

INTERROGATIONS #2 with EOW comments
SOCIOLOGY 924
session 3: Organization-Analytic Approaches to the State
September 18, 2002

Memo #2 James Benson—A Question to Michael Mann

Michael Mann criticizes class reductionist theories of the capitalist state which described the state as an organization for managing the affairs of the bourgeoisie (504). While he acknowledged that Marx had a point in this regard, he insists that Marx had “underestimated the constraints on capitalism that moral-ideological and party-democratic crystallizations might bring.” My question to Michael Mann is as follows: Does your work demonstrate that moral-ideological constructions and party-democratic formations were independent of dominant class influences, such that they functioned as significant challenges to the capitalist nature of the state, during the time period covered by your book? **[The pivotal term Mann would use to answer your question is “entwining”: that is, the various forms of social power – ideological, party-democratic (and also military) – interact with and interpenetrate each other, and the effects in the world are the result of such interactions. The effects of the co-presence of different organizational-bases of power are not additive; they are interactive. And in such interactions it is impossible to reduce the effects to any one dimension – thus the rejection of reductionism. This does not mean mean that these non class bases of power are “independent” of class any more than class is “independent” of them. They need not “function as significant challenges to capitalist nature of the state” in order for them to have systematic, irreducible consequences.]**

I challenge Mann’s notion that “societies are only loose aggregates of diverse, overlapping, intersecting power networks (506).” The development of capitalist, industrial production was particularly salient during the time period that Mann studied, especially from the mid-nineteenth century onward. The largest increases in civil expenses (of states) that Mann cites in Table 11.5 are all expenditures that directly served the interests of capital expansion: education, transport, other economic services, symbolic communication. **[what about the warmaking expenses? These often were not closely tied to the interests of capitalism – although they would benefit certain specific capitalists – and they certainly contributed greatly to the expansion of states. And many of these infrastructural expenses also served geopolitical power crystallizations]** I don’t see evidence of moral-ideological constructions at odds with these state initiatives. For example, the Protestant Work Ethic encouraged work activity within the emerging capitalist system. Mann’s suggestion that party-democratic formations may have placed limits on capitalism is the more serious of the two contentions. Again, there is a need here for examples, within the time period covered by his work. One way of beginning a deeper inquiry of this party-democratic “crystallization” involves examining the influence of classes on political party formation during this period. I advance the hypothesis that working classes were only beginning to amass the technical skills, the organizational structure, and the economic power necessary to exert political influences on their respective states, during this time period.

Interrogation – Week 2 (The Sources of Social Power) – Amy Lang

1. Mann makes a strong argument against Marxist predictions regarding the possibility of economic relations to revolutionize political (distributive) power relations. In particular, he rejects both a “systems”-logic to the study of social phenomena (the idea that economic and political arenas are part of a unitary, bounded social system), and a vision of class as embodying purely economic relations. Thus he argues that while states crystallized as capitalist throughout the long 19th Century, this was one among several competing state imperatives (militarist and national-representative being the others). Historically, the classes that developed were segments, fractions, and/or ideologically constituted (via the combination of nationalism with certain class segments), and these then complicated the ways in which political groupings were incorporated into the state. Having been schooled largely by Weberians before coming to Madison, Mann’s “complexified” account of economic power relations seems intuitively plausible to me, especially

through its reliance on historical evidence. My question for those more schooled in class analysis is this: What, if anything, do we lose by rejecting systems-thinking and a focus on “purely” economic classes? **[Does Mann say that classes are not purely economic phenomena or – alternatively – does he say that the organization of classes as collective actors is not a purely economic phenomenon? I am not sure if he is rejecting a fairly economic definition of class relations. It seems to me that his main argument here is with the determinants of class struggle and organization.]** Is there some other important characteristic of Marxist theories of the state that Mann’s theory does not address? **[I think the fundamental question here is the problem of the critique of capitalism and the possibility of an emancipatory alternative: the bottom line of Marxism – I would argue – is the claim that capitalist class relations are a fundamental impediment to human emancipation, and the capitalist state is a specific institutional complex that blocks the transformation of capitalism necessary for such emancipation. Mann – like Weber – would reject this conception of an alternative as meaningful, I think.]** Or is the difference between the two merely one of choosing between levels of abstraction? **[This is an interesting proposal – that Mann is simply explaining a lower level of abstraction than Marxist class analytic approaches. Mann, I think, would respond that the higher level of abstraction is a false abstraction – i.e. it no longer constitutes a level of abstraction at which causal mechanisms can be identified.]**

So far, I can think of two drawbacks to Mann’s project that operate at a theoretical level: Mann loses parsimony and he loses the assumption of causal regularities. Whether social theory should be parsimonious and focus on causal regularities is open for debate, but I am assuming that these elements are valued in Sociology. The issue of parsimony is obvious for anyone who has done the reading for this week. In terms of the second issue, even though there are only four sources of social power, they “entwine” in different ways at different times to different degrees. Marxist “systems” thinking at least posits basic causal connections between economic and political development. **[In some ways, of course, a model of the entirety of human history that says it can be properly described and its trajectories explained by the entwining of only four sources of social power is pretty parsimonious. The application of this to specific historical problems may get very complicated, but this doesn’t mean that the conceptual structure itself is so complex: it is fairly lean menu of concepts in some ways. I agree with you that entwining is pretty slippery and often renders the causal story a bit opaque. I interpret this as meaning two related things: 1) causal processes are interactive rather than purely additive, and 2) the organizations which are the carriers of power embody multiple sources of power – the sources of power are not fully organizational differentiated, but rather interpenetrate. That is still causal language, just not a simple one.]**

2. Would it be worthwhile to separate Mann’s two constitutive elements of power (overlapping networks of interaction and organizational means for attaining goals)? I bring this up in the context of thinking about Mann’s discussion of military power in the 18th as compared to the 19th centuries. Mann argues that in the 18th century military power (along with economic power) transcended and “organized” other sources of social power. Geopolitical competition (aka military networks of interaction) spurred the development of state infrastructures. In the 19th century, military power (he focuses on the development of the military as an organization) was subsumed under state development. That is, although military autonomy grew, this was ultimately regulated by territorial political power. Thus it appears that Mann favours the “network” aspect of power when discussing military transcendence, and the “organizational” aspect of power when discussing military subordination to other forms of social power. Does he do this when discussing other sources of power? **You make a superb/interesting point here. Worth discussing. I think Mann would like both networks and organizations to be always present in the analysis of power, but you may be right that when he talked about the subordination of one form of power to another it is primarily in organizational terms.**

Matt Vidal #2 A few points on Mann's *Sources of Social Power*, Volumes I and II

1.

