



Israel National Defense College
47th Class 2019-2020

**Schools and Approaches in
Political Science**

Final Assignment

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Questions.

1. Discuss shortly the difference between the term globalization, concept of globalization and phenomenon of globalization.
2. Present in short, the text you decided to analyze and explain why you chose it.
3. How does the author/creator of the text conceptualize globalization?
 - a. What is the content of the conceptualization – how does he define or describe globalization?
 - b. Is the conceptualization direct or indirect?
 - c. What is the approach used for the conceptualization, is it explicit or implicit? Please use examples to explain.
 - d. What is the creator/author's approach to globalization?
4. Please analyze at least two reviews of the text you choose.
 - a. Do the reviewers adopt a different approach than the one of the text?
 - b. Do the reviewers stem from a different approach or the same approach with a different viewpoint? Or do the reviews after all adopt the same approach and resonate the same arguments of the text?
5. Use a different approach to offer changes to the text you chose.

DEFINING GLOBALIZATION

Globalization as a term refers to the interconnectedness of countries and people from different parts of the world, and moving towards a common system. The concept of globalization means integration of economies and societies through cross border flows of information, ideas, technologies, goods, services and culture. The interconnectedness between countries and people from different parts of the world reduces or breaks down national barriers in the areas of culture, commerce and communications to enable the free movement of information, ideas, technologies, goods, services and culture. As a phenomenon, advancements in computer and communication technologies have resulted in quick and radical improvements in communication and transportation capabilities and these developments have accelerated globalization. The process of integration is now more compressed and faster and its impacts more

widespread, with geographic distances becoming less of a factor. As a result, one could see increased interdependency and interactions on international cultural, social, economic and political activities.

SELECTION OF TEXT FOR REVIEW

The text that I have chosen to analyze is the BBC TV series “Years and Years”. Through each member of the Lyons family, this TV series presented the near future possibilities about certain immediate worldwide concerns brought about by globalization. The TV series does so by following the lives of the Lyons over the next 15 years, from 2019 to 2034, in the context where Britain is rocked by unstable political, economic and technological advances. I have chosen the TV series “Years and Years” to examine globalization because the mini-series reflects current affairs and accelerates into the future, presenting its plausible outcomes. While the TV series has presented one perspective of consequences that is plausible, it also sets one into thinking what are the other possible outcomes, what could be the triggers that led us to this path of dystopian, and what could we do now to prevent or minimize such a situation from unfolding.

CREATOR’S CONCEPTUALISATION OF GLOBALIZATION

Through the 6 episodes in the TV series, the creator described globalization as a phenomenon that is dark and unsettling, where individual lives were seriously negatively impacted and destabilized by a series of geopolitical events ranging from global politics, immigration chaos, financial crises, climate change as well as technology advancement such as infotech and biotech. The TV series depicted the Lyons family as people who were once insulated from global catastrophes, but were now very affected culturally, socially, economically and politically given the tighter interconnectedness to the

other parts of the world as a result of globalization. The TV series creator used each member of the Lyon family to portray these aspects; (a) Daniel fell in love with a Ukrainian refugee (Viktor) fleeing homophobic torture, divorced his partner, and eventually drown and died while going out of his way to illegally get Viktor into UK before his repatriation to Ukraine. (b) Bethany, a depressed teenager who hides behind smartphone filter masks, very much wanted to be a transhuman and took dangerous steps to become one, and she did eventually become a transhuman through other ways. She also said “I don’t want to be flesh. I want to live forever as information.”, and “I will be data.” (c) Edith was a passionate political activist and in championing her climate change cause, she risked her life to report on the issue. She was exposed to nuclear radiation and had her life shortened when the island she was on was attacked by a nuclear bomb. She was also eventually persuaded to become a transhuman. (d) Stephen and Celeste had their fortune wiped out which arose from a banking crisis, triggered by the collapse of an American bank. Celeste also lost her job as an accountant to artificial intelligence. (e) Rosie found herself caught up in the eccentric rhetorics of Vivienne Rook, and became a supporter of Rook’s political movement. Rosie however found herself subsequently locked out of her housing estate, which became gated by the policies of Rook, the politician whom she supported.

