

Aspirations and Anxieties: The Neoliberal Geopolitics of the NIC

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## Chapter One: Introduction

A National Intelligence Council (NIC) report called *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (2008a) is the inspiration and data for this thesis. I use *Global Trends 2025* as a site for investigating what sorts of geopolitical knowledge are circulating at the highest tiers of government in the US. Intelligence-gathering and reporting are influential projects of knowledge-creation with respect to US foreign policy. Strategic intelligence is a discursive space in which geographic knowledge, and especially geographic vision, is of primary importance, making widely published reports such as *Global Trends 2025* vital documents that sustain the spatial assumptions and geographic wisdom motivating and legitimating US foreign policy.

In my careful reading, ideas about technological change and globalization emerge as key narratives animating the NIC's vision of global change over the next fifteen years. My analysis draws on and contributes to discussions of globalization concerned with neoliberal geopolitics (Roberts, Secor, and Sparke 2003), and on related discussions of geopolitics and geoeconomics (Cowen and Smith 2009; Sparke 2005a; Sparke 2007b; Roberts, Secor, and Sparke 2003; Domosh 2012; Mercille 2010; Mercille 2008). Geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses come together in this planning tool in support of an increasingly militarized – techno-militarized - global role for the US.

*Global Trends 2025* points to a specific way of knowing the world, but also to a network of people who are producing this kind of knowledge. In the next section, I explain more about the NIC and describe the creation and content of *Global Trends 2025*. I then briefly trace the history of US intelligence before considering the ways in which the discipline of geography and the project of US intelligence are co-implicated. I follow that discussion with a review of critical geopolitics literature, which I nuance with feminist perspectives on the politics of knowledge

production and the nature of global interconnectedness. Finally, I explain my methodological framework.

### **The National Intelligence Council**

I approach *Global Trends 2025* as a window to the internal rationale supporting US imperialism, albeit one that is carefully crafted for a policy audience. The National Intelligence Council (NIC) is the medium- and long-term macro-planning and strategic thinking agency of the US Intelligence Community (IC). The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) relocated the NIC from within the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI); “the National Security Act also specifically establishes the NIC and defines its role at the center of the government’s intelligence analysis efforts” (Best, Jr. 2011, 1). The NIC’s primary function is to support the Director of National Intelligence (DNI). The DNI’s key focus is to integrate US foreign, domestic, and military intelligence and to serve as the President’s principal intelligence adviser. The DNI also manages the National Intelligence Program (budget) and sets the policies, priorities and direction of the IC as an integrated whole. In FY2010, the 17 agencies of the IC had a combined budget of \$53 billion (Office of the Directory of National Intelligence 2010), though the secretive nature of intelligence gathering and covert operations makes it likely that this number is in fact even larger (Paglen 2009). The NIC’s responsibilities are elaborated in intelligence community Directive Number 207, *National Intelligence Council*. Briefly, they are to “provide intelligence assessments to the National Security Council, military decision-makers and Congress, making their work mostly internal to the federal government (Best, Jr. 2011, 2). “Congressional intelligence committees conduct oversight of all intelligence activities and have, on occasion, focused on the analytical efforts, including NIEs. Publically available documents do not,

however, include oversight hearings of the NIC and its work” (2011, 7). I indicate several moments when the NIC’s work has come under scrutiny later in the chapter.

The primary publications of the NIC are National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs), classified documents whose purpose is to centralize the knowledge of all the IC agencies in order to predict the course of events in the near future. The NIC also produces other documents (e.g. conference reports and special reports) to guide and support policy makers and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), including the *Global Trends* series, an unclassified, long-range planning document which projects out 15-20 years into the future (National Intelligence Council).

I analyze the latest edition of the *Global Trends* series, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (2008a) in order to begin understanding how the US intelligence community continues to justify its funding stream to Congress, and to the American public. This report is particularly well-suited for this task because, as an unclassified document, it has a wider audience than classified intelligence documents, and carries the weight and seriousness of a scientifically-researched, professionally-produced analysis. *Global Trends* reports are important because they are directed at the highest levels of governance in the US, including the President, Congress, academics, corporations, and think tanks.

*Global Trends* has been in circulation since the mid-1990s. The stated purpose of the series is to “to stimulate strategic thinking about the future by identifying key trends, the factors that drive them, where they seem to be headed, and how they might interact”(2008a). *Global Trends 2025* was produced as a collaborative effort of US intelligence experts, academics, consultants, and international experts (both US-citizen and non-US-citizen; in an interesting nod to web 2.0 technologies, the current iteration of this report also included an online comment

period). It was primarily authored by Matthew Burrows, counsel for the NIC (Rozen 2009). The 2008 edition describes the state of the world's future as seen by intelligence and other experts under the Bush administration, and was published as President Obama's team took over the administration in January 2009.

In order to help lawmakers create policies with desirable outcomes, the report focuses on a handful of factors that the NIC believes will have a large impact on future events. *Global Trends* dedicates one chapter to each of six 'key drivers': globalization, demography, the rise of new powers, the decay of international institutions, climate change, and the geopolitics of energy. The over-riding impression of these chapters is a sense of anxiety about the changes that the authors think are likely to take place over the next 15-20 years, though this is tempered by a hopeful confidence in technological progress and globalization. The biggest source of anxiety is that the United States' economic dominance is no longer assumed to continue into the future (this report was published only a few months into the economic crash begun in fall of 2008). However, according to the report, US military supremacy is not likely to decline: "In 2025, the US will still retain unique military capabilities, especially its ability to project military power globally, that other nations will continue to envy and rely on to secure a safer world" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 97). The analysis that follows in Chapters Two, Three, and Four is in part an attempt to place these conflicting narratives of declining and/or continuing US global power in the context of geographers' engagements with globalization.

The publication of *Global Trends 2025* was greeted with much fanfare by news media outlets, with headlines highlighting the two major changes from the previous version, *Global Trends 2020: Mapping the Global Future* (National Intelligence Council 2005): the new report acknowledges climate change as a major security threat and points to the fact that the US may be

losing its 'superpower' status, to the risks of a nuclear Iran, to the "arc of instability," and to the increased risk of war over scarce resources. Although *Global Trends 2025* has not been analyzed by geographers, the report has received some attention in peer-reviewed journals, mostly in the form of summary or review, rather than analysis (Shkundin 2010; Munasinghe 2009; Cohen 2009; Anon 2009; Anon 2008; Layne 2009). It seems that the report does have the wide audience for which it aims: there have been various engagements with the report's findings by natural resource managers, political scientists, Naval War College (US), and NATO Defense College in Rome.

My interest is to understand the political work accomplished in the publication and circulation of *Global Trends*, so I need to be specific about *Global Trends*' location within powerful circuits of state craft. In this section, I explain how the "key drivers" and scenarios guiding the report were developed. I argue that *Global Trends 2025* needs to be understood within the genre of "military futurism" (Carr 2010) and as an artifact of the "military strategic studies complex" (Morrissey 2011). Pausing to consider the report's site of production tells us something about how both *Global Trends 2025* and the technology that produced it function as a coupling of knowledge and power – who has the power to define the way that our foreign policy is imagined and what is relevant to foreign policy decision-making. Doing so, we can identify specific sites, institutions and people within the nexus of state funding, the US intelligence community (a combination of military, academic, think tank and private sector actors and connections), and private corporations, who control certain relations of power/knowledge. The knowledge of the future produced in *Global Trends 2025* is spatialized knowledge: it orders the world in specific ways and disciplines reality (in fact, this is the stated intent of the document).

The primary method for creating future knowledge for the document is a technique called scenario planning.

Scenarios as a strategic planning tool have a long history in the US extending back to WWII. As a methodological tool, scenarios are thoroughly enmeshed in the needs and interests of the military-industrial complex (Bradfield et al. 2005, 796–7). In the 1960s in the US (and in France), scenarios were used by the US Department of Defense as a way to determine which weapons systems development projects should be funded. Scenarios were developed by the RAND Corporation, a joint project of the US Air Force and the Douglas Aircraft Company. Through the 1960s, RAND worked almost exclusively on defense management studies for the US Air Force (2005, 797). Sophisticated scenario planning depended on the development of computers for complex calculations, and game theory, which provided a theoretical structure for investigating social interaction, and finally, on the US military's need for war game simulation models (2005, 798). The kind of serious play implied in “war games” is also echoed in the report's descriptions of impoverishment and prosperity as winning or losing the ‘globalization game.’

*Global Trends 2025* used an intuitive logics model of scenario development (National Intelligence Council 2008b). This methodology was pioneered by the Shell Corporation, whose *Year 2000* study provided a controversial example of its use; GE's early reports also produced alternative global social and political scenarios out to 1980 (Bradfield et al. 2005, 800). The intuitive logics methodology can accommodate many voices, is normally either descriptive or normative, and is process-oriented. It relies on subjective and qualitative analysis, drawing on “disciplined intuition.” The method relies on the experience and knowledge of experts (referred to “scenario champions” in this case (National Intelligence Council 2008b, 4). Commonly used

tools include brainstorming, STEEP analysis, clustering matrices, system dynamics, and stakeholder analysis, research and discussion to identify key driving forces. This is in contrast to, for example, fitting curves to historical data to identify trends, as in probabilistic modified trends models. In these intuitive logics models, all scenarios are equally probable futures. The models must be coherent, comprehensive, internally consistent, and underpinned by rigorous structural analysis and logic (Bradfield et al. 2005, 807–8). My analysis pushes back against this final requirement. I argue that *Global Trends 2025* is based on a very limited theorization of global change rooted in neoliberal ideology and a militarized worldview.

The report uses scenarios as of a form of ‘virtual reality’ to teach the reader the lessons that the authors feel should be learned from their models by creating ‘playful’ fictional artifacts from possible future scenarios. Four possible scenarios are communicated to the reader with a short summary of the important factors and a fictional ‘artifact’ that gives the reader the chance to imagine being in the midst of the scenario. The four Global Scenarios are titled: A World Without the West (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 37); October Surprise (2008a, 57); BRIC’s Bust-Up (2008a, 76); and Politics is Not Always Local (2008a, 89). These artifacts include: Letter from Head of Shanghai Cooperation Organization to Secretary-General of NATO June 15, 2015 (2008a, 38–9); US Presidential Diary Entry October 1, 2020 (2008a, 58–59); Letter by current Foreign Minister to former Brazilian President February 1, 2021 (2008a, 77–9); and a *Financial Times* article “Politics is Not Always Local” September 14, 2024 (2008a, 90–1). Although these charts, tables, text boxes, and scenarios are meant to tell a story about the future, my project here is to demonstrate that *Global Trends 2025* is more appropriately thought of as a set of stories about the contemporary moment of neoliberal global capitalist expansion and US supremacy. Using a rhetorical analysis of the text and images in the report, I argue that these

narratives need to be understood in terms of their historical antecedents, and in terms of the kinds of geographical ‘common sense’ upon which they rely. Being attentive to *Global Trends 2025*’s connections to a specific formation of power/knowledge – namely, the strategic studies complex and military futurism (and to a history of geographic imaginations that have their roots in colonialism), alerts us to be on the lookout for certain assumptions that the report draws upon to communicate its vision of the future. Though my analysis is chiefly concerned with understanding how futures models come to be communicated in political language, rather than with the actual models themselves, a brief history is nonetheless useful.

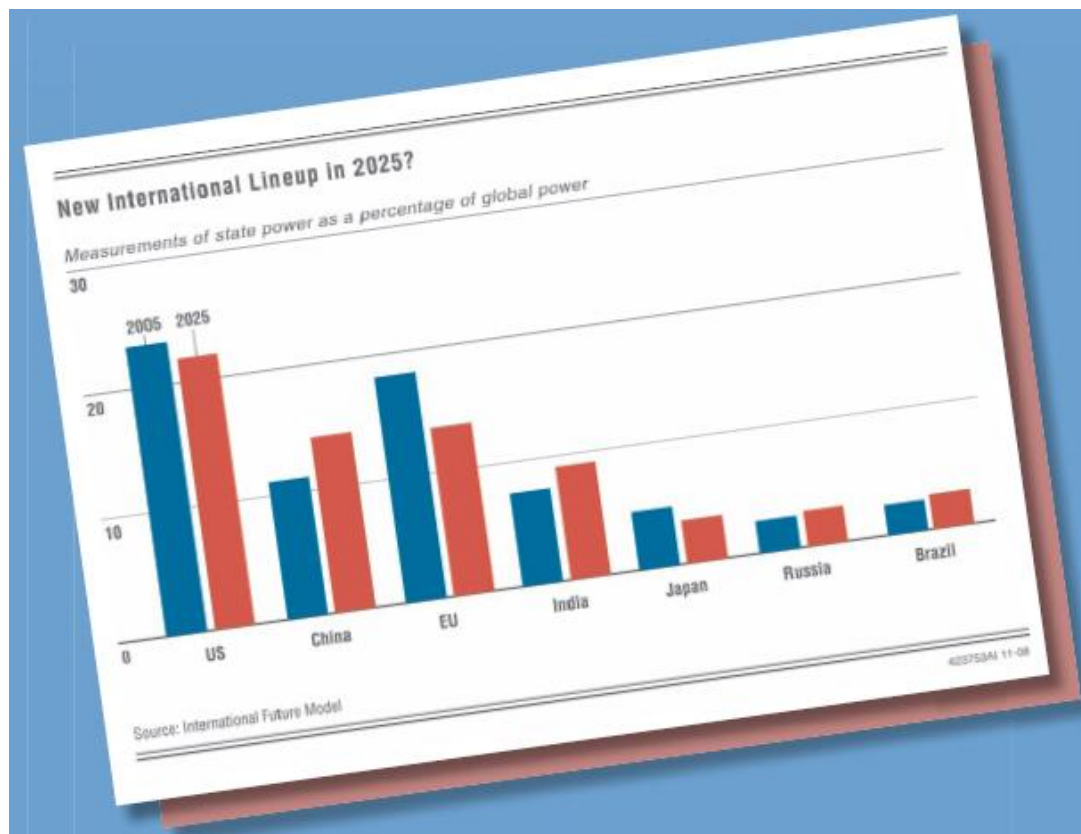
In the final stage of developing *Global Trends 2025*, the team quantified its scenarios using the International Futures model (National Intelligence Council 2008b). The International Futures (IF) model was developed by Barry Hughes at the University of Denver, where the model is housed. The IF model “is a large-scale, long-term, integrated global modeling system. It represents demographic, economic, energy, agricultural, socio-political, and environmental subsystems for 183 countries interacting in the global system” (University of Denver) and its primary purpose is to generate scenarios for educational and policy planning purposes. Hughes was involved with the Club of Rome models of the 1970s, and the current model has developed in stages from there. The previous generation (i.e. the one preceding the web-based version developed for *Global Trends 2020*) was used to create specialized versions for corporate customers such as General Motors, the CIA (the Strategic Assessments Group version), and the European Union (University of Denver). The development of just this one computer-based model threads its way through the entanglements of intelligence, private sector, and academic knowledge production to that form the core of the military-strategic studies complex.

The National Power score index is an example of scenario quantification based on the International Futures model. The National Power score is an index combining weighted factors attributed to states, the primary unit of analysis, representing GDP, defense spending, population, and technology which is expressed as a percentage of global power (National Intelligence Council 2008a, vi, 28, 29). Quantification communicates the scenarios to readers. For example, Figure 1 illustrates how quantification is used to create a visual representation of global change by illustrating the model's prediction that the US, Japan, and the EU will have less relative power in 2025, while China, Russia, and Brazil will gain in relative power. This chart is very abstract, but its larger narrative of declining power for the "West" (here, the US and EU) is supported in the main text of the report and in Scenario 1, "World Without the West."

The IF model and *Global Trends 2025* share the liberal assumptions about human's ability to create change and to control outcomes that also animate liberal political institutions based on universal rights. The IF team's philosophy makes several assumptions: that we must take a global perspective on important issues, that goals for "human systems" are now clearer than in the past, for example, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015, that our understanding of human systems is increasing, and that "the domain of human choice and action is broadening" (University of Denver). The IF model's goals are associated with reducing the number of humans living under conditions of impoverishment and ill health: "Such goals are increasingly guiding a sense of collective human opportunity and responsibility" (University of Denver). The site goes on to say that models such as theirs increase the ability of humans to intervene in the world and achieve goals. I argue that *Global Trends 2025* fails to deliver on this promise by eschewing an understanding of care ethics in favor of limited conceptions of global economic security which promote the maintenance of the status quo in the form of increasing

neoliberal policy reforms and maintaining US global military dominance. In spite of their liberal rhetoric, in practice, both of these systems of global control are based on exploitation and human insecurity, rather than on an actually increasing quality of life and right to self-determination.

**Figure 1: Title Page of Chapter 3 “The New Players”** (National Intelligence Council 2008b, 28)



### A History of Surprises

US intelligence agencies are an important site for understanding US global power and understanding the intelligence complex in the US is essential to understanding US geopolitics (Morrissey 2011, 459), or as one historian of US intelligence put it, “Because the United States is a world power whose interests are global and continual, American policy makers must

necessarily be kept informed” (Thomas 1983, 4). I begin my investigation of the relationships among geographical knowledge, geopolitics, and US intelligence by briefly considering their historical entanglements. As the US was growing into its role as a ‘benevolent empire’ and major world power before, during, and directly after World War II, its intelligence community was just barely organizing itself. Over the past seventy years, the US Intelligence Community (IC) has evolved from an ad-hoc group of academics, Wall Street businessmen, and military men into a vast network of 17 federally-funded intelligence agencies within the executive branch of the US government, covering both domestic and foreign issues.

In spite of this growth, the IC is plagued by an apparent lack of success, marked in both popular and expert narratives by a series of “surprises” that undermine confidence in the IC’s ability to fulfill its mandate to guard against attack. As a result of this history of surprises, agencies like the CIA have a major credibility problem in terms of both their ability to predict and prevent attacks (their original purpose) and their ability to provide accurate information about the present (the most recent example being the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) scandal in Iraq). Since the NIC is responsible for coordinating all forward-looking intelligence, it has been directly implicated in the alleged failures of the IC over the decades. The table below summarizes some key moments in which the IC was unable to produce accurate intelligence, or when Congressional doubts about the IC resulted in a change to laws. Table 1.0 suggests that the IC in the US must work to justify itself.

**Table 1. History of Surprises**

<b>Cuban Missile Crisis</b>	The Intelligence Board's September 19, 1962 Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) stated that the Soviets would not put long-range nuclear missiles in Cuba. On October 14, 1962, photographic evidence revealed the estimate was wrong (Best, Jr. 2011, 5). Kent (1964) defends this mistake by explaining the art of creating estimates and by acknowledging that estimates must take on knowable unknowns (things it is perfectly reasonable for someone to know, such as the exact number of Soviet bombers) and impossible unknowns (things that no one could know, such as the future!).
<b>Church Committee</b>	The Church Committee ended a period of lack of oversight of intelligence, provoked by Watergate and other abuses. Politically, the 1970s are a time of global economic instability; the political situation was made worse by military losses in Vietnam.
<b>Intelligence Authorization Act for FY1993</b>	Best (2011, 6) reports that by the early 1990s, Congress still lacked confidence in the intelligence community's ability to relate to its consumers, so the Intelligence Authorization Act for FY1993 (Public Law 102-496, 106 Stat. 3191) provided statutory authority for the NIC and required that outside experts be included in the preparation of estimates.
<b>September 11, 2001</b>	In spite of the fact that the NIC produced a 1995 estimate "predicting terrorist attacks against and in the United States," <i>The 9/11 Commission Report</i> still criticized the NIC for failing to point directly to the involvement of Al Qaeda in the predicted attacks (Best, Jr. 2011, 6-7).
<b>Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in Iraq</b>	The NIE which addressed the question of WMD in Iraq was prepared by the NIC in September 2001 at the request of Congress; this estimate became a cause for concern when field data collected after the estimate's publication did not support the estimate's claim that WMDs were being hidden by the Iraqis. (Best, Jr. 2011, 7).
<b>Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004</b>	One result of criticism of the quality of analytical products such as NIEs by the 9/11 Commission was a reorganization of the intelligence community according to the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA; Public Law 108-458). IRTPA places the NIC under the control of a newly created Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), headed by the Director of National Intelligence (DNI). The act reiterated the NIC's established statutory duties and "double hatted" the chairman of the NIC as Deputy DNI for Analysis (Best, Jr. 2011, 7).

Before World War II, the US did not have an intelligence service and intelligence gathering was conducted on an ad-hoc basis (Weiner 2007), but the development of a foreign intelligence service signified that the US had become a major world power, a position which

drove its need for information about other countries. The US had been an imperial power since the acquisition of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines (purchased for \$20 million), per the 1898 Treaty of Paris (the Republic of Hawaii was annexed that same year) (Mann 2010), intelligence gathering was an informal affair until 1941. Although the US had been ‘thinking globally’ in terms of economic power for decades (Domosh 2012), it was the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, that convinced US policy makers and military leaders to invest in an organized foreign intelligence service as a vital component of geopolitical power (or “leadership”).

The Office of the Coordinator of Information was created in the summer of 1941 to address the newly-perceived need for better quality and better coordinated intelligence; in June of the next year, the name was changed to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). There were many geographers among the OSS staff; the OSS reported directly to the President and Joint Chiefs of Staff (Barnes and Farish 2006, 813, see also Kirby 1994). After the war, the US intelligence community survived as a series of bare-bones institutions until the formal creation of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the National Security Act of 1947 (Weiner 2007). The establishment of the agency was contentious, but one argument in favor of funding such an agency was the new US position of global power (Weiner 2007).