In chapter 1 of volume 1, Mann spends some time arguing that societies cannot be understood as totalities. Yet, the following statement from the same chapter seems to me to be exactly what Marx meant by the notion of totality, which is that society is concretely the result of many determinations, "the unity of the diverse": "Questions of economic production, of meaning, of armed defense, and of judicial settlement are not fully independent of one another. *The character of each is likely to be influenced by the character of all, and all are necessary for each.* A given set of production relations will require common ideological and normative understandings, and it will require defense and judicial regulation" (Mann 1986: 14-15; my emphasis). Does Mann mean to imply an understanding such as Skocpol, that these developments were "originally separately determined?" I cannot understand how this statement of dialectical interdependency, each process "necessary for each" other, along with the statement of production relations functionally requiring ideology, military and state power, can be understood as anything other than an affirmation of the notion of "society" as a concrete totality. Is he confusing his polemic against totality as one against "primacy" and "economic determinism?" To what degree does this curious contradiction in his work come from the level of abstraction at which he works? Is it possible that his empirical/historical findings of "entwining" forces of power *unnecessarily* (in the sense that it could have been otherwise, depending on contingent factors) leading to the development of the modern state could be theoretically explained "better" through a more abstract analysis? (See 2 and 5 below: does he understand organization only as formal organizations?)

Additional point on "entwining": In any case, I think Mann's claim that "because in both phases the two principal transformers were . . . entwined, . . . it is not possible to weight their interrelations" is a cop out; especially when he immediately adds that "although of course, the economic power of capitalism uniquely remained part of both phases of dualism" (1993: 737). Whether or not there is a single "ultimately determining logic," the "patterned mess" that Mann describes, every element of his long and detailed story, suggests that what he is describing is in fact a system: how else can we understand something that is "not colliding billiard balls but entwined?" **[You make excellent points here and do identify confusing features of Mann's rhetoric. Here is how I would take this: he is rejected the notion of "system" as implying some tightly integrated, quasi-organic unity – where all the bits fit together into functional gestalts. He is not rejecting the ideas that different aspects of society have some conditions of existence and that these are filled by other institutions/practices. There are lots of isomorphisms, complementaries, reciprocities in his analysis. But they still do not fit together like a machine or organism; society is made of overlapping intersecting networks of relations which are only loosely coupled. There are system-like features to this kind of configuration, but it isn't a strong system in the Marxian sense of "totality"]**

2.

"Commercial and industrial capitalism developed class, sectional and segmental organizations simultaneously and ambiguously. I attribute outcomes mainly to authoritative political power relations" (Mann 1993: 5).

Because of his organizational approach, power is seen to reside mainly within formal organizations. Is this an artifact of the approach, or is the authoritative power of organizations really more decisive than the diffused power that inheres in social relations *qua* broad social structure (patriarchy, race, etc.)? Here the apparent broad historical approach may obscure the fact that he focuses on key episodes in what is theorized as an otherwise trendless movement (see V. I.: no system, no totality, no primary relations). I think the explanandum here is still discrete events, not historical development as such. On the ground (and close to it) discrete events are decisive; but how can we adjudicate between theories of "history as a culmination of discrete events with no overall logic" versus "history as discrete events and contingencies operating within relational frameworks of constraint, with developmental logics?" E.g., authoritative power may make key decisions within a framework of diffused power. **[This is a bit like Marx's quip: history is the judge, the proletariat is the executioner.]** Is there any theoretical reason why diffused power should be less decisive or causal than authoritative power? Diffused power may be more elusive, slippery, continuous, consistent, etc. Contrary to his caveats and theoretical prescriptions, the above quote is one of causal primacy. Moreover, the language of stumbling power actors, given institutions and emergent forces

seems to be at odds with the conclusion that the key outcomes come from "authoritative political power relations." **[I agree with you: there is no inherent reason why concentrated authoritative power has to have greater explanatory power in general than diffuse power.]**

3.

It seems quite clear that diffused power is more likely to be extensive. It seems intuitive that authoritative power would more likely be intensive also. But intensive power simply a subform of authoritative power? If not it is confusing because it is defined in terms of participants ("the ability to organize tightly and command a high level of mobilization or commitment from the participants"), which is clear in the case of authoritative power but not in the case of diffused power. Who are the participants in organizations exhibiting diffused power? Are organizations the loci of diffused power? I would say that capitalist market exchange is a quite intensive form of diffused power, even rivaling the paradigmatic case of intensive authoritative power: the military. **[Markets are not "intensive" because they do not "mobilize high levels of commitment**

4.

Forces of production are collective economic power; relations of production are distributive economic power. If classes are relations, then how can they be exclusively distributive forms of power? **[I don't see you question: distributive power is the power of A over B – thus capitalists over workers; collective power is the power of A and B acting jointly. Forces of production enhance the power of capitalists and workers acting jointly to produce. Distributive power only makes sense within relations. Maybe I just don't understand your question.]**

5.

If class relations are institutionalized then the effects of this diffused power may be quite large (e.g., placing constraints on state action, or the strategies and identity formation of workers) even if there are not formal organizations through which class actors exercise power. Minimally, classes may not be organized as political actors but still may exercise power individually (distributively) through capitalist firms, the aggregation of which (i.e., of firm-level capitalist relations) generates diffused power structures in labor markets, etc.

6.

Mann identifies four "fault lines" which impeded the formation of "pure" or "whole" classes: economic sector fragments of classes; segmental groups from enterprises, industries or occupation; strata or fractions; national segments (1993: 28). Seems to me like the first three are analytically identical.

7.

On "organizational materialism" and ideology. Why does the fact that media of communication may transform ideological messages make ideologies autonomous, organizational, or material (Mann 1993: 36)? Does the fact that ideology is diffused through organizational media make ideology *itself* organizational, in the sense of *social organization*, and if not in what sense is ideology organizationally similar to economic, political and military forms of organization? **[I think Mann is just making a simple point here: the effectivity of the ideological messages of the Catholic Church depend to a significant extent on the organizational properties of the Church which enable it to disseminate the message, add weight to the message, sanction violations of the message, etc.]**

From: Pablo

To: Everyone in Sociology 924.

Mann's crystallization model of the state – and what it precisely entails for Marxist theories of the state.

According to Mann, a state is polymorphous because it crystallizes at the center – but in each case as a different center – of a number of power networks (Vol II:75). That the state "crystallizes as X" seems to

mean simply that it does certain things x_1 , x_2 , etc, which, taken together, entail that it has the property X. This is the essence of his “functional approach,” that is meant to complement his “institutional definition” of the state. In the period and geographical area he covers in Volume II, states crystallized as capitalist, militarist, representative and national. He argues that there is no causal hierarchy among these four crystallizations, and that the capitalist one is not in any sense “ultimately determining.” On the contrary, “it is the combination of all these higher-level crystallizations (plus inputs from moral-ideological and patriarchal crystallizations) that provide such ‘ultimate’ patterning of *modern states* as we can find” (Vol II:88; my italics). The evidence Mann provides to support this claim comes from his historical analysis of five countries in the long XIX century.

