ternational lawyers saying, chapter one, page one, that "law is political". Nothing
e else has changed, the thousand and one reasons for law's legality are still there, but
now it can be said. And so also for political science — all the models and systems
are still there, but now it can be said, the regime, my dear, is normative.

There is much to be said for this new convergence — the old distinctions had
become tiresome to defend. I am more concerned, however, about the disciplinary
blind spots and biases which are reinforced by this new interdisciplinary harmony.
So long as international politics remained the great disciplinary other, international
lawyers could imagine it in broad terms — containing all manner of ideologies and
possibilities, and commitments. For political scientists the situation was similar —
over there, in international law, we might find all sorts of crazy idealists and utopian
speculators. In the new dispensation, however, international law has devoured
the political other only to find there the same structures and processes of liberal
governance, just as political science has embraced its weird normative cousin only
to find the same regime it left behind. Possibilities are lost when we embrace a
global politics which eschews the ideological, which is committed to the forms of
a cosmopolitan global liberalism, just as possibilities are lost when political scien-
tists embrace a global law purportedly purged of ideological commitment but cau-
tiously committed to liberal virtue. My sense is that the convergence of interna-
tional law and politics has narrowed the disciplinary imagination in precisely this
way, leaving professionals and intellectuals concerned about foreign policy with an
impoverished interpretation of each of the three main transformations all agree
have overtaken the foreign policy arena in the last decade.

6.3. A common diagnosis and program

Since the Cold War, internationalists from all four disciplines considered here have
come to share a diagnosis of the changed conditions for statecraft. International
politics has become fragmented and has proliferated among diverse actors in myri-
ad new sites. Military issues have been tempered, if not replaced, by economic
considerations, transforming the meaning of international security. A new politics
of ethnicity and nationalism is radically altering the meaning of terms like 'inter-
national' or 'universal', transforming the conditions of both coexistence and coop-
eration. Consequently, internationalists know they must get beyond the equation of
international politics with diplomatic engagements and the United Nations institu-
tions, the assessment of regional or global security primarily in military terms, the
complacent hopefulness about the rationalist or humanist or universal claims and
aspirations of the international regime. But how?

Interpreting these broadly recognized transformations has become a matter of
deep ideological and political contestation among intellectuals concerned with in-
ternational law, organization, and security. In my view, the collaborative disci-
plinary sensibilities of mainstream commentators have influenced their interpreta-
tions for the worse. The separation of national cultures and global governance, the
isolation of politics in the public sphere, the separation of economics and politics, the reinforced commitment to the apolitical nature of private law, the conviction that governance must be built while markets grow naturally, the shared disciplinary desire for the triumph of cosmopolitan rationalism over local particularism, for more international law and an expanded global market, all these things have affected what professionals and intellectuals working in these fields see as possible and desirable avenues for post-Cold War foreign policy. In their interpretations of each transformation, foreign policy professionals underestimate the opportunities for (even the inevitability of) engagement with what seem to them background conditions: private law, market institutions, the politics of cultural change. As a result, participation in a global politics of identity, an overt professional attention to the political, economic, or cultural gains and losses to particular groups, is made more difficult, as is a foreign policy which is attentive to and participates directly in such struggles.

Internationalists have tended to see possibilities for governance and politics only in what has been thought of as the public sphere, even as the most familiar sites for public statecraft have been eclipsed. Although presented as the consequence of well-known facts of the post-Cold War system – global economy, democratization, erosion of sovereignty – the repeated emphasis on the expansion and democratization of a diminished public authority against the background of a depoliticized private order makes much mainstream commentary an argument for a traditional liberal political vision of a weak state and a market of relatively unstrained private power, structured but not tempered by law. Most mainstream commentators, moreover, remain ambivalent about the particularity of the national interest of the United States in all this – oscillating between the idea that national interests are and should remain both local and political, and the idea that the United States interest is fused with a broader cosmopolitan agenda of depoliticised and deracinated globalization. In both views, attention to the transnational alliances among individual interests and social groups as well as engagement in cultural struggle ‘abroad’ is made more difficult to imagine or pursue.

In my view, professionals and intellectuals concerned with international law and policy should reject these disciplinary conventions. From the fragmentation of international politics, often referred to as ‘globalization’, mainstream specialists have too readily drawn both an optimistic conclusion about global democratization and a pessimistic conclusion about the narrowed horizons for public policy, both nationally and internationally. As military issues have been tempered by economic considerations, mainstream specialists have become unduly sanguine about projecting military force abroad and have overestimated the technocratic nature of the terms within which issues of economic security will be measured and achieved, both for ourselves and for the less-developed. The result is an elite which oscillates between thinking of military force as an expression of national interest, leaving it unwilling to place a single soldier in harm’s way, and thinking of the military as a technical tool for cosmopolitan governance, leaving it too willing to extend force
abroad, on the unrealistic condition that the international live up to its promise to govern without political, economic, or cultural entanglement. Whether specialists are thinking about economic stability among the wealthier powers or development at the periphery, they think of the global economy in strangely depoliticized and technical terms. The new politics of nationalism and ethnicity have also divided mainstream specialists between two tendencies. On the one hand, they have reaffirmed the conventional internationalist project of universal, cosmopolitan, rationalist, and pragmatic institutions and doctrines against what they read as outbreaks of primitive or pre-ideological cultural passions frozen by the Cold War. On the other, many mainstream analysts have been willing to set universalism aside, affirming the peculiarly ‘Western’ quality of the contemporary world system in preparation for a global clash of ‘civilizations’.\textsuperscript{35} In all these domains, internationalists are ambivalent about the relationship between the United States’ national interest and their own disciplinary interest in internationalism. Sometimes the result is an accommodative argument in which ‘short term’ political interests (formulated by non-specialists) need to be set against ‘long term’ interests in the stability of the game. Sometimes the result is an endless search for a constitutional structure, a procedure, a system, which could align the two once and for all. Either way, the result is a strangely decontextualized, deracinated, and depoliticized international domain and foreign policy.

To my mind, the new globalization offers us the opportunity to rethink the locus of political contestation and public policy, the chance to invigorate debate about a wider range of structuring institutions and rules, for which ‘democratization’, however rhetorically salutary, in practice focuses too narrowly on formal participation in the public institutions of the state. We should rather seize the opportunity to redefine the terrain of the politically contestable to include the rules, institutions, and cultural habits of the private sphere. The re-interpretation of security in economic terms, moreover, should neither lead us to turn security issues over to the technical managers of the economy and the new humanitarians, divorcing military engagement from politics, nor to return to an isolationism of national interests. Rather, we should see the transformation in the conditions of security as an opportunity to rethink issues of global economic justice in broader terms. We should rethink development policy in cultural, political, and institutional terms rather than focusing on the iron ‘fundamentals’ of an imaginary market. We should accept that the projection of military force abroad is part of an internationalist economic, political, and cultural engagement, neither the simple expression of a uniform ‘American national interest’, nor participation in a technical or decontextualized humanitanism.

