

## 'In some ways this is a very Victorian enterprise'

*Wim Blockmans en Peer Vries in gesprek met Michael Mann over zijn 'sources of social power'*

Sedert Arnold Toynbee, wiens eerste deel van het tiendelige *A Study of History* verscheen in 1934, heeft geen historicus van naam het nog in zijn hoofd gehaald in zijn eentje een zo omvattende geschiedenis te schrijven als Michael Mann. Hij is dan ook socioloog, niet gehinderd door de neiging van historici zich in een hokje te verbergen, en geïnspireerd door de brede en vergelijkende benadering van Max Weber.\*

Mann, die thans is verbonden aan de University of California Los Angeles en aan de London School of Economics and Political Science, voert ons in zijn *The Sources of Social Power* - dat uiteindelijk vier delen zal beslaan en waarvan er thans twee zijn verschenen - terug tot niets minder dan *The beginning*, en dat is bij hem de prehistorie. Toen was er volgens hem meestal nog geen 'aanhoudende beweging in de richting van sociale stratificatie of (de vorming van) een staat' (I, 67-8). Van dit algemene patroon is slechts in uitzonderlijke gevallen, en aanvankelijk bepaald niet op onomkeerbare wijze, afgeweken als gevolg van de verhoogde interactie tussen populaties die leidde tot grotere dorpen met een enigermate permanent gezagscentrum of tot *chiefdoms*. Geen van deze gezagsstructuren was echter zo stabiel dat de machthebbers niet meer door rivalen uit hun positie konden worden verdreven.

Het eerste boekdeel loopt met grote schreden door de geschiedenis tot 1760. De analyse richt zich op machtsverhoudingen vanuit een optiek die meer theoretisch en systematisch is dan historici gewend zijn. Dat betekent niet dat historici die zoeken naar feitelijke informatie niets van hun gading zouden vinden. Manns analyses zijn vaak diepgravend en empirisch goed onderbouwd. Hij doet zijn best om zijn stellingen en visie behoorlijk te ondersteunen met empirisch, zo mogelijk kwantitatief, materiaal. Het analyse-niveau waarop hij zich beweegt, is echter hoger dan onder historici gebruik is. Dat blijkt niet alleen in de inleidende, theoretische hoofdstukken, maar ook uit het feit dat het boek slechts ten dele chronologisch is opgezet. Zo wordt het op de inleiding volgende, min of meer chronologische relaas over de 'machtsstructuren' van respectievelijk Mesopotamië, de wereld van de Feniciërs en de Grieken, het Assyrische en het Perzische rijk, en het *Imperium Romanum*, afgebroken voor een uitvoerige analyse van de ideologie van het Christendom en een verklaring voor de snelle verbreiding daarvan, waarna Mann plaats inruimt voor een vergelijking van het Christendom met de wereldgodsdiensten Confucianisme, Islam en Hindoeïsme. Daarna komt 'the European dynamic' in de periode van 800 tot 1760 aan de orde. Dat gebeurt in een bestek van een kleine 150 bladzijden, een onderneming die ongetwijfeld de wenkbrauwen van menig historicus zal doen fronsen.

In deze periode, waarop de vragen die worden gesteld voornamelijk betrekking hebben, onderscheidt Mann drie fasen, die hij curieus genoeg

afbakent met precieze jaartallen. Tot 1155 verkeren we in de 'intensieve fase', waarmee hij bedoelt dat de machtsstructuren hoofdzakelijk lokaal waren en op die schaal zeer 'indringend' en competitief. Tot 1477 ziet Mann vervolgens 'the rise of coordinating states'. Daarna breekt een fase aan waarin 'organic national states' zich ontwikkelen in interactie met het internationale kapitalisme. Het eerste deel, waar als gezegd in het interview het meest de aandacht naar uitgaat en waar we ons in deze inleidende opmerkingen dan ook toe beperken, wordt na deze weer min of meer chronologische uiteenzetting afgesloten met wereldhistorische beschouwingen over dynamiek in agrarische samenlevingen.

Het tweede deel van *The sources of social power* gaat, zoals de titel aangeeft, over 'the rise of classes and nation-states' in de periode 1760-1914, ook weer bekeken vanuit het perspectief van de verhouding tussen de vier door Mann onderscheiden bronnen van sociale macht. Uit het feit dat deze analyse van een veel kleiner tijdsbestek (waarin de ontwikkelingen in Frankrijk, Groot Brittannië, het Habsburgse Oostenrijk, Pruisen-Duitsland en de Verenigde Staten worden besproken) 826 pagina's beslaat, zo'n 300 meer dan deel I, blijkt al dat Mann de ontwikkelingen in de lange negentiende eeuw veel 'dichter' beschrijft dan de eraan voorafgaande. Met name zijn sterk kwantitatieve onderzoek van de wijze waarop de staatsvormingsprocessen verliepen en van de rol daarin van oude en nieuwe elites, biedt vele interessante en verrassende inzichten. Ook hier weer zien we de voor Manns benadering kenmerkende afwisseling tussen hoofdstukken met theoretische bespiegelingen en conclusies enerzijds en empirische analyses anderzijds. Hij biedt inderdaad, zoals hij zelf in het interview stelt, geen 'even-textured narrative or history of social development'.