Observe that nothing Mann says goes against the idea that *in capitalist societies* the state is a capitalist state, i.e., it is a state that functions structurally to reproduce capitalism. So, what is Mann criticizing? He is opposing the idea that this is the “*only* fundamental property” of the modern state (Vol. II:45; italics in the original). What this means is not completely clear, and we should try to sort it out – “fundamental” for what, or in what sense? This is not a minor problem for Mann, who defends a rather ideographic view of the social world. **[One possible meaning here is this: Certain aspects of the state which pervasively affect what they do and even their impact on capitalism are not derived from the fact that they are capitalist states but rather from other properties of the state. Most notably, in his argument, if it were just “up to capitalism” the modern state would be transnational, not national, in its basic structure: capitalism thrives best as a transnational (in strong or weak senses he elaborates), but because of the military crystallization (among other things), capitalist states become nation states – territorially confined and nationalized – and this has immense consequences for capitalism. The “theory of the capitalist state” generally argues that if property X of the state has immense consequences for capitalism it should be explained by the capitalist character of the state – i.e. in some sense or other its superstructural character. This is what Mann is rejecting, it seems].**

Even with this clarification pending, I still want to propose two very tentative arguments in favor of the idea that, in capitalist societies – because nobody thinks the Marxist argument was meant to apply to the modern state in general – the capitalist crystallization of the state is more fundamental, or perhaps the only fundamental one. Both have to do with the variability in the high-level properties Mann discusses. First, it seems that between 1760 and 1914, the five countries Mann studies were much more dissimilar in the “representative” and “national” dimensions than in the “capitalist” one. For instance, regarding the former they were situated in very different places in the continuum from despotic monarchy to full party democracy. So much, that is doubtful whether we can actually say that all these states crystallized as representative in that period. The same applies to their degree of centralization – USA and UK exemplify quite important differences in this dimension. Second, and perhaps more central, we should keep in mind what happened after 1914. Militarism is not today a central property of the states of many advanced capitalist societies. “Representativity” was not a property of the state in many capitalist countries for long periods of time after 1914, and is absent today in some capitalist countries. The “national” character of some states is doubtful – think of Spain, or Switzerland, for instance. However, it seems that the capitalist crystallization was and is always there in capitalist social formations. Therefore, it could be argued that this property is more fundamental in some sense. **nice formulation: pervasiveness across otherwise dissimilar cases as a criterion for fundamentalness.**

On the other hand, in what sense this property would be more fundamental is something that for sure deserves additional thinking. Otherwise, we risk that the Marxist thesis becomes a tautology. Did the state in Sweden stop being a capitalist state during the heyday of social democratic rule? Did it remain a capitalist social formation during those years? If the answers were No and Yes, we would have evidence against the Marxist thesis and in favor of Mann’s. I don’t think this is the case here, but the key point is that we need definitions of ‘capitalist social formation’ and of ‘capitalist state’, such that it is *logically possible* to answer No and Yes.

Mann argues that “the main point of contention between Marxian and Weberian theory [is] whether we can single out economic power as ultimately decisive in determining the shape of human society.” Its vague terms suitably interpreted, I agree with this statement, and I certainly accept that “the issue of primacy is an empirical question.” But I think Mann goes awry when he writes, “Not ends but means give us our point of entry into the question of primacy...what [human] goals are and how they are created...is not relevant for what follows.” For one way of defending the Marxian position is precisely to argue that relationships of economic power *explain the ends* to which Mann’s other forms of social power are means.

So, for instance, Robert Brenner has argued that the structure of incentives prevailing under feudal property relations pushed feudal lords to make war, seize territory, and consolidate states. If his argument is correct, the prevalence of warfare under feudalism did not represent an autonomous power dynamic, but rather corresponded to the prevailing pattern of economic power. Likewise, Marxists have traditionally explained the demise of the *belle époque* and the descent into World War I in terms of the changing character of economic competition as the capitalist mode of production entered its monopoly phase. If this is right, the imperial carve-up of the world and ensuing bloodbath did not represent an ‘atavistic’ outburst by militarist elements, but rather expressed the logic of capitalist development. **[This, of course, is precisely what Mann rejects: he argues that the dynamic of capitalism and capitalist economic power bases by themselves would generate transnationalism, not nation-states, and that the national form of the state is something imposed on capitalism from dynamics rooted in other organizational sources of power – especially the military and territorial political organization. These generated dynamics which rendered capitalism much more national and territorially caged than it would otherwise be, and this in turn had a massive impact on the way capitalism developed.]**

My point is not that arguments of this sort are indisputably true, but rather that Mann does not engage them directly (at least not in the passages we have read), and this seems to flow from his decision to push the question of the ‘ends’ of power aside. Mann’s specific explanations of various historical developments may be incompatible with any Marxian position, but to establish this requires clarity about precisely what is at issue in the debate over ‘primacy’.

César A. Rodríguez

Soc. 924

Memo #2: An Organization-Analytic Approach to the State

1. I would like to insist on an issue that is touched upon in the introduction to this week’s topic offered in the syllabus. It pertains the status of Mann’s “theory” of the state. Put more generally, it pertains what counts as a *theory* of the state.

In Chapter 1 of Vol. 1, Mann explicitly states that his is a theory operating at a lower level of abstraction than most other social theories. The reason for this is that, for Mann, “societies are much messier than our theories of them” and thus social scientific explanations have to operate with “concepts suited to dealing with a mess” (p. 4) –i.e., concepts that incorporate the complexity and variety of concrete social practices. However, in criticizing historians, he also claims that his IEMP model accounts for historical patterns of social interaction, and thus sets out to offer a “causal model of organized power.”

The solution that Mann adopts in order to both deal with messiness and offer a causal model of social power is a Weberian one. Indeed, like Weber, he uses ideal types –e.g., a typology of social power, a taxonomy of social classes, a classification of state “crystallizations”, etc.—to explain historical phenomena –in his case, the evolution of networks of power in the West in the long nineteenth century. Thus, as evidenced by the chapters in Vol. 2, the complexity –and, at times, obscurity- of Mann’s analysis stems from his attempt to simultaneously formulate multifarious ideal types and apply them to the analysis of concrete historical episodes.

