

Globalization, Governance and Change:
A Comparative Analysis of Bobbitt and Mann's Views

By

Jonathan E. Czarnecki, Ph.D.
Naval War College Monterey

For

The ISSS-ISA Annual Conference
Austin, TX
November 2014

I. Introduction

Globalization inundates human populations with goods, entertainment, information, and fear from terrorists. Globalization is the giant engine of social change in the current era; it has altered the social relational landscape, changed the way humans conduct their economies, and arguably also transformed the processes by which human society governs its affairs.¹ Most researchers believe that globalization has been a historically continuing process for a long time,² but only recently, in the 1980s, does globalization receive systemic attention from scholars.³ There have been a multitude of commentators who have described and analyzed these phenomena separately and in their relationships with each other.⁴ Two of them have written epic and panoramic treatises purporting to explain the reasons that power the relationships of globalization, governance, and change: Phillip Bobbitt and Michael Mann.⁵ Approaching their subject from two different academic perspectives, history and political science for Bobbitt and sociology and history for Mann, both authors provide compelling theories and explanations for what human civilizations are now experiencing. Though both understand factors that power the relationship, they also seem to take for granted the main power source of the dynamics of the relationship among the three: information. This paper will explore the relationship of globalization,

1

2

³ At least Michael Mann thinks so. Read his The Sources of Social Power Volume 4: Globalizations, 1945-2011; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Chapter 1.

4

⁵ Phillip Bobbitt, The Shield of Achilles; Michael Mann, The Sources of Social Power (4 volumes);

governance and change from the positions of Bobbitt and Mann. It will then focus on the major driving force of this relationship, information. Finally, the paper will use the frameworks of both commentators, imposing information as a major component, to explore possible futures for the relationship.

Study of the relationships among these three phenomena is critically important because both globalization and governance circumvallate all current human societies, and social change is a defining characteristic of the age. First, however, one must agree on defining the three elements of the relationship.

II. Definitions

Kenneth Waltz has written that "globalization is a fad of the 90s..."⁶ He might just as well have included governance in that grouping, and extended the discussion into the 21st Century. If globalization and governance are fads, they are enduring ones.

This paper adopts the position of Joseph Nye, Jr. concerning globalization. Nye understands globalization in terms of the continuing development, maintenance, and flow of social relationships or networks among the human species.⁷ It is these social relationships, powered by information technologies, that accounts for the political, social and economic aspects of globalization. Augmenting Nye's conception is the idea that globalization is not new; social relationships also are a historical phenomenon. As several researchers and historians have noted, expansion and "thickening" (Nye's term) of social

⁶ Kenneth Waltz,

⁷ Joseph S. Nye Jr., Power in the Global Information Age;

relationships has been going on since human civilizations emerged in the Bronze Age.⁸ Finally, the paper conceives globalization to be a set of political, social and economic processes that interact with each other and the natural and human environment; cause and effect explanations concerning globalization do not hold up well under close scrutiny.⁹

Governance in this paper refers to public governance; as mentioned above, the term defines the processes of governments. The paper recognizes this is a narrow interpretation; it is quite valid to consider any organization or group to be subject to governance.¹⁰ In particular, the emphasis here is on the state in its current guise, the nation-state. The main issue for discussion is how the nation-state is being affected by globalization.¹¹ There are a host of theories on the effects of globalization on the nation-state, ranging from Van Creveld's The Rise and Decline of the State argument for the pending demise of the nation-state to Waltz's steadfast defense of the nation-state as the preeminent political entity in the global community.¹² This paper, of course, concentrates on only two: one leaning towards the Van Creveld interpretation (Bobbitt), and one leaning towards Waltz's (Mann.)¹³

By change, the paper means the alteration of social processes in the face of some driver(s) of change. Thus, the emphasis is on the broad topic of social

8

⁹ Michael Mann,

¹⁰

¹¹

¹²

¹³ Bobbitt would argue that he does not believe in the decline of the state, but rather the emergence of a new form, the market state. However, Van Creveld's argument centers on his belief that the *nation-state* is declining in relevance. Thus, there is some agreement between the two.

change. As with globalization, the research on social change is voluminous; by one count, there are no less than twelve theoretical schools concerning social change.¹⁴ It is quite simply beyond the scope of this paper to address all, or even most, theories on social change. At its most fundamental level, social change concerns any and all alterations to human societies. Study of social change involves both apparently random and systemic reasons for change.¹⁵ One line of thought considers globalization as a primary and systemic cause for the social change human civilizations now seem to be experiencing.¹⁶

III. Comparative Analysis of Bobbitt and Mann

This section is organized in three sub-headings: common elements, Bobbitt's unique contributions, and Mann's unique contributions.

Common Elements

Both Bobbitt and Mann consider a broad sweep of human history to make their respective cases. Bobbitt examines the period from the 15th Century to the present; Mann's multi-volume effort goes back to the very dawn of human civilization. Both argue primarily from a Eurocentric perspective, though Mann starts out more expansively. Both seem to agree on the major influences that have driven changes in the state: conflict (war), technology and economics are

¹⁴ Hans Haferkamp and Neil J. Smelser, editors, Social Change and Modernity; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. Accessed 19 November 2012 at <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft6000078s/>

¹⁵ Gene Shackman, Ya-Lin Liu and George (Xun Wang. "Why Does a society develop the way it does?" 2002. Accessed at <http://gsociology.icapp.org/report/summary2.htm>.

