

SOCIAL & CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 27	28 - 38	39 - 50	51 - 62	63 - 74	75 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 26	27 - 38	39 - 50	51 - 63	64 - 75	76 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Once again, the recent trend showing increasingly appropriate and well-focused research questions continues. Very few inappropriate research questions were seen, and twice as many candidates presented adequately focused research questions as did not. There were a greater number of context-based reports than was the case in the May 2010 session, although issue-based reports were again in the majority. There were successful issue-based reports dealing with: trends in the Bar-Mitzvah ceremony in a particular country; gender differences in perceptions of the role of mother; a study of "cultural markers" in symbolically maintaining ethnic identity; an analysis of the social context of music performances in public spaces.

Context-based projects as usual often focused on familiar research sites such as schools, sports clubs, restaurants, weddings, musical groups, *etc.* A few centres featured group work, sometimes acknowledged as such in well-defined contexts. For example, one centre undertook a field trip to a rural area of their country, researching a variety of topics such as the impact of tourism, gender roles in house construction, indigenous concepts of illness and curing, religion and rites of passage. Overall, while there were a number of successful context-based reports which clearly focused on well-defined issues, context-based reports tended to be overly descriptive.

While a few centres have made progress in the interpretation and analysis of data, perhaps responding to the more explicitly stated requirements of the 2010 assessment criteria, this task still represents a weak point in most reports, particularly in reports taking a context-based approach.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Candidate performance was almost identical to the May 2010 session, with twice as many receiving full marks as those receiving none or one mark. Also, more centres show some success in guiding candidates in choosing appropriate and well-focused topics.

Criterion B

While almost all candidates employed appropriate research techniques, the majority could not both clearly describe their techniques and justify their use. Performance under this criterion has changed but little over recent examination sessions. It remains striking that centres vary markedly in the degree of success achieved by their candidates under this criterion. Some candidates seem to have been carefully guided in appreciating the focus on method, while some seem to have been left to select and justify research techniques on their own.

Criterion C

As in the case of the presentation and evaluation of research techniques, most candidates were clearly limited in their success in presenting data in a clear, well-organized and detailed fashion. It was sometimes evident that data had not been systematically collected, in which case there was little likelihood that clear and detailed presentation of data would be accomplished. One moderator noted that different styles of data presentation could be distinguished among different centres, and that candidates were sometimes guided more by the styles to which they had been exposed, rather than by their particular research questions, or by the nature of their data.

Criterion D

A sizeable minority did not present the analytical framework required in this criterion, a number of candidates moderated could not be awarded more than 2 of 4 marks. Even when candidates employed appropriate anthropological concepts in their analyses, understanding of these concepts and how they might be applied was usually limited. Key concepts, for example, "rites of passage" or "cultural identity" were often not defined, and weaker candidates often introduced concepts that were not appropriate, or which they could not apply in interpreting their data.

Criterion E

The majority of candidates mentioned ethical issues arising in field research, and a clear majority provided at least some discussion of these issues, although only a small minority fully discussed them. These discussions revealed wide variation in how completely candidates understood what constitutes permission to carry out field research. It is concerning to read that some candidates carried out research among young children without parental permission, feeling that permission for the research obtained from business owners or school principals was sufficient.

Also, some candidates struggled with ethical issues regarding observation, feeling that secret observation of a group was ethical if the observer did not disturb anyone. Less obvious issues concerning ethical practice such as selectivity of data, representation, positionality and reflexivity were rarely addressed.

Criterion F

This appeared to be the criterion that candidates found most difficult. As usual, there was a wide range in candidate ability to demonstrate imagination and insight. A number of candidates moderated received less than two marks under this criterion, one mark being the modal mark. This represents a slightly lower performance than was seen in the May 2010 session. To do well under this criterion, candidates must have presented anthropologically valid and well-focused issues in order to demonstrate good or excellent insight and imagination. Some evidence of reflexive and critical thinking about the process of data gathering and issues of interpretation is also expected for full marks under this criterion.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Selecting and focusing the research question: As noted in recent reports, while there has been gradual improvement in the proportion of candidates selecting appropriate and well-focused research questions, the extent to which this happens still varies markedly between centres. It bears repeating that guiding candidates toward worthwhile research topics and helping them focus their research questions is perhaps the most important and possibly the most difficult task a teachers faces with regard to the internal assessment (IA). If a candidate never clearly focuses a research question it is to be expected that data presentation is at least likely to lack detail, and that the interpretation and analysis of data are likely to lack clarity and be superficial, no matter what level of theoretical sophistication the candidate may reach.
- Data presentation and analysis: Both teachers and candidates will benefit not only from studying the guidelines and assessment criteria carefully (pages 44–48 in the 2010 Subject Guide), but by studying the marked IA samples found in the *Teacher Support Materials (TSM)*. Both the Subject Guide and the *TSM* may be accessed through the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC). Some class time must be devoted to preparing candidates for the IA. There are many guides to field research available to aid the teacher in this effort, several of which are annotated on the OCC's Teacher Resource Exchange (click on "Search resources," then in the "category" drop-down box, click on "1.3 Methods and data collection/field research methods"). Studying the marked exemplars with examiners' commentaries in the *TSM* will also aid teachers and candidates in seeing how successful candidates integrated analytical frameworks into data analysis.
- Ethical issues: the 2010 programme criterion E, concerning ethical issues makes it clearer than ever that candidates must engage ethical issues. While there has been gradual improvement under this criterion, it is clear that there remains much room for improvement. A significant minority of candidates either omitted consideration of ethical issues, or merely mentioned them. Teachers should carefully review the list of ethical issues presented in the "Requirements and recommendations" section of the Subject Guide (page 40).

Some aspects of ethical practice, such as the issues of representation, positionality, and reflexivity are not only to be considered when undertaking research but are basic theoretical considerations which teachers at higher level should be critically addressing with every ethnography they cover.

- While teachers are not required to submit comments with their marks, this practice is strongly recommended, and is very useful to moderators in the moderation process. Teachers' comments enable moderators to better follow the marking process, and allow moderators to better focus on areas needing attention in writing their IA subject reports. Presently, most teachers do not include any comments at all, either written on the text itself or in summary form.
- Teachers are reminded to carefully describe the circumstances of group work undertaken on the 3/CS form (for guidelines on IA group work, refer to the Subject Guide, page 39). It is the teacher's responsibility to insure that data interpretation and analysis are each candidate's own work.

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In most cases the aims and objectives of the limited fieldwork exercise were well understood and well executed, and while some candidates misunderstood aspects of the internal assessment (IA) others showed a flair for both data collection and analysis. The reports were generally of a high quality and candidates as a rule found suitable venues for their observations, although some candidates did not limit themselves to observing. The assessment criteria were covered with varying success. The biggest obstacle to success was the inability to differentiate between descriptive inference and sound analysis as required in criterion B. Even the strongest IAs were sometimes weak in this area. The reports were adequately critiqued by most candidates, although some chose to expand their reports with new data, or to correct perceived mistakes rather than discuss the experience of collecting and recording data.

There are a worrying number of centres that are not following guidelines in the timing of the exercise. The observation must be completed within the first six weeks of the course and the critique approximately six months later. (See page 42 of the Subject Guide). Not adhering to this schedule gives skewed IAs that tends to be overly analytical and data centred, which is not appropriate for this more self-reflective exercise. The assessment criteria are geared to judge according to the correct procedures and focus on insightful analysis of an observation rather than results of a research project. Marks are being lost when these guidelines are not being followed.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Completion of the written report continues to be the most successfully accomplished of the assessment criteria. Choices of venues were creative; eating establishments, playgrounds, public transportation, street corners where beggars and musicians vied for attention. Potential ethical considerations of these activities were often properly considered in the critique. Less

successful was fieldwork in familiar places. Candidates found it difficult to create an artificial distance while observing a family party, their friends, or their own workplace.