In reading Vol. 2, and in particular Chapter 3 (“A theory of the modern state”), it seemed to me that Mann had ultimately given up the theoretical, model-building aspirations laid out at the beginning of Vol. 1. This is so because of two reasons. First, he suggests that his theory of the state is confined only to the “history of a particular time and place, and with one singular culmination: World War I” (p. 87). Thus, rather than a theory, he seems to offer broad generalizations on a particular set of states in a particular historical conjuncture. Second, he pushes the idea of multicausality to a point where, to my mind, his account becomes difficult to distinguish from what he calls “foul-up” views of the state. This is the case especially when he gives great weight to unintended consequences and randomness in the production of historical phenomena –as in his claim that “the modern state has emerged in forms intended by no one and has in turn transformed all their identities and interests” (p. 87). Also, since there is no limit to the amount or content of ideal types, the multiplication of such types in Mann’s work according to the *explananda* at hand makes his account rather elusive, and his theoretical claims difficult to pin down. Theoretical payoffs are low if conceptual taxonomies themselves are as complex as their *explananda*. Indeed, as I read it, Mann’s theoretical claim about the state ends up being rather timid and ad-hoc –an eclectic mixture that is “partly institutional, partly functional polymorphous theory” (p. 88).

In light of the above, in sum, the point I would like to raise for discussion is to what extent Mann actually offers a *theory* of the state. The answer to this question, of course, depends on the answer to the question as to what is a theory of the state –and whether there may be theories that, although operating at different levels of analysis, can contribute to each other’s tasks. **[This is – of course – a big, murky, metatheoretical problem: what constitutes a “theory” and in what sense does Mann offer us a theory. The way I would put it is that the book offers us a conceptual menu in terms of which one can generate fairly compelling theoretical explanation of the trajectory of states in the 19th century. The concepts are more abstract than the explanations. Nevertheless, this is a kind of theory. Here is a Mann-like theoretical proposition: “The extent to which states become organized as nation states cannot be explained by the dynamics of capitalism per se or the functions states fill for capitalism, but rather depends upon the interaction between the capitalist character of the state and the state’s relation to military sources of power”. I think should count as a theoretical claim, not just a descriptive one.]**

2. A more specific, but closely related point, regards Mann’s claims about the heterogeneity of the state and the contingency of historical phenomena. Mann argues that the development of capitalist, representative, national and militarist state crystallizations is “entwined” and “nonsystemic”, and that states are “messier and less systemic and unitary than each single theory suggests” (p. 88). He does so to a great extent in order to avoid any causal claim as to the “ultimate primacy” of any of such state crystallizations.

This argument adequately captures the variety of combinations of the four state crystallizations –which, as Mann argues, would engender a 16-fold (and even bigger, since Mann envisages sub-types within each crystallization) typology of states. However, it leaves unexplained why –despite internal variations—the combination of those four specific state crystallization became so stable and widespread in the period of history under examination. In other words, if there is no overarching patterning mechanism, why did the combination of capitalism, representation, nationalism and militarism took hold *permanently* in the five leading Powers? Why did it spread gradually but securely to other countries in the West? If none of these crystallizations is holding them all together, is there an “elective affinity” between them?**[Very good point – similar to some observations made by Pablo]**

Matt Dimick
Sociology 924
Theories of the State
Weekly Interrogation 2

I would like to raise some issues about Michael Mann's *The Sources of Social Power*. These issues relate to the kind of model Mann uses and his desire to avoid a "symmetrical" or "unitary" model while at the same time avoiding the problems of a purely spatial model that tries to cleanly separate social "factors." I wonder whether demands too much from argument that sources of power are separate but often "entwined."

As Mann continually argues throughout the book, societies are messy. He wants to acknowledge this fact at the level of theory and argues against "societal" versions of social theory that, in his view, emphasize "totality" and "symmetry." His approach is to talk about societies being "constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power" (Vol. I, p. 1). He argues that one cannot reduce each source of power to another, that there is (probably?) not any "ultimately determining" factor, and that, in some sense, these sources of social power occupy distinct places in social space. But Mann's statement also recognizes that the distinction between them—while real—is not clear cut: these networks of power also "intersect" and "overlap." As Mann puts it, they are "promiscuous" and at times "entwine." He accuses other social theorists for taking the spatial model too far, for example when he says that Marxists view the state as a political factor *rather than* an economic one (Vol. I, p. 17). (But then he also accuses Marxists of being too "reductionist" for example, when they "reduce states to economic power relations" (Vol. II, p.44). Here, Marxists aren't spatial enough.)

Mann has a model that avoids both the problems of reductionism and "spatialism": he recognizes spatially distinct, non-reductionist sources of power, that at the same time entwine in contingent ways. **[Mann often emphasizes contingency, but it seems to me that much of his entwining arguments are not especially contingent – the same sort of entwining seems to be happening in many cases, so it cannot be universally contingent, I think]** Arguably, this is the great merit of Mann's approach. But I have some issues about what "One early example is when he makes his case that military power is distinct from political power. One reason he gives for the distinction is that states have not always exercised a monopoly of organized military force, citing the European feudal state and its dependence on the feudal military levy controlled by decentralized lords (Vol. I, p. 11). But I had thought that the feudal state was characterized by its decentralized, "parcelized" sovereignty, where the king and lords exercised political and coercive power within their own sphere dictated by the feudal hierarchical contract. Thus, it doesn't make sense to draw the distinction in this case between "state" and "military." Does this just mean that military power and political power were more entwined than Mann realizes. Or is he trying to sneak his way around something here? Perhaps to do otherwise might force him to admit a more "systemic" or "symmetrical" view of society by recognizing a much more direct connection between politics and coercion in this case? Shortly later, Mann says that political powers "are those of centralized, institutionalized, territorial regulation" (Vol. I, p. 11), thereby avoiding the issue of whether feudal lords were part of the political and/or military power structures. But this sounds like he is using a much too "modern" definition of political power. **[I think the point here is that the military and the political are distinct sources power and that their interconnection/interpenetration/entwining will be variable across states. Political power is derived from effective "territorial regulation" whereas military power from concentrated coercion. These will always be linked, just as territorial regulation must always be linked to economic power in one way or another . But a necessary linkage does not imply an identity or an invariant form of linkage, and thus the claim about the distinction between these forms of power.]**

Another example occurs during his discussion of the transition of feudalism to capitalism in chapter 7. (I didn't read chapter 6, so I hope I'm not mischaracterizing when I rely on his summary in chapter 7.) There he argues that in the pre-1792 phase, not class struggle but rather political struggle "structured by fiscal crises induced by war making" was the defining struggle of the period (Vol. II, p. 221). But from my understanding, the "dynamism" of the feudal economy came from its "militaristic" nature: it could only expand through conquest, as opposed to "the accumulation of capital." Could one argue that the crisis-generating militarism of this period was directly bound up with the feudal economy, and not just entwined? Or is this just a recognition of the entwining that Mann has already pointed out. **[I think that this is genuinely a debate, not just a terminological point, Brenner insists that it is the**

feudal character of property relations that generates a specific kind of warfare which, in turn, generates these sorts of fiscal crisis; Mann believes that their was an autonomous military/monarchical basis for these conflicts] Furthermore, the ruling class wasn't distinct from the feudal state: as Therborn pointed out, the feudal state was "privatized" in that *political* power was exercised primarily for the lord's *economic* benefit. Thus, were struggles against "taxation, bondholding and economic privileges, debt laws, and monopolies and prices conferred by the state" (Vol. II, p. 222), just as much class struggles as they were political struggles, since the state elites who enjoyed the benefits conferred by these political instruments were arguably also the ruling class? Again, is this just a case of closer entwining than Mann realizes? Why does Mann insist that these struggles were political rather than class, or both?