Three years after the formal establishment of the CIA, Director of Central Intelligence (the head of the CIA) General Walter B. Smith, USA, created the Board of National Estimates as part of the CIA’s Office of National Estimates. The Board’s mandate was to create and coordinate government-wide assessments of foreign threats and trends. In 1950, the Board of National Estimates (BNE) was established as part of the CIA’s Office of National Estimates. BNE estimates of Soviet military capabilities were vital to US planning and negotiation with the

Soviet Union during the Cold War (Best, Jr. 2011, 4). Over the next few decades, the Board of National Estimates “operated as a council of ‘wise men’” and National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) developed into “something of an art form” (National Intelligence Council, “History”). By 1973, policy makers seem to have lost confidence in their wise men: in order to make estimates more responsive to the needs of policymakers, DCI William J. Colby dismantled the Board and replaced it with a group of regional and functional specialists called National Intelligence Officers (NIOs). Six years later, the Board was renamed the National Intelligence Council (National Intelligence Council, “History”).

These changes were occurring within the CIA, the military-strategic studies complex (MSSC) was emerging from US academic, military and government institutions, while US global ambitions were focused on attaining geopolitical and economic control of the Middle East and Central Asia. The emergent MSSC promoted these dual Cold War geopolitical and geoeconomic aims by “firmly bind[ing] existing links between scripted strategic ‘knowledge’ and actionable ‘intelligence’” (Morrissey 2011, 438). The Middle East was imagined as a key region for US strategic planning at this time, as evidenced by the 1979 war game *Gallant Knight*, in which the US defended the oil-rich Middle from Soviet Control (2011, 438).

By the early 1980’s, several strategic studies institutes sprang up, while existing institutes (e.g. the Brookings Institute) called for aggressive US foreign policy, “with most calls betraying an implicit Orientalism, neatly packaged within a broader appeal for American leadership in securitizing the regional political economy and thereby safeguarding ‘global economic health’” (Morrissey 2011, 439).

## Global Power and the Power of Science

Since I began by suggesting that it is important to study *Global Trends* because it reveals the structuring influence of a specific, situated, non-universal (though universalizing) world view which is the focus of my analysis, it is useful here to indicate how some geographers have characterized the evolving conceptions of what constitutes valuable knowledge for military, intelligence, and scientific purposes. The United States intelligence agencies grew up under the care of geographers, and geographers' research agendas were shaped by the concerns of state intelligence agencies. The OSS, for example, employed more geographers than any other institution during WWII (Barnes and Farish 2006, 814). American geographers worked with others in the intelligence community to create a new kind of science, the "World War II regime," characterized by multidisciplinary, objectivity, and "Belief in the instrumental power of science in achieving national security interests" (2006, 810). Objective scientific knowledge was of vital importance to American global power in both the hard sciences and the social sciences. Barnes and Farish see WWII as a crucial break in which this became more true than ever, and the encounters it fostered formed a specific 'something new':

The knowledge created out of the Second World War's destruction and the Cold War's proxy conflicts and modernization projects was not innocent, but was shaped within a peculiar institutional permutation – the military-industrial-academic complex – that directly or indirectly promoted an American geopolitical agenda. The agenda was realized through the politicization of science and its technological products, the use of scientific methods, including analytical logic and qualitative techniques...." (Barnes and Farish 2006, 811)

Barnes and Farish (2006) draw on Pickering's (1995) concept of the "World War II regime" of scientific knowledge and its form to understand how and why the term 'region' went from being a descriptive term to one that was explanatory and scientific. The World War II regime was characterized by a form of science that was "mission-focused, team-based and interdisciplinary, hierarchically organized, state-funded, machine-oriented, and, owing to reduced interest in pure

theory and more interest in application, model-based” (Barnes and Farish 2006, 809). During WWII and the Cold War, Barnes and Farish argue that science adapted to be able to serve the military. Viewed as part of the “WWII regime” of knowledge production, *Global Trends* can be seen as a product of the military-strategic studies complex, now extended into the “military-strategic studies complex,” as a product of science and technology, and as a move to gain and maintain American global power.

While Barnes and Farish (2006) focus on a geographic term, the concept of the ‘region,’ the expertise being developed and applied by the intelligence community extended beyond the geographical realms of science and of the military to include economic aspects of US power. For example, as Andrew Kirby asserts of the OSS, the intelligence community “created many of the blue prints for post-war US economic and military hegemony...[as well as] presiding over the emergence of essentially new conceptions of academic labor” (Kirby 1994, 306) cited in (Barnes and Farish 2006, 813). As Morrissey (2011) argues with his term “military-strategic studies complex,” and as my analysis concludes, the project of US intelligence is deeply entwined with the geoeconomic rationality guiding US foreign (and domestic) policy. I return to this theme in my discussion of critical geopolitics, where I suggest that this intertwining is best captured by the term “neoliberal geopolitics.”

### **Power/Knowledge and the Task of Geography**

"The task of a critical geopolitics...is to investigate how those discursive structures are constructed, to seek their roots in intellectual life in the societies in which they are produced, and in the process show their flaws and (often hidden) assumptions. Critical geopolitics asks questions of how geopolitical discourses might be deconstructed to reveal their complicity in contemporary power relations" (Dalby 1990, x).

The ability of terrorists to surprise the US government and the lack of the WMD, or "smoking gun," in Iraq, were in large part constructed as failures of intelligence; they were both

evidence of and cause for a newly-aggressive foreign policy on the part of the Bush administration. It was precisely because of our inability to know decisively the threats that *might* be there, we were told, that we needed to *act* decisively in case they - these vague and frightening threats - were real. To mark what is new about the Bush administration's actionist geopolitics and the War on Terror, Hannah maps what he calls 'Rumsfeld space,' based on Rumsfeld's 2002 briefing to the Defense Department regarding intelligence about fictitious WMD in Iraq in which he distinguishes between "known-knowns," "known-unknowns," and "unknown-unknowns" (Rumsfeld 2002, cited in Hannah 2010, 397). *Global Trends 2025*, with its 15-20 timeframe, exists in the realm of unknowns.

That a *lack* of good intelligence could be used as a reason for a state to act on that missing or faulty intelligence needs explaining. Matt Hannah argues that 9/11 resulted in a qualitative shift in how fear is produced and managed as a justification for what he calls "actionist geopolitics;" which also elucidates some of the connections between intelligence, foreign policy, and ultimately, an obsession with total knowledge and control. Hannah explains that risk is perceived and acted upon in Western societies since the 1980's, according to the "precautionary principle:" "a commitment to the avoidance of danger, or more generally, of possible negative effects, a primary consideration of decision-making" (2009, 398). The content of the Bush administration's decision-making relative to the precautionary principle can be described as "actionist:" "a systematic preference for action as opposed to inaction" (2009, 398). Hannah argues that Bush's actionist geopolitics and the War on Terror not only take risk more seriously, "but actually *refuses to accept it as an uncontrollable phenomenon*" (2009, 398, emphasis original).

In the aftermath of revelations that the CIA was unable to prevent 9/11 and prewar intelligence on WMD in Iraq was inaccurate (Cornwell 2004), the US intelligence community needs to rebuild its credibility both domestically and abroad. For example, *New York Times* reporter Tim Weiner's (2007) best-selling history of the CIA tells a story of continued failures by the US intelligence community, framing the past sixty years of US intelligence as 'a warning' that the US will not be able to maintain its position of global power without better intelligence: CIA failures constitute a danger to national security. (A bigger danger to the security of our constitution and to democratic governance is the fact that the administration and intelligence community were not held accountable by the American public for failing to produce evidence of WMD in Iraq, as pointed out in former U.S. Marine and former top weapons inspector of the UN Scott Ritter's July 2002 column in the *Boston Globe* (Mann 2010, 169–70). The NIC's own website (National Intelligence Council) also betrays a spotty history of success, describing the need for an agency specializing in predictive analyses growing out of previous failures, which then demanded further change when it became "insular and remote". When viewed in light of these ongoing discussions and doubts, it is clear that planning documents produced by the NIC for policy-oriented audiences such as *Global Trends* are as much justifying itself and its budget to a domestic audience as they are about foreign intelligence. This need to regain credibility with the public influences the form of the document, which is presented largely as fiction, a speculative impulse that extends even to the past, as evidenced by an article posted on the NIC website showcasing what *might have been possible* to know and do before the Pearl Harbor attacks.

Thus, a historical outlook poses two major problems for the US intelligence community in general and for its role in supporting the US as a benevolent empire: 1) a historical outlook disrupts the credibility of US intelligence because of its history of past failures, and 2) it

undermines the US image as a benevolent empire by pointing to all of the ways in which US global power has been forged through covert violence and outright war, and motivated by corporate profits more than American idealism.

This analysis is in part a response to Sparke's suggestion that geographers need to be involved in critically assessing "the geographical *grounds* of fear and hope", which he locates in geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses, respectively, in US political rhetoric (2007b, 338). Sparke argues that geographers have a collective responsibility – an ethical obligation (Sparke 2007a) – to question "what is left out of the consolidation of any particular geographic account, vision, map or idea" so that we can use both theory and empirics to debunk groundless fears (Sparke 2007b, 338). Similarly, Morrissey encourages us to consider "the responsibility of geography in advancing more grounded, nuanced and humane scripting of the various worlds that form the backdrop of so much contemporary US geopolitical and geoeconomic calculation" (2011, 438). In the next section, I will briefly describe the subfield of critical geopolitics as one area of inquiry where geographers have tried to question these geographic accounts.

Critical geopolitics is a subfield of political geography concerned with the representations, practices, and imagined geographies of state craft, and is today situated in a context of global interdependencies that complicate traditional inter-state geopolitical struggles. Geopolitical research describes and analyzes "how state analysts, military and other, interpret the territorial operation of state power and visualize spatial control", while critical geopolitical analysis "exposes geopolitical assertion and makes 'informed critiques of the spatializing practices of power'" (Hague 2004, 227), quoting (O'Tuathail and Dalby 1994, 513). Scholars working in critical geopolitics have questioned traditional definitions of what counts as political and geographic. Critical geopolitical research has also contributed to our knowledge of the

persistent relevance of the state in the face of globalization and the importance of popular and everyday knowledge and image circulation to supporting overseas military and development agendas (Dodds 2001, Dodds provides a brief history of work in the 1980s and 1990s).

O'Tuathail (1996) proposed a three-part formulation of the kinds of geopolitical discourse:

Popular geopolitics is found in mass media, movies, and popular culture; Practical geopolitics is found in actual foreign policy and state bureaucracy; and Formal geopolitics is found in the work of think tanks and academic venues. Increasing attention is being paid to popular culture (Dittmer 2010; Dodds 2007; Dodds 2011; Hughes 2007; Purcell, Brown, and Gokmen 2009; Sharp 2000), as well as to people's everyday, lived experiences, especially experiences of fear (Pain and Smith 2008; Pain 2009).

Simon Dalby's *Creating the Second Cold War: the Discourse of Politics* (1990) provided an early example of the kind of analysis that critical geopolitics might offer. Knowledge of the Other and articulations of technical expertise emerge as key analytics in Dalby's argument that security discourse both creates and conceals deeply political effects in and on the domestic sphere, even as it describes "foreign" threats. Building on Foucault's work on punishment, madness, and sexuality, Dalby asserts that in order to define a normal, a reformed, a sane, etc., discourse must define an "Other"; "Otherness is inherent in the analysis of discourse" (1990, 7). Dalby's site of inquiry is security discourse, which he argues purports to regulate a dangerous and threatening Other, but which has just as many political effects at home (1990, 7). The key point here is that the practitioners of whatever discourse use a set of rules that must be carefully constructed through repetition to analyze their object - madness, deviance, etc. - and in so doing, create both the object itself and their own authority to manage it (1990, 7). Dalby writes, "The Other provides the axis on which acceptable and unacceptable political activities and identities

are constructed. Related to this, is the particular 'common-sense' notion of security as spatial exclusion; the Other as threat is specified in spatial terms as inhabiting somewhere else" (1990, 13). My analysis draws on Dalby's analytics to show that the threatening Other in *Global Trends* is constructed through spatial metaphors, references to policy (e.g. state capitalism), and through the development of discursive figures who produce distinctions between Same and Other. As he demonstrates, spatialized knowledge of the Other, rather than being innocent, is actually the founding concepts upon which notions of acceptable political opinion and behavior are built.

The "expansion of the role of specialized discourses of technical expertise" is a key aspect of new political formations (Dalby 1990, 11). Technical knowledges, communicated through technical discourses, serve to depoliticize the issues at stake: "They depoliticize issues by invoking technical expertise in the place of political decision-making, in the process displacing explicit political discussion and replacing it with expert discourse" (1990, 11). In a similar vein, Dalby also observes that the assumptions upon which this deployment of technical knowledge is based "reduce[s] the scope for democratic decision-making" ((1990, 12) citing Falk 1987), and justifies the existing technical fixes (such as nuclear warheads as a solution to perceived security problems) by discursively creating an ever-present threat to the existence of the society (1990, 12). Critical geopolitics works to uncover and interrogate the assumptions and logics that guide policy-making (and war-making).

As I state above, my analysis contributes to discussions of geopolitics and geoeconomics. Sparke (2007b) describes both as 'geostrategic discourses' (rather than as successive phases in official American foreign policy, although there is a certainly an evolving history to their use) which coexist in arguments about American security. These discourses are specifically spatial and invoke differing geographical imaginations. Geoeconomic discourse is hopeful, invoking

“expanding economic flatness;” “capitalist inclusion rather than exclusion or containment;” networks; connections; and trans-border ties. Geopolitics relies more on fearful imaginaries and uses language such as foreign threats; “peer competitors;” “rogue regimes;” “failed states;” and “terrorist cells” (Sparke 2007b, 340). In his discussion of the 2003 Iraq war, Sparke documents the changing geopolitical doctrine that the Bush (and now Obama) administration’s War on Terror marked: September 11, 2001 was narrated by those masters of statecraft as having precipitated a radical alteration of America’s strategic vision from containment to an axis of evil that demanded offensive action (2007b, 343) – but this shift was not supported through geopolitical discourse alone. The hopeful imaginaries of geoeconomic visions were paired with “fetishistic fears about dangerous spaces and others’ places to create a forceful, albeit forcefully misleading and contradictory, double vision” (Sparke 2007b, 340). Although inclusion in the ‘flat world’ of global capitalism appears to signal a departure from old scriptings of the Cold War, some persistent geographies remain in the geopolitical imagination.

While some have drawn on Harvey’s (2003) discussion of logics of territory and capital to understand geopolitical and geoeconomic thinking, here geopolitics and geoeconomics are thought of as geostrategic discourses (cf. (Mercille 2008; Mercille 2010)), which makes room for us to acknowledge the constitutive power of documents such as *Global Trends*, which does not predict, explain or recommend any specific course of action in direct terms. Instead, it shapes and narrows our understanding of the future. *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (National Intelligence Council 2008a) represents one such mapping of the future in which the interplay between geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses can be analyzed and understood. I think that *Global Trends 2025* potentially signals a potentially new anxiety about those connections themselves so that a shadow international system becomes real, and the networks

take power from states. For example, issue networks like religiously-based ones are scripted as a possible site of resistance to the modernizing force of globalization – even while having benefited from globalization's 'hopeful' aspects.

I draw on Roberts et al.(2003) to sidestep the geoeconomics versus geopolitics dilemma using their concept of “neoliberal geopolitics.” They write about the invasion of Iraq by the US and UK in 2003, and its 'justifications', especially in the work of Thomas Barnett. They say that their central concern is which how a "neoliberal world vision has served to obscure these more traditional geopolitics"(2003, 888) beneath a veneer of hopeful narratives of globalization. One particularly influential justification of the war was in terms of globalization "as 'not only necessary, but good'" (2003, 886). Their discussion of Barnett's gap/core map also raises an important point that they draw out in their analysis: although Barnett's construction of 'different rules' for the gap appears to fly in the face of neoliberal narratives of a flat, borderless world, they argue that concepts of the gap are not "exception to neoliberalism, but rather as neoliberalism's necessary spaces of exception," just as different rules for the colonies were once an accepted part of liberal conceptions for Britain (2003, 894).

Neoliberal geopolitics is also a major justification for the war: neoliberal geopolitics is a "geopolitical world vision...[that] is closely connected to neoliberal idealism about the virtues of free markets, openness, and global economic integration" (2003, 886). "We want further to highlight how the neoliberal geopolitics of the war planners illustrated the contradictory dependency of multilateral neoliberal deregulation on enforced re-regulation and, in particular, on the deadly and far from multilateral re-regulation represented by the 'regime change' that has now been enforced on Iraq" (2003, 886–7).

Drawing on the writings of Thomas Barnett and the New Rule Sets Project of the US Naval War College (Jan 2000), Roberts and colleagues argue that in contrast to Cold War era imaginations of 'danger' as something to be closed off and contained, the "new global vision of almost infinite openness and interdependency...danger itself is being defined *as* disconnection from the global system" (2003, 888). Massey (2005) and others remind us that places defined as 'disconnected' through markers such as 'political/cultural rigidity' and 'abject poverty' (Roberts, Secor, and Sparke 2003, 892) are actually produced as impoverished at the same time that affluent places are produced as such (cf. Harvey 2003). The authors establish that military force is now and has been a component of US imperial powers, and that it now seems to be part of the suite of state-managed liberalization, which also include structural adjustment, fiscal austerity and free trade (Roberts, Secor, and Sparke 2003, 887).

A belief in 'America's mission' to save the world sustains both geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses and interventions. Underlying both US geoeconomic and geopolitical logics (Sparke 2005b, for a discussion of PNAC discourse around US military supremacy) is a deeply rooted sense of American exceptionalism, fueled by an imagination of the civilizing influence of US political and economic expansion which is as discernible in the early 1900s (Domosh 2012, 4) as it is in the current and recent US war-making in Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively. Domosh emphasizes that the US commercial expansion was considered to have a benevolent and often redemptive role; US economic expansion was equated with a civilizing mission and it: "positioned the United States as more 'civilized' than Europe, because it was bringing civilization to others without stooping to warfare, which was considered a throwback to barbarism....To think globally in the late 19th century, then, was to imagine the nations of the world all moving their way up the hierarchy to become like the United States" (2012, 4).

Roberts, Secor and Sparke (2003) chart just one of the many possible re-articulations of neoliberal globalism and American empire. Domosh encourages us to analyze the discursive roots of what she calls “America’s mission” and the discourses of geoeconomics that attend it at various historical periods: “overlooking these discourses blinds us to their power to make American economic expansion seem to be working ‘in the general interest’ (Harvey 2003, 39) and to the role that geography and geographical knowledge have played in their formation” (2012, 20). I will take up these related concerns regarding neoliberalism and American empire by centering the military-strategic studies complex as discussed in Morrissey (2011). *Global Trends 2025*, with its emphasis on collaboration among government, academic, and private sector experts (even contracting out portions of the analysis), is one important moment where these discourses and processes come together in a text.

All of this “America’s mission” rhetoric functions within and sustains a system of white supremacy, which we need to address directly at the outset. It is impossible to understand the discursive effects of *Global Trends 2025* and its relationship to the discourses and materialities of globalization, empire, and American exceptionalism without addressing how whiteness functions to consolidate and justify American privilege and power (for a review and critique of geography’s engagement with whiteness studies, see Shaw (2006)). Geographers have called for the discipline to overcome the mental block that makes us unable to see whiteness as something other than an unremarked “normal” in both domestic and international study (Bonnett 1997), to make ourselves more aware of our “wholly racialized world” (Delaney 2002), and to make an effort to understand the specific forms of whiteness and its geographical imagination (Jackson 1998). David Delaney argues that space should be thought of as an “enabling technology” through which race is produced (2002, 7), therefore we need to take place and discursive

constructions of place seriously, saying alert “to the contextualities and contingencies of power, identity and community” (2002, 10). What this means for a rhetorical analysis of *Global Trends* is taking the report as a kind of ‘race-making event;’ while my analysis here still privileges a one-sided account of what the ‘global’ future might be, by situating squarely within a project of white supremacy, I hope that we can begin to unhide the working the white privilege in our discourse and our discipline (Kobayashi and Peake 2000; McGuinness 2000).

In his 2001 progress report on critical geopolitics, Dodds suggests that critical geopolitics needs to move toward better understandings of how geopolitics functions in everyday life, saying that critiques of the privileged view of international politics have not been accompanied by alternative understandings: “Methodologically, critical geopolitics has been very disappointing” (Dodds 2001, 473). More work also needs to be done to understand military geographies and the uses of geographical knowledge and technologies (such as GIS) in the practices of peace-keeping and war-making. Furthermore, we need a more robust engagement with questions of ethics, justice, cosmopolitanism and universal rights. Finally, we need to direct our research toward the “proliferating risks produced by the success and at times excess of the scientific and technological dimensions of modern life” (Dodds 2001, 478). While in the intervening decade since Dodd’s writing, there has indeed been increased attention to military and technological aspects of international politics (Gregory 2004; Mitchell 2010; Morrissey 2011; Mercille 2008; Mercille 2010; Sparke 2005b; Sparke 2007b), there still has not been a sustained engagement with everyday life (but see (Pain and Smith 2008; Fluri 2011) for an example) and ethical concerns.