The new engagement, within and among societies, between national, ethnic, or religious sensibilities and the traditions of cosmopolitan rationalism and technocratic policy science should lead us neither to reaffirm an a-cultural international-

ism against ‘outbreaks’ of primitivism nor to retreat behind the walls of a ‘Western’ civilization. The fragmentation of the state and the geographical expansion of the economy place local and global groups in complex and intersecting new relations of competition and cooperation for which the broad categories of citizenship or culture or class are unduly limiting. We have the opportunity for a reinvigorated engagement with a global politics of identity on the basis of this new reality of mixed, interconnected, and diasporic identities and affiliations. The global market, like the global political order now being built should be judged by the distribution it effects among such groups.

6.4. Transition: a disaggregated and chastened public policy

The post-Cold War transition is being played out on an international terrain dramatically different from that which followed World War II. In this transition, it is difficult to identify a center of decision-making or a nexus for international political and social transformation. Reading the biographies of the great statesmen of the last post-war period, one cannot help being struck by their feeling of having been, in the words of Dean Acheson, “present at the creation”.36 Whether creating the institutions of 1945 or rewriting their missions thereafter, statesmen felt present at a moment and a place where world politics was being rebuilt before their eyes. They knew where significant international decisions were made and could identify the institutions which would carry the burden of constructing the post-war order. In the event, international politics continued to be defined by these decision makers and institutions throughout the Cold War. Even after the emergence of powerful non-state actors, among them the great multinational corporations and non-governmental organizations, the conflicts and interactions of global private and commercial life remained in the shadow of the sharp militarized split between East and West. Even the rise of individuals as backbone of the human rights regime did not disturb the priority of sovereignties, for all these other actors became subjects of international law in relation to states – as claimants, advocates, duty holders – rather than in relation to one another.

It should not be surprising that the academic study of international relations became increasingly narrow under such circumstances, despite the growing sophistication of its models. During the Cold War, the academic establishment devoted to international relations became increasingly focused on how a hegemon might think. In a bid for objectivity, the study was quite often abstracted from the actual political and ideological objectives of our century’s particular hegemons, and cast, in the name of realism, in terms of what a reasonable hegemon could be expected to do. In this respect, ‘peace studies’ carried out by foreign policy intellectuals located in Europe, between the two superpowers, were no different from the international relations academies of the Cold War protagonists. In the United States, the

study of international relations was linked to a foreign policy establishment, uniting those who would study the thinking of the hegemon with those who would do that thinking. By the end, all could generally be confident that their legislature, like that of their adversary, would fund whatever it appeared model actors would do in just such a model dilemma.

As many have said, the end of the Cold War disrupted the structuring assumptions which made this mode of thought possible. In 1989 the field of international relations plunged not to the end of history but back into history. Unfortunately, on arrival there was no longer a legible map: no group of institutions or political leaders now experience themselves as present at the creation. In this transition there is no unified plan for systemic transformation, no primary sites or pre-set sides. Contemporary international history seems less rational, its decisive actors more random or diffuse, less game theory than chaos. The key systemic optic is fragmentation or decentralization, an international system without a central focal point, institutionally or psychologically, a transition without a central plan or institutional locus. At the same time, the conveyor belt between the strategic studies or international relations academy and statecraft has been replaced by a broader academic struggle of interpretations. In this environment, we can see academic work more clearly as culture or ideology or politics than science. Or, to put it another way, an intellectual focus on the rational actions of states has become but one among many ideological positions about the way we should understand and construct international affairs.

Many of the trends which produced this fragmentation were underway throughout the Cold War. Although sharply increased after 1989, the broadening of participation in the international system – dozens of new states, many with economic and military power approaching or surpassing that of the old great powers, multitudes of splinter groups with access to weapons and the international media – was already long underway. So also the fragmentation of the political class within the modern welfare state, the transformation of political decision-making into a complex administrative and social process, the involvement of legislatures in foreign policy, and so on. The boundaries between local, national, and international questions were already breaking down as the result of newly disaggregated patterns of governance and new technologies of communication and social organization.

In many ways, the post-Cold War focus on these transformations simply registers the previously nascent eclipse of the state by a wide variety of economic, social, and religious actors. At the conceptual level, these changes have offered many international legal analysts the opportunity to reaffirm some of the field’s most familiar and dogmatic propositions: that sovereignty as a legal form has eroded, that international law should be understood in political terms, that the boundary between international and municipal law is a porous one, that ‘transnational’ law is a more appropriate description of the international legal order, that international law may be more enmeshed in cultural and governmental forms than its pretensions to
‘universality’ suggest, that the international regime may be better understood to be structured by an ongoing legal process than governed by substantive legal norms. With interdisciplinarity again in fashion, international lawyers embrace the political and political scientists reciprocate with interest in the legal process. In this burst of reaffirmation we have again seen the enthusiasm for relations between law and politics or politics and economics, which, like the relaxation of formalism and universalism, has accompanied every post-war moment of disciplinary anxiety and renewal since the late nineteenth century. One result is more complex models of international behaviour as analysts rush to embrace multi-level games, porous regimes, autopoetic feedback loops, and transnational public interest litigation. In the enthusiasm of renewal, all previous thinking about international relations can seem formalist, legalistic, entranced by a fantasy billiard ball world of states.

This methodological reaffirmation has the advantage of suggesting that we can understand our new situation by applying, perhaps more carefully or completely, elements of what has been disciplinary common sense for a century. At the same time, we can finally throw off the most annoying disciplinary pretensions of the Cold War – that international law was sufficiently autonomous to be beyond the reach of ideological struggle or sufficiently neutral to be universal. The methodological self-confidence which has accompanied the relaxation of these disciplinary conventions has linked well with a political optimism. The end of the Cold War will permit the completion of what has been the internationalist project of the century, a humanitarian ‘civil society’, an ‘international community’ which could dethrone the state, open participation to a wider range of individuals and groups, and open international legal discourse to the political. Non-governmental advocates will gain access to the corridors of international institutional decision-making just as mainstream internationalists can become more open about their politics. In the United States, internationalists can take some pleasure when a Senator Helms or a Secretary Albright bring their political convictions into international affairs, now that the tentative diplomatic or legal vocabulary and ritualistic ideological denunciations of the Cold War internationalist establishment have all been relaxed, or blended together.

When you speak with young internationalists from a wide variety of different countries who are enthusiastic about this moment of transition, who feel they too might be present at the creation, they are not talking about working with the United Nations or the foreign ministry, but about Médecins Sans Frontières or Greenpeace, or Citibank. The United Nations system seems a relatively marginal actor, even if those loyal to the United Nations idea can still find moments where it can and has made a singular contribution. Rather, institutions like CNN, the European Central Bank, or Federal Reserve now seem far more likely sites for management of international relations. At a global level, mainstream internationalists have tended to welcome all this as a democratic opening, offered as a new internationalist project, perhaps as an emerging ‘right’ to democratic self-governance which could provide a new justification for an ‘international community’, even for the
United Nations, as intervening guarantor of non-state participation in national governance. Indeed, it has become conventional to celebrate the disaggregation of the state into a set of loosely associated social actors on a stage with a diversity of other players.

