

# CRESSI Working papers

The CRESSI project explores the economic underpinnings of social innovation with a particular focus on how policy and practice can enhance the lives of the most marginalized and disempowered citizens in society.



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## **How Does the Analysis of Mann Enrich the ‘Capabilities Approach’ to Social Innovation?**

By Justus Lodemann

Chapter 9 of:

**Deliverable D1.1: Report on Institutions, Social Innovation & System Dynamics from the Perspective of the Marginalised**



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Creating Economic Space for Social Innovation

# How Does the Analysis of Mann Enrich the ‘Capabilities Approach’ to Social Innovation?

## D1.1 Chapter 9

By Justus Lodemann

### 9.1 Introduction

Power is the capability to act upon one’s environment (e.g. Scholtes 2009), or, as Michael Mann (1986) defines it: “Power is the ability to pursue and attain goals through mastery of one’s environment”. Power is relational, be it between individuals or groups of people, in relation to or between institutions, states, over nature etc. The historian and sociologist Mann has developed a categorization scheme for power on different levels. Mann names four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military and political (IEMP model). It is important to understand what Mann means by ‘sources’ of power. The original drive of human action and thereby the ultimate sources of power lie in humans’ restlessness, purposiveness and rationality to increase their ‘enjoyment of the good things of life’ (Mann 1986). In Mann’s view these goals require intervention with nature and social cooperation thereby creating power networks with different focuses and infrastructures.

The capability (capabilities) approaches (CA) as proposed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum have both an evaluative and an agency aspect (Fukuda-Parr 2003). To gain an understanding of *why, by what or whom* people are marginalized plays a crucial role and a way to look at this might be the analysis of involved power networks. Enrica Chiappero-Martinetti and Nadia von Jacobi (2014, CRESSI internal paper) propose to define marginalization with regard to the CA as “a social process through which personal traits are transformed into potential factors of disadvantage”, the factors being “individual or contextual characteristics that both, tend to be associated to a disadvantage and that in empirical investigations of the marginalized are found to be common”.<sup>1</sup>

In the following paper I will try to sketch Mann’s concept of power with special focus on some elements – the IEMP model, collective power (‘power to’), infrastructural power (‘power through’) – that I think might be linkages or informative to the capabilities approaches as proposed by Sen and Nussbaum.<sup>2</sup> I will try to discuss these linkages and find starting points to the question of agency (What kind of policies and political changes enhances the capabilities of the marginalized? How can the individual act?). As these topics are broad and the emergent literature is vast, the considerations presented here are by no means exhaustive but more a patchwork of thoughts that suggests some points for discussion and further development.

### 9.2 Michael Mann’s concept of power

According to Mann there is nothing like ‘the society’, i.e. societies are not unitary, there is no ‘totality’, i.e. no definite, overall structure, because of the diversity and unpredictability of goals

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<sup>1</sup> Further information about the CRESSI project is available at: [www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/cressi](http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/cressi)

<sup>2</sup> This paper forms Chapter 9 of: Houghton Budd, C., Naastepad, R. and van Beers, C. (Eds.), *Report on Institutions, Social Innovation & System Dynamics from the Perspective of the Marginalised*, CRESSI Project Deliverable D1.1. Available at: <http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/ideas-impact/cressi/publications-0>

and interactions that result in a vast bunch of overlapping and intersecting social power networks (Mann 1986). Because there is no totality, Mann argues that “individuals are not constrained in their behaviour by ‘social structure as a whole’,” therefore he states that it is needless to distinguish between ‘social action’ and ‘social structure’. Mann defines society as “a network of social interaction at the boundaries of which is a certain level of interaction cleavage between it and its environment” (Mann 1986).

Mann points to the diversity of goals humans have (and the resulting inability to build a theory on this). Power is a ‘generalized means’ (Parson as cited in Mann, 1986) for reaching these goals. People need to enter power relations with each other to push their goals but the different networks do not add up to a kind of ‘social totality’ that one might be able to theorize; Mann (1986) claims that “societies are much messier than our theories of them.”