¹⁶ The most popular of these explanations can be summarized in Thomas Friedman's work, especially his The Lexus and The Olive Tree; also found in Shackman, et.al.

the three most addressed drivers.¹⁷ Both are pessimistic in their assessments concerning the direction of the future of human social change.

Bobbitt's Unique Contributions

Bobbitt makes clear early on that he is approaching changes to the state using law, strategy and history.¹⁸ His is a historical analysis that uses strategy (actually the results of strategy, that is war) and legitimacy (rule of law) to understand these changes. Bobbitt explains his approach:

"The State has two primary functions: to distribute questions appropriately among the various allocation methods internal to the society... and to defend that unique pattern of allocation by asserting its territorial and temporal jurisdiction vis-à-vis other states. These two tasks are, respectively, the work of constitutional law and strategy."¹⁹

He finds the state has evolved through five forms since the 15th Century: Princely states, Kingly states, Territorial states, State-Nations, and Nation-states.²⁰ The evolution from one form to another is marked by a radical change to the constitutional order of states. Epochal wars are the drivers of that radical change.²¹ Thus, the change can be historically marked by the treaties that end these wars. Also, the treaties themselves contain the legal language that

¹⁷ Bobbitt's major thesis revolves around these three ideas; for Mann, the political and economic sources of social power predominate in the current age of the nation-state.

¹⁸ Bobbitt, The Shield of Achilles..., p. 5.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 206

²⁰ Ibid, Part II.

²¹ Ibid, pp. 21-23.

describes the outlines of what the new state evolution looks like.²² Finally, each new constitutional order, developed on the bases of the treaties, provides the foundation for the new state evolution's legitimacy.²³ Bobbitt is no determinist, however. He understands the relationships as "fields" as opposed to "lines" of explanation.²⁴ Bobbitt writes, "A field relationship is mutually effecting between two or more subjects. Whether the one (strategy or constitutional order) causes the other, or visa versa, depends entirely on where you stand and when you decide to being."²⁵

The culmination of Bobbitt's historical argument is the emergence of a new form of state, the market state. The incumbent form, the nation-state, lost its relevance and legitimacy with the end of the Cold War, marked by Bobbitt with the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty in 1990.²⁶ The nation-state has become obsolescent because it could no longer deliver on its promises or premises: maximizing the welfare of its citizenry, protecting the cultural integrity of the nation-state, and securing its population from a variety of new threats including terrorists, criminals, and nuclear weapons.²⁷ The market state is Bobbitt's interpretation of the meaning of the social changes that have defined the decline of the nation-state. Specifically, he writes that the market state

"...is a constitutional adaptation to the end of the Long War

²² Ibid, pp. 344-345.

²³ Ibid., pp. 346-347. Bobbitt's summary charts map the state evolution according to his theory's components.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 74.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., Chapter 23.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 214-228.

And the revolutions in computation, communications, and Weapons of mass destruction that brought about that end (of the nation-state.)... Such a state depends on the International capital markets and, to a lesser degree, on the Modern multinational business network to create stability in The world economy... Its political institutions are less Representative... than those of the nation-state... Whereas the Nation-state justified itself as an instrument to serve the Welfare of the people (nation), the market state exists to Maximize the opportunities enjoyed by all members of society... (T)he market state pursues its objectives by incentive structures And sometimes draconian penalties, not so much as to assure That the right thing is done as to prevent the social instability That threatens material well-being.”²⁸

Bobbitt notes that the market state will exist with three paradoxes: (1) more centralized government but weaker government; (2) more public participation in government but less meaning to that participation (the idea of the citizen as spectator increases); and (3) the reduction of the traditional welfare state but increased infrastructure, epidemiological and environmental security activities by the state.²⁹

This form of state appears most suitable to a post-modern society that focuses on individual achievement with concomitant material rewards (or punishments) and material well-being as social virtues. It is important to note that Bobbitt is not advocating the notion of the market state, but simply bringing together threads of current events and processes into an understandable rubric.

Bobbitt considers that the market state may evolve in one of three general variants: the mercantile, managed or entrepreneurial market states.³⁰ He writes

²⁸ Ibid, pp. 228-229.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 234.

³⁰ Ibid, Chapter twelve.

that “the mercantile state seeks market share above all else, in order to gain relative dominance in the international market; the entrepreneurial state seeks leadership through the production of collective goods that the world’s states want; the managerial state seeks power through its hegemony within a regional economic zone.”³¹ The mercantile state can be seen as a “lone wolf” acting in a community of states; the entrepreneurial state seeks to lead that community; the managerial state seeks to form a regional bloc within that community. Bobbitt provides illustrations of these examples: Japan as mercantile; the United States as entrepreneurial; Germany as managerial. He argues that the most appropriate choice for the United States is the one that it illustrates – entrepreneurial.³² Bobbitt’s reasoning is based on the existing and distinct attributes of the United States as a country, economy and culture: decentralized government, relative physical security, leadership ambition, economic creativity, and strategic (mainly military) superiority.³³

Bobbitt completes his magnus opus with a set of possible futures, based on the taxonomy of market states he has presented. All three scenarios are to one degree or another pessimistic in terms of what the new evolution of state can provide human society: individual opportunity not community welfare, material well-being not moral virtue, security not sovereignty.³⁴ His way of salvaging the idea of human rights and sense of community is through

³¹ Ibid, p. 283.