Kunnen historici op vele punten detailkritiek uitoefenen en betere, recentere gegevens aandragen dan de door Mann gepresenteerde, zij zullen niet zo gauw een zo lange en ruime ontwikkelingslijn in één greep vatten. Hoe stevig is echter die greep? In zijn eerste hoofdstuk ontwikkelt Mann enkele theoretische concepten, rafelt het begrip 'samenleving' uiteen in een veelheid van machtsnetwerken; onderscheidt sociale functies en sociale organisaties die uit die functies gevormd zijn en gaat in op het verschil tussen diffuse en autoritatieve, intensieve en extensieve organisatievormen van macht. Wat hij uiteraard vooral doet, is het IEMP-model toelichten, zijn geheel van opvattingen over de vier bronnen, en de bijpassende organisatie van macht.

Volgens Mann gaat het in de menselijke geschiedenis steeds om ideologische, economische, militaire en politieke macht, ieder ingebed in specifieke organisaties die in hun interactie onder bepaalde voorwaarden dynamiek teweeg brengen (I, 22-32). Analytisch is het zeker interessant deze machtsbereiken te onderscheiden. Voor de pre-industriële periode, die in deel I wordt behandeld, valt toch te betwijfelen of Mann er wel in slaagt het functioneren van deze vier organisaties als gedifferentieerde en relatief autonome krachten aan te tonen. Gerede twijfels rijzen bij zijn interpretatie van het Westerse christendom als pacificerende kracht tussen politieke en militaire machten. Ook valt het moeilijk zich in pre-industriële samenlevingen

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een (zelfs gedeeltelijke) loskoppeling van politieke en militaire macht voor te stellen, terwijl Mann anderzijds, overeenkomstig een sociologische traditie, de justitiële dimensie van politieke macht over het hoofd ziet (de koning als *'fons iustitiae'*, de samenhang van 'politie en justitie'). Zijn vier-factoren model lijkt toch sterk ingegeven door de meer recente geschiedenis, waardoor het een eventuele aanspraak op universele toepasbaarheid verliest. Dat doet uiteraard niets af aan het gegeven dat zijn benadrukken van de competitie tussen organisaties over de beheersing van machtsvelden een zeer stimulerend uitgangspunt vormt, waarover nadere gedachtenwisseling vruchtbaar lijkt.

The object of *The sources of social power* is to 'provide a history and a theory of social power'.<sup>1</sup> You want to do this by means of your IEMP model of organized power.<sup>2</sup> What struck me is that the status of neither the theory you are looking for nor the status of your model become quite clear. Are you referring to a classification, a perspective that 'enables us to decide what might be the key facts, what might be central and what marginal to an understanding of how a particular society works'<sup>3</sup>, to 'a theoretical frame for the interpretation of the history of societies'<sup>4</sup>, a model in the technical sense of the word - an explanatory simplification -, to an explanatory generalization?

Well, if it is a theory, it is a weak theory. It is more like a theoretical model. It orients me fairly systematically to the kind of data that I am looking for. I do not have a strong theory. It may be possible, on the basis of the more empirical volumes, to come to some more general conclusions about the relationship between the four different sources of power i.e. ideology, economic power, military power and political power. In the second volume I do try and give a more general explanation of the long nineteenth century arguing that the first part of it is most explicable in terms of economic and military power and the second half of it in terms of economic and political power. How much I will be able to go outside particular times and places to more general observations is still a relatively open question.

**Do you feel you are raising questions historians left aside too much? Is that the reason you are writing such a huge 'historical' work?**

No, I would say that my starting point were not the inadequacies of the historians but the inadequacies of the social scientists. This was started as a more theoretical project than it turned out to be. I oppose two inadequacies of theory. Firstly, too much materialism and on the other hand, encountering it, a traditional kind of idealism. So a dualism of theory. And secondly, an empirical neglect of a whole set of facts connected with military and political questions. Historians and sociologists are less apart than people often think. The sociologist's neglects are perfectly explicit, the structure of the theory is explicit. Historians tend to reproduce the same defects but in a more empirical

way in terms that things are discussed or not discussed. Of course this is only partially true: good historians always have a rich appreciation of theory and if Weber was a sociologist he was a different kind of sociologist from 95 percent of my colleagues, not only because he is greater but because his concerns were far more historically informed.

**You are looking for primacy i.e. you ask: 'How can one isolate the most important element or elements in human societies'?<sup>5</sup> Or to put it another way: 'What are the relations among these four power sources? Is one or more of them ultimately primary in structuring society'?<sup>6</sup> But is it not a priori impossible to answer questions like these when you - and I think rightly so - stress that societies are not unitary systems?<sup>7</sup> When societies are not closed systems<sup>8</sup>, how then could we ever find a general answer to the question what is primary in them?**

Clearly it could not be a law-like statement, it could only be a generalization about a macro-history, a macro-period. In the same way as one can make generalizations about the contemporary world or nineteenth-century Europe one might be able to make more long-run generalizations about much broader spans of time. Beyond that I do not think that will be possible. But there is a different level of general proposition that might be more attainable. I think there are certain general characteristics of these forms of power. For example that it is a characteristic of economic power relations that they are the ones that relate best to the kind of everyday practices of peoples' lives, whereas the relationship of military, political and ideological power structures are not so deeply implanted in everyday life. But what that amounts to and how far one can take that kind of generalization is still an open question.

