far away as possible from theorizing the mechanisms of supervision, repression, etc.). This is, however, a weakness in Marx, most likely stemming from his lack of experience with or understanding of actual labor. Some of those weaknesses are then replicated in Lenin and Trotsky's fascination with Taylorism and the "militarization of labor." Harry Braverman is, I think, a big improvement on Marx in this particular regard.

For Mann, it's less of a weakness because class and particularly production are less central to his analysis.

Jorge: I find it very interesting that Mann distinguishes "military power" and "political power", in a provocative way which moves away from the canonical Trotsky-Weber

definition of State. Perhaps it is because I am from a country used to the military insurrections and coups. What does this have to do with class analysis?

Rahul: I agree. The Marxist tradition is particularly weak on theorizing the military as a political actor. Here, I think, Mann is drawing on Weber as well as the bellicist school of state-theorizing (including Tilly).

I don't know how to answer this question, because it invokes an absolute referent – class analysis – that remains for us undefined, both structurally and in terms of its analytical purpose. For Mann, the question is, "What does this have to do with social power as manifest in the societies I have studied," and he does give some answers there.

12. Interrogation, Fabian Pfeffer

Mann's self-proclaimed aim is a grand "sociological theory based on historical depth and breath" (p.32). Without any doubt, the historical depth and breath of his work is impressive. Yet, I do not think that Mann actually provides a sociological theory at all. His framework might be an interesting heuristic for describing social change but in my opinion fails to fulfill two central requirements of a theory: falsifiability and reduction of complexity. To elaborate on this point, I would like to compare his framework with a different sociological approach that for some also fails to qualify as a theory: systems theory. [If anyone will be assigned to give comments on this interrogation, he or she should feel free to directly proceed to the next paragraph, especially if unfamiliar with or bored by systems theory].

Although Wright characterizes Mann's work as an "agency-centered framework" (p.5), his distinction of four basic power sources (IEMP) in some aspects resembles the classical (e.g. Luhmann's) systems theory distinction between distinct spheres of society such as the religion (I), the economy (E), the military (M), the political system (P), and others. This comparison might seem a bit far stretched considering some fundamental differences between these approaches (static versus dynamic; no micro-foundation whatsoever versus the concept of power actors). Nevertheless, I think it is revealing to compare the solutions that these two different approaches find for a central analytical problem: the degree of autonomy of or interpenetration among the different spheres of society (power sources / sub-systems).

Most varieties of system theory assume a high autonomy of societal subsystems (*autopoiesis* is yet the most obscure label for this). Different systems follow their own internal logic and convert system-external stimuli into this internal logic. Mann's power sources on the other hand are highly interdependent. *Entwined* might be the single most frequent word of this book. It means that power sources are "not merely external to one another [but] shape one another's form (p.725)", they are "not reducible" to one another but "variably encouraged and structured" by each other (p.42). Such notion of highly interactive systems of society offers some interesting analytical possibilities. For instance, it results in the claim that economic conflict is only a necessary but not sufficient cause of social revolution: "without intervention from other sources of social power, [economic] conflicts [...] turned out partial, mild and particularistic" (p.724).

Nevertheless, the theoretical indeterminacy of such highly interactive systems despairs any sociologist who sets out to follow Mann's IMEP model. Missing claims about a stable immanent logic of at least one power source (as in systems theory) or the primacy of one over the other (as in Marxism) make Mann's framework perhaps flexible, but most probably too flexible for empirical refutation. Mann's ultimate argument for developing an underdetermined framework for the study of social change is that empirical complexity necessitates it. The fact that he needs three volumes and far more than 1000 pages to analyze the history of 150 years might be indicative of such complexity. But in my eyes his approach inevitably plays out to be of no service for the reduction of complexity. In the face of his impressive work certainly seems like a minimalist and insubstantial critique - but it further encourages me in claiming that his work has great value as a historical description rather than a well-defined theoretical model to study current processes of social change.