As mentioned above, there is serious problem that some observations read more like prepared research projects rather than simple observations and therefore lack the necessary spontaneity that lends itself to methodological analysis in the critique. The very good reports were fully detailed with spontaneous and curious commentary giving adequate data to later critique.

Criterion B

Criterion B remains the most challenging of the assessment criteria and specifically noting the differences in description and analysis is often overlooked. There has been improvement in recent years as more candidates have learned to distinguish between the two but in terms of full discussion few candidates performed well here. Those who did showed the ways in which mere description can give meaning. For example, recording the “race” of people at a fast food restaurant indicates that race is enough of an issue to be noteworthy during the observation. Some took this up in the critique and recognized that they kept racial statistics because they were influenced by public debate or personal predilection. They showed that they understood that race is a loaded topic that can be dealt with critically. In other words, they recognized that even simple description can refer and infer. And that ethnographic analysis can be influenced by a perceived need to categorize a particular aspect of social life. Most merely accepted racial distinction as a given, and this was problematic.

There was more description than analysis in the reports, but nonetheless a few candidates were able to show that they understand the difference. Some saw in their opinions about family life at a burger bar, for instance, that they were not only describing, but also attempting to generalize on the dynamics between parents and children. This made for some valid analysis.

Some casually cited the phrases descriptive inference and solid analysis but gave no examples or discussion, which is inadequate to complete this criterion.

Criterion C

The ability to recognize focus, assumption and bias was mostly completed well and is the area that has gradually most improved since the inception of the SL IA. It is good and getting better. It appears that teachers are quite clear on this point and candidates seem well prepared for this analytical task. They recognize that their gender, youth, upbringing, religion, and culture in general, play a role in what and how they chose to observe. This treatment was sometimes so thorough, however, that these were the only criteria covered, and that is problematic.

The new criterion that collapsed two areas into one have also helped clarify the requirements. There are fewer candidates that think the position of the observer refers to physical rather than social and personal position.

Criterion D

This holistic criterion gives the candidate an opportunity to critically reflect on anthropological methodology and is the area that varies most widely in terms of content and ability. At one end of the continuum there were candidates who presented full discussions on the nature of fieldwork or the legacy of Malinowski and others who seem to be unaware of what they had experienced in the field and largely repeated information from the report. Some candidates overloaded the critique with theoretical analysis and others offered no methodological

reflection. Generally there was a balance between these extremes, however, and many candidates were quite perceptive.

The central elements here are that candidates make an attempt to reflect on the fieldwork process and its challenges, to recognize the ways in which they have operated in the field, and to show how their observations can be connected to wider anthropological issues. There were quite a few who managed to balance these elements.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be directed to choose appropriate settings where they can remain anonymous, rather than allowing observation in places so familiar that they risk becoming participants, or refer to well known people or facts about the venue. This distracts from the intention of the SL IA, which is a learning tool devised to show how the candidates' perceptions can be influenced by studying anthropology for six months. For that reason it is imperative that they are given minimal instruction before the one hour, non-participatory observation. They should be made aware of the ethics involved in recording information in public. But no preparatory research is needed; in fact it deters good performance.

In principle, there are no mistakes in the observation. There can be superficial analysis, subjective attitudes, prejudice, and misunderstandings. These are not mistakes as such, but rather the way we often interpret when we are unaware of our own perceptions, or larger social issues. Future candidates should not look to correct perceived mistakes from the observation but note what they have understood about anthropological method in relation to their observations. Teachers might refer to what candidates have learned in TOK on perception and awareness of self and society.

Time should be spent explaining criterion B to future candidates. Discussion on description and analysis is lacking in most SL IAs. In preparation for completion of the critique, examples could be given in class, perhaps from anonymized observations by former candidates, where the differences can be dissected. It is on criterion B that marks given by teachers are most often moderated down, indicating that some may not be fully aware of the requirements. This exercise may be useful for both teacher and candidate.

Lastly, it is important that future candidates keep to the required schedule of the IA; that the observation be completed in the first six weeks, the critique following six months later.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Some candidates misunderstood some aspects of the text and their answers to the questions reflected these misunderstandings. In particular, some candidates assumed that all the police

recruits were biological males rather than just transformed into masculine officers irrespective of biological sex.

In other cases candidates answered question 2 by listing any theoretical perspective they could, sometimes several at once, but then did not link these directly to the material in the examination text, or to their answer to the question. In question 2 a significant proportion of candidates are still failing to make any reference to the viewpoint of the anthropologist and so are failing to gain more than 4 out of 6 marks for this question.

Less strong scripts were mostly descriptive, tended to repeat material from the text in the answers and, in some cases, quoted heavily from the text itself. A small number of candidate answers were composed almost entirely of quotations from the set text.

Some candidates significantly repeated material from question 1 in question 2 which meant that at least one of the questions was not answered appropriately.

In a small number of cases candidates were not able to complete all the questions on the paper. This was a particular issue for question three where the question was sometimes left unfinished, or so brief as to be too short to gain a good mark. In a few cases question 3 was very brief because the answers to questions 1 and 2 were over-long.

Some candidates who answered question 3 failed to compare conceptualizations of power in a society of their choice with the conceptualization of power in the Buenos Aires police academies. These candidates often chose a different issue to compare, such as rites of passage, but in doing so failed to answer the question that was set on the paper no matter how worthy the comparison they produced.

The societies chosen for comparison in question 3 were not always fully contextualized. In some cases the candidates did not describe the case study chosen fully enough or did not produce a comparison, but rather simply described the ethnography they had studied in class without referring back to the examination text. In a very few cases no ethnography was cited at all. In one case a candidate chose a book in the Harry Potter series as a comparative text. This is not a suitable text to be used as an ethnographic comparison.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

As ever the very best scripts demonstrated excellent comprehension skills, critical thinking, and the ability to relevantly interweave materials / ethnography / anthropological concepts to make strong and well-developed points.

Some of the stronger scripts showed an ability to bring in relevant anthropological concepts and theorists in question 2, with Van Gennep and Victor Turner's work on rites of passage as well as reference to feminist theorists explicitly mentioned. Others were able to make sound statements about the viewpoint of the anthropologist and where the line of thought was well reasoned this was credited. The third comparative question produced a good range of well structured answers drawing on several different ethnographies across the candidate cohort.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

In question one, weaker scripts, as in past examination sessions, relied heavily upon the text and used quotations (which were not always referenced as such) to answer rather than summarize and write answers in their own words.

There was also considerable overlap between answers to question 1 and 2 in some weaker scripts. Some answers were very short, sometimes no more than a few lines, or just a brief sentence or two.

It was pleasing to see that some candidates were able to explain what is meant by hierarchy (rankings of superiority and inferiority which often link to a moral order) and also to link this with reference to both gender and the civilian/police officer divide in the Buenos Aires police academies.

These candidates were able to describe how feminine attributes are linked with civilians of both sexes and also to recognize that women police recruits are to some extent transformed into “masculine” beings, but that the sexism of the police academies nonetheless maintains a hierarchical distinction between male and female officers of the same rank. Many candidates recognized the “liminal period” (line 2 of the text) as relating to rites of passage and developed this line of discussion in their answers.

Question 2

Question 2 answers sometimes repeated points from question 1 rather than develop understandings of how civilians are “transformed” into police officers as required by the question. On this question also, weaker scripts simply repeated material from the text about the treatment recruits endured during training in the police academies.