**Did you really try to pay as much attention to each of the four powers you identify on an theoretical level?**

No, I do not think I did. But that is because I am reacting against the predominant materialism and economism of previous work. To a certain degree I take for granted knowledge about modes of production and their development and assume a degree of knowledge about that. Therefore much of the discussion is about political and military phenomena. They have been very much neglected. There is the usefulness of the model at its most general, but then there are 'uses' which still come from the model but which are slightly less general. If the general model was not all that useful I could still fall back on a kind of distinctive contribution which is a serious attempt to relate together - and encourages to relate together - political, military, ideological and economic power in a way that this has not yet been done. They have traditionally been kept in separate compartments. For example the discussion about capitalism and classes has not been seen as fundamentally related to the development of nations and nation-states. The fact that I consistently bring together different sources of social power and bring back into mainstream

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social theory concerns with military power relations as well, which had been neglected for a long period of time, seems to me to be the core of what I do. Ideologies remain rather problematic to me. I am not convinced that as yet I have a particularly strong theory or appreciation of their role.

Of course one can say: 'I'm emphasizing those elements other people tended to neglect', but if you stress the importance of diffused power<sup>9</sup> should not the power of rising capitalism have received more attention than it did in your book? It is very influential. I do not think you can leave it out just because other people paid a lot of attention to it. The economic developments between 1200 and the second half of the eighteenth century - the rise of the market, maybe an old-fashioned story but an extremely important one, proto-industrialization, early modern commercial capitalism - they do not figure in your book while they are extremely important to your subject. Take for example the relations between economic organizations and state-finance. Some states could operate in a more powerful and often violent way because they had access to commercial capital while others did not.

As far as say the period of the fourteenth to the eighteenth century is concerned I accept a fair degree of conventional wisdom, partly derived from marxist analysis of the development of capitalism, partly derived from more conventional (neo)classical economics. The problem is how these property relations got there in the first place, how small and large property owners and markets arrived there. Therefore much of my explanation is on the earlier period. This is not an even-textured narrative or history of social development. I look at forms of social power that become particularly problematic at particular points of time and seek to explain them. Then, in a way unevenly, I go to something else. When I shift toward the end of my first volume, I shift toward explaining the origins of the other predominant feature of the macro-structures of contemporary Western society which are the nations-states and their development. One can not yet talk about nation-states in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

I agree, but aren't you so fascinated by forms of power and especially forms of centrally-organized power that you overstate their level of penetration? Are not for example many societies you describe in your first volume, hardly integrated at all?

Well it is certainly true that many of them were only weakly integrated. And I hope I say that from time to time. Even in contemporary society the degree of integration can very easily be overestimated. The connection for example that people have to the nation-state is often rather tenuous and very uneven.

To give a more specific example, you speak about a centralized state in England in the twelfth century. Is not that early?

Well I am interested in the *centralizing* aspects of political life. My concern is more with states than with other forms of political regulation which might be much more local.

In your own words each chapter concerns itself with the leading edge of power, the place where the capacity to integrate peoples and spaces into dominant configurations is most infrastructurally developed. From the ninth century onwards you focus on developments in Europe. Or to be more precise on northwestern Europe and after 1155 especially on England. Is that really the leading edge then?<sup>10</sup>

It is a matter of pragmatism, of prior knowledge and linguistic abilities...

The reason you give in your book for placing the leading edge in the northwestern part of Europe is that to your opinion between the ninth and the thirteenth century this was the region in the world that had most intensive economic power. I quote: 'Intensively, the yield from any particular plot of land or group of people had risen enormously. Human beings were penetrating deeper into the earth and rearranging its physical and chemical properties so as to extract its resources. But socially too, their coordinated activities, using greater congealed labor (i.e. capital) in machines were also far more intensively organized. ... No empire, no society ... had penetrated so intensively or extensively. The principal mechanism in this reorganization of history was economic power...'<sup>11</sup>

I do not mean to say that by that time that already was the case. But certain developments were under way then which made things possible much later.

Nevertheless in that story you are constantly stressing the fact that in northwestern Europe there would be intensive power. Is there any proof for this assertion? To begin with I am not quite sure what you mean by intensive power. Do you mean labour productivity, land productivity, total productivity? When I read E.L. Jones' *Growth recurring* or Braudel's *Civilisation matérielle* I do not get the impression that the intensive power in the northwestern parts of Europe was really superior to that in for example Sung China or later Tokugawa Japan, or closer to home, Southern Spain.<sup>12</sup> If you look at yield ratios of rice or maize or at population growth, the northwestern part of Europe at that time does not yet seem that special. I think it is still backward in intensive power.

The emphasis in that discussion is on the local economy, on the capacity of small-scale production systems to generate an agricultural produce which can nourish the population involved in it and leave a surplus. The emphasis is very much on it being a kind of local system that is not very dependent upon extensive structures of whatever kind to maintain it at that level as is the case for example with irrigation systems.