If individuals cooperate to enhance their power over a third party or nature, they exercise ‘collective power’ (power to). It is important to note that, according to the interpretation by Schroeder (2005), for Mann power always requires an organizational form and is *emergent* and not originally imposed. Social organization and division of labour start when networks want to pursue (collective) goals effectively, therefore are starting to organize internally. Herein inherent is a tendency to ‘distributive power’ (Parsons 1957). ‘Distributive’ refers to the distribution of a fixed amount of power to actors: the power that one actor gains, the other one loses (zero-sum). Though the term collective power is often used as counterpart to distributive power, this juxtaposition is questionable as collective power is by no means a fully consensual form of power. Coercion and force (‘power over’) are integral parts of collective power as well, e.g. internally: with the restriction of individual choice to the benefit of the group, or, externally: as exercised power over third parties or nature (Hagen 2010). Collective and distributive power therefore live a symbiotic coexistence: a) depending on the level of analysis, the latter is inherent part of collective power (restriction of individual choice, power over third parties and nature), b) distributive power emerges from collective power due to social organization and division of labour.

The created power networks are not static or exclusive but more or less constantly changing. They are further developed by (groups of) human beings who want to push their goals forward. Always changing networks challenge the established levels of institutionalization and, as the case may be, are ‘outrun’, intentionally or unintentionally. This might happen by directly contesting institutions, in-between existing entities (‘interstitially’) or at the edge of them. Thereby new forms of power relations and – especially in the case of state power, but not restricted to that – new levels of institutionalization are created. Following Mann, the dominance of power structures is depending on the extent of institutionalization, i.e. that the control of the group or individuals ‘in charge’ is institutionalized in the laws and norms of the overall social group.

Mann introduces four sources of power: ideological, economic, military, and political relationships (IEMP model). The model does not solve any question of primacy – what is the most determining variable in society? –, and Mann doubts that there might be an overall theory of primacy because of the different logics and different mechanisms of power (Lawson 2006)<sup>3</sup>. However, he claims the model to be the closest approximation possible to that question and in his oeuvre *The Sources of Social Power* he shows the usefulness of the model. The organizational means of power and the combinations that are used by humans to push their goals “will depend on continuous interaction between what power configurations are historically given and what emerges within and among them” (Mann 1993). The four sources of power can be understood as a fluid between the ‘crystallizations’ of the state and the society (Breiner 2012); the distribution of power is context-

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<sup>3</sup> Mann argues for concepts that are ‘suited to dealing with a mess’ which he claims being a virtue of his IEMP model.

dependent.

Aside the ‘military’, the remaining three sources of power are not new ‘categories’ as they have been already described by scholars like Marx, Durkheim and Weber (Schroeder 2006). In the following the four sources of power as used by Mann are shortly sketched (for a more thorough explanation see Heiskala 2014, internal paper<sup>4</sup>).

Ideological power relations refer to “the human need to find ultimate meaning in life, to share norms and values, and to participate in aesthetic and ritual practices” (Mann 1993). Ideological power relations emerge from a need which refers to the individual level which Mann does not theorize further<sup>5</sup>. His concept of ideological power refers to *control over meaning*, independent from its contents on the individual level. Ideological power as ‘immanent morale’ largely supports the status quo and existing institutions. In cases where ideological power relations are developed due to (social) needs that have not been dealt with so far (‘interstitial’), ideological power can generate autonomy and trigger and support rapid transformations. The institutions and networks that develop by ideology tend to be *functionally* organized, they tend to transcend the socio-spatial organization of the state (unless they are not state-led and bound to institutions). The transcendent character points to the often *diffuse* aspect of ideological power (in contrast to an authoritative form of power<sup>6</sup>).

Economic power derives “from the need to extract, transform, distribute and consume resources of nature” (Mann 1993). In Mann’s view, economic power relations affect everyday’s life the strongest, because they play a major role in people’s livelihoods and the connected daily routines. Economic power relations form between singular work units and the extensive circuits of markets (formerly called the ‘circuits of praxis’, see Heiskala 2014, internal paper). As markets (and companies) are not confined to national boundaries, economic power may transcend national boundaries, though not as easily as ideological power.