³² Ibid., p. 288.

³³ Ibid., pp. 288-289.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 777.

constitutional means that recognizes the legitimacy of added players to the global community, both transnational and subnational entities, while emplacing democratic rights' responsibilities on these new participants.³⁵ Bobbitt's model is the Charter of Paris for a New Europe Treaty that is part of a series of international agreements that announced the end of the Cold War. The Charter mandates the thirty-four signees (NATO and Warsaw Pact countries) to protect human rights and support rule of law. The opening language of the Charter states:

"Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings, are inalienable and are guaranteed by law. Their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of government. Respect for them is an essential safeguard against an over-mighty State. Their observance and full exercise are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace."³⁶

Bobbitt brings his argument full circle with the incorporation of law into the matters of strategy as a foundation for the emergent market state.

The above discussion captures just the highlights of Bobbitt's The Shield of Achilles. The work is surely far-ranging and rambling; in the words of one critic, it is sometimes "unhinged" and "eccentric."³⁷ However, it is but one interpretation of the seemingly massive social changes that human civilizations are experiencing world-side. The book and the theoretical perspective supporting its arguments have received both applause and criticism. The most common criticism is that Bobbitt has merely added a historical perspective to the

³⁵ Ibid, Chapter twenty-six.

³⁶ Accessed via Internet at <http://www.osce.org/mc/39516?download=true> on November 6, 2014.

³⁷ David Runciman, "The Garden, the Park and the Meadow," *London Review of Books*, Vol. 24, No. 11, June 6, 2002, pp. 7-11.

neo-liberal economic chorus that has repeatedly noted the pending demise of the nation-state.³⁸ These critics portray Bobbitt as a shill for American Imperialism and its accompanying strategic primacy among the global community of nation-states. He adds the political and historical basis for the continuation of U.S. military dominance to complement the economic basis described by popular globalization proponents.³⁹

I consider such arguments as approaching an academic *ad hominem* criticism. There are far more substantial questions for Bobbitt's model and theory. Three questions are posed in this paper. First, why must there be a market state? In other words, could the changes that Bobbitt well describes be interpreted in a different fashion? As the brief quotation from the Paris Charter above emphasizes, human rights and rule of law should predominate, and these are specific virtues attendant to the nation-state, *not* Bobbitt's description of the market state. As one alternative, this paper shall make an argument in the following pages for another interpretation of the changes, the emergence of the *information state*, which could be a variant of the nation-state or a new evolution of the state. Second, how can Bobbitt generalize a global evolution of the state based on the Paris Charter, which has been signed by only 34 of the world's 190+ nation-states and all 34 countries are in either Europe or North America? Early in his book, Bobbitt makes the sensible point that he focuses on the

³⁸ Michael Mann, "Can The New Imperialism Triumph in the Age of Nation-States?" *History and Theory*, Vol. 43, May 2004, pp. 226-236.

³⁹ Again, Friedman is the most vocal commentator on the deterministic aspects of globalization affecting economies. See The Lexus and The Olive Tree...

European experience because Europe has dominated world events since the 15th Century. This may have been true through the end of the epochal Long War (1914-1945) of the 20th Century; but the diffusion of global state experience since 1945, which has added over 130 nation-states to the global community (most of which are outside Europe and North America) informs students of global social change that there is an added geographic dynamic that must be accounted for in any reasoned interpretation of the changes affecting the nation-state.

Third, given the admitted complexity of global social change over the past 500 years, why does Bobbitt concentrate on one paradigm, markets, to explain the changes that have affected the global community? True, an economic component to any interpretative theory on globalization and governance is necessary, but hardly sufficient in itself. Bobbitt attempts to consider other paradigms of the state, and concludes they are not paradigms at all, but rather policies.⁴⁰ He believes that the alternatives he has identified, all of which are political in nature, are just the bankrupt echoes of the successful nation-state paradigm – excellent in achieving success during the Long War but unable to account for the following peace.⁴¹ However, in his description of the emerging market state, Bobbitt falls short of distinguishing the difference between market states and nation-states; it appears that the market state may just be a variant of the nation-state. This is a significant criticism that several observers have

⁴⁰ Bobbitt, The Shield of Achilles..., p. 275.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 281.

made.⁴² Perhaps in his choice of major drivers (strategy, law, history) explaining the evolution of states, Bobbitt has overlooked the fundamental sources that account for social change. Perhaps these are sources of social power.

