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# GOVERNING SOCIETY

## The story of two monsters

**Mitchell Dean**

*This paper addresses the notion of 'governing society'. It does this first through revisiting the founding Hobbesian symbol of the state as Leviathan and its status in contemporary social science discourses proclaiming the end of the nation-state and of the social project it contained. It then proceeds to outline the genealogical sites of emergence of governing society and the social project from, in turn, an internal or domestic perspective afforded by the notion of governmentality, and then from an international perspective of a system of states and their location in a global spatial order. An assessment of the project of governing society and the fate of the social, would need to be framed not in terms of the life and mooted death of the Leviathan nation-state, but in terms of the struggle between two monsters. The latter struggle might symbolize, from time to time, the relations between such a state and civil society, the social and the economic, the domestic and the international, land and sea, change and order, nation-state and globalization.*

KEYWORDS: government; state; society; economy; international; Leviathan

Michel Foucault was often the most rationalist of thinkers, possibly due to his heritage within the French history of science. True to this inheritance, when Foucault came to study politics he framed it as a study of 'governmentality', that is, of the rationalities and techniques through which we govern and are governed. However, he did not doubt the power exercised over us by the imaginary; his call to cut off the king's head in political theory being one memorable example. Even more fundamental is his famous jibe at those who overvalue the state in the 'immediate, affective, and tragic form' of 'the lyricism of the cold monster confronting us' (Foucault 2007, p. 109).

Foucault's suggestion here is that our key concept, the state, precisely due to the intensity of the imagery condensed within it, acts as a kind of obstacle to thinking about politics understood as the ways we render our worlds, or aspects of them, governable. No doubt our political imaginary does act in the way Foucault suggests. But what if the non-rational plays as positive and facilitative a role in political thought and action as the rational? What if the terms of political discourse are constituted not simply in relation to the way we render the world thinkable but the ways in which we imagine it? What if the story of governmentality has also to be complemented by what Christopher Connery (2001) has called a 'geo-mythography', the way we imagine and mythologize our space and world?

Today, when all the world proclaims the death of the nation-state, and consequently that of the social, we could re-read Foucault's point above and say that we need to explore once again the 'mythicalised abstraction' and 'immediate, affective and tragic form' of the

cold monster. We need also to extend his understanding of governmentality so that our political thought does not again become reductive, this time to the techniques and rationality of governing. If the study of governmentality is concerned with how we make our world thinkable and actionable then it cannot restrict its approach to politics to those elements which make the world orderable, logical and calculable, no matter how profitable such a problematic has been. We need to think again about monsters and the constitutive and integrative way mythological thought can help us imagine our world. Our danger today would not be an excessive lyricism but perhaps an excessive rationalism.

I begin with this point as a condition for understanding the 'social' and governing society as a project. For rather than approach the social as a historical artefact of rationalities and techniques of government, which is now at the moment of its passing, I would argue, with Emile Durkheim and, more recently, Robert Castel, that the social remains the site of a continuing problem of social cohesion: 'The "social question",' says the latter, 'may be characterized as a concern about a society's ability to maintain its own cohesion' (Castel 2003, p. 3). Under conditions of liberal democracy, the social question and social citizenship are the necessary correlates of the existence of inequality and poverty within a society of equals (Procacci 1998).

Those who proclaim the end of the nation-state, and of the society it bounds, in an era of globalization, share the assumption that the historicity of political forms and concepts portends their eventual disappearance. The problem with this view is that concepts are terms within a network of differences, distinctions, and oppositions, and therefore do not make sense without each other. This first point can be made by investigating the Hobbesian mythology of the state. I hence approach governing society first, and relatively briefly, from the perspective of political mythology. Having made the point about the necessary inter-relation between opposed political concepts through revisiting our founding political myth, I then return to a revised and enriched account of the idea of governing society and its genealogical sites of emergence.

