Of All Possible Future Worlds

Global Trends, Values, and Ethics

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Possible Future Worlds

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Introduction

“It will all be fine,” Candide replied. “The sea of this new world is already better than any of the seas of Europe. This sea is calmer, and the winds more constant. It is certainly this new world that is the best of all possible worlds.”

—Voltaire, Candide, or, Optimism

What will our future world be like in the next fifteen to twenty years? At the end of 2012, the US National Intelligence Council (NIC) released, “Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds,” the fifth installment of a series that aims to provide a framework for thinking about future policy planning. It describes the megatrends, game-changers, and four potential worlds that we will likely face.¹ Such accounts raise a fundamental question: how do you tell a story that has not yet happened? Anyone can make up a story, but the worth of forecasting should lay less in surface lessons and assertions than in how analysts are able to tell a credible story about the future that will allow people to make decisions today.

I submit that trends are only important insofar as they affect our future values and that such stories should be viewed more critically due to their limited consideration of ethics. My concern is less about the reports themselves, whose findings are approximations of the thoughts of individuals in civil society, academia, business, nongovernmental organizations, and states existing in the world

today. Rather, the content of the future world and the texture of our values themselves are the most important considerations for individuals, communities, organizations, and states to think about when choosing—to the extent that we can—what should be the quality of our future lives and livelihoods.

**GLOBAL TRENDS 2030**

The NIC as well as other organizations in the European Union (EU), Russia, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have conducted such reports about global trends and the future world of 2030.\(^2\) Policy planners in the US foresaw a series of individual-, society-, state-, and global-level megatrends. The empowerment of the individual at a scale never before experienced will be the most prominent trend of the future. Technological innovations in information, automation, manufacturing, resource management, and health will be the primary causes of this megatrend. The second megatrend will be demographic shifts of a growing global middle class, increased urbanization, more migration, and aging populations across societies. As the world’s population reaches over 8 billion people, a third megatrend will challenge societies to face stresses on the availability of food, water, and energy. The final US-envisioned megatrend will be the diffusion of power between states (e.g., a relative decline of the West and a more powerful China and India) as well as the changing nature of power (i.e., soft power will be more important than military power, and individuals and regional governments will have more of a direct influence in world politics).

\(^2\) See Annex for a listing of each reports’ trends.
EU forecasters foresaw many of these same megatrends, however, the character of these trends took on a more ambitious tone. People across the globe will be more educated, healthier, more equal in terms of gender, and in general they will enjoy more human rights. Individuals will be more empowered through the recognition of multiple nonconflicting identities at local, national, regional, and global levels. Thus, individuals will be empowered in such a way that they will not only pursue their own self-interested ends, but they will also become global citizens who will be able to share the values of an interconnected community wherein governance within states and of the globe will become more democratic.

Experts in Russia also saw the world as becoming more democratic than today but less democratic, individually-driven, and egalitarian than either of its US and EU counterparts. The nature of power will not change as foreseen by the American planners, and states will be the main actors overseeing a hierarchical world still led by the US, but influenced more in rank order first by the EU and China, second by Russia, and finally by Brazil, India, and today’s other rising middle powers.

NATO policy planners also saw the nature of power as constant and predicted that states would remain the main source of power. However, NATO focused on trends that were much more conflict-ridden than the other reports. Although some individuals may be empowered, they will represent threats to the state in the form of hackers, terrorists, and criminals. The greatest structural changes in the future will relate to more friction between people, states, regions, ideologies, and worldviews; increasing integration of economies for some parts of developed and middle-income countries, but not the poorest developing countries; and more asymmetry among states, leading to more inequality and conflicts between rich and poor countries and between the poor themselves.
Unlike the EU vision, humanity will not achieve one shared, cooperative, and global community.

**Possible Worlds**

Based on each report’s trends, policy planners illustrated a number of possible worlds that could likely exist. The US presented four alternative worlds, the EU and Russia, one each; and NATO sketched out four possibilities. When we account for all of the possible worlds that might likely derived from these trends, we have a total of ten distinct future worlds. How could this be so? We all live on the same planet now, we have similar access to information, and in the future, we will all live in one world—not several.

That one prediction is right and the others are wrong would be far too simple of an answer. My effort is not aimed at making straw men of these reports—they are too intelligent, systematic, and fascinating to be dismissed. Rather, my goal is to evaluate each of their visions of trends and futures in order to cull insights toward a better understanding of what future world is to come. When policymakers ham-fistedly wield their pens without due consideration of all possibilities—however politically unpalatable, counter-intuitive, or outlandish—we run the risk of living in a suboptimal world ranging from inconvenience at best and suffering at worst. Such negligence is not only a lack of imagination: it is a failure in critical thinking. Our future lives and livelihoods are at stake. An evaluation of these worlds is needed.

**Our Future Values**

In order to understand how these ten worlds stand against one another, we need some unifying goal beyond the trends themselves
so that we may have some metric for comparison that would allow us to judge which worlds are more preferable than others. Thus, I suggest that the achievement of our values should be how we measure progress toward one world over another. In particular, I will focus on four universal values: individual liberty, distributive justice, cultural pluralism, and peace. Liberty refers to an individual’s positive and negative freedoms to pursue his or her desires without harming themselves or others and without external intrusion. Distributive justice refers to what we should owe to other people. Pluralism refers to cultural diversity and group identity. Finally, peace is simply the absence of war. Although there may be other values we could choose and their definitions are debatable, these values are basic ones that to some degree have been accepted by all peoples in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Unfortunately, the reports, at best, only tangentially focus on these values, and their future state is not readily apparent in each of these worlds. This is not an attack on the reports, rather, this is an imperative for decision makers. Hence, we need some systematic way of extracting meaning from the given trends and worlds. In Michael Walzer’s “Governing the Globe: What is the Best We Can Do?,” the political theorist offers us such a way to conceptualize how these values might take different forms along a continuum of different archetypical worlds arranged by the unity of global political order. The degree of division of global governance determines the types of global order, ranging from international anarchy at one extreme to a unified global state at the other end. Seven idealized worlds are established wherein our four values take different forms in each, at times complementing and at other times conflicting with one another.

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3 Michael Walzer, “Governing the Globe: What is the Best We Can Do?,” Dissent (Fall 2000).
I will illustrate how all ten of the worlds envisioned by the US, EU, Russia, and NATO fall within these archetypical categories suggested by Walzer. The reports derived different trends and worlds due to selection biases, i.e., the exclusion of meaningful considerations that might lead to inaccurate predictions about the future. I focus on three types of biases: traditional, methodological, and temporal. Each of the studies can be characterized with these biases. By exposing the biases of each of these worlds, we can have a better grasp of the range of possible future worlds. By categorizing the particular worlds envisioned in the reports under a formal conceptualization of types of worlds, we can then determine what our future values will look like in each world scenario. This will not only inform individuals, communities, organizations, and states of what worlds may come, but it will also help them decide what world they should work toward.

**Toward a Logic of One World**

Given the infinite number of futures that may happen, I attempt to simplify the thinking involved, and work toward a logic of one world, detailing what aspects will be necessary and possible. I use modal logic and possible worlds semantics developed by analytic philosopher Saul Kripke to gain simple, but rigorous definitions of possibility, impossibility, and necessity. These concepts will allow us to more formally appreciate how selection biases may shape our worlds, but more importantly, these three ideas will help us clarify not only the values that will exist in kind, but also the texture of the values themselves across all worlds.

The definition of a possible world is more than simply saying that a world could happen. A world may be possible by definition if and only if it is not necessarily false. Since we cannot prove the
nonexistence of the set of ten worlds, they may all be possible. Further, we will assume that other worlds not in this set are impossible considering the trajectory of trends given in each report. Selection bias of trends thus plays a major role in determining what is possible and impossible. Finally, given this set of ten worlds, necessity by definition is what is true in all possible worlds. When the worlds are evaluated, it is only the value of pluralism that is necessary across worlds for all people, whereas liberty, justice, and peace are merely possible.

**One World, Many Ethics**

After illustrating a logic of one world, I finally discuss global ethics, i.e., the means of achieving our future values. Policy is the implementation of ethics, ultimately responding to the question of what should be done.

The logic of one world forces us to focus on the value of pluralism. This is in contrast to the values generally emphasized in the US, EU, and NATO reports. The US saw the empowerment of the individual and the promotion of liberty as the driving the impetus of the future. The EU report focused on social justice as the primary outcome of global trends. And the NATO report used peace as the primary metric to predict the future. However, no report took pluralism as a starting point. Far from resigning from our pursuit of liberty, justice, and peace, a focus on the necessity of many people will allow us to optimize all of our values. Each of the worlds presents its own ethical challenges.

I suggest ways in which we may be able to optimize our values by illustrating three global ethics as framed by political theorist Michael W. Doyle: (1) one world, one people, (2) one world, two peoples, and (3) one world, many peoples. I will illustrate the
arguments of ethicists ranging from social-contractarian and utilitarian cosmopolitans, to liberal democrats, and to Law of Peoples Rawlsians. This focus on pluralism will allow us to explain why some worlds are more desirable, why some worlds might emerge, and how we might arrive at better worlds. The principles, prudence, and pragmatism of these respective ethics can help us work toward the best of all possible worlds.
Since 1997, the NIC has convened a number of meetings with government officials, experts, the private sector, and academics to produce reports published every four years following the US presidential election. A copy is delivered to the incoming president some time after election before inauguration. However, the publication is not for the president’s eyes only: it is freely available to the public, foreign governments, policymakers, analysts, and journalists. Even a terrorist with dial-up can download what leaders in the US intelligence community think. The NIC’s aim is to play a vital role in providing policy communities with honest, unadulterated information. What is remarkable about “Global Trends 2030” is that it is an official US document that attempts to publicly and earnestly espouse impolitic assessments for many American ears:

- In many ways, China and India will be more powerful than the US. China and India’s middle-class demands will dwarf the US.
- From a demographic perspective, the US’s best days are behind it. The US’s window of opportunity will be over in less than two years: the US will have a post-mature age structure that will drive down economic productivity and GDP growth.
• The aggregate power of developing states will surpass US power. The health of the global economy will hinge more on how well the developing world does than on the West.

Although these trends might be unsettling for some of the American public, we should ask whether these predictions are necessarily dismissible. When policies negligently get life-altering facts wrong, people needlessly suffer. And if one is concerned not only with themselves, but also with the lives of others, preventable ignorance is unacceptable. Thus, a forward-thinking strategic report such as “Global Trends 2030” is of no small consequence.

Although “Global Trends 2030” should not be slighted as the work of some five-dollar fortuneteller, it also would be too extreme to consider the NIC’s findings as prophecies from the Oracle at Delphi. The NIC is not aspiring toward such prognostic feats. It emphasizes that the report offers a framework that will stimulate thinking about possible futures.

Yet most coverage of “Global Trends 2030” has not focused on assessing the framework. Instead, headlines have understandably highlighted the report’s wide range of trends including the rise of China and India, the growth of the global middle class, and the shift not only in national power but also the nature of power. To be sure, these are important trends, they were in the report, and journalists would have been harangued for not mentioning such details. And given the mind-boggling array of facts, figures, and futures, the report can be overwhelming to digest. It is understandable why editors have selected the stories that they find most interesting for their readers. Indeed, it sounds counter-intuitive to

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criticize journalists for reporting the trends listed in a global trends report.

But there is a good reason to be counter-intuitive.

Danger lies in foretelling the future by fortune cookie. Such small snippets of worldly wisdom, mass-printed and served to readers as absolute truths, may not only lead readers to think that such facts and worlds are inevitable; they may further narrow their views of what is possible. “Global Trends” was designed to prod policymakers and stimulate citizens into thinking seriously about our future world by establishing a framework for planning. Policymakers and citizens deserve the full feast of the report, not simply what seems novel. Even the most seasoned political analyst will be impressed by the systematic breadth and caliber of this exercise. The richness of the report—and its flaws—can only be appreciated by evaluating its framework, which tells a story of individual-, society-, state-, and global-level megatrends.

**United States**

**Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds**

By 2030, individual empowerment will be the central megatrend shaping all of our futures. A number of factors will elevate individuals. A growing global middle class will usher in the reduction of extreme poverty to the lowest levels ever known in human history. Throughout the world, people will be better educated and healthier. Women and men will enjoy more equal rights. Technological innovation will bring about the greatest change in individual empowerment.\(^5\) Big data, social networking, and smart city

\(^5\) For a more extensive overview of the effects of future connectivity on the lives of individuals as seen by Google, see Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, “Our Future
information technologies will drive growth for both the developed and developing worlds. Leap-frog technologies such as smartphones will lift the poor out of poverty. Automation and manufacturing technologies such as robots, self-driving vehicles, and 3D printing will free the individual by permitting new and more productive work patterns. Resource technologies such as genetically modified crops, precision agriculture, and better water management will feed a more populous world while biofuels and solar energy will drive those new people to work. Health technologies will lead to new cures that will eliminate or alleviate many of today’s diseases. Human augmentation will better allow the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and those with impaired limbs to touch.

Individual empowerment will be so great that it will bend the trajectories of the other three megatrends. Changes in demographic patterns will be the most proximate change. An additional 1.2 billion people will increase the world’s population to 8.3 billion. Yet these newborn babies will not lead to a more youthful world: future populations of all societies (except for sub-Saharan Africa) will face rapid aging. Today’s Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development high-income countries will become demographically post-mature structured countries (i.e., the number of older people will outstrip the number of middle-aged and young people) and today’s emerging BRIC economies (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) will become mature structured. Thus, aggregate GDPs will decrease in today’s rich countries for two reasons: (1) older, less energetic workers will become less productive but continue to demand high living standards, and (2) the numbers of youthful domestic and international workers drop. This will lead to a shrinking number of youthful countries. However, urbanization will

drive increased demand and opportunities for both skilled and unskilled migrant labor for the construction of housing, offices, and transportation infrastructure over the next forty years.\(^6\) Globalization’s incentives toward efficient urbanization, particularly in the developing world, will lead to 60 percent of the world’s population to live in cities.

This future, more-crowded planet will face a **food, water, and energy nexus**. An additional 1.2 billion people will increasingly demand resources that have always been interconnected, but never consumed at as such levels by so many people in history. Climate change will be intertwined with this nexus. Changing weather patterns will bring to light commodity interdependencies. Climate change’s effects on land and water availability will affect the supply and demand chains of food, and these effects will also challenge the global middle class’s demands for higher consumption of energy. Climate change will also help determine food and water availability region by region. However, growing strains on these commodities may not preordain their scarcity. Food technologies such as genetically modified crops and precision agriculture may accommodate the rising global population as the green revolution did in the past. Water management with subsurface drip irrigation systems may conserve water in a future of higher demand and droughts. Innovations in energy technologies such as bio-fuels, solar, and hydraulic fracturing may also help to prevent a scarcity of fuels for the future. Efficiencies brought about by urbanization and smart cities may also mitigate problems.

Individual empowerment through economic growth and technology; shifting demographic patterns of a rising global middle

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class, aging, and urbanization; and the strains of the food, water, and energy nexus will all culminate to direct a global diffusion of power not only in terms of a new distribution of national power, but also in terms of the nature of power. By 2030, regardless of which global power index one uses—one measurement includes only GDP, population, military spending, and technology while another also incorporates health, education, and governance—China will surpass the US and EU as both experience relative decline. India will surpass both the US and EU if the more basic index is used. China and India will not be the only countries to rise, nor will the US and the EU be the only countries to decline. Goldman Sachs's designated “Next Eleven” countries combined (i.e., Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, The Philippines, South Korea, Turkey, and Vietnam) will overtake the EU’s global power by 2030. At the same time, the 20th century’s other great powers, Japan and Russia, will follow the same relative downward power trajectory as the US and EU.

However, these national power shifts will not result in a new order of dominance: no country—not the US, China, or any other country—will be a hegemonic power. What does this mean for stability? A multipolar, fragmented international system may increase the potential of conflict through a number of game-changers: new global players may introduce economic volatility and imbalances and lead to a crisis-prone global economy; interdependence may lead to wider scopes of regional instability since crises in regions such as the Middle East or the South China Sea could spill over; a limited US role in the world could preclude the hegemonic stability that some believe has been ensured in the past century; new technologies may lead to new weapons capabilities beyond the surveillance of drones; and the high expectations of empowered, hungry, middle-class individuals may form a governance gap due to
the inability of their elected politicians or leaders to deliver public goods.

