Part I

The New Agenda

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Introduction
A New Agenda for International Relations?

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Introduction

There have been several defining moments over the course of the last hundred years that have been described as signalling a new age in world politics as well as stimulating new ways of looking at the phenomena involved. The most recent, and the one that continues to define the present period, was the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, although by then the Cold War that it symbolized had already come to an effective end as a result of the momentous changes that had taken place in Gorbachev's Soviet Union since the mid-1980s. If the fall of the Wall, together with the events that followed with the unravelling of the Soviet empire, symbolized the end of one era and the beginning of another in world politics, it also prompted some serious rethinking about the nature, purpose, methods, scope and subject matter of the discipline that studies world politics, traditionally known as international relations (IR).[1] With the collapse of polarization between the two superpowers and the threat of all-out nuclear warfare in rapid retreat, other significant concerns for world politics gained prominence. And it was not long before scholars and other observers of world affairs were talking about a 'new agenda' for the discipline of IR in a 'post-Cold War era'.[2]

An early version of the new agenda that was put forward in 1991 identified a number of global policy concerns including the environment, drug trafficking, AIDS, terrorism, religious fundamentalism, migration and human rights. At a broader, systemic level, the phenomenon of globalization, and what seemed to be opposite tendencies towards fragmentation, were identified as being among the most significant 'macro' issues.[3] All these, together with the very idea of *global* policy, have become prominent topics in the study of world politics, along with new conceptions of such crucial concerns as security which has expanded from a narrow military definition to encompass many of these new agenda issues. But these developments raise new problems and challenges for

students of world politics in terms of how we now define our subject areas either within the broad field of IR or within specialist areas such as environmental politics or security studies. With respect to the latter, as Karin Fierke points out in chapter 8, if 'security' can now mean anything and everything, then it effectively means nothing at all.

This raises the question whether the broadening of the agenda to include an almost boundless array of problems and issues constitutes a problem for the integrity of the discipline itself. This is an especially interesting question in an era of globalization which is widely seen as leading to the almost complete 'unbounding' of the globe. If IR itself is to become unbounded, and to take on board the study of practically everything, then what, in the end, will constitute the core of the discipline and make it distinct from other disciplines? Or does it matter whether the discipline as such dissolves? Is IR becoming an 'interdiscipline' (rather than simply more interdisciplinary in its approach)? And, if so, would it be appropriate simply to abandon the whole idea of IR as a discipline in its own right and reassemble courses of study under something called 'International Studies'? Breaking down the barriers between disciplines may well be a good thing in many respects. After all, how can one possibly contribute effectively to contemporary debates about, say, the role of culture in world politics without having a good understanding of highly influential anthropological approaches to the concept? On the other hand, where does the 'unbounding' of the discipline end, if not in the study of everything?

'Everything', as astronomer John D. Barrow notes, is a very big subject. None the less, he goes on to point out that contemporary trends in the study of the physical sciences also suggest that the quest for a 'theory of everything' is more popular than ever, having entered the mainstream of theoretical physics after a period in which it was sought only by a 'few maverick thinkers and unconstrained speculators' (including Einstein).[4] The more conservative and parsimonious of IR theorists would join in repudiating the utility of any such undertaking. The idea that one can see or grasp 'the whole' and thus be in a position to theorize rationally about it is anathema to conservative social and political thought. And theoretical parsimony has, according to its proponents, been a prime virtue of realist IR thought in both its traditional and its neo-realist forms. Kenneth Walz, for example, defends his version of neo-realism as a theory limited to explaining a certain slice of political activity – not the entire spectrum of social and political concerns – on the grounds that a theory has to be about *something*, not everything.[5]

These are some of the concerns that have been expressed generally about IR in the last decade or so. But they have not all been raised simply as a result of the end of the Cold War. To assume so would be to underestimate the extent to which the discipline had already been undergoing substantial transformation – or had at least had its foundations severely shaken in the previous decade. Kal Holsti, writing in 1987, argued that international theory was in a 'state of disarray' as a result of challenges over the previous ten years or so which had

broken down a 'three-centuries-long intellectual consensus' about international politics. In place of a fundamental consensus on the subjects of inquiry and theorizing, new conceptions and images of the world, and how it works, had arisen, most criticizing the realist, or classical, tradition.[6] This fundamental consensus had evolved around three core assumptions: first, that the proper domain of study comprised the causes of war and the conditions for peace, security and order; second, that the focus of study must be on the essential units of analysis in the international system, namely nation-states, and their diplomatic/military behaviour; and, third, that states operated in a system characterized by anarchy, understood as the absence of any overarching authority in the international sphere.[7]