### **There are Two Cold Monsters (at least) not One!**

Thomas Hobbes used the figure of the Leviathan as a symbol for his imagining of the *homo magnus*, the great man, of the territorial state (1996[1651]). Leviathan, however, is the sea-monster mentioned in the *Book of Job* (xl) which in Jewish mythology rises up in battle against a land monster, Behemoth. While Hobbes may have known this, he uses the term to designate the territorial state, an entity clearly of the land, and he refers to it as an 'artificial man' and a 'mortal god' and had it represented on the frontispiece of his book by the *homo magnus* whose body is made up of little men. When he came to write about the English civil wars of his time, it was in *Behemoth* (1840[1679]), and the land monster was transformed into a symbol of disorder and revolution.

For four centuries Hobbes' image has captured the imagination of much political and social thought. There are numerous references to the state as monster including that of Friedrich Nietzsche ('*das kälteste aller kalten Ungeheuer*' [1988[1883], p. 61]). When Foucault sought to cut off the king's head in political thought it was so that he could understand the 'capillary' forms of power which are constitutive of the 'social body'. The image here is not so far from the great man of the frontispiece of Hobbes' book, if cutting off his head would liberate the capillaries formed by the many little men. If Ulrich Beck (Beck & Beck Gernsheim 2002, p. 47; Beck 2000, p. 23) has sought to put to rest 'zombie

categories', we are not surprised that the nation-state as the 'container of society' is chief among them. It is fair to say, I think, that the state is still imagined as a landed entity and a territorial entity, and that not far below its rational concept we find this image of a monster which we wish to slay or which, if we have already slain it, returns as a zombie or a Golem. On this both liberal and Marxist thinkers have tended to agree (see the work of Neocleous 2003).

In recent times, however, we have managed to slay this monster less by the dictatorship of the proletariat than with the great liberal claim of our age: globalization. From this point of view, the flows of trade and commerce, of finance and investment, combined with the advances in information and communication technology, have rendered the nation-state, and social and political analysis and policy based on it, at best secondary if not entirely redundant. As a part of the metaphysics of our age, the social strategies which were based on this nation-state are now said to be obsolete. Society has escaped from the container of the nation state; it is now cosmopolitan and of unbounded risk.

But what if Hobbes and those who have followed found an appropriate image for political power and discourse but were mistaken in its use? We should recall that the Leviathan is a sea-creature, a great fish, a sea-serpent or a whale, possibly female, which rises from its depths to undertake a deadly battle with the male land-monster, Behemoth. Today we invoke the great image of the flows of information, finance and trade to defeat the land monster and in doing so invoke an image of the oceanic undoing of the boundaries, markings and customs of the territorial state, and the orientations humankind has in relation to that state. We are closer to the mark when our *monstre froid* rises from beneath the great surfaces and oceanic flows of globalization undoing the markings of territorial sovereignty which contain our conventional ideas of society and its cohesion and order.

But what if advocates of globalization are just as mistaken as the theorists of the state they seek to displace? What if political power is constituted today not by Leviathan or Behemoth alone, but by both at once and in their antagonism? This seems closer to the biblical, apocryphal and Gnostic traditions.<sup>1</sup> The liberal political order, and its mutations, is neither a zone of territorial order alone nor of commercial flux. Rather than political order being defined by state alone, it is, and has been already for several centuries, defined by land and sea, order and flux, public order and international law, territorial state and commercial flows. In this case we would have as much to fear, and to welcome, from both sea and land monsters, and we would not be so quick to replace one with the other. Beneath the smooth surface of globalization with its promise of a pacific realm of liberal commerce we might find rising from the depths the coldest of all cold monsters which can bring as much violence, paternalism and hierarchy as the state once did on land.