The creator had conceptualized globalization in the TV series through the observed current affairs which the viewers were familiar with and could relate to. He then led the viewers on and allowed them to use their personal values, culture, and own interests to qualitatively infer through their imaginations to draw similar conclusions on the consequences of globalization as shown in the TV series. For example, one could draw analogy on the rise of robots, frailty of banking system, nuclear bombing of Hong Sha Dao, refugees and cruelty of deportation, depictions of 60 days of rain and no more bananas and butterflies

etc as portrayed in the TV series with realities such as advancement in biotechnology, collapse of Lehman Brothers, conflicts between US and China, impacts of civil conflicts such as Syrian refugees and effects of global warming.

The creator had seek to explore power in the society from the first dimension. The creator viewed globalization from the angle that power is distributed in society. The existence of political parties (Rook campaigning in an election in which she won) and the various interest groups (Edith's active involvement as an activist on many issues, Bethany's fixation to be a transhuman) all acting against each other testifies to the distribution of power in globalization and no single entity is in full control. Despite it being the case, there is peaceful coexistence of these different interests and lifestyles in the society, anchored by the values of liberal democracy. As seen in episode 6, Muriel blames the family for the various problems in the world, saying they had remained indifferent and did not do anything to change things for the better despite the continuous occurrences of these catastrophes.

ANALYZING THE REVIEWS ON “YEARS AND YEARS”

In James Poniewozik's review of the TV series in New York Times, he wrote in his article “Mostly, they each feel like a representative for a social or political demographic. Stephen, a banker, is the standard-bearer for the moneyed globalist class; Rosie, a single mother, for the masses who want society shaken up; the materfamilias, Muriel (Anne Reid), for a past generation that remembers more stable times; Bethany, for a future generation grasping for hope in a virtual world that they can't find in the physical one.”¹ From here, we could see that Poniewozik has adopted the same conceptualization approach as Davis where he analyzed that power is fragmented and diffused. Poniewozik's

¹ Poniewozik, The New York Times, 23 Jun 2019

comment that the TV series is “half family drama, half speculative fiction” also suggests that his approach to conceptualization is based on observations.

In John Powers’s review, he wrote “The actors keep the dizziest events anchored in common experience, and Davies is brilliant at finding real emotion in fanciful circumstances.”² and “He basically extrapolates from today’s big issues, be it refugees, fervent nationalism, fake news, or the collapse of traditional political parties. At times, Davies falls into what George Orwell called the trap of believing that what’s happening now will keep happening forever.”³ which suggests that his approach to conceptualization and viewpoints are similar to that of the TV series creator.

ADOPTING A DIFFERENT CONCEPTUALISATION APPROACH

The TV series creator had depicted globalization with a predominately pessimistic outlook and had not included plausible outcomes of interventions to the impacts of globalization. For example, the TV series showed that the Lyons family (or the world) continued to live life as though nothing has happened after a nuclear bomb was dropped, or the seemingly fall of Europe (Greece leaves EU, Hungary declares bankruptcy, Spain’ government overthrown by revolution, Italy’s government resigns) or the rise of extreme Nationalism (US leaving the UN as a result).

A different approach to analyze globalization in the TV series could be to investigate the reasons for the indifference in the Lyons family despite all the unfavorable things that happened to them. We could approach it from the 2nd dimension of power. In Stephen’s case, he had lost his high-paying job in a banking crash. He however just continued with life by taking on several low-paid jobs, including being a bicycle courier as well as getting paid for rendering

² John Powers, NPR, 24 Jun 2019

³ ditto

his services for a drug experiment, while at the same time have an affair with his colleague. Even though Celeste found out the extra-marital affairs, she did not confront Stephen initially. Celeste was also initially opposed to Bethany's transhuman ambition but eventually gave in and said to Bethany that she could be what she wants.

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Online Articles

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2. John Powers, "Imagining A Dismal Future, 'Years And Years' Says Plenty About The Present", NPR, 24 Jun 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/06/24/735377947/imagining-a-dismal-future-years-and-years-says-plenty-about-the-present>, Accessed on 1 Nov 2019.