Mann's Unique Contributions

Michael Mann's great work is an attempt to "provide a history and theory of power relations in human societies."⁴³ Right off, one notes the difference from Bobbitt for Mann is a sociologist interested in what makes human societies tick. His chosen method is a historical one; his theoretical basis is social power. Mann's theoretical argument is twofold:

1. "Societies are constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting socio-spatial networks of power..."
2. A general account of societies, their structure, and their history can best be given in terms of the interrelations of what... (are) the four sources of social power: ideological, economic, military and political relationships. These are (1) overlapping networks of social interaction... and (2) organizations, institutional means of attaining human goals."⁴⁴

By ideological power, Mann refers to the ability of social entities to define and constrain meaning among its members, to develop and maintain norms of behavior for these entities, and to establish aesthetic/ritual practices that promote social belonging. By economic power, he refers to the "satisfaction of subsistence needs through the social organization of the extraction, transformation, distribution, and consumption of the objects of nature." Military power refers to the need for organized physical defense of the social

⁴² In particular, the Runciman and Mann reviews make these points.

⁴³ Michael Mann, The Sources of Social Power Volume 1: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

organization and the utility of an organized force to also act aggressively when required. Mann becomes more explicit in his definition of political power, concentrating on one social form, the state. Political power refers to the utility of "centralized, institutionalized, and territorialized regulation of social relations.⁴⁵ He begins his theory by focusing on the individual human – purposive, rational and striving species seeking to "increase their enjoyment of good things of life and capable of choosing and pursuing appropriate means for doing so."⁴⁶ Mann notes that humans are *social* not *societal*; that is, humans by nature and need are predisposed to interact with each other in any number of ways, but they are not necessarily society-seeking.⁴⁷ Indeed, he criticizes of other sociological efforts to capture the dynamics of human society on their assumption that society is a unitary concept that humans seek, and thus concentrate on only one or two sources of social power. To this criticism, Mann observes that humans comfortably interact in many societies simultaneously, these social relationships reflecting his defined sources of social power.⁴⁸

Mann's theory is a motivational one, attempting to explain how humans go about pursuing and achieving their goals (purposiveness.) The key motivator is social power. He argues that the concept of social power can be expressed as a two-by-two taxonomy with one vector, Extensive-Intensive, describing the reach of social power, and the second vector, Authoritative-Diffused, describing

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 22-26.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

the centrality of the expression of social power.⁴⁹ Together, they comprehensively describe the forms of organizational reach that Mann will use in his historical analysis. A summary chart of Mann's theory is shown in Figure 1 below:

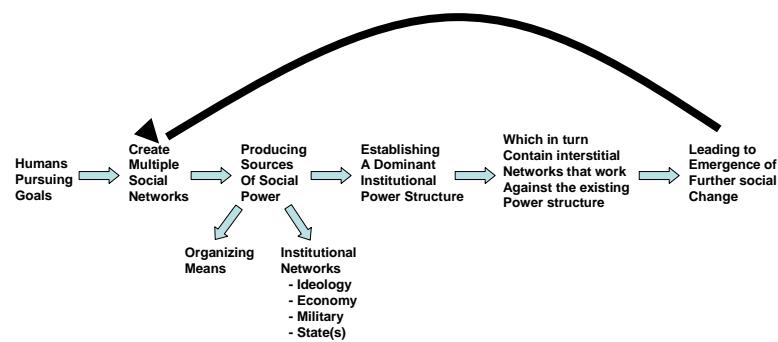


Figure 1
Mann's Sources of Social Power
Theory Flow

A full description of Mann's historical analysis is far beyond the scope of this paper (his work is four volumes.) The two most important points relevant to this essay are found at the beginning and the end of that history. First, Mann finds that archeological and historical evidence demonstrates that early human societies were not subject to the political power of a centralized state. While members of a society would pay homage and obey tribal elders, follow them into war, and respect them, these actions only rarely converted (Mann states that

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 7-9.

only three recorded societies did this) to a centralized state.⁵⁰ The centralized state power network evolved as a result of a confluence of fertile environments most typically found in wide river valley, increasing population density of those valleys practicing alluvial agriculture, necessary irrigation systems to socially distribute the river water to fields to support the increased population, and finally demarcation of territory to control use of the fields. Within a relatively short time, perhaps as little as 200 years in the case of Mesopotamia, human society had changed to reflect an institutional centralized political network – the state.⁵¹ Mann discusses this evolution in detail, producing a fascinating narrative that is not relevant to the subject of this paper. The major point for this essay is that the idea of a state as the expression of the political source of social power is a relatively new invention for the human species; humans have been on this earth for 40,000 years or so, and the state has been in existence for about 5,000 years. An adjunct finding that Mann makes provides significant support for his argument: wherever archeologists have discovered early human societies, they have been in river valleys, and there is evidence that all such societies evolved similarly but independently.⁵²

The second important point derived from Mann's work concerns his analysis of the evolution of modern governance, that is the nation-state, and its

⁵⁰ Ibid., Chapter 2. Mann's argument is detailed and highly referenced. Here only a summary is provided to readers.

⁵¹ Ibid., Chapter 3 contains a highly detailed argument, with significant evidence referenced to support Mann's case.