Nowadays military power is a form of (state) power dealing with physical force. In general it is “the social organization of concentrated lethal violence. It is authoritative, indeed arbitrary, and violent” (Mann 2008). The need for military power stays blurry; Brenner (2006) paraphrases Mann’s account on basic needs in this respect as the need to defend. In contrast to economic power, Mann claims that military power generally does not affect everyday’s life to a relevant extent in democratic states (Lawson 2006), at least in times of peace. In general it also does not transcend other sources of social power. However, in cases of military regimes, military power can be used to oppress dissidents or unpopular social groupings. Regarding its spatial reach, its striking range is not confined to a defined territory.

Political power refers to state power and is – like military power – based on authoritative regulation. It is “the territorially centralized regulation of social life” (Mann 2008). The basic need connected to political power is supposed to be order and justice (Brenner 2006). Mann distinguishes between power ‘over’ and power ‘through’ society, or, put differently, despotic and infrastructural power. Infrastructural power refers to the power of the state to permeate and centrally coordinate the activities of civil society through its own infrastructure. Infrastructural power relations are not single-sided, one-way, but involve a dialectic discourse between power groupings, i.e. civil actors and state elites (Mann 1993).

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<sup>4</sup> In this paper I will not follow the NACEMP model as proposed by Heiskala though it might offer further insight for reasons of marginalization.

<sup>5</sup> In general, the striving of the individual to pursue goals is regarded as the ‘original motor’ that cannot be theorized due to its complexity

<sup>6</sup> In contrast to the conscious character of authoritative power which is generally exercised through explicit commands, diffuse power spreads in a spontaneous, often unconscious and decentered fashion.

As military power and political power are generally both forms of state power in democratic states, I will try to shortly sketch Mann's account of the 'state'. In his view, the state is „an arena, the condensation, the crystallization, the summation of social relations within its territories ... it is a different socio-spatial organization“, that has defined boundaries (Mann 1984). State elites can be treated as actors who have a will to power. Mann distinguishes between two aspects of state power: despotic power<sup>7</sup> (power over) and infrastructural power (power through).

It is important to note that state power does not derive from means that are only available to the state. Also here, both directions are existent: infrastructural means and resources of both power organizations tend to diffuse towards the opposite organization. The relative amount of diffusion towards civil society is important for the amount of infrastructural power exercised: social relations are further bound to territory with an increase in infrastructural power; a high level of diffusion of infrastructural power means and resources to civil society leads to 'decentering and de-territorializing' (Mann 1984). From the formation of nation states to the present the form of state power changed; today's bureaucratic-democratic states, so Mann, are low on despotic and high on infrastructural power; the shift leads to higher stability as infrastructural power involves cooperation between citizens and the government, hence enhancing legitimacy<sup>8</sup>. The state has become a 'polymorphous' state.

Each of the four proposed sources of social power sources has its 'infrastructure', e.g. computer networks, roads and education systems for transmission of information and commands; often these infrastructures are identical though used in different, power-source-specific ways (Mann 2008)<sup>9</sup>. Mann calls the inter-relations of the power sources 'orthogonal', i.e. they interact with each other, but each power source has a specific internal 'logic of development' that makes their inter-relations not determinant (Bandeira Jerónimo 2013).

For the CRESSI specific context of social innovation for *the marginalized* I will now turn to the CA, its implications for the definition of the marginalized and try to further develop the ideas wearing a 'power lens' made by Mann.

### 9.3 The CA and the marginalized

Mann seemingly had (and possibly still has) a strong interest to understand the emergence of state autonomy, its power and its relation to civil society (Mann 2008, comp. Mann 1984). He focuses on power relations with little reference to the individual level<sup>10</sup>. The CA as proposed by both Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum<sup>11</sup> offers an analytical tool to study marginalization with focus *on the individual level*<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, power is exclusively relational and relative whereas the concept of capabilities refers at first to the question what the individual is able to do (comp. Scholtes 2009)<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Mann claims that the extent of despotic power autonomy derives from the inability of civil society to control the used power means.

<sup>8</sup> Comp. to: citizens becoming 'caged'

<sup>9</sup> 'Promiscuity of organizations and functions'

<sup>10</sup> Reminding that the striving of the individual to pursue goals is regarded as the 'original motor' that cannot be theorized due to its complexity.