If the Leviathan takes the form of globalization today, it is because the latter is a metaphor for change, for a sense that there has been a sea-change in human affairs. Yet it is not simply change itself that is at stake but that change wrought by the liberal realm of commerce, of trade, and of the flux and flow of commodities, money, finance, and investment. It is capitalist change. Globalization is a metaphor for the undoing of the social state, of the deregulation of the labour market, of the growing insecurity of a society of wage-earners, the lessening of protection for socially vulnerable groups, and of the capacity for national governments to do much about any of this. In this respect, the new Leviathan calls forth the social question more urgently than before and reminds us of the

state's role as protector and enabler as much as the locus of sovereign powers. The terms of political discourse, if we follow this mythology, keep referring to one another and calling each other forth even when they are posed as opposites. To imagine the victory of one monster in a definite defeat of the other is deeply misleading. Moreover, for our time at least, it is empirically unsustainable. Just as the international necessarily entails the national, the de-territorializing flux and movement calls forth territorialization, the economic the social, change order, sea land, and vice and versa. What can be grasped mythologically, can be understood genealogically.

Any account of governing societies and the way rationalities, programmes and technologies for governing societies are constitutive of a social domain should take into account the apparent oppositions mentioned above. In doing so, I identify four key genealogical 'emergences': the establishment of states and the state system within an international framework; the formation of civil society and within it, the national economy, as a domain of government; the constitution of a social domain as a surface on which appears the welfare state; and the neo-liberal problematization of the liberal-national-welfare state in the name of a globalized economic system and a transnational civil society.

Only the latter three emergences can be identified from the perspective of the domestic arts of government. All four need to be viewed from both domestic and international perspectives.

### **Internal or Domestic Conditions of 'Governing Society'<sup>2</sup>**

The problem of governing society can be first posed as an internal or 'domestic' matter of state. This is where Foucault's lectures and 'governmentality studies' more generally (Sennelart 2007, p. 390) have proved most useful. Using such work, it is possible to distinguish three key sites of emergence and mutation of the project of governing society.

#### *The Formation of the Division between State and Civil Society*

According to this approach, governing society was first posed in European countries in relation to the effectiveness of the rule of the territorial state with respect to what was called in the eighteenth-century 'civil society' (Dean 1999, pp. 113–130). A key component of the emergence of this idea of governing society was a liberal problematic of security in which the security of the state depended on securing the quasi-natural and necessary processes of civil society, including those of commerce and industry, the economy, the population and so forth. Security, in this account, was often regarded as more fundamental than liberty, often elided with it, and, at the very least, bound to it in reciprocal relations (Neocleous 2000, pp. 8–9). Adam Smith (1978[1752–54], pp. 322–323), however, argued for the primacy of economic liberty to promote security by activating the processes of civil society and market.

This anchoring of security within civil society distinguishes aspects of modern rule from previous approaches to governing the state. We can mention among others the following: seventeenth-century doctrines of 'sovereignty', 'reason of state', and 'civil prudence'; the cameralists' police science or *Polizeiwissenschaft*; theories of trade and population such as mercantilism, and ideas of Political Oeconomy (Hunter 1998;

Oestreich 1982; Foucault 2001; Dean 1991; Tribe 1978). These doctrines, at least from the perspective of their liberal critics, assumed a transparency of the objects of governing to the sovereign or statesman or other formal authorities and a kind of unlimited capacity on the part of these authorities. More fundamentally, they envisaged the state or kingdom to be composed of households that were extensions and instruments of the royal 'house' and its treasury (Dean 1999, pp. 93–96). Their notions of economy were as such still akin to Aristotelian *oekonomia*, meaning the patriarchal governance of the household or *oikos*.

A key issue for the 'police' of such a political formation was that of vagabondage which, from the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries, corresponds first of all to the problem of the re-territorializing and recoding of those populations whose ties to land, place, community and hierarchy were destroyed by the breakdown of feudal ties and obligations and second, and only later, to the enforcement of labour discipline. Security was thus a matter of defeating internal enemies, outlawing and punishing crimes of sedition, treason and regicide, re-territorializing and disciplining rootless individuals, and ruthlessly crushing uprisings and establishing order under the dominion of a single territorial ruler.