Despite these game-changing risks, new states would face an even greater risk if they were to violently revise the status quo that is permitting them to rise into the future. Today, *interstate conflict* is at a historical low. A major reason for this, many argue, is that the victors of World War II created an international order of international institutions and a global economy that would benefit all states. No other country offers an alternative vision in the next fifteen to twenty years from today’s liberal international order that would be beneficial for all states. Multipolarity, despite increased risks, does not necessarily entail great power conflict. The “hundred years’ peace” was a period between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the First World War characterized by multipolar stability. Limited wars occurred, but great wars did not. Although this period was bookended with the most violent conflict in history and the powers of the future may push for a different order rendering such conflicts in the future as plausible, a conflict of a world-war magnitude is not predicted by 2030.

*Intrastate conflict* will likely continue a now two-decades-long downward trajectory. Young men—the most violent, destabilizing demographic group in history—will, as a cohort, grow older. In the past, this aging was arguably a cause for the decline of violence in Europe and the US. Today, we see youth uprisings from South and Central Asia across the Middle East, encompassing Sub-Saharan Africa, and tapering off in the Central Andes and mid-section of Central America. By 2030, though, we will see a contraction and aging of this youthful global “demographic arc of instability” and

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fewer intrastate conflicts are likely to occur. Some countries, unfortunately, will not have such a future: the demographic and ecological factors that have put the fifteen states most at risk of state failure today will be no different in 2030. Somalia, Burundi, Yemen, Uganda, Afghanistan, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Nigeria, Niger, Pakistan, Chad, Haiti, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh will continue to be at risk of intrastate conflict due largely to their youthful demographics and ecological conflicts over food and water. The only difference might be the country order of their risk of state failure.

The changing nature of power may be even more profound than shifts in national power. The role of hard power will be limited by states’ desire to maintain a peaceful and prosperous world order. The utility of military force may become too blunt of an instrument, as diplomacy becomes increasingly important for all states, especially for today’s middle powers, in achieving their interests. However, technological innovation will cause the most drastic change in power. *Amorphous networks of state and nonstate actors* will fill the interstices of today’s international order. Individuals, multinational corporations, and nongovernmental organizations will be able to harness big data in real time at speeds faster than governments. Past power asymmetries will be upended as nonstate actors will be able to exert more pressures on their governments to become more responsive and as these actors become more accountable to the public. Individual-state interactions will more broadly range from symbiotic dependencies beneficial to all actors, to individuals more independent from their states, to confrontations between malicious hackers and governments.

These megatrends and game-changers will diverge toward a range of four alternative worlds. Although the actual future world will likely be composed of elements from these worlds, these
archetypes are useful sketches of likely global developments. A number of black swans (i.e., low probability events that may have cataclysmic effects on the fundamental dynamics of world affairs) could cause great strains on the four megatrends. In the past, the development of unforeseeable events such as the invention of the Internet or the nuclear bomb transformed epochs for better or worse. Such events in the future might include severe pandemics, much more rapid climate change, an EU collapse, US disengagement, a democratic or collapsed China, a reformed Iran, a nuclear war or a weapons of mass destruction or cyber attack, or solar geomagnetic storms. However, given their relatively low probabilities, only few of the possible worlds incorporate these dramatic influences.

The best-case Fusion scenario has both the US and China realizing a shared interest in a growing global economy without conflict. Both countries will coordinate to avoid conflict in the South China Sea. And they will look for other opportunities to cooperate. This forward-thinking inclination sets a norm of cooperation over competition that other countries will internalize. Trust among civilizations will increase. Multilateral institutions will become more inclusive. China will undergo political reform. The EU will use today’s eurozone crisis as a catalyst for political restructuring. Technological innovation will skyrocket as all growth in all economies—developing, emerging, and OECD—accelerates. Innovations will alleviate stresses on the food, water, and energy nexus.

Stalled Engines represents a worse-case, but still decent world where the risk of interstate conflict increases in Asia and the Middle East, globalization slows, and the US and EU no longer lead. The

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European Union will unravel as countries leave the eurozone. Emerging economies will continue to grow, but beneath their potential since fundamental economic and political reforms in China and India will not be made. Technological innovation will consequently slow, although IT connectivity will continue to grow. A global black swan shock such as a pandemic will expose the weakness of multilateral governance as rich countries shield their own citizens from the poor countries where diseases might originate.

Inequality within and between countries characterizes the Gini Out-of-the-Bottle world. Although global GDP growth will be greater than in the Stalled Engines world, the least well off in this world are worse off than in any other alternative. At the national, regional, and global levels, the rich will get richer, and the poor will get poorer. The US’s hydraulic fracturing investments and technological innovations will maintain its status the preeminent power. Uncompetitive Greece, Spain, Italy, and Portugal will be thrown out of the eurozone. With America disengaged and Europe looking after itself, African countries at most risk of state failure will suffer from sectarian tribal and ethnic conflicts without the sympathy of international aid and peacekeeping forces. Chinese political institutions will become unstable while its coastal cities thrive and middle-class dreams will be snuffed out by corruption and governance gaps. These political and economic inequalities will also increase the risk of intra- and interstate conflict.

The Nonstate World reflects a radical decentralization of global power. Nongovernmental organizations, multinational businesses, academic institutions, wealthy individuals, and megacities take the initiative on global challenges. Technologies will have been innovated in such ways that individuals and small groups will no longer need governments to provide their services. Social media, mobile
communications, and big data will increasingly connect and inform individuals. The global values of elites and the middle-class will have converged on poverty, the environment, anticorruption, rule of law, and peace. Governments will play the role of facilitators rather than directors. Private capital and philanthropy will outstrip official development assistance. International governance institutions will have to accommodate nonstate actors at the same table as states. Dangers may also persist. Terrorists and criminal networks will be able to wield lethal and disruptive technologies and slip through the cracks of a patchwork of competing security authorities. This world will be more stable and prosperous than the Gini Out-of-the-Bottle world since it will be more socially cohesive and cooperative.
Chapter 2

Our Future Values

There is something mesmerizing about watching a long line of dominos cascade at a constant clip, winding in all sorts of directions in the way that the NIC’s story was told. However, it can also be bewildering since despite the impressive breadth of this exercise, it is difficult to know what exactly one is to do after hearing this story. This, perhaps, is due to the fact that the most important considerations were hidden in the background. Trends are only important insofar as they affect the quality of our and our children’s future lives. Although the NIC accounts for individual empowerment, readers are left with only a glancing notion of what will happen to the future of human values. Any prediction that does not take values into consideration is normatively worthless.

With this in mind, I would like to further extrapolate from these trends and worlds the greater consequences they have on four particular values: individual liberty, distributive justice, cultural pluralism, and peace. Definitions of these terms should be simple and intuitive, even if academically debatable. Liberty refers to an individual’s positive and negative freedoms to pursue his or her desires without harming themselves or others and without external intrusion. Distributive justice refers to what we should owe to other
people. Pluralism refers to cultural diversity and group identity. Finally, peace is simply the absence of war. In “Governing the Globe: What is the Best We Can Do?” Michael Walzer offers a way to understand how these values will take different forms along a continuum of different theoretical worlds organized by the degree of unity of global governance. Although there may be many other values that we could consider, these are four values that all people would want to seek for themselves if not others. After all, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a legal document signed by every nation-state, enshrined these principles in its emphases on political, social, and economic rights. Indeed, specific interpretations of these values that different peoples will hold will vary as will the degree to which one value will be more important compared to another value for one culture compared to another. However, at some basic level, these four values are shared by all people. In this bare sense, I do not believe that these four values are as controversial as they might be interpreted.

In order to traverse the world ahead, we need some standards by which we can compare worlds and drive our future policies. My argument is not that there cannot be other values that we should consider such as poverty alleviation. However, such metrics may be more proximate than immediate. For example, economics Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, whose thinking is considered to have helped inspire the creation of the Millennium Development Goals, has challenged the idea of measuring human development merely through poverty alleviation. Sen believed that the true measure of development rested in people’s liberty to exercise their own naturally endowed capabilities. Further, the High-Level Panel of

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9 Although in other contexts, the term pluralism may refer to many values, here, the term simply refers to disparate peoples.
Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda included both peace and inequality (i.e., distributive justice) as crosscutting values to consider for the post-Millennium Development Goal agenda even while placing the eradication of poverty as its primary objective.\textsuperscript{11} Thus, a consideration of these four values will likely lead to considerations of poverty in any case. Although there may be other values, I believe that these four values best capture what most people would agree to be worthy measurements.

Technology magnate and philanthropist Bill Gates, in his 2013 annual letter, appreciated this global focus on setting standards. He has called for a new focus on measurement in order to understand how much progress can be made to the human condition. Gates cites the example of the innovations that led to the creation of the steam engine presented as by William Rosen in \textit{The Most Powerful Idea in the World}, “Without feedback from precise measurement, Rosen writes, invention is ‘doomed to be rare and erratic.’ With it, invention becomes ‘commonplace.’”\textsuperscript{12} It is my hope that however general these four values may be, decision makers will be able to think about what policy innovations they could implement that would drive progress toward these goals as a matter of routine rather than randomness.

At this point, since I am assuming that these values are universal, I can also make another divergence from the NIC report itself. I will no longer simply focus on the values of an American citizen, but I will try to consider the values of an abstract person from any place in the world. If these trends are indeed global, they will have effects on every individual’s lives—not just American ones. Nor will


I henceforth consider only policymakers in Washington, DC, but rather I will aim to speak to policymakers who make decisions at international and national levels as well as individuals, communities, and organizations vested in their own futures.

From a description of the trends in the previous chapter, we get an optimistic, but perhaps too general of a picture of the fortune of these values. I will first make a preliminary sketch of the future state of values in this chapter, and after developing this context, in the pages that follow I will then offer a more detailed assessment of our future values.

In more precise terms of individual liberty rather than empowerment in general (i.e., to be strong is not the same as being capable), people will be freer to pursue their preferences and freer from limitations of nature, societal conventions, and happenstance. Individual empowerment offers a bright future considering that, on the whole, individuals will be richer, healthier, and better fed; that women and men will be more equal; and that basic human senses will be able to be partially restored if lost or even augmented if intact.

Distributive justice will have a brighter future for the poor. The alleviation of poverty will become more realized than ever before in history. As the global middle class grows, the ills of inequality will have less relevance as basic needs are met. Absolute inequality may persist, but there are good chances that the less well off, as a group, will be better off than they have in history.

Peace will also have a promising future: both interstate and intrastate conflict will decline.\(^\text{13}\) Wars between nations will not be likely between great powers. And violence within nations will

become less prevalent. However, this is not to say that there will be no conflict. Growing tensions among new and old powers will persist as competition over a food, water, and energy nexus becomes more heated as climates shift ecologies.

Cultural pluralism will also thrive. As rising powers ascend, more cultures will have not only a say in world affairs, but also material influence in terms of economics and military capabilities. With this rise in aggregate power, comes the greater likelihood that these nations’ characters will persist and influence others. Further, as transnational networks form, new and old cultural identities will be able to proliferate.

I would suggest that such an appraisal predicts our future values in far too simple of a fashion. And I believe that the NIC was also skeptical of such hard determinism. This is why they created four alternative scenarios for us to understand to what extent our future selves and children will be able to realize these values. The features of these alternative worlds give us some idea of these limits and potentials. For instance, the Gini-Out-of-the-Bottle world shows us that inequality will have negative effects for the poor in terms of distributive justice (the worst off will not necessarily be better off), individual liberty (not all people will be empowered only the wealthy will be able to realize their full potential), and peace (inequality will lead to instability and conflict within and between nations). The new rising powers will increasingly stand shoulder-to-shoulder with older powers, but both international and domestic inequalities will prevail. The poor, conflict-ridden countries of today will have no improved future while only the emerging BRICs or perhaps also the Next Eleven will thrive. Also domestic inequalities will prevail within these rising powers’ borders as they have in today’s United States, the most unequal developed country in the world.
The Nonstate, Stalled Engines, and Fusion scenarios also have different permutations of the four values. I will not yet exhaustively detail here the different combinations of liberty, justice, peace, and pluralism that may present themselves. These worlds’ value-states will become evident as we proceed. Instead, we must answer more essential questions. Why would individual liberty be more prevalent in one world rather than another? What overarching cause might lead distributive justice to fail or succeed? What will texture a future peace? Why might cultural pluralism flourish as diverse nationalities rather than nonstate transnational networks of individuals? In essence, what might be a systematic way of understanding a variance of our future values? An answer to this fundamental question will allow us to determine what we can do to ensure the best future.
Chapter 3

Global Political Orders

In “Governing the Globe,” Michael Walzer imagines possible worlds along an axis of increasing unity of global governance. Each political arrangement shapes a variation of our values. On one end of the spectrum there is international anarchy: although national governments may rule, governance on coordination, cooperation, and decision making does not exist at a supranational level. This world is the most divided. At the other most united extreme, one world government influences—if not determines—the lives of all people. With the boundaries of possible arrangements delimited, Walzer then offers seven political arrangements in order of increasing centralization: international anarchy, weak states and institutions, international civil society network, decentered world, federation of nation-states, global hegemonic empire, and unified global state. Centralization refers to the lack of division in global political order:

The centralization of the global state [the most united state on the continuum], by contrast, is unqualified. Following
Thomas Hobbes’s argument in *Leviathan*, I want to say that such a state could be a monarchy, oligarchy, or democracy; its unity is not affected by its political character. By contrast, unity is certainly affected by any racial, religious, or ethnic divisions, whether these are hierarchical in nature, as in the imperial case, establishing significant inequalities among the groups, or merely functional or regional. Any political realization of difference moves us [leftward] on the continuum as I am imagining it.14

**INTERNATIONAL ANARCHY**

This regime is radically decentered, and a greater sovereign or law does not bind sovereign states. There are no organizations or long-lasting alliances around transnational issues. Cooperation happens only if there are coincident interests between states. Sovereignty is the best at protecting individual liberty (at least on the international level if not at the domestic) and at preserving distinct historical cultures—national, ethnic, and religious. However, anarchy is a situation of war or the specter thereof. There are no international mechanisms to guard against inequality.

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14 Walzer, “Governing the Globe,” p. 44. Unlike in Walzer’s original piece, here, I illustrate increasing centralization from left to right on the continuum.
Weak States and Institutions

This is the least ideal world in the sense that it is the most similar to the actual world that we live in today. There is some modification of state sovereignty, and there are more global organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, and NATO, but they are still weak in the sense that they draw their powers from states. Pluralism faces challenges here since weak states cannot protect their peoples. There are weak protections for individual rights, and inequality has the potential to be high. The frequency of conflict is less in this arrangement due to better organization and cooperation, but the threat of war remains.

International Civil Society Network

A plurality of international associations proliferates across state borders. This is a world composed of activists, and the role of states is limited. These transnational networks can accomplish much, but they do not have the resources, might, and organization equal to states. International civil society associations will tend to react to crises, rather than prevent them. They lack the ability to plan, anticipate, and prevent. These organizational limitations have significant consequences on the composition of values. Understanding among peoples mitigates much conflict. While pluralism beyond borders thrives in this situation, civil society networks do not have the ability to broker peace in countries torn by civil war. Nor do they have the means to redistribute
resources significantly. Individuals are freer to communicate, associate, and bond with people from other countries; they are no longer bound to geographical constraints. However, some actors’ liberties will be more pronounced than others. For example, multinational corporations with professional paid employees can overwhelm other global actors. This will present challenges to regulation and distribution.

**Decentered World**

The anarchy of states is mitigated by alternative centers of power such as international civil society, international organizations, and regional unions. These centers contain dense webs of transnational social ties. International organizations are strengthened on top of the institutional structures that exist today. The UN has stronger enforcement capacities and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund regulate the flow of capital and international investment. Regional organizations will play a larger role. This regime provides the greatest chance for peace, justice, cultural difference, and individual liberty. It presents the least risk of tyranny from other individuals, states, and organizations. This situation can be characterized as having the greatest political possibility in contrast to the guaranteed political success of a unified global state (defined below) or the uncertainty of international anarchy. However, liberty will be variegated by civil society, state, and region: individuals in different settings will have different

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protections and entitlements. This multiplicity of actors will also raise questions for the prospects of peace for the worst off. It will be difficult to determine who will be responsible to ensure basic human rights for those people in power centers indifferent to liberty, justice, peace, and pluralism. Although the UN will have more force for humanitarian interventions and peacekeeping, there will be greater chances for failure since accountability and responsibility will be difficult to achieve among diffuse power centers. Thus, there is a danger that great powers may assume a genocidal indifference toward some in order to achieve a larger peace. Additional disadvantages include slow decisions, no perpetual peace, and no single identity.

