education, training, welfare, security. If you get a job with Google, no matter where you are, you are going to be very well looked after. The distribution of these benefits is extremely patchy, and a lot depends on finding yourself in the right place at the right time. (It's incredibly hard to get a job with Google.) But in some places the same is true of government.

Nonetheless, despite this mind-boggling proliferation of international organisations, there are really just two basic models for international politics outside of a world state. One is the technocratic model. Here politics is understood as something that can be rationalised and improved by being parcelled out into narrow areas of technical expertise. The underlying idea is pragmatic: international co-operation functions best when it devolves onto specialists who know how to make things work. This model often relies on the ever-growing body of international law to regulate governments and to reconcile conflicts. It suffers from the failing of all technocratic models of politics: it is insufficiently political. It assumes that non-experts will put up with being told what to do by experts so long as the expertise continues to deliver benefits. That won't happen. First, people get tired of being told what to do by experts. They will eventually want more input themselves. Second, even experts can't keep delivering the benefits. Sooner or later they will screw up. When that happens, the international technocratic order won't be able to handle the fall out. Politics will erupt.

The alternative model sees international politics as an extension of the modern state rather than as a limitation on it. There are ways to scale up without going all the way to world government. Take the EU. At present it is sliding towards technocracy. Bankers and lawyers, regulators and bureaucrats all tiptoe around national politicians, trying to find a way to keep the benefits going without upsetting anyone too much. Any push towards a federal European state is very muted. Germans don't want to give their money to Greeks because they don't see them as fellow citizens. For now no one wants to force the issue. But a genuine European state, or its equivalent in other parts of the world – a West African state, a pan-Pacific state, a Central American state – is the only plausible rival to creeping technocracy. It would require a radical change of course. In the EU it would mean European-wide political parties, fielding candidates in European-wide elections, standing on European-wide platforms. Real politics, real choices, real conflicts, and at the end of it all someone with the power to pool the resources of an entire continent if the situation demanded it. How big a change would this be? Imagine the British electorate, currently flirting with UKIP and tempted by a referendum that will offer the chance to leave the EU altogether, instead voting for a Polish or a Spanish or a Danish politician to be president of Europe and accepting the result as legitimate. Then the victorious politician using his or her legitimacy to levy taxes on British citizens at rates that served the wider interests of the European Union. And British citizens feeling that they had no choice but to pay. *That* big a change.