The Cold War period certainly produced a great deal of theory reflecting this consensus, which also strongly supported realist approaches. But, as is evident from Holsti's remarks, the consensus was already under challenge well before the events of 1989. Even so, there is no doubt that the end of the Cold War provided a significant impetus for the various directions that IR had started to take, which included a reassessment of existing conceptual and methodological issues and an interest in alternative approaches. For many of the practical issues on the emerging agenda, a theoretical focus concerned almost exclusively with the play of power politics, which had indeed dominated throughout the Cold War period, seemed simply inappropriate or even irrelevant. Alongside more conventional approaches such as realism (and neo-realism) and liberal internationalism, the contemporary period has seen a burgeoning of other perspectives, including constructivism, postmodernism, feminism and critical theory, none of which now resides simply at the margins. Moreover, as Jack Donnelly emphasizes in chapter 11, we can also see much more potential for a dynamic engagement between these newer approaches and realism in its various forms.

At another level both the practical issues on the new agenda, as well as the perspectives and approaches that have been applied to their study (including the move away from realism), have combined to produce a much stronger focus on normative international theory. In an earlier work, Chris Brown notes that this refers to a body of work which addresses directly 'the moral dimension of international relations and the wider questions of meaning and interpretation generated by the discipline'. In its most basic form, he says, 'it addresses the ethical nature of the relations between communities [and] states'.[8] As we shall see, normative theory underlies virtually all the issues dealt with in this collection. This is especially so with respect to the phenomenon of globalization and its impact on the nature of political community as well as forms of polarization other than those which were conventionally understood to characterize world politics in the Cold War period.

In thinking more generally about a new agenda for the discipline of IR in a new era of world politics – however we might characterize it – it is instructive

to review briefly the development of the discipline along with developments in world politics from the earlier part of the twentieth century. By doing this, we can see both continuities as well as new departures more clearly.

IR in the twentieth century

As mentioned at the beginning, several defining moments over the course of the twentieth century seemed to mark the beginning of a new age in world politics as well as new ways of looking at problems and possibilities. To be more specific, there have been three such moments. The first two followed the end of the World Wars in the first half of the twentieth century, and were therefore born out of an experience of violence on a massive scale. In both cases, the world seemed ready for remaking.

The discipline of IR as a field of study in its own right, separate from law and history, was itself founded as a direct response to the horrific and unprecedented experiences of World War I. This was marked by the establishment in 1919 of the Woodrow Wilson Chair of International Politics at University College Wales, Aberystwyth. The main focus for the new discipline was, not surprisingly, on the causes of war and the conditions for peace. The discipline's main initial intellectual impetus in the years after World War I drew on idealism; on a belief that the world could – and therefore should – be made a better and safer place for all of humankind. The optimistic idea of inevitable progress in the development of human society as a whole attracted many supporters then. But progress still had to be nudged along with the assistance of purposive human agency. One of the principal ideas of the time was that a new and peaceful world order required an overarching international organization that could mediate relations between the essential components of an anarchical international system – sovereign states – and thereby ensure a viable form of collective security. And so the League of Nations was created.

By the late 1930s, as Europe again descended into mayhem, the idealist approach to world politics with its strong normative basis seemed almost completely discredited. In the wake of this second catastrophic World War, and then with a Cold War between two major powers setting in immediately, a new approach to theory and practice was called for. The discipline therefore took the turn towards realism – a mode of analysis that promised to tell it how it really is. The core assumptions of this school, in its classic form of thought, were a rather pessimistic view of human nature and the inevitability, not of progress towards an ideal or at least better state of existence, but of the unremitting struggle for power.

Realist theories, moreover, gave explicit support to the view that issues of morality can have no place in the international sphere. The premise was that because a structure of sovereign authority is necessary to sustain moral rules

and practices, and because such a structure is present only *within* states, it follows that there can be no true morality in the anarchical realm of the international sphere which is constituted by the spaces *between* states. In other words, the international sphere was nothing short of a moral vacuum. In addition, realists have generally supported the view that moral values and beliefs – which give rise to moral rules and practices – can only arise *within* a community and are more or less specific to that community. Here, the 'community' has usually been equated with a 'nation' which is in turn conflated with 'the state'. In short, realist theory has tended towards the position that moral values are relative – and state-bound. In the post-Cold War era, this kind of position on normative issues has also attracted support from communitarian theory in so far as it has been applied to the international sphere.[9]

For many proponents of realism during the Cold War era, to imagine that an international organization could overcome the essential condition of anarchy and form an international community capable of implementing, collectively, an idealist agenda for world order was regarded as pure folly. None the less, another attempt to achieve a measure of international co-operation in the pursuit of collective security was made with the founding of the United Nations. And a commitment to the highest form of idealism was enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly in 1948.