So Mann seems well motivated when he uses his IMEP power model: it avoids reductionism. However, the examples above make it sound like it's still too spatial, and that the distinctions between kinds of power is much more subtle. Maybe the social is more unitary than Mann admits.

Finally, what consequences do these questions have for a more Marxist approach to state theory? Traditionally, many Marxists have also relied on spatial models, talking about "levels" and the "relative autonomy" between them, not always to good effect. The "levels of abstraction" could lend itself to the same interpretation where we can read the systemic level as the "economic," the institutional as the "political" and the individual as the "ideological." But this doesn't seem to necessarily be the case. The approach rather seems to rely not on separating levels in terms of social space, but only in terms of abstraction. It, too, also seems to avoid the problems of reductionism, but also that power can't be so easily separated into distinctive spheres.

924memo#2-Keedon

I am very impressed by Mann's book. My objection with which I could come up only with difficulty is that his conceptual strategy is too broad to be specific about any specific eras. He reduces all human reality to four powers: ideological, economic, military, and political. **[I am not sure if he reduces "all human reality" to these four powers, but rather argues that these four powers explain the trajectories of large scale social change since change requires power, and power is effective only when organized]** Their interrelations and changing primacy in specific eras may be suited for a study of some macro historical changes, but his typology not changing over entire history may lead to the lack of specificity. For instance, the distinction between political and military powers embarrasses us who live in modern nation-states. **[I am not sure that the distinction should be "embarrassing" in the modern state. It can be the case that (1) political power and military power each have their own distinctive sources – territorial regulation and physical coercion respectively, and also (2) the organizations which wield military power are subordinated to the organizations that engage in territorial regulation. I am not sure why you find the distinction as such problematic.]** Also, the grand typology misses some significant new networks of power which emerged in modern times, beginning with civil society. Thus I might suspect that his concepts are a guideline for his narrative historical study rather than produce a "theory" of social power

#2 Landy Sanchez

This week my comments are about Mann's perspective on the autonomy of State, particularly about how it is achieved, autonomy "variations", and the connections between autonomy and cohesion.

As Barrow (1993) claims, the question about "the possible autonomy of the state" in capitalist societies gave rise to the organizational approach in State Theory. A central assertion of this perspective is that State is not an instrument of the dominant class, and also that there exists "the contingent possibility of historical and political disjunctures between state and capital" (Barrow, 1993, p.127). To Skocpol this autonomy rests on the assumption that State power is not a derivation of class power, but it could arise from its organization; in both senses as structure of state apparatus and organizational capacities of state officials. The extent of State autonomy varies across space and time.

Mann integrates this approach to his *organizational materialism*. In fact, his notion of autonomy arises [at least partially] from his interpretation of Skocpol's work. In one sense, state autonomy resides in "the autonomous logic of definite political institutions, arisen in the course in the course of previous struggles, then institutionalized and constraining present struggles." (1993, p.52) In this sense, autonomy is the independence of state apparatus from current interest struggles, and it is not a product of strategic actions of neither state nor particular actors.

A second notion of autonomy in Mann appears in his discussion about despotic and infrastructural power. The question is about the degree of insulation of state institution from civil society pressures and interest. Mann asserts that full insulation [despotic power] is unlikely, but it is possible to achieve it partially through "explicit" state strategies. He quotes the German monarchy case "Through particularistic, embedded alliance regimes may attain moderate insulation and autonomy from broader social forces" (1993, p. 64), or other monarch attempts. **[While Mann was undoubtedly influenced by Skocpol in some respects, nevertheless I think his arguments are quite different from hers. In particular, Mann does not really give much weight to the autonomous interests of state elites as such. That does not play that much of a role in his argument. And, unlike Skocpol, he also argues that the state in the 19th century was indeed a capitalist state. His autonomy comes much more from the dynamic processes through which states are formed and built, which he sees as being generated by nature of military competition and the problems of territorial regulation.]**

If both notions are presented in Mann's works, is the autonomy of the state constructed by state actors, or is a by-product of social struggle, or both?

Another issue refers to the extent of variation of state autonomy. For Mann it varies not just across time and geography, but also among the different parts of the state. In this sense some institutions are less "vulnerable" to dominant class or social pressure and other are "conquered" by them. To me, this approach allows an infinite variation of state autonomy, but it makes almost impossible to identify factors that explain that difference, thus each case becomes a "unique" situation that can just be explained by the analysis of the particular situation that gave it rise. **[But doesn't Mann, in producing these particular explanations, invoke a range of common factors? Thus, for example, Mann explains why in all of these cases states took increasingly national forms, and then provides particular explanations for the deviations (Austria) and variations. I think, in the end, his explanations are not quite so open-ended]**

I found interesting his idea about the relationship between autonomy and cohesion. Mann questions the idea that a greater degree of cohesion is a characteristic of an autonomous state. In contrast, he holds that its cohesion and effectiveness depends on the relations between state and civil society: "where the state was relatively cohesive, this was mainly because central state actors remained embedded, if more universalistically, in civil society power networks, principally in national classes. Where state actors had more autonomy from civil society, they had difficulty in acting cohesively" (p.474). Thus, autonomy is negatively correlated with cohesion. But, I also think that this statement is problematic when we consider his idea of different crystallizations of the state, and about the different degrees of autonomy of state institutions. Since each state institution might be dominated by different state crystallizations, (p.80) the state actors are embedded in different power networks, and each state institution has different degrees of autonomy, how is cohesion attained? **[Interesting issues – I think your observation about the ironic relationship between cohesion and autonomy is worth discussing. This is quite different from Skocpol, I think, who would see cohesion of the state elite as resulting from their autonomy – and contributing to it.]**

2 – TERESA MELGAR MICHAEL MANN: SOURCES OF SOCIAL POWER

Let me say at the outset that Mann's conception of the state appeals very much to me, largely because it raises issues that resonate with much of the emerging discourse as well as debates on the nature of the state and state-civil society relations in our part of the world. Here, I wish to just zero in on two very interesting

points he raises concerning his particular approach to the state and examine their implications for political practice.