## Methodology and Goals of Analysis

A critical geopolitical analysis should do the following things: examine spatial assumptions; challenge the role of the state; question power relations; and challenge how state institutional analysts envision the world (Hague 2004). These four goals are the starting point of my analysis, to which I would add that we must always pay attention to the ways in which both the geopolitical reasoning that is our object of critique *and* our geopolitical analyses themselves run the risk of replicating a masculinist narrative position that privileges total, complete knowledge claims over situated, contextual knowledge (Rose 1993; Haraway 1991a; Nagar et al. 2002; Nagar 2002; Mohanty 2006; Sharp 2009). Hyndman describes a feminist political analysis as one which: analyzes state power at multiple scales; emphasizes embodied epistemologies and subjects; situates knowledge as a view from somewhere; incorporates reflexivity; and employs a "relational ethics" (2004, 309–311). In spite of my acknowledgement that this analysis might consolidate US hegemony by centering it, my turn to feminist methodology offers an antidote. I examine several 'figures' in the text, and insist that we pay attention to the ways in which certain subjects are used and created in the justification of US imperial action. I pay attention to the conditions of productions of *Global Trends*, and I reflect on how the academy is implicated in the circuits of knowledge production I describe.

As in Roberts (2003), the writings of Michel Foucault and geographers' responses to Foucault and to the writing of Henri Lefebvre (Harvey 2009, for example), inform my analysis. Briefly summarized, Roberts' methodological framing is as follows: 1) drawing on Foucault, discourse is treated as part of a variety of 'strategies of power' which produce space materially and discursively and which work "by being deployed spatially"; 2) space is theorized according to the poststructuralist writings of Lefebvre, who argues that space is socially produced through social practices and is not prediscursive; and 3) spatial practices encompass the daily activities of

production and reproduction that come to define our social networks and social organization (e.g. hierarchy; public/private); spatial practices are also defined by representations of space, such as maps and representational spaces (e.g. our imaginations of spaces) (Roberts 2003, 2–3). Dalby further emphasizes the technologies, habits, educative techniques, and forms of communications of institutions that are both the products and productive of discourse (1990, 6).

Lawson frames her analysis of the *World Development Report 2009* as part of a critique of geographic theory:

“The concept of economic embeddedness in place signals much more than politically neutral issues of distance, natural endowments, and transportation costs. Geographers begin from a relational sociospatial ontology in which economic processes are inseparable from social, political, geographic relationships and power hierarchies” (2010, 354).

To support this claim, she cites Harvey (Harvey 1985; 2005) and Plummer and Sheppard (2006). Furthermore, Lawson notes that “geographers view space as coproducing capitalist economies” (2010, 354). She goes on to summarize two examples that call the assumption of space as neutral into question: the petroleum industry in Nigeria and water privatization in Argentina. By drawing on specific, materially grounded histories, she is able to more effectively argue that *relative power* is a better explanation of inequality and difference than correct or incorrect *policy choices*. After all, those same so-called ‘correct’ policy choices – “policies of economic integration are simultaneously and selectively producing poverty and dispossession in those same places” (2010, 355). In proposing to analyze *Global Trends 2025* from a specifically geographical point of view, I am attempting to argue that the effects and effectiveness of the report cannot in fact be fully grasped without a specific attention to the ways in which geographical concepts are deployed in the report.

As Sara Mills acknowledges in her introduction to *Discourse* (2004), “discourse” is a very fluid term that is used to mean many things and is often poorly defined in scholarly work. Therefore, I will draw on her discussion of the way in which cultural theory has taken up Foucault’s work to elaborate a bit on what I mean by discourse for this analysis. Citing the work of Diane Macdonell (1986), Mills identifies two important points of departure for discourse analysis, emphasizing “the institutional nature of discourse and its situatedness in the social” (2004, 9) and the fact that discourses are “principally organized around practices of exclusion...[so that this naturalness of what it is possible to say] is a result of what has been excluded, that which is almost unsayable” (2004, 11). Mills also draws our attention to the work of Marxist linguist Michel Pêcheux (1982), who stresses the “conflictual nature of discourse: that it is always in dialogue and in conflict with other positions. He stresses the fact that ideological struggles is at the heart of discourse” (Mills 2004, 12).

My approach to discourse analysis is heavily influenced by Gillian Rose’s *Visual Methodologies*. I turn to her for guidance on how to analyze the visual components of discourse as serious and significant sites for meaning-making: as Sparke puts it, “an appeal to the truth of vision...is one of the classic tropes of the modern geopolitical imagination” (2007b, 342); see also (Agnew 2003; O’Tuathail 1996). A critical visual methodology tries to critically account for three important sites for each image: the site of the image itself (its content), its site of production, and its site of audiencing (2007). In recommending a critical visual methodology, Rose is chiefly responding to a narrative of social change that she calls ocularcentrism. This narrative posits that as time passes, social change advances from premodern to modern to postmodern, and that these shifts are accompanied by a corresponding increase in ocularcentrism so that seeing and knowing become indistinguishable. Rose notes that space and geography are

not factored into these explanations of social change, resulting in a Eurocentric and ethnocentric universalizing narrative. Rose explains that critics of this narrative fault it for an uncritical celebration of the dominant visuality; instead of accepting 'increasing ocularcentrism' as an explanation for change, we need to pay attention to the specific social power relations articulated in specific scopic regimes, and recognize that no scopic regime is an historical inevitability (2007, 5). One proponent of this critique is Donna Haraway (1991b), who argues that the currently dominant type of 'techie visual gluttony' is available only to some, especially those "tied to militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy" (Rose 2007, 5, quoting Haraway 1991, 188); this particular vision is not neutral: it produces "specific visions of social difference" (2007, 5). I find Rose's critique significant for my analysis because she demands that the construction of certain ways of seeing, or visualities, be questioned and positioned appropriately within the social relations that both produce them and of which they in turn (re)produce. In so far as *Global Trends* foregrounds a certain type of visuality, which is bound up with the narrative of globalization we can read it through the critical interpretive questions advanced by Rose. Like the Doisneau photography Rose (2007) describes in her guide to critical visual methodologies, *Global Trends* relies on a particular combination of technology and truth-telling in order to make a convincing claim about the future. In spite of the report's 'artistic' elements and qualitative development, realism and expert knowledge are still important aspects of the authors' ability to convincingly claim to know about its subject: the future. Building on Rose's critique of geographic knowledge, I argue that *Global Trends* is an example of masculinist knowledge as a way of explaining to which regimes of scientific knowledge the report appeals. Rose recognizes two types of masculinist knowledge: that social-scientific masculinity "asserts its authority by claiming access to a transparently real geographical world"

(1993, 10) and that aesthetic masculinity "establishes its power through claiming a heightened sensitivity to human experience" (1993, 11).

Rose identifies the exclusion of women from hegemonic definitions of geography as an important expression of the relationship between power and knowledge; the job of feminist geographers is to "question the epistemology and ontology of the geographical project" (Rose 1992, 341-2). Rose goes on to show that while women may be absent from geography, the feminine is present in geographical ways of knowing, which are based on masculinist categories.

Feminists have used history as a method for highlighting long-standing structures of power and for examining how and why certain knowledges are produced. We come to see claims to truth and objectivity as situated and historically contingent. However, Bhavnani notes that in their quest for a historicized account of gender oppression, feminists have elided axes of difference other than gender (2004). Bhavnani (2004) discusses Haraway's call for situated knowledges and for strong objectivity, and urges feminists to engage the macro and micro politics of research at the level of *analysis*, rather than just as a "note" in the write-up. She identifies a key confusion of *ethical issues* with *epistemological issues* (see also Nagar 2002). While it is important to reflect on who should be doing research where and for what reasons, reflexivity should also play an analytical role, helping us to assess the validity of research questions and truth claims. Thus, I implicate geography and geographers in this analysis of US intelligence.

Discourse analysis is an appropriate method for critical visual methodologies because it pays attention to both the actual images and their social production and effect: the analyst is concerned with how "images construct accounts of the social world" and is focused on the image itself and is centrally concerned with language (Rose 2007, 146). In chapters Two and Three, and

Four I try to pay close attention to both visual and textual images that appear in the report in an effort to discern the possible social effects of the text. In chapter Two, I consider how the report and its discourses were produced by explaining how the report is produced. In chapter three and the conclusion, I spend time reflecting on the possible effects of the particular visuality expressed in the report.

When I write of discourses of geopolitics, geoeconomics, globalization, masculinity, and femininity, I am referring to sets of practices which encompass a broad range of possible texts and institutional sites, all of which must be considered as part of a specific historical, social moment. *Global Trends* is a specific text that I can use to examine the entangled discourses of globalization, geopolitics, and so on. Thinking about the exclusive nature of the organization of discourse sets me up for arguing that one important goal of discourse analysis is to understand the way in which the realities produced by specific discourses silence certain other truths; by producing one truth, the discourse is powerful because it excludes other truths. Throughout I am aware that not only the discourses I analyze, but also my engagements with it, are representative of ideological struggle.

## Chapter Two: Technologies of Change

“Technology” is an important keyword that refers to a wide range of issues in the *Global Trends 2025*. In this chapter, I treat implicit and explicit references to technology as a coherent (if contradictory) narrative about global change that lays claim to predictive and explanatory power about the future: technological change mediates the global “key drivers” of change – promoting globalization, mitigating the impacts of climate change, and accelerating shifts in relative national power, among other things. Simultaneous expectations of US dominance and decline animate the report, which predicts continuing military dominance even in the face of declining US economic dominance and the possible loss of ‘superpower’ status for the US. This narrative does specific political work by explaining which places and actors are modern and legitimate and which places - or areas of investment - deserve to be treated with caution or with enthusiasm by policymakers. In so doing, *Global Trends 2025* discounts the processes that are productive of the “need for” technological innovation, in terms of both adoption of new technologies, and in terms of the interventionist foreign policy that accompanies both aid and war. It ignores the question of who will benefit the most from technological innovation – likely those with control over technology (and the capital needed to produce it).

Hopeful narratives of technology frame technological innovation as a marker of progress and modernization: I suggest that framing the ‘technological fix’ uncritically as a marker of modernization hides from scrutiny 1) the relations that produce problems for human thriving and 2) that technological change produces new relations of inequality which are not just incidental to the process of modernization, but are fully part of its result. More specifically, two kinds of violence are hidden from view: structural violence and state violence. This is accomplished through the adoption of what I am calling the strategic resources and strategic weapons models

of technological change, which are articulated within a background narrative of neoliberal geopolitics.

Against the backdrop of this narrative, the report posits a strong connection between national status and “technology,” for example, as in the title of a special textbox: “Science and Technology Leadership: A Test for the Emerging Powers.” As I state above, ideas about technology are also integral to globalization, demography, the rise of new powers, the decay of international institutions, climate change, and the geopolitics of energy are the “key drivers” of global change identified by the future scenarios articulated in the report. Even “relative certainties” like global economic growth are imagined as filtering through technological change, broadly conceived: “The pace of technological innovation will be key to outcomes during this period” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, iv). While some references to the impact of technological innovation and diffusion are hopeful (bringing modernity, stability, and economic growth), others are more fearful and anxious about the future. The major threats to the current US-dominated world order are climate change, nuclear weapons, the “arc of instability” (see Chapter Three), and an increasing risk of resource wars: technology is imagined as “key to outcomes” of these threatening futures as well. In the next section, I establish that *Global Trends* associates a narrative of technology with national power (thus territorializing technological change) and uses technology as a marker of progress and modernity.

### **Technology, Territory, Modernity**

How is technology measured and described in *Global Trends*? In order to answer the question of what the authors might mean by phrases like “the pace of technological innovation will be key,” I examine a special text box in which technological innovation is quantified using a model called the National Innovation System. This text box, “Science and Technology

Leadership: A Test for Emerging Powers” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 13), provides a short discussion of how the NIC determines the relative innovation capability of a state (in this case, the US, China, and India). This box is interesting to me for two reasons. First, it provides something of a window into how predictions are made by describing the “NIC-contracted global survey of scientific experts” based on the National Innovation System (NIS). The concept of an NIS, the text box explains, was created in the 1980s in response to questions about what enabled a country to successfully transfer new ideas into new commercial products, but has since evolved to account for “increased globalization” and information technologies (2008a, 13). The nine factors used to create the NIS on which *Global Trends 2025* is based include:

1. “fluidity of capital,
2. flexibility of the labor pool,
3. government receptivity to business,
4. information communication technologies,
5. private sector development infrastructure,
6. legal systems to protect intellectual property rights,
7. available scientific and human capital,
8. marketing skills, and
9. cultural propensity to encourage creativity” (2008a, 13).

With their emphasis on capital flows, flexible labor, business-friendly government, and intellectual property rights, these factors clearly suppose a neoliberal free-market scenario in which private businesses do most of the innovating and state governments are the intended beneficiaries (accruing power and benefits based on a model of nation-as-market). Neoliberal policy norms infuse the National Innovation Systems model, which is predicated on a world of increasing globalization, while other important issues are neglected. My point here is to recognize that the NIS model only deals with quantifying and describing technological innovation, which is an insufficient basis for policy and way of understanding the future. We

need to understand the implications of technological change for relations of inequality and environmental impact as well as its implications for “national power.”

This text box also solidifies our imagination of certain places, especially of the US as a natural leader in technological innovation. It asserts that the US currently has a stronger NIS than China and India, and that we are likely to maintain this superiority. However, it predicts that China and India will each achieve equivalent capabilities to the US in one category each: government receptivity to business innovation and scientific and human capital, respectively (2008a, 13). The US will retain special dominance in intellectual property rights, ability of business to “mature innovation,” and “cultural propensity to encourage creativity” (2008a, 13). Like much of *Global Trends 2025*, this claim that the US is “culturally” better at innovating technology smacks of imperial descriptions of foreign populations as backward and technology-hating. These are dangerous descriptions that some still find to be convincing justifications for war (Sui and Morrill 2004).

Technology is associated with innovation and adaptability, qualities that *Global Trends 2025* claims for the “US and other Western states” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 51) and also specifically for publicly traded oil companies (vs. state-owned ones). The push for innovation is portrayed as “giving geopolitical advantage” even when the costs might be very high. For example, “Cultural hesitancy to go down an ‘unnatural’ path of human development” is among the barriers to cognitive technology (2008a, 49). A table listing likely, probable, and possible technology breakthroughs includes far-fetched ideas, listing “human strength augmentation technologies” that “promise to give a person superhuman strength and endurance,” and “human cognitive augmentation technologies” among the possible and plausible breakthroughs in the next 15-20 years, respectively (2008a, 48). Much is left out of these

discussions, which give more attention to projects such as the making of super-soldiers than they do to discussing the present and future consequences of technological change, leaving issues of structural inequality (in which the consequences of technological change are displaced onto countries other than the US) unquestioned. While this question of unequal social and environmental costs of technology is elided, unequal access to opportunities to invest in technology is explained through cultural barriers.

### **Technology in the Scenarios**

Thus far, I have drawn on examples of technology discourse to sketch an abstract notion of what technological innovation means in the context of *Global Trends 2025*, and I have described the authors' argument that technology shapes the other 'key drivers' of the report. In this section, I examine in more detail how the authors imagine this occurring, with two goals: 1) to demonstrate the way in which the report uses fictional 'artifacts' from a possible future to make policy recommendations and advance a specific ideology regarding global political economic relationships, and 2) to show that discussions of technology are intertwined with a vision of neoliberal globalism ("global political common-sense about the need for economic liberalization" (Sparke 2012, chapter one) as both a desired and naturalized or inevitable future. I chose to explore "October Surprise," one of the four global scenarios that are the core of *Global Trends*, first because technological change is a significant factor in the outcome of this scenario.

"October Surprise" contains a contradictory narrative regarding economic growth and technology. The possibility of this scenario arises from several preconditions: environmentally destructive growth policies are continued, governments lose legitimacy due to their inability to effectively cope with disasters, and "Despite technological progress, no technological 'silver bullet' is found to halt the effects of climate change" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 57).

After summarizing these major factors for this scenario, the authors offer a sample fictional document that is intended to express the possible future situation in which we might find ourselves, which in this case is a US “Presidential Diary Entry,” dated October 1, 2020. The reader is positioned as peeking over the shoulder of the President, who reflects “in private” on the day’s event, catastrophic flooding in New York City. He or she laments advice not followed, and speculates about the (future) future. He or she writes about the problems of waiting too long to relocate the New York Stock Exchange further from the threat of coastal flooding, and implicitly urges readers from the past to invest in energy and infrastructure:

“We were warned that we needed to decentralize our energy generation and improve the robustness of our infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events. Tragically, we did not follow this advice” (2008a, 58).

References in this artifact to flooding in New York and to the deaths of 100,000 Chinese due to a dam disaster (2008a, 59) support the clearly drawn connection between destructive growth policies and environmental destruction listed as a precondition for the scenario. In spite of this, the President is unable to conclude that such “irresponsible growth” (2008a, 58) should have been avoided:

“The Europeans, of course, have been out in the lead on energy efficiency, but they have been too ready to sacrifice growth, and without economic growth, they have not been able to generate high-paying jobs” (2008a, 58).

Efforts to increase efficiency are thus cast in opposition to the “good” of increasing economic growth. By stating that “high-paying jobs” are the goal of growth rather than, for example, widespread economic security, this didactic reflection leaves room for questions of persisting inequality to remain unasked, let alone answered. Global inequality is at least acknowledged: “The poorest countries have suffered the most from our hands-off approach to globalization” (2008a, 59). The “October Surprise” diary entry *clearly* identifies global elites’ view of

“globalization” and their faith in technological solutions as a problem that prevented positive change from occurring: “We all assume technology will come to the rescue, but so far we have not found the silver bullet” (2008a, 58). The concept of the technological fix, the idea that a technological “silver bullet will solve problems of impoverishment and resource exploitation, remains unquestioned.

In this chapter, I argue that reading *Global Trends* in terms of neoliberal geopolitics can help make sense of contradictions within the report (that is to say, it can help us understand why the text protects the goal of economic growth through technological innovation, even when its own scenarios suggests that this goal is actually the cause of future disasters). A significant component of the neoliberal geopolitical rationality is the economic liberalism promoted in the “October Surprise” diary entry, which emphasizes economic growth, reduced trade barriers, and retreat from social programs:

“We all have been focused on boosting or maintaining greater economic growth. We have a lot to be proud of in that regard. We have avoided giving in to protectionist urges and managed to reenergize the trade rounds” (2008a, 58).

“I know we have talked for a long time about not all boats being lifted and the need to do something about it. But I think we thought is best that Bill Gates, NGOs, and others handle the problem” (2008a, 59).

So even though the artifact appears to recommend mitigation against the effects of environmental devastation (strengthening infrastructure, etc.), the report does not seem to recommend that we consider collectively changing course, instead advocating pride in the very things it identifies as leading to a scenario of catastrophic loss of life and destruction of livelihoods. The task of dealing with inequality and the unequal impacts of extreme weather are left to the private sector; any sense of responsibility to deal with or prevent disaster is thus abdicated by government in this scenario. Although *Global Trends* portrays itself as a neutral

tool for choosing the best policies for the future “we” want, it seems clear given this contradictory narrative that the report’s authors are invested in a version of neoliberal globalism.

In addition to naturalizing a future of free trade and austere outlooks on social provision, this Presidential diary entry envisions a military role for the state. In reference to the harsher effects of “hands-off...globalization:” “NGOs can’t mount peacekeeping operations. States at some point have to take responsibility” (2008a, 59). The scenario thus posits a role for the state that involves military intervention in the service of maintaining the current global order, thus uniting a neoliberal globalist perspective on the future with an expectation of support of continued globalization (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of what “globalization” means in the context of the report). Next, I briefly consider the remaining three scenarios by highlighting how technological innovation shapes each possible future.

In the scenario “A World Without the West,” protectionist movements in the US and Europe have led to slow economic growth. In turn, this has shrunk defense budgets and the US has not been able to maintain global military superiority. Protectionist trade barriers are partly the result of frustration over “The fact that China and India became first adopters of so many new technologies – next generation Internet, clean water, energy storage, biogerontechnology, clean coal, and biofuels” (2008a, 38). The scenario accuses Russia (the letter’s author is the Russian head of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization) of stealing technology for clean fossil fuels from “the West” (2008a, 39).

In “BRIC’s Bust Up,” Brazil takes on a diplomatically significant role among the squabbling US, China, Russia, India, and oil-producing states. Alternative energy in the form of clean coal, solar, wind, and geothermal does not take off in this possible future, despite US and

Chinese investment in innovating these technologies. Brazil is in good standing on energy issues thanks to its “continued development of biofuels in a responsible way” (2008a, 79).

The scenario “Politics is Not Always Local” is one in which global communications technology confers so much power to networks of activists that states no longer control the international agenda. Environmentalism provides a point of confluence for diverse agendas.

“In a sense, we have reached the Promised Land in which global cooperation is more than a ‘conspiracy’ among elites but bubbles up from the grassroots across historic national and cultural divides” (2008a, 90).

These scenarios raise important themes for understanding how technology functions as a narrative in the report: the importance of communications technology, alternative energy technologies (alternative to oil), and the importance of technological innovation to state power more generally (as expressed in the NIS as well). I discuss these themes in more detail below.