By contrast, to conceive the object of government as securing society would be to imagine an 'internal' outside of government having a history and a dynamism of its own which must be known and respected by anyone attempting to govern it. Civil society became an entity constituted by quasi-natural but relatively opaque processes of the economy, of population and of society itself. These processes, in turn, depend on the 'natural liberty' of individuals to pursue their own interests and better their own condition. The key political problem would be of those unwilling or unable to exercise that natural liberty and increasingly dependent on private or public relief, pauperism. Pauperism, rather than poverty, becomes the object of governmental intervention because it portends the demoralization of the population and the breakdown of civil society (Dean 1991). Civil society would be known through emergent bodies of knowledge such as political economy and vital statistics, and later demography and the social and human sciences. The family would be resituated less as a political institution and more as a quasi-natural element within civil society, formally regarded as private.

The focus on governing through civil society presented a limit to the extension of formal political rule. The focus on commercial freedom and individual responsibility, however, left quite some scope for the development of a legitimate sphere of intervention of the liberal state and occasioned 'the nineteenth-century revolution in government' (see Sutherland 1972; Polanyi 1957). The reform of the Poor Laws of 1834, for example, was the outcome of a quarter-century attack on pauperism which would centralize poor relief within the liberal state to better enforce both the 'less-eligibility' of paupers with respect to the condition of the lowest wage-labourer and the responsibility of the male wage-labourer for those construed as his dependants (Dean 1991).

### *The Formation of the Social*

The division between state and civil society was inscribed within the surface of the territorial state and hence integral to the formation of the liberal constitutional state. It was on the surface of the latter that a new inscription would now emerge: that of the social. The social would encompass this moral critique of the population established in the war on pauperism within a triple historical complex.

First, there is a trajectory of legislation and practice which connects the regulation of working hours and conditions in factories, the emergence of public healthcare, education and workers' compensation systems, and the establishment of unemployment, sickness and aged benefits. Second, there is the rise of different forms of knowledge of the diverse social, economic and industrial processes and the ills, problems and risks they pose, and an appreciation of the limits of liberal political economy to solve such problems and provide for their solutions. Finally, there are the actions of social, philanthropic, medical and educational movements and the organizations of the emergent working-class, feminist and other popular associations. These practices, disciplines and actors helped establish political concerns for national well-being, prosperity, social cohesion and the extension of citizenship. A *social* domain was hence being formed, and with it a social way of governing which combined collective responsibility and individual compensation for the ills or risks of the industrial economy (Donzelot 1979; Ewald 1991; Castel 2003).

A further striation of this social space defined by civil society occurs with the emergence of the ideal or project of a welfare state in the second quarter of the twentieth century. This ideal was articulated upon the practices and institutions of governmental intervention in education, healthcare and social provision, the regulation of the workplace and the new status surrounding the worker, and the aspirations of mass movements and the programs of mass parties within a widening electoral process. In its post-World War Two Keynesian compact, the welfare idea is concerned with definitively defeating the evils of mass unemployment wrought by the economic cycle and its depressions.

The important point to note is that, in the long run, the liberal limitation of the sphere of government proved as enabling as it was restricting. Nevertheless, there is at least one major continuity between classic liberal and later welfare states. They both maintain a distinction between a public sector bureaucracy and private domains of family and work. The latter would be open to state interventions only in the case of knowable ills and problems or incapacities of self-government, or in the name of a greater good, such as the security of the population or prosperity of the nation. The former will answer to an ethos of public service not tied to the logic of markets.

### *The Neo-Liberal Mutation of the Social*

The last quarter of the twentieth century saw a significant metamorphosis of the liberal project of governing societies in which this distinction between public provision by means of state bureaucracy and private commercial activities came to be viewed as fundamentally problematic. A *neo-liberal* way of governing emerged (Harvey 2005), first in Anglo-Saxon countries, and only later, and in more limited ways, in the states of Western and Northern Europe, which sought to breach this distinction between public and private sectors by a host of means. These included the contracting out of service provision, the establishment of quasi-markets in areas of public service, and the privatization of formerly public enterprises. Discourses of community and partnership linked public organizations to private for-profit and non-profit ones. This neo-liberalism also problematized the regulation of work and sought to encourage a recontractualization and individualization of the workplace in the name of flexibility and performance. One way of looking at this mutation would be that the collectivization of risks came to be viewed as a risk itself to the performance of the economy and hence risk had to be, at least to some extent, de-socialized, individualized and privatized.