In the meantime, however, the contours of the international order were being moulded around a clear bipolar pattern of superpower rivalry and many IR scholars obviously applied themselves to the analysis of this most dangerous manifestation of confrontation. After Hiroshima, this pattern of world order was held together partly by fear as the nuclear arms race commenced. The development of ever more sophisticated weapons of mass destruction delivered not simply a balance of power but a balance of terror which could, if upset, lead to mutually assured destruction – a scenario appropriately labelled with the acronym MAD.

Other important developments in the post-war period included the formal demise of the colonial empires. With this, the principle of self-determination gained increasing prominence as well as practical expression, although independence for many countries in the Third World periphery was heavily compromised by a number of factors, not least of which were the dynamics of Cold War bipolarity. Moreover, for many people at the periphery, the war was far from 'cold'. While the core powers refrained from direct physical confrontation with each other, the violence of the Cold War was played out in proxy wars among their clients.

The polarized structure of superpower relations in the Cold War period is often understood simply in military or strategic terms. But of course there was much more to it than that. A principal characteristic of the period was the bipolarity of ideologies – of normative visions of how the world should be – that were represented by each of the power blocs. The states comprising the

Western power bloc championed the ideas and values underpinning capitalism and liberal democracy. The USSR and its ensemble of supporting states, on the other hand, justified their repressive methods of government as necessary for the realization of the common good through the establishment of communist society. So much is fairly commonplace.

It has also been said that as long as the communist bloc held together and sustained its challenge to the democratic West the space was created for authoritarian governments in the Third World to flourish.[10] This may be true as far as it goes, but it is also the case that the US and its allies lent considerable support and encouragement to right-wing authoritarian regimes and movements around the world. In fact most right-wing regimes were – merely by virtue of their anti-communism – embraced as part of the 'free world'. These included such notorious dictatorships as those of Marcos in the Philippines and Pinochet in Chile. It is little wonder that the messages about what constituted 'democracy' and acceptable human rights practices were somewhat mixed. And it is even less remarkable that the US – and many of its allies – have so often been charged with hypocrisy in foreign affairs. This also reinforced the realist notion that moral posturing in the international sphere is, in the final analysis, merely a reflection of specific self-interest masquerading as humanitarianism.

These issues aside, a remarkable feature of the Cold War period is that despite the emphatic left–right bipolarity of ideologies everyone actually agreed, in normative terms, that 'democracy' as such was a good thing and that there should be more of it. Moreover, virtually every government in the world *claimed* to be a democracy and each one certainly claimed to be concerned for the human rights of its citizens. The same generally applies today. As the rhetorical contest gained momentum in the early Cold War period, the philosopher W. B. Gallie put forward his now famous notion that democracy is an 'essentially contested concept'.[11] By this he meant that because democracy was almost universally regarded as something good and desirable it was something that everyone therefore wanted to claim as their own.[12] But beyond this Gallie also implied that rival uses of the term by people in deeply opposed camps must all be regarded as legitimate – and for this reason Gallie has been understood (rightly or wrongly) as endorsing a relativist or at least sceptical perspective.

The main point to be noted here is that the rival uses of the term 'democracy' during the Cold War period revolved largely around ideological questions of how the good life promised by democracy was to be best achieved – through the freedom and political equality of a liberal democratic and capitalist regime, or through the more extensive socio-economic equality and freedom from exploitation promised by communism. Normative arguments about the *cultural* basis of one version or another, if they were used at all, were usually secondary. As we shall see, however, arguments about the role of culture are now central to a wide range of key normative issues in world politics from

discourses of women's human rights to the politics of paranoia evident in many of the debates surrounding the relationship between 'Islam' and the 'West'.

The decisive answer to the ideological debate that dominated the Cold War era, for most people, seems to have been delivered in 1989. And this brings me back to my point of departure.

The New World Order at the end of history

As the forces which eventually led to the fall of the Berlin Wall gathered momentum, a hitherto obscure State Department official in Washington published a now well-known article, 'The End of History'.[13] What Francis Fukuyama meant by the 'end of history' was that with the collapse of communism there remained no other viable models of economics or politics to challenge the dominance of either capitalism as an economic system, or democracy as a form of rule in its specifically liberal form. He argued that no other system could deliver the proverbial goods and that the massive political and economic changes under way in Europe at the time served to prove the point. So the polarization of ideologies and world-views that had been at the heart of the tensions and conflicts of much of the last half-century effectively collapsed. Capitalism and liberal democracy now seemed unchallengeable.