In this examination session there was a more comprehensive attempt across the candidate body to include the viewpoint of the anthropologist in the response to this question. However, it is still clear that some centres are not preparing candidates to do this and in these centres no candidates were able to achieve more than 4 marks for their response to the question. Some candidates developed material on rites of passage and discussed the viewpoint of the anthropologist as relating to a symbolic perspective in social and cultural anthropology. While many recognized that Van Gennep had first developed the concept of rites of passage (including the concept of liminality) many other candidates assumed that the first reference to liminality was in the work of Victor Turner and did not appear to realize that Turner was developing and extending the work of Van Gennep.

A few candidates linked the viewpoint of the anthropologist to feminist work in anthropology and some cited relevant feminist anthropologists to support their position. Others considered the anthropologist to be potentially biased in various respects and when this was well justified the response was given credit. However, simply stating that all anthropologists have some inevitable bias is not a sufficient way of dealing with the viewpoint of the anthropologist.

A few candidates ignored the requirement to incorporate a theoretical perspective into their answer and simply reproduced material which was very close to the examination text itself.

Some candidates were able to discuss the transformations that civilians undergo to become police officers in terms of identity and the performance of gendered identities as an aspect of the self which is socially constructed and made through rituals such as those of the new recruits in the police academies. These answers tended explicitly to de-link gender from biological sex.

Question 3

Candidates who did particularly well on question 3 often did so because they chose well-contextualized and well-justified comparative ethnographies. Those who did not do so well often appeared to have ignored the focus of the question which was on power and how power is conceptualized.

Better answers often compared the power relations and hierarchies found in the police academies in Buenos Aires to those found in societies with clear social and/or gender inequalities. The forms of violence used by the powerful on those who are weaker or in some way socially marginalized were often explicitly described and compared to the symbolic violence used on the police recruits to feminize their bodies before the new masculine police identity could be made. Some candidates compared actual violence with symbolic forms of violence but did not always make this difference clear in their answers.

While more and more candidates now understand the need to contextualize the comparative ethnography there were still some candidates who did not adequately historically contextualize their work. In some cases no comparative ethnography at all was offered and in other cases where an ethnography was presented it was not compared to the text in the examination in any way.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

As has been stated before, some centres fared better than others and appeared to have succeeded in encouraging candidates relevantly to describe, analyse and generalize as well as cite sources.

In particular, while most candidates do reasonably well on the more descriptive question one (although too many fail to move beyond simply repeating material from the text and do not generalize from this basis), some do not move beyond description in question two and this limits the marks they can achieve on this particular question which also requires the demonstration of analytical skills and generalization.

In question three the most significant failings were poor choice of comparative ethnography because the chosen comparative ethnography did not focus on conceptualizations of power, no comparative ethnography and failing to produce a systematic comparison. In order to achieve the latter, candidates need to do more than make a brief passing reference to the ethnography on the examination paper.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 22	23 - 27	28 - 32	33 - 44

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

A very small proportion of candidates produced very short essays, or just one essay for this component. The weaker scripts lacked a range of ethnographies and in some cases essays had no ethnographic material at all, or repeated the same information in both scripts and used only one ethnographic example for both essays.

Weaker scripts also lacked theoretical knowledge, or used anthropological concepts in ways that were not best suited to the question or the ethnographic materials presented. In some

cases the theoretical knowledge of the candidates appeared to end at the turn of the 20th century with evolutionary theories categorizing societies as savage, barbaric or civilized.

Some candidates failed to make clear which option they had chosen to answer on for the questions where alternatives were possible (questions 1, 4, 7 and 10) and this sometimes made it more difficult to mark the script, particularly if several of the option terms were used in the script.

In one case a candidate appeared to have misunderstood the examination rubric and attempted to answer all the questions on the paper writing a few sentences for each.

While many candidates did attempt to provide material in their essays to cover criteria D and E some centres appear not to be adequately preparing candidates for these assessment criteria and so some candidates are in effect losing 6 potential marks on the paper as a whole.

As ever the same key areas of the programme continue to prove difficult for some candidates and these relate to the definitions of central concepts and terms in questions; the ability to apply this knowledge to ethnographic data and to the question in a relevant manner; and the interweaving of relevant theory and ethnography.

A small number of candidates failed to complete the second essay on the examination paper and this appeared to be the result of poor time management during the examination.

Some candidates are not using the work of anthropologists as their ethnographic material. The use of work by journalists is not sufficient, unless it is supported by good anthropological conceptual and theoretical material, otherwise candidates risk reproducing the very culture bound assumptions and biases that anthropologists work to understand, theorize and make explicit in their own work in order to understand alternative social systems and worldviews in less culture bound ways. Some candidates in this examination session did make clear when they were using the work of journalists such as Fadiman or Schactman and this is a step in the right direction. However, given how many good ethnographies are available it seems a pity that social and cultural anthropology candidates are not reading these in their classes.

Defining terms:

The central concepts appearing in questions were often undefined, poorly defined, or only partially defined. These terms, such as "race", "ethnicity", "gender", "moral systems", "power", "social movement" and "class", were often not clearly defined and this left candidates struggling to make their answers relevant to the question. Often the terms are used in over general and commonsense ways, rather than in the more specialized ways in which they are used by anthropologists.

Application of theory:

Centres varied widely in the ability shown by their candidates to carry out theoretically informed discussions. Candidates appear to be using terms such as "power" very loosely rather than define which anthropological school of thought they derive their knowledge of power from.

Ability to answer all parts of a question:

Too often candidates ignored key words in a question or focused on one part of the question to the detriment of the rest. For example, in question 3, kinship was often written about in detail and good descriptions of kinship systems set out, but how these change and what the effects of changing kinship relations may be were less often covered in the same answer.

Again, in question 9 candidates wrote about social conflict and gave examples of this, but did not always explain what produced or caused the social conflict as the question required.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

As stated in previous reports, centres varied widely in the ability of their candidates to present and properly apply theoretical perspectives. Some candidates produced extremely good work demonstrating detailed levels of knowledge and skill in answering the questions. These candidates had a sound range and knowledge of anthropological theory, a keen ability to select and use relevant concepts and detailed knowledge of several ethnographies which they are able to draw on to produce detailed, reasoned, sound and thoughtful essays. At the other extreme, however, some candidates were only able to show very elementary knowledge of anthropological theory and sometimes there was little evidence of having studied the requisite number of ethnographies in sufficient detail to do well on the paper.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

This was a reasonably popular question but a fair proportion of candidates failed to link their chosen topic—most often migration or globalization—to transformations in religious practices in any systematic and sustained manner. These were good essays on globalization or colonialism but not always so good on globalization and religious practices, or colonialism and religious practices. Some candidates also focused on religious beliefs rather than on changes in religious practices. Good answers included materials on syncretic religious movements or on, for example, vodou in New York (a double movement firstly of people from West Africa to Haiti and then from Haiti to New York and religious practices that combine traditional West African and Christian practices).

Question 2

This was by far the most popular question on the paper and on occasions answered extremely well by candidates who not only showed that they understood gender and power well but were able to use this in a focused and apt fashion. Popular answers used ethnography by Bourgois (*In Search of Respect*) or material on Chinese rural to urban factory women (P. Ngai *Made in China*), Allison's *Nightwork: Sexuality, Pleasure, and Corporate Masculinity in a Tokyo Hostess Club* or on Ortner's *Sherpas through their Rituals*. Strong answers drew on feminist theory as well as on work by, for example, Scott (*Weapons of the Weak*) to discuss the relationship between gender and power. Others used materials including film about the maquiladoras on the US-Mexico border to good effect.