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**A city like Edo in the seventeenth century had one million inhabitants. I do not suppose they were fed by a local economy.**

I know very little of Tokugawa Japan but my understanding is that this is the place that most closely resembled Europe in this respect, both in terms of the localism, the intensity of the connection between the village and the manor, and of the dynamic between them. I put the emphasis on northwestern European developments because I think they are quite early. It is partly conjectural. As you can see in the book I do not give much evidence. But I do not think there is. I do not feel I have been neglecting an enormous body of research which could have either upheld it better or disproved it. It is a conjunction of this 'hypothetical' intensive growth with later extensive forms of power, developing in that area, which produces the very sustained development of Europe and especially the Northwest.

**You just used the word 'sustained', as you did in your book when referring to developments in medieval Europe<sup>13</sup>, although you admit there were occasional hiccups.<sup>14</sup> Is not that a rather optimistic interpretation of European economic development from the twelfth century onwards? A 'hiccup' seems to me to be a rather euphemistic expression for losing one third of the population. There were very big Malthusian ups and downs.**

Is there any evidence that there were more people dying there than in other parts of Europe?

**No, I don't think so. The death rate was highest in the Mediterranean. The population density there was higher. But to come back to your thesis on intensive growth, that local capacity of growth can also be seen in for example Valencia. It had an irrigation system, but this was a local one. It was not imposed from outside by an imperial structure, just as the polders here in Holland. There is no necessary link between irrigation systems or drainage systems and centralization.**

Well, that is true. I was only using that as an example. As I say myself at some point, it is not state-centralized, it is more regionally-centralized.

**This brings us to what I suspect most historians will find the most interesting, the most intriguing and controversial element in your book, and in any case the most interesting one in the context of this journal, the way you try to explain 'the European dynamic'. You state a thesis in which, if I am right, you suggest two explaining elements: on the one hand the existence of a system of intensive local power in the 'acephalous' European society where there is no monopoly of the sources of social power, and on the other hand the normative integration or pacification which is provided by Christianity. The sources of social power are not monopolized, there are only networks. Yet there is no disintegration and**

anarchy because of the shared norms of Christianity. You even go as far as to call Christianity a necessary condition of that European dynamic.<sup>15</sup> You explicitly refer to the tension between the transcendent and the immanent elements in Christianity<sup>16</sup> as a cause of what you call the rational European 'restlessness' which is at the basis of this dynamic. Is this not a rather strange interpretation of Christianity? Is Christian ideology not static? Did Christianity really 'encourage(d) a drive for moral and social improvement even against worldly authority?'.<sup>17</sup> Take for example the ideas on the three estates, which are supposed to be static, or monasticism, to mention an other element that does not exactly point to a kind of restlessness. It is just as evasive as is Buddhism.

Let us take the three estates. Throughout the Middle Ages there is a large satirical literature on that which is in effect portraying the notion that in theory there are supposed to be three estates, but actually what is happening is the grossest form of exploitation. The behavior of knights and monks is not as it is supposed to be. There is a very large literature of dissent within this religion.

That would mean you are saying that Christianity was restless because in practice it was not what it was supposed to be! What then is 'real' Christianity?

Well, it is a religion that cannot rest. There is a gap between the real world and the ideal. You do not find that gap to the same degree in either Hinduism or Confucianism to take the extremes, and a little less of it in Islam.

Then it is less of a causal and more of a 'non-blockading' factor. What you are saying now is that in theory the ideology of Christianity should have blockaded dynamism but in practice things were not that way...

No, Christianity has this notion of the world being imperfect. There is a dissatisfaction with the world. Salvation consists in seeking a better personal conduct and a better world. In the Middle Ages there are ideals about that, particular ideals which are portrayed in literature and painting. There is a 'this-worldly orientation' towards improvement.

There has been a very long struggle about power between economic and religious organizations over the control of economic behavior. I think for example of the control of money lending, the control of capital accumulation. What we see is that the Church wanted to contain economic developments, but did not manage to do so. It lost this struggle. Economic organizations such as companies of merchants managed to get rid of regulation by the Church.



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Well, I do say that there is a secularization of this process. When I talk about the role of the Church I am focusing on early and high medieval developments. After that it declines.

But then how exactly did it decline? For something to decline it has to exist. *How* did the Church take care of that normative pacification that according to you was a necessary condition of European dynamics? What exactly did the Church or religion do to make people behave in one way and not in another? And even if it was important in theory: are not you overestimating the 'penetration' of Christianity, as if every peasant felt Christian, bound by the ideals of the Christian Church?

No, that would be a gross overstatement. This is meant to be a very partial, even minimalist argument: the argument that there is a basic-level solidarity. There are a number of things that the Church provided at different moments in time. The first contribution is this levelling and transpolitical effect of Christianity in the Roman Empire with its notion that a community can exist which is not enforced by the authorities, does not depend ultimately on the Empire. Of course when Christianity becomes the official religion there is a fusion of the two. The second contribution is the ability of the Christian Church to survive the collapse of the Empire and become the main organizational structure and so bring together two formerly quite separate areas in Europe, one Roman and the other barbarian. Very important in this is literature both as a technical infrastructure of communication and as a means of conveying a shared message. The monopoly of shared meanings is something the Church would retain for a very long time. Then there is the particular development of monastic networks and the forms of economic life created in a period of economic decline. Of course there are robber barons and states that are at war with one another but the Church provides a kind of international diplomatic network. The role of the clergy and the Church as mediators in international dispute and their ability to humble a deviant ruler are crucial.