**Federation of Nation-States**

Like the decentered world there are multiple power sources and international organizations, however, a federation of nation-states is oligarchic, and the greatest powers act as the central mediators. States must chose to give up sovereignty in return for a contract with a constitutional division of power. The political characters of state regimes are similar. An oligarchic order allows for better material equality. Since states agree to an order, they will be less likely to go to war with one another. Thus the likelihood for peace is greater in this situation than any other discussed so far. A constitution will also ensure that signatory states will enjoy some security over their cultures. However, these benefits come at a great cost: this order is most likely to be forced rather than chosen and will hence be undemocratic. Finally, individual liberty would suffer greatly.
A global empire regime would have one dominant power ruling over all others. Autonomy for other states would be granted, rather than achieved. There would be some room for cultural independence, but only according to the toleration of the hegemon. Empire might lead to one of the most stable regimes, thus a global peace could easily follow because the hegemon would determine it. However, the hegemon would only guarantee peace for some cultural groups. These groups, though, would be considered subjects rather than political participants. Individuals and groups within states would receive no guarantees. There would be no necessary aim at distributive justice, and empire would display the most extreme form of inequality.

In this regime, sovereign states no longer exist, and global governance is completely centralized. All people are equal citizens of a world that recognizes no boundaries. The strength of this order leads to the maximization of absolute peace and egalitarian distributive justice. There is no cultural divergence and whatever individual differences exist, they are ignored. This is a situation of perfect cultural convergence. Notions of individual liberty and cultural diversity will be challenged, since no individuals as we
understand them today will exist because convergence eliminates all personal and cultural differences.

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These summaries are not meant to be exhaustive descriptions. Rather, they will provide the basis for how to make sense of the many possible worlds and values that will be further developed in the following chapters.
Chapter 4

Selection Bias

In the policy world, selection bias happens when all meaningful options are not given due consideration. A limited option set could preclude planning for a possible world not considered in that set. The chief importance of such biases is that they compromise planners’ abilities to steward policies that will safeguard our values.

For example, an option set that considers only multipolarity, demography, and climate change but not individual empowerment would preclude leaders from considering individual-level policies focused on civil society, behavioral economics, education, or psychology. Instead, such an option set would limit policymakers to focus on policies where the nation-state is at the center. For instance, influential hackers and networked individuals—embodied today, for example, by Julian Assange, Wikileaks, Anonymous, Bradley Manning, and Edward Snowden—may have the ability take advantage of such blind spots of states. However, arguably the most significant failing would be to neglect developing policies focused on liberty, justice, peace, and pluralism—values that even these actors, in their own ways, claim to aspire toward.
The great challenge for policy planners is how to properly conceptualize the way that we can predict—or whether we can predict—the future world. Drawing upon Isaiah Berlin’s seminal essay “The Hedgehog and the Fox,” psychologist Philip Tetlock frames two ways that forecasters can envision the world. Hedgehogs know one big thing. They have one grand theory about the world, which extends to all matters. Their explanations about the world follow clock-like regular patterns and are parsimonious: simple, highly explanatory, and deterministic. Foxes on the other hand know many small things. They are skeptical about grand theories and are more willing to change their thinking based on circumstances and actual events. Their explanations are more cloud-like and complex and less ambitious and predictable. How good are expert hedgehogs and foxes able to accurately forecast the future? In a twenty-year study, Tetlock tested whether both hedgehog-like and fox-like experts from a number of fields (not unlike the ones who participated in the NIC study) were able to accurately predict the long-term future. He found that on the whole, their predictions performed only slightly better than chance, but less well than computer algorithms. In short, experts are not very good at predicting the future.

This does not mean that the NIC’s predictions are useless or that predictions cannot improve. Tetlock further found that foxes were better than hedgehogs at predicting the long-term future during the Cold War. Forecasters can make two types of mistakes: false positives or false negatives. False positives—committed more by hedgehogs—erroneously predict worlds that will not happen, e.g., the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. False negatives—committed more by foxes—fail to predict worlds that

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will happen, e.g., the start of the two world wars or the game-changing effects of the invention of nuclear weapons. One standout failing of the NIC study is that they do not assign to their predictions the probability of such errors. Tetlock’s primary takeaway message is not simply that we should think more like foxes because they are more often right. Instead, the goal of forecasting should be to better balance these two ways of thinking, finding the optimal forecasting frontier where the tradeoff between false positives and negatives can be no better, i.e., the denial of more false positives will not lead to more false negatives and the denial of more false negatives will not lead to more false positives.

In providing us with a spectrum of possible worlds rather than a dichotomy or single world, Walzer’s conceptualization helps us understand the range of true and false positive and negative worlds. Since this spectrum is neither nebulous nor unyieldingly deterministic, we can begin to arrive at this optimum frontier where the logics of the cloud and the clock converge, holding that the future is neither radically unpredictable nor completely predictable.

We can now better understand how our biases may lead to false positives or negatives—and take measures to mitigate them. Selection bias can originate from many sources. For example, incomplete information, limited budgets, limited time, or absentmindedness may lead to the exclusion of meaningful options. Here, however, I will focus on three kinds of biases: traditional, methodological, and temporal. The former type of bias arises from more conventional notions of the term. Idiosyncratic preferences of culture, ideology, or individual inclinations may lead a researcher or organization to favor one input over another. I define the second bias as those biases that arise from selective surveying, i.e., some important groups may have been excluded from a study or some groups’ opinions may be weighted more than others. Finally,
temporal bias refers to the limited knowledge that steers policymakers into predicting certain trajectories at a given time. This risk points at the danger of making inferences about the future based on isolated incidences.

Traditional selection bias can come from more conventional understandings of the term. Personal or political preferences can lead one to believe in certain assumptions and to forego valid policy prescriptions. Perhaps the most glaring example of such a bias is that the NIC expected its publication to be read by a US audience rather than a European, Chinese, or Brazilian one. Is it a coincidence that a country that tends to value individual liberty over other values (e.g., distributive justice) compared to other nations also foresees a future where the individual is empowered to be freer than today? Would a Russian or Chinese government’s intelligence agency have predicted the same?

Further, methodological surveys of different groups may lead to different conclusions. For example, favoring the opinions from Google, Facebook, and Twitter may have led the NIC to have too Panglossian a view of the panacea of technological advancement and individual empowerment. Thus, the potential for the malicious use of technology to worsen the world was not duly considered: the Luddite opinion was not heard.

A further consideration not considered was that new technology may have only a marginal effect on our values. Peter Thiel—a prominent Silicon Valley venture capitalist, co-founder of PayPal and Palantir, and the first outside investor of Facebook—in public discussions on vertical versus horizontal progress has surprisingly

argued such.\textsuperscript{18} Despite developments in today’s technologies, particularly in the realm of the Internet, we have not seen many fundamental innovations that have radically changed our lives and what we value. For example, drones may have reduced casualty numbers of those states (promoting the liberty of some) that deploy them and increased the number of casualties of innocent bystanders (denying the liberty of others), but no technology—not even the interconnectedness and uniting forces supposedly offered by Google, Facebook, and Twitter—have fundamentally changed human nature to prevent war from happening.

Another conclusion not considered might be when consultations of only government officials lead to a state-centric view of the future rather than one of a grassroots, international movement that may be foreseen by members of civil society. This bias might cause leaders to ignore the potential for individuals to affect their own futures with their own perceptions and volitions in a manner that states are either ill equipped to do on their own. For example, regardless of whether you despite or praise whistleblower Eric Snowden, he has irrefutably challenged the status quo for better or worse.

The NIC deserves much credit in its attempt to mitigate traditional and methodological biases. In particular, its many meetings with various national and international groups and its new considerations of so-called black swan events have led to the inclusion of many meaningful options. The NIC also commissioned reviews of its four previous studies and sought to address blind spots, biases, and strengths. The NIC compared notes with academics, think

tanks, and governments across the globe including in the EU, China, India, Russia, and Africa. It does not boast about predetermined predictions, and its opening pages address not only its previous flaws but also international reactions to the report.

However, although the NIC drafters included as many options that they could think of, “Global Trends 2030” did not eliminate all biases. Perhaps the best way to appreciate how biases can shape futures is by comparing other possible future worlds not included in the US option set. A concrete way to do this is to look at others’ predictions of future worlds. How have other states and organizations envisioned the future?
Chapter 5
Other Possible Worlds

Indeed, the EU, Russia, and NATO have conducted their own assessments. These studies rival the US report in quality and consideration. Although the otherworldliness of these studies may seem foreign to the US, these worlds may hold some unconsidered truths. This is not to say, however, that these other studies are perfect: they too have biases. In the next sections, the ambitious biases of the EU, the state-centric biases of the Russian report, and conflict-prone biases of NATO will become evident in the following summaries as we continue to build toward a clearer understanding of why these frameworks matter to our future values.

Before we proceed, though, I must note a shortcoming of this study. Unfortunately, one methodological selection bias that I have been unable to mitigate is that I do not consider global trends reports from Asia, Africa, Latin America, or the Middle East. The reason for this is simple: I could not find any such report. My hope is that this study may suggest to policymakers in those lands how
they might conduct future global trends analysis, and in turn, how their own studies may in the future improve considerations found here.

At the end of each description of these alternative worlds, I will introduce a number of ethical challenges that each world poses, including identifying who should be the principal actors to manage our values, determining whether values can be forced upon citizens, and questioning how universal our values really are.

**European Union**

**Global Trends 2030: Citizens in an Interconnected and Polycentric World**

The European Union Institute for Security Studies and the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) published its first “Global Trends 2030: Citizens in an Interconnected and Polycentric World” in April 2012. The report covers trends also found in its US counterpart such as the empowerment of individuals due to a rising global middle class, digital information, and the new world of the Internet; demographic challenges of aging and migration; food, water, and energy scarcities due to climate change; and power diffusion toward Asia and today’s middle countries as well as the rise of the importance of soft power. Although there may be emphatic or narrative differences, the American and European

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drafters seem to be in agreement with these larger general trends. “EU Global Trends 2030” also tells a story that moves from the individual, to the society, to the state, and to the possible future. However, as its subtitle suggests, there are two important differences between the reports that arise from both traditional and methodological biases.

First, the EU report envisions only one possible future world, namely an Interconnected Polycentric one. Why might this be? I would suggest that traditional European values and biases, although admirable and aspirational toward our four values, led the report to exclude consideration of other possible scenarios. The report’s traditional bias comes to light as the beginning of its second chapter on converging values begins, “The realization that there is ultimately one global community will come about primarily because of the collective realization that people share similar aspirations and difficulties.”20 Further, in terms of normative scope, the EU report encompasses more topics than the US report. The EU report places a greater focus on a “post-Huntingtonian” global human community that values human development, human security, human rights, democracy, women’s equality, non-conflicting identities, and the earth.21 Consequently, the EU report’s outlook is more peaceful and Kantian than some of the more conflicted, Hobbesian worlds foreseen by the NIC. On the one hand, this is indeed a better, more desirable world. On the other hand, however, neglecting to consider other worlds may be problematic because we may not be able to cope with alternative

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20 Ibid., p. 39.
21 A “Huntingtonian” world refers to a post-Cold War world where the divisions of culture and the fault lines of civilizations determine the battle lines of future conflict. See Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?,” Foreign Affairs 72, No. 3 (Summer 1993): 22–49.
Of All Possible Future Worlds

worlds that could endanger the values that they—and we—hold dearly.

This one future world most resembles the decentered, best-case Fusion alternative world in the US report. However, unlike the framework of US “Global Trends 2030” the European report does not attempt to design alternative scenarios based on the variability of major and minor trends. The authors are cognoscente to mention that there are a great many uncertainties such as increased risks of intra- and interstate conflict, strains on resources, and potential governance gaps, but EU “Global Trends 2030” does not sketch out in detail the world with much higher resolution of variability. This is not to say that the authors do not write about conflict-ridden events: they discuss, in as great of length as (and sometimes at greater length than) the US report, topics such as great power rivalry between the US and China, pandemics, chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear war, cyber attacks, a stalled global economy, increasing regional instabilities, private militaries, and space wars.

However, although a thorough reading of the report would not leave one in the dark about what a polycentric world could look like, that mental picture and operational logic is unclear. Depending on the reader, this opacity may lead to the risk of EU “Global Trends 2030” over-determining a value-rich future while US “Global Trends 2030” may under-determine such. The question of whether or not we can take for granted our values or if we will have to fight for them is the essential project of policy. There is a great difference between what should happen and what will happen.

This is particularly problematic when one considers the other subtle, but consequential difference between the two reports. The methodology of the EU report was similar to the US’s with another key exception. Like the NIC, ESPAS used a mix of in-house and
contract-based experts from EU institutions, think tanks, and elsewhere. ESPAS also consulted with academics, think tanks, and policy planning departments at regional conferences across the world. However, unlike the US report, the EU incorporated youth focus groups of 20–30-year-old students, activists, and civil society on questions of identity, future challenges and opportunities for their countries, and political participation on social networks.

The inclusion of youthful opinion is not trivial. They, after all, are the ones who will have the longest of futures. The NIC’s exclusion of this group may have precluded the US drafters from conceiving of such a similar world community. Focus groups were held in Egypt, Pakistan, Indian, China, the US, Brazil, France, Russia, and Turkey. The liberal character of the EU report then may have stemmed from beyond the researchers’ own personal biases and could be a reflection of technologically interconnected youth from across the world. Although it may be too much to say that perception is all of reality, its reflexive effects arguably have some bearing on future behavior.\(^\text{22}\) Quite simply, the way that the youth foresee the future will likely affect what they will do today.

These two biases, traditional and methodological, converge toward a particular problem. Walzer argued that a decentered world—the category to which the Interconnected Polycentric world belongs—offered us the best possibility to achieve our four core values.\(^\text{23}\) However, although Walzer’s conceptualization of a decentered world allows us to consider this potential, it is not quite clear what would be the best decentered world that would optimize our values. Note that polycentrism is not necessarily the same as

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\(^{22}\) I use the term “reflexivity” generally to refer to the sociological concept developed by a range of thinkers and scholars, including Karl Popper, Thomas Nagel, Anthony Giddens, and Pierre Bourdieu.

\(^{23}\) Walzer, “Governing the Globe,” p. 50.
multipolarity. While the former emphasizes many different centers, the latter applies only to the centrality of states. A polycentric world could be a multipolar world that focuses only on states (e.g., the US’s Fusion or Stalled Engines), but it may not necessarily be so. A world with many centers could have some centers that are traditional state powers and others that are multinational corporations, international institutions, or networks of individuals, such as the NIC’s Nonstate World.

Will the future be polycentric or multipolar, and which would we prefer? Whether we strive toward a the US best-case world driven primarily by states in a Fusion world or by civil society and states in an EU-conceived Interconnected Polycentric one will have consequences on how we can today plan ahead for tomorrow. This question will be more fully discussed in the final chapter, but for now, we can say that the US and the EU are not the only actors who will have to cope with this question.

**RUSSIA**

**Strategic Global Outlook 2030**

In Russia, the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IWE), one of the countries most preeminent think tanks, produced its first global forecasting report, “Strategic Global Outlook 2030” in 2011.24 While the IWE’s past reports focused solely on economic concerns, this current effort focused on similar considerations as those found in the US and EU reports. “Strategic Global Outlook 2030”

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presents only one possible world: a **Hierarchal Polycentric** one. However, despite its name, this possible world remains state-centric. Thus, in context of our definitions, the foreseen Russian world would better be conceived as a hierarchal multipolar one falling somewhere between Walzer’s decentered and federated categories.

The arrival at one future may be due to similar selection biases found in the EU study. The methodological biases of the Russian report are more opaque than the other two reports. All that readers are told is that the report is the product of an interdisciplinary study by a large panel of experts with much experience in researching various global issues. Readers do not know whether these experts are academics, government workers, part of the private sector, members of NGOs, or part of civil society. Although the Russian report mentions now familiar trends such as declining interstate conflict, technological innovation, globalization, and a rising global middle class, the report appears less polished than its US and EU counterparts, and it is unclear how the IWE derived their trends. This may be why some statements appear to be simple unquestionable assertions without elaboration (e.g., “The world economy will face no limitations from consumer demand.”25 or “By 2030, the world will not suffer from the shortage of energy resources.”26).