A common failing in this question included the inability to define what was meant by gender (or to say that gender is based in biology), or power which was often simply assumed to be an unproblematic term. Another problem with some essays is that they lacked focus on the question because they appeared, in some cases, to be slightly re-worked class essays on gender and the division of labour, or gender and some other similar topic.

Question 3

This question was often answered by candidates who knew about kinship systems in detail and were often able to compare different kinship systems (often a matrilineal one and a patrilineal one). However, while there is no question of the general knowledge of kinship that

these scripts demonstrated only a small proportion of those who answered this question wrote specifically on the “effects of changing kinship relations”. Many simply described static kinship systems.

Stronger scripts considered, for example, post-marital kinship relations and how a marriage may change kin relations. Others produced good work on the Na in China and discussed how the kinship system of the Na is undergoing changes at present (*A Society without Husbands or Fathers* by Cai Hua).

Question 4

This question was a fairly popular one on the paper. It was most often answered in relation to the ethnicity or social class option and here Bourgeois’ ethnography of Puerto Ricans in New York was very often used as a core ethnography. Answers were often descriptively strong though less so on conceptual and theoretical grounds.

Sometimes candidates appeared to be writing about race when they meant ethnicity. Some candidates clearly defined the terms that were used though relatively few considered it necessary to explain what they understood by “identity”. Those who did define identity and moreover did so in terms that meant this was a fluid and dynamic concept tended to produce the stronger scripts.

Very few candidates wrote on caste, but those who did appeared to be reasonably well versed in some of the classical sociological and anthropological ideas of caste as well as having some knowledge of more recent caste politics and debates on caste identities in modern India.

Question 5

This question was not among the most popular on the paper but almost all responses considered modernity and tradition to be contrasting and not as producing each other. Some more thoughtful scripts compared ethnographic cases where traditions had been lost or changed to ones where traditions continued into the modern with relatively little change. Many candidates appeared unable to consider any alteration of a “custom” as anything other than a cultural loss and were not, it appears, able to conceive of a social order in which constant change is normal. Very few candidates were able to define “modernity” or “tradition”.

Question 6

There were some very strong answers to this question. The best were able to outline the three stages of a rite of passage with reference to particular rituals in specific contexts, relate this to Van Gennep and then develop their chosen ethnographic material to consider how and why a rite of passage might have social and cultural significance. Often birth, initiation and death rituals were the focus of the essays.

A few very good scripts were also able to critique the model of rites of passage, to consider the violence in such rituals (using the work of Bloch in one case) and to discuss the formalism of the model and the limitations of such an approach to ethnographic data. Other candidates considered the symbols used in rites of passage and the meaning that came from collective social rituals.

Weaker answers simply reproduced the material from the May 2011 paper 1 on police academies in Buenos Aires. Other very weak scripts simply mentioned the Amish Rumspringa but failed to provide any conceptual or theoretical discussion that would have made the answers anthropological in nature.

Question 7

This was the least popular question on the examination paper and was most often answered in relation to either ideology or social movements. Some candidates wrote on the use of modern technologies such as video among the Kayapo to achieve their political goals, but this assumed that the Kayapo are a social movement rather than an indigenous population.

One candidate chose to write on the Arab Spring and the uses of modern communication technologies to organize the protest movements across the Arab world at present. This was a very interesting position to take but unfortunately the material was very journalistic and not theorized in terms of social and cultural anthropology. It may be a year or two before anthropologists publish material on this particular event which is still unfolding.

Question 8

This was a question that was very well answered by a good proportion of candidates. Very strong answers included the impact of western money on the Tiv and how this altered local understandings of value and exchange drawing not only on the work of anthropologists such as the Bohannans and Mauss but also on economists such as Karl Polanyi. Others considered the impact of international finance and credit cards on the witchcraft beliefs of Akan traders in Ghana.

These scripts tended to demonstrate both good detailed ethnographic knowledge and also sound conceptual knowledge which was directed to answering the question. Another popular source for ethnography used to answer this question drew on material about Kula and Ijalabadu mortuary exchanges in the Trobriand Islands. A few candidates chose to write on Nash's *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines*.

The weaker scripts for this question tended to produce over-general statements of a rather commonsense style about how western dominance is undermining local economies.

Question 9

This question produced some excellent answers defining different types of conflict and the forms of resistance it sometimes led to. Social conflict was often described using Bourgeois' *In Search of Respect* or Chagnon's *Yanomamo*, but also in terms of how to avoid conflict among the Ju/'hoansi for example where ecological conditions mean that a conflict could have very serious consequences for an individual.

A key weakness with the answers to this question tended to be the lack of discussion about causes of social conflict itself. Too many scripts simply described conflict rather than discuss and evaluate the causes of social conflict. A few candidates wrote about personal, psychological conflict and so did not address the social and anthropological approach to the topic.

Question 10

Again, as with other questions on this paper, candidates who did well on this question were those who defined what they meant by a moral system, conformity or nonconformity or resistance in a convincing manner and then linked this directly to the discipline of anthropology (rather than a particular anthropologist).

Some candidates used this question to show their knowledge of the history and theory of the discipline and this was often very successful as a strategy to show how the discipline has gathered and analysed data on one of the question options in different ways over time.

Less strong answers tended to pick an anthropologist and then describe cases of, for example, resistance, in the ethnography of the particular anthropologist.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should be reminded that key terms used in questions must be defined, and applied to the ethnographies discussed in the essay. Commonsense understandings of terms such as “identity” or “power” are not sufficient.
- Teachers need to help candidates achieve a balance between conceptual development and theoretical exposition and analysis. This works best when the concepts are closely linked to ethnographic material so that candidates can see how the concepts help to explain the descriptive materials they read.
- Candidates should be discouraged from attempting to answer a question on a topic that they have not studied or which is similar to, but not quite the same, as a class essay they have already prepared unless they are able to adapt this to answer the question that is set on the paper.
- Candidates need to be introduced to a broad range of anthropological theories and concepts as well as to ethnographies which serve to link with, or exemplify, the theories candidates are taught. In particular, centres should endeavour to ensure that candidates are given sufficient time during the course of their studies to become familiar with some more contemporary ethnographies and some of the more recent theoretical developments in the discipline.

In this paper too many candidates appeared to know only about evolutionary theories from the late 19th century (Tylor and Morgan) and while they seemed to understand these quite well, there has now been over a century since Tylor and Morgan wrote.

- Candidates lost marks in the new curriculum if they were not able to show detailed knowledge of three societies. This was a shame as the two marks awarded for knowledge of three societies ought to be two marks that every candidate is able to guarantee on the paper. Criterion E (Breadth of knowledge of societies).
- Candidates should be strongly encouraged to answer all parts of a question and not to only write on the one part that they know more about. Candidates should also be discouraged from simply reproducing class essays in the examination. The precise wording of the examination question may require a rethinking and reordering of material produced in class. This was evident in some scripts, for example, in question 2 relating to gender and power where candidates sometimes appeared to be reproducing a class essay on a similar topic.
- All candidates should be made aware of the new criterion D (Processes of change and transformation within and across cultures and societies) as again, the possible 4 marks available on this criterion are really ones that all candidates should be able to achieve.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 1	2 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 20

General comments

Overall, candidates seemed prepared to respond to paper 3 questions. However, the most notable weakness for many candidates this session was the lack of effective integration and discussion of theoretical schools of thought or individual theorists. This had a negative effect on marks awarded, particularly in terms of criteria B and D. The Subject Guide emphasizes theoretical perspectives as a means to gain a deep, critical understanding of theory and ethnography, and to avoid rote style teaching methods in terms of learning about schools of thought or individual theorists.

