

DP IB Geography: HL



Your notes

Changing Identities & Culture

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Global Spectrum of Culture & Diversity

Defining Culture

- Culture describes a **system of shared meaning**
- The culture of a **place or a person** is made up of lots of different parts, including traditions, language, foods, symbols, values, religion and leisure activities
- Some cultures can be similar, while others can be very different
- Culture is important to all human populations; it is what makes people who they are

Forms of Culture

- **Cultural traits** are distinctive features shared within specific groups and include:
 - **Cultural activities** such as
 - **Festivals**: celebrations mark significant events or beliefs in a community
 - **Rituals**: births, marriages and deaths have particular customs linked with them across different cultures
 - **Behaviours** such as greeting other people, dining etiquette, etc.
 - **Symbols and objects** such as totem poles for Indigenous communities
 - **Patterns and designs**: Arabic calligraphy in Islamic art or Māori *moko* tattoos in New Zealand
- **Ethnicity** involves cultural practices, views and distinctions
 - Major groups, such as African, Asian or European, have sub-groups
 - These sub-groups are further separated by language, regional practices, or even a shared history
- **Identity** is complex and can include:
 - **National identity** involves shared symbols such as flags, anthems and history
 - **Religious identity** is a shared belief system that can shape lifestyles, moral values and worldviews
 - **Ethnic identity** reflects pride in being connected with a particular ethnic group
 - **Subcultural identity** has roots in larger cultures, based on shared interests or lifestyles such as hip-hop culture or the vegan community, etc.

Emerging Global Culture



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- The world is changing faster than ever before
- Technologies such as the internet and satellite communications make the world more global and more interconnected
- This has increased interactions between economies and cultures, changing everyday lives through **cultural diversity** or the **hybridisation of cultures**
- This can occur through **adoption**
 - The host culture fully adopts the 'foreign' culture without modifying it
- Or through **adaptation**
 - The host culture borrows parts of the 'foreign' culture and modifies it to fit the host society
- Adoption and adaptation of cultures have led to the development of a '**global culture**'
 - Apple products have become part of people's lives around the world
 - This cultural product is designed in the US, manufactured in China and sold across the globe
 - This globalising of American products is termed **Americanisation**
 - **Westernisation**, on the other hand, is the adoption of British, European and Canadian culture, etc.
- Western culture still plays a significant role in shaping the global cultural landscape
- However, other non-western cultures are also impacting the cultural landscape
 - For example, China's flagship phone, Huawei, and South Korea's Samsung are influencing the technological landscape
 - Japan's car manufacturer, Toyota, can be found in almost every country in the world
- The world is becoming more of a single or global culture

Examples of Global Culture

Characteristic	Example
Language	English has become a common language in almost every country in the world
Dressing/clothing	Many forms of clothing are becoming global, such as jeans being worn by all genders, etc.
Music	Music genres and individual songs are listened to in different parts of the world

Movies/television	Bollywood movies are making greater impacts on the movies industry worldwide
Sport	The English Premier League, Spanish La Liga, NBA, NFL in America, all have a global appeal and watched by millions world wide
Tourism	A form of cultural exchange that allows people to experience different cultures



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Global Interactions on Cultural Diversity

Cultural Diffusion

- Cultural diffusion is the spreading of one culture into another
- Historically, this was through trade, intermarriage, warfare and sport
 - Tennis has evolved from hand games played by French monks in the Middle Ages to the modern game of tennis in England in the late 1800s and is now one of the most widely played sports in the world
- Today, globalisation is the main driver of cultural diffusion through:
 - **TNCs** spread aspects of their home culture around the world, such as Nike, Apple, Disney, etc.
 - Others have adapted their products to suit each country, reflecting local cultures, such as McDonalds
 - **World media** exposes many different cultures, habits, tastes, etc. to the rest of the world
 - E.g. K-pop star Psy in 2012 referred to the hip Gangnam district in Seoul, South Korea, in his video Gangnam Style, which went viral on YouTube within 5 months, reaching an unprecedented 1 billion views
 - **Tourism**: when people visit a country, they expose that culture to their language, food, fashion and cultural habits and tastes
 - **Migration**: people take their customs, language and food with them, creating a partial change or fusion of culture
 - Mexicans in California have brought their culture and food with them, fusing Mexican food with Californian tastes in what is termed Mexifornia
- Some communities see cultural diffusion as a threat if it means the loss of their own local culture



Examiner Tips and Tricks

It is important to recognise that cultural diffusion is **not** just the spread of Western culture. The rise of Chinese cuisine in the UK is an example of Chinese culture spreading from migrants to the UK.