1) contesting the idea of a monolithic state -- Mann's conception of the state poses a direct challenge to the idea of a monolithic or unitary state. Instead of looking at the state as one aggregate whole that is driven by one overriding logic, he proposes that we look at the specific institutions and varying institutional arrangements that undergird the exercise of state power, "specify their institutional peculiarities" and examine how they actually pursue their goals in a dynamic process of interaction with other "power sources" in society. In so doing, we may discover that states are often "messier" than usually assumed -- that there is no single factor that ultimately determines why states act the way they do. Their actions, instead, are often the result of a dynamic interplay between these sources of power and the often complex, sometimes unpredictable processes and power struggles that take place therein.

Part of my attraction for Mann's approach to understanding the state lies in the way it sensitizes us to the possibility that state institutions may not always act under the same overriding logic or imperative. By taking a more disaggregated approach to the analysis of the state, we might find that some institutions within the state apparatus may be prone to protecting class or other particularistic interests more intensively than others. The reverse may also be true: some institutions may be more open to initiatives that promote the welfare of a broader section of society than others. The challenge then is to understand the peculiar dynamics that underpins the actions of these institutions, and to sort out the salient factors that shape these dynamics.

This possibility of a non-monolithic or a "disaggregated" state is, to my mind, a very important concept to entertain, specially if one is seriously engaged in efforts that seek to transform the exercise of state power. Certainly, this may not seem very critical if one is in a "smash the state" mode, in which case, what will likely matter is the wholesale replacement of the state machinery. But if one seriously believes that state power may be transformed, perhaps through a combination of reforms from within and pressure from below, then it becomes important to see whether or not there may be spaces or openings in the formal state arena which progressives could maximize to push for reforms, cultivate potential allies, and in general, bring about a policy and institutional environment, where government actions are more responsive to broader social needs and popular participation. Of course, the extent to which these openings could be present would also depend upon the nature of the regime in power. A dictatorship is much less likely to offer these spaces than a liberal, if elite, democratic regime **[I think your points here are absolutely on target and of fundamental importance. I wonder, however, if Mann's specific way of understanding the nonunitary character of the state actually opens much of a door to the idea of emancipatory challenges using more open parts of a nonunitary state? There isn't a whole lot of room for popular forces really playing much of a role inside of the state in his analyses, at least in this book. Mostly it is power holders, different segments of different elites, which do the acting. The People may cause trouble a stimulate reaction, but they do not seem to penetrate the state much in his discussion. But perhaps this is because he is talking about the 19th century?]**

b) The specific design, structure or other relevant institutional features of these state institutions do matter in shaping the extent to which they can achieve their goals.

While this may look very much like a concept that comes out of the emerging literature on institutional design, it is something that may very well be derived from Mann's advice. As he puts it, to understand the causal impact of states on societies, we must "specify their institutional particularities."

I agree with Mann that specifying a state's institutional particularities is important, for some states may prove to be more effective in carrying out their goals, depending on the appropriateness of the design and structure of the institutions tasked with these goals, and the overall policy environment in which these goals are embedded. Reformers in a particular state in the South, for instance, may seek to transform the economic structure of their societies, say through a thoroughgoing agrarian reform. But doing so will require not only that appropriate laws covering the issue are in place. It will likely also necessitate state

institutions that are not easily captured by particularistic interests, and which will not readily succumb to pressure when resistance to this initiative builds up.

Accepting the notion that design, structure and other “particularities” of state institutions do matter in shaping the extent to which they can achieve their goals, have important implications for political practice as well. In particular, this means that reformers need to pay attention, not only to the substantive content of their reform packages, but also the specific types of institutional arrangements and design, (be they in the political or economic realms) that will best advance these goals. Can our political institutions be designed in such a way that the political elites who run them, are compelled to act with a fair amount of transparency and accountability? What kinds of incentives and disincentives might be incorporated into their structure and design, such that this has a fairly good chance of taking place? Are some forms of government and / or some mix of institutions more likely to cultivate more principled forms of politics and electoral participation than others? What precise combinations of market-based incentives and state intervention will likely stimulate a more egalitarian and broad-based distribution of wealth and income? These are only some of the questions that reformers, may face, in attempting to grapple with the institutional and policy requisites of much cherished social reforms. **[The issues you raise here are one’s we will discuss a bit more directly later in the course. One comment here concerning the interrogations: mostly in your comment you do not actually talk much about Mann per se, about his specific arguments about the 19th century state, or his specific claims about the non-unified character of the state. Generally I think it is best to more systematically engage the specific arguments of the readings in these memos.]**

Michael Mann Sources of Social Power
Christine Overdeest

Some questions for discussion:

Mann tends to conclude state and military forms of power are empirically important because they consolidate other forms of power

How much is his emphasis on states/consolidated forms of power historically contingent?

i.e., I wonder if that in the next volume Mann will develop the argument that there has been a shift in the last century to the dominance of decentralized forms of social organizational power.

i.e., Will Mann argue with or against much recent scholarly and empirical attention to economic and political globalization? I think he would have to see some key instances of political power as becoming more “diffuse” under globalization – i.e., globalization from below, anti-globalization protests, transnational civil society? Similar arguments are made about some aspects of economic globalization (of foreign investment, denationalization of the fixed interest rates). so this raises the question: are states losing their role as consolidators?

[I am not sure how Mann will deal with the problem of globalization, but I suspect that he will argue that intensive authoritative power remains central to understanding global capitalism, rather than seeing globalization of markets and capital organization as seriously undercutting their importance. He would undoubtedly invoke “entwining” here.....]

**Week 3: Reading Outline: Michael Mann
Sarah Swider**

Two Questions/Areas for Clarification:

1) I think I get his definitions and uses of power, collective power and variations, distributive power and variations. But I am unclear as to why the distinction between power and authority (and legitimacy) is not necessary. Also, not clear on distinctions of political power and state power. **[I think these are probably identical in Mann – since the only organizations which exercise political power in the IEMP model are states. He does not use the term “political” in the broader sense of “capacity to produce and transform social relations”, but more narrowly as the capacity to regulate activities on a territory.]**

2) In rejection of institutional and functional approaches, he conceives of societies/states as multiple overlapping and intersecting power networks of social interactions (Ideological, Economic, Military, and Political). And, he argues that depending on the contingencies of power sources, the modern state crystallizes in one of three forms: capitalist, moral-ideological, or militarist (simplified).

Assuming that my read of him is somewhere near the mark, my question has to do with the “contingencies of power.” He suggests that at various times and places there have been an enhanced capacity for a particular organization to exercise more power than the others (p 3). Furthermore, he suggests that this is due to important new organizational techniques.

