

[Here is your superb essay. I found your ability to weave the contending theories into the critique with such ease very inspiring. From the point of theory building, this essay is among the top three in the class: 15 out of 15.]

In his book, *Incoherent Empire*, Michael Mann seeks to disprove the notion that the United States is effectively constructing a global empire. The author avoids making a specific proclamation regarding the theoretical framework of International Relations he adheres to in order to evaluate the United States and its foreign policy behavior. This critical essay will evaluate the arguments, empirical information, and lines of reasoning Mann employs to discuss the United States as a global power, and will compare and contrast those against the various theoretical frameworks of International Relations.

Mann begins his argument by evaluating the military power of the United States in comparison to historical patterns and other actors in the contemporary global playing field. He asserts that the United States has no military rival. He arrives at this conclusion through consideration of the military agendas of comparable states. Japan and Europe do not pursue military power.

His analysis of the budget for military spending allocations is another key component of consideration in determining that the United States has no danger of a significant military challenger. Mann introduces strong empirical evidence that helps to ground his position. In 2003 alone, the U.S. budget for defense was over forty percent of the world's cumulative total. Along the same lines, Mann notes that the United States' military spending was twenty five times greater than the military spending of all seven of the so-called "rogue states" the U.S. claims are its enemies.

The previous line of reasoning makes it apparent that Mann's argument is not consistent with a "pure" [what is pure line of realism?] line of Realism. His logic is comparable to Realist lines of reasoning in that he is focused on evaluation of the role of power and the importance of the "great power [the preceding presentation requires deconstruction; if you are drawing a distinction between traditional realists who tend to emphasize absolute capability and neorealists who counsel in favor of relative capability, then the argument must be recast]". His theory lends priority to military power. Mann is also pessimistic in his approach, as he seeks to explain the way things are, as opposed to a normative "how things should be" approach.

However, early on Mann departs from the traditional Realist approach. The notion that the "other powers" (Japan and Europe) do not pursue military power is a fundamental violation of the Realist line of reasoning. According to Realists, violence is endemic in global relations. Mann implies that the behavior of Japan and Europe is contradictory to the quest for military supremacy. Their policies suggest that they prefer to avoid violent conflict. The reasoning that led him to consider these countries as global powers in his comparative analysis, even though not significant military powers, implies additional factors are being considered as qualities of "power", outside the realm of military power.

Consistent with Realism, Mann goes on to identify the four components of empire building; defense, offensive strike power, the ability to conquer territories, and the ability to pacify the peoples indigenous to occupied lands. Mann discusses the nuclear power position of the United States, noting the Nation currently possesses about

9,000 nuclear weapons in its arsenal, more than any other state. To Mann, this is a strong point.

However, the United States is lacking relative capabilities when soldiers are figured into the analysis [when the requirement of pacifying occupied peoples is considered]. Mann empirically demonstrates that the U.S. has a grand total of about 1.45 million soldiers as compared to China's 2.5 million. Considering the sheer number of expendable human bodies, the United States only has about 5% of the global total of soldiers, which is insufficient to police the entire world. Hence, Mann confirms his theory that the United States is not an empire, a position that would demand a global military presence of U.S. troops [his logic breaks down here; Great Britain did build a huge empire with armed forces much smaller than the U.S. has today. If the U.S. could not pacify any people, it has to do not with the size of its forces but the power of modern nationalism].

In terms of global deployment, Mann cedes that the United States does possess global deployment capabilities. He points to the 132 military facilities the U.S. has in different countries around the globe, from military bases to simple refueling centers. Mann makes a historical comparison and notes the significance of this capability as being the first time in history a nation has had full global deployment. However, a major obstacle is that the United States is subject to gaining permissions and adhering to the rules of the locality. They don't have free reign to make decisions independently. Additionally, the United States presence in these countries makes them less domestically secure and instigates hostility against the respective governmental leaders.

Mann evaluates the firepower of the United States, which he refers to as its biggest asset. He concludes the R.M.A. (revolution in military affairs) in combination with information warfare allows the United States to inflict devastating damage with very little loss of U.S. lives. Mann gives empirical support to back up his argument that this is the major U.S. advantage by bringing weapons and special technology into the discussion; long range guided missiles, predator planes, self-steering tanks, self-destructive landmines that jump into the paths of oncoming vehicles.

According to Mann, the “weapons of the weak” are defying the low impact weapons and advanced technology belonging to the United States military. The U.S. defined “rogue states” are acquiring nuclear warheads. They have paramilitaries with small arms. He notes that less accurate M-16’s are sold in Africa for the equivalent of 15 cents. Terrorists are building primitive bombs and using suicide bombers. Mann also notes that chemical and biological weapons serve as deterrents for the weak states to ward off the strong. He also adds that the United States did not discontinue its chemical and biological weapons programs until the late 70’s and that the U.S. still possesses them.

Mann notes that effectively ruling occupied territories depends upon enlisting locals who enforce the mission of the imperialist state. He points out that in some cases the United States fails in this area and succeeds at other times. He asserts the Army uses no native help; they instead use M-16’s. He cites cases such as the United States embracing local allies in Afghanistan and the Kurds in the north of Iraq.

Mann concludes that the United States is not an empire because militarily, it does not have the might. To summarize his line of reasoning, the United States does have the largest arsenal of nuclear weaponry, a plus. However, I.R. theory tells us that the

United States cannot deploy these weapons because other countries that possess them pose a substantial risk of counter nuclear attack, so this power is moot. The United States is severely deficient in soldiers. It could not win a massive, conventional war, nor could it patrol the planet. Its global deployment capabilities are irrelevant because they are contingent upon diplomatic relations with host countries. If the United States were building an empire, global deployment would be based on unilateral authoritarian decisions, not a permission slip. Its sophisticated firepower is not effective against new threats, such as highly decentralized networks of international terrorists. Lastly, the United States does not have the ability to pacify occupied territories because it rules from behind the barrel of a gun.