From the beginning of the 1990s, the momentum of neo-liberal 'reform' received a renewed impetus which could be summed up in one word: globalization. The concept of globalization tied transformations in politics, international law, culture, technology, trade and finance, to the evident growth of private corporations and international non-governmental and intergovernmental agencies. This discovery of a 'trans-national' civil society beyond the territorial state, and the blending of diverse trajectories into the gargantuan concept of globalization, would rupture the older liberal problematic of security. A neo-liberal problematic of security would simultaneously argue that states have severely diminished capacities with regard to the management of their now 'unbound' national economies and demand that states reform as much of institutional and individual conduct as possible in order to make their performance competitive and efficient and hence attractive to global capital and financial flows. Beyond the performative contradiction of neo-liberalism, explicitly denying and practically affirming the project of governing society, lies another project of security often of a more profoundly authoritarian style. Unbound from the link to the prosperity and happiness of national society, security concerns can be latched onto the contraction of legal due process, 'target hardening' of vulnerable sites, heightened surveillance, and so on, in a manner with certain resemblances to the old police regulation (Neocleous 2000).

To return to our realm of the imaginary, the markings, orientations, boundaries and inscriptions of the territorial state upon the earth, the distinction between state and civil society, the formation of the social and the ideal of a welfare state, amount to nothing under the massive, smooth surface of the great global sea which envelops them. Yet, as the invocation of security suggests, a monster stirs under that sea. In this respect, the trajectory of the domestic conditions of the idea of governing society demands, as our excursion into political myth would indicate, that we pay attention to the position of the internal government of the state within the international domain, its global spatial outlook, and the system of states themselves.

### **The International Conditions of 'Governing Society'**

With the important exception of one lecture (Foucault 2007, pp. 296–306) on the 'military-diplomatic apparatus' attendant upon the emergence of the European state system, Foucault's concern for 'governmentality' is one largely of domestic affairs and needs to be complemented by an account of the conditions of emergence of territorial states themselves (Hirst 2005, pp. 26–38). In this respect, the emergence of the territorial state and a system of territorial states is one which has been relatively neglected in governmentality studies and requires supplementing with perspectives outside of work derived from Foucault. The emergence of the territorial state is a precondition for any domestic government or ordering given that the former is the surface on which such government can occur. Governing society presupposes such a territorial state.

#### *The Emergence of the Territorial State*

Above all, the emergence of a modern art of government meant the emergence of a political unity, the state, which was capable of putting an end to religious and civil conflicts within its territory (Hunter 1998). This process began in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and most particularly, at least in the historical memory of

political modernity, with the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 concluded at the end of the Thirty Years' War (Zacher 1993; Krasner 2000). The key principle of that treaty was the non-interference of external powers in the religious conflicts within states (Hirst 2005, p. 35). The principle was summed up as *cujus regio, ejus religio* (whose is the territory, his is the religion), a tenet enunciated earlier in the Peace of Augsburg of 1555. The population would henceforth follow the religion of the prince and the prince could not change his faith without forfeiting his territory. The consequence of this was that rulers were able to take control over their territories without undue anxiety about the savage destruction of life committed in the name of doctrinal differences by militia and bands of mercenaries. In the process, they could begin to form societies. They could start to build a stable identity of the population based on common religious identity and muster this loyalty to discipline populations to turn their aggression away from internal civil war towards other states.