⁵² Ibid.

continuation into the 21st Century. Here more than anywhere else in his research, Mann differs significantly from Bobbitt.

In his first volume, Mann recounts the progression of human society, or civilization, from 5000 BCE to the 18th Century CE. Using his IEMP sources of social power model to organize his historical analysis, Mann finds that the predominant source of social power in these millennia is ideological, culminating with the emergence of Christendom within Western civilization.⁵³ He spends the second volume of The Sources of Social Power addressing the evolution from these ideological classic states to the modern state. This evolution progressed in two stages. In the first stage, there was a decline of ideological influences in the 17th and 18th centuries and the concurrent rise of both economic and military power relationships.⁵⁴ This was quickly followed by a second stage, in which the economic power networks developed into the capitalist form still in existence today, and in which the powers of the state greatly increased, subsuming the military power networks under its thrall.⁵⁵ Interestingly, Mann lists nine drivers of this shift in social power; all of them are based on increased information access.⁵⁶ By the time of the start of the First World War, the transformation of social power effectively is complete. Thus, one can conclude that the modern state, the nation-state, is for Mann a dynamic interaction of all four social power sources with economics and politics competing for the preeminent position in the

⁵³ Michael Mann, The Sources of Social Power Volume 2: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. p. 2.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁵ Ibid., indeed this is the essential distillation of a theme of the second volume.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 37-39.

interaction. Ideology has moved to the fringes of the interaction, much diminished by the assault of the Age of Reason and the advances of science; the military source of social power has been sublimated – not quite completely – under the influence of the politics. This sets the stage for his discussion of globalization, which takes up much of his third volume and all of his fourth volume.

For the first half of the 20th Century, Mann finds that three power organizations, or forms of networks, dominate global social behavior: capitalism, empires, and nation-states.⁵⁷ This reflects the dominance of economic and political sources of power he revealed in his second volume. Mann now defines globalization as just “the extension of relations of ideological, economic, military and political power across the globe.”⁵⁸ He argues that globalization should be considered in the plural sense, as globalizations; he reminds readers that all four power sources are somewhat autonomous. During this period, Mann observes the diminution of empires through wars, and the rise of nation-states in their place, with the most notable exception of the emergence of the United States as an empire.⁵⁹ By this stage of his historical analysis, Mann recognizes that the complexity of variables interacting both within each social power source and across sources that development of a causal theory of social change is impossible. At best, a contingent complexity-based theory (for example,

⁵⁷ Michael Mann, The Sources of Social Power Volume 3: Global Empires and Revolution, 1890-1945; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. p. 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Chapter 15.

punctuated equilibrium theory) might illuminate specific and constrained periods of change.⁶⁰

Mann uses his last volume to undermine a prevailing argument that the nation-state is in decline due to globalization. He notes that while it is true that the nation-state, as the political power source, is changing, it is hardly diminishing. Mann writes, "Nation-states are now the hegemonic political form across the world. Only one empire is left (the United States), and its decline has just begun and will continue. Nation-states continue to structure capitalism..."⁶¹ He argues that the nation-state is not opposed by globalization, but rather both emerged together; recall that for Mann, globalization is more accurately referred to as globalizations, with each source of social power extending its reach across the globe in both separate and interrelated ways. Globalization and governance for him are complementary, not competing.

There are two significant obstacles to the continuing evolution of the nation-state and globalization according to Mann. First, there is the danger of runaway capitalism, typified by the neo-liberal school of economic thought which "suggests that markets always maximize welfare, while the pursuit of short-term shareholder value ensures maximal efficiency by enterprises.... Let economic power rip, unobstructed by the state or collective organizations and they will produce the optimal result."⁶² Mann spends two entire chapters of the last

⁶⁰ Ibid. pp. 3-6.

⁶¹ Michael Mann, The Sources of Social Power Volume 4: Globalizations, 1945-2011; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. p. 418.

⁶² Ibid., p. 130.

volume first relating the consequences of the ascendancy of neoliberal economic policies across the globe, and then addressing why this form of economic power bodes ill for the future of human society. He finds that the creative destruction of neoliberal economics creates much wealth for a very few, and creates much economic destruction (jobs, wages, taxes foregone) for the very many. The resulting increasing inequality threatens the stability of the dominant form of the nation-state, democracy. Mann notes that one should not depend on the mythology of cyclic economic behavior; his evidence clearly shows that trust in the self-correcting processes of neoliberal capitalism is misplaced.⁶³

The second potential obstacle to continued evolution of the relationship between the nation-state and globalization(s) is climate change. The presence of climate change as a potential global disruptor of human civilization, while seemingly commonsensical, is an unusual consideration in the discussion of globalization, governance and social change. Mann's inclusion of climate change marks a significant contribution to the body of social science seeking explanations for human social development. He presents the well-established litany of environmental changes that have led to the impending climate crisis: ozone layers, CO₂ emissions, other "greenhouse" gases, industrial pollution. He clearly identifies the threats: deforestation, acidification of oceans, rising temperatures and ocean levels, depleted agricultural lands.⁶⁴ He also is quite clear on the origins of the threat: industrial capitalism that focuses on short-term

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 358-360.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 362-365.

stakeholder gains at the expense of long lead time impacts, nation-states that encourage economic policies focusing on growth at any expense, and humans who are seeking material goals in terms of food, clothing, and other material goods.⁶⁵ Mann understands that the climate change problem represents an existential threat to human social development, affecting all four sources of social power. His extensive discussion of the social dynamics of climate change includes recommendations coupled with assessments as to the likelihood of implementation. However the most relevant point of Mann's chapter on climate change is that he considers the problem in the context of the existing forms of social power, especially capitalism and the nation-state. He does not foresee significant changes to these forms, just their adaptation or maladaptation to environmental circumstances.