That is before 1400....

I agree, this role is eventually taken over by a system of states.

Recent research shows that this is very much a view from above, with regard to the penetrative power of both state and Church. Even the ideological language of the Church, if it was known at all, was perverted by remnants of popular culture, as you can see for example during the persecution of witches in the seventeenth century. Is not your approach too top-down, an ideology being imposed, hypothesizing that it penetrates?

What we have to explain at the end of it is not all that much. We are not talking about a massively trading, massively dense diplomatic system. In a

global perspective this is still a rather backward part of the world in which not much is going on in terms of long-distance communication. But the small amount which there is, has an interaction effect with the local developments. One does not have to say that the role of the Church is enormous, one just has to say it has to be there.

If it is Christianity that facilitates these contacts in the field of diplomacy or long-distance communication and trade, why then are for example trade-contacts between Christians and the Islamic world and even between Christians and heathens so easy? Christians seem to be able to negotiate with everybody in the world! Christians in the Iberian situation, until the early seventeenth century, had some very close cohabitation with Muslims. Until the end of the fifteenth century there was a large Jewish community in Spain. They were living and working among Christian 'Spaniards': there were no ghettos. So I still do not see the necessity of this 'facilitating' Christianity.

There is more than one kind of trade and interaction going on at any of these periods of time. The Mediterranean remained a very natural trading place for a very long time. The ability of elites to trade with each other is something that has endured through a whole succession of different political and ideological systems. I am not surprised by the enduring of Mediterranean trade. It is generally mediated by elites of merchant groups and usually needs specific kinds of formal diplomatic regulation.

The Italian merchants trading with Muslims and establishing colonies in the Middle East, in for example Alexandria, did not have diplomats; they were the diplomats themselves.

That is the same kind of thing you get in the 'ports of trade' in the Ancient empires.<sup>18</sup> It is trading in specific kinds of goods. I am interested more in the trading of mass staple products for example grain, timber or textile.

There was a massive trade with heathen Slaves in Prussia and farther east, mediated by the Teutonic Order, a Christian order. Could one not construct another interpretation of European dynamism? Or rather, it has already been constructed by E.L. Jones in his *Growth recurring*.<sup>19</sup> In this book he defends a thesis in which there is no necessity for referring to normative integration in an 'acephalous' society, especially when trade is in basic goods. In such a societal system there is not *one* rent-seeking polity that completely dominates the whole territory. It then does not make much sense for the rulers of any particular small 'state' to be rent-seeking. People could go to another 'state'. In such a collection of small states there is no rationality in rent-seeking, in bothering trade: It is not because I love the guy, not because we are both Christians that I do not rob him, but when I do so he and his colleagues will never come back! Not

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robbing, but protecting *and* taxing him is the solution. The European feudal system was inherently incapable of being a rent-seeking system as far as trade is concerned. People could always go away. A capstone state as in China where the only existing, central government could behave as a robber baron, did not emerge here. There is no reference to Christianity needed, only one to rationality. I think this fits in with what you say about the idea of private property. According to you even in the early medieval period and surely in the Higher Middle Ages there existed a distinct private property in Europe.

As you remember I use the term 'private' in a special sense. I do not say it is 'individual'. I say it is 'hidden' from the state.<sup>20</sup> Think of the Roman idea of immunity. It is not absolute but relatively private. The state can not lay its hands on it. So, there is a partial truth in your remarks. But the problem is that it is still the bourgeois theory that men have 'the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another'<sup>21</sup> and the only thing that will ever stop them is a rent-seeking state.

#### **What is wrong with being bourgeois?**

Given that for most periods of history and most places there have been effective rent-seeking states, why did not the development occur in Europe? The answer is partially that social development is a very complicated business which needs a lot of different things coming together in a very laborious and slow way with a certain number of coincidences, but it is also a matter that other forms of social organization than rent-seeking states may hinder or help social development...

Then again, there was normative integration in for example Chinese society too, so that by itself can not have made the difference. A difference however between China and Europe is that European feudalism was characterized by political parcellization and Chinese society was not.

It is not true that in China there was just one religion. There was a Confucian kind of world view but other forms as well.

#### **There was heresy in Europe too.**

But in China we see more socially restricted believe-systems, one applying more to the upper classes and the officials of the Empire, the other being more popular. There is no attempt to integrate the tension between the popular and the elite. While one endorses obedience to authority, the other one extols practices which are not concerned with the rational improvement of the world. The distinctive feature of Christianity, which to some degree it does share with Islam, is that it is fundamentally the same religion for all the different social classes, even though the actual practices deviate enormously from this.

There is the notion of salvation for all, so there is a minimal level of common identity across the classes. That separates Christianity and Islam from the others to a degree. I do not know enough about Islam to be able to tell what are the negative features to Islamic religion and its structures. All I can do is repeat the Gellner type of arguments.<sup>22</sup>

**On a theoretical level we should know more about Islam to say anything about the effects of Christianity in Europe.**

Well that is true. I think it would be ideal to do that in relation to Tokugawa Japan as well.