### **Hope and Fear in Discourses of Strategic Resources and Strategic Weapons**

Discussions of technology are a site of tension between two competing imaginations of space in *Global Trends 2025*. On the one hand, there is the idea that technological innovation and the benefits of new technology will diffuse over the smooth surface of the earth, thus bringing the benefits of innovation to the poor masses (e.g., increased food capacity). Here, space is neutral and technology passes through borders, benefiting those who need it (more likely, those who can take advantage of it). This innocent view of the relationship between technology and space, however, is also haunted by a more fearful imagination of technological diffusion expressed through anxious narratives about communications networks and the diffusion of weapons technology to nonstate actors. In the context of these anxieties, technology either provides a point of connection for actors who would usurp the authority of states to set the international agenda, or technology is a weapon which would allow actors such as terrorists to

usurp states' role as the only legitimate perpetrators of violence. Analyzing the "smooth space" world view in terms of both its hopeful and fearful aspects reveals that what is really at stake in this vision of change is state power (deterritorialization), and especially US supremacy.

While the construction of particularly neoliberal and state-centric normativity could be usefully analyzed in terms of discourses of geoeconomic and geopolitics, I understand the discourse of technological change in *Global Trends 2025* in terms of neoliberal geopolitics (as I suggest above), which captures the co-constitution and co-application of neoliberal economic reform and (US) state power. Neoliberal geopolitics speaks to contradictory combination of geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses and spatial imaginations that I find in the report; the word 'neoliberal' implies not just a particular type of calculation or logic (as in geoeconomics), but also a normative position, neoliberal geopolitics. This term better captures the way in which the discourse of technological change is positioned as part of a broader set of trends (global neoliberal capitalist expansion) that is "not only necessary, but good" (Roberts, Secor, and Sparke 2003). It is through this normative lens that *Global Trends 2025* re-circulates long-standing narratives about US civilizing mission and "West vs. rest" within its discourses of technology.

I group references to technology's role in disrupting or sustaining such "West vs. rest" narratives (as in the "World without the West" scenario) under a discussion of fearful and/or threatening discourses. As I argue earlier in the chapter, state control appears to be the most significant motivating factor for technological innovation in the territorialized vision of technological change surrounding questions of technology and geopolitical advantage in *Global Trends*. Innovation benefits nation states by benefiting national economies, and is framed here as a "test for emerging powers" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 13). Technological

innovation is framed as an underlying force propelling ‘globalization’ (one of the report’s ‘key drivers’) that requires adherence to neoliberal free market principles. In the discussion that follows, I discuss technology in terms of state power, especially with respect to control over nuclear weapons. I argue that these discussions do a specific kind of political work: they naturalize neoliberal economic relations and naturalize the state as the proper users of violent technologies such as nuclear weapons. In the process, some states are constructed as modern, progressive and some kinds of violence are constructed as in the service of some sort of stable international order, while other actors and kinds of violence are constructed as irrational and threatening.

There are both hopeful and anxious aspects to technological change as it is narrated in *Global Trends 2025*, especially as in terms of the spread of technology across space. The hopeful view of technology bolsters arguments about modernization and progress through technology and the diffusion of Western-controlled and patented technology and ignores the incredible violence that attends this expansion (for example, the Cold War – scripted as bringing a nice stable, rational global order of power). I argue that at least two kinds of violence are obscured through narratives of technological change in *Global Trends 2025*: structural violence and state violence, which is accomplished through the adoption what I am calling the strategic resources and strategic weapons models of technological change.

In this section, I examine the strategic resources model of explaining technological change, in which innovation is the means of accessing strategic resources (here, food, oil and water). Technological development is offered as the solution for a variety of problems, from hunger, to global climate change, to oil shortages. *Global Trends 2025* places its hopes with technology even when, by their own admission, it seems like an unlikely solution, as in the case

of oil shortages. In this problem-solving role, and in terms of weapons superiority, technology is a source of power for states that can access it (states being the primary legitimate actors in their analysis). The following examples rely on the “technological fix” to resolve current and future problems such food shortages, oil shortages, and even human aging. For example, *Global Trends* advocates a second generation of Green Revolution technology to solve the problem of “food shortages.” I argue that focusing on a technological solution to widespread hunger hides uneven relations: the uneven distribution of wealth constrains access to food and is a more empirically-grounded explanation of widespread hunger than a lack of technology (Massey 2004; Harvey 2005). Ongoing and future inequality, in this case, generates an opportunity for some to profit from the innovation and sale of new Green Revolution technology, but can also serve to entrench vastly uneven social relations. According to the instrumental logic of *Global Trends 2025*, food and water are considered strategic resources; this logic is produced in part through discourses of technology. These resources will become increasingly scarce over the next few decades: the number of countries considered either cropland or freshwater scarce is predicted to increase from 21 to 36, or 1.4 billion people, more than double the current estimate of people experiencing this scarcity (2008a, 51). The increased severity of food and water shortages is said to be the result of growing populations and of climate change. Instead of critiquing problems of distribution and access, the report represents food shortages as a ‘technical problem’ with a technical fix, asserting that big producers such as India, China, the US and the EU are “likely to work to launch a second Green Revolution, this time in Sub-Saharan Africa, which could help dampen price volatility in worldwide grain markets” (2008a, 52). The prospect of a second Green Revolution is one of the only ways in which impoverishment is addressed in *Global Trends 2025*. Although seemingly hopeful about the potential of a technological fix for food production,

it is still not hopeful about the future of Sub-Saharan Africa, which it says will continue to be characterized by impoverishment, violence, inequality and ethnic divisions (2008a, 56). Even within the “technological fix,” here a hopeful narrative about Green Revolution technology that will provide a solution at the level of “worldwide grain markets,” some places are still hopeless in the future. Any discussion of the contemporary and historical production of Sub-Saharan Africa as a hopeless place is ignored in this discussion.

Oil is a strategic resource with tremendous geopolitical significance today and in the future (recall that the ‘geopolitics of energy’ is a ‘key driver’). *Global Trends 2025* advances contradictory claims regarding technology that might eliminate dependence on oil for energy. The authors write that “All current technologies are inadequate for replacing traditional energy architectures on the scale needed, and new energy technologies will probably not be commercially viable and widespread by 2025” (2008a, 44). Yet, in spite of this near certainty, *Global Trends 2025* does not advocate measures that might avoid the human cost of, for example, a lack of oil to power industrial agricultural production. Instead, it hopefully asserts, “We believe the most likely occurrence by 2025 is a technological breakthrough that will provide an alternative to oil and natural gas” (2008a, 46), in spite of long lags in adoption, and “Despite what are seen as long odds now, we cannot rule out the possibility of a transition by 2025 that would avoid the costs of an infrastructure overhaul” (2008a, 44). This seeming faith in “technology” to solve problems with such huge human and environmental impacts, especially lacking any strong evidence of probably long-term solution, is puzzling to say the least. As I note above, the scenario “October Surprise” makes note of this attitude as a prevailing approach, but also portends destruction as its result. This contradiction is smoothed over by reference to the acknowledged common good of the free market.

Promoting a ‘technological fix’ to what is really a crisis of unequal access created through the relations of global capitalism points to a very specific world view, distinct from a language of the ‘right to water’ or ‘right to food.’ Even more disturbing is the way in which *Global Trends 2025* frames the solutions as ones that will provide political leverage in the future, rather than celebrating them as life-saving technology. In a table called “Technology Breakthroughs by 2025” (provided by SRI Consulting Business Intelligence and Toffler Associates), “clean water technologies” is listed as a probable breakthrough, driven by increased demand for water based on population growth and high industrial demand, as well as increasing scarcity due to climate change. The entry for the table row “Why is the Technology a Game-Changer?” for this innovation reads, “...First movers to develop and deploy cheap energy-efficient clean-water technologies could gain huge geopolitical advantage” (2008a, 47). The distillation of technological advances into their ability to generate state power, rather than save lives or increase people’s quality of life, is a theme that appears throughout *Global Trends 2025*. This explanation of change in which technological change is such an important force with a global scalar framing of change is what I am trying to capture with the term “strategic resources model.” This model narrows the field of political contestation to technical questions of investment and innovation, effectively pushes questions of structural inequality out of view.

I term the above examples ‘hopeful’ because they assign a positive role to technological innovation within the logic of the report (e.g., technological innovation itself is viewed in a hopeful light in terms of its ability to both alleviate problems at the global scale, such as global oil scarcity). That is, technological innovation is associated with modernization, problem-solving, and with maintaining the stability of state power. The examples highlight the importance of strategic resources to state contestations of power, celebrating technology as a way to access

them, and they also resonate with tropes of geoeconomic discourses of inclusion such as economic integration, and connection (Sparke 2007b). Furthermore, these examples highlight the way that references to liberal economic goals or progress serves to smooth over contradictions in the narrative. This hopefulness is important to understanding the attraction of geoeconomic vision, but also point to how it is intertwined with geopolitics and state power. Next, I address themes of state power and geopolitics more specifically in my discussion of strategic weapons discourse.

According to *Global Trends 2025*, the shifting balance of power among states is a major driver of change in the Globalization narrative. In the strategic resources discourse, technology, especially new, innovative technology, is a source of national power in part because of the economic advantage it can provide to whoever owns it (as discussed above). The strategic weapons approach to technological change abstracts weapons technology from its violent reality by misframing the history of nuclear weapons technology and pushing the violence of nuclear weapons into a risky future. Strategic weapons discourse hides the ongoing violence of the current international order; it is a territorialized vision of technological change, concerned with diffusion of technology to nonstate actors or to unstable states. Dalby (1990, 7) argues that security discourse creates and conceals political effects in and on the domestic sphere, even as it discusses foreign threats. Here, thinking through technological change in terms of weapons articulates the smooth-space paradigm as well as creating a dangerous Other which it purports to manage. Nuclear weapons provided the basis of what *Global Trends 2025* remembers as a peaceful, “stable deterrent relationship” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, ix, 62) during the Cold War, which the report calls a war of ideology, rather than as the imperial contest for resources and economic influence.

There are two things that I want to engage through the strategic weapons discourse: 1) the assumption that violence and control through violence are the most rational and most effective tools of governance, and 2) the importance of technology in creating a particular perspective from which state violence appears less messy by hiding its consequences. *Global Trends 2025* writes, in the future,

“It is not certain that the type of stable deterrent relationship that existed for most of the Cold War would emerge naturally in the Middle East with multiple nuclear-weapons capable states. Rather than episodes of suppressing or shortening low-intensity conflicts and terrorism, the possession of nuclear weapons may be perceived as making it “safe” to engage in such activities, or even larger conventional attacks, provided that certain redlines are not crossed. Each such incident between nuclear-armed states, however, would hold the potential for nuclear escalation.” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 62).

Although a “first use” of nuclear weapons is implicitly acknowledged in the text (through reference to a possible “second use”), the threat of nuclear escalation is framed as largely a future issue, relevant if the “wrong countries” get a hold of nuclear weapons, for example, Iran (National Intelligence Council 2008a, v). Possession of nuclear weapons (and the US status as the only country ever to use nuclear bombs in a wartime setting) contributes to the factors that make it “safe” for the US government to engage in an almost continuous war and unilateral actions which are far from “suppressing of shortening low-intensity conflicts and terrorism,” and yet this aspect of strategic weapons is silent in the document. Instead the concept of strategic weapons comes to mean keeping inappropriate actors from possessing nuclear weapons.

Although conflicts during the Cold War may have been safe moves for the US government (and they often were not that either), for its soldiers and citizens, the Cold War was not safe at all. The US involvement in Vietnam, during which the US perpetrated atrocities and terrorized multiple countries with advanced technologies such as Napalm, cost the lives of 58,000 US soldiers, plus the thousands of soldiers who were injured physically and mentally.

Harsh and violence repression of domestic discontent over the war and other issues also resulted in lost US lives (Zinn 2003). Instead of recognizing the violence of the Cold War era, the risks and violence associated with nuclear weapons are cast as a future, rather than present, problem. The risk of a second use of nuclear weapons is said to be higher in the future: “Future asymmetries in conventional military capabilities among potential rivals might tempt weak states to view nuclear weapons as a necessary and justifiable defense in response to the threat of overwhelming conventional attacks” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 67). This use of weapons is associated with terrorist violence:

“For those terrorist groups that are active in 2025, the diffusion of technologies and scientific knowledge will place some of the world’s most dangerous capabilities within their reach. One of our greatest concerns continues to be that terrorist or other malevolent groups might acquire and employ biological agents, or less likely, a nuclear device, to create mass casualties” (2008a, ix).

The passages quoted here make oblique reference to a history which should be centered in a discussion of nuclear weapons: the fact that the US is the only country to have used nuclear weapons to cause mass casualties. Instead “risks” are assigned to specific types of political actors, nonstate actors (terrorists) and “weak states,” and to specific geographical regions, the Middle East, “conflict-prone region” (2008a, 67). While “our” possession of nuclear weapons during the Cold War is seen as suppressing conflict through a “stable deterrent relationship,” “their” possession of nuclear weapons “over there” is seen as creating the probably of *increased* violence. I argue that this dichotomy serves to construct “our” violence as appropriate and safe, while others’ violence is considered unpredictable and risky; the creation of this dichotomy masks the effects of violence action and warfare perpetrated by us, thus safely bracketing questions of whether US policies on military action around the world is or is not part of the creation of future risks.

I have argued that “technology,” with its connotations of modernization and progress, is afforded the power to generate geopolitical advantage and thus international power for the actors that create it. These narratives of technological innovation imply a wide variety of technologies and they also imply both flat-world visions of space and an uneven, geopolitical vision. In my final example, I will focus on the report’s treatment of communications technologies, and the social formations that they are said to encourage: issue networks. What becomes clear in the discussion of networks is that it is not merely that these two visions of space compete – but in issue networks, neither states nor corporations control the flows of information and capital. This narrative is not entirely new, but feeds older and more classic fears that have already been indicated, including the shift of power from West to East, decline of the state/deterritorialization, and racialized ethno-religious discourse (who counts as modern; see Chapter 4). In the case of issue networks, technological change (communications technology) is associated with a threatening Other.

*Global Trends 2025* defines issue networks as networks focused on problem-solving by nonstate actors in an international context that will have at their center a national or international commission of experts; current examples include: Financial Stability Forum; Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum; and the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 84–5). These networks are a source of anxiety for state managers because they are predicted to shift power away from states, limiting governments’ ability to control international debates. They will “develop and diffuse standards for various realms,” including IT, regulations, and management of the “new post-industrial economy,” which will be the basis of agreements between states (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 85). It is implied in the report that ‘special interest’ networks could also be seen as a challenge to

democratic rule (in its idealized form at least; whether democratic governments act in the interest of all their citizens or in the interests of power corporations is a question worthy of consideration): by limiting state power, networks would in effect be limiting people's ability to self-govern. Here it is appropriate to acknowledge that the current global rule is an expression of a dominant local, not a global universal (Massey 2004), and is imbricated with representations of race.

The 'decline of the West' narrative reappears in discussions of an approaching 'multipolar world.' In this section, I will consider how this theme intersects with discussions of 'Islam' and 'Muslims' by examining *Global Trends*' descriptions of the changing relationship between state power and 'networks.' Among issue networks, religion-based issue networks are predicted to be more powerful than secular issue networks in the future (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 85). *Global Trends 2025* asserts that we will be "entering a new age of clerical leadership in which religious leaders become major power brokers in resolving future international disputes and conflicts" (2008a, 85). Religious networks figure large in the imagination of the report. This seems to be especially significant in the context of the changing relationship between state power and civil society. *Global Trends* posits that the weaker the state, the "more critical the role of religious ideology, usually of a fundamentalist or theocratic nature" (2008a, 87). While *Global Trends* does not limit the meaning of 'religious ideology' to Islam, I do think that it is reasonable to suggest that references to religious ideology in the text should not be separated from a discussion of Islam.

*Global Trends* attributes several 'abilities' to religious networks. They can channel social and political protest (2008a, 85) by framing "popular grievances in terms of social justice rhetoric and egalitarianism" (2008a, 86); gather power to religious entrepreneurs, with the

potential for those leaders to even try to become leaders of nations, or usurp state power in a literal sense (2008a, 85); serves as a "vehicle for opposition to that same modernizing process [of globalization]" (2008a, 85); increase the risk of religious conflict and minority scapegoating; and function as places from where state power is usurped in the case of a "global down turn" (2008a, 85). The discussion of religious networks serves as another opportunity to construct 'globalization' as 'modern:' "Although religious groups have been a great beneficiary of globalization, religion also has the potential to be a primary vehicle for opposition to that same modernizing process" (2008a, 85). This framing recalls narratives of religious networks are anti-modern, such as those that we saw being deployed in discussions of Taliban in Afghanistan as rejecting modern life (see Sui and Morrill 2004).

Technological change – whether courted or imposed – is implicated in both the possibility of increasingly interconnected political-economic relations as well as in the daily material practices of paid economic work and the work of social reproduction. I have identified technology as a narrative that operates within a global scalar framing of change in *Global Trends 2025*. However, because technology is not *just* a narrative, but a set of things, material processes and relations, we can point to specific instances to ask whether our dominant discourses can account for the real impacts on people's everyday lives (and therefore whether they are an acceptable basis for policy-making). Thinking through both the discursive and material aspects of narratives of technological change thus provides a foothold for feminist critiques of abstract knowledge-production concerning a global scalar frame.

My concern is that documents such as *Global Trends 2025*, with their advocacy of technological innovation, modernization ideology, neoliberal trade policies, and US military supremacy, pave the way for a more violent, less caring foreign policy in the future. I conclude

that a critical feminist re-reading of *Global Trends 2025* should push back against this narrative, reworking it into a critique of increasing militarization and of its instrumental logic. This is an opportunity to evaluate change by prioritizing impacts on people's real lives both conceptually and empirically, instead of in terms of abstract hopes and fears. By "conceptually" I mean taking feminist critiques of hierarchal constructions of scale and of knowledge production about "the global" seriously. What is being left out of our accounts, our spatial imaginations, our mappings, and our vision of the future that might be helpful in framing an ethical stance to guide US "global" policy?

This narrative encodes specific notions about what constitutes progress and modernity, and about who is modern. As with globalization, the uneven material and social relations produced by and productive of technology disrupt the smooth narration of global change as linear and of space as neutral (technology just diffuses, technology provides universal solutions). The instrumental logic of technology fixes and strategic resources is grounded in geopolitical concerns over state power, and produces a "closed future" whose policy-making is concerned with a masculinist need to control and a vision of militarized neoliberal globalism. Finally, I discuss how global trends constructs dangerous weapons as appropriate and rational tools for nation-states through narrating the past (Cold War) and future. The effect of this discursive move is to help justify state violence in the present and to hide the impacts of state violence. This contradictory narrative is expressed through a normative logic of US supremacy, which determines when technology is viewed in a hopeful light and when as a threat. The ambivalence between hope and fear manifested in the contradictory discussions of technological change help unhide the working of powerful discourses that frame *Global Trends 2025* as a story of economic and geopolitical security, or neoliberal geopolitics, which obscures many aspects of

understanding future risks. This chapter begins the work of creating discursive space for other truths about the past, present, and future to emerge.

### Chapter Three: Landscapes of Global Change

This chapter characterizes globalization discourse in *Global Trends 2025* by describing both the hopeful and fearful aspects of globalization, beginning with an examination of how ideas about modernity, progress, global interconnectedness and the inevitability of globalization serve to advance a specifically neoliberal global capitalist expansionist version of globalization. While this vision of global change is cast in a hopeful light by the report's authors in many respects, it is haunted by an imagined geography of danger and fear. These geopolitical fears (Sparke 2007b) are expressed through a spatial logic of contagion and instability that encourages ever-increasing militarization as the base of continued US global power. In this chapter, I document the specific images and narratives used to support neoliberal expansion and its intertwining with US military supremacy. I trace neoliberal geopolitics in terms of two geostrategic discourses, geopolitics and geoeconomics. As in the previous chapter, I am alert to the contradictions within these discourses, and I argue that it is the space between these alternately hopeful and fearful predictions of global change that points toward a clearer understanding of the kind of global common sense created in the report.

I employ the terms geopolitics and geoeconomics to describe geostrategic discourses which have significant real-world effects (Sparke 2007b). These discourses are often based on groundless hopes and fears, as in Sparke's example of the hopeful predictions that American military intervention would bring with it "free-market freedoms" and the fear of WMD and terrorist connections in Iraq (2007b, 339). Such discourses shape foreign and domestic policy (Dalby 1990; Mitchell 2010; Mitchell 2011; Sparke 2007b), and therefore need to be countered on two levels: (1) we need to debunk futurological discourses, especially those based on groundless fears and hopes, before they can be used to justify another war and because they already justify ongoing preparations for war, and (2) we need to replace them with better

explanations, such as geographies of dispossession (Carr 2010; Sparke 2007b). My basic goals in this chapter are to examine the implications of thinking the future through the landscapes of global change presented here. I suggest that feminist critiques of scale offers a more effective explanatory framework through geographies of responsibility, which would implicate policy makers in a responsible geography, rather than a geography of state security, violence and risk management.