There is another side to this decentralization or fragmentation of international political decision-making which the mainstream internationalist has come to regard, wrongly in my view, as a completely separate development to be accepted with ambivalence rather than promoted with enthusiasm. A shorthand for this change, for the rise of technocratic decision-making which has accompanied the geographical expansion of the economic market once concentrated in the old industrialized North, might be simply: from politics to law, from public to private. The erosion of the state has been accompanied by, has been largely accomplished by, the replacement of traditional political machinery with institutions of expert management in both the public and private sectors. At the same time, the United Nations system has been overtaken by the institutions of international economic law; no longer simply the Bretton Woods intergovernmental regime, but an ad hoc mixture of international private law, commercial practice, local schemes of adjudication, and financial mechanisms, and decentralized market initiatives.

The result has been not simply the opening up of international politics to new actors, still less the immersion of international law in 'politics,' but a transformation in the methods and objectives of public policy. We could describe this transformation in a number of ways: as an erosion of the ambitions and potency of public law; as an expansion in the importance of private law, private initiatives, and private arrangements; as the withering of the welfare state under the pressure of globalization; as a democracy deficit; as governance by experts; as technocracy. We could focus on the legalization of political decision-making, the importance of adjudication and administration, and the decline of the legislative. This is a legalization of politics less as norm than as process, with law fragmenting political choices, spacing them out in numerous bureaucratic phases, structuring them with proliferating standards and rules, redefining political interests as factors to be balanced in an apparently endless process. Trade law provides a good illustration. Once broken down into hundreds of technical disputes about particular commercial behaviour and dozens of individual negotiations about specific tariffs and regulations, each proceeding on its own timetable in its own institution, it is difficult to imagine aggregating these interests into a monolithic ‘trade war’ between two ‘nations’ in anything except rhetorical or hyperbolic terms.

But there is more here than a new public law regime for resolving or blunting the emergence of interstate disputes. If we say that the spirit of free trade has replaced the spirit of multilateralism, it is clear more has changed than the level of decision-making, for the two terms seem to come from different vocabularies altogether. It is not simply the level of political action which has shifted or the site which has fragmented. The terms within which one can think of a political initiative at all have been altered, become both more technical and more often played
out in the commercial and private domains. In technocratic decision-making for a private market, the moment of decision, the locus for political choice, is not proliferated or opened up, but rendered invisible. We see this perhaps most acutely in the European Union, whose political decision-making always seems to take place elsewhere – last year at the summit, or across the road in the Council, and so on, the idea of a government promoting a program replaced by the enlightened management of prosperity. At the same time, a new Europe, a European identity as much as a political structure, is being built by businessmen in Birmingham and Duisburg rather than by either the Commission in Brussels or the Parliament at Westminster.

This image dramatically narrows the participants whose interests are understood to be in contestation with one another internationally – exactly at the moment it celebrates an opening up of the policy process to civil society. The replacement of political choices by technical options, the reinterpretation of international affairs in terms of economic management, the disappearance of the levers of the public state, empower some interests and disempower others. We need only think of the process by which European Union policy managers have differentiated their internal regime from the trade system connecting them to the ‘transitional economies’ of Central and Eastern Europe – not as a set of political exclusions or choices between groups, but as the natural consequence of technical differences in levels of development.

Mainstream internationalists greet these transformations in the objectives and modes of politics with a tone of tragic resignation cut off from their enthusiasm for the erosion of state sovereignty. In this view, we must simply accept that with the withering welfare state must go the aspiration for a vigorous public policy. Something called ‘globalization’ has rendered public intervention in the emerging global market more difficult than it once seemed within the confines of the welfare state, whether in the name of the environment, labour standards, consumer protection, or redistributive taxation, as if the triumph of private over public ordering brought about by a global market by definition meant a reduction in the domain of the political. Certainly welfare states everywhere have experienced a weakening of their traditional levers of public policy in the face of increasingly mobile capital and labour. The erosion of wage policy or macroeconomic freedom in the democratic West is no different in this respect from the erosion of totalitarian controls elsewhere under the impact of global communication and trade.

The resignation with which most internationalists have greeted these changes is starkly at odds with the enthusiasm they have shown for a newly open international political process. Perhaps the enthusiasm for new public actors is linked to confidence that, after all, the domain in which they can do much mischief has been dramatically reduced. Even those most aggressive in battling for international labour or environmental regulation have tended to accept the equation of an expanded global market with diminished public capacity. It is common in the international relations establishment to think it obvious that the decentralization of
authority which empowers new strategies of advocacy by myriad groups at diverse levels should not lead back to a regulation of the international market. The link here is a familiar liberal one between democracy and a disempowered state. In some versions, the problem is rather that the welfare state’s capacity to mount a public policy has been eroded by economic globalization, while it nonetheless has been able to retain sufficient political authority to incapacitate other potential centers of public policy for a global economy, whether at the local or international level. The common theme is a disempowering of public law and a disappearance of private and commercial affairs from the jurisdictional domain of politics.

In my view we should reject this combination of enthusiasm about the fragmentation of international political life and resignation before the shrinking ambitions of public policy in the face of a growing private sector. The missing element in both responses is recognition of the politics of the private domain. The politics of the private is occluded, as we have seen, by the collaborative separation of public international law and international economic law. Perhaps ironically, the repeated mantra of enthusiasm for erosion of sovereignty perpetuates rather than questions the definition of the political which lies at the core of the state system. If we began to think of the private domain as political, it would not at all be obvious that the current situation is one of increasing fragmentation rather than concentration in a few key institutions – the major financial institutions and corporations. Global governance in this sense has not fragmented, it has simply moved from Washington to New York, from the East Side to Wall Street, from Geneva or the Hague to Frankfurt, Hong Kong, and London. Nor would it be clear that a global market should reduce our political or policy aspirations, rather than simply our aspirations for a politics or for policy which could be imagined as a public initiative and be implemented through the traditional vehicles of state authority.

My argument is not that we should reverse the mainstream interpretation, revivifying the state or disestablishing the international market. The welfare state often did entrench class, race, or gender privilege within its borders while preventing movement of people, ideas, and capital in ways which buttressed inequitable resource distributions across the globe. In some cases the move to a more technocratic politics has been a counterweight to the corrupt tendencies of mass politics and the capture of the welfare state by rent seekers of various sorts. Treating the construction of a state apparatus as the sine qua non of decolonization has entrenched all sorts of gruesome political practices in the name of respect for sovereignty. Similarly, the boundaries of national markets have often operated to block entrepreneurial initiatives which would improve the global distribution of wealth, just as they have often blocked ideas in ways which shrunk the global imagination.

Nor, at the methodological level, do I propose that we should reject interdisciplinary conversation or return to the fealty for international law’s exaggerated, often disingenuous claims to political neutrality, coexistence, or universality which characterized the discipline during the Cold War. The coexistence hypothesis often pulled the fields of international relations and law away from moral commitment
during the Cold War and occasionally made uncomfortable hypocrites of good-hearted liberals insisting on the legality of law and the virtues of formal equality in the face of the gulag. At the least, commitment to the legality of international law and respect for sovereign equality channeled humanitarian impulses in narrow and often hypocritical institutional channels. The insistence on the universality of international law often denied the roots of international law in Western projects of conquest and understated the obvious density of legal and political relations within cultural, economic, or ideological blocs. The claim that international law might be sharply distinguished from politics was always at least partly in bad faith, at least in a North American legal academy which had fully integrated the insights of American pragmatism and realism. The political scientist’s insistence that international law was mere morality never fit with his more complex understanding of the legalization of domestic politics, anymore than the international lawyer’s insistence on the autonomy of legal judgment fit with his understanding of the contextual politics of legal rules and reasoning.