Second, the territorial state had to gain exclusive control over a territory. In late-medieval Europe, rule was undertaken by a multiplicity of powers which '... competed to control the same spaces, claiming forms of territorial and functional rule that are ill-defined in their scope and rights' (Hirst 2005, p. 31). These included leagues of cities such as the Hanseatic League, monastic military orders, city-states, princely bishoprics, and mercenary forces (Hirst 2005, p. 33). It was the great achievement of the development of European thought and law that all of this would be put under a single centralized jurisdiction, legislation and administration of the territorial state.

The third aspect of the development of the territorial state was that states had to mutually recognize one another within a common legal framework, to form what some have called a 'society of states' (Bull 1977; Held *et al.* 1999, pp. 37–39). The central plank of this recognition is the principle of non-interference which allows states to get on with the task of unifying their own populations and homogenizing them to form societies. These three factors – the ending of European civil war and the neutralization of religious conflict, the unification of a territory under a central system of rule, and the mutual recognition of states within a state system – were the basis of the formation of a comprehensive European legal and spatial order (Schmitt 2003[1950], pp. 128–129).

### *The Conditions of the European State System*

There are three key conditions for this comprehensive European state system and the global order it inaugurated: the formation of clearly demarcated and protected borders; the legal, military and diplomatic regulation of the relationship between European states; and the global distinctions and markings founded by that European system.

The primary condition for the mutual recognition between states was the existence of a clearly demarcated and mutually recognized frontier between two such states, which enclosed them against one another. The idea of a border which could be mapped and defended as a clear line between states is itself coincident with the territorial state system and is only an episode in the history of geographical boundaries. Just as the territorial state replaced the tangled web of overlapping jurisdictions in late medieval Europe, so the border replaces other kinds of political boundaries, such as the march and the *limes* (on these, see Walters 2004; Hirst 2005).

Secondly, the relations between these mutually recognizing states had to be governed in several ways. As Foucault notes (2004, pp. 303–313), the relation between

European states would be formed through new diplomatic and military techniques after the Treaty of Westphalia which put an end to the dream of the reconstitution of the Roman Empire. These would include the very idea of Europe itself as a plurality of different sovereigns, supreme in their own domain and recognizing each other, new diplomatic models around the notion of a 'balance' between such states and their spheres of influence, new permanent military apparatuses including standing armies and the professionalization of the 'man of war', and new concepts of war for reasons of state. According to Schmitt (2003, pp. 126–130), these new international legal relations crystallized into the *jus publicum Europaeum*, European international public law, which would regard war as a kind of duel between two sovereign persons, and reject the *bellum ex justa causa* (war from just causes) of medieval Christendom and the havoc of confessional conflict. War between European sovereigns would be 'war in form', *une guerre en forme*, a formally declared war between two mutually recognizing sovereigns and thus distinct from religious civil wars and feudal conflicts (Schmitt 2003, p. 141).

Third, this European state system and spatial order included a conception of parts of the world not occupied by such states and within which European states would be able to engage in conquest and competition outside the normal structures of European law. The discovery and occupation of the New World was integral to this distinction between European and non-European parts of the globe and between those parts of the world in which European public law held and those parts beyond European law. The earliest examples of this kind of distinction included the *rayas* drawn by Spain and Portugal as a part of a common Christian empire and the later 'amity lines' of Catholic and Protestant powers (Schmitt 2003, pp. 89–99). What emerges alongside a notion of European interstate law is a specification of the zones in which this law did not hold which were 'beyond the line'. Fundamentally, this legal system would also be based on the distinction, established by Hugo Grotius, of firm land and the free sea, *terra firma* and *mare libre* (Schmitt 2003, pp. 172–173), and later, after the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, was able to distinguish between various 'soil statuses' including state territory, colony, protectorate, free occupiable land and exotic countries with European extraterritoriality, and to define the notion of territorial waters (Schmitt 2003, pp. 179–184).