On the other hand, traditional biases are more apparent. “Strategic Global Outlook 2030” does not see the rise of the individual as a world-changing megatrend nor do demographic changes play much of a role. Instead, increasing globalization, state power diffusions, and increasing demands for state leadership are the key trends of the future.

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25 Ibid., p. 29.
26 Ibid., p. 30.
The US will continue to be on top as the global military, innovative, financial, and economic leader. On the level immediately below the US are the EU and China. The EU will continue to institutionalize a common political and economic identity to form a “collective actor” while China will be an actor with a potential future leadership role. Russia belongs on the next level down with its natural resources, nuclear and military power, and research and development investments. The next level below Russia is occupied by the middle powers of Japan, India, Brazil, and possibly South Africa, Turkey, and South Korea. At the bottom of the pyramid are countries with limited resources, power, and influence on regional

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27 Adapted from ibid., p. 41.
and global political and economic processes. Note the absences of individuals and civil society as major actors.

This emphasis on hierarchical state power leads to a peculiar path by which the Russian report implicitly approaches the progress of our future values. The concluding thesis of the report states that Russia should adapt its domestic and foreign strategy to major global trends in order to avoid marginalization, cope with future risks, and exploit new opportunities from globalization. The development of the values depends on the reform of domestic political, social, legal and educational institutions to align with the principles of globalization and “non-destabilizing inequality.”

Note, however, that the impetus for improved values arises due to outside pressures on the Russian state, rather than through some grassroots movement or individual appeal toward the values themselves. Given the hierarchal future envisioned, this should not be a surprise considering Walzer’s category of a federation of nation-states. The benefits of a global federation come at a great cost: this order is most likely to be forced upon states rather than chosen since no state would ideally choose to subjugate itself to another. Economic and militarily powerful states heavily influence what values other states can enjoy. A hierarchical order that prefers peace and economic globalization can lead to positive developments in global values. Less developed states that agree to an ordering may lead to improved material equality. Also, since states agree to an order, they will be less likely to go to war with one another. Thus, the probability for interstate conflict is low. Further, an ordering ensures that each society on a different rung of the global ladder will enjoy a degree of autonomy. Thus, states will enjoy some

28 Ibid., p. 48.
29 Ibid.
security over their own cultures. For some peoples, however, it is unclear to what extent intrastate conflict will occur or how the potential for state repression might affect individual liberties and group rights.

In the Russian case, we see how both traditional and methodological biases led to a future world where our values may be improved for citizens, however, these values are arrived at perversely. On one hand, a utilitarian ethical interpretation may see no harm in such a path as long as the values improve in the end. On the other hand, deontological or communitarian accounts might question whether such an end can truly be achieved if values are forced upon from above. This is another open question with no easy answer that we will return to in the final chapter.

**NATO Multiple Futures Project: Navigating Towards 2030**

The US, EU, and Russia are not the only actors studying the future. Multilateral organizations have also engaged in global trends analysis. Although the World Bank, various UN agencies, and other think tanks such as ZIF Centre for International Peace Operations have published their own global trends analyses, these organizations have focused primarily on their own parochial themes of interest such as development or the environment, and few have looked forward years in advance like our previously mentioned studies.
However, perhaps the most systematic, comprehensive, and forward-thinking study, despite a limited focus, can be found in NATO’s “Multiple Futures Project: Navigating Towards 2030” report published in 2009. Unlike the Russian and EU visions, but like the US report, NATO envisions four possible worlds. They arrive at these worlds by looking at their own elaborate set of drivers and trends. However, the values in these worlds take on a unique constraint not found in the other reports: concerns over peace and security take precedence over all other values.

Despite NATO’s strong framework, it also has its own selection biases. NATO is an intergovernmental military alliance, hence traditional biases led to the prediction of futures primarily concerned with state security matters. It was concerned specifically with what member states can do to protect their populations, territory, and values. As described in the report’s opening pages, the Multiple Futures Project “focuses on future challenges, on their relative nature and gravity, and on what the Alliance can do today to prepare for tomorrow. It offers insights into the difficult choices associated with managing risk, in order to protect the most vital element of the Alliance, its population.” More so than any of the previously mentioned reports, NATO is concerned with matters of life and death. The choices to go to war, intervene, or do nothing are NATO’s essential policy options. Thus, peace is the value most emphasized in the report, while liberty, distributive justice, and cultural pluralism are of second-order importance. This orientation of preparing for challenges and conflicts raises the question of whether readers are only given the worst, most violent of all

32 Ibid., p. 3.
possible worlds to deal with rather than others that consider these latter three values on par with peace.

Since the report mentions few specifics about how NATO conducted its study, it is difficult to ascertain how it’s methodological biases led to these particular four futures rather than others. NATO attempted to be open, transparent, and inclusive in its study. It worked with national and international organizations, and conducted a number of workshops internally within the North Atlantic Council and Military Committee with representatives from forty-five nations from more than sixty institutions, with a total of 500 political, military, civil, and economic experts from the public and private sectors. However, NATO left undisclosed which particular states and organizations participated. It was further unclear what was the distribution of people from the military, civil government, nongovernmental, academic, and private sectors.

This methodological opacity, however, does not mean that the report’s framework was simplistic or lacking in explanation. To the contrary, its framework is perhaps the most systematic of all the global trends reports discussed thus far. In the report, the building blocks are nine drivers of change, which are divided into two different categories: structural and deterministic. Keeping constant and varying the weights of these drivers, NATO then designed four possible futures: Darkside of Exclusivity, Deceptive Stability, Clash of Modernities, and New Powers. The drafters of the report then looked beyond scenarios: they determined three benchmarks and goals that policymakers would value most: the endangerment of people, territorial integrity, and values and ideas. Decisions on global trends only matter to NATO officials insofar as they protect their member states’ domestic populations locally and abroad;

33 Ibid., pp. 3–4.
secure their national borders; and preserve Western cultural norms, values, and political systems. Finally, given these trends, scenarios, and values, NATO identified so-called “risk conditions” that would influence the three objectives and allow Alliance policymakers to make future decisions.

The structural drivers are friction, integration, and asymmetry. These trends have been influential throughout history for centuries, and for our purposes, they might best be understood as comparable to the NIC’s concept of megatrends. Friction refers to the global distribution of power and the degree to which cooperation and conflict affect decisions at the international level. Integration refers to globalization and economic trade. Asymmetry refers to the wealth and power discrepancy between states. On the other hand, deterministic drivers are those trends that will have the greatest impact on security in the coming decades. The remaining six drivers include changing state capacity, resource allocation, climate change, technology, demographics, and competing ideologies and worldviews.

Note that many of these drivers overlap with the US report’s focus on diffusion of power; demographic patterns; and the food, water, and energy nexus. However, a focus on individual empowerment is noticeably absent as a global trend. Individuals have instead been designated as a “source of threat,” i.e., a risk that could endanger NATO’s people, territory, or values. Why might this be? On the one hand, the answer may be simple. NATO may not see the rise of the individual as a defining feature of the future. Perhaps in the end, technological advancements in NATO’s view may only lead to improved lives for individuals, but such gains will not rival the power of states in this worldview. However, another reason might be that traditional organizational biases that place an emphasis on states as the primary actors might have blinded the
Of All Possible Future Worlds

researchers from the notion that nonstate actors such as individuals, NGOs, or transnational civil networks could upend conventional thinking.

An identifiable methodological difference between the NATO report and the other studies presented so far is that it considered ideologies and worldviews as a trend rather than an outcome. According to its definition, ideologies and worldviews deal with the alienation of and confrontations among individuals and groups that might arise due to differences in values, religion, and historical geopolitical perspectives. Implicit in this driver is the question of whether global cultural convergence will happen.\(^{34}\) Will there be one global state or a collection of states that share identical values? Compare this to the envisioned European Interconnected Polycentric world. Although the EU report saw a convergence of shared values as an ultimate trend, most of the worlds in the NATO report are direct challenges to the liberal, post-Huntingtonian international community thought to naturally arise in the EU report. NATO is open to the possibility that in the future, cultures may collide, and divergence could lead to inter- or intrastate conflict. Our shared global values are not forgone: we may have to fight for them—and some of us more than others.

NATO designed four possible worlds by keeping constant and varying the weights of their nine drivers. Their **Dark Side of Exclusivity** world focused on how detrimental climate change, poor resource allocation, failed economic integration, and conflicting ideologies and worldviews will challenge state sovereignty. This scenario falls into Walzer’s international anarchy category and in part resembles the US Gini Out-of-the Bottle world. No international governance structures will prevent inequality for the poorest.

\(^{34}\) For an optimistic assessment, see Kishore Mahbubani, *The Great Convergence: Asia, the West, and the Logic of One World* (New York: Public Affairs, 2013).
The countries of today’s developed world will best be able to adapt to these challenges while weak and failed states not integrated into the global economy, starved of resources, and maladaptive to climate change will suffer the most. Liberty will be variegated: individuals living in rich countries will enjoy more freedom to pursue their preferences, whereas individuals in poor countries will see no such opportunities. The fight for cultural pluralism and dominance in these developing countries will be fierce. These challenges will lead the developing world to face a proliferation of radical ideologies and spill over of ethnic, religious, and ideological conflicts. While the specter of war may not affect developed countries, the poorer nations will have the least prospects for peace. NATO countries will have to decide whether to intervene to safeguard its own people, territory, and ideas. If these conflicts spill over to neighboring states with such threats as weapons of mass destruction, then intervention would be mandatory. If none of these three values are at risk, then there will be no action. However, if a mix of these values is at stake, member states will have to make difficult decisions on whether to intervene in fragile states.

The Deceptive Stability world is also similar to the US Gini Out-of-the Bottle world, but leans more toward Walzer’s weak states and institutions category. Inequality, variegated liberty, poor prospects for peace, and fights for cultural dominance in the developing countries are also persistent though relatively less severe features of this world than in the Darkside of Exclusivity. In this scenario, high asymmetry, growing demographics, poor resource allocation, and conflicting ideologies and worldviews will preoccupy resource-rich developed states with domestic concerns due to aging populations, urbanization, and governance gaps, while resource-poor states will confront the world with transnational criminal activities, spill-over conflicts, and uncontrolled migration...
of their youth. Despite their relative internal stability, but due to their inward focus, liberal democracies will be too distracted with their own domestic concerns to intervene, and their ability to anticipate and shape their external security environments will be more limited.

The **Clash of Modernities** world may be categorized as an overlapping of Walzer’s international civil society and decentered worlds. In terms of global political form, it is the union of the EU’s Interconnected Polycentric and the US’s Nonstate worlds. However, in terms of political character it is a more fragmented and conflicted world community than the EU and US visions. The character of values in this world principally depends on global networks. Although for NATO, the concept of disconnected networks goes beyond technology and essentially emphasizes political, social, and economic networks, a useful conceptualization of these dangers is captured by the concept of a “balkanized Internet” where differing levels of state control over the globalized Internet will lead to a more fractured collection of networks characterized with differing levels of freedom.\(^\text{35}\) In terms of pluralism, networks will define two broad cultural groups: those that belong to modern networks and those that do not. This world focuses on how ideologies and worldviews, demographics, and technology will shape multiple advanced-network societies that can connect with one another and grow mega-cities of wealth and culture.\(^\text{36}\) Governance in the developed world is diffuse, multi-layered, and network-centric.

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\(^{36}\) For a more detailed illustration of networks and how developed states such as the United States can benefit see Anne-Marie Slaughter, “America’s Edge: Power in the Networked Century,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, No. 1 (January/February 2009): 94–113.
Individuals in the developed world network will be at liberty to connect with people, resources, and organizations across the world. However, there may also be a danger that individual liberty may run wild from the perspective of some of these states. In this view, member states may elect to monitor their own technologically empowered citizens as much as foreign individuals and groups. Today’s Assanges, Mannings, and Snowdens may be a glimpse of the future challenges for states. Such surveillance will challenge how people will weigh the balance between liberty and privacy versus peace and security. These actors’ concerns on the future tradeoff between privacy—a variant of liberty—and security—a variant of peace—warrant mention in order to be as unbiased as possible. In revealing himself to be the whistleblower of National Security Agency surveillance of personal online activity, Edward Snowden explained, “I don’t see myself as a hero because what I’m doing is self-interested: I don’t want to live in a world where there’s no privacy and therefore no room for intellectual exploration and creativity.”

Wikileaks co-founder Julian Assange, in response to former Google CEO Eric Schmidt’s and Google Ideas head Jared Cohen’s *The New Digital Age* and concerns over government surveillance argues:

The advance of information technology epitomized by Google heralds the death of privacy for most people and shifts the world toward authoritarianism . . . . But while Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Cohen tell us that the death of privacy will aid governments in “repressive autocracies” in “targeting their citizens,” they also say governments in “open” democracies will see it as “a gift” enabling them to “better respond to citizen and customer concerns.” In reality, the erosion of

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individual privacy in the West and the attendant centralization of power make abuses inevitable, moving the “good” societies closer to the “bad” ones.\textsuperscript{38}

While this review may be unfair to the content the book since both Schmidt and Cohen raise concerns over how connectivity will challenge how we might secure our liberty and privacy, Snowden and Assange are interesting because they claim to pursue universal values through legally questionable, if not outright illegal, ways. In whatever esteem readers may hold these actors, we can see what extremes some—states or individuals—might take to fight for their own vision of the future.

In this balkanized view, privacy concerns will be very different for those in developing countries outside of the modern network. On one hand, the disconnected areas in the developing world that fail to join modern networks will not have the luxury to worry about such privacy concerns because they will not enjoy such a degree of liberty. On the other hand, such powerful surveillance technologies in the hands of tyrannical regimes such as Syria or North Korea could cost some citizens their lives. These areas that are disconnected, segregated, and disassociated are the sources of the most conflict for the developed world since peace and economic fairness cannot be maximized in these countries’ pre-modern networks. Intervention by NATO countries appears more limited in this world, but they will still have to remain vigilant for their own protection in combating transnational organized crime, intellectual piracy, and arms trafficking. Developed states’ foreign

policy, including humanitarian action, might entail integrating threatening countries into modern networks.  

The **New Power Politics** scenario is NATO’s variation of Walzer’s decentered world. It most resembles the US’s Stalled Engines world with a more Hobbesian character in that competition and equality among states are driving factors that may lead to conflict. According to NATO’s framework, competing ideologies and worldviews, conflicts over resource allocation, and a lack of economic integration characterize a future of multipolar power politics where absolute wealth grows, but regional powers compete for influence and resources—particularly in ungoverned areas—for their own domestic populations but against others. Peace within those regions exists but conflict among regions is less certain. Consequently, both individual liberty and cultural pluralism will be variegated according to region in addition to nation and society. No regional power has a dominant global reach as spheres of influence and ideological supremacy shift. Thus, a tyrannical threat to our values from one nation is not foreseen.

However, a potentially more dreadful threat may have dire consequences on our values. In this New Power Politics world, weapons of mass destruction could proliferate across nations and cause a great deal of uncertainty. It is unclear whether the nuclear peace theory of second-strike-induced restraint held by Kenneth Waltz or a global nuclear winter will ensure or endanger our peace, and

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39 For possible technology-focused strategies toward integration, see United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarianism in the Network Age*, OCHA Policy and Studies Series (New York: UN, 2013). The report calls for recognizing information as an essential need in humanitarian action. States would have to build their own capacities to ensure that information is open and shared freely and responsibly.

consequently our liberty, justice, and pluralism. In Walzer’s idealized conception of this type of world, our four values have the most potential for optimization, however, in NATO’s variation we see that our values are not necessarily the best that they could be, existing as more qualified, geospatially contingent, and under constant threat. A bias ensuring peace over all other values may be the main cause of such a suboptimal future.

I will end this chapter with a particular focus on the value of peace in the developing world, since although NATO’s most immediate concern may be peace for its own countries, our unbiased concern is for a plurality of values as well as the abstract individual regardless of chance station.