Michael Interrogation of Fabian Pfeffer

[I am not sure how to respond to your methodological criticisms about what counts as good social science, but I'll give it shot: Is it true that Mann's theory is not falsifiable? He presents a theory of the development of the modern nation state. His theory is that states develop according to an effective combination of several forms of power (authoritative vs. diffuse, etc.), traceable to different social sources (IEMP). According to his theory, one would not expect to find the workings of a modern nation state, with its entwined classes and nations, in historical contexts where only authoritative power is present, and diffuse power is absent. If such a case turned up, his theory would be falsified. Also, Mann's theory is developed by selecting on the dependent variable, existing modern nation states, and then working backwards to explain their common features as well as their divergent features. The theory developed out of his five cases will certainly do a good job of explaining his five cases (!), but the theory may still be tested for its general explanatory power by applying it to other cases. If other cases do not fit his theory, that would lead either to a refinement of his theory and our understanding of what a nation state is, or to the conclusion that the additional case isn't actually a member of the class of "modern nation-state". Either way, explanation seems to be advanced. Although it is possible to define a good theory as that which "reduces complexity", I do not think it should be the objective of good social science to try to do that - especially if one thinks that complexity and contingency is a feature of social life. A focus on complexity is a move away from structuralism to something else - perhaps historical institutionalism? I think a good case could be made for such a movement. Isn't it possible that a contingent, overlapping configuration of power dimensions rather than just economic structure determines social forms such as the nation state? If not Mann's theory, what kind of theory would allow us to investigate such a social world? (Michael)].

Elizabeth Response to Fabian

I think you make a great point that Mann's analysis runs the danger of being unfalsifiable and therefore non-explanatory, since he not only posits several kinds of overlapping power, but also that the relationship between them changes their causal

powers (for lack of a better word), without giving much systematic account of how this works.

I think maybe the way to pull some non-tautological points out of Mann is to explore the theoretical logic that he uses in practice, in his historical analysis. This is what Wright does, I think, when he shows that for all Mann's protestations about the irrelevance of class location, he in fact uses class locations to explain the emergence of collective action in his historical work. Similarly, while it's true that Mann's framework has the starting point that much is contingent (which can in itself be a substantive, falsifiable point – see Michael's comment in his interrogation about the importance of timing, or Mann's point on p. 234 (v2 ch7) about "self-fulfilling ideological principles," i.e., history constraining what actors can do in the future), he also implicitly relies on the emergence of certain patterns in his historical work. The point about collective action being what is of interest because organizations, not individuals, hold greater ability to change things may be a falsifiable point as well, although actually I'm not sure about this since his sense of "collective action" or organizational action is so broad.

Rahul comments on Fabian

Fabian: Yet, I do not think that Mann actually provides a sociological theory at all. His framework might be an interesting heuristic for describing social change but in my opinion fails to fulfill two central requirements of a theory: falsifiability and reduction of complexity.

Rahul: I don't think one can take seriously Popperian falsifiability in its unvarnished form as a serious criterion. A theory should make predictions about reality; that is true, and the only actual point of Popper's criterion. But no theory specified in abstraction gives an unambiguous way to make predictions (although the degree of ambiguity varies from theory to theory). You could make the same criticism of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection – as has often been done. The point is that a great deal of work has to be done to specify the pathways by which you go from a theory's basic principles to a prediction. In the case of Darwin, the basic question that has to be answered in order to do this is, "How do we hypothesize sensibly about what factors might lead to differential reproductive success?" If you don't have at least a provisional answer for this, you can't even try to falsify evolution by natural selection.

I don't know what has to be elaborated for Mann's theory, most likely because it would take a lot more work, some of it by people other than Mann, to figure it out.

Similarly, look at Marx. If you include his concrete predictions in his theory, it's not only falsifiable but false. If you remove them and look at general principles – "The history of hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle" – you need to elaborate definitions of class, ways to balance the potential effects of class from other effects, theorize some way to remove "incidental" events that have nothing to do with class from a putative larger historical sweep that is driven by class, and much more. Only then can you try to falsify.

As for reduction of complexity, anything you can describe in a mere 1300 pages is a lot simpler than human history. Or, less flippantly, there are plenty of places in which he provides relatively simple explanations. The "social cage" idea, for example. Or the idea that you can explain societies by looking at four sources of social power, instead of the vulgar Marxists' idea that one is enough. Four is more than one, but it's still pretty simple.