Cultural Imperialism



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- Sometimes cultural change is achieved through deliberate coercion, referred to as **cultural imperialism** and linked with empire-building and using resources for their own gain
- It dates back to the era of the industrial colonial phase, when colonial masters imposed their cultures on their colonies
- Cultural imperialism didn't end with formal colonialism in the second-half of the 20th century; it changed
- Today, cultural imperialism has taken on a new dimension by becoming a social, political or economic process
- Facilitated by TNCs, it represent the interests of the rich and powerful, especially those of the west
- Dominant economic forces such as the USA have cornered the market in goods and gained control and influence over the culture of the host country
 - Coca-Cola and KFC have dominated the global food industry and are found on almost every continent
 - KFC has more than 25 000 restaurants in over 145 countries
 - In Japan, KFC is presented as an American holiday tradition and is the most widely eaten meal on Christmas Day
- International media agencies have promoted cultural imperialism in the interest of western and non-western nations, such as CNN in the USA, BBC in the UK, and Al Jazeera in Qatar
- Media-created desires and portrayals can break cultural roots and replace them with a false narrative
 - Advertisers use the media to portray western cultural products as the best for everyone
- Western countries promote democracy through funding elections in developing countries
 - E.g. imposing democracy and western education on the people of Afghanistan after the US invasion in 2001 was a form of cultural imperialism
- English is the most dominant language in the world, due to the influence of British colonialism in many parts of the world
 - '**Globish**' is adopted by many countries for two reasons:
 - It is the dominant language used on the internet
 - It has become the global language of business, technology and education
- The criticisms of cultural imperialism have been that:
 - It is one-way; one culture is imposed on another
 - It leads to homogenisation of the landscape,

- Democracy is not always the best for illiterate societies; it can lead to the exploitation of the poor by the rich

Case Study: Cultural Diffusion in Singapore

- Singapore is a port city and home to a range of cultures, ethnicities and religions due to its global trade links
- Since the 19th and 20th centuries, immigrants from India, China and around the Malay Archipelago have migrated to the island
- Socially, Singapore has led the way in intermarriage, altered cultural forms and mixed-race communities
- Today, Singapore's ethnic makeup is predominantly Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian and Peranakan communities
- Singapore has a diverse range of architecture
 - Katong-Joo Chiat is a historic Peranakan neighbourhood, while the earliest Indian settlers laid their roots in what is known today as Little India
 - Long before Singapore became a colony, the Indigenous Malay people have considered Kampong Gelam as their ancestral home
- The different ethnicities have their own mother tongues that are still spoken but have coalesced into a local dialect called **Singlish**
 - English and Singlish are the main languages spoken in Singapore
- Singapore is one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world
- People of all faiths live, work and worship together in the city
- Many communities have their own traditional festivities and practices but celebrate together as Singaporeans



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Global Brands

Glocalisation

- **Glocalisation** is when a global company produces goods that are aimed at the local market
- For example, in India:
 - McDonald's does not have beef or pork products on their menu for religious reasons
 - Whirlpool redesigned their washing machines to account for the challenges of washing five-foot-long saris



Examiner Tips and Tricks

The term 'think global, act local' is useful to describe the strategy of glocalisation.

Cultural hybridity

- Globally, there are a number of different cultures co-existing at the same time
- Where two or more of these cultures combine, a new culture emerges
- This is known as **cultural hybridity** and is linked to globalisation

Case Study: Coca-Cola

- Coca-Cola is an American **TNC** that manufactures, markets and sells soft drinks
- It was established in 1886 in Atlanta, where its **HQ** remains, and now operates in over 200 countries
- Two-thirds of Coca-Cola's **revenue** comes from overseas and it owns other brands like Fanta and Sprite
- Coca-Cola has promoted itself through **global advertising campaigns** and by sponsoring major sporting events
- It is one of the most recognisable **global brands**
 - After the word 'OK', 'Coca-Cola' is thought to be the most understood word in the world
- The production and distribution of Coca-Cola are done through a franchising model
 - Coca-Cola produce the main syrup base and local people with local resources produced the drink