With the end of the Cold War, many no doubt thought the end of serious warfare had been reached as well. And given that most of the violent struggles in the Third World had been attributed to superpower manipulations it would have seemed quite reasonable to assume that a significant cause of violence in the periphery had also been removed. As is quite evident, however, the vacuum left by the collapse of bipolarity both in military and ideological terms has not been filled everywhere by peace and tranquillity. Warfare has continued to flourish in many parts of the Third World as well as the former Second World as civil wars or wars of state formation have continued to claim hundreds of thousands of lives. The twentieth century closed with few signs that violent conflict, as the pursuit of politics by other means, was about to pass into history. Indeed, much of the violence, especially in places like the Balkans, has been perpetrated in the name of history. It is also evident that the phenomenon of globalization has scarcely been effective in ameliorating the range of political ills that seem to have been generated by various forms of particularism and/or other kinds of polarization.[14]

A significant part of the new agenda for IR devoted to studying these conflicts has therefore been very much preoccupied with the original concerns of the discipline – namely, the causes of war and the conditions for peace. But whereas earlier students of IR focused on inter-state wars contemporary warfare has usually been within states and much research has therefore concentrated on so-called 'internal conflicts'. The international dimensions of these conflicts, however, are numerous and it makes no sense – if it ever did – to treat

them as simply 'domestic' affairs. This has led to an increasing recognition of the political porousness of the boundaries of sovereign states in the post-Cold War period. In practical terms, this has been evident across a range of issues from environmental concerns to humanitarian intervention. This new thinking, moreover, was strongly encouraged in the early post-Cold War period by the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his *Agenda for Peace*. Although he reiterated the importance of the fundamental sovereignty and integrity of states as the basis for common international progress, he none the less stressed that the sovereignty principle (the theory of which, in any case, had never matched the reality)[15] needed to be critically reassessed and balanced by equally important ethical considerations relating to what goes on inside state borders. The legitimate agenda for global security in the post-Cold War period was therefore to include a commitment to human rights and good governance within states.[16] However, as Chris Brown makes clear in chapter 9, the circumstances under which intervention is legitimate today remain anything but clear.

Despite these developments and departures, entrenched perceptions and habits of thought in the study of world politics die hard. James Rosenau argues that the research agenda for IR has been so deeply rooted in a habit of thinking which assumed that the state is the 'terminal entity' for loyalties, policy decisions and moral authority that the discipline faces the danger of lagging far behind in an era in which the international–domestic boundary has been rendered obsolete; an era that is more appropriately defined by the interaction between globalization and localization.[17] This has implications for the way in which practical issues are treated. Lorraine Elliott, for example, identifies the main challenges confronting the environmentalist agenda as residing in the intensification of globalization and its political and normative consequences. She also points out that the reformism inherent in today's dominant neo-liberal orthodoxy, as it relates to the global politics of the environment, means that many efforts have been aimed at making the existing order work more smoothly rather than challenging its very basis. The value of international institutions based on the sovereign state – among other things – therefore remains unquestioned, and indeed unquestionable, by an approach which 'takes the world as it finds it'.

Of course states will remain. Neither Rosenau nor other contributors to this collection such as Jack Donnelly, who are otherwise critical of the way in which states have been given such primacy in traditional approaches to IR, deny the fact that states will be around as formal legal entities for some time to come. Moreover, as many of the internal conflicts in the post-Cold War period demonstrate, control of a sovereign state is still a prize to kill and to die for. But inter-state warfare is by no means obsolete either, as the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in the early post-war period illustrated. And here it was the violation of the sacred principle of state sovereignty that was considered grounds for a just war.

At another level, the subsequent expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait by an alliance of forces under a UN Security Council mandate regenerated the general mood of euphoria that had followed the collapse of the Berlin Wall. In fact it seemed to offer firm evidence that, in the absence of polarization in world politics and the shift to a globalist mode of thinking, the collective security function of the UN could at last be fulfilled. This led to a revival of idealist aspirations reflected in visions of a 'New World Order' based on effective international law and backed up by the sanction of the UN's new-found solidarity.