### Globalization Discourse

This chapter is in some respects an attempt to understand how the authors of *Global Trends* envision the future global landscape. As we saw in chapter two, hints of the physical environment and people's interactions with it are mostly abstracted away so that, for example, access to water becomes a discussion of strategic investment in technology in the interest of national power. Thus, the term landscape here refers mostly to the spatial imagination of the report writers. I am interested in understanding the role of space, place and the relationships between places in their story of global change. The most significant catch-all term dealing with space and place for the authors is "globalization:"

The scenarios in both reports [*Global Trends 2020 and 2025*] address the future of globalization, the future structure of the international system, and the dividing lines among groups that will cause conflict or convergence. In both reports, globalization is seen as a driver so pervasive that it will reorder current divisions based on geography, ethnicity, and religious and socio-economic status. (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 2)

In fact, it appears from this introductory quotation that space and place are in fact irrelevant relative to the dominating force of globalization, which the report claims will reorder not just cultural and social systems around the world, but geography itself. In the executive summary, a chart titled "The 2025 Global Landscape" sets the tone for the kind of evidence that will be permissible for describing and explaining changes in the global landscape for the rest of the

report. I argue that the terms are not neutral descriptors, but instead draw on the reader's ability to call up existing knowledge of key terms, categories, and spatial imaginaries that imply ideological understandings. For example, in the "Relative Certainties" column of this table, one entry reads, "The unprecedented shift in relative wealth and economic power roughly from West to East now under way will continue." There are several kinds of arguments in play here: a spatial one (West to East), which drawing on Said (2000), we must acknowledge is also a cultural argument; a temporal argument (unprecedented, now under way, will continue); and an economic one (shift in relative wealth and economic power), which we could also understand as geopolitical, since it refers to power. By interpreting the meaning of these arguments, we are alerted to the fact that *Global Trends* must draw on common knowledge of place, power, and culture that are produced by older narratives of Orientalism, East versus West.

Before unpacking the global landscape and globalization narrative any further, I want to make a brief detour and return to some themes from the literature review in the introductory chapter that I have used to make sense of globalization discourse in *Global Trends*, including feminist critiques of scale and globalization and critical discussions of neoliberal geopolitics. Critiques of knowledge production originating in feminist research emphasize that the global scale is neither natural nor necessary. Roberts' (2003, 3) analysis of discourses of global management highlights a key part of globalization discourse, the framing of "scalar restructuring" as a "set of imperatives in which the global is demarcated as the domain of capital," drawing on a flat-world representation of global spaces in which people, corporations, institutions and governments are forced to react to the 'new reality' of global capitalism. The constitutive logic of "globalization" discourse is premised on the relevance of a "global scale." Scale is itself a conceit that helps consolidate power and restrict truths so that we can argue that

with the global scale we see vastly different concerns than if we look at the 'local.' Like the national, the global is an allusion to territory that helps consolidate resources and power. Feminist engagements with economic globalization "extend these critiques by pointing out that they tend to deal with (1) economic processes in the formal sector, (2) only certain places and scales, and (3) only certain actors (Nagar et al. 2002, 260). *Global Trends 2025's* analysis posits of weak form of agency for individuals, and focuses instead on states and the 'masters of statecraft' who run them. *Global Trends 2025* relies on masculinist constructions of knowledge and universalizing descriptions of globalization to produce its claims to have special knowledge about the future (knowledge that is both accurate and useful). A significant part of the report's ability to make truth claims about "the global" is that globalization, the economy, and technology are all treated as extrasocial and extraterritorial in origin, "leaving places and populations no choice but to 'compete' on its terms" (Roberts 2003, 2).

In this section, I argue that globalization is not a neutral label for an already-existing set of processes, but rather invokes a set of ideological assumptions made clear by critical engagements with globalization, which I will now briefly discuss before describing how "globalization" is used in *Global Trends*. Globalization is often associated with 'geoeconomic hopes' consisting of a "globalist common sense about a globe-spanning, level playing field" whose hopefulness is "expressed as a discourse about the inevitably inclusive and expansive aspects of capitalist globalization" (Sparke 2007b, 344). Roberts et al. describes this view of globalization: "Like Modernity and Development before it, Globalization is thus narrated as the force that will lift the whole world out of poverty as more and more communities are integrated into the capitalist global economy (2003, 887). Roberts also describes and critiques the discursive constellation we call 'globalization,' but also attends to "the uncertainties and anxieties

at the heart of globalization" (2003, 2). She acknowledges that discourses are *social*, mutable, and constantly renegotiated. Part of what I want to show by being attentive to the anxieties around the identity of the global manager is that the categories that describe the smooth working of international politics take a significant amount of work to create and maintain. Geographers' engagements with narratives of "globalization" point to uneven geographies of capital accumulation and power in order to both challenge the assumption that the world has become flat and smooth, and to simultaneously show how these assumptions shape worldly practices, and they argue that globalization needs to be discussed in terms of its specifically neoliberal aspects [i.e. not inevitable], its historical continuities [not new], and its unevenness [not a leveler] (Harvey 2003). According to Roberts, we can identify a certain discursive constellation of key discourses as 'globalization'. Those key discourses include: 1) neoliberal economics (structural adjustment, devaluation, trade liberalization, and austerity); 2) development; 3) deregulation; and 4) new world orders. Roberts notes that this particular constellation of discourses "powerfully defines collective political and spatial imaginations" (2003, 1).

In order to understand globalization discourse as it appears in *Global Trends*, I will distinguish between "globalization" as used to describe the accelerating interconnectedness and interdependence of people, places and processes that has been occurring in some form or another since before colonial times, and the ideological use of the term to both label and shape the set of policies and practices that comprise a neoliberal global capitalist expansionist outlook. In this document, globalization, rather than serving as a neutral label for a present or future 'reality,' is a label characteristic of a specific period of history, the "(post-1989) hegemony of neoliberal discourse that is reworking nation-state power and the rhetorics and practices of development" (Nagar et al. 2002, 258). *Global Trends* subsumes what I am calling a neoliberal global capitalist

outlook under that political-economic label “Western economic liberalism” (of which democracy is also a key component). In the analysis that follows, I argue that *Global Trends* most often employs the ideological, political meaning of “globalization,” drawing on neoliberal globalist framings of globalization in the following ways:

1. Globalization is positioned as an independent force to which other actors (states and institutions) must react and to which there is no alternative.
2. Globalization is characterized by a Western model of economic liberalism. (State capitalism is used to create an ‘other’ to Western liberalism.)
3. Globalization is associated with progress, modernization, democratization, and standard of living increases (although small acknowledgements of the dispossession created by global integration are suggested).
4. Globalization is discussed as a “game” with winners and losers, in which winning is portrayed as a matter of choice, rather than as a historically and contemporarily produced expression of inequality.

Understanding Globalization as a specific discursive construction reveals the spatial assumptions upon which it is based as non-neutral. As Vicky Lawson argues with respect to the *World Development Report 2009*, from a geographer’s point of view, space is not an empty, passive setting for global processes - “geographers view space as coproducing capitalist economies” (2010, 354). Lawson makes her argument by juxtaposing the discursive construction of the report with the material realities of two empirical cases. A very important aspect of globalization discourse as it is articulated in *Global Trends* is that globalization is understood in geoeconomic and geopolitical terms to the exclusion of other realities. This lack of robust consideration limits and shapes *Global Trends*’ vision of the future.

*Global Trends* advances an evolutionary and progressive vision of globalizing economic order: economic exchange is seen as operating at the *global scale* and is said to be characterized by an “increasingly borderless” world of “more seamless” labor markets. Countries are described as facing a “value-added production ladder” up which their societies “graduate” or not, depending on key factors such as higher education (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 17). Globalization and progress are concurrent processes in a world of “expanding economic flatness” (Sparke 2007b); this suggests a hopeful geoeconomic discourse. Framing change – and space – in this way, as if each country were moving along a historically-predetermined path, supports explanations of violence and inequality that do not account for the simultaneous production of rich and poor places in the current global capitalist system. These explanations are problematic because they naturalize differences between places and ignore the historical and political economic causes of impoverishment, while suggesting that globalization is a solution to the problems of currently impoverished places.

The concept of “modernization” helps solidify this narrative in *Global Trends*, helping to set up a continuum of countries at various stages of modernization. The narratives of increasing modernization and increasing openness among rich and poor countries spatialize the narrative of global change so that certain places are modern, while some others are not. Of course this is not new; for example, Dalby’s analysis of Cold War documents reveals that an important part of the ideological structure he analyzes is the “assumption...that the other nations’ interests really do parallel those of the USA” (Dalby 1990, 52); “[f]urther, it is asserted that the interests of the ‘developing nations’ are the same, a ‘progressive economy’ is universalized as an interest even of the ‘communist nations’” (1990, 52). Several countries are specifically described as “modernizing,” including Brazil, “a modernizing world power” (National Intelligence Council

2008a, 35); Turkey, whose blending of "Islamic and nationalist strains...could serve as a model for other rapidly modernizing countries in the Middle East" (2008a, 36); and Indonesia, which is described as a political success (2008a, 36). Modernizing places are described with positive phrases. For example, Brazil is described with the phrases: "positive regional model"; "secure footing"; "fair and open"; "positive precedent"; "solid foundation"; "steady growth"; "growing consensus"; and "responsible fiscal and monetary policy" (2008a, 35). This glowing report on Brazil is not politically neutral: *Global Trends* 'rewards' specific policies by associating them with the label 'modern.' Since Brazil recently discovered oil deposits, the report recommends that Brazil adopt the characteristically neoliberal economic policy of increasing foreign investment by creating "a legal and regulatory framework attractive to foreign investment" (2008a, 35). Brazil also sets a good example by having a "responsible fiscal and monetary policy" (2008a, 35). The above discussion of "modernizing places" lays the groundwork for hopeful geoeconomic predictions.

While the discussion of Brazil as a successfully modernizing place establishes the kind of policies that are "modern," Indonesia and Turkey help define what is *not* modern by the standards of *Global Trends*. Indonesia is described as moving away from its "once-authoritarian" past, characterized by now-fading separatist movements, to its current democratic and politically moderate status (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 36). It is now a place of "relative calm" with little support for terrorists (2008a, 36). The lesson is that authoritarian governments, separatist movements, and terrorist movements are less than modern. It takes work to make this make sense, since terrorism is just as modern as globalization. Turkey is described as being most likely to end up with a "blending of Islamic and nationalist strains" (2008a, 36), which is valued as positive: the report states that Turkey could serve as a model in this regard for other

modernizing countries. Turkey and Indonesia are both majority Muslim countries and thus have a special significance in the imagined world of *Global Trends* (I will return to this theme in Chapter Four).

Mitchell (2010; 2011) notes that there is a notable shift from discourses of containment to connection in the context of neoliberal global expansion. I do think that this is a concept with merit, especially when one is reminded of the incredible power afforded to discourses of globalization. An important part of Dalby's analysis is the idea of security as spatial exclusion, which he argues is a common-sense notion for security intellectuals (1990, 13). Distinguishing Same from Other is a relation of power involving epistemological questions and questions of politics; it is also a process of identity formation (1990, 17). Dalby draws from Foucault and Said to come to a key point: "The exclusion of the Other and the inclusion, incorporation and administration of the Same is the essential geopolitical moment. The two processes are complimentary; the Other is excluded as the reverse side of the process of incorporation of the Same" (1990, 22). One way of creating 'the Other' is through the use of time as distance, for example the use of evolution in anthropology (Dalby 1990, 23). I think in *Global Trends* we see this use of time as distance in narratives of places as being behind in the 'globalization game.' The narrative of Globalization creates unity and "makes Same" those countries that are seen as non-threatening to US global power. For example, *Global Trends* narrates India as a country that while gaining in the share of global power, occupies a moral 'high ground' thanks to its commitment to democracy and their increasing wealth. Brazil is another example of a country framed as on the right side of politics and policies, said to serve as a "model" for other countries. Brazil helps teach certain lessons about democracy and the economy: "Its progress in diversifying its economy will serve as a positive role model;" Brazil has a "maturing

commitment to democracy;" and steady growth comes from political stability (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 35). The types of countries that might be able to have important roles on the "world stage" – we might call them “winners” – are countries with either very large populations like China and India or with "potentially high-performing economies" such as Iran, Indonesia, and Turkey (2008a, 29).

The language of winners and losers of the “globalization game” is frequent in *Global Trends*. Lawson writes of similar language in the *World Development Report 2009* that this language implies that “all places can choose to win” (2010, 354). As she points out, such a flat world view (i.e., of a level “playing field”) only makes sense if you consider race, class, gender, national context, and even certain histories irrelevant to the discussion of *who is poor* (2010, 353). Winners and losers language assumes that we can ignore the histories of winning and losing, even when we look to the future (2010, 354). An important difference between *Global Trends* and the *World Development Report* is that the *World Development Report* attempts to frame this unevenness as a resource to create flows of migrants that can be used to “develop” certain regions. As I discuss in this chapter, *Global Trends* takes a more anxious view of large global flows of migrant workers, especially migrants from majority Muslim countries such as those found in the “arc of instability” (National Intelligence Council 2008a). Although *Global Trends* is willing to see potential migrant workers as a potential “worker bulge” if they stay in their countries of origin, the report focuses on discussing the problems involved in integrating (especially Muslim) immigrants and their descendants into European societies or on the possibility of ethnic, racial, and other conflicts that might result from continued impoverishment. The larger point here is that the *World Development Report* and *Global Trends* make similar assertions about places' ability to choose their futures; *Global Trends* does this without

acknowledging so explicitly that development is spatially uneven. *Global Trends* places the onus of care on the states: some states can “manage the consequences of globalization” and some “governments are unable to do so” (2008a, 86).

### **No Good Alternatives**

There is no (good) alternative to globalization. Although narratives of globalization depend on hopeful geographic vision and assumptions about space, as I’ve suggested, these narratives take a lot of work to maintain, which is done by painstakingly distinguishing good from bad changes, and this begins from a progressivist notion of the history of globalization as advancing through various stages. *Global Trends* narrates global change within a framework of “phases of globalization,” by way of placing globalization within its historical context. The executive summary outlines a history of globalization, which it sees as having had two major phases so far: phase one consists of the pre-war era (before 1914-1918), which featured a complete breakdown of globalization; phase two is called the “international system,” extending from post World War II to the present. The next 20 years (in the future) is characterized in the report as a risky, dangerous transition period to a third, multipolar, disorganized phase controlled by a mix of state and nonstate actors (National Intelligence Council 2008a, vi). The shift away from phase two, the “international system,” forms the core narrative of *Global Trends 2025*, and distinguishes it from *Global Trends 2020*, which posited a more stable international system marked by US dominance, or at least a less ‘risky’ transition (2008a, 1)).

*Global Trends* relies on narratives of Globalization to justify certain policies and to create the possibility of a threatening future. The narrative of the shift away from the current system of globalization is a site of contradiction and anxiety in the report, but provides an opportunity for the report’s authors to value neoliberal policy reforms over other policies by using them to

distinguish positive changes from negative changes (and claiming the moral high ground by then associating ‘universal goods’ such as democracy with positive changes). “International system” refers to the global arrangement of power constructed in the Bretton Woods agreement. On the one hand, the report predicts this system will be completely changed in the next 20 years thanks to "the rise of emerging powers, a globalizing economy, an historic transfer of relative wealth and economic power from West to East, and the growing influence of nonstate actors" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, vi). On the other, the report claims that the current international system will likely not be challenged by emerging powers (2008a, x, 37, 81, 84). The new system will be characterized by *increasing* multipolarity and *decreasing* multilateralism (cooperation), with the exception of greater Asian integration/Asian regionalism (2008a, 81). The report refers to a ‘governance gap’ that will require the US to continue increasing militarization and military supremacy. There are two major ways of making sense of this shift: in terms of narratives of the ‘decline of the state,’ and in terms of the ‘decline of the West’ narrative. Later in this chapter, I will explore how the report expresses these anxieties about these changes. In this section, I focus on understanding how neoliberal ideology is articulated through discussions of global change in *Global Trends*.

Russia and Indonesia, are examples of how *Global Trends* associates neoliberal policy shifts with positive change, while using the language of threats to create a sense of urgency around the policies it advocates. Russia is portrayed as a threat to US dominance. According to the report, “Current trends suggest Russia has a more immediate interest in directly challenging what it sees as a US-dominated international system than do other rising powers” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 94), and “Russia has the potential to be richer, more powerful, and more self-assured in 2025 if it invests in human capital, expands and diversifies its economy, and

integrates with global markets” (2008a, 31). Neoliberal policy moves such as integrating with global markets are described above as “correct” policy choices that will lead to economic growth are also said to have the potential to change geopolitical relationships between Russia and the US. Russia might be made “friendlier” to the US if in the future they have a more “diversified economy,” “independent middle class,” investment in energy resources and “reliance on foreign technological expertise” (2008a, 94). Economic growth dominates discussions of what is good and effective.

Indonesia is named one of the “up and coming powers” for the next 20 years. Of these up and coming powers, *Global Trends* states, “A growth-friendly macro-economic policy climate would allow their natural economic endowments to flourish” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 35–6). Indonesia can achieve economic growth by implementing a suite of policy changes that include: improving the investment climate; strengthening the legal system; improving the regulatory framework; reforming the financial sector; reduce fuel and food subsidies; and generally lowering the cost of doing business (2008a, 36). In describing what it will take for Indonesia to grow from a macro-economic perspective, *Global Trends* creates a perspective from which certain policies are favored. In framing Indonesia as a country with the potential to join the “winners” of globalization, *Global Trends* notes that although it is outside the “Arab core” (apparently an advantage), it is still a majority Muslim country (apparently a disadvantage). These comments are notable because they mark Indonesia as a place of global connection whose policy changes are not politically neutral: they are haunted by the “Other” side of globalization, which has both racial and spatial components.

When searching *Global Trends* for ‘alternatives’ to a neoliberal global capitalist explanation of change and expectation for the future, I found that very few alternatives are

discussed. I have already mentioned that most discussion in *Global Trends* focuses on the geopolitical and geoeconomic, and this is true here as well. Although the TINA doctrine does not admit the possibility of an alternative future (and neither does *Global Trends*, which claims in spite of everything that the international system will not likely be challenged by emerging powers), alternatives to the Western model of liberal democracy are fearfully acknowledged as a threat or as a “descent.” For example, “descent into a world in which mercantilism and resource nationalism become the overriding *modus operandi* for others [other states] probably would narrow the number of US partners, increasing the risk of terrorism” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 93–4). For those looking for an alternative to neoliberal capitalist expansion in the future, the NIC paints a narrow vision (restricted to “mercantilism” and resource nationalism), and frames that vision in negative terms, making it seem anachronistic and even irrationally violent by associating alternatives with an increased threat of terrorism.

In spite of the hopeful picture of a “friendlier” Russia described above, alternatives to globalization such as those presented by Russia’s state capitalism policy are seen as inherently threatening to the global order. For example, a “resurgent Russia” and “terrorism” are grouped together under the category “threats to Europe” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 94), while Russia and the West are said to disagree on many issues, including terrorism and Islamic radicalism, resulting in a “values gap” (2008a, 32). Russia’s usefulness as an imagined place that consolidates both the rewarding and threatening sides of the global future illustrates the fluidity of place in globalization discourse. State capitalism, though constructed as a threat to globalization, still is not granted the status of a coherent, rational political-economic model, asserting that it lacks a defined character:

“The lack of any overarching ideology and the mix-and-match of some of the elements - for example Brazil and India are vibrant market democracies - means that the state-centric

model does not yet constitute anything like an alternative system and, in our view, is unlikely ever to be one. Whether China liberalizes both politically and economically over the next two decades is a particularly critical test for the long-term sustainability of an alternative to the traditional Western model...." (2008a, 14).

The report continues to undermine the potency of the state-centric model by arguing that the "middle class" will press for political influence, increasing the likelihood of democratization. Although as an alternative to Globalization, state capitalism is portrayed as weak here; a broader reading of *Global Trends* gives the impression that state capitalism is quite a bit more defined, with China, Russia, Iran and the other Gulf States being the largest states with such a system. This seemingly contradictory treatment functions to effectively create a threat, a reason why neoliberal global capitalism (in its many forms) must be actively supported in the future, while maintaining the superiority of Globalization and re-assuring the reader of Globalization's ability to dominate its political-economic 'other.'

In spite of vague fear-mongering regarding the possible global consequences of terrorism and state capitalism, *Global Trends* places its faith in the benevolent power of globalization, reassuring the reader that the emerging powers, although they are using a more state-centric model, "are diverse enough, and their dependence on globalization compelling enough, that there appears little chance of an alternative bloc" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 82) that would challenge the West. A state centric economic model is here subtly *opposed* to globalization, ruling out the possibility that state-centric economic models might successfully coordinate across national borders, in contrast to the current transnational mode of giving control to large private corporations in the "free market." Even with the Cold War over (regrettably, to read *Global Trends*), Russia is a geopolitical thorn in the geoeconomic side of the West: Russia has many possible futures "because of starkly divergent forces – liberal economic trends and illiberal political trends" (2008a, 32). Although these political and economic trends compete with

Western norms, the reader is also assured that diverse economies lead to pluralistic democratic political systems, thanks to “institutional consolidation, a rising middle class, and the emergence of new stakeholders demanding a greater voice” (2008a, 32).

