

# 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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## **Relating Mann's Conception to CRESSI**

By Risto Heiskala

Chapter 10 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

# Relating Mann's Conception to CRESSI

## D1.1 Chapter 10

By Risto Heiskala

### Introduction

Historical sociologist Michael Mann outlines in his *The Sources of Social Power* series a fourfold theoretical model for the study of society. The model reduces the multitude of relations of interaction in social networks into the ideological, economic, military and political sources of social power. In my (unpublished) manuscript (Heiskala 2014), I suggest that Mann's IEMP model can be extended in interpreting the ideological power source more broadly as cultural power (C) and introducing the two new power sources of artefactual power (A) and natural power (N). That is how we come to a revised NACEMP model. The reasons to introduce the new model have to do with the need for disciplinary integration between the social, technical and natural sciences but also with an attempt to produce a theoretical conception that would be more useful than the original IEMP model in the analysis of many key issues of the current era such as environmental problems and technostructures or transformation of the gender system. In this short paper I suggest some ways in which the model could be used in the CRESSI project.<sup>1</sup>

### 10.1 How to turn the conception into a theory of innovation?

The transformed NACEMP model based on Mann's a bit simpler model outlines six power sources. The first of these, natural power, however, is not a field of innovation but evolution. Yet its structures are relevant as sources of power or marginalization (in cases of disabled people, for example). All the other power sources can be seen as fields of innovation. This is how we get five types of innovation, i.e. artefactual, cultural, economic, military and political innovations. Strictly speaking only four of these are *social* innovations as the class of artefactual innovations is a somewhat extended version of a category often called *technological* innovations. I would still like to keep it as one part of the innovation model because technological innovations too take place in social networks and affect the social reality (Latour 1987 and 2005) and also because technological innovations have been so important since the industrial revolution, at the latest, and will remain to be important in the future. This is how we get a model with five types of innovation. For the purposes of innovation studies, however, I would like to extend a bit the definition of the military power source and speak about security related innovations thus counting in addition to lethal power also all organized violence capacities into its field.

This is how we get the ACESP model of innovation studies covering the following forms of innovation:

- artefactual innovations (Ai)
- cultural innovations (Ci)
- economic innovations (Ei)
- security related innovations (Si) and

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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). This paper forms Chapter 10 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>.

- political innovations (Pi).

## 10.2 How to relate the model to the Capability Approach?

As a new theoretical approach the identity of the CA is still open in many senses. One of the still open questions is the interpretation of the exact nature and theoretical status of capabilities. Amartya Sen outlines the approach by referring to five distinctive types of freedom, which all must be present at least to some extent for people to be able to actualize their capabilities. These freedoms include ‘(1) political freedoms, (2) economic facilities, (3) social opportunities, (4) transparency guarantees, and (5) protective security’ (Sen 1999, 10). According to Sen, this is one possible list among others, and it is always a context specific task relative to local standards and objectives of the developmental project at hand to specify those capabilities that are central in each context. Martha Nussbaum is more ambitious. In the tradition of human rights and Rawlsian theory of justice she presents a list of ten ‘basic capabilities’, which every political system should honour. The list includes (1) life, (2) bodily health, (3) bodily integrity, (4) senses, imagination, and thought, (5) emotions, (6) practical reason, (7) affiliation, (8) other species, (9) play, and (10) control over one’s environment in (10a) political and (10b) material sense (Nussbaum 2000, 78-80). Nussbaum understands her list as an abstract frame, which can have various different context specific local applications. She also emphasises that it is open to debate. Yet, she thinks that it is a universal measure of human dignity, and should therefore be obeyed in all contexts and political constitutions. Here she departs from Sen, who thinks that it is better to work with more open set of context specific lists without an abstract ‘basic’ frame to which these local lists should always be somehow grounded. Debate about the controversy between Sen and Nussbaum on the nature and status of the capability approach still continues, and there is no easy solution in sight.