My argument, rather, is that the resignation with which the mainstream accepts the demobilization of a vigorous state policy suggests that even as the institutions of the welfare state have been eroded, the notion of public policy which states exemplified is alive and well. The mainstream remains wed to an image of public policy as the territorial intervention by ‘public’ authorities in a background of private initiative, even as they celebrate the erosion of the institutions which have been structured for action on this basis. This resignation is also a refusal to treat as political, as public, as open to contestation, the institutions and norms which structure that background market. In this sense, the turn to political science and the new affirmation of the ‘politics’ of international law has paradoxically narrowed rather than expanded the mainstream’s political imagination. In many sectors, often where factors of production are relatively immobile, a locality may have more capacity to conduct a global public policy, not as the bottom tier in a scheme of devolution or decentralization, but as a direct participant in global political culture, than either the welfare state or the new institutional structures of international economic law. If capital and commodity markets are to be successfully taxed and regulated, for example, it may be better to focus on the powers of a few ‘global cities’ than on the cumbersome interstate machinery for regulating trade in services.

The question, in other words, is not whether politics or where politics, but what politics. Internationalists should care less about whether the state is empowered or eroded than about the distribution of political power and wealth in global society. Because mainstream international analysts are content to accept that the political and economic results which flow from a particular system of private initiative are outside the legitimate bounds of political contestation, they can be enthusiastic about a disaggregation of the state and the empowerment of diverse actors in an international ‘civil society’ without asking who will win and who will lose by such an arrangement. As a consequence, at the analytical level, the turn to political sci-
ence too often illuminates the structure of the regime without adding to our understanding of its substantive choices.

This idea is sharply illustrated by the observation that a great deal of nonsense can be done in the name of elections and completion of an international human rights agenda. Respect for elections or progress on human rights can blind us to local grievances as effectively as respect for the sovereignty of the post-colonial state. Similarly, an opening of borders can contribute to an unjust global distribution of wealth as surely as national autarky. Indeed, this is particularly likely where the demobilization of the welfare state mechanism has been accompanied by a redefinition of politics which demobilizes new social actors from political engagement with the private law institutions of the market itself. It is, of course, troubling that we should use the collapse of the state as an entrée to demand participation in its constitution, just as it is troubling that the new international decentralization should yield a new generality about the relationship of law to politics, a newly hegemonic form for political participation, a renewal of a universal enlightenment writ now in the lexicon of the local.

The disaggregation and legalization of global political culture is the most significant of the post-Cold War transformations. Technocratic governance, a displacement of public by private, of political alignments by economic rivalries, of politics by law, the unbundling of sovereignty into myriad rights and obligations scattered pragmatically across a global civil society, all this has transformed international affairs. That it has often meant an opening of international affairs to new actors and concerns, a democratization and proceduralization of international relations, an intensification of human rights, may well be to the good. But this openness is not the most significant dimension of the new internationalism. Rather, the transformation wrought by technocratic governance has shriveled the range of the politically contestable, confirming as natural the geography of center and periphery wrought by the private market. Because they underestimate the political nature of private institutions and initiatives, many mainstream internationalists have accepted the demobilization of policy making as they have applauded increasing access to its machinery. The result is an intellectual class unable to develop viable political strategies for the new world it has applauded into existence, ratifying the political choices which result from the particular arrangements of private power to which the state has handed its authority while celebrating the expansion of participation in an emasculated public policy process.

6.5. Transition: economic security displaces military security

It is now often said that national security is increasingly understood in economic, rather than military terms. Of course, whether one thinks in regional or global terms, the question of who can project force abroad, who has armies available to do what, remains important, undergirding patterns of trade, prosperity, and emigration. But we have all felt the pressure of a new security vocabulary, of surpluses
and deficits, hard and soft currencies rather than throw weights and silos. As weapons proliferation has become as much a matter of economic as political alliance, aspiring members of the foreign policy elite are learning more about prosperity than throw-weight. Disarmament and non-proliferation have become matters of economic ‘conversion’, enmeshed in trade deals and complex buyouts. This is more than post-war military demobilization or the expectation of a peace dividend – it may be that military establishments remain at wartime levels, even expand. We experience instead a re-evaluation of their function and deployment, their relation to national security determined less by Clausewitz than Keynes.

If we think of the expansion of NATO and the European Union into Central and Eastern Europe, agricultural subsidies, market access, the security of investments, labour costs, seem somehow more central than military commitments and strategies. It seems quaint that someone should bother to write the New York Times to point out that expanding NATO will, after all, mean expanding a military commitment. Does anyone think we would intend such a commitment now, would indeed ever have pushed the button for Bavaria? In the new international relations of communication, missiles are merely missives, the Cold War a symbolic grid-locked game, and anyway, East and West Europe relate to one another now as North and South – their relations structured by ideas about ‘stages’ of economic development. If we felt the quickened pulse of a new security politics in 1989, the moment passed. All the run-ups to NATO expansion, like the European Union’s endless internal structural revisions, are less moments of constitutional clarification than a routinized procedural reform carried out against a backdrop of concern about economic growth and prosperity. The emergence of a neo-liberal global market has taken the idea of ‘convergence’ to levels unimaginable when the concept entered the field 25 years ago. Suddenly the Third World presents less as an arena for political and ideological struggle than as an unending series of ‘emerging’ markets. Development is back on the table, the Central Intelligence Agency (redeployed to ferret out trade secrets and foil economic espionage) taking a back seat to the International Monetary Fund in structuring relations between North and South. The great commercial banks have replaced the military suppliers as economic partners to the Third World state. From the United States point of view, security is less the survival of one or another military structure than the survivability of neo-liberalism, the preservation of trade and currency flows, the stability of the investment climate.

Like the disestablishment of the state, the economization of security has largely been welcomed by mainstream specialists in international relations and law. If the liberal peace hypothesis proves correct, the disaggregation of the state into a global market has left the world militarily more secure, free to worry now about prosperity. Economic security seems achievable through technocratic means – through sound management and trade deals, and a smorgasbord of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. Trade wars are, in the end, friendlier than real wars, even cold ones. They cost less and can be won by lawyers. In the meantime, we can
think of all sorts of new uses for military machinery. During the Cold War, military interventions and proxy wars were hard wired to the central problem of global security. Now they float more freely, limited police actions, humanitarian gestures, stabilization at the periphery. Nothing is so urgent, we could do it or not, it’s a moral question, a technical question, maybe we should send the Red Cross instead, or hold a plebiscite, or enforce an embargo.

