

Week 1- Introduction to a global world

Proto-Global Problems

- Galton's Problem - cultural diffusion is so ancient and so widespread that all claims to essentialism have to be viewed very skeptically. E.g similar cultural traits might arise by diffusion. No part of the world can be studied in isolation
- Places that we think may have been connected by impossible distances may have in fact been connected after all e.g the Phoenician's circumnavigated Africa in 600 BC
- Thor Heyerdahl (Norwegian adventurer) is a strong believer of this
- Adoption of the alphabet also signifies that the world was connected - there is really one alphabet in the world - the Phoenician Alphabet. The only exception is the Korean Hangul which was created by modern times as an explicit attempt to create a new alphabet
- Viral epidemics also spread across the entire Afro-Eurasian landmass as early as 2 AD e.g. the plague
- Other examples include climate change, languages, spread of global religions
- A global social problem is
 - A problem, that is social (e.g related to interconnections of human beings) and is global in scope (driven by global forces and carrying global implications). They cannot be localised or particularised but are rather generalised
 - Not all problems are global problems

The Global World

- The rich countries of the world today are still those that are peopled by the descendants of the global colonisers of the early modern eras
- A typical country has a population of 10 million people and a GDP per capita of \$5,000 (to put this into perspective, Australia has a GDP per capita of \$50,000). Half the countries in the world have less than \$5,000
- Only about 1/8 of the world's people live in developed countries (GDP per capita of \$20,000 or more)

United Nations Year in Review 2017

- New Secretary-General Antonio Guterres
- World fastest growing refugee crisis evolves in Myanmar
- In Yemen, 8.5million people are on the brink of the worst famine in modern time
- Almost 100,000 migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea and almost 3,000 have drowned - most are fleeing poverty and conflict in sub-Saharan Africa
- Committed to achieve gender parity - by 2020, the UN aims to double the number of women peacekeepers

Left-Behind Children

- Most closely identified with contemporary China. Other countries' problems with separated families are part and parcel of globalisation
- Since women are almost everywhere the primary caregivers of children, women away from home to work in factories = children living with other family members such as grandparents
- In many societies fathers left behind are not (culturally) considered fit or able to raise their own children
- Children can end up playing the dual role of cared for and caregiver as many rural communities consist entirely of young children and the elderly
- The hukou (registration system) in China legally specifies the place in which a person is allowed to live. Historically, government services could only be accessed in that place (e.g schooling and healthcare), however, these restrictions are starting to disappear - meant to disappear entirely by 2020

- It is estimated that 60 million children are left behind, half of them are pre-school age 0-5 years
- This problem also occurs in the Philippines - where around one million women work overseas specifically in Saudi Arabia, UAE and Singapore
- Cities like Singapore and UAE depend on the existing of an endless flow of low-wage guest workers who do all manual work