While this binary juxtaposition of economic policy on the one hand and political structure on the other is reductive to say the least, it does helpfully illustrate the ideological aims of the report, which are to promote liberal democracy and economic liberalism, often by recommending neoliberal policy reform and maintaining military supremacy. It also illustrates that this link between economic liberalism and democratic political structures is created through imaginations of certain places, such as Russia. By using the scalar frame of “global” trends, the report is able to use certain imagined places (i.e. certain countries) to discursively link liberal democracy, economic liberalism, and US supremacy in both of these arenas (and in military power). There is also something in the above paragraph similar to the text's seeming habit of wanting to hold on to realities that it predicts will no longer exist. For example, US supremacy seems to be 'on the wane', and yet the report asserts that the US will still be uniquely powerful. It seems to fit with the idea that there is some sort of threat of decline that we need to avoid, combined with the faith that 'we' have the best system, so we will come out on top, adding a sense of urgency to already-assumed US supremacy. The threat and uncertainty justifies directing resources to the 'problem', while our unique potential to take on a 'leadership' role, also known as taking on the 'burden' of “global governance” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, xii, 1, 81) justifies extreme international actions (such as the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq).

### **Geopolitical Fears**

As I have begun to show, the globalization narrative in *Global Trends* is marked by anxieties, both geopolitical and geoeconomic. As I mention above, *Global Trends* is overall an

anxious narrative plagued by fears about: US economic and military decline; the spread of violence from places like the arc of instability to the US; global shifts in economic power from the East to the West [an imperial orientalist imagined geography]; WMD in the hands of Russia, Iran, China, etc. or in the hands of terrorists; the declining ability of states to control international relations and their own territories; resource shortages, especially of oil, water, and food; and Muslims (as a racialized political label, see Chapter Four). Anxiety around ‘state capitalism’ is a problem for geoeconomic narratives because it contradicts the doctrine that there is no alternative to globalization. The ‘arc of instability’ is an imagined geography that expresses and produces anxiety about the Other, and which attempts to explain what we would call uneven development or accumulation by dispossession in terms of a geography of non-modern or anti-modern disconnection (as alluded to above).

*Global Trends* creates a futurological and imaginative world in imagining the world of 2025 – a world that is home to all sorts of fears. In his discussion of how fearful discourse about WMD and connections to al Qaeda made certain policies (notably, military intervention in Iraq) possible, Sparke argues that these fears had a “notably futurological and imaginative quality” that created a space for the illogical evil imaginings about what *might* be true about Iraq to become a justification for war (2007b, 341). (See Carr (2010) and Hannah (2009) on the effects of fearful speculation on the blending of military and police action and on aggressive interventionist policy.) Sparke describes how, in the lead-up to the Iraq war, feelings of vulnerability of Americans after 9/11, fear of the potential weapons in Iraq, and fear that older ideas about containment are longer valid when view through post 9/11 experience were expressed through Orientalist tropes of “hate-filled orientals” that help direct fear toward particular places (2007b). The anxieties expressed in the report reveal two important aspects of

globalization discourse. Firstly, anxieties in the text point to the incompleteness and inadequacy of globalization discourse for helping us understand how and why change takes place in the ‘real world.’ Secondly, the anxiety- and fear-producing sections of *Global Trends* construct a dangerous, insecure present and future. Seeing the world as a dangerous place contributes to militarization of our thinking and positions US policy makers as managers of a dangerous global future by suggesting that they take steps to avoid undesirable futures (seeing military solutions as particularly effective and adopting militaristic priorities and attitudes as one’s own are also characteristic of militarized thinking (Enloe 2007, 4)).

As I’ve show, *Global Trends* imagines an inside and an outside to globalization, which is written about as the ‘globalization game’ (recalling military games and also corporate models). The “globalized” world can expect to benefit economically in the future, but this is an uncertain truth – the report acknowledges that Iran and China are threats not just to US military and economic power, but also pose a threat to this narrowly-defined globalization. While the report recognizes ‘unevenness,’ it works hard to make this unevenness seem to exist outside globalization using spatial metaphors and a language of choice (choosing the correct policies means places will benefit economically).

In spite of the modernization, progress, and increases in democracy promised by ever-increasing Globalization, *Global Trends* constructs the world and its future as a dangerous and insecure place. The primary narratives of threat and insecurity are:

1. The decline of the West narrative, composed of declining US economic dominance and the twin shifts of increasing multipolarity and decreasing multilateralism (Russia, China, India, etc. and blocs/regionalism);

2. The arc of instability and its attendant depictions of poverty, violence, and migration; climate change plays a role in this discussion as well; and
3. Challenges to global governance such as the influence of nonstate actors, including religious networks, issue networks, and the shadow international system.

The concept of global governance blurs the divisions between geoeconomic and geopolitical logics; promises of geoeconomic connection justify the militarization of globalization represented by US military supremacy, i.e., its role in global governance maintaining the balance of power and providing of a US “security umbrella” (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 34, 93). Such terms have the ring of expertise, but do nothing to explain the kind of political, social and economic realities that might follow from US actions in the pursuit of this role, which assumes the capacity for a globally deployed military and extensive international aid.

The overarching trend of increasing multipolarity and decreasing multilateralism is premised in part on the concept that it will be either individual states or "global" institutions that are brokering power. However, the report does address the possibility of regional groups and blocs. The report even goes so far as to nearly oppose 'blocs' and globalization, saying that there is little chance of blocs forming because of countries' dependence on globalization (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 82). Although this is stated to be the case, the authors of the report are still concerned about Asian regionalism, a possible exception to the overall trend (2008a, 83), which they say might mean "quasi-blocs" in North America, Europe, and East Asia (2008a, 83). These quasi-blocs and other global agreements (for example those brokered by nonstate actors like issue networks) will have implications for the possibility of governing at a global scale (2008a, 83).

The question of Asian regionalism is also important for the role the US will be able to claim in terms of security or as a 'power balancer,' as Asian "integration is currently weakest in security, where trends toward competition and hedging persist" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 83). The authors expect that the US will need to act as a "regional balancer" in the Middle East and Asia (2008a, 93, 96). As China's influence and power grows, US ability to counterbalance their power will be more appreciated (2008a, 96), although Russia will oppose US global dominance (2008a, 32).

These anxious narratives of global change and the US role in managing or shaping change contribute to the continued militarization of US foreign policy, as I mention above. Militarization is a slow, step-by-step process: "To become militarized is to adopt militaristic values (e.g., a belief in hierarchy, obedience, and the use of force) and priorities as one's own, to see military solutions as particularly effective, to see the world as a dangerous place best approached with militaristic attitudes" (Enloe 2007, 4). Enloe explains that while the globalization of militarizing processes is not new, what

"is new is (a) the global reach of these business, cultural, and military ideas and processes; (b) the capacity of promoters of globalizing militarism to wield lethal power; (c) the fact that so many private companies are now involved in this globalization of militarization; and (d) the intimacy of international alliances among the players" (2007, 8).

Enloe's generalized assertion resonates with the limited claims that I can make here about *Global Trends*, but feminist work on the entanglements of neoliberalism, war and international aid give us an idea of what these relations might look like in a particular place and time. For example, Hyndman's (2009) study of Sri Lanka and its bilateral relations with Canada over the period 1977 to the present. Her data is the result of interviews in both Canada and Sri Lanka with senior managers at CIDA, diplomats, and NGO officials. Hyndman demonstrates that flows of aid are

shaped by factors beyond just 'neoliberalism': "aid is a dynamic bundle of geographical relationships at the intersection of war, neoliberalism, nature, and diaspora" (2009, 884). Her analysis focuses on two key discourses and their role in framing aid: "aid effectiveness" [channeling aid to places that will make 'good' use of it, places demonstrate their ability to do so through commitments to neoliberal policies] and "securitization" ["the tying of aid to security agendas in the global north"] (2009, 869). Both discourses illuminate aspects of *Global Trends*' treatment of development issues in the global south, and because they are based on Canadian and Sri Lankan data, also indicate that analyzing *Global Trends* is such a small part of understanding the breadth and influence of such discursive formations, and their effects. "Threats to national security, in particular, have stoked a geopolitics of fear that less developed countries will 'invade' or infect donor countries if adequate aid transfers are not provided" (2009, 869).

Roberts et al. (2003) are responding to the US and UK invasion of Iraq in 2003, which they treat as evidence of two important factors: American unilateralism [neoconservative ideology that demands a strong state not afraid to exercise its power] and what they call "neoliberal geopolitics." The concept of neoliberal geopolitics accounts for a new development in international politics: with the Iraq war, they observe, military force has been added to the "economic axioms of structural adjustment, fiscal austerity, and free trade" (2003, 887) that formed the core components of economic governance responsible for enforcing neoliberal economic idealism in the recent past. The Iraq war is an extreme example of "enforced re-regulation" upon which neoliberal economic idealism depends (along with multilateral deregulation) (2003, 886), and it was waged partially due to the influence of a particular imagination of the world in which, instead of it being possible to contain dangerous influence beyond an Iron Curtain, danger is associated with *disconnection* (Mitchell 2010). Although they

acknowledge the classically imperialist aspects of the Iraq invasion (control of territory and resources), they argue that these concerns exist alongside a world-view that goes beyond imperial dreams of controlling hemispheres or blocs to a “much more open, systematic, globally ambitious, and quasi-corporate economic style” (2003, 888). They investigate the concept of neoliberal geopolitics through Thomas Barnett’s map of the world. Their engagement with Barnett’s global vision of the world sheds significant light on a particularly troubling metaphor in *Global Trends*’ global vision: “the arc of instability,” the geographic arc formed by countries with youthful age structures (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 22). The moralized distinctions between good and bad policies that I argue are taught through smooth-space visions of globalization are reiterated here in terms of a spatialized metaphor of disconnection and danger, the “arc of instability.” Therefore, youth bulges can lead to worker bulges in countries that provide education and a “business-friendly environment for investment” (2008a, 22), which is framed as good because it leads to the common good of economic growth. However, youth bulges where employment conditions are not favorable lead to “instability”: “youth in weak states will continue to go elsewhere - externalizing volatility and violence” (2008a, 22; examples include the West Bank/Gaza; Iraq; Yemen; Saudi Arabia; Afghanistan; Pakistan).

In thinking through the use of binaries for creating the Other, the “arc of instability” becomes an important structuring concept. The concept of youth bulges (one of the two demographic features of the “arc of instability,” the other being rapid population growth) helps to geographically define inside and outside of economic globalism. The report writes that according to its experts, youth bulges could lead to economic advantage, possibly turning countries into “new economic tigers,” as long as those countries provide a “business friendly environment for investment” and an “educated workforce” (National Intelligence Council 2008a,

22). This language helps consolidate the discourse of neoliberal globalism as the defining inside/outside. I suppose the report could have said that they would become economic tigers if the people were 'free to develop how they wished' (as Dalby's data might have done), and while that concept of personal freedom is embedded in the ideology of neoliberal globalism, the reports authors appear to try to present neoliberal globalism as ideology-free (for example in the text box titled "End of Ideology?" (2008a, 73) and throughout the executive summary, in which the authors state that ideological conflicts such as the Cold War are not likely to reoccur; they also state that 'ideology' is likely to have the most force in the "Muslim world").

If certain neoliberal policies define the 'inside' of neoliberal globalism, then if states with persistent youth bulges if they see no change in employment, they define the 'outside:' "youth in weak states will continue to go elsewhere - externalizing volatility and violence" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 22). Here we see a hint of the old containment logic in the fearful portrayal of youth as a threat of violence. Meanwhile, the report also implies that weak states are ones that fail to implement the neoliberal policies they just predicted will have economic benefits for those youth bulge states that employ them. A strong state is implicitly one that conforms to neoliberal globalism. There is also a spatial dimension to the defining of the outside. Although the report mentions that the majority of persistent youth bulge states will be located in Sub-Saharan Africa, in this discussion, only states from the "Middle East," broadly defined, are mentioned at first as threatened by this future: West Bank/Gaza, Iraq, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Pakistan, although the narrative does go on to mention other 'parlous' (marked by uncertainty and danger) states such as DROC, Ethiopia and Nigeria.

Critiquing *Global Trends*' use of globalization discourse has important implications of completeness and accuracy of their report, of course, but the more important issue is to critique

the assumption made in *Global Trends* that their narrow political and economic goals (i.e. the maintenance of global capitalism controlled by US corporations and military power) represent a universal “good” for the entire world, which are in turn used as a justifications for violence by policy makers and statesmen. As feminist and critical research demonstrates, the knowledge politics of *Global Trends* and other visions like it both produce the invisibility of – and depend on the ability to ignore – the lives and experiences of the billions of people (men and women) *not* advantaged by neoliberal capitalism in the US and around the world.

My analysis includes and holds accountable the hopeful as much as the fearful landscapes. Massey writes,

"The evocation of a placeless capitalism can lead all too easily to an erasing from the imagination of the places in which capitalism (and thus globalization) is very definitely embedded; those places... in which capitalism has accumulated the resources essential to the deployment of its power. This indeed is an erasure of place which is politically disabling" (2004, 14).

Massey's attention to those places which benefit greatly from capitalist relations was very helpful to me in my effort to articulate a critique of the scalar framing of my data. I draw on feminist critiques of scale to argue that the global frame effectively excludes both gender inequality and issues of inequality more generally that might otherwise serve as a catalyst for political resistance to the geopolitical/geoeconomic common sense of the report (i.e., that the global international political and economic order should be preserved; that US military supremacy is a force for good). As Massey points out, part of the power of invoking "global trends" also emanates from the unmarked locations of power that create, reinforce, sustain, and benefit from those trends, which are produced by those in power.

The contradictions and anxieties associated with impoverishment and ‘conflict’ are evidence that we need better explanations of both the present and the future than those provided

in *Global Trends*. We need a *relational understanding of global processes*: the existence of physical and structural violence are better explained by examining the particular ways in which places and processes are linked, rather than by simply categorizing places as ‘globally connected’ or ‘disconnected,’ for example, by framing certain places as anachronistic – places are not ‘behind in the game’ – they are simultaneously produced. In characterizing *Global Trends*’ understanding of globalization and its future, I have used geopolitics and geoeconomics as analytics that help me untangle the often contradictory geostrategic discourses that animate the report. Undertaking this task as an explicitly feminist re-reading reveals that geopolitics and geoeconomics are united with broader discussions of globalization by their reliance on masculinist knowledge regimes for exploring their critiques.

I show how fearful futures in which alternate blocs of economic power develop (alternate to US-led global capitalist expansion) and dangerous geographies such as the arc of instability threaten to overtake the “developed world” (through a narrative of “the decline of the West”) create a role for the US as a global manager. This is a militarized role in which US military supremacy is maintained in order to keep the anxious aspects of globalization at bay. By attending to these contradictory expectations of globalization (aspirations and anxieties), my analysis points to the fluid and unwieldy nature of globalization discourse and shows that it takes a significant amount of work to maintain a façade of placeless globalization operating in smooth global space. I also show that geostrategic discourses only seem to exclude the messy parts of global power (violence, structural inequality, racism, gendered division of power); in fact, they depend on these messy parts to give meaning to their predictions, which is the focus of my next chapter.

## Managing the Middle Classes, Muslims, and Women

My goal in this chapter is to show that *Global Trends*, though it purports to be an objective, expert account of the possible futures, is part of a particular way of knowing the world and a particular way of constructing expertise. I argue that the report is populated by a cast of characters, or figures, that do important ideological work in the text. I draw on Edward Said's work on Orientalism and on feminist critiques of the global to argue that in order to understand what it is possible to know or learn from *Global Trends*, we need to understand how the authors create an authoritative claim to knowledge despite the contradictions and omissions that I have traced in the report narration of global change in Chapters Two and Three. First, I say a little more about the theoretical inspiration for this chapter, and then I discuss five figures that I argue create an authoritative set of claims about the future.

Representations of others are never innocent (Said 1997; Dalby 1990); although *Global Trends* purports to imagine the world of the future, the characters that populate its scenarios rely on older notions of Same and Other to craft a narrative that should be understood as fully embedded in Cold War and Orientalist world views. Three of the figures I discuss in this chapter draw on popular narratives about "Muslims." Invocations of Muslims in general, as well as specifically gendered representations of young Muslim men and Muslim women constitute figures who define an "Other" to Western modernity. I have already hinted at this in my treatment of spatial/political concepts such as the arc of instability and religious networks. Here, the concept of figures allows me to draw attention to the racialized aspects of imperial discourse in *Global Trends*. I contrast these Others with the figure of the "Global Middle Class," a figure that constructs a normalized political-economic identity that is implicitly contrasted with "Muslims."

Identifying the strategic location of the author of a given text is a key methodological device for Said (2000) which I employ here to identify the normalized subject position of the author that I call the “Global Manager.” Strategic location is “a way of describing the author’s position in a text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about,” including kind of narrative voice, type of structure, and the kinds of images, themes, and motifs the author uses to gain control of his object of study in order to speak on its behalf. Since my own analysis is focused on a single text, I rely on Susan Roberts’ (2003) analysis of the global manager in corporate advertisements to contextualize my reading and to highlight the resonances between corporate literature and the view point of the NIC.

Roberts’s critique is one of several feminist theorizations of the global that demand careful consideration of scale and agency, which I try to apply to my analysis. In my reading, *Global Trends* theorizes global change as the result of primarily geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts that are best understood as global phenomena. In this narrative, the global scale is primarily populated by actors such as states and international organizations, a move which obscures the contextual relations, actual people and the scale of everyday life that feminist empirical contributions to our knowledge of globalization insist are essential to understand “the global.” These critical feminist theorizations of “the global” as constituted by processes and realities that are always embodied, always locally contextualized, and always implicated in the realities of everyone’s everyday lives, prime us to demand explanations of global processes and global change that can account for the nature of this reality. Asking about particular bodies resists the scalar framing of ‘the global’ as the most relevant site of analysis, one which is free of history and ideology. Mountz asks, are "some bodies...made more visible because of the way they are raced, classed, and gendered" (2004, 325)? Do these bodies figure more prominently in

the way that decisions are made about certain spaces? I argue that in *Global Trends 2025*, gender and race become lenses for the selective viewing of certain bodies, but they do not inform a relational analysis of global change, which remains focused on a competitive model of state control.

Being curious about human agency leads to better understandings of global processes than ignoring human agency, and provides a foil for unrealistic and ungrounded analyses. The local and the intimate are the “stuff” of global processes (Freeman 2001; Mountz and Hyndman 2006; Katz 2001). In the context of *Global Change*, this curiosity might lead to asking, In the imagination of the report, who will be empowered to create change in the future? Who is doing this looking into the future (i.e. how does the report imagine its audience)? Part of the critique of the global scalar frame is that *Global Trends 2025* does not pay any attention to the effects of global processes on real bodies. What work do these ideal types of actors do to create a particular kind of narrative, a narrative that helps to explain grander topics such as “globalization”?

My method for establishing what constitutes a “figure” in the text is similar to the manner in which I identified discourses of technology and globalization. I looked out for groups of references to certain aspects of global change that were afforded a certain amount of causality or that resonated with analyses I had encountered in the literature. There are at least five discursive figures whom the report constructs as significant shapers of the future in its narrative: the Global Manager, the Global Middle Class, “Muslims,” Violent Unemployed Young Men, and Women as Geopolitical Agents. Just as discourses of technological change and the spaces of globalization are more representative of the ideological tenets of militarized neoliberal globalism, these five figures function more as tropes that consolidate a particular perspective on the future based on a neoliberal normative frame. I organize them here to reflect the hope/fear

dialectic that I've argued is at play in the document. The Global Manager and Global Middle Class tropes express a hopeful expectation that global change can, in fact, be effectively managed and shaped in the interests of global capitalist expansion, and that the results its success will be prosperity. I draw on Susan Roberts' theorization of the global manager from her work on corporate advertising, as well as using examples from the text to elaborate these figures. The final three figures, Muslims, Youth, and Women, function as what Edward Said has called "coercive labels," on which I elaborate below.