<sup>11</sup> As already mentioned I will not go into detail about the differences between Sen's and Nussbaum's approaches though also claims regarding capability-supporting structures might vary e.g. Sen's understanding of capabilities as dispositive freedoms (choice leads to guaranteed functioning, comp. Richardson 2007).

<sup>12</sup> Comp. Scholtes (2009) who develops a power scheme starting at capabilities (individual powers)

<sup>13</sup> This does not mean that capabilities are not dependent on relations to others or the nature. In this paper I will not go further into the normative structure of capabilities though the comparison of capabilities to liberties might give further insight as it tackles the problem of institutionalization.

The CA consists of five key elements: the capability itself, functionings, agency, endowments and conversion factors (comp. Chiappero-Martinetti and von Jacobi 2014). Capabilities are enabled through a combination of personal traits / capacities and an environment that provide the necessary social and natural resources (Longshore Smith and Seward 2009, comp. Richardson 2007). Chiappero-Martinetti and von Jacobi (2014, internal document) propose to analyze the individual and the contextual level separately because of the (differing) possibilities for change.

Following Chiappero-Martinetti and von Jacobi (2014, internal document), “marginalization is a social process through which personal traits are transformed into potential factors of disadvantage”. This definition directly opens the question of *how* this transformation takes place. Marginalization has an active side: entities that are marginalizing, or, have the power to marginalize (see ‘social structure’). This process does not have to be aggressive but can be via ignorance, disrespect or deprivation of necessities. But it does not have to be ‘conscious’ in any ways; Cynthia Enloe (1996) describes marginalization as follows: “No individual or social group finds themselves on the ‘margins’ of any web of relationships [...] without some other individual or group having accumulated enough power to create the ‘centre’ somewhere else.” Following Enloe, the marginalized tend to be silenced and not heard because of the missing resources it takes to have a voice<sup>14</sup>. As forms of power<sup>15</sup> are diverse, so are hierarchies which relate to each other, either undermining each other or enhancing each other’s status quo<sup>16</sup>. The marginalized are at the bottom of the power pyramid. The sources of power resp. the lacking opportunities to draw power from them are sources of marginalization.

If we want to *evaluate* the status quo by identifying power networks that play the most important role in the marginalization we need detailed information about the status quo of the marginalized, including lacking possibilities and needs. Otherwise we are left with the broad question of how institutions interact with personal traits (Chiappero-Martinetti and von Jacobi 2014, internal document). The possible reasons of deprivation of necessary endowments and of hindering conversion factors are manifold. The (only) common denominators of marginalized individuals are, so Enloe (1996), that these individuals are stuck in asymmetrical power relations with their social environment, lacking power in various ways, e.g. regarding access to or within economic power networks.

## **9.4 Side note: Transition management**

As already mentioned, the CA involves an agency aspect dealing with what can be done to enhance capabilities of people. This aspect (so far) has had its focus mainly on policy and political changes (Fukuda-Parr 2003), or, on political power<sup>17</sup>, but it can also refer to the individual level or to collective action. However, in this regard the CA has to be supported by further theories as the CA itself does not offer methodologies, e.g. to formulate policies for enhancing and fostering capabilities (Hill 2007, referring to Alkire). Regarding Mann’s theory of power, we are dealing with an analytical tool that also does not offer a direct account on how to foster change.

An approach that makes the step from general theory to the politics and management of change has been proposed by Avelino and Rotmans. They propose an understanding of power in the context of transition management and explicitly employing Mann’s categories. In their view, the ability to

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<sup>14</sup> And confronting the more powerful involves the danger of penalty (Hill 2007).

<sup>15</sup> Enloe refers to political power.

<sup>16</sup> Hierarchies “do not sit on the social landscape like tuna, egg and cheese sandwiches sitting on an icy cafeteria counter, diversely multiple but unconnected.” (Enloe 1996)

<sup>17</sup> E.g. human development approach / UN.