All this certainly seemed to reinforce the beliefs of those who saw a democratic and capitalist 'West' led by the US triumphing over its Cold War adversary, and then successfully leading the charge against a new devil in the form of Saddam Hussein, as signalling a genuine idealist prospect. In short, it accorded with a mood of liberal triumphalism prevalent among a considerable number of media commentators, politicians, bureaucrats, military personnel and academics, and no doubt among a significant portion of the general public at large. Moreover, it resonated very clearly with Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis.

With respect to the end of the Cold War itself, some more critical commentators have noted that the 'endist' interpretation of the events in eastern Europe was 'closely related to, perhaps part and parcel of, a singularly unattractive mixture of moral narcissism and cultural triumphalism in the west'. This was because it was not merely that 'the West' had won in some strategic or material sense – it had won because 'Western *values*' had won.[18] In short, the moral high ground had been captured at the end of the Cold War, consolidated by the Gulf War, and was thereafter set to be held indefinitely by the leaders of the New World Order.[19]

But the return of this particular variety of idealism was soon to be challenged by another very powerful and persuasive way of looking at the post-Cold War order – one which foresaw some much gloomier prospects of disorder emerging from so-called primordial sources of conflict. The critics of endism and liberal triumphalism, many of whom were intellectually oriented around a critical left perspective, were now joined by a conservative and far from idealistic Harvard professor whose prognostications centred on a 'clash of civilizations'.

Culture and the new normative agenda

The essential burden of Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis is well known and I will set it out here only in its barest details. The main arguments are based on the assumption that ideological and/or economic factors will no longer serve as fundamental sources of conflict in the post-Cold War era. Rather, the principal source of conflict will be cultural – as

reflected in the great civilizational divisions of humankind. For Huntington, a civilization comprises 'the highest cultural grouping and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species'.[20] He identifies eight mega-entities that qualify as civilizations. These are Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, 'possibly' African and, last but certainly not least, the West. The main premise for a conflictual scenario is stated in fairly simple terms: 'In the post-Cold War world flags count and so do other symbols of cultural identity . . . because culture counts, and cultural identity is what is most meaningful to most people.'[21]

There are numerous problems with these broad claims, a number of which are addressed in this collection. But a major point worth emphasizing here is that Huntington's thesis, although non-statist in its formulation, reinforces traditional perceptions of the structure of world politics as predominantly conflictual. Moreover, it promotes the notion that intercivilizational – or intercultural – relations are themselves primarily relations of conflict.[22] This can be attributed, at least in part, to the way in which 'culture' has been conceptualized throughout much of the twentieth century. Because of the centrality of this concept to how normative issues are framed and treated, whether it is explicit or implicit, it is a subject worth exploring in a little detail here.

From an early anthropological understanding of culture, there developed the idea that the world was made up of human communities each in possession of its own 'culture'. From there, the culture concept came to signify a complete self-contained entity – a totality. Moreover, the concept was applied to the demonstration of *difference* between these entities, and this became more important than any demonstration of similarity. And while difference as such need not provide grounds for conflict the causes of many conflicts, especially in the post-Cold War period, have invariably been framed in terms of cultural (or ethnic) difference between groups. Moreover, cultural difference has been invoked frequently in debates about human rights and the legitimacy or appropriateness of liberal-democratic institutions in non-Western contexts.

These issues are central to much contemporary normative theory, especially as it revolves around the themes of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism, or universalism and particularism. Because it is generally assumed that moral values are derived directly from a community's 'culture', and that cultures are in some significant sense 'unique', it has also been assumed that each community is in possession of its own unique moral framework or universe. From a particularist perspective, this leads to the view that the only valid standards available for judging moral behaviour are to be found *within* the group, and not beyond it in some abstract universal or global sphere. It is further assumed that the correct normative position to adopt in relation to these 'cultures' is that each and every one must be regarded as possessing equal intrinsic merit.

Beyond the smaller socio-political units that were the traditional subjects of anthropological research, it also became common to speak of 'cultures' as

coinciding with the boundaries of states, and so there is 'Chinese culture', 'Italian culture', 'Brazilian culture' and so on. There has been a strong tendency, from studies in 'national character' to 'political culture' as well as in traditional approaches to international relations, to treat these as homogeneous entities as well. I noted earlier that classical realism confined morality to the domestic sphere by virtue of the state's exclusive sovereign properties in contrast with the anarchical realm of the international. The geopolitical containment of 'culture' within states, deploying a very thinly stretched anthropological conception, has further reinforced this tendency to treat moral issues as belonging solely within the domestic sphere of states' concerns.