Foreign policy experts have oscillated between two quite different modes in thinking about the role of the military in this new world. On the one hand, the military remains an instrument of national interest and policy, with a much less urgent need to project itself outside the territory. There are fewer threats to the United States: ergo fewer armies and fewer boats far away. The projection of force abroad should be measured against the national interest in a neo-liberal global order of free trade – protecting the sources of raw materials, the trade routes, and the stability of trading partners, stabilizing other people’s wars more often than fighting our own. At this point the discussion shifts easily to the other hand – perhaps the national interest coincides with the stability and extension of the cosmopolitan agenda of global governance. If so, perhaps the military should be thought of as a national contribution to international order, for which we should be thanked and probably reimbursed. In this setting, however, when force is projected abroad, we must be clear that it is the sort of sanitary action one might expect from a global order which had no stakes in local disputes but stability – intervention without political entanglement, a police action, an air strike, with limited objectives and clear avenues of retreat back to the cosmopolis.

A focus on securing prosperity is certainly welcome. But we should worry about two aspects of this new consensus: the thin vocabulary available for speaking about international economic security and the newly assertive sense that military uses can be disentangled from ongoing political judgment and risk, if only the original mission objectives are clear and don’t creep. As international relations specialists have embraced a transformed state and an expanded market, they have defined economic security in terms of stability, investor confidence, and growth, itself seen as a technical matter which arises with the market, which requires more governmental abstinence than public policy, and which can be built best by submitting to the disciplines of price in an open market. The economization of security comes with a political program – the neoliberalism of the Washington Consensus – proposed not as a contested matter of ideological commitment but simply as the facts of a new international situation.

The embrace of the economic has led to an emptying out of political judgment about the meaning of economic security which makes it more difficult to think about distributive issues, both within and between societies. Economic security need not mean deference to the impulses of the largest market actors – there are, after all, more than one possible markets, structured by different background values and distributive choices. This is particularly true at the periphery. Although the conditions for economic security are commonly understood to be radically differ-
ent in the center and at the periphery, the difference is usually seen precisely backwards. Mainstream commentators seem to expect the periphery to live closer to the bone of a uniform market discipline than do the more amply padded economies of the center. The wealthier nations of the North experience a chastened public policy apparatus slowing, but not arresting their submission to the imperatives of the global market. For the poorer economies of the periphery, the vision is quite different – as they ‘emerge’ into the market, they face more bracing winds – a trade regime more hostile to national policy than anything in the internal markets of the North, a far more fickle relationship to international finance, and an internal market far less institutionally and politically capable of blunting the shock to market prices. The economization of security is more devastating to local cultures under conditions of modernization than in the developed world. But these institutional, cultural, and local dimensions of economic change are but dimly lit background facts in the imagination of the mainstream internationalist disciplines.

At the same time, if the Vietnam or Afghanistan syndrome left policy makers unduly wary of using military force to achieve ideological objectives abroad during the late period of the Cold War, a war fought politically and economically by the competitive production of military hardware and cultural export, the new mainstream suffers from an inverse Vietnam syndrome: so long as the mission can be detached from ideology, can be purely humanitarian or internationalist, or an expression of the ‘real’ as opposed to the ideological national interest, and can be accomplished by the military acting alone, without economic or cultural, or political entailments, proceed. The military has emerged from the collapse of the welfare state as the only bureaucracy broadly thought capable of acting successfully, so long as the mission does not bleed back into economic or political matters. Seen this way, the military is available for a wide variety of technocratic tasks, but should be protected from the quagmire of political or social engagement. At its most extreme, this has meant a willingness to engage in democracy building, but only to the extent possible by securing boundaries, supporting the state’s security apparatus, and remaining studiously neutral among national political forces. Problematically, however, this means using the military to stabilize borders and prop up failing states at precisely the moment globalization renders those borders porous, and those state institutions marginal sites for public policy.

The odd part about this cross-disciplinary consensus is that it neatly fulfills both long-standing disciplinary aspirations – to sabotage sovereignty once and for all, to build an international regime both open and stable – and a recognizable political program – finally the end of the welfare state, the emergence of a liberal international law, the separation of economics and politics. Something has happened to allow capture of these largely progressive and humanitarian internationalist disciplines by a Thatcherist or Reaganite political program. Partly, of course, the political ideology of the intelligentsia has moved dramatically to the right since 1980. But something else is at work as well – a conspiracy of disciplinary blindesses which has led professionals in all these fields to interpret new conditions without
engaging what are understood to be the background cultural, political, or institutional conditions for policy.

The ideas of universalism and coexistence did blind many internationalists to a great deal of injustice, weakening the discipline’s role in the great ideological struggles of the Cold War. The new focus on participation and democracy is meant to eliminate that blindness, with the hypothesis of a ‘liberal peace’ justifying an international preference among regimes. But we cannot ignore that the new regime among ‘liberal’ states will effect a new division across the globe, virtual perhaps, but every bit as decisive as the iron curtain. An ideological curtain will have fallen, separating normal from abnormal societies, those living inside a complex, integrated, post-industrial domestic regime from those who must live more directly in the harsh light of the international order of free trade.

I attended an interesting conference of investment bankers and securities experts, shortly before the Thai currency crisis sparked a wave of global economic difficulties. It was an enormous hall, a thousand enthusiastic and wealthy people considering how one should fashion a portfolio of security investments in the post-Cold War climate and how one should understand the role of ‘emerging markets’. One speaker after another told basically the same story: politics has little to do with twentieth century international affairs. The most significant historical fact of the century is economic: throughout the twentieth century, the geographical terrain within which capital could safely and securely be invested was smaller than could absorb the amount of available investment capital, leading to an excess of capital and a shortage of labour, creating high wages and low interest rates. Since 1989, that has all changed: the domain for safe capital investment has expanded dramatically, leading to a global shortage of capital and excess of labour. So we can expect an avalanche of capital moving out of Western Europe and the United States towards emerging markets, coupled with falling wages and higher returns to capital. In short, it is a good time to get out of labour and into capital.

Of course, economic transformations of this magnitude may create a variety of security problems. These investors were rather blithe about the idea that wages would fall in the first world by 20 percent or more, as if this were possible without political transformations and instabilities. They were quite calm about the fickleness of this capital avalanche as it moves into emerging markets, Mexico or Argentina or Asia, or Russia, attractive today and unattractive tomorrow, creating a whip-saw effect as countries and sectors go in and out of fashion. It is true that the security issues and political transformations which need to be addressed have economic rather than military roots. They are driven by the actions of private parties, not states, the emiseration they throw off unlikely to be interpreted as a humanitarian crisis until it is far too late. But none of these security concerns can be addressed adequately either in the technocratic terms within which economic security is sought, terms blind to distribution and the social context in which economic growth occurs, or through the use of military force detached from economic cost and political risk.
The economization of security reflects more than the increasing interdependence of prosperity or a new appreciation for the costs and externalities of the military. It reflects as well a new vocabulary for understanding the global system and one’s place in it. The point is not simply that during the Cold War security was understood militarily, while now people are more worried about prosperity. During the Cold War security was understood to be a function of one’s position in an ideological geography of East, West, and Nonaligned, a geography which was then mapped and defended in military terms. Issues of global wealth and poverty, North/South issues, remained secondary to this broader divide, matters of national economic development rather than global security. In this structure, a nation’s primary identity would be mapped ideologically and defended militarily. It would then turn out that the nation also had one or another Gross National Product.