One of the reasons why this European international order persisted so long until the First World War was that the system of sovereign states fostered trade and commerce around the globe on a scale not reached again until recent years (Hirst 2005, pp. 38–41). Under the political principle of commercial liberalism, and under British hegemonic naval and commercial control of the seas, the liberal constitutional state was committed to enforce definite international norms of the freedom of trade. The 'long nineteenth-century' and its pacific international order were based on a world free-trading system and the mass migrations of European populations to the New World. The territorial state and the state-system that made it possible, together with the maritime *Pax Britannica*, were the twin conditions of what in retrospect was the first great global era of liberal commerce.

### *From the European State System to the Cold War*

The twentieth century saw the mutation of this system of European based interstate law when international law would attempt to take a universal rather than European perspective in first the League of Nations and then the United Nations. Crucial to this move would be the rise of the United States and the idea of a Western Hemisphere. The

latter, enunciated as early as the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, sought to annex the Americas from the interference of the powers of the now Old World of Europe. After the catastrophes of the new 'Thirty Years' War' in Europe from 1914 to 1945, and the genocides which would have their most horrific exemplar in the Holocaust committed upon the Jews and other peoples by the Nazis, aggressive war for national purposes would be criminalized, notions of crimes against humanity and peace would emerge, and doctrines of universal human rights would come to dominate the discussion and practice of international affairs. The First World War saw the collapse of the old international order and British hegemony and the emergence of a range of authoritarian nationalist regimes and the Soviet Union which sought to base their alternatives on enforced large-scale economic and social control over citizens and their movements. After 1945, and particularly after 1989, the United States would take on the role once held by Britain of establishing the rules for a new international trading order and enforcing existing territorial borders.

This is where our international narrative transects our domestic one. The high point of welfare-state doctrines and of confidence in the capacity to govern societies occurred in Western nation-states during the thirty years after the end of Second World War. Then the internal balance of European states and their empires gave way to the balance of mutually assured destruction (MAD) made possible by massive nuclear arsenals with intercontinental delivery systems. In effect, the Cold War acted as a proxy international system. In the West, the nation-state was protected by a system of financial and currency controls, after the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944, including semi-fixed exchange rates, one-off devaluations, insulation of domestic money markets, and the use of International Monetary Fund loans.

The Cold War stand-off started to see the emergence of a new domain of superpower contestation in the process of decolonization of former European colonies. A 'Third World' emerged between the authoritarian land-based socialist empire and a liberal trading sea-empire. Paradoxically the model of the territorial state would be claimed by or extended to those former colonies without the capabilities of the management of their own population, not to mention the defence of their own territory, which had been the hallmark of the classical European concept of the state after the Treaty of Westphalia. The extension of the number of states who were clearly not capable of acting like such a model, together with the growth of non-state international organizations and the criminalization of acts of aggression under international law, has led to a situation in which the state is no longer viewed as a political entity which can secure its own position within the international order and becomes, in large parts of the world, simply those forces which are most likely to maintain a minimum of political and social order.

If the nineteenth-century revolution in government marks the real beginnings of the task of governing societies, the post-Second World War welfare state marks its zenith. The latter was underpinned by a specific regulation of international finance which created a secure space to enable domestic macro-economic policies such as Keynesian demand management by manipulating levels of public expenditure and investment. Externally, the Western liberal democracies were confronted with an authoritarian alternative with command economies, enforced trade and military cooperation between socialist blocs.

*From the Cold War to Spaceless Globalization*

As we have seen, one key context for the problematization of the idea of governing societies was the neo-liberal critique of the domestic capacities of the state. At the heart of that critique was the view that the welfare state, high wages involving collective bargaining with trade unions, high levels of public investment in education, healthcare and infrastructure were all brakes on the competitiveness and productivity of the economy. The Keynesian model, neo-liberals argued, had resulted in simultaneous inflation and unemployment due to the malign effects of the ever-increasing demands placed upon public expenditure within the representative political cycle. Aggressive neo-liberalism was first adopted in the Anglophonic parts of the West, led by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. These leaders also adopted a tougher stance toward the Soviet alternative which was collapsing under the weight of its own inefficiencies, lack of domestic legitimacy, and inability to compete militarily with the West. The neo-liberal critiques, combined with the collapse of this alternative, prepared the way for the invocation of globalization as a standing reason for the conduct of neo-liberal policies. Liberal intellectuals in the West pronounced the inevitable spread of the liberal capitalist system across the globe summed up in the 'end of history' (Fukuyama 1992) and globalization as the 'One Big Thing' (Friedman 2000).