Huntington's thesis, however, in keeping with the mood of much post-Cold War thinking, transcends the state. But he obviously stops well short of anything resembling a globalist approach. His extends to a civilizational realm which contains broad, but none the less 'essential', elements of particularism. Here he is picking up on some quite commonly assumed entities – 'Islamic culture' or 'Confucian culture' or 'Asian culture' or 'Western culture'. These are scarcely novel or unfamiliar categories and each is often treated as some kind of totality in everyday parlance. Yet none of these entities will bear the weight of even the most cursory examination for 'cultural' cohesion.

A point that is especially worth emphasizing here is the way in which Huntington has presented a simplistic formulation of 'the West' versus 'the Rest'.[23] He is hardly alone in doing this. In dividing the world into these two great blocs, he is, after all, simply adopting categories that have become part and parcel of everyday thinking and usage, as I've already suggested. Almost everybody talks about 'the West' or at least uses the term without giving much thought to what it is, what it does, who it includes and who it excludes, and so on. In deploying an undifferentiated concept of 'the West' in opposition to a 'non-West' category, Huntington also reinforces some very long-standing Orientalist images. This has contributed very substantially to the more recent phenomenon of Occidentalism – the totalizing and essentializing of 'the West' in discourses such as the 'Asian values' debate, or in certain varieties of 'Islamism'. The result has been the imagining of another great division in world politics. And, although some might suggest that 'culture' has replaced 'ideology' in this exercise, it would be foolish to assume that culture has nothing to do with ideology. As I have argued elsewhere, contemporary debates about the role of culture in world politics remain deeply embedded in issues of ideology and power, especially where culture is linked to the political and economic interests of state and regional elites.[24]

Fred Halliday's observations on the 'carnival of the grand generalization' ushered in by the end of the Cold War capture very well the character of the discourses revolving around the 'cultural turn', not only in IR, but in other social sciences as well. One way to defeat some of the myths, of course, is simply to look at the historical or empirical record, and Halliday does so in exposing the extent to which 'Islam versus the West', as a deep-rooted,

historically constituted antagonism, simply does not stand up to scrutiny. There is in fact a much more extensive record of violent conflict *within* the West and *within* the Islamic world than between them. Jill Steans is similarly critical of aspects of the cultural turn, especially where some important feminist concerns have been bracketed off as 'private' and/or 'cultural' matters, and therefore excluded from the realm of legitimate public political issues. The recognition of women's rights as human rights requires breaking the bounds of the particular, as well as the private, and recognizing the possibilities and opportunities provided by a trans-contextual approach in which 'cultures' are not seen as static isolates.

These broad cultural issues on the new agenda underscore a number of others that have come into sharper focus since the end of the Cold War, especially those concerned with sovereignty, security and justice which form the focus for many of the individual contributions to this volume.

Sovereignty, security and justice in the post-Cold War world

The passing of the old bipolar world order and the unbounding of the globe in many and various ways may seem to have put paid to any notion of polarization at all. But what we usually understand as the polarization characteristic of the Cold War era has not necessarily passed into history. As we have seen, some now favour the notion of a polarized 'West versus the Rest' scenario – at least as a way of conceptualizing a new/old world order. Another way of dividing or polarizing the world that bears some features of the West/Rest dichotomy is the developmental North/South or First World/Third World divide (with much of the former Second World now joining the latter category). As Caroline Thomas demonstrates, however, the emphasis on inter-state and regional polarization – on which these categories are based – has obscured the extent to which there has been a significant intensification and reconfiguration of *intra-state* polarization based on material inequalities. Thus there is a First World within the Third World and a Third World within the First. Thomas also picks up on a number of themes that run through several other contributions to this collection. And, like Elliott, she notes the strength of reformist approaches, which are pursued at the neglect of more thoroughgoing *transformist* positions which so far remain at the periphery of the agenda.

Further serious problems with the neo-liberal agenda, including the extent to which globalization has exacerbated inequality both between and within states, are discussed in detail by Richard Higgott. A related problem is that economic liberalization is often seen as an end in itself, with scant attention to its effects on existing norms and values within societies. What is needed, above all, he suggests, is a normative agenda for international political economy that is critically attuned to the fact that politics and society cannot be governed by market assumptions alone – as well as to the fact that, despite the triumph of

capitalism, two billion people live on less than $2.00 a day with about the same number having little or no access to clean drinking water. Here, incidentally, a shift in thinking about security in military terms to a more holistic conception of human security and survival seems eminently appropriate.