### **The Global Manager**

In this section, I describe the figure of the Global Manager, based on Susan Roberts' analysis of representations of globalization in corporate advertising. This figure resonates strongly with the narrative and visionary style of *Global Trends*, which establishes a strategic position for the reader with respect to knowledge of the future. This figure allows me to argue that the particular perspective created for the reader of *Global Trends* implicates a certain kind of subject, who is "raced" and "placed" just like the other figures which animate the future scenarios. The figure of the Global Manager allows me to emphasize that *Global Trends* is written with a specific audience in mind – drawing out the figure of the global manager reveals the privileged position of the reader of *Global Trends*. Just as the report is written for certain audiences, it is also written from a particular place. In the previous two chapters, I wrote of discourses of technology and globalization; here I want to point to the fact that these discursive constructions are not free-floating, but are grounded and reproduced in and by specific people in specific places (Massey 2004). I argue that this 'master' subject is the intended audience of the report, and that thinking of this authoritative position as a figure among the other "subjects" of

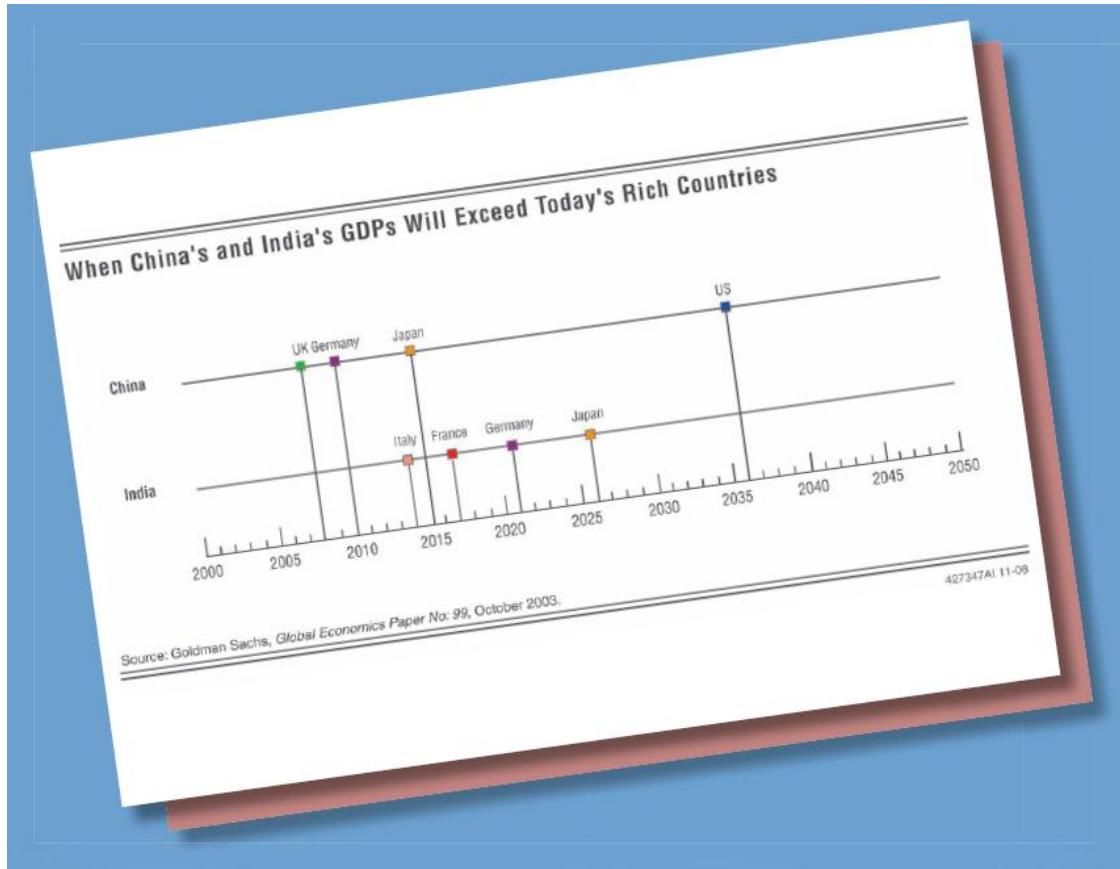
the future allows me to better account for the situated nature of the knowledge produced in *Global Trends*.

The concept of Robert's global manager resonates with the common sense that I argue is produced through discourses of technology and globalization in *Global Trends*. "This 'new global manager' who is a supercapitalist, unfettered by 'a sense of responsibility,' plays the global management game on a sports field that is the world" (Roberts 2003, 19). Success on this playing field demands the ability to think and see globally and to have a global mind-set (2003, 22); a global mind-set is a corporate re-framing that demands a "visualization of world space" (2003, 24). This corporate framing of the world from above resonates with *Global Trends*' references to countries interacting in global economic relations as "winners" and "losers" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 45, 46, 52) in the "globalization game" (2008a, 3, 8). The discourse of global management is central to narratives of globalization, and these discourses have effects, as Roberts, Secor and Sparke argue in their discussion of the intended audience for Thomas Barnett's influential map:

"The audience of Barnett's map...is effectively assumed as one more incarnation of the masculine authority figure, the heteropatriarchal savior that, as Donna Haraway (1997:132) argues, maps the world of fast capitalist technoscience with the god trick of perspective" (Roberts et al. 2003, 892).

The corporate visioning of global space as a set of factors to be captured, charted, and envisioned is also produced in *Global Trends* through charts such as the "New International Lineup in 2025?" chart pictured on the title page of chapter three, "The New Players" (shown in Figure 1 on page 10 of this document). The title page of chapter one displays a similarly economic and abstract understanding of global space in which the spatial relationships among the countries in question are elided and their significance is reduced to GDP or National Power Scores that can be charted and displayed for the consumption of the Global Manager.

**Figure 2: Title Page of Chapter 1 “The Globalizing Economy”** (National Intelligence Council 2008b, 6)



This global vision demands the creation of a new kind of subject, who is as detached from the restrictions of national identity and citizenship as he is from responsibility for the uneven development of global capitalist expansion. Thus, the figure of the Global Manager is situated outside the world made known through the scenarios and charts of the report. Roberts claims that the "idea of vision is absolutely central to the discourse of global management and the person of the global manager" (2003, 25). The global manager is situated as a disembodied eye, a positioning that Roberts finds very significant:

the "view from apart and above is one that situates the viewer outside the world - and the world (and its contents) become so many things to be managed and controlled. The gaze

is strategic....the entire human world, the feminized other, is laid out before the eyeball of masculinized transnational capital" (2003, 28).

I argue that not only the idea of vision but its realization in the form a document such as *Global Trends*, which attempts to capture all significant changes over the next two decades world-wide in 100 pages, are both central to global management in the quasi-military corporate world and in the explicitly militarized world of geopolitics. The Global Manager's view is a neoliberal geopolitical world view.

However, it is this expectation of and need for control that means that the Global Manager is produced also by the instability of his global imaginings. Throughout my analysis, I have emphasized the constant, disruptive presence of fearful imaginings that disrupt the smooth vision of, but also in some way complete, the neoliberal geopolitical world view. "The global manager is born out of a huge anxiety about vulnerability" (Roberts 2003, 31). The figure of the Global Manager (Roberts 2003) embodies (or rather, disembodies) the contradictory emotional strands of *Global Trends*, with [arrogant] hopes for the neoliberal project and the fearful anxiety that neoliberalism will be revealed to be vulnerable.

The point of beginning this chapter with the Global Manager is to re-place *Global Trends* within its specific political context. It is a refusal to accept without question the common sense articulated in the report, and also a refusal to accept the idea that the report's existence is itself nothing to be curious about. Drawing on Roberts' theorization of the global manager allows me to make themes of control, vulnerability, and heteropatriarchal masculinity directly relevant to the question of which subject positions are produced in the report – it not only the Other, but also the neoliberal globalist who is produced in the narrative of *Global Trends*.

## The Global Middle Class

*Global Trends* makes several references to a growing or rising middle class in various countries around the world in its predictions about the future. My main point in explaining the figure of the middle class consumer/voter is to argue that the Global Middle Class represents a hopeful category that normatively differentiates the deserving subjects of globalization from its Other, which is defined through fearful spatial imaginations and images of Others. The middle class is an overdetermined concept that stands in for processes important to a geographical understanding of global change, and is discursively bound to an agenda of political and economic liberalization. Like globalization, the growth or rise of the middle class is afforded a kind of causal power. I treat that concept of the middle class as an ideological label that 1) advances the hopeful myths of globalization as a leveler and 2) constructs a normative agenda with a politically liberal democratic agenda. The middle class, like the spatializing concepts of “the West” or the “winners of globalization” serves to define an inside and outside for globalization (i.e. neoliberal expansion).

*Global Trends 2025* identifies the development and/or growth of a middle class as a globally significant trend in several countries and at various scales: in China, India, Russia, Iran, Turkey, ‘Asia;’ and also at the “global” scale. Like the other figures I discuss, the idea of a global middle class is most likely a strictly discursive, rather than actually-existing, figure. Economist Branko Milanovic surveyed several ways of calculating the concept of a global middle class, and concludes that there are no data to support the idea of a global middle class. He shows that only 17.4% of the world’s population would be in the category middle class, and they would only own 6.5% of world income according to 1998 data (Milanovic, 2005, 130).

The middle class is given causal significance in terms of the shifting relationships of power that are possible by 2025. For example, an “independent” middle class is listed as one of

four factors that could reverse a trend of Russian opposition to US influence in the international system (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 94). The middle class is also discussed in less direct contradiction to the way in which impoverished people seek influence - through non-state actor issue networks, especially religious ones. However, this discursive association is much less certain. Middle classes can also align themselves with non-state actors. In the scenario "Politics is Not Always Local," the influence of nonstate actors with respect to climate change activism is attributed to the rise of middle classes in Russia, China, and India (2008a, 90). One thing that is interesting about the lessons taught by this scenario is that the motivation for action is not, in fact, class-based. The middle class is scripted as provoked to organize around environmental issues rather than, say, class issues such as rights to organized labor.

The report discursively binds the concept of the middle class to a particular agenda: political and economic liberalization in line with the Western model, especially as opposed to a model of state capitalism. The report ties economic diversification to a pluralistic political system and relates both to the middle class, for example Russia could become more pluralistic, "the result of institutional consolidation, a rising middle class, and the emergence of new stakeholders demanding a greater voice" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 32). India is also used as a lesson to reinforce this association, since the report describes it as enjoying economic growth as a result of a "rapidly expanding middle class, youthful population, reduced reliance on agriculture, and high domestic savings and investment rates" (2008a, 30).

Discussions of the middle class are also tied up in questions about whether or not state capitalism represents a viable alternative system to the western model of liberal democracies. This is a concern that threads throughout the document, but it intersects with the middle class in the imagination of this document because the middle class is said to increase

democratization. Since the middle class is related in the report to the development of increased democracy, it seems appropriate to analyze the report's treatment of the term democracy. The report positions democracy within the triumvirate of economic liberalism, democracy and secularism (this system is scripted as newly threatened (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 3)). *Global Trends* mentions democracy alongside countries that have the potential to gain international influence: India, China, Russia. Indonesia, Brazil and India are seen as solidly democratic. The narrative about democracy is solidified in a special text box, "Future of Democracy: Backsliding More Likely than Another Wave:" "We remain optimistic about the long-term prospects for greater democratization, but advances are likely to slow and globalization will subject many recently democratized countries to increasing social and economic pressures that could undermine liberal institutions" (2008a, 87). The box goes on to outline three significant 'take-home' points regarding democracy, which are:

- Economic collapse could create an increase in democracy in China and Russia;
- Better economic performance in authoritarian countries could sow doubt about liberal democracy as the best model;
- Democracy has "taken root" in "Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, where opinion views it positively independent of any material benefits" (2008a, 87).

The report seems to envision democracy as a key axis along which international power may be organized. For example, the report predicts that if China's economy slows or becomes hostile to Japan, then Japan might "move to assert its influence in part by seeking to rally democratic state in East Asia" (2008a, 34).

*Global Trends* sets up a binary view of the alleged trend of the growing middle class: the trend can be seen as a two sided coin, with a light side (poverty alleviation) and a dark side

(growing inequality due to exclusion from the globalization game - this binary encourages us to view poverty alleviation as a result of inclusion). *Global Trends 2025* discusses impoverishment in terms of a rising middle class: "never before have so many been lifted out of extreme poverty as is happening today" (2008a, 8). This claim needs to be critiqued in terms of geographers' arguments about simultaneous production of a globally uneven landscape (Massey 2005) through processes of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey 2005). In the same paragraph, the report posits not only the idea of growing middle classes in different places, but also the existence of a specifically global middle class. This promotes the idea of a smooth, flat notion of class as defined implicitly here only in terms of income. By positing a global middle class, the importance of context, place and politics to a conceptualization of "middle class" is sidelined, making conceptual room for the "global middle class" to become detached from particular explanations of change and serving to articulate a generally hopeful, but non-specific understanding of the political and economic future that might be brought through globalization.

### **Muslims and the Muslim World**

Said writes that "the West" and "Islam" are "coercive labels" and he hopes that "people here and in the Islamic world *may* discover the deplorable limits" of such labels (1997, 78). The discussion of globalization in Chapter Two is in part an effort to show that 'globalization' has also become a coercive label, carrying with it meanings and connotations that simultaneously operate outside of and on the 'real world' by making its specificity seem invisible, treating 'globalization' as a set of common sense, agreed upon notions of good, bad, progress, and modernization. In this section, I will show that these common sense notions depend on the text's ability to bring to life an opposing identity in less sanitized language than is used to discuss political economic systems (neoliberal capitalism v. state capitalism). In discussing the

discursive figures that populate the text, *Global Trends 2025*'s reliance on Cold War and Orientalist imaginations becomes even more clear. The first figure I will discuss is "Islam and the Muslim World," a blend between the spatialized conceptions of an 'arc of instability' and the more individualized figures of the "Violent Unemployed Youth" and the "Muslim Woman" – these two coalesce around the concept of fertility rates and 'ethno religious' identity. For example, in the Middle East and North Africa: "But over time, lower fertility promotes religious and political stability and, if secularization in southern Europe is a guide [Eurocentrism], modernized versions of Islam could take root by 2025" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 65).

Mamdani (2004) asserts that the production of "the Muslim" as a *political identity* was forged in the Cold War and he encourages us to see discourses about the War on Terror and radical Islamist violence as a continuation of global relations from the Cold War and colonial relations. I agree with his emphasis on continuity, but am also attentive to the newly-dominant emphasis on inclusion, integration, and connection as a way of eliminating threats (Mitchell 2010; Mitchell 2011). In this section, I will try to untangle some of the ways in which Islam, and by implication, Muslims, are discussed in *Global Trends 2025*. Integration and/or assimilation of Muslims in Western Europe is a globally significant trend, according to the report: "Successful integration of Muslim minorities in Europe could expand the size of the productive work forces and avert social crisis" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, v, see also the textboxes "Women as Agents of Geopolitical Change" and "Muslims in Western Europe").

The text box "Muslims in Western Europe" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 25) is an excellent example of the tendency in *Global Trends 2025* to view the "Muslim world" and the West as opposed to each other. The text box is interesting because of the work it does to 'localize'

Muslim identity and consolidate the political label "Muslim," drawing uncritically on racist tropes of overpopulation, instability, and 'integration' while ignoring colonial history even as it purports to objectively assess the 'Muslim population' as some sort of whole. I say non-realist because the authors make absolutely no effort to describe or understand the diverse realities that might be encompassed by such a label - not even distinguishing between recent immigrants (or from which countries they might arrive) and citizens. Having (re)created the label 'Muslim' separate from any particular reality or context, the report then can speak of (unspecified) "Muslim-related issues", including the need to integrate and assimilate (all) Muslims, lest "tense and unstable situations" arise. Muslim identity and issues are further marginalized by language that characterizes all Muslims as separatist; Muslims are said to favor "areas with Muslim-specific cultural and religious practices", which are not described. The use of the label 'Muslim' to create a completely generic "Other" is extremely clear in this instance. When this text box finally does describe anything, it again 'localizes' Muslim issues even further, by relating them to "foreign policies for the Middle East" and Israel.

In chapter one of *Global Trends 2025*, the 'Middle East' is a place that is explicitly opposed to the 'Western model' through the discussion of Islamic parties: "In the Middle East, secularism, which has also been considered an integral part of the Western model, increasingly may be seen as out of place as Islamic parties come into prominence and possibly begin to run governments" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 14). This quotation is troubling to me for several reasons, first among them being its seeming objectivity and innocence. The statement is reductive, for example ignoring the complex relationship between state secularism, Christianity, class politics, racism, and heteropatriarchy in the US 'model' of economic development, as well as its violence and colonial/imperial history.

I wonder if there might be an implicit either-or between poor and powerless and 'the middle class', who presumably have influence (the report gives the influence of the middle class in terms of being able to turn around the political situation in say, China). Even if this is not the case, the report does set up 'the poor' and powerless to be both vulnerable to and likely to strategically align themselves with either criminal networks or religious organizations.

### **Violent Unemployed Youth**

The figure of the violent unemployed youth selectively operates to further marginalize what the political signifier “Muslim” means (already localized and excluded from the West/Western political and cultural norms) by associating “Muslim” with discourses of terrorism through the figure of the violent unemployed youth.

The figure of the ‘violent unemployed youth’ is associated with so-called ‘youth bulge’ states in the ‘arc of instability’ in *Global Trends 2025*; he is from the global south and is a racialized figure seen as angry and radical – especially when he is not ‘given’ alternatives to “volatility and violence” by those global and state managers who have the power to create political and economic environments (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 22). The violent unemployed youth is seen as at risk for joining terrorist groups from the beginning of the report: “In the absence of employment opportunities and legal means for political expression, conditions will be ripe for disaffection, growing radicalism, and possible recruitment of youth into terrorist groups;” the violent unemployed youth could join the “newly emergent collections of the angry and disenfranchised that become self-radicalized” (2008a, ix). The youths then are apparently partly driven by an internal force – they are ‘self-radicalized’ (as if the tendency for violence were inherent and particular to these young people) – and employment is the key to de-railing this momentum. I think that this phrasing does several things. First of all, it only allows a

systematic analysis of the ‘causes’ of terrorism to extend part-way. Although the authors acknowledge that economic concerns are important, they recommend political expression, not political control, be given to those who are disenfranchised.

These angry, disenfranchised, radical youths are described using language that recalls the threat of new diseases – they are ‘emergent’, they spread, they are growing, and they are dangerous. The rationality of these actors is also undermined: they have “a desire for revenge or to become ‘martyrs’ – [they] will continue to turn to violence to pursue their objectives” (2008a, ix). The violence of these actors contrasts with the violence that might be perpetrated by a state, for example the still-risky but more clinically framed “Episodes of low-intensity conflict taking place under a nuclear umbrella” (2008a, ix) that might occur in the context of a nuclear Iran. Even these episodes of conflict are less rational than the “stable deterrent relationship that existed between the great powers for most of the Cold War” (2008a, ix). Of course, in reality, this ‘deterrent relationship’ was maintained through nearly-continuous proxy wars, but this violence is erased in the continuum of hyper-visible, irrational violence of terrorists to the invisible, justified and rational violence of states, and especially super-powers.

Ironically, the fearful discourse created in *Global Trends* for its intended reader, the global manager, uses the concept of irrational violence to undermine the figure of the violent young Muslim man, thus rendering illegitimate any meaningful critique of the current dominant global capitalist system that might emanate from what the labels are of instability and Muslim purport to describe. Like so-called failed states, which are excluded from the category of rational violence, the figure of the violent young Muslim man is excluded from the rational masculine figure of the global manager. As Jennifer Fluri writes, "Relating emotive response to violent

actions and linking them to fear and erratic behaviour serves to disassociate these acts of violence from acceptable 'masculine' behaviours such as honour or courage" (2011, 285).

These angry young men seem especially incorrigible when compared to Muslim women, as they are in the text box "Women as Agents of Geopolitical Change," The report should be quoted at length here:

"Muslim women do far better assimilating in Europe than their male relatives, partly because they flourish in the educational system, which facilitates their entry into jobs in information or service industries. Sharply declining fertility rates among Muslims in Europe demonstrate this willingness to accept jobs outside the home and a growing refusal to conform to traditional norms. In the short term, the decline of traditional Muslim family structures may help explain the openness of many young Muslim men to radical Islamic messages" (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 16).

I will return to this later to ask what it means for Muslim women, but here I want to point out that young men are constructed as a 'risky' group within the spatial extent of 'the West.'

### **Women as Geopolitical Agents**

"While the policy processes of global governance are sometimes informed by gender, their policy discussions, critiques and conclusions tend to decenter some of the issues that are key to gender equality such as care of older and disabled people (and the rights of those people themselves), child care provision, and the forms of social protection that provide rights to give and receive care" (Williams 2010, 12).

The figure I consider here is that of the 'third world woman.' Gender is among the many things that are not legible in *Global Trends*' framing of the 'global.' It is made invisible by being ignored, and yet gendered bodies and gendered relations become visible and globally significant in selective ways that I argue are part of the process of constructing certain places and populations as Other. When women are talked about, it is not to include gendered reality as a "driver" of global change; rather, women's inclusion here articulates a racist framing of the world which draws on past racist constructions which have their roots in orientalist and colonial global framings. I draw on feminist theorizations of global change to suggest that some of this

limitation stems from an uncritical scalar framing of the global, but I also suggest that the category “woman” is also raced and placed within a certain imagined geography in such a way that, rather than increasing our understanding of other places, “woman” ends up implicating an “Other” to modernity and the West.

Asking where are the women is a basic way of getting at what is left out when scale – here the global scale – is theorized in a hierarchal scalar frame in which certain processes and actors are privileged as significant – as “key drivers” of global change (Freeman 2001; Nagar et al. 2002). I find Mountz and Hyndman’s (2006) term the “global intimate” a useful way of pointing to the co-constitutive nature of locally-framed experiences and globally significant processes. In their formulation, the everyday and intimate experiences, negotiations, and actions are the actual ‘stuff’ of the global.

The words ‘woman’ and ‘women’ appear infrequently in *Global Trends 2025*. While I do not focus on quantitative content analysis in my discussion, a few numbers provide context for the qualitative analysis that follows. The word ‘woman’ appears in only five places in the report, all in chapter two, “Demographics of Discord”, and all in reference to fertility rates, which are predicted to stay low in Western Europe and Japan (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 21), to be varied in India, and to be declining in Iran (2008a, 26). In addition to the text box “Women as Agents of Geopolitical Change” (2008a, 16–17), which I will analyze in more detail below, there are six references to ‘women’ in *Global Trends 2025*, half of which also appear in chapter two: another reference to fertility of Russian women (2008a, 24), a reference to women’s low status in India (2008a, 26), and a reference to the “confrontations with Muslim conservatives” precipitated by immigration to Western Europe from Muslim countries regarding, among other things, women’s rights (2008a, 24).