I am personally more inclined toward Sen’s stand because it is difficult to see on what exactly lists of basic capabilities such as Nussbaum’s are grounded. The list itself is a sympathetic one but because it very much resembles a new version of the UN declaration of human rights one immediately starts to search an authority such as the UN General Assembly behind it. As such an authority cannot be found, it remains an intervention made by a single scholar. That again means that irrespective of what Nussbaum says, the status of the list is the same as Sen’s, i.e., it is a context specific interpretation tailored for the purposes at hand. This encourages me to provide a third list based on the transformed version of Mann’s power sources, i.e., the above NACESP model. This is how we get the following list of capabilities:

- natural capabilities (Nc)
- artefactual capabilities (Ac)
- cultural capabilities (Cc)
- economic capabilities (Ec)
- security related capabilities (Sc) and
- political capabilities (Pc).

The status of the list is the same as Sen’s, i.e., instructions for use read simply: ‘use in cases of need, otherwise tailor an alternative list of your own’.

### **10.3 How to relate the model to Beckert's economic sociology?**

The approach in economic sociology presented in Beckert (2010) is an extensive one. It can actually be seen as a very fruitful attempt to synthesize the three most influential traditions of economic sociology, i.e., Granovetter's network approach, neo-institutionalism and cultural approaches into one research programme. As such a synthetic attempt I sympathize the conception very much and see it as a source of great potential. Yet I also have a problem with the conception. The problem has to do with the fact that it is a research programme in the field of economic sociology. Economic sociology again is a twin brother of neoclassical economics. Both disciplines are based on and exemplify a rupture in relation to the tradition of classical political economy, which was in addition to markets interested in the reproduction of the societal totality in the form of production and the relationship between social classes. This all changed in the wake of the marginalist revolution that made markets the sole object of study in economics. This still is so in economics today, but it is so also in economic sociology. It criticises economics of the use of narrowly economic models in attempts to explain the workings of markets, brings in sociological concepts and shows that explanations change, and quite often to the more realist direction, whenever such concepts are utilized. Yet the study of markets is where economic sociology draws the line. It is not interested in anything else and brings concepts from general sociology into its discourse only when such concepts are useful in the explanation of the workings of markets.

Contrary to economic sociology Mann's conception in historical sociology is tuned for the analysis of the societal whole and thus moves in the field of general sociology. In such a conception the economy is one field among others in society and accordingly economic power is only one of the six different sources of power in the transformed NACEMP model. This points to the direction of interpreting Beckert's approach within a more extensive conceptual frame in which it is an approach in the field of economic power. Yet it is important to understand that Beckert touches also issues that have to do with all power sources (such as institutions and networks) and issues that have to do with other power sources (mainly culture). Therefore, the relationship with Mann's conception is more complex. However, I do not see any fundamental contradiction between the two conceptions even if it may turn out that we sometimes will have more concepts than we need for the purposes of empirical analyses and policy recommendations.

### **10.4 Is there a contribution to the analysis of marginalization?**

I think there is. In line with what has been said above I propose that there are six forms of marginalization. These are:

- natural marginalization (Nm) such as physical disability
- artefactual marginalization (Am) such as lack of technical means for the use of the Internet or the network of highways
- cultural marginalization (Cm) such as lack of cultural capital
- economic marginalization (Em) such as lack of economic resources
- security related marginalization (Sm) such as lack of physical protection and
- political marginalization (Pm) such as limited access to public discourse or centres of political power.

These forms of marginalization can be diminished by using five types of innovation:

- artefactual innovations (Ai) such as new auxiliary devices for disabled people

- cultural innovations (Ci) such as new forms of education or new conceptualization of citizenship rights
- economic innovations (Ei) such as new forms of credit
- security related innovations (Si) such as prevention programmes of intimate violence or political terror and
- political innovations (Pi) such as new forms of mobilization or new institutional patterns for decision making.

In addition, marginalization can also be prevented or eased with ways that are quite traditional and not innovative at all. This is also an important thing to remember when tailoring policy advice. Old recipes can work too!

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Contact person: Project Manager: [cressi@sbs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:cressi@sbs.ox.ac.uk)



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