

May 2015 subject reports

## Social and Cultural Anthropology

Overall grade boundaries

### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 15	16 - 31	32 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61 - 71	72 - 100

### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 13	14 - 26	27 - 36	37 - 48	49 - 59	60 - 71	72 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

### Component grade boundaries

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

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

A slight majority of the reports presented appropriate topics and well-focused research questions, a proportion similar to the results seen in the May 2014 session, which represented an improvement over the two previous May sessions. As usual, there was marked variation among centres as to the success of their candidates in this regard.

As has been the case in this component for most recent examination sessions, issue-based topics were much more popular than context-based topics.

The most successful issue-based report applied the Marxian concept of commodity fetishism to social and economic relations in Brasilia during the FIFA World Cup competition. Slightly less successful was a report examining the changes in roles of Tibetan Buddhist monastics brought about by migration, and a report assessing the role of religious practice in the lives of young northern Ugandans.

As is usually the case, most context-based reports focused on places familiar to the candidates, and in some centres there were clear tendencies to study the schools themselves, or smaller units within them such as sports teams, creative or service activities. Successful reports included a study of community formation among international peace studies students; a study of identity differences among the youth of two geographical sections of a European city; a detailed examination of a Nepalese rite of passage, and a structuralist analysis of binary oppositions seen in rehearsal behaviour of members of a ballet company.

It should be noted that both issue-based and context-based reports had their own characteristic strengths and weaknesses. Issue-based reports frequently lacked detail in data presentation, and especially if approached through a poorly-focused research question, tended to yield superficial analyses. On the other hand, context-based reports frequently tended to be overly descriptive, often with unneeded detail. Both approaches, however, are likely to lack conceptual and/or theoretical frameworks for analysing data, as is required by the assessment criteria (see Criterion D).

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A

As in the May 2014 examination session, a slight majority of candidates presented appropriate topics and well-focused research questions, and very few inappropriate research questions appeared.

### Criterion B

Performance against this criterion was almost identical to that seen in the May 2014 examination session, both of which represented somewhat lower-achieving performances than seen in May 2013. Only one-third of candidates clearly justified and described research techniques (corresponding to a mark of 3 out of 4). Very few candidates presented inappropriate techniques. Again, there were marked differences between centres in candidates' performance. The most successful centres clearly reflected training in the selection, description, and evaluation of research techniques, while several centres showed no evidence of such training. Perhaps the most common single shortcoming seen regarding treatment of research techniques is the tendency to neglect the context under which research was carried out, that is, candidates partially or completely ignored 1) how informants were selected; 2) what the independent or "background" variables differentiating informants might have been; 3) the number of informants involved, and 4) the circumstances under which research instruments were administered.

### Criterion C

Performance against this criterion showed a slight improvement over recent sessions in that slightly over one-third of candidates presented data appropriately and in satisfactory detail, thus receiving at least 3 out of 4 marks. Very few candidates inappropriately presented data in appendices, which represents an improvement from the May 2014 examination session. Since appendices are not included within the 2000-word limit, were this practice to be tolerated, presenting data in appendices would render the word limit meaningless. Teachers need to be vigilant in guiding candidates to utilize appendices properly.

### Criterion D

This criterion has consistently been the least well-served of the assessment criteria. This examination session there was a surprising and disappointing drop in performance compared to the May 2014 session, when almost two-thirds of candidates presented at least a rudimentary analytical framework employing anthropological concepts and/or theory. This session, over half of the candidates did not present an analytical framework. It continues to be the case that sound application of concepts and theory to data analysis is often hampered by the candidates' neglecting to define "key" concepts such as "rites of passage," "globalization," "commodification," "ethnicity," "identity," "emic" and "etic," *etc.* Many candidates, aware that they are expected to apply anthropological concepts and theory, introduce concepts or theory they have not fully understood, with the result that they produce distorted and/or superficial analyses. Very few candidates received full marks against this criterion.

### Criterion E

A slight majority of candidates offered at least some substantial discussion of ethical issues arising out of the field research experience, a slightly less satisfactory result than was seen in the May 2014 examination session. As with most of the assessment criteria, performance varied markedly between centres. Most candidates showed an awareness of the need to respect informants' privacy, but unfortunately, the majority of candidates did not deal with the broader but less obvious issues of ethical practice in field research, such as issues of representation of individual subjects and groups, positionality and reflexivity. These issues have been an increasingly important concern among ethnographers over at least the past 40 years, hence it is not unreasonable to expect higher level candidates to show some degree of familiarity with them.