Discussing women's lives only in terms of fertility rates reflects the instrumental framework of *Global Trends*, which gives the most analytic weight to phenomena captured by geopolitical and geoeconomic analytics. Women's agency is constructed as reactive and as following from the implications of their being (their reproductive capacity) rather than from their decisions and actions, and women's lives are seen as a trend to be manipulated by US policy makers. Thus, when women are discussed at all, women's lives are portrayed as expressions of ethno-religious populations' fertility, and discussions of fertility are marked by a high level of anxiety about racial change and immigration. Fertility rates also function as an implied *marker* of racial difference from low-fertility, modern, white populations in the US and Western Europe.

The label "Muslim" is used frequently in *Global Trends* to refer to diverse populations spanning many nations and groups, and in reference to a wide variety of processes and trends, from increasing education for women to immigration to radicalization. To understand what this means, I draw on Edward Said's (1997) framing of the term "Muslim/Islam" as a coercive label. He writes, "the term 'Islam' as it is used today seems to mean one simple thing but in fact is part fiction, part ideological label, part minimal designation of a religion called Islam. In no really significant way is there a direct correspondence between the 'Islam' in common Western usage and the enormously varied life that goes on within the world of Islam..." (1997, 1). Since the report does not refer to any specific group of women or to any specific empirical example, I take both "woman/women" and "Muslim" to be political constructs that are used and can be analyzed without needing to confirm or deny a 'reality.' In addition to consolidating the politically-charged label "Muslim," predictions about fertility rates moves the narrative quickly from a nebulous global space into specific places, as this map depicting changing fertility rates in what the report terms the "arc of instability" shows.

Women, specifically Muslim women, are also discussed in terms of economic participation in both ‘Muslim *places*’ such as Saudi Arabia, the ‘Middle East’ and North Africa and in ‘Muslim *populations*’ such as immigrants to Western Europe. Increasing women’s economic participation is seen as a marker of and catalyst of political and religious change. For example, technological advances that might make oil less relevant will force economic change in Saudi Arabia, “including women’s full participation in the economy—and a new social contract with its public as it tries to institute a work ethic to accelerate development plans and diversify the economy” (2008a, 46). Similarly, in the text box subtitled, “A Two-Tier Muslim World?”, the report states that “a greater emphasis on economics and, most importantly, *greater participation of women in the work force may spur new forms of progressive Islam*. This does not mean that extremist strands will disappear; in the short term they might benefit from unease over the changing role of women and alternative family models” (2008a, 65, emphasis added). Changes to women’s lives are considered abstractly as a path to “modernization;” in suggesting this, the report constructs those same places as non-modern or even anti-modern.

In addition to direct connections to woman(en), ‘fertility’ is also mentioned in reference to: the arc of instability (National Intelligence Council 2008a, 21), ethnic shifts brought about by labor migration to the US (2008a, 23), political change that might be brought about by “ethno religious” migration to low-fertility countries (2008a, 23), Shiite integration in Lebanon (2008a, 24), the increasing proportion of Muslims in Russia due to high fertility rates (2008a, 24), Muslim’s above-average fertility in Western Europe (2008a, 25), the possibility of nationalist backlash against non-Orthodox Slavs, especially Muslims, in Russia (2008a, 25), a future “echo bulge” in Iran (2008a, 26), and finally (spectacularly), the possibility that declining Muslim fertility rates could lead to “modernization” in the Middle East and North Africa (2008a, 65).

Several conclusions are apparent: *Global Trends 2025* is insufficiently curious about women's lives; women are considered almost exclusively as expressions of an ethno religious population's fertility; and discussions of fertility are marked by a high level of anxiety about racial change and immigration. Fertility rates also function as an implied *marker* of racial difference from low-fertility, modern, white populations in the US and Western Europe.

In spite of the glaring lack of any meaningful gender analysis, *Global Trends 2025* does include a text box addressing the topic 'Women as Agents of Geopolitical Change.' First of all, the existence and title of this chart suggests that women are not the usual 'agents of change.' The text box "complicates" the narrative of women-as-reproducers to include what might cause those fertility rates to decline (education), and also includes women as paid workers. I imitate the authorial style of the report by creating a table based on the claims that the report makes in this text box.

Part of what I want to critique about the table is how the relationship between the title and the columns below it serve to delimit women's agency in problematic ways. I want to emphasize the way in which the implied causal relationship between women's lives as trends and the social outcomes they predict hides more about social, political and economic processes than it reveals. For example, the report states that increasing "female education" results in declining birthrates but does not discuss why there is a widespread correlation between the two. These trends are discussed from a social engineering perspective, rather than a perspective of empowering women. *Global Trends 2025* lists "laws encouraging greater female participation in the economy" as one of a number of factors that might help a country combat the demographic challenges of an aging workforce, along with technology, immigration, and public health improvements (National Intelligence Council 2008a, xii). My point, in part, is that these

relationships should be the starting point of wider discussions that ought to give more weight to feminist and critical research and perspectives.

**Table 2. Women’s Lives as Trends**

<b>Trend</b>	<b>Correlated Trend Posited in Global Trends</b>
Increasing female literacy	Increasing GDP
Increasing female education	Decreasing birthrates
Decreasing birthrates	Better maternal health
	Less malnutrition
	More children in school
	“social stability”
Increasing women’s political involvement	Governments will favor social over military policy
Increasing women’s economic participation	Economic growth
Increasing no. of women politicians	Declining corruption
Women flourish in schools	Women enter service jobs, saving the economy
Decreasing Muslim women’s fertility rate	Evidence of rejection of ‘traditional norms’
Decreasing of traditional family structure	Muslim men open to radicalism

Although this textbox could be taken as a good-faith attempt to ‘include women’, such a generous interpretation is not appropriate here. Women’s political and social agency is seen as simply reactive (women respond to ‘rates’ of ‘factors’ with predictable shifts in behavior in a smooth, neutral and ahistorical space) and trivial (lacking in explanatory power). Women’s roles as mothers are naturalized (nothing to be curious about), while their caring labor is made invisible (thereby both naturalizing and trivializing it). By including women’s agency in a textbox that trivializes that agency, the text more effectively excludes women’s lives and the feminine from the non-trivial, non-feminine “drivers” of global change.

Global Trends 2025 proposes women’s economic participation as a solution to declining national power. When women’s reproductive capacity is not the reason for discussing them, then their productive capacity usually is. Important enough to warrant mention in the “Executive Summary,” *Global Trends* lists “laws encouraging greater female participation in the economy”

as one of a number of factors that might help a country combat the demographic challenges of an aging workforce, along with technology, immigration, and public health improvements (National Intelligence Council 2008a, xii). There is no mention of the greater burdens that women will likely have to shoulder as they go from unpaid or part-time to full time work, something that feminists have pointed to as one of the costs of this ‘solution’ (Lawson 2007; Williams 2010). The report assumes that it is meaningful to discuss women over the entire globe as a monolithic category. As Lawson (2010) points out in reference to the *World Development Report’s* advocating migrant labor, *Global Trends’* emphasis on increasing women’s economic participation alone hides the work of caring for oneself and others, which in turn obscures the relations of care and care work that re-inscribe inequality and create new forms of inequality. We need to think more deeply about the material relations that are elided by reductive labels and uncurious analysis. We must not assume that economic relations and social relations are separate.

A feminist political ethic of care usefully reframes the question of inclusion of women’s lives and women’s issues at the scale of global analysis by engaging in a normative critique that foregrounds a relational ontology of interdependence that takes caring work and caring relationships as the serious “stuff” of globalization. A feminist political ethic of care usefully reframes the question of inclusion of women’s lives and women’s issues at the scale of global analysis by engaging in a normative critique that foregrounds a relational ontology of interdependence that takes caring work and caring relationships as the serious “stuff” of globalization. We cannot understand the global economic system or global inequality without accounting for the actual ways in which daily life is continually restructured by those relations.

My analysis points to the need for grounded, empirical work such as those presented in this session that can provide a more realistic starting point for creating policy and understanding the causes and implications of global change. We cannot allow reductive, racist imagined geographies to obscure the role of the current global capitalist system in producing inequality and impoverishment. My goal in analyzing *Global Trends 2025* is not inclusion of feminist perspectives in a policy agenda whose goal is to make the world safe for capital by relying on US military power. Instead, my hope is that if we begin from a theorization of the global – such as the ‘global intimate’ – that posits people’s actual experiences as the actual “stuff” of ‘global trends,’ then perhaps a radically different set of goals will emerge. The particular kind of knowledge represented by *Global Trends 2025* – a masculinist world view characterized by an expectation of control based on geoeconomic and geopolitical calculations – will no longer be in demand.

Drawing out the discursive figures that populate *Global Trends* helps make the contradictory logics of the report more transparent by demonstrating that the world view on which they are based is ideological rather than objective. Although the point of sketching these figures is not to compare them to some ‘truer’ version of, for example, ‘Islam’ or ‘the Muslim world,’ an important part of robbing them of their power is to reflect on how little they do represent the real complexity of any part of the world or the people who live in it. I drew on Said, Dalby, and Mamdani to demonstrate that the discursive constructions of Islam are given life in depictions of angry young men, Muslims (in general) and Muslim (Third World) women. These figures are opposed to the implied figure of the global manager and the middle class liberal voter, who are associated with the Western political economic system of liberal global capitalist

expansion. The binary relation that is expressed in this juxtaposition gives form to the spatial associations of globalization's 'inside and outside' as discussed in the previous chapter.

By asking, 'where are the people?' I sought to disrupt the scalar framing of the 'global' in order to understand the limitations of the report's grasp on real lives (and therefore its ability to represent the future with any accuracy). Although *Global Trends 2025* appears to make an effort to, for example, include women (at least once) in their analysis, the result is not a 'balanced' treatment of women's lives. I will draw on feminist engagements with critical geopolitics to hopefully understand if there are blind spots in the report that limit its effectiveness as a planning tool and reinscribe the positionality of the white, heteropatriarchal master subject (Haraway 1991a; Puar and Rai 2002; Rose 1993; Roberts 2003).

Human agency is abstracted and represented in very selective ways. The fictional journal entries and correspondence of 'world leaders'; the fertility of certain populations, such as those in the arc of instability; the personalities of charismatic religious leaders; the vulnerability of the poor and of migrants; the calculations of states seeking protection or power; the anxieties and consumer preferences of affluent classes; and the changing ways in which people form identities, affiliations, and relationships.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

The analysis of *Global Trends 2025* presented in this thesis is in part an attempt to place conflicting narratives of declining and/or continuing US global power in the context of geographers' engagements with globalization. I begin my analysis by situating *Global Trends* within its institutional and historical context. I build on recent critical writing about "military-strategic studies complex" and the kinds of geographical 'common sense' implicated in this formation of power/knowledge. I see the knowledge produced through *Global Trends* as deeply intertwined with both the project of US intelligence and a corporate geoeconomic rationality, which I describe using the term "neoliberal geopolitics." My interest is to understand the political work accomplished within the text itself (although work needs to be done to understand how its rhetoric functions through its publication and circulation as well). I argue that knowledge about the future produced in *Global Trends 2025* is spatialized knowledge: it orders the world in specific ways and disciplines reality (in fact, this is the stated intent of the document). My analysis draws on work in critical geopolitics to show that the threatening Other in *Global Trends* is constructed through spatial metaphors, references to policy (e.g. state capitalism), and through the development of discursive figures who produce distinctions between Same and Other. Using a rhetorical analysis of the text and images in the report, I argue that spatialized knowledge of the Other, rather than being innocent, serves to normalize a specific set of policies.

*Global Trends 2025* is based on a limited theorization of global change rooted in neoliberal ideology and a militarized worldview based on limited conceptions of global economic security which promote the maintenance of an international status quo in the form of increasing neoliberal policy reforms and maintaining US global military dominance. In spite of their liberal rhetoric, in practice, both of these systems of global control, such as US global governance through international institutions, are based on exploitation and human insecurity,

rather than on an actually increasing quality of life and right to self-determination. To make this argument, I analyze three discourses operating in the text: discourses of technology, discourses of globalization, and discourses about the Other.

In Chapter Two, “Technologies of Change,” I examine a particular expectation of change articulated in *Global Trends* centered on the idea of technological innovation. I push back against abstract articulations of change that normalize state violence and obscure the production of structural inequality. I argue that *Global Trends 2025* frames technological innovation as a marker of progress and modernization, and I suggest that framing the ‘technological fix’ uncritically as a marker of modernization hides from scrutiny 1) the relations that produce problems for human thriving and 2) that technological change produces new relations of inequality which are not just incidental to the process of modernization, but are fully part of its result. More specifically, two kinds of violence are hidden from view: structural violence and state violence. This is accomplished through the adoption of what I call the strategic resources and strategic weapons models of technological change, which play out an alternately hopeful and fearful vision of the possible futures made possible through technological innovation. My concern is that documents such as *Global Trends 2025*, with their advocacy of technological innovation, modernization ideology, neoliberal trade policies, and US military supremacy, pave the way for a more violent, less caring foreign policy in the future. I conclude that a critical feminist re-reading of *Global Trends 2025* should push back against this narrative, demanding a relational analysis that privileges understanding the productions of impoverishment and reworking the concept of ‘global trends’ into a critique of increasing militarization and of its instrumental logic. This is an opportunity to evaluate change in a less abstract and ideological fashion by prioritizing impacts on people’s real lives both conceptually and empirically. By

“conceptually” I mean taking feminist critiques of hierarchal constructions of scale and of knowledge production about “the global” seriously. My analysis makes room for us to ask, what is being left out of our accounts, our spatial imaginations, our mappings, and our vision of the future that might be helpful in framing an ethical stance to guide US “global” policy?

In Chapter Three, “Landscapes of Global Change,” I turn to another abstract idea of change: globalization. The authors of *Global Trends* afford the concept of globalization a huge amount of significance in their imagining of the past, present and future, so I begin the chapter by examining some of the ways they frame globalization. Their formulation of globalization is abstract and universalizing, and I argue that the placeless, faceless global capitalism one might imagine based on their discussion is actually a carefully crafted set of narratives that draw on ideas about scale and about particular places, people, and centers of power. I briefly recall several themes from my introductory literature review to help denaturalize the concept of globalization, including feminist critiques of scale and globalization, and critical examinations of neoliberal geopolitics and US empire.

I elaborate on the contextual, situated, and productive nature of “globalization” discourse in *Global Trends* by presented my own reading of the political work done through deploying globalization discourse in the text. I demonstrate that globalization is not merely a neutral label for an already-existing set of processes in the world, but rather functions to consolidate specifically neoliberal global capitalist aspirations as a “common good” for the future through a set of ideological claims about what globalization is and is not. In the final section, I show how the spatial assumptions and ideological claims made about the hopeful future to be brought by globalization are supported as much through the creation of anxious futures and dangerous spaces as they are by promises of global stability and prosperity. Fearful futures in which

alternate blocs of economic power develop (alternate to US-led global capitalist expansion) and dangerous geographies such as the arc of instability threaten to overtake the “developed world” (through a narrative of “the decline of the West”) create a role for the US as a global manager. This is a militarized role in which US military supremacy is maintained in order to keep the anxious aspects of globalization at bay. By attending to these contradictory expectations of globalization (aspirations and anxieties), my analysis points to the fluid and unwieldy nature of globalization discourse and shows that it takes a significant amount of work to maintain a façade of placeless globalization operating in smooth global space. I show that geostrategic discourses only seem to exclude the messy parts of global power (violence, structural inequality, racism, gendered division of power); in fact, they depend on these messy parts to give meaning to their predictions and guide future policies.

I address the discursive creation of a “threatening Other” and a rational global manager, whose job is to mitigate the risky existence of this Other, in Chapter Four, “Managing the Middle Classes, Muslims, and Women.” I argue that the simultaneously hopeful and anxious narrative I have traced in Chapters Two and Three is animated by at least five discursive figures, including the Global Manager, the Global Middle Class, the Muslim, the Violent Unemployed Youth, and Women. My analysis shows that these figures function to create abstract political identities, rather than expressing a meaningful set of relations on which to base future policy-making.

The figures of the Global Manager and Global Middle Class express a hopeful expectation that global change can, in fact, be effectively managed and shaped in the interests of global capitalist expansion, and that the results its success will be prosperity. The figure of the Global Manager exists outside the text in the presumption of the US need for global governance. Drawing attention to the figure of the Global Manager helps to undermine the idea that the

knowledge presented in *Global Trends* represents an objective knowledge of the future. The Global Middle Class functions as a hopeful category that differentiates the deserving subjects of globalization from its Other. It functions as a political label that advances the hopeful myths of globalization as a leveler and discursively binds capitalist expansion with a politically liberal democratic agenda.

The figures of the Global Middle Class and Global Manager are created as much through their difference from a racialized Other as through their normalization of neoliberal globalist common sense. The figure of the Muslim is a political label that provides an Other to the West (the West is defined against both fearful spatial imaginations and fearful Others); the West and the “Muslim World” are constructed as opposites. The history of colonial and Cold War relations are elided in the unproblematic opposition of the Muslim and the modern, rational Western political subject. The figure of the Muslim is further elaborated in the gendered categories of Violent Unemployed Youth and Women. The figure of the Violent Unemployed Youth populates a threatening geography, the arc of instability, and serves to distinguish orderly, rational violence from disruptive, irrational violence, thus normalizing and rationalizing violence perpetrated by the state. The figure Women is deployed to selectively view certain women’s bodies as alternately threatening and hopeful representations of the global future. Women’s reproductive capacity is a threatening intimate geography that *Global Trends* positions as in need of monitoring and management, while Women’s capacity to work is treated as a hopeful opportunity for economic growth. I conclude that these discursive figures in some ways constitute a missed opportunity to complicate the abstraction inherent in the concept of “global trends” by drawing attention to the real struggles of people’s everyday lives as they produce global relations through their work, their travel, their consumption, their political action, and

their caring relationships. The figure of Women, for example, could point to the complexity of women's lives and roles in different places, which then might serve as a starting point for resisting the totalizing logic of *Global Trends*. Instead of providing an opportunity to question or undermine the common sense notions of US supremacy and militarized neoliberal globalism, the five discursive figures end up serving to consolidate them.

*Global Trends 2025* is a 'view from somewhere,' more specifically, 1) from an institutional site that is thoroughly embedded in US military interests, 2) from a policy perspective that naturalizes neoliberal ideology and US military supremacy, and 3) from a masculinist (universalizing) construction of knowledge which calls into being a moralized dialectic of hope and fear that is communicated through spatial, racialized constructions of the Other. My goal in making this argument is to insist that futuristic policy guides should be the subject of analysis and critique and to point to the vital importance of research endeavors that take on the task of understanding potential futures from an empirically grounded approach to research. However, this cannot mean that "critical" insights are simply included in state projects of knowledge production. Writing in reference to the US military's 'cultural understanding' programs, which are designed to 'win hearts and minds' (for example, the inclusion of cultural and human geography in military and intelligence literature (Johnson 2006; Johnson and Berrett 2011; Long 2010)), Fluri asserts,

"These programmes draw upon classic methods for colonisation and imperial military occupation. These strategic methods for 'improving' military strategy in Afghanistan also compete and occur in tandem with (rather than in lieu of) conventional and technological military operations such as aerial bombs, drones and robotics – which also kill civilians" (2011, 292).

Really succeeding in our endeavors to make feminist epistemologies and methodologies count means changing the *goal* of the analysis as well. We need to demand not just a different analysis,

but a *different outcome*. Thus, it is important to question what kind of world the scenarios in *Global Trends 2025* push lawmakers to try to create. Thomas Fingar's statement in his introductory letter to the report, "If you do not like where they [events] appear to be going, you will have to develop and implement policies to change their trajectory," is followed by an analysis in which stability, especially economic stability, is associated with increasing US militarism. Critical scholars cannot ignore sites of knowledge production which promote this sort of common sense; geographers are particularly well-placed to conduct research in these areas. In documenting the historical evolution of what he calls the military-strategic studies complex, Morrissey encourages us to consider "the responsibility of geography in advancing more grounded, nuanced and humane scripting of the various worlds that form the backdrop of so much contemporary US geopolitical and geoeconomic calculation" (2011, 438). By resisting the logic of "neoliberal geopolitics" in *Global Trends*, I try to make space for alternative telling of the past, present, and future.

I hope to increase our collective knowledge about one artifact of state-produced geographical knowledge not by claiming authority over the *Global Trends* and the future it describes, but by encouraging readers to be curious about the contradictions within the text and to demand that a more situated, less ideological, and more accountable narrative be used to shape US foreign policy than the one produced in *Global Trends*. Although I am not in search of more accurate 'predictions' of the future, I am looking for better explanations of the 'trends' as I find them described in the report. My goal is to ask questions of the text and of my own analysis that are in the spirit of transnational feminist inquiry, which teaches us to be suspicious of totalizing narratives and representations of the world, and, importantly for geographers, of narratives that assume space has a neutral role in producing capitalist economies (Lawson 2010). I remain

suspicious of ‘narratives of progress’ and of my own role in replicating insufficiently reflexive critical narratives which ignore processes of racialization and class differentiation even as they critique masculine privilege and imperialism (Mohanty 2006; Nagar and Swarr 2010). We need to be accountable to those from whom we try to write (Nagar 2002), even when not in the field.

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