Mann's Sources of Social Power has generated a great deal of discussion within sociological circles, including the publication of one volume just of critical essays!⁶⁶ Much of the criticism deals with Mann's conceptualization of his IEMP theoretical model in the context of sociological theory and his historical approach (some feel he "cherry-picks" his history.)⁶⁷ While interesting, these discussions are beyond the scope of the present paper. The essential point of his work is that it is motivationally based (on human desires and needs to achieve goals), that it defies simple cause-and-effect explanations, that it transcends history,

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 364.

⁶⁶ John A. Hall and Ralph Schroeder, editors, An Anatomy of Power: the Social Theory of Michael Mann; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁶⁷ Ralph Schroeder, "Introduction: the IEMP Model and its critics," in An Anatomy of Power... pp. 1-16.

and that it is an evolutionary argument. The contrast with Bobbitt's work could not be more salient: Bobbitt sees periods of significant change in circumstances that lead to significant, even revolutionary changes in the forms of states. Mann senses a continuity of the sources of social power, with emphasis on the political power – in the form of the state. For Mann, the mix of sources of social power may change from generation to generation, but the underlying forms remain remarkably consistent.

As noted early in this paper, both Bobbitt and Mann are somewhat pessimistic about the future of a now globalized human condition, human governance, and social change. They only differ on the causes for the pessimism. In Bobbitt's case, it is the relentless (in his view) increasing domination of markets that has undercut the bases of the nation-state, with its modern values to maximize the welfare of its citizenry. As just mentioned above, for Mann it is neoliberal capitalism and climate change that may be the cause of human civilizational misery.

Putting both Bobbitt and Mann in perspective, the reader discerns a common pattern in their analyses. Both understand that globalization has been a continuing phenomenon. Both would agree that there are consequences for governance due to the continued extension of globalization (or globalizations in Mann's parlance.) Both would agree that there is no "end of history;" social development and social change continues apace. Finally, both observe that a major contributor to the changes they observe and analyze from their own

perspectives is information, or more specifically the radically increased access to information.

IV. The Information State?

If globalization is an historical inundating process driving broad social change and alterations in public governance, then what explains or drives globalization? One answer, common to most research on globalization is information.⁶⁸ Commentators have quickly linked the apparent victory of capitalism over competing economic forms, pronounced clearly with the end of the Cold War and its centralized state-focused economic form, with the emergence of powerful information technology. Capitalism and the information revolution are the interactive beneficiaries of this event even as the political form that achieved the successful conclusion to the Cold War, the nation-state, becomes obsolescent.⁶⁹ Or so the generally accepted story goes. As Bobbitt observed, there is a strong historical interaction between economics, technology, strategy, and the evolution of the state.⁷⁰ The relationship between technology and economy is an old human story, not a new one. Specifically, information technological advances have accompanied changes to the state and to economies since the beginning of civilization. Figure 2 provides some insight into this relationship in the context of governance.

⁶⁸ For example, consider David Held and Anthony McGrew (editors), The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate (Second Edition); Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2007. Held and McGrew devote an entire section (six chapters) to the subject of the influence of information on globalization.

⁶⁹ Manuel Castells, "Information, Technology, Globalization and Social Development," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) Paper No. 114, September 1999. p.2.

⁷⁰ Bobbitt, The Shield of Achilles..., Chapter 13.

Information Technology Advance	Bobbitt's Event of Note	Mann's Event of Note
Recorded Writing c. 3300 BCE	-	Rise of the state c. 3000 BCW
Guttenberg Press 1453 CE (280 pages/hour)	Peak of Princely States 1555	-
First Newspaper 1609	Peak of Kingly States 1648	Decline of ideological dominance as source of social power
Complete saturation of Europe with Newspapers 1702	Peak of Territorial Nation 1713	Rise of Modern State 1760
Steam Press 1808 (1,100 pages/hour)	Peak of States-Nation 1815	Evolution of nation-state 19 th Cent.
Telegraph, Telephone, Radio (1844, 1876, 1894)	Peak of Nation-State 1919	Demise of empire, Rise of Nation States 1945 – present
Computer, Internet 1943, 1969	Market State 1990	-