The NATO report implicitly highlights how interdependent our four values are on one another: an overemphasis on peace, despite its benefits, may limit the potential optimization of our other values. The traditional biases of NATO limit us from considering those people whose values might be left the worst off, since all of NATO’s future worlds leave people in fragile states outside of its fundamental decision-making process. Developed states’ interests will continue to be the primary condition for intervention—as they perhaps always have. In the Deceptive Stability world, developed countries ignore conflict countries at their own peril. The Clash of Modernities world similarly focuses on blocking threats of individuals from affecting affairs within their own borders. The Darkside of Exclusivity world leaves intervention as certain only if NATO’s people, territory, and ideas are at stake, but merely optional when these values are not challenged. However, the most dynamic scenario for fragile states is, ironically, the most competitive one among major powers. A New Power Politics world that has multiple powers competing for influence may lead to proxy conflicts in developing states or to active unilateral intervention by great
powers pursing stability in their regional neighborhood. However, for those people in countries that are not new powers, not in those neighborhoods, and not falling within great power interest, there will be fewer opportunities for humanitarian interventions and peacekeeping since no power will take responsibility or assume accountability—in the form of blood and treasure—for the values of other peoples. For example, the present-day humanitarian interventions by NATO in Libya and France in Mali, show that the option to act may be viable even when core matters of state security are not in question, while the now almost three-year-long civil war raging in Syria today in an atmosphere of Western hesitance is a stark reminder of the limits humanitarian values that are supposedly universal.

In the end, this leaves us with another set of difficult questions. How shared and universal will our values be when we, within capable developed countries, choose not to intervene to protect values for all people regardless of boundaries? On the other hand, in the attempt to protect others, how much would we threaten our own values when it is viewed as supererogatory rather than a matter of duty to place our own lives and livelihoods in danger? Even further, could the future of those in the developing world be brighter than predicted by NATO—might the economic rise of the rest, the decline of inter- and intra-state conflict, and the rising human demand for our values preclude the call for Western intervention across South and Central Asia, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Central Andes, and Central America? Like Walzer, political theorist Andrew Hurrell argues, “a pluralist and multipolar order is actually a morally better system than one in which power is heavily concentrated.”41 In describing the fall of

Western dominance, the decentering of the global world order, and the diffusion of power, Hurrell critiques past Western interpretations of justice for arrogantly focusing on what the rich world owed to distant strangers. This bias led to a form of global justice characterized by paternalism and interventionism rather than mutual respect.42

The impact of globalization on emerging states and societies has all too often been conceived in polar—terms incorporation versus exclusion; fusion versus fragmentation; modernizing, liberalizing coalitions versus confessional, nationalist, or Third World-ist counterforces. However, patterns of binary thinking are extremely unhelpful—analytically, normatively, and politically. Instead, we need to understand the relationship between the outside and the inside and to track the processes by which Western ideas of international order and capitalist modernity have been transposed into different national and regional contexts, as well as the mutual constitution of ideas and understanding that result from that interaction.43

I am not sure of what the right course of action should or will be, but I believe that the answers to these questions will expose our true biases and values. A more formal consideration of these questions will be raised in the final chapter.

42 Ibid., p. 195.
43 Ibid., p. 203.
Chapter 6
Past Future Worlds

Degree of Unity

Worlds

- Present
- US Global Trends
- EU Global Trends
- Russia Global Outlook
- NATO Multiple Futures

- Darkside of Exclusivity
- Deceptive Stability
- Clash of Modernities
- New Powers
- Hierarchical Polycentric
- Interconnected Polycentric

- Gini Out-of-the-Battle
- Nonstate World
- Stalled Engines
- Fusion

- October Surprise
- BRICS Bustup
- Politics is Not Always Local
- World Without the West

- Cycle of Fear
- New Caliphate
- Davos World
- Pax Americana

- Post-Polar World
- Permeable Globalization
- Regional Competition
- Inclusive Globalization

- Today
- Weak States and Institutions
- International Civil Society Network
- Decentered World
- Federation of Nation-States
- Global Hegemonic Empire
- Unified Global State
So far we have looked at trends based on their future trajectory. However, focusing on the present to predict the future gives us an incomplete understanding of trends. The past can be as vital as the present in forecasting. Since the NIC has published previous reports, we can better appreciate today’s various global trends reports.

Why did people in the past predict the futures that they did? The actual world that past authors lived in was the basis for their future predictions and biases thereof. To be more specific, when we look to the past we should look at two pasts: the past world and past envisioned future worlds. This nuanced distinction helps us understand how present biases can shape what futures we might predict. Thus, in addition to traditional and methodological biases, temporal biases, even if seemingly unavoidable, can have a determinative impact on predictions.

In this chapter, these differences will be made more concrete as I discuss past NIC reports. I will focus on the last three reports. In 2000, the NIC predicted future worlds for 2015; in 2004 for 2020; and in 2008 for 2025. The end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s was the beginning of modern market-based globalization, hence “Global Trends 2015” featured globalization as the most

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prominent megatrend shaping its scenarios. Five years later in “Global Trends 2020,” globalization was still the most important megatrend but it was accompanied by two other major events: (1) emerging powers, particularly the BRICs, were beginning to rise during (2) a post 9/11 world. Thus, the worlds that the NIC envisioned were also heavily influenced by both concerns over transnational terrorism and pervasive security concerns. “Global Trends 2025” also foresaw globalization, the rise of new powers, and security concerns as major trends that would continue to shape the future world. Security concerns (particularly on transnational terrorism), however, became more muted than four years prior. A number of other major trends were introduced to “Global Trends 2025.” Climate change, increasing resource competition, and new technologies received greater attention than in the past. Thus the worlds envisioned tended to focus on the danger of narrowly interested states and their ability to cope with transnational challenges.

“Global Trends 2015” focused on seven disaggregate drivers, including demographics, natural resources and environment, technology, global economy, governance, future conflict, and the role of the US. Although it noted that no single driver or trend would dominate the global future in 2015 and each driver will affect different regions differently, one trend stands out in all of its scenarios: globalization was the most important megatrend between 2000 and 2015. It is not clear how the NIC methodically arrived at their four scenarios. Two of their scenarios looked at the positive and negative effects of globalization, while the other two focused on whether military conflict or competition would characterize regional power dynamics. In the Inclusive Globalization world, technology, economic growth, and demographic shifts start to positively influence lives in the developing world. Economic
liberalization diffuses wealth, governance is effective but seen as less necessary, and since most states are benefitting and see no need for conflict. This world may be approximating a unified global state.

On the other hand, the Pernicious Globalization scenario may be seen as unleashing the Gini Out-of-the-Bottle world. Global elites are the prime beneficiaries of globalization while the majority of the world’s population sees a worsening or no improvement of their lives. Technology will not be able to address population growth and resource scarcities. Illicit networks will exploit technological innovations and an illicit economy will grow in both developed countries and today’s poor-performing developing countries. A governance gap will form as leaders will not be able to handle demands, and conflicts will arise due to inequities.

Globalization may also be the greatest driver of the Regional Competition world. This world best fits Walzer’s decentered conceptualization and would precede the Fusion, Stalled Engines, Interconnected Polycentric, and New Power Politics worlds of 2030. Globalization has helped the world grow, but not all countries want to be dominated by a US-driven globalization. Europe, Asia, and the Americas become more preoccupied with their own priorities. Regional economic blocs integrate and high levels of economic growth ensue—as does regional competition. Regional and state governance thrive in emerging and developed countries. However, global governance falls out of favor as regions become more insulated. Technology diffusion is uneven as intellectual property concerns limit sharing. And although great power military conflict among the US, Asia, and Europe is not likely since all regions are growing, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Central and South Asia have few places to turn for support in the event of internal conflict.
In contrast to the other 2015 worlds, the **Post-Polar** world is a world where globalization plays a more limited role in the future. This world resembles Walzer’s vision of international anarchy. The US and Europe do not see gains in economic growth and both turn inward. Asian countries, however, become prosperous. America plays less of a role in Asia consequently, and geostrategic rivalries among China, Korea, and Japan come to light. Global and regional governance is weak, especially in Asia as none of these powerful three states are willing to cooperate.

The envisioned worlds of 2020 also foresaw globalization as the overarching megatrend that shaped all other trends, particularly the entrance of new global players. In the **Davos World**, globalization takes a more non-Western character as China and India rise to lead robust economic growth in both the developed and developing world. This world represents the decentered node from which the 2030 Fusion and Stalled Engines worlds might originate. Countries that can best utilize new technologies will benefit most from globalization. The US, Europe, China, and India will best be able to adopt these technologies for growth. However, not all countries will benefit from globalization equally. Japan and Russia will face demographic patterns that will stem their power. The US will see a relative power decline, though it will remain the most important country in many ways. Those in the developing world will not see as rapid of growth as in China and India and may grow resentful. However, interstate conflict is not likely to arise.

Globalization and the rise of new powers will lead to another trend: pervasive insecurity. Since other countries will become richer, new powers will challenge the status quo. Great power conflict resulting in war will not be the chief insecurity, thus, interstate or intrastate conflict will not be likely. Countries in the Middle East and Northeast Asia may decide to develop nuclear weapons since it
will seem as though their neighbors are as well. Instead, the global middle class and certain regions will face the most conflict. Members of a growing global middle class will compete with one another for jobs and their demands for better lives will depend on how political leaders respond and decent economic growth. Weak governments, stalled economies, religious extremism, and youth bulges will lead to internal conflicts in fragile states. These conflicts may spill over with the creation of transnational terrorism or illicit networks.

Three worlds might stem from pervasive insecurity. A **Pax Americana** scenario would allow the US’s predominance to survive changes in the world. This world would resemble the Russian Hierarchical Polycentric world, but would also fall within Walzer’s category of a hegemonic global empire. America’s military dominance would continue and the US would be able to determine for the world its own conceptions on liberty, justice, peace, and pluralism. The **New Caliphate** world envisions radical religious identity politics, driven by transmuting international terrorism, to challenge Western norms and values as the foundation of the global system. Together with new communications technology and Muslim identity revival in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and Western Europe, the new caliphate would intervene in national and regional separatist struggles in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, and southern Thailand. By 2020 al-Qaida will be superseded by other Islamic extremist groups. A **Cycle of Fear** world is a scenario that may overlap with this New Caliphate world. It is characterized by the threat of proliferation among states. Thus either traditional state actors may endanger world security with weapons of mass destruction or nonstate terrorists may leave the world worse off.
Five years later in 2025, globalization, the rise of new powers, the relative decline of US power, and fears over terrorism, conflict, and proliferation will continue. However, a new transnational agenda on strategic resources, food, climate change, and new technologies will be major trends as well. The World Without the West scenario is the precursor to some world closer to Stalled Engines rather than the Fusion world five years later. Growth in the US and Europe are lagging and both look inward with protectionist measures as emerging powers continue to grow. This multipolar world may not be one of great power war, but there will be tensions over influence and energy resources. Regional organizations may play a more prominent role in this world.

On the other hand, slowed growth and resource shortages lead to a BRICs Bust-Up world that is a more atomistic and competitive variant of a World Without the West. Regional governance does not take hold as nationalist sentiments and energy competition make countries uncooperative. The chances for conflicts are much higher as supranational governance has given way to unmitigated anarchy.

Another world that focuses on the lack of cooperation among nations in pursuit of a “growth-first” mentality is the October Surprise scenario. Global inattention to climate change may leave the world vulnerable to catastrophic weather events. Governments would be forced to cope with crises of floods, droughts, and food shortages rather than on economic growth. Mitigation efforts would be of no use at this point since no technologies can reverse climate change in the short term. These challenges may prove to be too much for governments to handle, and both interstate and intrastate conflict might increase.

A more optimistic variant of a scenario that focuses on the ineffectiveness of nation-states to cooperate is the Politics is Not
Always Local world. This world foresees the emergence of the empowered individual. Communications technologies enable political activists to form transnational networks around issues that matter most to them such as environmentalism or climate change. NGOs, labor unions, ethnic groups, and religious organizations wrest control away from many government powers, and pursue their groups’ core interests.

With each report, we saw how the addition of new temporal biases and trends altered future forecasts. In 2000, globalization shaped future worlds most for forecasters. In 2004, globalization still took precedence, but we also saw the rise of new powers and pervasive insecurity as emerging megatrends. In 2008, globalization remained an underlying megatrend, but its effects were more muted than in past reports. Globalization shared an equal footing with new global players and uncertainty as well as a new general category of strategic resources, food, climate change, and new technologies.

By 2012, globalization was no longer considered a megatrend by the NIC. Instead, the rise of empowered individuals became the overarching megatrend of the next fifteen years. Demography is also a new megatrend not previously emphasized (although considered as a trend in all past reports) that is growing alongside the diffusion of power to other states and natures as well as the growing problems of the food, water, and energy nexus. This is not to say that globalization will no longer become relevant in planning, but it will by then become so familiar and its effects so engrained that it will not necessarily warrant less consideration, but rather more specific considerations. The question for us is whether we should take the effects for granted or be more vigilant about them.
So far we have looked at the possible worlds in 2030 from American, European, Russian, and NATO perspectives. We have also traced the trends of past future worlds. We can now better appreciate the four scenarios in US “Global Trends 2030” as illustrative of only several worlds among an infinite number of possible worlds. This could have been a more daunting task. Some infinites, after all, are greater than others, and the finite mind can only process so much. However, this task has been simplified into a more manageable, delimited set of possibilities arranged in a systematic manner. Drawing these worlds along a spectrum of increasing global political unity allows us to begin understanding what will be necessary, impossible, and possible in 2030. We are nearly able to understand what is most important not only to policymakers but for all people, communities, and organizations evaluating global trends: the future state of our values. In 2030, will human liberty necessarily be a feature of everyday life for all people? Will perpetual peace be impossible? Will the less-well off be better off? Will a plurality of cultures endure?

In order to precisely answer the question of what determines the variance of our future values, we need to first form a more rigorous
conceptualization of necessity, impossibility, and possibility. These ideas should not be seen as new at this point since, aside from being intuitive, these ideas have been informally intertwined throughout this book. However, they do require refinement for more precise policy prescriptions. In the beginning of this book, I asked how could all of the global trends reports predict so many different possible worlds if we are all bound to live in just one future world. The simple answer might be indeterminacy. Since we cannot know what will happen with 100 percent certainty, many answers are possible. However, this “your guess is as good as mine” response does not inform us how to plan for the future. I will now offer a formal philosophical response, using modal logic and the possible world semantics pioneered by the philosopher Saul Kripke in order to frame a logic of one world.45

**Possible, Impossible, and Necessary Worlds**

Assume that we have our set of ten possible worlds given by the global trends reports. Our definition of a possible world is more than simply saying that a world could happen. Worlds in this set may be possible in our definition if and only if they are not necessarily false. Since these worlds have not yet existed we cannot categorically dismiss their future existence—however likely or improbable their existence may be.

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Possible Worlds Semantics

The purpose of formal logic is to establish a set of axioms and rules that will allow us to distinguish valid arguments from invalid ones. An argument can be said to be valid if and only if its premises entail its conclusions. A proposition “A” in an argument is assigned a truth-value and can take classic logical operands, including negation “¬ A”, conjunctions “A & B”, disjunctions “A v B”, and if-then conditionals “A → B”. Here is an example of a valid argument:

All individuals in 2030 will be more empowered by technology. “A → B” = True

I am an individual and will live in 2030. “A” = True

Therefore, technology will empower me in the future. ∴ “B” = True

Modal logic on the other hand deals with two notions, possibility and necessity, that cannot have truth-values assigned to them in classic predicate logic. Possible operands may be represented as “◊”. Necessary operands may be represented as “□”. Given these operands, we can define the possibility of a proposition symbolically as “◊ A ↔ ¬ □ ¬ A”. Proposition “A” is possible if and only if it is not necessary for A not to be true. Necessity for a proposition may be defined as “□ A → A”. It is necessary for “A” to be the case, so “A” is the case. We want to be able to say that it is necessary that all individuals in the future will be empowered, so they will be. However, we cannot assign truth or falseness to “□ A → A” based solely on the semantics of classic logic. We need a more robust semantics. Validity within a logical system is only possible if that system is
Both sound and complete. Soundness entails that every argument proven with a system’s axioms and rules is in fact valid. Completeness entails that every valid argument can be proven with the logical system. Kripke developed possible worlds semantics in order to achieve both ends. This new semantics introduced the notion that possibility and necessity could be treated in a similar manner in classical logic as existential and universal quantifiers. First, Kripke assumes that there is a set of possible worlds. The set may be labeled as “S”, and possible worlds belonging to that set may be labeled {“W₁”, “W₂” . . . “Wₙ”}. The truth-value of a proposition “A” in different possible worlds may be represented as “v (A, W₁)” = True, “v (A, W₂)” = False, and “v (A, W₃)” = False. Kripke then introduces an axiom into the logical system that will make it sound and complete:

\[\forall A, W \ v (\square A, W) = \text{True}\]

for every world “Wₓ” in “S”, “v (A, Wₓ)” = True

A proposition is necessarily true if and only if the value of that proposition is true in all possible worlds. For example, say that we want to argue that peace for all people will be a necessary feature of the world in 2030. We would have to show that peace will exist in every world in our set of worlds for this to be the case.