This hierarchy of politics and economic has been reversed. The global compulsion is no longer to assimilate to the Cold War, but to the market, to take one’s place in a primary arrangement of wealth and poverty organized by stages of development, to be ‘shocked’ into one’s natural place in a global division of labour. States are divided today between prosperous and underdeveloped, hard and soft currencies, and so forth. This reimagining of global social geography has transformed the terms within which interstate competition takes place from a conflict of ideology to a stage of development. At the same time, the terms within which this economic division is written and in which its development is to be understood are technical, the global market presented as a strangely depoliticized zone. The price system will simply allocate a wealth to each participant on the basis of productivity, resources rushing to the productive and fleeing the corrupt, the shiftless, the lazy.

But finding one’s place in such a world and defending it can only be done with political choices which implicate background cultural and institutional conditions, both within national markets and globally. Defending the stability of the political order necessary for investor confidence, permitting the ‘natural’ reallocations foreseen by my happy investors, will require a set of political choices both among states and among groups, among ethnic groups or classes within nations, as among transnational interests of labour or capital or women, or men. Choices between groups and sectors with different stakes in different patterns of modernization, between different classes of investors, and those with stakes in different patterns of production, trade, and consumption. It is common to imagine, for example, that the global market ‘requires’ an emerging market to enforce the ‘rule of law’ to permit transparency and predictability in market transactions. But the alternative is generally not arbitrary or chaotic allocations, simply a different, and often equally predictable allocation of resources, perhaps to local rather than foreign investors, to domestic oligarchs rather than foreign shareholders, or vice versa. Such choices can only be engaged, can only be seen beneath the blanket insistence on technical ‘transparency’, once the mainstream tendency to efface analysis of background cultural, institutional, or political structures has been overcome.
As security has come to be understood in economic rather than military terms, the terms within which economics are considered have narrowed, depoliticization and the erosion of the welfare state eliminating the possibility for a distributive politics, prosperity understood as the natural result of energy exerted in a transactional market. What is missing from this story is a vocabulary for addressing issues of wealth and poverty, of distribution, of economic justice in political terms as the struggle among groups in societies. It is as if the old coexistence mentality which had led internationalists to be agnostic as between liberal and totalitarian regimes had paradoxically reasserted itself within a newly economized understanding of security, as agnosticism as between wealth and poverty.

The result is a tragic combination of exultation about democratization or human rights, passivity about market generated winners and losers, and a tendency to interpret the economization of security in technocratic terms stressing stability and the inexorable authority of large market actors. The emergence of human rights as a preoccupation of international law is all to the good, but it threatens to remain limited to formalizing participation in a governance regime which has lost its authority and raison d' être. If the new story is economic, the new mark of participation is less the vote than the living wage. The international lawyer or policy analyst who today ignores economic justice will be like the internationalist during the Cold War who ignored democratic rights in the name of ‘coexistence’; he or she will have missed the boat.

In a sense, mainstream interpretations of the first two post-Cold War transformations reinforce one another. It is only after accepting the attenuation of public policy capacity in the face of globalization that it makes sense to reinterpret security in economic terms turned over to technocratic experts likely to be indifferent to distributive concerns. And it is by invigorating our sense for the politics of private law and private initiative that the economization of security can be coupled with a political pursuit of economic justice as well as the technocratic pursuit of stability. In both cases, the key is overcoming a disciplinary blindness to what seem background facts, norms, and institutions. This inattention to context, this unwillingness to engage, contest, embrace what seem immutable social facts is most evident where one might least expect it: where internationalist disciplines turn their attention directly to what they think of as ‘culture’.

6.6. Transition: cosmopolitanism and the cultural politics of ethnicity and nationalism

It has become common in thinking about international affairs after the Cold War to stress the importance of culture. This has two broad associations. On the one hand, it implies a transformation in the medium of international affairs. Sometimes this simply means that the spread of Coca-Cola has become a more important vehicle of United States hegemony than Voice of America or the military establishment. Sometimes it means that the traditional methods of diplomacy have been trans-
formed by the media, as CNN has replaced the embassy cable. At its extreme, the
turn to culture and language suggests a transformation in the meaning of govern-
ance, from a matter of normative enforcement to communication and persuasion.
Mainstream internationalist commentators have tended to welcome this idea, as
they welcome the economization of security and the disaggregation of the state, all
suggest an international affairs more openly amenable to expertise, a matter of
texts rather than either guns or butter. The cosmopolitan internationalist is likely to
embrace the importance of symbols and the media, advocating a realism informed
by sociology and culture as well as politics. In this sense, the internationalist disci-
plines in the United States have generally embraced the symbolic as functional to
their objectives, without changing those objectives.

We can see this in the new advocacy strategies, which stress adjudication over
legislation, and devote energy to activities disconnected from the politics of inter-
state relations, working in a broader zone of international cultural politics. The in-
tuition behind this gesture seems to combine two feelings: that international debate
and institutional resolutions are ‘just rhetoric’ and that hoping for government
compliance with what purported to be international obligations is an unsatisfactory
solution to most problems. Only a cultural strategy seems likely to make interna-
tionalist initiatives on behalf of refugees or the environment successful. Even the
World Court can be reinterpreted as a one political player among others, contrib-
uting by its rulings to the ‘legitimacy’ or ‘illegitimacy’ of government or institu-
tional action. The idea about ‘culture’ which undergirds this enthusiastic embrace
of new professional modes of understanding and operating in the international sys-
tem is a very general one – within the cosmopolis at least, culture is a matter of
persuasion and communication, a way of augmenting or draining one’s legitimacy
stockpile in a community, the ‘international community’ in which everyone speaks
roughly the same language of missiles and missives, sanctions and sanctimony.
Within the international, one can embrace the cultural background as a set of gen-
eral communicative possibilities and methods.

On the other hand, outside the international, the emergence of culture presents a
challenge to the cosmopolitan. We saw this vividly in the attitudes of the com-
parativists and public internationalists. This is culture as a set of local or partic-
ularist commitments, a different language altogether from the communicative
methods of cosmopolitan governance. Culture in this sense makes the cosmopoli-
tan interested in governance uneasy, either by insisting upon a broader tolerance
and respect for the relativism of values than that demanded by the ideological ag-
nosticism of Cold War ‘coexistence’, or through the emergence of cultural alterna-
tives to cosmopolitanism which had been overlooked or prevented from expressing
themselves on the world stage by the rigid divisions of the Cold War. It is common
to think of the blocs, empires, states, and ideologies which have broken up in the
aftermath of the Cold War as artificial constructs, giving way to more authentic, if
dangerous, cultural identities. Just at the moment when the last remnants of ideol-
ogy have crumbled away, allowing a glimpse of the end of history and the triumph
of rational secularism, one finds the cosmopolitan sensibility confronting an array of allegiances and cultural forms one had thought long vanquished or dormant. Suddenly, for example, religion is back, and not simply as an expanding evangelical Protestant handmaiden to market rationality, but in a wide range of more primitive, mystical, and irrational creeds.