*On the questions of “Ultimate Primacy” and the question of development of the modern state Mann seems to be suggesting that either I,E,M, or P power networks, or some combination, have emerged at different times as dominate, this is what I take to be the “power contingencies”. Throughout successive chapters I am not clear on his explanation for shifts in dominate power sources (IEMP) and corresponding role in state, I get the sense that his it could be either technological innovation, modernization, or what he calls “organizational techniques” that are more efficient at meeting goals (pg w/examples: 248,259,268,288). However, if he is using one of these factors as his explanatory variable for shifts in dominate power sources/networks, then he runs into some of the same problems that he highlighted when he was critiquing other theories. **[This is a very good issue to discuss. I think it is really two questions: (1) What is the central criterion for establishing the relative dominance of a form of crystallization in the state or the relative importance of different forms of power in the society? How do we know when one dominates another? (2) How do we explain shifts in dominance given the criteria that define dominance?]***

924 INTERROGATION (NO. 2): MANN

Brad Brewster

[Note: All citations are from Mann’s *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. 2, unless otherwise indicated.]

OVERALL: “It is possible to steer between Marx and Weber” (p. 736). Rather than take Marx’s presuppositions or analysis over entire or reject them entire, Mann scrutinizes the various elements of Marx’s theory to find the precise value of each: That Marx “overestimated,” “exaggerated,” “neglected,” various factors is “well known,” “but a conventional demolition job on Marx clouds our understanding of where *exactly* he went wrong and of how we might improve on him” (p. 24).

[Note: For example, Mann carefully examines a pivotal definitional statement by Marx regarding class (see indented quote on page 25 in vol. 2). He finds a misreading and makes the corrective re-interpretation (pp. 25-26). Such a reading (1) easily accounts for phenomenon that previously were problematic, making theory more congruent with reality (pp. 28-30), and (2) makes Marx more consistent with himself, that is, with his own rejection of idealism (p. 25).]

MESS: “Societies are not systems” (p. 506); rather society is a “patterned mess” (p. 4). “Societies are confusing battlegrounds on which multiple power networks fight over our souls” (p. 29). That goes for relations of production, too: “Relations of production . . . are a confused battleground on which identities are fought” (p. 29). “Actors’ very identities and interests were changed behind their backs by the unintended consequences of action” (p. 725), thus “changing their very identities below the level of consciousness” (p. 21). Furthermore, certain actors were “imbued with reactionary old regime values” (p. 439). Environments were “uncertain” and their actors “were prone to make ‘systemic mistakes’” (p. 725). Situations “often exceeded the understanding” of actors and, consequently, “actions involved many mistakes, apparent accidents, and unintended consequences” which “would then act back to change the constitution of markets, classes, nations, religions and so forth” (p. 4; also see p. 87). Interests were seldom “transparent” (p. 21, 34) and, permitting that, the “calculations of interests . . . always involved norms . . . emanating from complex attachments to ‘imagined communities’” (p. 50). Strategies were “half-conscious” (p. 18). In the case of classes, conflict was seldom “head-on” (p. 33). Revolutions went unfinished (p. 16, 248) as did classes and states (p. 41). Traditions persisted (p. 17). Old mixed with new (p. 15, 248, 438). By such depiction Mann is distinguishing himself from Marxism, a characteristic of which Mann sees as having assumed (wrongly) an orderly, cohesive, comprehensible society with very tidy divisions between major institutions, all of which had “transparent interests, clear vision, [and] rational decision[-making]” (p. 21). Mann’s is trying to convince theorists to recognize societal messiness – diverse actors with diverse identities, cumulative interaction effects, incomprehensible complexity, and mistaken logistics and their structural impact – as the legitimate starting point of theory (p. 4). **[Nice statement of the messiness thesis. The question is: what are the implications of empirical messiness for theory-construction? Is this just a levels of abstraction problem?]**

AUTONOMY I: According to Skocpol, the appearance of autonomy seems to be quite restricted: in times of ‘domestic rebellion’ or ‘international warfare’ blah, blah (see Barrow 128-130). The interests of the state can coincide without conflicting, and conflict without contradicting. But should they conflict or even contradict, it is rarely, as Mann suggests, an either-or ‘head-on’ conflict. That *some* owners of the means of production will get their property expropriated by the state in times of international warfare is no determination of an all-out, head-on clash between ‘the state’ and *the* capitalist class. Such ‘autonomy’, then, would be highly qualified – even questionable.

AUTONOMY II: Mann’s conception of state autonomy in (and as the product of) an incomprehensible “mess” of power networks appears vastly less restricted, less exceptional, and more spontaneously emergent than Skocpol’s. Mann’s model doesn’t identify ‘extreme’ situations, like domestic rebellion, as one of few ‘moments’ of state autonomy. Instead, what Mann sees as a “mess” can produce autonomy via interstitial space incidentally, unintentionally, mistakenly, etc., according to various actions and reactions among power networks. Does Mann locate autonomy only in social space that is either (or some combination of) “transnational” or “interstitial to other power organizations” (p. 42)? And, in Mann’s model, how much is autonomy dependent on “mess”?

[Note: ‘Less restricted’ also includes being less restricted to reason, as various power networks at various levels or sections make logistical miscalculations which affect the way other networks make their logistical (mis)calculations, the sum of which may produce unintended “interstitial spaces” for autonomous state action.]

[Mann’s idea of different sources of power being autonomous is mainly an organizational claim about the character of the “source” of power – in economic resources for economic power, in regulative capacity over territory for political power, etc. – rather than a question of the autonomy of the goals of the actors who use that power. Political power would have autonomy for Mann – I think -- even if capitalists ran the state for their interests, since what they have to do to effectively deploy regulative capacity over territory is different from what they have to do to deploy their capital assets effectively..]

AUTONOMY III: Autonomy is a fairly either-or concept (either you have it or you don’t) when it is indexed by outcome – the final product of state actions being measured “*against* the long-run economic interests of a dominant class” (Skocpol quoted in Barrow, p. 126). (Short-run concessions seem to be no measure of autonomy, since these may support long-run economic interests of a dominant class.) But

Mann's theory begins with the premise that state and society interpenetrate each other, that society is messy, that outcome is often a product of mistakes and misjudgments feeding back into structure, producing unintended consequences, etc. That is, even when the interests of state and a dominant class coincide – if indeed the state has its own interests – or when the state acts as an instrument of dominant class interests, state action may still conflict with or even contradict dominant class interests. Thus, outcome would seem to be an unreliable measure of autonomy.

AUTONOMY IV: Also, in light of the above, does it make any sense, as an alternative to either-or conceptions of autonomy, to speak of 'relative autonomy' or gradient autonomy? If so, then what would we mean by that?