**You suggest that economic developments in northwestern Europe - intensive growth - are a precondition for the growth of centralized states.<sup>23</sup> One could easily find other parts of Europe where agrarian growth was even faster and where methods of agrarian production were more developed, for example the Po Valley in Italy. Should not one expect a certain kind of centralized state to have developed there?**

When I talk about the development of these things I am talking about a very long-term historical development and I would not say that those states were very centralized.

Nevertheless, sooner or later, I think it is in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, integration is supposed to be provided by an organization that was centralized and territorial, and to your opinion distinctly useful to keep the European dynamism going.<sup>24</sup> What exactly are you referring to when you speak about a centralized and territorial state in this period of time: the so-called 'coercion-intensive' state of Charles Tilly or his so-called 'capital-intensive' state?<sup>25</sup> Aren't you too much in line with that traditional view of many historians: capitalism and the central state going hand in hand on their way toward the modern world? Economic growth in early modern Europe is not really - and that is the background of my question - a characteristic of centralized states. Or do you only mean *infrastructurally* centralized states?<sup>26</sup>

My interest in the history of the development of these states is more in the area of the control of power. It is much more in terms of the development of common ways of doing things across a larger territory: common fiscal structures, common rules of extracting resources from the population, common interventions through religion. These kinds of very gradual processes. It is a very wide-run process that did not always have very much impact on economic development.

Charles Tilly refers to the danger such a way of reasoning becomes teleological: trying to explain only what really happened and describing

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processes only in function of their results, whereby one omits all kinds of other possible and rival ways of development: small states, commercial metropolises, urban networks. They were not only possible, they existed!<sup>27</sup> Commercial networks were dominant until the eighteenth century. We now know that even the states we thought were absolutist, for example seventeenth-century Spain or eighteenth-century France, did not unify their fiscal systems. They were unable to collect their taxes themselves and had to privatize them. Colonial exploitation was also very much a private, not a state-led affair. Take for example all those private, licensed organizations. They would fit in fine with your idea of the intertwining of different sources of social power organizations but they are not necessarily indicators or precursors of a strong national state.

There was indeed a lot of particularism... It was a very limited centrality. I am not saying that those states are highly centralized. What one has is the possibility of developing different forms of relatively organic states. In my second volume I put together Britain and Prussia as relatively organic forms and contrast them with for example Ancien Régime France. If you make that point about political structures you are right. That is true. There are several factors involved here. One is that one has to put practical limits to what one does and what one is interested in. I think that in the second volume I become more interested in forms of political and economic organizations which did not survive. There is bound to be in this 'leading edge' focus a teleological element. In some ways this is a very Victorian enterprise.

Wallerstein has very clear ideas about the relationship between being a strong state and having a core position in the economic system.<sup>28</sup> Do you see any necessary correlation between the forces you distinguish?

For Wallerstein the notion of the strong, state apart from the way in which it is conditioned by being in the core, is somewhat contingent. He does not theorize it. What I try and do is to talk about the development of these relatively cohesive states as they are connected to all kinds of economic systems in northern Europe and influenced by their capacity to have a military, including the way they are seeking to develop them and extract resources by them, and by the geo-political configuration of Europe as a whole. It is the conjunction of these things that enables the outcome to happen.

Of course it is all a matter of degrees, but nevertheless, you suggest an 'elective affinity' between centralized states and economic dynamism.<sup>29</sup>

Well, I suppose I am thinking particularly about their greater capacity to develop a kind of organic cohesion between the uses of military power, commercial expansion and the propertied classes. Their capability to develop this as a more cohesive state.

Then you mean centralized in an 'infrastructural' not in a 'despotic' sense?<sup>30</sup>

Yes, the clearest example being the development of these United Provinces in the Dutch coastal area.

Well, again the example of the Bank of England or the Dutch financial institutes raises the question if such economic organizations - power structures in your view - have got the attention they deserved if they are equally important and independently developing forces. Is not the relative independence of these economic systems vis-a-vis the political system characteristic of this acephalous European society?

Yes.

Should we then not regard the nineteenth century as an exceptional phase in European history? The size of markets and that of states never coincide more than in that period in time. Only in this century these two factors seem to coincide territorially.

What is going on is the increasing of the density of the state in this period linked to the general increase of density of capitalism, both inside and outside the state.

There is also an increase in density in the nineteenth century in what one could call 'ideological power'. To my opinion you do not give that very much attention. In your book you say: 'Human motivation is irrelevant except that it provided the forward drive that enough humans possess to give them a dynamism wherever they dwell'.<sup>31</sup> What you are interested in is the organization of power resources. This is '... the crucial determinant of the rise of a religious movement, as it is of any movement'.<sup>32</sup> 'Belief systems are messages - without communication infrastructures they cannot become extensive'.<sup>33</sup> Well, what we see in the nineteenth century is an extensification of ideological power. Nationalism for example is very important in the construction of the national state and it implies a 'nationalization' of the masses. This is something that gets less attention than one might have expected considering your interest in communication structures and considering your remarks on the fundamental influence of Christian ideology.