Contemporary internationalist commentary has reacted in two quite different ways to the challenges posed to cosmopolitan commitments by culture in this second sense. Sometimes the idea seems to be to reaffirm the universalism of the cosmopolitan sensibility, the achievement of a historic liberation from particularism through rationalism. In this view, cosmopolitanism, often associated with pragmatism and the logic of the marketplace, needs to be defended against outbreaks of more primitive sensibilities when those sensibilities challenge the possibility of a universal pragmatism, and to be more tolerant of diverse cultural differences when they do not threaten that hegemony. The most dramatic examples, of course, are nationalisms and ideologies which threaten the peace or condemn enlightenment universalism as itself culturally particular (most notably some Islamic fundamentalisms) and need therefore to be kept in place. At the same time, ethnic customs more local and unthreatening to a global cosmopolitan project (most notably involving women’s roles or family structures) should be scrupulously respected. Where this line should be drawn remains, of course, a matter of controversy, but the frame is stable: culture can be managed by exclusion or assimilation. This is not only a matter of bold ethnic or religious challenges, of course. The claim to cultural specificity can also threaten the technical universality of the new market sensibility – by insisting on distributional commitments or productive forms which can best be respected by governmental initiatives which will seem ‘interventionist’, ‘protectionist’, even ‘corrupt’.

The effort to assimilate or exclude cultural differences of the ethnic sort has a long tradition in the disciplines of international and comparative law. Efforts to ensure that outbreaks of economic culture (in the form of subsidies or protection) remain abnormal or are eliminated form a core preoccupation of international economic law. Internationalists have long thought of the problem of nationalism and ethnic violence as one of conflict between international rationalism and a variety of primitive forces. One often hears the observation that nationalism is breaking out all over or ethnic hatreds that are very old are reemerging, as if from the unconscious. Nationalism is associated with desire, with primitivism, with pre-modern sensibilities and considerations, with pre-rational deformations, and our job as members of the international political establishment is to find a way of keeping the super-ego in charge of these forces emerging from the same. In this strand, cosmopolitanism is not itself a culture, but comes after culture, emerges from the defeat of the particularism of culture, and must be ‘tolerant’ of cultural differences, such as those involving family structures or other ‘private’ matters, precisely to retain distance from the cultural. But therein lies the tension. A demobilized international, able only to defend itself by cultural agnosticism, will find it difficult to
implement the cultural strategy suggested by the transformation of international political life into a matter of missives and messages, except where the objective is to exile a cultural form from the domain of global civilization altogether. The idea of a committedly deracinated international, no matter how up to date its media toolkit, will have a difficult time participating in the struggle among cultural groups whose practices and commitments do not 'shock the conscience of mankind', or engaging with economic institutions or cultural forms other than as abnormal public interventions to be quarantined or eliminated. What approach should one take, for example, to the consolidation of Islamic nationalism by enforcement of a restricted role for women in urban areas which enhances employment security?

At the same time, a second strand of reaction has emerged which takes almost precisely the opposite tack, affirming the cultural specificity of the enlightenment tradition and insisting on a defense of the West against the rest. In its softer form, this strand simply continues the relaxation of the internationalist's aspiration to universalism begun with the observation that a disaggregated regime might well engage liberal and illiberal states quite differently, or that as market distinctions displaced ideological alignments, post-industrial and less developed societies might well inhabit rather different legal and political regimes, or that as democratization became increasingly a preoccupation of the international regime itself, participation in numerous international institutions and arrangements might well vary quite dramatically between democratic and non-democratic states. In this softer version, it is unclear exactly how these new distinctions will be played out. We can as easily imagine a WTO reaching out to China, insisting that concerns about local democratic conditions be set aside in the name of a universal market, or that market engagement be itself the vehicle for promoting local democracy, as we can imagine MERCOSUR or the European Union making democratic governance a condition of admission, or the attachment of conditions of respect for human rights to their recognition of newly emerging states.

In the harder version of this strand, which embraces the cultural specificity of the liberal cosmopolitan tradition, universalism is explicitly derided as a fantasy of the West. Although one might wish to promote democracy more generally, one should recognize it as an explicit part of the struggle for Western cultural hegemony. Paradoxically, however, this strand is likely to insist that market structures remain untainted by cultural or political baggage - that the market be universalized precisely to constrain the clash of cultures. In this sense, we should trade with the Chinese without expecting to change them, should understand that they will experience democratic conditionality as cultural overreaching, and expect a backlash.

In this we see many of the blind spots of our several disciplines: a sense for the separation of economy and politics, for the entailment of government and culture, for the apolitical nature of private law, for culture as a local affair. A puzzling result is an image of the distinction between public and private as naturally universal of democracy as a peculiarly Western concoction, and the odd sense that non-
Western societies are likely to experience conditions of democratization as culturally intrusive (akin to interference in family structures or gender roles), but will not experience International Monetary Fund conditionality the same way.

There is much to be said for the internationalist embrace of the cultural. During the Cold War, ideological conflict did obscure a range of other differences, and internationalists were unduly constrained to the traditional methods and strategies of interstate politics. As the locus of international affairs has splintered and spread, the number of differences asserting themselves internationally has increased, and we need to think of an international regime with a more complex and layered structure. All of these efforts to embrace the cultural are efforts to correct for the blind spots and bias of earlier disciplinary conceptions. All reach out to what have been background institutions, facts, and norms – to the local, to value, to identity, to the non-technical, and non-rational. Rather than overcoming these disciplinary biases, however, these mainstream interpretations continue them.

Embracing the cultural nature of global governance is intended to enrich the tools and techniques available to the internationalist beyond the narrowly procedural or normative. The difficulty is the continued commitment to the distinction between the global market and global governance, however mediatized, on the one hand, and local cultures on the other. Engaging with local cultures in the name of assimilation is also an effort to pierce the veil of sovereignty to embrace what have been the background institutions and norms of local societies. The problem has been that this appreciation of cultural difference homogenizes cultural identities and relates them exclusively to either consumption preferences (Germans like beer) or forms of public life (minority rights) rather than permitting a direct clash among cultural, institution, or contextual forces which would suggest different modes of production, of distribution, and of governance. Like the effort to acknowledge the ‘Western’ nature of international governance itself, this approach to culture leaves the economy, with all the groups and institutions, both local and global, which structure its distribution of power and wealth outside the field of vision.

When mainstream internationalist disciplines interpret the emergence of the cultural, they typically either overstate the contrast between the nationalism breaking out all over and the acultural world of modern secular rationality, or they overstate the fusion of modern cosmopolitanism with the cultural interests of the ‘West’. Neither is accurate. Although obscured by disciplinary sensibilities in numerous ways, the internationalist disciplines articulate a vision of society, a practice of statecraft, a theory of the economy, which reinforces some institutions, some groups, some nations, some states, and not others. They neither stand outside culture nor are they identical with the West. As we have seen, even the cosmopolitanism of international law means something different, is associated with different politics and groups, in the United States and elsewhere. Whether one advocates ‘cosmopolitan internationalism’ as one culture or as the lack of culture, one remains blind to the political competition of groups and interests at both the national and international level. I find that sometimes and in some places the values, inter-
ests, and agendas advocated by internationalists align with the interests of groups I care about, while at other times they do not. But in most all situations, the disciplinary practices of internationalists make it hard to see through to the interests which will be advanced or retarded by their advocacy.