Globalization, we are often told, is about the compression of time and space. More fundamentally, however, it is about the erasure of the marking and orientations on the surface of the Earth which have characterized social and political development over the last four centuries. By claiming the dissolution of the borders between countries, it erases the markings of the system of territorial states. By claiming to undermine the capacities of the national state, it claims an erasure of public and private, and state and society, and thus can render the project of governing society problematic.

Strangely, the first decade of the twenty-first century has seen an authoritarian reinscription of both these divisions. The new conjuncture began with the neoconservative project for the reassertion of American hegemony and a juridical decision on the 2000 Presidential election. It coincided with the events of 9/11, the rediscovery of the enemy in the form of Islamic fundamentalists, the war on terror and two military invasions and occupations, and the scandals of 'extraordinary rendition' and Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay. It has witnessed the strengthening of authoritarian regimes across central and East Asia, the stalling of democratization in Russia, and the persistence of rogue states and guerrilla movements as enemies of the proclaimed cosmopolitan order. It has led to new forms of war and struggle including against global terrorism that amount to a definitive bracketing of the law of war and its twentieth-century codifications in the Geneva Conventions. In internal domestic government, the return to the use of force, paternalism and sovereign instruments to enforce moral obligation, discipline, hierarchy and social order among sub-populations seems to indicate the worst prospects of the neo-liberal project. Further, the aggressive policing of borders and of illegal immigration indicates some fundamental limits to the rhetorics of flows and free movement. Contemporary liberal democracies now often seem to act in a manner closer to the authoritarian liberal formulation of 'sound economy, strong state' advocated by Schmitt in 1932 than to a libertarian advocacy of free markets (Schmitt 1998[1932]).

To return to the longer-term picture, then, a territorially bound state, with an effective central government, in a world of other such states, who would trade and

compete with one another, form alliances and rivalries, and occasionally find themselves at war with one another, was a condition for the emergence of notions of governing society, and of the techniques and rationalities of government. The problematization of the pertinence of such a world order and the place of this bounded entity within it is the immediate reason for our current sense that the idea of governing society has gone out of fashion. As we have seen from the already long history of the twenty-first century, we might wish to revisit what now appears in retrospect to have been a rather too hasty conclusion.

## Conclusion

The last two sections of this paper have described the domestic and international conditions of existence of the liberal government of society, its relation to the legal and political government of the society of states, on the one hand, and to an often authoritarian government of those who failed the test of liberal autonomy or pose a threat to liberal commerce, on the other. It was this kind of government which came to establish the relationship between state and civil society in the eighteenth century and which lasted for the next two centuries. It was largely on the basis of this liberal government that the notion of governing society acquired the taken-for-granted meanings that are under suspicion today in social and political theory.

None of this is to say that there have not been many styles of this liberal government of society: classical, national, imperial and social liberalism in the nineteenth century; welfarism and its different liberal, corporatist and social democratic forms in the second half of the twentieth century; neo-liberalism and authoritarian liberalism and neo-conservatism today. Despite the diagnostics of our social theorists and the passion of today's advocates of globality there remains no sign that the terms of political discourse have undergone an epochal mutation. There is no sign that Leviathan and Behemoth have killed each other, or that one has killed the other, in the final battle of Judgment Day, as the Apocryphal literature would have it, and that we, as the chosen people, can now feast on their remains in the days of the Messiah.

## NOTES

1. See the entry 'Leviathan and Behemoth' for discussions of the myth in different literatures, at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com> (accessed 15 October 2007).
2. The following two sections remodel and give more structure to the arguments of Dean (2007, pp. 25–35). In so doing, this paper draws upon a number of the passages published there.

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