mobilize resources consists of an act (power to) which involves control over (power over) over these resources. ‘Resource’ in this context refers to persons, assets, materials, capital etc. which they claim have no inherent hierarchy and are ‘power neutral’. The resources gain their relevance to the extent they are used as objects of power by actors, who want to pursue their goals. The authors assign resources to the four sources of social power as proposed by Mann (e.g. economic power as the ability to mobilize monetary resources). They claim that the power of an actor is dependent on *access to, strategies and skills for mobilization and willingness to mobilize* resources (Avelino and Rotmans 2010). Avelino and Rotmans point to the importance of knowledge which they call a “meta-condition to meet the four conditions of power (access, strategies, skills and willingness).” On first glance this seems to fit neatly to the necessity of endowments for capabilities: *access to* social and natural resources and *strategies, skills and willingness* as personal traits. Spreading knowledge on the four conditions of power requires social power networks (diffused or institutionalized educational systems) and Avelino and Rotmans claim that it is a first step to open up or enhance the opportunities of potential social innovators / marginalized people (creating ‘spaces’). Moreover they propose to foster the creation of networks between these actors to enable and enhance (now in Mann’s terminology) the exercise of collective power<sup>18</sup> to oppose the existing order (comp. Lawson 2006, Ibrahim 2006). Avelino and Rotmans point to the importance of close links between these actors and state elites<sup>19</sup> in order to institutionalize the new schemes (see also Soifer 2009). But complications arise: improving well-being by changing power relations – also through collective power – might be at the expense of others<sup>20</sup>.

#### 9.4 Linking CA and Mann’s theory of power

Mann offers a historical account of power logics that likely play a role also if social innovations are to make a societal difference. As mentioned above, the dominant power structures can be challenged by direct opposition, at their edges or by interstitially emerging power networks. As many significant problems are new, they are often interstitial to traditional institutions and require new or adapted institutions. When (collective) power reaches the extent that existing institutions – e.g. the infrastructural power networks of modern nation-states – are put under pressure, changes in the existing order might be possible. Mann (1986): “Fundamental social change occurs, and human capacities are enhanced, through a number of “episodes” of major structural transformation.” However, for the study of actual change Mann is doubly limited:

There is no explicit normative point to his analysis (except, perhaps, his basic needs?) – here the CA can complement the account for the discussion of social change and the “improvements” of social innovation.

There could be further refinement how power over is exercised and can be fostered.

Mann’s concept might offer a more ‘structural’ approach to power to the CA than other theories on power have done so far, i.e. taking as starting point the society and/or the nation-state and not the individual well-being. Moreover, Mann offers one way to remind CA scholars that power to / capabilities are dependent on power over.

What are questions for further development? What questions can help to test the empirical value of Mann’s concept for the CA? We have to carefully analyze the existing power networks in their

<sup>18</sup> Comp. Avelino and Rotmans: *transformative power*.

<sup>19</sup> Resp. what they call “regime-actors that can exercise *constitutive power*”.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore Hill (2007) promotes the „creation and spread of ‘liberating knowledge’ *regarding social behaviour*.“ (my own emphasis)

specific contexts. Following aspects might have to be taken into account if we are analyzing case studies (comp. Gorsky 2006 and Scholtes 2009):

To what extent the marginalized are lacking capabilities in the specific context? Which resources are available to the individual, which resources are lacking? To further specify the question: what is their access to these resources, what are their strategies and skills for mobilization and their willingness to mobilize resources (drawing on the specifications as proposed by Avelino and Rotmans)?

Which social power networks (IEMP) deal with these resources, who is involved, who is in control? Which means are used in the specific context to exercise power?

How can the involved social power be characterized (e.g. what is its spatial reach? Is it exercised in an authoritative, hierarchy-bound way? What is the level of institutionalization? Does it transcend other sources of power?)

Are there emerging power networks dealing with the situation of the marginalized? How is their relation to the leading edge of power (directly opposing, interstitial, at the edge)?

What factors facilitate or impede (collective) action / power for capabilities?

Regarding social innovation, can we find a scheme to ‘predict’ the chances of scaling or even success of an idea, e.g. building on Mann’s claim that ideology / ideas can travel fastest and diffuse other sources of power? What are the interrelationships of the sources of power, what is their impact on the specific social innovation<sup>21</sup> and vice versa?

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<sup>21</sup> E.g. are ideas travelling slower if they are dependent on economic resources?

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*Internal CRESSI project documents:*

- Chiappero-Martinetti, E. and N. von Jacobi (2014). 'Relating Sen's Capability Approach to CRESSI', CRESSI, internal document.
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