When reacting to ‘outbreaks’ of nationalism or ethnic passion, the effort to retain the sense for cosmopolitanism’s distance from the cultural hardens the line between the modern or secular and the primitive or contextual in numerous unhelpful ways. It is difficult to distinguish cleanly between local cultures to be assimilated and those to be opposed as threats to the universal without inadvertently reinstating precisely the distinction between public and private, or the distinction between national and international that the disaggregation of the state was meant to undo. The result is likely to be an unhelpful overstatement of the solidity and coherence of both local cultures and of internationalist modernity, when in fact the most interesting and important international problems of the next period are likely to arise precisely from the debate within cultures between modern and pre-modern identities and values, and within the culture of internationalism between deracinated cosmopolitanism and a variety of new identities of gender, race, national origin, religion, and so forth. The differences between men and women are more significant within both international and national cultures than is the difference between international and national culture, just as differences among men or among women are often more significant than those between them. In the same way, differences among different ‘markets’, different forms of market economy, are more significant than the imaginary line between ‘the’ market and public life. Similarly, differences among groups within developing economies, among strategies of development, among groups in ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’ economies are more significant than relations between two economic systems (developed/underdeveloped, or global market/national economy) imagined to be easily distinguishable.

At the same time, when the internationalist embraces the culture of the internationalist project, labeling it ‘Western’, the result is similarly limiting. Of course it is true that people around the globe pursue various political and economic projects in terms of large cultural identities, seeking to make ‘West’ and ‘East’, ‘Asian’ and the ‘West’, or Islam and Christian carry the freight of particular differences. And conflicts are likely to break out along boundaries of this type. But these identities are neither exclusive nor particularly stable. Like nationalism, the idea of a global Christianity or Islam or Western tradition has ebbed and flowed over time. It can certainly be resurrected now, as a modern response to the disaggregation of international affairs. But the re-emergence of such broad identities will have to contend with other patterns and identities, both global and fragmented.

Patterns of communication, migration, and economic development have produced a Third World in the First and a First World in the Third, have proliferated ‘Western’ sensibilities as well as nationalist resistances of various sort in a wide variety of places. If we embrace the cultural by stressing the distinction between
the West and the rest, or global and national economy, we will miss what may be
the most significant cultural developments of the post Cold War period – the in-
termeshing of cultures through disaggregation of politics and economization of se-
curity – which offer the opportunity for a more invigorated international politics of
identity.

In my view, this effort is the key to understanding each of the other major trans-
formations in international affairs. To build an international order in a ‘globalized’
world of proliferated sites for public authority without accepting the narrowed po-
litical aspirations which come from blindness to the political nature of private law
and the constructed nature of the market, we must make the distributional ar-
rangements among groups in global society – between finance and production,
between capital and labour, between these and those distributors, these and those
consumers, between male and female workers – places of political contestation.
Some of these groups will be national, Thai and Malaysian producers for example,
but most will not. So long as we think of military force as the arm of a deracinated
international order or think of prosperity as the operation of a technically autono-
mous market, we will not be secure. After the economization of security, we must
accept the cultural and political entailments of military engagement in terms of the
distribution of power and wealth among groups abroad, this warlord and not that
one, these oil producers and not those. Only by thinking of development policy as
a set of choices among groups – these investors and not those, these public offi-
cials and not those – will we avoid consigning emerging markets to the authority
of powerful market players. In my view, we need an international which is open to
a politics of identity, to struggles over affiliation and a shifting embrace of the con-
flicting and intersecting patterns of identity asserting themselves in the newly
opened international regime.

6.7. On avoiding disciplinary blind spots and bias

International affairs after the Cold War is indeed profoundly different. The familiar
terrain of international political engagement has broken up, expanding the range of
players in many directions. The transition to technocratic governance and the dis-
placement of traditional political questions by problems of economic management
has transformed the search for security and the role of the military. The relaxation
of ideological differences and the insistence on a formal universalism which char-
acterized the Cold War era of ‘coexistence’ have opened international affairs to a
wide range of cultural challenges and opportunities.

These changes are easy to see, but hard to interpret. Difficult as it is to say what
the next period of international political life will be like, we can all sense that the
conditions of political life, for Cold War protagonists and bystanders alike, have
been transformed. And we know from experience that the first interpretations are
likely to be both enduring and misguided. After all, none of the institutions created
in the wake of the World War II would perform as anticipated – all would require
massive reinterpretation, often almost immediately. The uncertainty of such a postwar moment has hardly encouraged our statesmen and commentators to keep their powder dry until the mist clears. In the struggle to interpret what has become us since 1989, our scholars and statesmen have largely returned to familiar themes, even as we acknowledge that the traditional questions are no longer the right points of departure.

In making these assessments, the disciplinary sensibilities of specialists in international law, international economic law, comparative law, and international relations together overemphasize the disconnection of public and private, the apolitical nature of private law, the disconnection between governing and comprehending, the distinction between local culture and global governance. Historical progress mythologies support each of these discipline's own claims to authority and reinforce geographical divisions between the center and the periphery, while offering a narrowed definition of possible and desirable directions for reform.

One result is that the interpretations which mainstream commentators in these fields have given recent transformations of international life have had similar limitations, reinforcing the invisibility of background norms and private arrangements and taking important areas of political contestation out of the internationalist's vision at precisely the moment a turn to the market and a disaggregation of the state makes these norms and institutions potentially the most significant sites for international contestation and struggle. They reinforce the naturalness of current distributions of global wealth and poverty, focusing our attention on participation in public structures at precisely the moment questions of economic justice provide the most salient challenges for the international regime as a whole. The result is a strangely passive policy-maker. And they reinforce the stability of cultural identity at precisely the moment conflict and contestation among and within cultural identities created by diasporic and hybrid experiences are emerging as the most dramatic international dynamic for both politics and economics in the post Cold War period.

When we think about nationalism or ethnicity or race or gender consciousness, we should see a quintessentially modern phenomenon, an identity politics which will be with us throughout the next period. The issue is not how we can repress these claims, containing them within the private or the national domain, but how we can understand and engage them internationally. The desire for sovereignty, for political participation, for autonomy, for independence, are not alternatives to an international or rational way of running the world. The typical approach taken by political scientists and international lawyers confronted with these dramatic transformations, the parceling out of sovereignty into thousands of units, is to think of international relations as a problem of management. How can we manage this situation? How can we turn it into a process that is amenable to the operations of expertise? And the move to expertise is an important part of a transition period such as this. The challenge before us, however, is to embrace, to manage this tran-
sition without transforming political, economic, or military questions into technical matters which narrow our political options and naturalize inequalities.

As we think about international politics and security after the Cold War, I urge professionals and intellectuals concerned with international law and policy to think beyond the blind spots and biases they inherit with their disciplinary expertise. Perhaps we will be able to transform our disciplinary practices so as to embrace the disaggregation of the international regime and the economization of security without resignation about global poverty, to embrace the displacement of ideology by culture without sharpening the distinctions between cultures or the cosmopolitan conceit of living beyond the cultural. Perhaps we will develop an internationalism based on a global politics of identity, a shifting sand of cultural claims and contestations among constructed and overlapping identities about the distribution of resources and the conditions of social life.