However, this approach is not to come at the expense of candidates developing an understanding of major schools of thought or individual theorists in anthropology. To help clarify expectations around use of theory, the IB will be altering the internal rubric that appears at the top of paper 3. Additional guidance will also be provided in the form of changes to the explanations provided in Part 4 of the syllabus. (These changes will be published on the OCC later this year.) Teachers are also reminded on pages 10-11 of the Subject Guide, which provides guidance on how to teach ethnography, theoretical perspectives, concepts and theory in an integrated manner.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Theoretical Schools

The weakest area for many candidates was the effective integration, and critical discussion of, theoretical schools of thought. Many candidates referred to theoretical schools, but only some were able to effectively explain their relevance in detail. For example, feminism and Marxism were often referenced. However, candidates could have been more specific in terms of the school of thought they were discussing within these broad frameworks (e.g. Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, political economy). Specific anthropologists, discussed meaningfully, would have also helped them to focus their discussions. Some candidates mentioned the names of anthropologists or schools of thought into their essays, but were not able to provide any details. This left doubt in the examiners' minds about the level of understanding held by the candidate. In a significant number of cases, candidates did not include any theory at all, meaning that they did not receive marks for criteria B and D.

Some candidates confused theoretical perspectives with schools of thought. For example, "the conflict school" or "the structure school" were often cited. These do not exist in anthropology. These candidates need to convey an understanding of perspectives as views that both theorists and ethnographers take, as well as more detailed knowledge of the specific schools of thought.

Focus on question

While most candidates demonstrated a good amount of anthropological knowledge, many struggled to explain the relevance of the materials presented in response to the question. In some cases, essays represented more of a list of memorized definitions of theoretical perspectives, or memorized points about theoretical schools and ethnography, but did not effectively tie these three key aspects of paper 3 together in a relevant manner. Candidates also needed to ensure that they clearly indicated the question to which they were responding.

Some candidates appeared to write down everything they knew in the hope that some of it might be correct. Connections and comparisons were made, but sometimes lacked relevance to the question.

Use of Ethnography

While many candidates critically integrated ethnography and theory, others selected ethnographic material that was lacking in detail and was not always clearly appropriate for the question. In some cases, ethnographers were not identified, or mis-identified so that anthropologists from the 1920s might be classified as “post-modern” and non-anthropologists labelled as anthropologists.

Appropriate materials

Overall, there has been marked improvement in the range of ethnographies and theoretical schools being studied. However, too many candidates cited late 19th century anthropological thought as though it required no critique from a 21st century perspective. For example, social evolutionary thinkers such as Tylor and Morgan, were applied to contemporary societies, and in some cases cited as though they were cutting edge theorists. In a few cases, centres seem to be teaching theory solely from the first half of the twentieth century, which is strongly discouraged.

Further, many candidates had clearly been exposed to classical Marxism, but only a few effectively made links between Marxism and cultural materialism or Bourdieu, and many overlooked political economy. This was particularly notable in the use of Bourgeois' *In Search of Respect*, where an understanding of political economy and of Bourdieu would have been entirely appropriate.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared**Addressing assessment criteria**

Almost all candidates presented complete essays that attempted to address the assessment criteria in at least superficial ways. In many cases, clearly structured essays were presented that included thoughtful insight with regards to connections between theoretical schools, theoretical perspectives and ethnography.

Theoretical perspectives

Most candidates successfully defined theoretical perspectives that were relevant to the question at hand. More candidates are being selective in using theoretical perspectives, rather than providing long lists of memorized definitions.

Range of materials

Almost all candidates included ethnography in their responses. In some cases, candidates were successful in demonstrating the relevance of the ethnographic materials. Most candidates provided basic contexts (date of fieldwork, author, group, location, historical relevance) for ethnography. A good range of ethnographic materials appeared in the scripts. This included: Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*, Ortner's *Life and Death on Mount Everest*, Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Weiner's *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*, Abu-Lughod's *Veiled Sentiments and Writing Women's Worlds*, Ong's *Spirits of Resistance*, Scheper-Hughes *Death Without Weeping*, Ngai's *Made in China*, Parreñas' *Servants of Globalization*, Pascoe's *Dude You're a Fag*, and Fernea's *Guest of the Sheik*.

Introductions

Many candidates provided much stronger introductions to their essays than have been presented in the past. Their introductions often included definitions of selective, relevant theoretical perspectives. The better essays also included an indication (and identification of) relevant ethnographic materials; the even better essays also included a clear indication of the theoretical schools that would form part of their focus; and the best essays tied these together into a clear thesis. Unfortunately, many candidates did not follow through on their strong starts, as the bulk of their essay lacked clear focus, and necessary depth.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

This was a popular question. Many candidates successfully conveyed an understanding of agency, and linked it to ethnography. Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* was a popular choice. Some candidates were very successful at using this ethnography, while others oversimplified and exaggerated the ethnography. The better scripts successfully integrated theory, such as Bourdieu's ideas of practice.

Other candidates integrated concepts (such as fields, habitus or cultural capital) but did not link these to any theoretical school. In some cases, candidates misunderstood agency to simply mean "free will", overlooking the definition emphasized in anthropology, which focuses on social action and influence. Other candidates understood agency to only be enacted by individuals, overlooking group agency. In some cases, comparisons to structure were useful. However, in other cases, the essay ended up being more about structure than agency, diluting the response's relevance to the question. Weaker scripts misunderstood agency to be something good, enacted by individuals, and structure to be oppressive and bad. This indicated a lack of understanding that perspectives are fundamental to understanding society, and that apparent opposing sets of perspectives can be used by ethnographers and theorists in tandem.

Question 2

Responses ranged from excellent, critical and detailed to simplistic and misunderstood.

Materialist perspective

Some candidates presented excellent responses that explored Harris, Steward and Marx in a detailed and critical manner. Many of these responses were linked to the work of Chagnon or Lee. In other cases, candidates used the same theorists but clearly did not understand the

context or content of their theories. The weakest scripts misunderstood a materialist perspective to mean a materialist society.

Diachronic perspective

There was good discussion about how ethnographers need to draw upon history in detail to fully understand a society. Colonialism was used as a pertinent example of change, or how it created conflict between groups (examples including *Mama Lola*, *In Search of Respect* and colonial Haiti). Some candidates were poorly prepared and confused, as they mistakenly linked Radcliff-Brown to a diachronic perspective, and accredited resistance theory to Julian Stewart.

Conflict-centred perspective

This was a popular option but was largely used to describe conflict in society rather than relating it to theory that tries to analyse conflict. The responses also highlighted the perennial problem of referring to “The Conflict Theory”, which is not a school of thought in anthropology.

James Scott’s *Weapons of the Weak* was used well with good examples, such as Malaysian peasants, and soldiers in Singapore. Marxist theories such as political economy and the ideas of Wallerstein and Gunder Frank were also appropriately used. Other candidates simply described classical Marxism, which was inadequate.

Particularistic perspective

Some candidates correctly identified Boas, or American Historical Particularism, as relevant to this question. Other candidates did not include any theory. Most candidates recognized the importance of a particular approach, sometimes successfully contrasting it to universalistic notions. However, most responses were superficial and lacked critical insight.

Question 3

Some candidates provided strong responses drawing on Bourgeois and political economy; contrasting functionalism with social action theory; or simply evaluating schools of functionalism. A significant number of candidates struggled to meaningfully integrate ethnography into their responses. An equally significant number of candidates confused Levi-Strauss’ school of structuralism with a structure-centred perspective.

Question 4

This question was less popular than the others. A minority of the candidates who answered this question provided excellent insights. These candidates primarily referred to functionalism and had a good understanding of the influences on functionalism (e.g. positivism, natural sciences, Malinowski’s notions of method), the reactions of functionalism (reacting against social evolutionism), and also the ways in which a synchronic approach shaped much of the ethnography written in the first half of the twentieth century. These candidates also provided a sound critique of theories and ethnographies that used a synchronic approach. Unfortunately, the majority of candidates did not have a solid understanding of the synchronic perspective and provided simplistic and confused responses.