- Globally, there are variations on the original formula to meet local demand, including:
 - Coca-Cola with lime, only available in Canada, the USA, Singapore, UK, Belgium and the Netherlands
 - Coca-Cola Blak only available for two years
 - Coca-Cola Citra only available in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Japan and NZ
 - Coca-Cola Clear which was only available in Canada, France and Australia
- There are only 2 countries in the world that do not sell Coca-Cola
 - Cuba
 - North Korea
 - Bolivia came very close to banning Coca-Cola in 2012; however, the government encouraged its population to drink less cola and have a healthier alternative instead



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Case Study: McDonald's

- McDonald's have kept the same logo, the same brand colours, the same tagline, the same brand values and the same clown everywhere
- This is the global part, as it makes them easily identifiable in any country
- The local part is the food
- They try to maintain the familiarity of its products, which are customised according to local tastes, culture, customs and opinions
- For example:
 - In India, you will get a McAloo tikki
 - An Ebi Burger in Hong Kong
 - Corn Pie in Thailand
 - Big Brekkie Burger in Australia
 - Bulgogi Burger in South Korea, etc.
- The local is confined to certain aspects of the product while still being global when it comes to a brand image



Examiner Tips and Tricks

Always make sure you use examples when answering questions about 'glocalisation'. These do not have to be the same as the ones above, but they must be relevant to the idea of a global brand that has been modified to suit the local market. In NZ, the chocolate manufacturer Cadbury's has different flavours such as Black Forest and Tim Tam. Same brand but different tastes.

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Urban Landscape Culture

Uniform Urban Environments

- Over the centuries, traders and migrants have brought ideas and materials with them
- Gradually, people and places have inter-connected and formed urban landscapes with many similarities
- Globalisation has further **increased these similarities** between places and created an expected uniformity within the urban landscape

Factors Contributing to Uniformity in Urban Environments

Factor	Effect
Time-space compression	Allows greater interaction. As time shrinks between places, communication increases and ideas are shared
Technology	Ideas may be shared more quickly
International migration	As migrants move from place to place, they bring architectural styles and ideas
Global brands from TNCs and the retail experience	TNCs operate with an economy of scale. Repetition of the customer experience, saves money on marketing, advertising and design. They also present themselves as part of an aspirational lifestyle in new markets
Part of a global network of urban centres	Cities compete to encourage inward investment from amongst the world's leading TNCs
Key infrastructure is standardised	Building techniques, transport hubs, etc. E.g. airport procedures are uniform, including the language used. This gradually spreads beyond the transport nodes and into other areas, such as English being on signs in most major transport interchanges, alongside the national language

- Features of uniformity include:
 - Tall buildings** are common in most modern cities, especially in the central business district



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- **Location of certain services:** The CBD in most cities is the centre of the city, characterised by shopping areas, pedestrianised zones, high land values, fast food restaurants, etc
- **Industrial estates** have moved from the core to the semi-periphery in cities
 - These areas still need an expanse of flat land, easy access for transport, energy supplies, etc
 - This results in same model of development being followed regardless of geographical location or local restrictions (the industry moves to a place that would accept their needs)
- **Science parks** are a familiar sight in many cities, with a generic look of low rise buildings, open green spaces, large car parks and close transport access
- **Retail parks** have a series of similar requirements, such as large car parking and land needed for the big retail shops. The variety of products dictates the overall construction, though retail parks are usually themed to give them a local look
- **Transport infrastructure:** multi-lane roads, inner-city ring roads, underground railway systems, urban bus networks, airports, etc
- **Housing patterns and developments:** inner cities with similar construction and planning, middle-class neighbourhoods in suburban areas, urban sprawl, as well as land zoning where services are located in specialised areas

Urban uniqueness

- All urban areas have some things in common
- Less westernised or globalised cities are expected to be different
- Arab cities have different structures and environments from western cities, yet coexist with western corporations and culture
- Many large western cities have mosques, helping to merge Arabic cultures
 - Bandar Seri Begawan is the capital and largest city of Brunei, Borneo
 - It is dominated by the opulent Jame'Asr Hassanil Bolkiah mosque and its 29 golden domes
 - Even with a small population of just over 450 000 people, there are elements of a western culture, from fast-food outlets to movie theatres; amusement parks to fitness gyms; you can find most things in Brunei