Figure 2
Information Technology, Governance, and Globalization

Note in each case that the information technology innovation preceded the event of note. Assuming Bobbitt and Mann are correct in their historical interpretations, there seems to be a relationship among information technology, sources of social power, and the evolution of the state that is temporally related. Also note the increasingly preeminence of the political source of social power (Mann's concept) at least until the emergence of Bobbitt's market state; the political source, as one recalls from an earlier discussion of Mann's theory, takes the form of the state. Both Mann and Bobbitt would agree that the state tends to centralizes its power to influence its society. What seems to be revealed in Figure 2 is that information technology has supported the state's centralization of power, a relationship clearly discussed by Mann and also observed by other

commentators of globalization.⁷¹ However, the centralization relationship between information technology and the state is disrupted with the latest set of information technologies, creating Bobbitt's market state. Carnoy and Castells argue three reasons for this: (1) the transformation of knowledge formation to entities outside state control; (2) the decline of knowledge production as a monopoly of the state; and (3) the increasing inability of states to provide for their populations, thus providing incentives for these populations to seek information elsewhere.⁷² Information technology may have a non-linear relationship with the state, in which some technologies centralize power in the state, and others decentralize such power. What is the reason for this non-linearity?

The answer to the question lies with the product of information technology: information. Information has two components: data and the meaning with which humans interpret the data. Data can be quantitatively measured by bytes; meaning is a polymorphous concept that contains several aspects. The result is that the relationship between data and meaning is not necessarily strong: a little data can generate many meanings (for example, military intelligence), and a lot of data can result in convergence of meanings into a few or only one (for example, scientific research.).⁷³ Information can lead

⁷¹ Michael Mann, The Sources of Social Power Volume 3..., pp. 10-19. Also. Martin Carnoy and Manuel Castells, "Globalization, the knowledge society, and the Network State: Poulantzas at the millennium," *Global Networks*, Vol.1, No. 1, 2001, pp. 1-18.

⁷² Carnoy and Castells, "Globalization..." pp. 9-10.

⁷³ Hans Christian von Baeyer, Information: The New Language of Science; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003. Chapter 2.

to shared consensus on ideas and events, or it can lead to polarization of groups that cannot or do not wish to accept common interpretations. Control of the quantity of information (data) and the quality of information (meaning) is a powerful tool for anyone seeking social change from the status quo. Whoever or whatever has the most access (quantity plus quality) information can literally change the course of human history. Historically, in the early centuries of human civilization, very few people had access to information technology, and thus information; these few were the first literate people and they were always in the employ of the state. The reason for the small numbers of literati lies with the technical difficulty of applying the relevant information technology – clay forms, feathered pens, papyrus or silk papers, and the conversion skill of translating language to the written script. The numbers of literate people remained small until the next technological leap occurred: the invention of the Guttenberg printing press. With the press, the skill for translation and the tools of that translation became much easier, providing incentives for more people to learn how to access information. In order to control this wider access, the state itself had to transform from a simple monolithic ruling entity to a more organizational ruling system (for example, the king's court.) Wider access of information also led to more interpretations of information as well as simply more ideas, making the state's control more selective than comprehensive. Rifts in ideological consensus develop, leading to social conflict as well as social development.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ This is a major theme of Mann in his Volume 2 of The Sources of Social Power..., consult especially Chapter 2.

Information technological innovation continues and accelerates in the late 18th and 19th centuries, allowing for truly global information access (undersea cables appear as early as the 1860s.) More people and groups become informed, new economic forms are invented (capitalism, classes), and new ideologies flourish (Marxism, Scientism); these trends require even more change to the state's form, culminating in the emergence of the nation-state, with its extensive intrusion into citizens' affairs and its development of large and complex bureaucracies to regulate information access, among other notable functions.⁷⁵

The next set of information technological innovations expand information access beyond just the printed word; they extend the access into the electromagnetic spectrum; the speed with which information can be communicated then reaches the physical limit of the speed of light. However, the nation-state, the prevailing form of political power at the time of these innovations, already has adapted with its regulatory functions derived from its imposition of control on everything and everyone in its physical territory. A straightforward expansion of regulation suffices to bring the electromagnetic information access under its control. However, the final present set of information technologies, concerning the computer and the internet, present the state with a more challenging problem of control. Early development of electromagnetic information technology experienced similar access restrictions as writing did before the invention of the printing press. The hardware and

⁷⁵ Ibid., Consult Chapter 13.

software for these technologies, extending even into the early years of computers and the internet, presented significant skill barriers to human society. Only a relative few could master Morse code, afford telephones or televisions, program computers, or access internet servers. This allowed the nation-state to continue regulatory protocols with some expansion of its bureaucracy. But the most recent information technologies have all but eliminated the skills bar and reduced the cost of hardware to prices affordable by all but the most impoverished people of the earth; almost 40 percent of the world's population, approximately 2.8 billion people, have access to the internet. Software is built into the new hardware, requiring minimal skill mastery by the technologies' users. The globe now can be considered connected.⁷⁶ When these facts are coupled with the speed of information communications, that is light speed, the challenge of the state to control information access becomes formidable, if not impossible.⁷⁷ Global information access now has the ability to simultaneously bring global human societies together and tear them apart, regardless of the intentions of affected nation-states.⁷⁸

The above trends should make clear that information, in terms of the concept itself, its technologies, and its access, is more than just an enabler of

⁷⁶ There are several popular texts available to address this phenomenon. A good place to start is with William H. Davidow, Overconnected: the promise and threat of The Internet; Harrison, New York: Delphinium Press, 2011, especially Chapters 13 and 14.