Question 5

Candidates presented a range of responses to this question. Some were well done, linking relevant theory and ethnography together in a detailed manner. Others were descriptive and were not clearly linked to theory.

Idealist perspective

Some candidates used Levi-Strauss and his structuralist ideas well, linking them to studies of the Kula exchange, potlatch and Iraq. The schools of psychological functionalism, and interpretativism were mentioned, but not developed or applied.

Universalistic perspective

Some candidates presented relatively superficial responses drawing upon functionalism. One candidate presented a very good answer drawing on third wave feminism, inequality, Scheper-Hughes' *Death Without Weeping*, Marx, unequal distribution of resources, and Eric Wolf.

Cohesion-centred perspective

There were several good essays presented in response to this question. The stronger essays drew on structuralism and functionalism, and provided good historical depth.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

The importance of theoretical schools

Theoretical perspectives form the focus of Part 4 of the syllabus. The logic behind this is to foster a critical understanding of ethnography and theory that moves beyond memorizing details of schools of thought. However, teachers must be aware of the fact that candidates need a solid grounding in schools of thought and the history of anthropology.

The teaching of schools of thought should be selective, as it would be impossible to cover the entire history of the discipline; should directly relate to ethnographies studied in class; and should provide candidates with a strong understanding of trends in anthropology, including contemporary theory. Examples of schools of thought that can be studied are included in Part 4 of the syllabus. Popular schools (in no particular order) include: functionalism (biopsychological and structural), structuralism, political economy, cultural ecology, cultural materialism, global theory, the three waves of feminism, liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, dependency theory, world systems theory, resistance theory, practice theory, social action theory, transactionalism, and historical particularism. Social evolutionism is sometimes mentioned as a means of understanding the motivations of subsequent theorists, but it is rarely valuable to learn this theory in detail with IB candidates.

Useful resources for learning about theory can be found on the OCC.

Three aspects

Teachers need to ensure that they are allowing opportunity for candidates to practice linking the three key aspects of this component together into well-structured analytical essays. The three aspects are: schools of thought, ethnography and theoretical perspectives.

Selection of ethnography

Careful consideration should be given to selecting an ethnography, which allows teachers the opportunity to foster an understanding of theoretical perspectives and schools of thought through the reading and study of ethnography. Candidates also need to include actual ethnography in their essays, not simply popular or journalistic resources.

Contemporary material

While centres have improved in the breadth of materials studied, some centres continue to exclusively teach older theories. Candidates must be exposed to contemporary theory in order to gain a good understanding of the discipline. They also need to be prepared to offer a critical understanding of why theories change over time, and why some theories are now considered “out dated” despite the ongoing strengths they may offer to anthropology.

Question selection

Time and attention should be given to practicing question selection. Teachers need to ensure that candidates know how to select questions that best fit their individual knowledge and that candidates are able to selectively apply theoretical schools, theoretical perspectives and ethnography to the questions they choose to answer.

The word “structure” is an important one in anthropology, and is used prolifically throughout the literature. The fact that this word holds several meanings confuses candidates. It is useful to explicitly help candidates understand the variety of ways this word can be used. For example:

- Structuralism: a school of thought most commonly associated with Levi-Strauss.
- Structure-centred: a theoretical perspective defined in Part 4 of the syllabus.
- Social structure: The meaning of social structure is not entirely consistent within anthropology. However, it is acceptable to think of “social structure” as synonymous with “social organization”, relationships between people in society (such as in the form of social roles).
- Structural-functionalism: A school of thought most commonly associated with Radcliffe-Brown (and inspired by Durkheim).

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 15	16 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

There were no specific areas which appeared difficult for candidates in general. Most candidates were able to demonstrate a general understanding of the text, in this case about the ways power is related to gendered hierarchies in the context of police academy training in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Though the text seemed to be well understood by a majority of candidates, many answers remained on a descriptive level or were written in a very generic way about issues related to gender, power or identity, rather than focused on the text or the relevant comparative ethnography. In a number of cases candidates were quite dependent on the text and appeared unaware that they should be using their own words.

Most candidates were able to attempt all questions. However, relatively few candidates attempted to define or discuss the key terms relevant to the questions, and without this it was

sometimes difficult to determine whether or not the understanding of concepts such as gender, power, or ritual were only based on “common sense”. Though many answers tended to be descriptive rather than analytical, some showed appropriate use of anthropological terminology and relevant concepts.

The societies chosen for comparison in question three were not always fully contextualized, particularly in relation to when the ethnographic data were gathered. A publication date for ethnography is not necessarily what is meant by ethnographic contextualization, but the description of the historical context of the ethnographic account. In some cases the candidates did not describe the case study chosen fully enough, or a well-developed comparison was marred by the lack of full identification of the ethnographic material referred to.

Areas of the programme and examination in which the candidates appeared well prepared

Some candidates demonstrated excellent comprehension and analytical skills, critical thinking, and the ability to interweave ethnographic materials and anthropological concepts to make strong and well-developed arguments. Some candidates showed an ability to bring in relevant anthropological concepts, as well as to produce convincing discussions and comparisons supported by relevant, fully contextualized ethnographies. Many candidates could present quite detailed comparative ethnography that was generally relevant and identified properly.

In terms of the areas of the programme, the majority appeared to be familiar with anthropological concepts and issues on gender and power. Also, knowledge about rites of passage was apparent in many answers. Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of gender as a social construct and they were able to apply this understanding to their interpretation of the text.

Candidates were able to identify the link between gender and hierarchy, and a few recognized that this was constructed as a specific discourse about domination and subordination.

As usual, the range of achievement was wide with the critical difference being the ability to write conceptually and thus analyse rather than describe.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

Most candidates seemed capable of identifying relevant points/examples and offering generalizations. The more successful responses presented relevant generalizations and examples, but others were rather dependent on the text itself. Weaker scripts relied heavily upon the text and quoted answers rather than summarizing in candidates own words.

Most candidates were able to describe the link between gender and hierarchy, if not to recognize this as a strategic construction or discourse about difference and power. Many understood how this was extended to civilians compared to police officers.

At the same time, some of the generalizations offered veered into the category of sweeping statements, where a candidate would essentialize masculinity or femininity and for instance argue that “women are always inferior to men”.

Though only a small proportion of candidates presented the gender hierarchy as natural, it is a concern that candidates, after following a period of anthropological studies should hold such view uncritically.

Question 2

Candidates seemed to demonstrate a good understanding of concepts such as rites of passage, transition, or identity issues in the context of police academies. Stronger answers provided detailed analysis, and framed the educational process of becoming a police officer in terms of rites of passage, interpreting its symbolism. Other responses were only descriptive, and though in general terms candidates understood the text, many did not identify relevant anthropological concepts.

There were very few instances of engaging with the perspective of the anthropologist as required. Those candidates who recognized the anthropologist's viewpoint were sometimes quite thoughtful, either in terms of emic/etic distinctions or by identifying the use of strengths and limitations of gender as an analytical category.

It became apparent that while some centres were aware of the importance of discussing the viewpoint of the anthropologist, not all were. Those candidates who wrote otherwise very good answers to this question but did not mention the viewpoint of the anthropologist were unable to gain full marks and this really was in many cases quite unfortunate.