### Criterion F

Slightly more than half of the candidates received at least 2 out of a possible 3 marks against this criterion, a performance slightly less successful than seen in the May 2014 session, and the proportion of candidates receiving full marks was also smaller. To do well against this criterion, candidates must have presented anthropologically valid and well-focused issues, and must show some sense of what constitutes a distinctly anthropological analysis of data. Some evidence of reflexive and critical thinking about the process of data gathering and the interpretation of data is also expected for full marks against this criterion.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Selecting and focusing the research question: Candidates must clearly state and focus the research question. There is wide variation in performance between centres, indicating that there is considerable room for improvement in this respect. Teachers will find suggestions for working with candidates through stages of refining a broadly-defined topic into a well-focused research question in the guidelines for the higher level internal assessment (HL IA) component located in the Teacher Support Material (TSM), accessible through the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC).

Data presentation: While there has been gradual improvement in data presentation over recent examination sessions, less than half of candidates are adequately presenting data clearly and in sufficient detail. This component clearly has a methodological focus, but this should not be taken to mean that data presentation should be slighted in favour of a concentration on methodological issues and theory. Both teachers and candidates will benefit not only by studying the IA guidelines and assessment criteria found in the subject guide (pages 44–48), but by studying the marked and annotated sample IA reports in the TSM. Both the subject guide and the TSM may be accessed through the OCC. Teachers should plan to devote some class time to preparing candidates for the IA component, and should also allocate sufficient time for individual conferences with candidates as their projects develop. Regarding field research techniques, there are many published guides to student field research, a number of which can be found annotated on the Teacher Resource Exchange pages of the OCC. A few candidates this examination session presented data in appendices. Teachers should take care to insure that candidates understand that the appendices should be used only for ancillary material, and not for presentation of data essential to the argument of the research report.

- Defining the analytical framework: There remains a disappointing gap between candidates' results and the expectation that they provide an analytical framework. A considerable number of candidates mentioned anthropological concepts, often without defining them, and proceeded to "analyse" data without systematically applying the concepts. Another considerable number stated in their introductions they would apply some particular anthropological theory, and then never actually described it or provided sources, leaving its relevance, if any, completely implicit in their analyses. To produce an adequate analytical framework, it is not necessary to lay out an entire theoretical approach in detail. For example, a frequently applied concept in analysing data is the familiar one of "rites of passage". Candidates in past examination sessions have often applied this concept to the analysis of data on relations between younger and older students in schools, or to school graduations ceremonies, to religious initiations, *etc.* Defining the concept, providing sources for it, and systematically applying it in analysing data is not an overwhelming task, and has resulted in many successful IA reports. A careful study of marked and annotated IA samples in the TSM publication as well as a thorough discussion of the assessment criteria is essential to introduce candidates to the notion of an analytical framework. Unfortunately, teachers' marks in a few centres still indicate that not all understand what is required under Criterion D.

- Regarding ethical issues: Ethical issues of fieldwork should not be approached as an isolated topic. Almost every modern ethnography that is likely to be read by candidates presents readers with a discussion of serious ethical issues faced by the ethnographer, which in some cases are close to the central theme of the ethnography. Engaging candidates in the ethical problems faced by professional ethnographers is the best way to help them see relationships to their own field research.
- Organization and format of the report: While there is no specific format for the IA report, it is advisable for teachers to offer candidates a suggested general format for their reports. This can be designed so as to raise candidates' awareness of the requirements presented in the assessment criteria, and to encourage clarity of organization. Teachers may find that if they do not provide some sort of suggested format, conscientious candidates are likely to ask for one. Use of a table of contents, subheadings, and bibliography specifically deserve attention, and should be part of classroom preparation for the assignment.
- Group work for the HL IA: Teachers are reminded that they should clearly describe the circumstances under which group work, if any, was undertaken. This should be done in a statement accompanying the 3/CS form. For guidelines on group work for the IA, refer to the subject guide, page 39. It is the teacher's responsibility to insure that the data presentation, interpretation and analyses in each individual report are the candidate's own work.

## Standard level internal assessment

### Component grade boundaries

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

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most candidates understood the purpose and goals of this methodological exercise and some produced excellent, reasoned, and thoughtful work. The usual range was found across standard level internal assessments (SL IAs). Almost all candidates clearly attempted to meet the four assessment criteria.