IDENTITY: Mann states that "it is rare that they [economic relations] single-mindedly drive anyone. We are also members of families, of cross-class communities and workplaces, of churches, of other voluntary associations, of nations, and so forth. Most of these identities confuse, some oppose, a clear-cut sense of class" (p. 28). And: "people in similar economic circumstances will also be influenced by other identities. Only a few will experience their lives as dominated by a class – or by a religious, national, or any other single – identity" (p. 28). This is true, now, but will it be so in the future? With Marxist frames of analysis one might envision that as the capitalism becomes more global, workers will more readily recognize their common economic situation instead of laying more importance on a host of other identities which cause unity or conflict across 'real' class lines, such as religious, racial, or national identities. **[Why, precisely, would a universalization of capitalism and proletarian status translate into a greater salience to class as a source of identity? One might think that as class becomes more pervasive, other differences may have more bite for a wide range of reasons (ranging from psychological issues like the narcissism of small differences to more structural matters, as the bases for solidarity for short-term gains).]** "World systems theorists, as befits Marxians, see an eventual utopian, economistic outcome when the capitalist economy finally and equally penetrates the entire globe, permitting world revolution and world government" (p. 258). This will give a greater accent of reality to class definitions of self-and-other and cause other definitions of self-and-other – for Mann, competing; for Marx, masking – to lose their hold. In sum, as "all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind" (Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*), workers then come to define themselves more exclusively by their position in the relations of production and other relations which construct identity become less significant. **[The global extension of capitalism and a world-wide proletarianization of labor does not mean a world-wide homogenization of the proletariat: complex internal economic divisions within the working class would likely remain or even intensify. If we know one thing about the development of capitalism is that it continually elaborates new forms of complexity, and the vision of homogenization has almost no empirical bases.]**

First, are these freely competing definitions of self or is the economic definition of self primary to noneconomic (e.g., religious, national, ethnic) conceptions of self? Second, is it true that other, noneconomic identities currently confuse a clear-cut sense of class? Is it foreseeable that they will not continue to do so? As the (capitalist) economy becomes king – possibly secularizing religion (and thus religious identities), transcending nation (and thus national identities) – will economic notions of self displace competing or masking noneconomic notion of self?

RELIGION: "Most churches cooperated more uneasily with states and became increasingly divided at lower levels" (p. 235). "The Catholic church moved toward being a transnational confederation of local-regional power networks, intensely implanted in family and communal life, dominating rituals of the family life cycle and the seasonal cycle of the rural community, and the controlling most elementary education" (p. 231). Is secularization simply religious groups retreating into "lower levels"? Or is secularization better understood by other institutions taking over the functions that religion historically played and fulfilled for society? What parallel might structural-functionalist definitions of secularization have for structural-functional definitions of the state, if any?

Implication of Mann's Analysis for Democratization Theory

Jing Sun

Michael Mann's fourfold typology of the sources of power posits as an attack on all sorts of reductionism. Mann argues that societies are not unitary but constituted of multiple overlapping and interacting sociospatial networks of power, among which the most salient are ideological power, economic power, military power, and political power. He further highlights the "jumpiness" of historical development: i.e., power flows from these sources in an entwining manner while at the same time at uneven rates. Thus the history of social development unfolds in a zigzagging way rather than as a smooth evolution.

Charles Tilly criticizes that although Mann attempts to challenge various kinds of monocausality, his own causal analysis places a clear emphasis on political power, especially on the role of the state. Mann declares himself as an "institutional statist" and contends that only by specifying the institutional-political differences between states can we adequately explain the differences in national development.

It seems to me there is indeed a potential clash between Mann's claim to falsify all kinds of determinism on the one hand, and his own insistence on statism on the other hand. However, my personal hunch on solving this problem is that Mann should abandon the ambitious claim of eliminating all kinds of determinism or monocausality by launching a Columbian effort of developing a new set of "general theory," but rather expose the significant role of the political power in the course of national development. One merit of highlighting the political power is that it can demonstrate the significance of political engineering, which is critically important for nation-building. **[I am not sure that in fact Mann is a political-determinist. He is an organizational determinist in the sense that he believes large-scale social structural change is the result, in general, of the collective coordination of strategies rather than just individual activity, and this implies organization, and he believes that in many contexts the specific forms of territorial organization we call "states" are especially important. But I do not think he is a political determinist as such.]**

This emphasis has direct implications for those nation states currently under the democratizing transition process. A major theoretical school on democratization, namely the modernization school, emphasizes the prerequisites for democratization is the modernization theory. Lipset, Almond and Verba posit a linear progression from a "traditional" to "modern" society. They focus on various social, cultural, and economic prerequisites before a nation can become democratic. Yet, recent cases of democratization cast serious doubt on the link between various prerequisite (be that cultural or economic) and political change. With formal democratic institutions now being adopted throughout the world by many countries, even in the poorest of economic circumstances, it is not surprising that a significant portion of the new analyses tend to concentrate on "democratic breakthrough." It is argued that it is the choices of individual political actors and the deals that they make with each other, rather than prerequisites, that made democratization happen. Thus, for me, there are ample reasons, especially in light of the recent historical trend, to single out political power as more fundamental among the four.

Shamus Khan
Memo #2 – Mann

I read two separate arguments within Mann's "cock-up, foul-up" or best, "structured mess" theory of social power. The first is that each source is *analytically distinct* and that they interact in complex ways contingent upon particular historical contexts. This is Mann at his most Weberian moments – the sources serve as "ideal types" to be illuminated in the particulars of historical instances. The important point here is that the four sources each have their own logic and effects. Mann relies heavily on this model when discussing most (but not all) of his historical instances - that is, where one of the IEMP sources has primacy over others, having the strongest "push" toward some kind of social change. This is not to suggest that there aren't relations and interactions between the IEMP sources, but rather the point is that each can be looked at as a distinct instance.

The other model does not see each IEMP source as distinct, but rather as a kind of “power” more general. Thus there is “power” of which IEMP are kinds. This is less “structured” and more “messy.” In this model, it is not a particular kind of power that realizes change, but rather power within a particular social realm – power that can be “typed” given the particulars of the realm within which it is mediated. (This is best seen in Chapter 12, especially, and not surprisingly, when Mann takes on Foucault’s and Giddens’ notion of “disciplinary power”).

So what? Well, in the first model, IEMP powers each function in particular ways, and give us a bounded body of power relations in society. In the second, we cannot assume that IEMP are the only forms of power; that is, as power more general is mediated through alternate social realms it will have a character that is distinct to that realm – beyond the IEMP model. Furthermore, the two lead us to ask if we have “power” general, of which IEMP are types (Model II), or, whether IEMP are the four distinct things, commonly referred to as “power” – but not bounded as the same concept (Model I). **[I am not sure I quite understand the contrast you are drawing. For Mann, I think, “power” is the capacity to produce effects in the world. His organizational theory of power states that human beings can accomplish much more in the world when they act collectively than individually – thus “organization” is pivotal to social power. But organizations differ in the kind of resource they mobilize or the kind of effect-producing technology they deploy. IEMP is thus a typology of these means deployed organizationally. This is an analytical distinction insofar as a concrete organization can deploy more than one kind of power, but there is still a unified concept of power common to all of these.]**