⁷⁷ There are exceptions, if a state is willing to pay the price. Consider the example of North Korea as an illustration. Even China's intense state regulation of internet access has been proven surmountable by people of modest programming skills.

⁷⁸ John B. Thompson, "The Globalization of Communication," in Held and McGrew (editors), the Global Transformations Reader..., pp. 246-258. Also in the same book, John Tomlinson, "Globalization and Cultural Identity," pp. 269-277.

globalization, governance, and social change; information is their defining characteristic in the current era. Globalization, or globalizations, is expanding because information is increasing in terms of quantity and quality; public governance is being forced to change its modus operandi because of information impacts on state operations (for example, Wikileaks, the Snowden revelations); social change is occurring because information is literally and digitally altering social relationships among individuals and groups throughout and across the globe (think of social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram are prominent among a growing host of media outlets.) Bobbitt is correct to note that the traditional notion of the nation-state has changed; but he focuses on a manifestation of information access, neoliberal capitalism, and misinterprets the resultant political adaptation as the market state. Mann to is correct to note the evolutionary quality of changes in the interactive dynamic of his four sources of social power, emphasizing in the present time the dominance of economic (capitalism) and political (state) sources of social power; but he also misses the point that capitalism as it has now evolved is centrally based on information access, and that the present configuration of the nation-state is changing its form, simultaneously becoming transnational and sub-national, because relatively unfettered information access has undermined its primary reasons for existence – territory, regulation, monopoly of force. The emergent evolution of the state, or variant of the nation-state, can best be understood as the Information State.

The characteristics of the Information State and its relationships with globalization, governance and change are similar to those relationships described by Bobbitt and Mann; the differences are those of emphasis rather than of substance. The four sources of social power remain in force; economic factors tend to dominate political factors as in the Market State. However, applying the idea of an Information State, one observes that the interaction of the four sources of social becomes more uncertain and more extensive, reflecting the thickening of network connections among the four. Similarly, the variations of the Market State can be reinterpreted: mercantile market states maximize information access within relatively heterogeneous ethnic, ideological and/or cultural states; managerial market states try to regulate information access in order to retain some semblance of control over the welfare of their citizens; entrepreneurial states also maximize information access, but do so with very diverse populations. The differential emphases, however, do lead to different implications for the relationship of globalization, governance and social change in the future.

V. Future Implications of the Information State and Conclusions

Two possible future implications of the Information State are apparent from its conception and characteristics. The fracturing of the political power relationships that virtually unlimited and uncontrolled global information access influences, if not causes, can lead to a new coalescence of virtually connected but smaller confederations of states, analogous to the classical Greek collection

of city-states; it can also lead to a return of centralized power sources, but not necessarily based on the politics of the state.

The possible future of the confederated Information State has two extreme variants: one based on retreat from global information access and one based on the embrace of that access. The former would look like a post-modern version of tribalism: human societies that maintain a coherent, consistent ideology at the expense of conflicting ideas. The latter would be far more dynamic and adaptive to social change because of its valuation of information access. Both variants would be vulnerable to forcible control by larger confederations or modern nation-states: post-modern tribalism is vulnerable because it refuses to adapt, and small-scale confederations because of economies of scale and ever-changeable consensus and dissensus mitigating their ability to focus on external threats.

Information States that return to a new centralized form or forms of social power could form on the basis of any or all of Mann's sources of social power. Like-minded people and groups tend to aggregate, and become both more convinced of their organizing idea (for example, Islamic fundamentalism), and opposed to compromise with competing ideas.⁷⁹ These mini-states could then further grow until they reach some maximal size that reinforces their ideology (for example, ISIS or the Tea Party phenomenon.)

⁷⁹ Cass Sunstein, [Republic.com](#); Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009. Sunstein's research for this book has revealed that diverse democracies can rip themselves apart because of information as much as bring them together.

This paper makes no predictions on how the future global community of states will evolve. The most likely probability is that the community will simultaneously hold both variants of the Information State, as well as the many manifestations of the current nation-state. In this regard, the paper is in agreement with Mann; there are too many factors creating a complex set of possibilities that overwhelms the capability of predictive methodologies.

Concluding Remarks

Globalization, governance and social change form an enduring relationship that define human social development and the forms that characterize such development. The relationship has a long history, but has garnered attention from academics in recent decades because of three appear to be accelerating in terms of speed and extent. This paper has attempted to put some aspects of this relationship in the context of two of the foremost commentators on the relationship, Phillip Bobbitt and Michael Mann. After reviewing their conceptualizations of the relationship, the paper considered a new possible interpretation, centering on the idea and characteristics of an Information State. The idea of the Information State requires further research, both empirical and historical, to flesh out its validity and, if found to be valid, its implications for academic discourse concerning the relationships among globalization, governance and social change. If proven to be valid, the idea of the Information State could also have very real implications for how human civilizations respond to the challenges to the rest of the 21st Century.