Further, by definition, any world outside of this set is deemed an impossible world. In the conventional sense one might say that an impossible world could happen. After all, worlds once thought impossible have happened. The earth is not flat, the sun does not rotate around us, and mankind has set foot on the moon. However, such worlds can only be made possible, according to our definition, by incorporating them into the original set of worlds. This choice to include or exclude worlds into a set is key to whether or not worlds are thought to be possible or impossible. Thus, the selection
biases of tradition, methodology, and time have the utmost relevance for people in charge of directing the future of the world. Needless restrictions or too ambitious of goals may prevent better decisions. When biases are mitigated, amazing potentials can be realized. Magellan, Copernicus, Armstrong, and Aldrin defied tradition, understood methods, and transcended their times. It is in this rigorous sense that the impossible can be made possible.

Finally, a world is necessary if and only if it is not possibly false. Based on this definition, within the set of worlds presented in the global trends reports there is no necessary world. These worlds could possibly be false: none of the worlds has come to existence yet nor may they ever. This, however, does not mean that that there is no necessity. Given this set of possible worlds, a value may be considered necessarily true if it exists in all possible worlds. Thus, even if a value exists in nine of the ten worlds, we might say that the value will exist in many possible worlds, but we cannot say that it will necessarily exist. This subtle distinction can make the difference between working toward making the best of all worlds or needlessly ending up with some inferior world. For example, not preparing for a world wherein a nuclear winter could annihilate half of humanity because planners thought that this would not be necessary would be catastrophic.

This dual nature of necessity highlights an important distinction. Worlds are not the only subjects that may be possible, impossible, or necessary: values that inhere in each of these worlds can also take their own attributes. In each of these worlds, we can also assume that our four values may be necessary, impossible, or contingent.\(^{46}\) Values may be said to be impossible if and only if

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\(^{46}\) Although the terms “contingent” and “possible” may at times be used interchangeably, I consider “contingent” as a special consideration of what is “possi-
they do not exist in any possible world or if they only exist in impossible worlds. Finally these values are contingent if and only if they are true in some possible world but not others. I will make these attributes more evident in the sections below.

**Necessity**

Necessity is what is true in all possible worlds. The 2030 global trends reports left us with a total of ten possible worlds, which fall into four of Walzer’s categories. We can gather from our possible worlds semantics that two values will in general be necessary in 2030: liberty and pluralism (see Table A).

We can say this because both individual liberty and pluralism will exist in all of these archetypical worlds. If there were some additional unified global state world, for example, neither pluralism nor liberty would necessarily exist because such a world does not possess individuals in a sense greater than physical bodies or significant group differences. If everyone is the same and radically equal, there can be no individuals because no distinctions can be made. In this case, we could not say that individual liberty will necessarily prevail in all possible worlds due to this one possible-world exception.

This is likewise true for pluralism. Notions of necessity have profound consequences on how we will have in some cases to protect and in other cases to relax standards of liberty, justice, peace, and pluralism.

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47 Here, I am not referring to legal equality—which from a rational perspective is what we all aspire toward. Instead, I am referring to individuals from a more idiosyncratic, personal perspective.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Liberty</th>
<th>Justice</th>
<th>Peace</th>
<th>Pluralism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anarchy</strong></td>
<td>True</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>True/Greatest chance for those able/willing to fight for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most free from government, but uncertain</td>
<td>No mechanisms</td>
<td>War/conflict is most prevalent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weak States And Institutions</strong></td>
<td>True</td>
<td>True/False</td>
<td>True/False</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>True Free, more stable and restricted by government</td>
<td>Worst off are better off within states, but not in other states</td>
<td>Poor, but states provide some security to individuals/groups</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International Civil Society</strong></td>
<td>True More free without government, but uncertain who will enforce</td>
<td>True Networks can provide more for the worst off</td>
<td>True Decent, but unclear who will organize and enforce</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>True Free and safer</td>
<td>True Multiple ways to help the worst off</td>
<td>True Multiple means to achieve</td>
<td>Good for individuals/groups across borders, but less certain within states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decentered World</strong></td>
<td>True Freer and safer</td>
<td>True Multiple ways to help the worst off</td>
<td>True Multiple means to achieve</td>
<td>True Good for national, regional, and transnational identities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although we are still left not knowing what particular future world lies ahead, Walzer’s spectrum of centralization gives us a clearer resolution of what features will exist in kind, if not in degree. Within this delimited set of ten worlds, we now have a clearer understanding of not only the reasonable range of possibilities that we can prepare for, but we also have a sense of what will be necessary features of any future world. The future world may fall within a range from international anarchy, weak states and institutions, international civil society, and a decentered world. In all of these possible worlds two of our values will exist in some kind. Dangers and opportunities may abound for our four values, however, at the bare minimum, we can rest assured that global trends bend in such a way that two of those values will necessarily exist. We can also observe that while justice and peace are not guaranteed for all, they are possible in more worlds than not. We can be guardedly optimistic about the future.

**Impossibility**

The impossible is that which does not exist in any possible world or only exists in some impossible world. If an impossible world is excluded, particular flavors of that world will not exist either. Neither a unified global state nor a hegemonic global empire will prevail in fifteen years, according to all of the reports. By this account, what is impossible may not seem too surprising for conventional foreign policy thinkers. The end of the Cold War signaled to many the end of communism as a competitive world
ideology to Western values of individual and group rights. The end of such a history is a decades-old story.

What receives less attention but warrants more, however, is what we lose and what we gain from these impossible worlds. What is deemed impossible has profound consequences on how we should address liberty, justice, peace, and pluralism. With the impossibility of these two idealized worlds come both positive and negative tradeoffs.

For years now scholars and experts have argued that America’s unipolar moment is coming to an end. Thus, the expectation of a new hegemonic global empire instantiated as a Pax Americana is more a nostalgic fantasy rather than a forthcoming, expected reality. At most, as the Russian “Strategic Global Outlook 2030” report predicted, America may remain the most dominant player on the global scene that will preside over all other states in a global federation. But even then the US will not be a full-fledged hegemon dictating what other countries should do. With the impossibility of a hegemonic world, the prospects for a highly unrestricted, free flow of information, trade, and capital are limited.

\[48\] Many readers might associate a Unified Global State with that ideology. However, a number of different forms of a Unified Global State are possible, including a democratic, united order. Kant, after all, envisioned the threats to individuals and groups from the democratic despotism of an extremely centralized order.


stable and peaceful world are relatively diminished according to Walzer’s spectrum.⁵¹

For those American patriots who see with a sense of loss America’s declining role in the world as a stabilizer and peacemaker, there may still be some silver lining. No other country will assume that role either: there will be no Pax China or Pax India. Further, as these countries rise, they will increasingly—even if unevenly—share our values. I do not think that a patriot whose values will spread to the rest of the world should be too disappointed with such a future. Thus, although peace may be uncertain, no one country will arbitrarily determine or endanger an individual’s liberty or a people’s freedom in another country without legitimate contest. Our values may be unevenly distributed in our possible worlds, but they will be more shared than if we were living in such an idealized hegemonic world. This relative lack of order and peace may be the direst for people and peoples in weak, conflict-ridden, or tyrannical states since these states will still be insulated enough from the rest of the world to rule over their own sovereignty, even if in atrocious ways. Although these peoples’ position is disconcerting and our values may vary within countries, at least on a different level, globalized tyranny will not be in any of our immediate futures.

Further, in regard to the impossibility of a unified global state, the world in 2030 would never be a utopian perpetual peace wherein true individuals and unique peoples would exist as many of us know ourselves in the world today. In such a utopian world, no individual would be guaranteed a robust sense of liberty, nor would unique cultures be allowed to flourish. For those today living in the most horrific of conflict-ridden environments, this is a devastating

prospect since peace will not be necessary for them. Further, for some cosmopolitans, this is also no small loss: all of the virtues of equality and distributive justice can do nothing to allow individuals and peoples to live good lives. This is the “soul-less despotism” of a world government forewarned by Immanuel Kant in the first supplement of his “Perpetual Peace”:

The idea of international law presupposes the separate existence of many independent but neighboring states. Although this condition is itself a state of war (unless a federative union prevents the outbreak of hostilities), this is rationally preferable to the amalgamation of states under one superior power, as this would end in one universal monarchy, and laws always lose in vigor what government gains in extent; hence a soul-less despotism falls into anarchy after stifling the seeds of the good. Nevertheless, every state, or its ruler, desires to establish lasting peace in this way, aspiring if possible to rule the whole world. But nature wills otherwise. She employs two means to separate peoples and to prevent them from mixing: differences of language and of religion. These differences involve a tendency to mutual hatred and pretexts for war, but the progress of civilization and men’s gradual approach to greater harmony in their principles finally leads to peaceful agreement. This is not like that peace which despotism (in the burial ground of freedom) produces through a weakening of all powers; it is, on the contrary, produced and maintained by their equilibrium in liveliest competition.

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52 This notion is in the same key as Amartya Sen’s capability approach, which focuses foremost on what people are actually able to be and do. In Sen’s terms, although a person’s utilization function will be ameliorated in the parameters of individual physiology, local environments, and some

In simpler terms, what good are peace and justice, if life is boring and meaningless and stripped of its individual subjectivity and cultural diversity? This is not meant to insult the lives of the suffering. Peace, after all, is arguably the first-order condition for the good life. However, as the deficiencies of the NATO worlds suggested, even the poorest and most misfortunate among us in the direst of situations want to lead good lives beyond mere existence. People do not only fight for their lives; they also struggle for their livelihoods.

Yet at the same time, there is a positive tradeoff. Those disappointed with the loss of the prospects of a world characterized by complete equality and complete peace, should take a great deal of solace in the idea that individuals will not be “soul-less” in all cases and they will necessarily be guaranteed a greater degree of equality and peace and that individuals and groups will thrive in greater numbers without the threat of monolithic cultural convergence in fifteen years. And to say that there will be no such perpetual peace is not to say that there will be no peace or that peace will never be perpetual in some other form in some later future after 2030. The same can be said for justice. So for any possible future world, for the worst-off, their fight will go on for peace and justice as well as for each individual's liberty and each peoples' identities. And it is in this “liveliest of competition” where a better equilibrium of values can be achieved.

**Contingency**

If global trends are so determinative that they shape events that are bound to happen or preclude worlds that will never happen, then no one can alter the structural contours of the future beyond these four archetypes described by Walzer. After biases have been
mitigated, we cannot make impossible worlds possible nor can we determine what will be necessary. For some, the conclusion that the two values of liberty and pluralism will necessarily exist may seem trivial. After all, who would expect these values to end in a mere fifteen years? Why bother creating such an elaborate scheme of definitions, theories, and illustrations if our values are bound to happen?

Here is my reason. It is not the contours that matter most: it is the content of the future world and the texture of the values themselves that are the most important considerations for individuals to think about when choosing—to the extent that we can—what should be the quality of our future lives and livelihoods.

Hence, the most actionable decision-making sphere for us to consider should focus on what is contingent, i.e., that which is true in some possible world but false in others. Since there is no such thing as a perfect world, this is a choice of tradeoffs. Quite simply, what are we willing to give up in order to gain? As I have shown, our four values can take a wide variety of gradients and resolutions—even within each of Walzer’s idealized archetypes. For example, to say that liberty will necessarily exist is not the same as saying that it is necessary that liberty will be monolithic, that liberty will be enjoyed by all people, that new liberties enabled by technology will not come at the cost of lost liberties of privacy, or that pursuing one’s liberty will always lead to security and peace. Necessity can take a myriad of possible forms, and we have some ability to both bend and adapt to the trending arches of an untold, yet determinate history. These contingencies leave us with a set of policy options for worlds to aspire toward. Under further examination and a stricter consideration of the attainment of values for all people, we can see that pluralism will still be a necessary feature of the world, however, liberty may not be as necessary as the weaker
general case may suggest (compare Table A and Table B). Based on this assessment, it is clear to me, as it was for Walzer, that the decentered worlds offer us the greatest potential to optimize our values. What is less clear to me, however, is which world will actually happen. Our biases should be no substitute for future knowledge.

Although a decentered world may rationally be the most preferable, reasonable people may argue that it is not the best world that is achievable. For example, even NATO’s conflict-ridden New Power Politics decentered variant might be considered normatively inferior to the US’s cooperative Nonstate World. On the other hand, the most cynical of realists may be right. Perhaps when history is finally told, NATO’s Darkside of Exclusivity world might be the only feasible world that would inhere some form of our values, privileging only people in Western and developed countries with liberty, wealth, and calm because power dynamics are so determinative that there could be no other way even though we might want better lives for the rest. Or perhaps, the best of all possible worlds will reflect our world today in the form of NATO’s Deceptive Stability. Indeed, it may be argued that we can do very little to alter the contours of the future.

However, impotence should be no excuse for ignorance. It is what we knowingly do that is most valuable, since consciousness, after all, allows us to be aware of our own values. Although some realists may initially decry that the decentered Fusion and Interconnected Polycentric worlds are liberal fantasies and that a global government cannot exist, I would argue that such worlds are not radical departures from an anarchic one. A decentered world is still a government-less one at the global level, and self-interested states may still be the dominant actors. However, other actors and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table B: Future Attainment of Values for All People</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Liberty</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darkside of Exclusivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gini Out-of-the Bottle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceptive Stability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonstate World</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clash of Modernities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interconnected Polycentric</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stalled Engines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Powers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical Polycentric</td>
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superstructures will still take form out of self-interest. That rules and global governance take form is certainly no sign alone that fundamental power dynamics have changed by orders of magnitude, but, on the other hand, that they are formed and followed out of prudence is also by no means trivial. Earnestness about our own limits and ambitions will help our planning in any case.

These definitions, theories, and illustrations should be grounded in the actual world today—the only world that is truly necessary because it is the only one that we know exists. What we do now in this moment cannot possibly be false, although our interpretations of these actions may be right or wrong. The choice among these future worlds should not be seen as a choice among impossible, idealistic worlds, but rather they should be seen as approximations of what the preeminent political philosopher John Rawls called realistic utopias: possible worlds that illustrate “how reasonable citizens and peoples might live peacefully in a just world.” While we start now from unequal positions, there is indeed a veil of ignorance cast over our future. The challenge, thus, is a classic one posed before by Kant, Rousseau, and Rawls: “taking [people] as they are and laws as they might be.” Reasonable people may disagree over which particular world we should aspire toward. The most difficult task is to choose a right course of action that opt-

54 Respected realist scholars have admitted this. “Much Realism argues—or assumes—that the anarchic structure of the international system leads to recurring patterns, many of them involving violence, and rules out long-term peace in the absence of clear deterrence. There is much to this perspective, but cost-benefit calculations, norms and values . . . can and have changed over time.” See Robert Jervis, “Force in Our Times,” *International Relations* 25, No. 4 (December 2011): p. 420.
56 Ibid., p. vi.
mizes our values given the constraints and possibilities of these global trends. How are we to choose the right course? And is there only one right way?
Of All Possible Future Worlds
Conclusion

One World, Many Ethics

We are one humanity, but seven billion humans. This is the essential challenge of global ethics: how to accommodate the tension between our universal and particular natures. . . . We are “pushed” toward a global ethic by the need to address urgent issues that are increasingly global in nature, and we are “pulled” toward a global ethic by a universal core implicit in the very idea of ethics—a core articulated most powerfully by the idea of human rights.58

A great ethical debate is forming today. In “Toward a Global Ethic,” philosopher David Rodin has concisely framed our dilemma in his words above. This contrast between our universal and particular natures is not a new problem in ethics. It is, as esteemed writer, professor, and politician Michael Ignatieff has suggested, as old as philosophy itself. Philosophers and political theorists have been thinking about global ethics for centuries—we do not need to reinvent the wheel. However, the increasingly complex nature of global trends have made this question more challenging to answer than in the times of the ancient Greeks. In closing, rather than listing a generic set of policy recommendations contingent on what many directions trends might go, I will suggest ways in which we may ethically approach the world. The abstract level of analysis in this book calls for more general conclusions.