There is actually a great deal of attention paid to it for the period of the late eighteenth, the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. I discuss the expansion of literature and literacy.

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**But at the end of the nineteenth century mass-media and mass education played a very big role in the spread of nationalism. And that is discussed much less.**

Nationalism is more limited in the nineteenth century than is generally argued. It is confined to specific groups. It is not a general feature of mass population. Nor is it even a general feature of the bourgeoisie as a whole. It is especially a feature of a kind of state-dependent middle class, of notables.

**You are very much writing toward a climax in your second volume, the climax being '1914'. And those notables at that time, the people who were in positions where important decisions were made, were really touched by the impact of the mass-media. They were deciding on the basis of national feelings, national antagonisms.**

I think around 1900 public opinion is only just becoming an issue. I do not believe that nationalism was all that important in the origins of the First World War. Of course there is a growth of nationalist pressure groups, but they have specific, limited social locations. Of course state education systems are important in that respect, though according to the character of different states. But it is the twentieth century that really sees the explosion of mass-education and mass-media.

**Do not we see a real breakthrough at the end of the nineteenth century? I think of the creation of national armies, national educational systems the distribution of newspapers. People were demonstrating by hundreds of thousands in the streets.**

National armies I think are very important and I give them a lot of attention. But what I argue is that people in the long nineteenth century are mobilized into support of a full national effort in the war through more particularistic structures. The military recruitment led to a kind of cross-class constituency which is supporting the official view on politics of the state. The identification with an abstract nationalism inculcated through mass-media was less important than that through the particular disciplinary structures involved in the logistics of the armies.

**So then one might say that the First World War was the last Ancien Régime war in the sense that politics was still fundamentally a business of elites and the military power was relatively autonomous?**

Yes, politics was still very much 'notable' politics. Even where there was voting there still was a high level of working-class abstention and in rural, provincial towns outside the red core there was still a lot of popular voting for conservative or liberal parties. It is surprising how few disturbances there were.

This brings us to the question of your fourth independent source of social power, the military. Most social scientists distinguish only three of these sources. Max Weber for example does not distinguish an independent military source of social power because in his interpretation the military is the armed force of political power: 'The decisive means for politics is violence. Anyone who fails to see this is ... a political infant'.<sup>34</sup> Can you imagine any political power functioning without very close control of physical violence? We can distinguish state-independent economic structures, state-independent cultural or ideological institutions, but I do not see an independent military force. Why should we try and conceive an independent military power?

Any form of political power involves *au fond* a form of force. But within the European states, not to mention the colonies, there was a military that had a significant autonomy within the state. This caste autonomy which developed greatly through the nineteenth century and exploded in the twentieth century, is one of the causes of World War I. The relative autonomy of the military caste is strongest in certain kinds of state especially in authoritarian monarchies. If one takes for example the German state in 1910 as being personified by Chancellor, Kaiser, Cabinet and higher civil servants, collectively forming as it were a diplomatic posture, one finds to a degree they are a caste formed by the military. In countries which are inheriting both the liberal and the authoritarian traditions, for example Spain, one can actually see the breaking apart of two 'states' as it were. On the Republican side one can see state-employed professionals serving a liberal civilian state, on the Nationalist side there is a military that is primarily serving a military order and Church authoritarian structure.

**On the one hand the state is becoming less and less militarized but on the other hand from the nineteenth century onward the military becomes more and more autonomous.**

Well it is becoming more autonomous in a particular sense. It is certainly recruited from specific social locations but those locations are less central to the modern class structure than they were in the eighteenth century. Whereas in the eighteenth century they were the upper class, in the nineteenth century they have become a distinctly reactionary former dominant, now declining upper class. An extreme caricature is the Prussian military. In the case of Spain it is not so much the upper class, but a kind of provincial, respectable middle class concentrated in certain regions with a very high degree of selfrecruitment. They form a kind of autonomous caste in Spanish society.

**The best indication of that seem those numerous so-called *pronunciamientos* in which the military set aside the politicians 'to save the country'.<sup>35</sup> But as a matter of fact aren't we then talking about a**



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**militarized state in which the political power is dependent and not to be isolated as an independent factor?**

No, because the case of the Spanish Republic is one in which you actually have the introduction of a liberal state with a whole set of liberal institutions, with the announcement of a social policy and the setting up of all kinds of institutions and more or less its own army against an Ancien Regime with its own army et cetera.

**I guess you would agree with Charles Tilly that war made states and vice versa which would be another reason to stress the importance of the military as a source of social power.<sup>36</sup>**

Yes, in both volumes I agree that war made the state until the eighteenth century and probably the beginning of the nineteenth. War is then still making the state but from that point in time there is something else making the state too. Then the role of the military declines. Of course in the American Civil War and in the twentieth century we again see this enormous impact that wars have on the state.