When considering political Realism as a theory of International Relations, it appears that Mann is definitely in line with many of its main propositions. The U.S. could be viewed as a rational actor, which is acting in accord with the classical pattern of behavior exhibited by national powers throughout history. It is asserting its hegemony, attempting to maintain and increase its relative capabilities, and struggles to prevent a loss of relative power. The United States seems to be motivated by survival and domination when gauging its foreign policy decisions.

The ideological designs of the United States are to spread "freedom" and "democracy". Thus, the U.S. refers to its military as freedom fighters and the current war in Iraq is titled Operation Iraqi Freedom. According to the rational actor model, this is simply the historical pattern of asserting exceptionality consistent with all colonial conquests. It provides the legitimacy and justification needed to generate public backing [your integration of theory here is admirable and the authoritative lucidity of

your understanding of realism is splendid]. Mann notes that the mass media in the States has “gleefully greeted” the new weapons developments which promise to yield fewer U.S. casualties. This is consistent with the rational actor model and the concept of manufacturing consent. According to the Burchill text and the fourth principle of Realism, moral principles do not guide state behavior, although they have these implications. Mann suggests that the blanket, black and white ideological groupings of terrorists and assertions such as “if you’re not with us, you’re against us” are creating more enemies for the United States. He notes that there is vast global resistance to the U.S. and when a terrorist group attacks, others join in and sympathize, reinforcing the opposition.

Mann’s suggestion that individuals, such as terrorists, are rising in prominence and becoming actors in the international realm is a divergence from the traditional Realist perspective. Traditional Realism asserts [also neorealism] that states are the primary actors because they retain a monopoly in the legitimate use of violence. The notion that religiously affiliated opposition groups that dispute the United States challenges the core of this position.

Mann devotes a considerable amount of attention to the internal dynamics of the United States government. He delves into an examination of the Bush administration’s staff, discussing the psychological basis motivating their individual foreign policy agendas. If Mann were adhering to logic consistent with Waltz’s Neo-Realism theory, the character of individual units would not be considered relevant because Neo-Realism posits that all units are functionally identical due to the constraints of the structure they

exist within. The anarchical nature of the system fosters mutual distrust and security through the accumulation of the means to wage war against other states.

Considering the individual agendas of Rumsfeld and his ilk seems to be more in line with the Public Choice Theory than Neo-Realism, as it suggests that bureaucrats have prominence in shaping relations based on factors not mediated by the international system. According to Mann, "visceral hatred" toward Clinton, an "affinity for the Israeli political right" and "Judeo-Christian fundamentalism" has influenced Bush administration foreign policy.

According to Public Choice Theory, politicians are seeking to maximize their chances for reelection. Mann points to the excessive military aid and assistance that is funneled thru to Israel, suggesting it goes as far as allowing the country to purchase directly from U.S. arms manufacturers with no explanation, a liberty no other nation enjoys. Likewise, Mann highlights that the average Israeli citizen benefits from American tax dollars at an approximate reward of \$500 per year, as compared to about three cents annually for the average African. Public Choice Theory would suggest that foreign policies such as the United States preferential treatment toward Israel, is motivated by domestic pressure and special interests groups. According to Public Choice theory, these interest groups must be extremely powerful. As such, they would be organized, cohesive, and have abundant resources.

The Structural approach as discussed in class points to a heavy engagement in global capitalism. The notion that the United States economy is on a war footing would

be consistent with much of the empirical arguments Mann incorporates. He discusses the military industrial complex. He also points to economic tactics of warfare, such as sanctions applied to Cuba and Iraq. He notes that in order to make sanctions effective, you must have multilateral support of competitor economies will free ride by snapping up the missed business opportunities. This would be consistent with the structural approach as it uses the global capitalist system as a tool for punishment of improper behavior.

Mann engages in a heavy analysis of the political economy. He discusses the neo-liberalism that hit Latin America, which resulted in some of the world's most steep wealth divisions. He discusses sweatshops contracted by American corporations and murders of Columbian labor organizers. He tackles the issue of United States pharmaceutical corporations extorting about \$10,000 annually from AIDS patients in Africa, refusing to allow generic substitutes to be produced at a lower cost because they claim patent and intellectual property rights on the medications. Mann brings the notion of "free markets" to the forefront of his argument. He advocates that free trade is the equivalent of imperialism, stating that U.S. politicians attach free trade with democratic freedom. Mann also notes that the U.S. makes way for corporate interests, mentioning the Washington Consensus.

Mann's thick discussion regarding the U.S. as the economic back seat driver is consistent with a structural approach. He brings several points in to support his case. The U.S. dollar regulated the global economy. The United States has tremendous purchasing power and has the advantage of running huge deficits because foreign

nations are funding the military engine that is the U.S. economy. He notes that trust in the American economy and its stability is on the decline in light of recent corporate scandals. Mann suggests that at any given point, foreign nations could recall their investments and throw the United States into financial bankruptcy.

Mann's theoretical approach to International relations appears to be Structural. He comes from an extremely pessimistic, Realist tradition of describing the system as it is. There are many elements of his argument that run parallel with orthodox Realism. However, the heavy considerations given to the political economy imply that the structural theoretical framework would best encompass his analysis. The Structural approach suggests foreign policy is dictated and manipulated by certain groups with special interests. Throughout the book, Mann makes this point consistently. Overall, he concludes that the United States is losing its uni-polar position. The increase of global opposition to the United States and the decline of confidence in the U.S. economy suggest that tumultuous times are ahead for the state.