Case Study: Seoul, South Korea

- Seoul is a **global megacity** with a population of 10 million and one of the densest municipalities (central city) in the world, with an area of 605 km² and 16 thousand people per km² (that's more than Tokyo!)
- **Seoul** has been the **capital of South Korea** for over 600 years and is a good example of a homogenised urban landscape



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Map of South Korea

- It fits the uniform urban environment with:
 - The CBD having skyscrapers and global firms such as Barclays, McDonald's and Starbucks, sitting alongside Korean firms such as Hyundai and Samsung
 - High-rise housing apartments and edge-of-town developments
- **However**, Seoul is also undertaking an urban redevelopment project, making it more heterogeneous than homogeneous
 - It is centred on restoring the historical cultural and environmental value of the Cheong Gye Cheon River in central Seoul
 - Along the river, murals retell some of the important events in Seoul over the last 600 years
 - The river is an important focus for Seoul residents and visitors, similar to Times Square in New York, partly because this project stresses the individuality and uniqueness of Seoul and Korea compared to other global cities



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Cheong Gye Cheon River restoration project in Seoul, South Korea. Photo by Red Shuheart on Unsplash



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Cultural Diversity & Diasporas

Defining a Diaspora

- A **diaspora** is community of people that have scattered across the world but **maintain** cultural connections of their homeland
- Diasporas can develop through **voluntary or forced** migration
 - The forced resettlement of Africans during the slave trade
 - **Professional and business diasporas**, such as the movement of Indian doctors to the UK during the 1960s
 - **Cultural diasporas**, such as the movement of migrants of African descent from the Caribbean
- The term comes from the **Greek** word for '**scatter**' and was **first used** to describe the **dispersion of Jews during biblical times**
- The **USA** has **many** different **diaspora** communities, such as African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Welsh-Americans and Irish-Americans

Influence of a Diaspora

- Diasporas play a role in **reshaping cultural landscapes and identities**
- Diasporas adopt **aspects** of their **host** countries yet maintain **distinct** cultural, religious, linguistic and social practices from their **homeland**
- Diaspora communities bring **advantages** to their host country and country of origin, such as:
 - Greater **social and cultural diversity**
 - Transfer **skills** and **knowledge** back to their homeland
 - Diaspora communities show **increased recognition and respect** of their **homeland's** culture and traditions
 - **Trade increases** between the host country and the country of origin
 - **Remittances** are sent between diasporas to support communities overseas



Examiner Tips and Tricks



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Although diasporas keep the culture of their country of origin, in many cases migrants intermarry, and so cultures become hybridised or new cultures emerge. However, it has been found that subsequent generations become passionate about their culture, although they have no first-hand experience of living with it in the country of origin. Therefore, it becomes an **idealised representation** of what it means to be part of that culture.

Case Study: The Irish Diaspora

- The **Irish diaspora** contains more than 80 million people that are scattered around the world in countries such as Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand
- The **USA** has the **second-largest Irish diaspora** in the world (after the UK)
- According to the **2020 US Census** Bureau, those **claiming** Irish descent numbered over **35 million people**
- Irish people have migrated for centuries, but the Great Famine of the 1840s forced mass migration
- **Most** of them **migrated** to **North America** and the **UK**
- Most **Irish Americans** today are of **second or third generation**, but they still have a keen interest in their **Irish heritage**
- Nearly **2 million** Americans **visit Ireland** every year
- In the **US**, to **celebrate St. Patrick's Day** and Irish culture, the **country** becomes **emerald green for a day**
 - Americans wear green clothes and drink green beer
 - Green milkshakes, bagels and grits appear on menus
 - New York City hosts the world's largest parade, drawing around 2 million spectators to the streets
 - The Chicago River, Illinois, is dyed green every March
- However, these traditions were **not imported** from Ireland **but** were **made** in **America** and **blue**, not green, was the **traditional colour** associated with **Ireland's patron saint** prior to the 1798 Irish Rebellion