Global Politics
Diefenbaker IB

Individual and Group Perspectives

Throughout the course, it is also necessary to approach the key political concepts and contemporary political issues through various individual and group perspectives. These will help you to develop an appreciation for multiple points of view and to deepen your understanding of the complexity of many issues encountered in the study of global politics: our unique personalities, life experiences and the social and cultural environments of which we are a part influence how we act in global politics. Three examples of important perspectives are gender, ethnicity and religion; additional individual and group perspectives will be relevant depending on the issue at stake.

Gender:

Gender is an important form of identity that can be socially constructed as well as biologically determined. Gender values can also change dramatically over time. In the 20th century, feminist movements successfully drew attention to women's inequality in education, employment, the home and in politics, and these issues remain ever pertinent. Today, *gender relations* in global politics refers to contested and changing power relations between men and women in which constructions of masculinity are often privileged. Many key aspects of global politics such as human rights, development and conflict remain highly gendered, and issues such as literacy, migration, sexual violence and disease continue to impact on men, women and children differently.

Ethnicity:

Ethnicity is a form of identity in terms of membership of an ethnic group. Individuals within an ethnic group share common characteristics including cultural and societal similarities such as language, beliefs and history. Although there may be no agreement about what makes each ethnic identity unique, many people describe themselves as descendents of a particular ethnic group and wish to preserve this status and their rights. Categories based on ethnicity may or may not overlap with national identities.

Religion:

Religion refers to a diverse set of belief systems. Religious identity usually has both a personal and a social dimension. On one hand, religion provides answers to questions about life, death, origins of the world and so on, and is a way for individuals to find or generate meaning in their own lives. On the other hand, members of a religion share narratives, rituals and, often, social norms and a moral code; being a member of the religious community is an important aspect of most religions. The potency of both the personal and social dimensions of religion combined with the fact that religions assert authority from supernatural sources serves to strengthen the influence of religious identities and communities in global politics.

Source: IB Global Politics Guide