Question 3

Most candidates structured their answers as a comparison and at least attempted to introduce a comparative ethnography. Many responses were structured as a comparison, and usually focused in terms of the issue of power. However, in many answers there was no clear conceptualization of this concept. Most candidates seemed to be familiar with relevant comparative ethnography, more often than not focused on gender as the critical category, rather than power. Popular ethnographies chosen were Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*, Yanomamo by Chagnon, Kraybill's Amish materials, Helen Safa's account of *The Urban Poor of Puerto Rico*, Foley's *Learning Capitalist Culture*. All these provided relevant materials for comparison.

Full identification of comparative materials continues to be a problem for a good number of candidates. They are required to fully contextualize their ethnographic materials. Quite often a candidate would only mention a very generic reference to a group of people such as for instance "high school students", or refer vaguely to place, for example, "in Africa".

Finally, some candidates would introduce two different ethnographies even though the question specified that only one such group should be introduced.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- In terms of examination skills, candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully and structure their answers accordingly. Practice with previous paper 1 texts and markschemes is critical to this goal. Candidates should be encouraged to be explicit in demonstrating their understanding of concepts by, for example, defining the terms used. Candidates should make sure they are actually answering the questions, and be aware that question 1 is usually descriptive but question 2 is more analytical. Teachers need to help candidates clarify key question terms, to make sure that answers are relevant and closely focused; again, practice with previous texts should be helpful here.

- Teachers need to make candidates more familiar with specific requirements:
 - In question 1, for example, candidates need to use their own words rather than rely heavily on quotations. Candidates are expected to go beyond simple description, to develop some generalizations that are relevant to the terms of the question and can be linked to relevant points and examples given in the text.
 - In question 2, in order to gain full marks, the answer must identify the viewpoint of the anthropologist. Also, candidates should be encouraged to work on developing their analytical skills so that they can move beyond merely offering descriptive responses. Candidates giving descriptive answers will limit the marks they can achieve as this particular question also requires the demonstration of analytical skills.
 - As for question 3, candidates should be told more explicitly about the need to fully establish a comparative ethnography in terms of author, place, and historical context. Candidates missed out on receiving more than 4 marks for this question because they seemed unaware of the need to establish the ethnography in full detail to receive higher marks.
- Candidates need to recognize relevant anthropological concepts and understand how to apply these to their answers. In terms of practice, it remains essential that teachers work with candidates to make sure that they are familiar with key anthropological concepts and approaches and to help them recognize how these can be linked to materials presented in a given text.
- Finally, in terms of ethnographic materials, it is important that teachers try to ensure that candidates are familiar with some contemporary materials and understand why it is essential to give full identification and context for the chosen case.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 21	22 - 27	28 - 33	34 - 44

General Comments

This was the second May examination session based on the new programme, allowing a free choice of two out of ten questions, as well as new assessment criteria D and E applied across both essays. Overall candidate numbers and centre's remained steady this year, consolidating the growth seen over the past few years. Not unusually, the quality of anthropological knowledge, understanding and skills in evidence varied enormously, from excellent in some cases to all but minimal in others, and with a wide range in between. Where some scripts showed strong evidence of anthropological knowledge and understanding and good analytical and comparative skills, others were limited to rather general, common sense or even personal responses, with little evidence of anything anthropological at all.

As was the case last year, examiners frequently commented on the overall lack of evidence of specific knowledge of core anthropological concepts as well as analytical skills. As a result, many answers were more descriptive than analytical. While a good many candidates demonstrated quite detailed knowledge of ethnographic materials and some comparative skills, they often failed to demonstrate anthropological knowledge and understanding in terms of definitions or discussion of relevant core concepts. Linked to this, there was little effort to evaluate or question anthropological materials. In terms of ethnography, although many candidates appeared to have quite detailed ethnographic knowledge across a range of societies or groups, some seemed limited in their choices: descriptive materials were rather similar, restricted to one region, did not address all aspects of the programme or were not ethnographic but documentary and/or journalistic, requiring different treatment. Usually these responses were less successful in establishing the relevance of their materials.

As was the case last year, overall the critical difference between stronger and weaker scripts was not only the range of ethnographic knowledge demonstrated (now assessed by new criterion B as well as criterion E) but most critically the ability to discuss specific anthropological concepts and approaches, to develop answers that were analytical rather than descriptive (assessed in criterion A). The new criterion D, assessing overall knowledge and understanding of processes of change and transformation as evidenced across both essays, continued to pose problems for many candidates (see recommendations below).

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

As already suggested, in terms of both programme and examination, many scripts demonstrated rather limited knowledge of relevant anthropological terms, concepts and arguments. More often than not there was little or no discussion of relevant key terms which when used, were more often presented as if self-evident, suggesting a rather limited appreciation of ways in which anthropological approaches are different than commonsense understandings. For example, the terms ethnicity, race, social class and caste (question 4) were rarely discussed in anthropological terms, as was the case with gender and power (question 2). As a result, many answers were more descriptive than analytical in nature. Quite often the candidates were so focused on description that they failed to explicitly address the terms of the question. As noted by one examiner, candidates “do not use the ethnographies well; instead of using them to support the ideas identified in the question and subsequent discussion, they simply describe what they know about the ethnography and lose focus on answering the question”. Additionally, many did not provide any contextualization of ethnographic materials leading, in many cases, to limited arguments and rather superficial comparisons. Further, a good many candidates seemed not to understand the importance of careful identification of the descriptive materials they presented, or to comprehend that what was described in a particular ethnography was the product of a particular ethnographer in a particular place at a particular time. Also in a good number of cases, other kinds of accounts, either journalistic, digital, and novels, were presented without any recognition or discussion of ways in which these might differ from ethnography.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Some candidates showed very good conceptual knowledge and comparative skills, and were able to develop strong, well-supported answers with relevant use of very detailed ethnographic materials. These candidates were able to offer clear and informed definitions of relevant concepts, to provide full identification of ethnographies and use clearly detailed and

appropriate examples. Other candidates were able to use ethnographic materials that were generally relevant and showed quite detailed ethnographic knowledge of several societies or groups. The majority of candidates, with some exceptions as noted above, made reference to specific ethnography and were able to identify it if not always completely. Many were able to provide the name of the anthropologist and the title of the study, and sometimes the ethnography present. Most were able to offer specific details, and show how and why these were relevant in terms of the question. Candidates were also fairly well equipped to offer comparisons and to make mention, if not to discuss, processes of change. Sometimes these were superficial accounts, but some were able to provide both relevant ethnography and examples of social change.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Question 1

This was quite a popular choice, usually focused on either globalization or colonialism, and sometimes quite well done. The more successful answers were able to offer clear definitions of relevant concepts such as syncretism, cargo cults, revitalization and/or hybridization, and to link these to relevant ethnographies. These answers showed good knowledge of processes of change and provided good contextualization. However this was not always the case: less successful candidates discussed belief or worldview rather than religious practices and were much less effective in terms of identifying the relevant historical context. There were fewer responses that focused on migration, however this sometimes inspired better essays, for example from candidates who referred to Brisebarre's *The Sacrifice of Id Al-Kabir*.

Question 2

This was by far the most popular question but overall was not very well done, largely because many responses lacked any clear anthropological conceptualization of either gender or power. Thus answers were generally quite well focused, but largely descriptive. Very few candidates could provide any anthropologically informed explanations about the relationships between gender and power, and instead described, compared and confirmed that there was power asymmetry in many societies; though in some more successful responses, two contrasting cases helped to develop a more nuanced argument, for example, Lee's the Ju/'hoansi and Weiner's Trobrianders. A good many answers were rather narrow, sometimes ethnocentric, and often uncritical, assuming universal male dominance. This question was sometimes attempted without any ethnographic support at all. Many produced answers that were tangentially relevant but far too vague and not grounded in anthropological argument of any kind.