Observation contexts were usually public spaces, which provide good data for observations and for subsequent critiques. Candidates observing public spaces seem more able to identify their biases in their critiques. A few candidates chose private settings, such as gatherings in the home of family members, and used terminology familiar only to an insider. In these cases, candidates had more difficulty identifying their biases in their critiques.

While criteria dealing with bias and reflection were often completed successfully, criterion B on description and analysis remains a challenge. There was some improvement over previous years but candidates (and possibly some teachers) seem to have difficulty understanding the requirements.

In a good deal of the critiques, perceived mistakes took precedent over self-reflection on the role of observer. Some candidates might be operating on the erroneous assumption that the purpose of the critique is to correct these perceived mistakes in the written report by pointing them out as bias.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A

The completion of the written report continues to be the most successfully completed criterion. Candidates appear to be engaged or even enthusiastic about the business of data collection. The majority of candidates chose venues appropriate for a one-hour observation and presented interesting reports that gave ample material to later critique. Observation reports were usually sufficiently detailed and well organized into categories of understanding. There is now less use of dry and simple chronology of events as an organizing principle. The requirement to observe only was not always met, as some candidates also interviewed, participated, or researched.

### Criterion B

As noted above, this was the least successfully completed criterion. The meaning of the terminology and the reasons for considering analysis in relation to description are not well understood. The wording used in the assessment criteria for Criterion B (descriptive inference and sound analysis) was mentioned more than in previous years but this was not often qualified with examples or discussion in the lower-achieving critiques. Simply quoting the criteria without relevant comparative examples from the observation report did not meet the requirements.

Although many candidates did try to make a distinction between description and analysis, and many were able to cite examples from their observations, relatively few were able to develop this knowledge in a systematic and anthropologically informed fashion.

### Criterion C

Many candidates are quite effective in identifying areas of their observation that indicate bias in some form. Candidates generally recognize personal biases but few could connect these with socially constructed biases. Discussions about bias were often too self-critical rather than reflective, and bias in the report was incorrectly seen to be a mistake in itself. The more successful IAs associated assumptions made in the report with conceptual habits and learned behaviour, or with wider social issues and systems of classification be they racial, class, or gender related. Criterion C requires reflection on the ways in which bias and personal choice could have shaped the observation. Many candidates commented on this issue, and some could see larger issues of methodology, the tension between subjectivity and objectivity in fieldwork. Some candidates were quite impressive in their understanding of these issues and expertly related them to issues of description and analysis as required in criterion B.

## Criterion D

Most candidates managed to find some methodological point about their observation to make, and some also included ethical considerations. More candidates are now reflecting on personal and methodological issues of fieldwork and this is a positive trend. Those that also discussed its challenges in terms of selection and analysis of collected data were quite good. Some candidates used references to ethnography studied in class to such an extent that it overshadowed critical reflection of their own experience. While comparing observations noted in the report to professional ethnography has some merit, many comparisons were inappropriate or forced.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates continue to struggle with descriptive inference and sound analysis. Teachers should look more carefully at Criterion B and develop ways in which they can convey the intention behind the requirements. Candidates should be encouraged to search for inferences and analytical expressions in their report and be encouraged to identify social as well as personal biases. By giving examples of descriptive inference and possible analysis from their observation reports, they can show that they are able not only to define the terms, but to use them correctly.
- Candidates should be made more aware of the reflective aspects of the SL IA and be directed not to use the critique to correct the report. It is not a mistake to show bias in the observation, but it is an oversight not to recognize personal and social bias of the observer. The SL IA is intended to give candidates a chance to review their initial work from a position informed by methodological issues in anthropology.

## Higher level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 10	11 - 12	13 - 13	14 - 20

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

There were no specific areas of the examination that appeared particularly difficult for candidates and almost all were able to attempt all questions.

The matter of 'generalizations' in question 1 was the only area where candidates struggled, but this is the case every examination session.

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

Almost all candidates had a relevant ethnography to draw upon for question 3.

Almost all candidates were able to invoke a theoretical perspective in question 2, although in some cases this was tenuous.

Most candidates made an attempt at identifying the viewpoint of the anthropologist.

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

#### Question 1

The higher achieving candidates addressed this in their own words and attempted to apply a conceptual approach. Lower achieving candidates were very reliant on quotations from the text.

#### Question 2

The higher achieving candidates had several theoretical perspectives to draw upon and could apply one or two of these that were valid. They were also able to offer one or more viewpoint(s) of the anthropologist. Lower achieving responses adopted a common sense approach which demonstrated little study of anthropology, and some attributed the VoA to Abe, a subject within the text rather than the anthropologist who authored it.