Kishore Mahbubani, dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, implores in *The Great Convergence* that we need a logic of one world in order to cope with the potential and problems of the coming future. The book concludes by saying that a logic of one world will need to aspire toward the formation of a global ethic. My illustration of the modal logic of possible worlds can be seen as a formal philosophical response to this call, appealing to rigorous reasoning rather than to simple platitudes of one increasingly globalized, interdependent, and interconnected world. Focusing only on the logic of a particular world among many other possible worlds’ logics is insufficient. All possible worlds should be considered in order to establish an overarching logic.

The United Nations, for example, has sketched such an ethic from a one-world logic in the run-up to the post-2015 millennium development agenda by stating, “There is a global ethic for a globalised world, based on our common humanity, the Rio principles and the shared ethos of all traditions: ‘do as you would be done by.’” The global ethic presented by the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda offers five transformative trends that policymakers should steer: (1) leave no one behind, (2) put sustainable development at the core, (3) transform economies or jobs and inclusive growth, (4) build peace and effective, open, and accountable public institutions, and (5) forge a new global partnership. If these five trends are implement-

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59 Mahbubani, *The Great Convergence*.
61 The panel dutifully mitigated its biases in forming this world by talking to 5000 civil society organizations, 250 CEOs of businesses, as well as individuals from all walks of life, including farmers, indigenous peoples, workers in the informal sector, migrants, the disabled, young and older people, women’s groups, faith-
ed, one world will emerge. One that is most similar to the EU Interconnected Polycentric world, and one that is “more equal, more prosperous, more peaceful and more just than that of today . . . A world with a new spirit of cooperation and partnership.”

The panel then illustrates twelve admirable goals that could follow the Millennium Development Goals: eradicate poverty, empower girls and women and achieve of gender equality, provide quality education and lifelong learning, ensure healthy lives, ensure food security and good nutrition, achieve universal access to water and sanitation, secure sustainable energy, create jobs, sustainable livelihoods, and equitable growth, manage natural resource assets sustainably, ensure good governance and effective institutions, ensure stable and peaceful societies, and create a global enabling environment and catalyzing long-term finance.

I believe all people would want the realization of these goals in their own lives if not for those of others.

There is a problem, however, with this logic: global trends may shape our future world in radically different ways than this one supposedly necessary world would suggest. A logic of one world needs to incorporate considerations of possibility, impossibility, and necessity. The objection is not that these goals and means are invalid within the consideration of the logic of one world in particular. Rather it is the negligence to consider how the particular logics of other worlds might realistically—or in terms of formal logic, soundly and completely—challenge not only the convergence of humanity but also the delivery of foreign assistance, gender equality, or other means. This book has shown that many other

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based groups, trade unions, academics, experts from governments, and multilateral organizations, politicians, and philosophers.

62 Ibid., p. 18.

worlds are possible, each sharing the necessity of the general improvement of liberty and pluralism, but each having their own specific schemata for all four values. We should not simply work toward one particular world with one global ethic, but rather toward the best possible world, featuring all of our values and considering many global ethics.

The logical system given to us by possible worlds semantics can assist us in conceptualizing what ethics we should consider. Regard Table B in the previous chapter, which establishes for all of our ten worlds whether our four values will exist for all people regardless of the state they live in. Although some may debate whether some of these evaluations are true or false considering the complexity of dynamics within each world, more sweeping observations stand out: pluralism is true in all possible worlds, and liberty, though existent in most worlds is not fully enjoyed by all people—particularly in the developing world. According to our definition pluralism is the only value that is necessary for all people, while the attainment of the other three values is contingent at best. Thus this specific necessity should inform us most of what type of ethics one might consider.

Fortunately, Michael Doyle has clearly laid out today’s leading global ethical theories by illustrating three types of possible worlds: (1) one world, one people, (2) one world, two peoples, and (3) one world, many peoples. Although Doyle develops this map to frame debates over global justice by cosmopolitans, neo-Kantian liberals, and Rawls in *The Law of Peoples*, his illustration is robust enough to also explain different permutations of global pluralism, peace, and liberty in the future.

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DOYLE first illustrates the one world, one people ethic advocated by cosmopolitan philosophers. In 1975 in response to Rawls’ *Theory of Justice*, which focused primarily on domestic considerations of distributive justice, political theorist Charles Beitz argued for a cosmopolitan global theory of justice. This theory held that self-contained nation-state distinctions imposed by Rawls and natural resource distributions across the world are, from a moral point of view, arbitrarily determined. Consequently, under a social contractarian view, citizens of relatively affluent countries have obligations founded on justice to share their wealth with poorer people elsewhere. And although Rawls would later apply his own theory to the international level in *The Law of Peoples*, philosopher Thomas Pogge would continue to argue along with Beitz that arbitrary nation-state boundaries and natural resource distributions, the illusion of state self-sufficiency, and necessarily interdependent relations among societies would call for the treatment of all individuals as members of one people.

Philosopher Peter Singer also appealed to the cosmopolitan premise of one world, one people, but from a utilitarian perspective. In 1972, Singer famously illustrated an analogy of saving a child drowning in a shallow pool. Anyone would naturally save the child if they could because the costs of sullying one’s pants would be negligible compared to the benefit of saving a life. In a similar manner, it should be a moral duty for people to feed starving

people oceans away because it would maximize the good that could be done at little cost. From a utilitarian perspective, distributive justice should be maximized depending on values that are common to all of humanity regardless of state borders, distance, class, what other individuals do (or do not do), regardless of whether an individual is rich or poor or if greater powers stand idly by. In 2002, Singer continued to develop a global ethic beyond distributive justice by focusing on globalization and increasing interdependence among one people beyond borders, arguing that “Our newly interdependent global society, with its remarkable possibilities for linking people around the planet, gives us the material basis for a new ethic.”68 Singer holds that a society’s ethic is a reflection of the economic structure to which its technology has given rise, and the revolution in communications has further created a global audience. Increasing interdependence, connectivity, and technological innovations have thus united the world’s people as one in unprecedented ways:

When different nations led more separate lives, it was more understandable—though still quite wrong—for those in one country to think of themselves as owing no obligations, beyond that of noninterference, to people in another state. But those times are long gone. Today, as we have seen, our greenhouse gas emissions alter the climate under which everyone in the world lives. Our purchases of oil, diamonds, and timber make it possible for dictators to buy more weapons and strengthen their hold on the countries they tyrannize. Instant communications show us how others live, and they in turn learn about us and aspire to our way of life. Modern transport can move even relatively poor people thousands of

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kilometers, and when people are desperate to improve their situation, national boundaries prove permeable.\(^\text{69}\)

For our purposes, both cosmopolitan views may apply generally to Walzer’s International Civil Society, Decentered, and Unified Global State worlds. Since I have established the latter type to be impossible in the near term, instantiations of only the first two types of worlds are possible: the US’s Nonstate and Fusion worlds and the EU’s Polycentric Interconnected world. Thus, advances in technologies from information to automation, manufacturing, resource utilization, and health will not only make individuals more liberated, they will also make us more interconnected and interdependent by transcending state boundaries and revealing to individuals across oceans that they are members of one people. Governance can take on three forms based on the three possible world instantiations, viewing the world’s actors in terms of individuality, multipolarity, or polycentrism. In the Nonstate World, governments would no longer be needed, and individuals through global civil society networks would perfectly coordinate among themselves. In the Fusion World, states would still be the primary actors, but they would support subnational, regional, and global solutions to optimize our four values. The Interconnected Polycentric World would be the most encompassing, allowing civil societies, states, regional organizations, and global institutions to help foster the best possible world.

However, these instantiations may be difficult to achieve due to a lack of will and coordination. While the appeal of this one world, one people perspective may flourish in the minds of men and women in civil society and the academy, it has not manifested itself in capitals today. A global ethic as a politics has failed to take form

\(^{69}\) Ibid., pp. 196–197.
in policy or practice. Why should we expect such coordination to be so well aligned in the future? If this logic is truly universal and if these cosmopolitan values are truly necessary and transcend time, why do we all not enjoy them now?

I do not think that it is because the logic of universal values is philosophically invalid, but rather it is because local concerns, idiosyncratic interests, and particular politics intervene for both selfish and rational reasons, at times rendering this one world, one people logic unsound and incomplete.\(^{70}\) Thomas Hobbes has often been criticized as having a dark view on human nature, characterizing life as solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. His critics often forget, however, that he started his thesis from premises identical to those of the cosmopolitans: all men and women are equal and rational.\(^{71}\) In contradistinction from the cosmopolitans, though, Hobbes arrives at the conclusion that conflict is inevitable. This is because men and women must cope with natural dispositions toward competition, diffidence, and glory.\(^{72}\) Competition makes us fight over scarce resources, diffidence makes us seek our own security, and glory makes us seek reputation. Thus, for some the problem with the cosmopolitan view is that it is not realistic enough. It can neither explain nor respond to the possible emergences of NATO’s or Russia’s predicted worlds, which do not view all humanity as one and instead recognize state boundaries as determinative of which peoples will be privileged to enjoy the four

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\(^{70}\) For readers with a background in formal modal logic, this challenge is of validating the argument that if some proposition about a value is necessary, then that proposition has to be the case now (\(\Box A \rightarrow A\)). Hence, the problem is of a logical system that is unsound and incomplete.

\(^{71}\) Thomas Hobbes, “Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning Their Felicity and Misery,” in *Leviathan*.

values unequally. Further, cosmopolitans cannot explain or respond to the US’s Gini-Out-of-the-Bottle and Stalled Engines worlds, which leave different peoples with variegated values. There are and will be more than one people in the world whose interests can conflict with one another even if cosmopolitan values may be the aspiration of all people. In this sense, all history is the story of the struggle between us against them. The great challenge for this global ethic is to make all peoples of the world see themselves as one while at the same time recognizing that some natural dispositions may drive us apart.

Given such a problem, Michael Ignatieff has asked, whether we should talk about one global ethic or multiple global ethics. These contractarian and utilitarian views may be categorized as a global ethic in the singular. Morality, in this one ethic, extends with equal concern “to defend all human beings and our common habitat against partialities and interests grounded in family, community, ethnicity, economic position, and nation.” Following Thomas Nagel, Ignatieff argues that this perspective starts with a “view from nowhere.” For both contractarians and utilitarians—though through different philosophies—this view asks how rational and equal people might form policies without consideration of arbitrary and accidental factors such as state boundaries, place of birth, class, or gender.

For Ignatieff, global ethics in the plural, on the other hand, refers to universal principles such as sovereignty, individual rights, civilian immunity in war, and rights of refugees and displaced persons. These particular values are legally embodied in existing

74 Ibid., p. 13.
international law in the *Charter of the United Nations*, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the Geneva Conventions, and the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. They are political documents negotiated among states to solve specific problems, thus they may not be in full accord with a singular global ethic, and they may at times conflict with one another. A reimagined global ethic “defends the universal interests of mankind and the planet; its purpose is to engage all forms of ethical particularism in adversarial justification; and the rules of these encounters, flowing as they do from the starting premise of human equality, preclude coercion and mandate tolerance.”76 It investigates particularism at the nation-state and community levels as well as universalism of international law.

While I might consider a definition of global ethics to encompass more than solely those embodied by international legal texts,77 Ignatieff’s juxtaposition of a global ethic versus multiple global ethics opens up a consideration of one world composed of more than one people, each compromising and competing with one another over multiple ethics. In the following sections, I will

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76 Ignatieff, “Reimagining a Global Ethic,” p. 16.
77 Foreign policy decisions can be made more by ethical considerations than by laws that are supposed to embody them. For example, the 1999 NATO bombing in Kosovo received no UN authorization in the Security Council. However, the Independent International Commission on Kosovo considered the bombing an “illegal but legitimate” use of force. Thus, laws can be seen at times as insufficient, and a consideration of ethics helps us to understand their limits and contradictions. Ignatieff and the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, in thinking about the tough choices to intervene during times of massacre, genocide, or ethnic cleansing, focused on the challenge of prioritizing state sovereignty through the UN Charter versus the prioritization of human rights in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. It was ethical consideration and not solely the laws themselves that helped find a compromise between these two values and to develop the norm of sovereignty as a responsibility to protect and provide basic security for a state’s own citizens.
illustrate the different global ethics of one world, two peoples and one world, many peoples.

**One World, Two Peoples**

Michael Doyle, through his formulation of the democratic peace thesis, can be associated with a one world, two peoples ethic. The distinction between a global ethic and multiple ethics can be explained by a fundamental problem: “the absence of a genuine sense of global community, the sense that we are in a common social project.” Whereas the cosmopolitan contractarians and utilitarians viewed the world as composed of one people, neo-Kantian liberals hold that the world is pluralistic and composed of two types of peoples: democratic and non-democratic. The global ethics of neo-Kantian liberalism focuses more broadly on the values of liberty, peace, and pluralism rather than primarily on global justice. According to the democratic peace thesis, there can be three global ethics between two peoples: (1) a global ethic among liberal republics, (2) a global ethic among non-democratic states, and (3) a global ethic between democratic and non-democratic states. These ethics, respectively, focus on peace among liberal democratic states, among non-democratic states, and between democratic and non-democratic states. The thesis holds that democratic peoples do not go to war against each other for three reasons:

1. Liberal peoples must elect and internalize the costs of going to war whereas monarchs and dictators do not.
2. Since liberal peoples share the same principles, they will respect the rights of similarly free peoples.

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(3) Respect for property rights and the benefits of commercial exchange reinforce these moral commitments.

The one world, two peoples ethic might be considered more realistic than the one people ethic. In comparison to the cosmopolitan one world, one people ethic, the democratic peace thesis can better explain and respond to all of the future possible worlds. This variation of values can be seen to exist most strikingly in the divided worlds of the US’s Gini Out-of-the-Bottle and Stalled Engines worlds as well as NATO’s Darkside of Exclusivity and Deceptive Stability worlds, however, it can also arise in NATO’s Clash of Modernities and New Powers worlds as well as the US Fusion and EU Interconnected Polycentric worlds. Thus, the democratic peace view of the world tolerates a greater variance of our values compared to the cosmopolitans. In all of these worlds, the values of liberty and peace are taken as first- and second-order conditions respectively. This is in contradistinction to the cosmopolitans who took liberty and distributive justice as primary and secondary considerations, respectively. For the neo-Kantians, liberty and peace are prior to considerations of distributive justice. Implicitly, the neo-Kantians do not accept the premise that all peoples are the same and they acknowledge that the liberties of these peoples may conflict. Neo-Kantians would never agree to a one world, one people global ethic where illiberal peoples may limit the maximum liberties of democratic peoples.

Thus, a prioritization of liberty and the acknowledgement of different peoples will continue to lead to the emergence of a separate peace for liberal democratic peoples versus non-democratic ones. Further, two other global ethics emerge for liberal democracies: (1) nothing prevents democratized peoples from going to war with non-democratized ones, and (2) the lack of shared values does
not prevent non-democratized peoples from going to war with one another. Other than peace, liberal values of liberty, justice, and pluralism in varying contingent degrees will necessarily exist within and among the societies of democratic peoples. This holds despite the fact that liberal democracies can fall within a range of forms from laissez-faire to social democratic.

Prioritizing liberty, peace, and pluralism through the market economy may help explain a greater tolerance for a wider variance in the degree of distributive justice. Thus, globalization and global trends may also pose challenges for the liberal peace not only among democracies, but also between democracies and non-democracies. In “A More Perfect Union? The Challenge of Globalization,” globalization is shown to pose three challenges to the democratic peace in terms of commodification, inequality, and security. Doyle draws upon Karl Polanyi’s *The Great Transformation*, which describes how the market economy and interdependence can make liberal peace unsustainable. While Singer believed that such interdependence necessarily called for a greater peace and neo-Kantian liberals believe that markets would help liberalize non-liberal societies and spread a greater peace, Polanyi argued that unchecked interdependence can have more inimical effects on domestic and international societies. This is because trade is not merely the exchange of commodities, but rather trade changes the factors of production, i.e., the value of land, labor, and capital. Consequently, trade disrupts social relations in communities, village life, regional life, classes, industries, and sectors. Commodification by liberal markets can prevent democratic citizens from choosing to live by their own values. Competition and arbitrary natural resource allocation has led to what some might consider an unjust

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distribution of wealth to a degree where the worst off are not better off that they could be. Such inequality fundamentally challenges liberal principles of equality and respect. Finally, the global market economy has made non-democratic China into a growing power that might one day challenge the peace of a liberal order. Thus, globalization between two peoples may endanger liberty, justice, and peace for liberal republics.