Noten:

- \* In de context van het interview relevante publikaties van Mann zijn: M. Mann, *The sources of social power. Volume I. From the beginning to 1760 A.D.* (Cambridge 1986); idem, 'The autonomous power of the state: its origins, mechanisms and results' in: J.A. Hall, ed., *States in history* (Oxford en Cambridge Mass. 1986) 109-136; idem, ed., *The rise and decline of the nation-state* (Oxford 1990); idem, *States, war and capitalism. Studies in political sociology* (Oxford 1992); idem, *The sources of social power. Vol II. The rise of classes and nation-states, 1760-1914* (Cambridge 1993) en idem, 'In praise of macro-sociology: a reply to Goldthorpe', *The British Journal of Sociology* 45 (1994) 37-54. Voor besprekingen van het in de context van dit nummer meest interessante deel I van Manns uiteindelijk op vier delen begrote *magnum opus* zie P. Anderson, 'Michael Mann's sociology of power' in: idem, *A zone of engagement* (Londen /New York 1992) 76-86; B. Moore, bespreking in *History and Theory* 27 (1988) 169-177; P. Munz, 'How the West was won. Miracle or natural event?', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 21, (1991) 253-276 en Chris Wickham, 'Historical materialism, historical sociology', *New Left Review* nummer 171 (1988) 63-80.
1. Aldaar deel I, 1.
  2. *Ibidem*, 22-33 en Deel II 6-10.
  3. Mann, *ibidem*, VII.
  4. *Ibidem*, 0.
  5. *Ibidem*, 3.
  6. Mann, *The sources of social power. Vol II*, 1.
  7. Zie bijvoorbeeld Mann, *The sources of social power. Vol I*, 1-2.
  8. Zie bijvoorbeeld Mann, *The sources of social power Vol I*, 3-4, 522-524 en 534 en idem *Vol II*, 1-6 en 736.
  9. Voor nadere toelichting zie Mann, *The sources of social power. Vol I*, 6-10.
  10. Mann, *The sources of social power. Vol I*, 31.

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11. *Ibidem*, 374.
12. Ik verwijst hier naar E.L. Jones, *Growth recurring. Economic change in world history* (Oxford 1988) hoofdstuk 4 en 9 voor China respectievelijk Japan, en naar F. Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XVe-XVIIIe siècle* (Parijs 1979) deel I *Les structures du quotidien. Le possible et l'impossible* hoofdstuk 2. Voor de situatie in China zie ook M. Elvin, *The pattern of the Chinese past* (Stanford 1973), een boek waar Mann zelf ook naar verwijst.
13. Mann, *The sources of social power. Vol I*, 413: 'The medieval growth was strong, sustained and pervasive'. Zie ook *ibidem*, 402.
14. *Ibidem*, 402.
15. *Ibidem*, 507.
16. Voor een toelichting op deze termen raadpleeg het register van *The sources of social power*, deel I.
17. *Ibidem*, 398.
18. Zie voor toelichting op deze term, die een grote rol speelt in het werk van Polanyi, K. Polanyi, C. Arensberg en H.W. Pearson, *Trade and market in the early empires. Economies in history and theory* (Illinois 1956).
19. E.L. Jones, *Growth recurring. Economic change in world history* (Cambridge 1988).
20. Zie voor toelichting Mann, *The sources of social power. Vol I*, 399.
21. Mann verwijst hier naar de bekende formulering van Adam Smith in diens *An enquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations* in Boek I hoofdstuk 2.
22. Zie bijvoorbeeld E. Gellner, *Muslim society* (Cambridge 1981).
23. Zie bijvoorbeeld Mann, *The sources of social power. Vol. I*, 374 en 416.
24. *Ibidem*, 416.
25. Zie voor toelichting Ch. Tilly, *Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990-1990* (Oxford en Cambridge, Mass. 1990) hoofdstuk 1.
26. Voor de uitdrukking 'infrastructural' zie onder noot 30.
27. Zie noot 25.
28. Zie bijvoorbeeld I.M. Wallerstein, *The modern world-system I. Capitalist agriculture and the origins of the European world-economy in the sixteenth-century* (New York 1974) onder de ingang 'core-states' in het register.
29. Mann, *The sources of social power. Vol I*, 416.
30. Voor toelichting op deze termen zie M. Mann, 'The autonomous power of the state: its origins, mechanisms and results' in: J.A. Hall, ed., *States in history* (Oxford en Cambridge Mass. 1986) 109-136.
31. Mann, *The sources of social power. Vol I*, 5.
32. *Ibidem*, 310.
33. *Ibidem*, 363.
34. Max Weber, geciteerd uit B.D. Porter, *War and the rise of the state. The military foundations of modern politics* (New York 1994) 303.
35. Voor de term *pronunciamiento* zie J.P. Amalric, e.a., *Lexique historique de l'Espagne XVI-XXe siècle* (Parijs 1976) 184: *Pronunciamiento*. Terme qui désigne dans l'histoire politique de l'Espagne, et plus particulièrement au XIXe siècle, une forme de sédition, généralement à l'initiative d'un chef militaire, qui vise à renverser l'autorité en place. On dit que le chef de ce mouvement ce prononce, c'est-à-dire qu'il proclame par un manifeste et soutient par les armes une opinion que le système politique existant ne lui permet pas d'exprimer. Cette action se traduit dans le faits par une prise d'armes, mais elle entend se justifier par un appel (grito) à l'opinion publique. Ce terme est d'ailleurs employé pour désigner tout action de ce type, même en dehors des frontières espagnoles.
36. Tilly, *Coercion, capital, and European states*, hoofdstuk 3.