Question 3

This was not a popular choice and not often well done, either lacking much knowledge of kinship or kinship relations beyond very general and common sense understandings, or struggling to clarify the context in which these changed.

Although a few candidates were able to demonstrate quite detailed knowledge of the effect of changing kinship relations, many focused more on the causes of changed kinship relations rather than their effects, thus not really answering the question.

Question 4

This was quite a popular question but rarely well done: only a few candidates were able to examine the relevant concept in anthropological terms and the link to identity was often quite tenuous, and often dependent on knowledge of relevant ethnography. Most candidates chose to focus on ethnicity or social class. Others confused "race" with "ethnicity" and made no differentiation between the two, although Bourgois' ethnography was quite successfully used in some cases. Also Safa's *Urban Poor of Puerto Rico*, Kathleen Hall's ethnography about British-Sikh girls in England and Foley's *Learning Capitalist Culture*. The better answers usually dealt with ethnicity drawing on Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*, Lee's *Ju'hoansi*, Chavez's *Shadowed Lives*, Fadiman's *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (but candidates need to be clear that this is a journalistic rather than an ethnographic account), and Brisebarre's *The Sacrifice of Id Al-Kabir*. Many candidates, however, demonstrated an inability to define their terms.

The least successful discussions tended to deal with race and caste. Several candidates presented answers with no reference either to anthropological concepts or ethnography, using unidentified historical or anecdotal materials.

Question 5

This was quite a popular question, and sometimes quite well done, although many candidates failed to provide appropriate definitions for the key terms, instead using them as "common sense" terms, quite often associating modernity with outside forces and tradition with local beliefs and practices. Most answers presented ethnography that was generally relevant, but the lack of specificity regarding the concepts limited the success of these answers. Nonetheless many answers managed to avoid too simplistic a dichotomization, and the better answers demonstrated an understanding of culture as dynamic and of modernity and tradition as historical and variable categories.

Question 6

This was also quite a popular question, and often quite well answered, as many candidates were able to present a detailed ethnographic description of a rite of passage and give it some context, suggesting at least some relevant social and or cultural significance. Ethnographies that were often quite well used here included Chavez's *Shadowed Lives*, Nanda's *Hjiras*, Turnbull's *The Forest People*, and Weiner's *Trobrianders* among others. However only a few responses demonstrated any familiarity with the threefold structure of rites of passage and consequently did not identify these stages in the ethnographic illustration, thus many answers were more descriptive than analytical. The best answers defined rites of passage and made reference to separation, liminality, incorporation, and ideas of transformation, providing an informed basis for an evaluation of their social and cultural significance.

Question 7

This question was least often chosen, and produced very few anthropologically informed answers, suggesting rather limited understandings of the relevant concepts and/or limited knowledge of relevant ethnography. More effective answers often used ethnographic accounts of the Amish. Several quite interesting answers attempted to analyse recent political events in Spain and in Egypt, but were limited by the lack of ethnographic materials.

Question 8

This was quite a popular choice and sometimes quite well done. Although most candidates seemed to assume that "global processes" meant globalization exclusively, many seemed

quite well prepared to identify and discuss global processes in relation to local economies, making good use of ethnographic materials such as Chang's *Factory Girls*, Weatherford's study of the coca economy in Bolivia, and Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*, demonstrating relevant conceptual and ethnographic knowledge. However many others wrote only in very general terms, often spending too much time describing hypothetical economic issues and not actual alterations in the local economy, and often struggling to maintain a clear focus in terms of the question, even where they managed to demonstrate relevant ethnographic knowledge.

Question 9

This question produced a wide range of responses, a few of which were both informed and quite original, for example, discussion of Willow's account of indigenous activism in Canada. Answers were most successful where candidates could draw on relevant ethnography and clearly identify the sources/forms of social conflict.

These were quite often seen as external in terms of cultural contact and economic changes including urbanization, but also internal such as the dynamics of kinship in Yanomamo villages, social and economic marginalization and gender relations. However other candidates had difficulty defining social conflict and applying any kind of anthropological perspective: these responses were often little more than anecdotal.

Question 10

This question was not often chosen but produced a range of answers. The most common problem was that candidates simply ignored the prompt, focused only on one of the three terms given and did not address the approach taken in anthropology, thus limiting their achievement. More successful answers focused on resistance, and conformity and nonconformity; these made good use of a range of ethnographic cases including Willow's account of indigenous activism and resistance to globalization, Fadiman's journalistic account of the Hmong in the United States, as well as Turnbull's account of Bambuti resistance to local villagers, Brisebarre's account of Muslim sacrifice in Paris, and Bourgois' account of crack dealers in El Barrio. The discussion of moral systems seemed to be more problematic for many and was usually poorly handled, with little conceptualization or comparison.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Conceptualization

The standard level course incorporates three fundamental components: anthropological concepts and approaches which provide the tools for argument and analysis; and detailed ethnographic knowledge and comparisons, which together provide the materials for supporting, illustrating and evaluating anthropological arguments. It is apparent from this year's scripts that while many candidates are quite well prepared in terms of their ethnographic knowledge and demonstrate some comparative skills, they are often lacking in their knowledge and understanding of anthropological concepts and approaches. Yet these need to be at the centre of any and every course and class. As one examiner wrote, "Teachers need to focus on core concepts listed in the IB syllabus and make sure candidates are aware of terms such as power, structure, agency, etc. ...".

Many candidates seem to be familiar with enough ethnographic material but merely described it rather than using it to support an argument that answers a question. If they are to be able to construct an argument these key concepts must be taught and discussed in relation to ethnographic materials.

Ethnographic materials

While most candidates demonstrate quite a good knowledge of appropriate ethnographic materials that were usually quite varied, it was also evident this year that some candidates are also presenting journalistic and documentary sources uncritically, as if they were ethnography. Examples seen this year include Fadiman's account of the Hmong, Geraldine Brooks' *Nine Parts of Desire*, Shachtman's *Rumspringa* and Discovery Channel's *Living with the Mek*. While these may be valuable as supplementary materials, they need to be treated somewhat differently than ethnography and teachers need to help candidates recognize how and why they differ, the implications of this and how to reference/discuss this in the examination context. Also in some cases ethnography needs to be updated to ensure that candidates are familiar with some more contemporary materials. Finally, complete identification remains an issue for many: minimally, this requires the names of the society or group as well as the anthropologist/author, the place and some context as well as the ethnographic present. Ideally, this would also include the title and date of publication but this is not essential. And although more candidates were successful in meeting the new criterion E which takes account of the range and detail of ethnographic knowledge demonstrated over the paper as a whole (2/44 marks), this remains an issue for others and deserves some classroom discussion.

Themes

Candidates also need to be exposed both to classical concepts and more contemporary concerns and themes. Some candidates in this examination session appeared to be better versed in contemporary themes like globalization, ethnicity, and gender than in classical themes like kinship, power, religion and ritual, or exchange. Obviously this has implications for the choice of ethnographies. Teachers are reminded to address processes of change and social transformation more consistently and critically so that candidates become more aware of their implications. This too is now assessed across the paper as a whole in criterion D (4/44 marks) and remains a limitation for a good many candidates.

Exam preparation and essay writing skills

Finally, there was evidence of the apparent lack of solid essay writing skills in a good number of scripts. Teachers need to spend time preparing the candidates with exam practice and essay writing skills, which should be developed and reinforced through frequent classroom practice and critique. Candidates are sometimes so focused on demonstrating what they know about an ethnography that they forget to answer the question. In particular, teachers need to move candidates away from describing ethnographies towards more systematic analysis and comparison. All candidates should be very familiar with the assessment criteria and it is strongly recommended that teachers use these criteria in their own ongoing assessment process.