
Slumdog Millionaire: A Film Analysis

The movie *Slumdog Millionaire* is centered on the show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, and a boy from the slums of India who is very close to winning all of the money. Jamal, the contestant on the show, is suspected of cheating because of how good he is doing, but Jamal really does know all of the answers. Throughout the film, events from Jamal's life come up to explain how he knows the answers, and by the end of the movie, Jamal's life history has been shown. The movie *Slumdog Millionaire* gives an image into what the country of India is like, and through that, many connections to Human Geography can be made.

The movie starts off by showing Jamal on the Indian version of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, showing stimulus diffusion of an American show crossing international borders and changing to fit the culture of India. Many of the first questions on the game show take Jamal back to his slum in Mumbai where he grew up, and in the movie as the camera goes over the slums, a very clear subsequent boundary can be seen between the poor and rich sections of the city. The squatter settlements that Jamal grew up in show extreme poverty, but that was where he learned many of the answers, and one of the flashbacks that would come back later in the movie was when Jamal and his brother, Malik, ran into the gangster who controlled their slum. This scene shows how the informal economy, such as drugs and other illegal activities, takes over the slum, due to a gangster controlling it instead of the government. The slum also shows the population issue that India is facing. When looking at the physiological population density of areas such as the slums of Mumbai, it can be seen that India has a population problem. It is clear to see that India is following an exponential growth rate, and within a relatively short amount of time, India will be the most populated state on earth. India is currently in the second stage of the demographic transition model as can be seen by their high crude birth rate. This can be easily seen in the movie during the shots in the slums when thousands of children can be seen running around. Later on in the game, Jamal is brought back to when his mother was killed by anti-muslim attackers in a riot in their slum, showing the ethnocentrism of the different groups in India as being a major centrifugal force to the multinational state of India. After this attack, the boys leave the slum and begin to travel around India, and do so until they are much older. Throughout their journey they meet a girl named Latika who becomes a very prevalent character, and Jamal goes through many events that help him to win the game show.

Early on in the game show, the host asks Jamal what he does for a living. Jamal says he works at a call center getting tea for people who work there. This section of the movie shows the economic globalization as footloose industries make the move from developed states to developing states, such as India, where labor is much cheaper and the company doesn't have to be close to the customers in such a globalized world. This also shows an example of range and threshold, because American companies don't have to be close to customers due to the increases in technology, so their customers can be called from halfway around the world. India, a country that is in the upward transition is where many of the non basic industries of the US are going, and due to that, India's economy is booming. It was very clear in the movie to see this, such as in the scene where Jamal and Malik met up in the apartment building that was being built, showing high development taking place. India is following Rostow's model of economic development, as can be seen by their huge economic gains as they enter into the fourth stage of his model; the drive to maturity.

A few questions in, a period of Jamal's life is shown during which they are taken in by an orphanage. However, as they soon learn, this orphanage is using the children to make money. This again shows an aspect of the informal economy as the children beg for money that isn't ever accounted for by the government. Jamal and Malik realize that the situation they are in is dangerous when the men attempt to blind Jamal, and the boys continue on their journey. The next place the boys stop is at the Taj Mahal, an icon of the cultural landscape of India. The boys begin conning tourists into paying them for tours of the Taj Mahal, once again, showing an aspect of the informal economy in India. An interesting scene at the Taj Mahal that shows a very clear example of popular culture was when Jamal and Malik were stealing shoes from the pile outside the Taj Mahal, and many of the shoes in the pile were brands that are very recognizable in the US. Jamal and Malik continue to travel throughout India, and as the movie progresses, they both grow older and they soon split apart after a big fight. The movie continues to progress the same way all the way up to where Jamal is on the final question and on that question he is reunited with the love of his life on the phone and wins the show. Although there were many main aspects of the movie that were related to human geography, there were also some less important parts of the movie that show many aspects of human geography just as well.

Throughout the game show, Jamal and the host talk in English, showing that English is a lingua franca, or a language that is spoken throughout the world as a means of communicating easily. However, throughout the movie, Jamal was talking in Hindi, a member of the Sino-Tibetan language family, which shows that English is still a common language. This is very common in countries, such as India, which is a multilingual state, to have English as a lingua franca as well.

Slumdog Millionaire connects in so many ways, directly and indirectly, to human geography, making it a very useful movie when thinking about the connection between all of the topics. The country that the movie is set in, India, is very useful to make these connections due to the place that India is in right now. They are a heavily populated country that is undergoing extreme economic development, however, their country is still facing many problems, and all of this was highlighted very well throughout the movie.