In general, the great ethical challenge for the one world, two peoples ethic is for liberal republics to prevent war with non-democratic states. As framed, however, there is little reason to believe that global trends will necessarily lead to the expansion of liberal respect to non-democratic peoples. The ethic may tend toward archetypical worlds where distributive justice is lacking, such as the Deceptive Stability and or Clash of Modernities instantiations. This is not to say that the democratic peace is lacking in means or motives to help those in some non-democratic states. Liberal peoples’ principles that focus on representative respect, human rights, and economic growth will drive individuals and some organizations in perhaps a Fusion or Interconnected Polycentric world to offer some foreign assistance to the poorest peoples through nonpolitical agencies such as developmental organizations. However, liberal democratic states will not systematically in all cases give aid as a matter of duty. Thus, while this ethic may help explain how the four archetypical worlds might arise, it is less clear how we might arrive at the best possible world among them.

**One World, Many Peoples**

In *The Law of Peoples*, Rawls offers a possible partial solution to this challenge by raising the question of whether one world has
many peoples rather than just one or two. While Beitz and Pogge sought to extend Rawls’s domestic theory of justice globally, and Singer sought to maximize utility for all people across borders, and Doyle started with the democratic piece thesis, Rawls began from a different starting point. For Rawls a singular global ethic is one that might bind a society of many peoples under a realistic utopia starting with eight principles:81

(1) Peoples are free and independent, and their freedom and independence are to be respected by other peoples.  
(2) Peoples are to observe treaties and undertakings.  
(3) Peoples are equal and are parties to the agreements that bind them.  
(4) Peoples are to observe a duty of non-intervention.  
(5) Peoples have the right of self-defense but no right to instigate war for reasons other than self-defense.  
(6) Peoples are to honor human rights.  
(7) Peoples are to observe certain specified restrictions in the conduct of war.  
(8) Peoples have a duty to assist other peoples living under unfavorable conditions that prevent their having a just or decent political and social regime.

While Rawls acknowledged that there are both democratic and non-democratic peoples, he also held that there are other peoples between this dichotomy. From the basis of this global ethic and the range of peoples’ acceptance of all, some, or none of these eight principles, there are also decent hierarchical peoples, burdened peoples, and outlaw peoples (defined below). Among these peoples there are multiple global ethics, which overlap but extend upon the three global ethics of the neo-Kantians:

A global ethic among well-ordered peoples

a. A global ethic among liberal republics
b. A global ethic between liberal republics and decent hierarchical peoples
c. A global ethic among decent hierarchical peoples

(2) A global ethic between well-ordered peoples and non-ordered peoples

a. A global ethic between well-ordered peoples and burdened peoples
b. A global ethic between well-ordered peoples and outlaw societies

(3) A global ethic among outlaw societies

A global ethic among liberal republics takes the form similar to that of a democratic peace. In contradistinction with the neo-Kantians who thought that peace emerged from representative government, shared values, and market economies, the Rawlsian democratic peace takes hold because liberal people honor all eight of the principles. Rawls categorizes another set of peoples: decent hierarchical peoples. These are peoples that uphold many of the eight principles, but not all of them. While Rawls might criticize the neo-Kantians for too simplistically categorizing these peoples as non-democratic peoples, Rawls held that liberal peoples should tolerate certain hierarchical peoples because they are not aggressive and value some of the liberal eight values such as human rights. This tolerance means that liberal republics should not intervene with—or even criticize—the affairs of decent hierarchical peoples. Thus, the great challenge for neo-Kantians is mitigated for Rawls by a greater tolerance for some non-democratic, though still decent hierarchical peoples.

While Rawls suggests that an ethic toward decent hierarchical peoples can help us move toward a better world, there may be some limits to application. For example, Doyle has suggested that the
number of such states is few and their population sizes are small. These states include Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, and to some degree Qatar, Bhutan, the United Arab Emirates, and perhaps Jordan. Thus, Rawls’s distinctions may have marginal practical impact. Further, in contrast to the neo-Kantian thesis, this peace holds whether or not liberal peoples can internalize the costs of war or whether or not a global market economy takes hold. In essence, however, this tolerance is tenuous. Liberals cannot be sure to extend the respect that they have for one another because hierarchical peoples do not respect their own people through democratic accountability. As Doyle asks, “If those governments will not trust their own publics, why should we trust them?”

While the global ethic among hierarchical peoples will range depending on which of the eight principles they hold, there is a clearer ethic between well-ordered peoples and another set of peoples. Rawls also introduces the category of burdened societies, peoples who are not aggressive and lack political institutions, material resources, and human capital. These are peoples who would choose to be well ordered, but cannot due to circumstances beyond their control. Well-ordered peoples (particularly liberal ones), have a duty to assist these societies in becoming self-determining, well-ordered peoples. However, distributive justice extends only so far as to raise these peoples to a decent hierarchical order. This raises questions of how much inequality we are willing to tolerate.

Further, Rawls introduces another set of peoples: outlaw societies. A global ethic among outlaw societies is unintelligible under Rawls’s scheme, because these are peoples who do not respect any or most of the eight principles. Hence, it is questionable whether

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83 Ibid., p. 114.
an ethic among outlaws is possible, although, they may base relations with other states on other considerations (e.g., realpolitik).

Finally, according to a global ethic among well-ordered and outlaw peoples, liberal peoples owe neither respect nor tolerance for these peoples because they do not respect these eight principles. Intervention, in varying degrees, by well-ordered peoples is justified because outlaw societies either do not respect human rights at a minimum or threaten their own people with genocidal policies at the extreme. In accordance with the principles, these wars should recognize noncombatant immunity and not revert to the indiscriminate nature of wars in the past. Such wars must be prudent in the sense that the purpose of intervention should be to bring outlaw societies into a global well-ordered society of peoples.
I do not want to leave the reader thinking that one of these ethics will always be the most suitable for our future planning. We will continue to live in a world with imperfect choices, and these three global ethics will not be sufficient in themselves to solve all future dilemmas. However, they offer us reasonable ways to respond to the particular opportunities and challenges posed by future global trends, which will ultimately lead us to one world.

The cosmopolitan view can motivate and guide us toward a few of the most desirable of possible worlds, which may optimize our four values more than other approaches. The neo-Kantian view offers us a realism that explains why all of the possible worlds might exist, and it provides rationales that will help us cope with future conflicts among peoples. And finally, the Law of Peoples view gives us a more complex rational basis to extend peace, justice, and liberty to more peoples, giving us a chance to tend toward the most promising decentered worlds. The principles of the cosmopolitans, the prudence of the neo-Kantians, and the pragmatism of Rawls can all help us work toward the best of all possible worlds.

Trends may bend in many directions. Some future worlds may be freer than others. Some less just. Others possibly more peaceful, and still others more diverse. The ethical choice for individuals, communities, organizations, and states will be to determine what degree of each we can achieve not only in the next fifteen years, but also, as we have in the past, for the longer future of humanity to come.
Annex

Global Trends 2030 Reports
### United States

**Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds**

#### Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Major Trends</th>
<th>Ancillary Trends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual empowerment</td>
<td>Reduction of poverty</td>
<td>Expanding global middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expanding global middle class</td>
<td>Narrowing education and gender gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovations in communications technologies</td>
<td>Improving health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increasingly conflicted ideological landscape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion of power</td>
<td>Rise and fall of countries: no hegemonic power</td>
<td>More limits to hard power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More limits to hard power</td>
<td>Power shifts to networks and coalitions in a multipolar world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic patterns</td>
<td>Widespread aging and shrinking number of youthful countries</td>
<td>New impetuses for migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New impetuses for migration</td>
<td>Increasing urbanization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, water, energy nexus</td>
<td>Increasing demand for resources</td>
<td>Increasing linkages among resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis-prone economy</td>
<td>Pressures on the West</td>
<td>Pressures on emerging powers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multipolar global economy: Inherently more fragile?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance gap</td>
<td>Governance starts at home: risks and opportunities</td>
<td>Increased focus on equality and openness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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84 NIC, “Global Trends 2030,” primarily from p. ii.
| Potential for conflict          | Creation of new governmental forms  
                        | A new regional order?  
                        | Increase in global multilateral cooperation  
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------  
| Wider scope of regional instability | Interstate conflict: continued decline  
                        | Intrastate conflict: chances rising  
| Innovations in new technologies | Middle East: at a tipping point  
                        | South Asia: shocks on the horizon  
                        | East Asia: multiple strategic futures  
                        | Europe: transforming itself  
|                               | Sub-Saharan Africa: turning a corner by 2030?  
                        | Latin America: more prosperous but inherently fragile  
| The role of the US            | Information technologies  
                        | Automation and manufacturing technologies  
                        | Resource technologies  
                        | Health technologies  
|                               | Steady US role  
                        | Multiple potential scenarios for the US  

### European Union

**Global Trends 2030: Citizens in an Interconnected and Polycentric World**

#### Summary

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Major Trends</th>
<th>Ancillary Trends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment of individuals</td>
<td>Global rise of the middle class</td>
<td>The universal spread of human rights and democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More education: the cornerstone of knowledge societies</td>
<td>Improving women’s rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The evolving information age: empowerment but threats to privacy</td>
<td>More sharing of the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A universal information revolution: the new world of the Internet</td>
<td>An increasingly “post-Huntingtonian” world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increasing expectations gaps and risks of extremism and nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converging values and demands, but risk of extremism</td>
<td>The universal spread of human rights and democracy</td>
<td>Demands for political participation but dangers of populism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improving women’s rights</td>
<td>More gender politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More sharing of the earth</td>
<td>Multiplication of non-conflicting identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An increasingly “post-Huntingtonian” world</td>
<td>Increasing “development with dignity”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More participatory democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands for political participation but dangers of populism</td>
<td>Rising wealth in developing economies</td>
<td>A rising middle class but persistent poverty and inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A shift of economic gravity to Asia and the developing world</td>
<td>Demographics: aging and slow growth in the West and East Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demographic pressures migration</td>
<td>Ongoing financial instability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Output and greening pressures
Less abject poverty, but persistent poverty and inequality
A greater focus on women and development
Inequality and the hyper-rich
Social challenges in adv. economies

## Climate change and scarcities: challenges to human development
Climate change and scarcity
Water scarcity
Natural resource scarcity: energy
Other resource scarcities
Delivering the green industrial revolution

## Human security: protecting citizens
Major conflict trends
Scarcity and strategic interests
Military technology and future conflicts
Regional conflict trends

## A power shift to Asia but greater uncertainty
A world of diffuse power
Soft power
The great powers
Uncertainty for some great powers
Uncertainty for some rising middle powers
Regionalism as a vector of power

## Diffusion of power but dangers of fragmentation
A world of networks
A world of private actors
A world of cities

## Increasing global initiatives but governance gaps
Global politics
Charting the future: the governance factor
Governance and responsibility: normative competition and contamination
Reforming global governance: synthesis, resilience, and fairness
Towards governance hubs?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Major Trends</th>
<th>Description of Trends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International security</td>
<td>A more stable world</td>
<td>The world will face less radical changes and shocks than in the previous twenty years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More responsible leadership</td>
<td>Globalization of security and development issues will bring about changes in strategic thinking of political elites of leading nations from a “center of power” orientation to one of “responsible leadership”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More coordination of global powers for international peace will prevail over inclinations to conflict</td>
<td>Widening usage of “soft” and “smart” powers in foreign policy through financial and economic superiority, science and technological advancements, culture and education, and of ideological influence. Increasing calls to reform the UN, WTO, IMF, and other organizations There will be increasing cooperation of global and regional powers in the maintenance of international security with regional integration happening in Europe, the Asia-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

86 These trends originate from Dynkin, “Strategic Global Outlook 2030.” Note that the headings of the “Major trends” column were tailored in order to conform to the other reports’ presentations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive developments in global powers security</td>
<td>There will be gradual democratic reforms in China, as well as an increasing number of democratic countries with rising nationalism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nuclear nonproliferation between the US and Russia will be maintained at lower levels. Great Britain, France, and China may disarm faster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific security arrangements</td>
<td>NATO will remain the foundation for Trans-Atlantic security with some global dimensions, cooperating with Russia and China in some regions such as Central Asia and Afghanistan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A new model for Trans-Pacific security will emerge on the basis of military and political cooperation among the US, China, Russia, Japan, and other countries in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional challenges</td>
<td>Rising importance of advantages in financial, economic, and natural resources; global interdependence; and manipulation of information to influence public opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New challenges</td>
<td>New priorities in the security sphere, included human security; protection of property rights, information security; and habitat safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-traditional threats will be the front line of international military and political cooperation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### World economic growth

- **GDP Growth**: 4–4.5% average annual rate of growth in GDP
- **Innovation Breakthroughs**: Innovation breakthroughs in new materials; bioengineering; human health products and services; energy conservation; humanitarian and social technologies; non-traditional sources of hydrocarbons; and nano-, bio-, info- and cognitive technologies.
- **Contributors**: China, the US, middle-income countries, the EU, and India will be the main contributors of world economic growth. China will become the world leading consumer market.

### Regional integration

- **Integration Progress**: Integration will progress in the EU. A new level of integration in the Asia-Pacific will take the form of a free trade area of “ASEAN, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea”

### Globalization and global economic governance

- **Globalization**: Globalization will go beyond finance toward intellectual pursuits, e.g., skilled labor, art, medicine, education, culture, entertainment.
- **Financial Markets**: Financial markets will stabilize as the real economy becomes less dependent on finance.
- **Governance**: Improvement in global financial governance with new legitimacy of the IMF and the G-20
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Liberal democratic globalization</th>
<th>Globalization based on market and democratic principles will remain the leading ideology.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global governance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ideologies will be increasingly interconnected with global political, social, economic, and cultural trends rather than only the domestic political life of countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sphere</td>
<td>Rising inequalities may undermine not only national social systems, but will cause international social problems (migration, demographics, ethnic conflicts, etc.)</td>
<td>Growing stratification of the global middle class along with the increase of its population in absolute terms. The poor will represent 20% of the global population whereas 10% will be on the verge of starvation. There will be a rapid increase in the number of millionaires and billionaires in China, India, Brazil, Russia, and other rapidly growing economies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers and Sources</td>
<td>Major Trends</td>
<td>Description of Trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Friction (distribution of power)</td>
<td>The degree of ease with which decisions are made at the international level, functions in essence as a relative power meter, ranging from cooperation to confrontation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration (globalization)</td>
<td>The degree to which national and regional economies trade, and their level of functional integration.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymmetry (states/political entities)</td>
<td>The relative discrepancy between states in terms of wealth and power, and influences international relations in terms of both development and security.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State capacity</td>
<td>The distribution and management of power at the state level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources (allocation)</td>
<td>The availability and affordability of, access to, and competition for essential resources, including energy, water, food and other indispensable commodities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>Any long-term significant change in the “average weather” that may have an impact on international relations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of technology</td>
<td>The evolution and availability of technology up to 2030.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Domestic population trends related</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of threat</th>
<th>(migration and urbanization)</th>
<th>to birth, death, age, income, ethnicity, and the other characteristics of a state’s population. It includes migration, urbanization, and external factors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competing ideologies and worldviews</td>
<td>Alienation and confrontation based on different values, religion, and historic geopolitical perspectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super-empowered individuals</td>
<td>Individuals who have overcome constraints, conventions, and rules to wield unique political, economic, intellectual, or cultural influence over people and events.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremist nonstate actors</td>
<td>Non-sovereign entities expressing extremist values and ideas that exercise significant economic, political, or social power and influence at a national, and in some cases international, level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized crime</td>
<td>A structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time, who act in concert with the aim of committing serious crimes or offenses in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogue states</td>
<td>States that act without respect for other states or global norms and rules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confrontational powers</td>
<td>Those powers that are quick to resort to force or threaten the use of force disproportionately to what is at stake and how it affects their vital interests.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>The manner in which the physical world exists and changes of its own accord, such as weather and geology, and the physical forces that shape the world.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of All Possible Future Worlds
About the Author

Thomas Nguyen

The author has worked at the International Peace Institute, Carnegie Council for Ethics and International Affairs, and the US State Department. This work represents his own views. He is also the co-founder and co-programmer of www.bld3r.com, a 3D-printing community. He holds a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University as well as philosophy and political science degrees from the University of Texas at Austin.

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OF ALL POSSIBLE FUTURE WORLDS
GLOBAL TRENDS, VALUES, AND ETHICS

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