While the contributions of both Higgott and Thomas point to the limited ability of economic theory to grapple with the social and political consequences of globalization, Elliott identifies the limitations of a liberal politics of the environment and discusses some of the new critical approaches that promise to challenge the prevailing neo-liberal orthodoxy. One of the consequences of this orthodoxy is that the 'global' becomes synonymous with institutional practices in which the 'local' is often marginalized or ignored. A major theme of a more critical global politics of the environment is the role and significance of civil society. Elliott discusses these issues not simply in terms of debates about democratic pluralism and institutional efficiency but as a response to the environmental (and other) inadequacies of statist forms of international governance and an inequitable world economic order.

If national sovereignty is no longer as stable a concept or principle as it seemed to be in the Cold War period, then the meaning of 'national security' has necessarily become uncertain as well. Karin Fierke, in assessing the new security agenda and the way in which 'security' itself has been undergoing a process of reconceptualization, also draws attention to some of the ambiguities and contradictions surrounding the way in which security is now often understood. Looking at the case of Kosovo, she notes (along with others) the fact that moral concerns over ethnic cleansing were paramount in justifying intervention. Certainly, there was no real sense in which some kind of direct 'national interest' – and therefore national security – was an issue. One should therefore question whether the use of force here fitted the category of 'security' at all, or whether a different concept is required. More generally, with respect to the present era in which polarization seems to have given way to globalization, the consequences of the latter now monopolize much of the agenda for world politics. In this context, she says that security thinking *per se* has shifted accordingly to encompass such issues as financial crises and environmental or ecological disasters as well as massive human rights violations. And this clearly shifts the traditional emphasis of security from a military focus to something which almost defies the very notion of 'a focus' at all.

In terms of the broad normative framework, Chris Brown considers, among other things, the way in which the traditional theory and practice of state sovereignty kept a firm boundary around human rights issues, thereby excluding them from the sphere of the international. The development of the international human rights regime since 1945 saw a steady undermining of the sovereignty doctrine, although actual intervention on human rights grounds was scarcely a regular practice. But now, in the post-Cold War era, intervention on humanitarian grounds has become an almost commonplace occurrence. In his contribution, Richard Devetak argues that, whereas discourses

of order consistently prevailed over those of justice during the Cold War, the present period has seen a strengthening articulation of humanitarian principles which, in practical terms, have been linked to assistance, aid, intervention and crimes against humanity. Thus the post-Cold War era has seen a progressive willingness to employ moral discourses grounded in widespread agreement and increasing calls for the 'international community' to respond actively to humanitarian crises – developments which may be construed as signifying a continuing process of enlightenment.

Two further issues concerning international theory are dealt with in the remaining chapters. Jack Donnelly tackles the question of how international theorists devoted to contending approaches can engage productively with each other in the post-Cold War period. Noting first that structural realism's 'disciplinary hegemony' has effectively collapsed under the weight of its inadequacies, in large measure because of its quite barren simplifying assumptions, he goes on to suggest that there are some promising signs of greater openness within the realist fold and that this is evident in some recent work on interactions. But the engagement cannot be a one-way process. He suggests, for example, not only that realists need to engage with institutions, but also that institutionalists might have something to learn from realists. Developments of this kind, rather than those in which contending approaches are seen as marching forth to 'do battle' with each other, are essential for a healthy and productive diversity within the discipline.

No account of IR in the post-Cold War period of intensifying globalization would be complete without a specific account or analysis of IR's central institution: the state. The final chapter therefore looks specifically at this entity in the context of international theory. And since the sovereign state has always been so central to IR it seems appropriate to draw together, by way of a concluding chapter, some of the general themes addressed in this collection as well as in the broader literature as it relates both to this entity and to the sovereign state system which has long underscored the way in which the 'international' in IR has been conceptualized. Given the focus on globalization that runs throughout the collection – and indeed throughout virtually all strands of IR scholarship in the post-Cold War era – particular attention is paid to the impact of globalization on the state. The idea, promoted in many quarters, that the state is under terminal threat from the unrelenting forces of globalization and is unlikely to survive another century is obviously of special concern to a discipline that has been largely built around the edifice of the sovereign state system.

We have entered a new century following a time of significant change in world politics when the apparent certainties of world politics that marked the Cold War period have given way to a much more complex and shifting set of circumstances. But while there is certainly something to the idea that there is now a 'new agenda' for IR this is no reason to believe that the traditional concerns of the discipline with the causes of war and the conditions for peace

are no longer central to that agenda. There is every reason to expect that these will continue to occupy IR scholars well into the twenty-first century. How we approach the issues is another question, especially since peace alone (in terms of the absence of war) is a goal that many believe falls well short of what can and should be attained. There has always been a concern to achieve peace with justice in world politics. It is this normatively attuned approach which informs the contemporary agenda addressed in this collection.

NOTES

The original version of this chapter, entitled 'The New Agenda for International Relations', was presented as an inaugural lecture at the University of East Anglia, 28 September 1999.

1 I use the term 'IR' to denote the name by which the *discipline* of international relations is generally known. To describe what has commonly been called 'international relations' in denoting the general *subject matter* of the discipline I shall generally use the term 'world politics'. This term denotes something much broader than simply the interactions between nation-states. That is why the title of this collection as a whole, while retaining the traditional term 'international relations', to denote the discipline, uses 'world politics' to convey the broader, less exclusive sphere of activity with which the discipline is actually concerned. For further discussion of the same point, see John Bayliss and Steve Smith, 'Introduction', John Bayliss and Steve Smith (eds), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 2–3.
2 This has been reflected in a large number of books and articles which speak, in one way or another, of a 'new agenda' or 'new conceptions' for either IR or certain subfields such as security, normative theory or peace studies. See for example: Fred Halliday, 'International Relations: Is There a New Agenda?', *Millennium*, 20, 1 (1991), pp. 57–72; Stephanie Lawson (ed.), *The New Agenda for Global Security: Cooperating for Peace and Beyond* (St Leonards, Allen Unwin, 1995); Paul B. Stares (ed.), *The New Security Agenda: A Global Survey* (Tokyo, Japan Centre for International Exchange, 1998); Nigel Dower, *World Ethics: The New Agenda* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1998); Ho-Won Jong (ed.), *The New Agenda for Peace Research* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1999); Phil Cerny, 'The New Security Dilemma: Divisibility, Defection and Disorder in the Global Era', *Review of International Studies*, 26, 4 (2000), pp. 623–46.
3 Halliday, 'International Relations'.
4 John D. Barrow, *Theories of Everything: The Quest for Ultimate Explanation* (London, Vintage, 1992), p. ix.
5 'Interview with Ken Walz', conducted by Fred Halliday and Justin Rosenberg, *Review of International Studies*, 24, 3 (1998), p. 379.
6 K. J. Holsti, *The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory* (Boston, Allen Unwin, 1987), pp. 1–2.
7 Ibid., p. 10.

8 Chris Brown, *International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches* (London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p. 3.
9 For further discussion on this see Stephanie Lawson, 'Dogmas of Difference: Culture and Nationalism in Theories of International Politics', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Theory*, 1, 4 (1999).
10 Barry Buzan, 'New Patterns of Security in the Twenty-First Century', *International Affairs*, 67, 3 (1991), p. 439.
11 W. B. Gallie, 'Essentially Contested Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 56 (1956), p. 171.
12 Ibid., p. 184.
13 Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', *National Interest*, 16 (1989), pp. 3–18.
14 It should also be noted that the incidence and intensity of ethno-nationalist conflicts is often seen as a post-Cold War phenomenon. Others argue that the empirical evidence does not support this impressionistic assumption and, indeed, that more conflicts have been resolved, especially by peaceful methods, since the end of the Cold War than in any other comparable period in recent history. See R. William Ayres, 'A World Flying Apart? Violent Nationalist Conflict and the End of the Cold War', *Journal of Peace Research*, 37, 1 (2000), pp. 105–17.
15 See Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992 (New York, United Nations, 1992).
16 Ibid., pp. 9, 47. See also Lawson, *The New Agenda for Global Security*, pp. 4–5.
17 Many recent works in IR, particularly outside the US, have made similar critical observations about the extent to which ingrained habits of thinking, especially in terms of the state, have shaped the discipline. See, for example, Gillian Youngs, *International Relations in a Global Age: A Conceptual Challenge* (Cambridge, Polity, 1999).
18 Colin Crouch and David Marquand, Editorial Commentary, 'The End of "End-ism"?', *Political Quarterly*, 62 (1991), p. 2.
19 These developments, incidentally, gave the US, Britain and others in NATO the confidence to mount the attack on Serbia in 1999, even without the approval of the UN Security Council.
20 Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, 72, 3 (1993), pp. 22, 24.
21 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 20.
22 See Jacinta O'Hagan, 'Civilisational Conflict? Looking for Cultural Enemies', *Third World Quarterly*, 16, 1 (1995), p. 19.
23 An alternative formulation which denotes a more explicit developmental understanding is North/South.
24 See Stephanie Lawson, 'Democracy and the Problem of Cultural Relativism: Normative Issues for International Politics', in Hazel Smith (ed.), *Democracy and International Relations: Critical Theories/Problematic Practices* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000), esp. pp. 71–3.