### Question 3

The higher achieving candidates made a clear justification for their choice of comparative ethnography and remained focused on answering the question (*ie* using 'suffering' as the point of comparison). They also included comparisons which were on a conceptual level rather than merely superficial. Lower achieving responses failed to adequately identify their comparative material, and several used material which is not ethnographic. Some just tried to compare the ethnographies rather than using 'suffering' as the grounds for this comparison.

### Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates must be trained to use terminology appropriately. The appropriate use of terminology is currently lacking, particularly in question 1.
- When responding to question 3, candidates should be reminded to think about and address the question, rather than writing everything they know about a particular topic.

### Standard level paper one

#### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 10	11 - 11	12 - 13	14 - 20

#### General comments

Most candidates were able to demonstrate a general understanding of the text – in this case an extract from an ethnographic account which explored the complex relationship between the Ghanaian migrants' socio-economic situation and their experiences of suffering. There were no specific areas which appeared particularly difficult for candidates and the text was well understood by many.

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

Though there was general understanding of the extract, many answers remained on a descriptive level. In a significant number of cases candidates were quite dependent on the text and appeared unaware that they should be using their own words, incorporating anthropological concepts and providing discussion and analysis. Only some candidates demonstrated good anthropological understanding and brought in relevant terminology into their answers. Not many candidates were able to analyse witchcraft as a general discourse about morality and sociality.

As has been true in previous examination sessions, generalizations and conceptual knowledge were two of the least satisfactory areas and are evidently a challenge for some candidates. Too often, candidates try to define core terms and concepts using their common sense understanding. Hence, it was sometimes difficult to determine whether or not the understanding of these terms could demonstrate anthropological knowledge.

Most candidates were able to attempt all questions. In a small number of cases candidates were not able to complete all three questions. Question 3 in particular was sometimes left unfinished, or was too brief and lacked detailed comparisons.

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

The range of achievement was wide, with the critical difference being the ability to write conceptually and analyse rather than describe. Some candidates demonstrated good comprehension and analytical skills, critical thinking, and the ability to interweave ethnographic materials and anthropological concepts to make well-developed arguments. Some were able to make sound statements about the viewpoint of the anthropologist. There were some excellent responses demonstrating high levels of knowledge and understanding across the paper.

Candidates tended to use relevant concepts and discussed anthropological issues incorporating terms such as knowledge, belief, migration, gender, social suffering, morality, culture, identity, or ideology. Many candidates identified and defined key concepts such as capitalism, modernity and globalization as general contexts to situate their discussions.

Some candidates structured their responses evidencing knowledge of belief and moral systems, and more particularly of witchcraft, making reference to Evans-Pritchard's work to demonstrate an understanding of how Ghanaian witchcraft constitutes an epistemological and moral framework for making sense of reality. Some candidates incorporated to their analysis the Foucaultian dyad 'power/knowledge' providing convincing arguments. Some referred to rites of passage to describe the process of migration while others resorted to the concept of 'culture shock' to describe Ghanaian migrants' experiences or incorporated Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to describe women's social position.

The comparative question produced a good range of well-structured answers, drawing on several different ethnographies. Some candidates showed an ability to bring in relevant anthropological concepts, as well as to produce well-sustained discussions and comparisons supported by relevant, fully-contextualized ethnographies.

It is very encouraging to see that candidates generally made relevant ethnographic choices in order to compare the case, demonstrating an understanding of social suffering as present in any society or group. Also, the ability to fully identify ethnographic materials is improving and many candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of relevant and often contemporary ethnographies.

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

### Question 1

Most candidates were able to describe and seemed capable of identifying relevant points but generalizations were limited. The more successful responses presented relevant generalizations and examples, but others were rather dependent on the text itself. Lower achieving responses relied heavily upon the text and quoted answers rather than summarizing in the candidates' own words. A small number of answers were composed almost entirely of quotations from the text in the examination paper.

Responses generally identified and described why female Ghanaian migrants decided to consult an anti-witchcraft shrine priest, giving an account of how they understood and experienced their illnesses as witchcraft. Thus, the majority of candidates were able to identify relevant points. However, several candidates struggled to introduce generalizations, and relied heavily on the text to construct their responses. The most successful answers made explicit reference to the complex relationship between the Ghanaian migrants' socio-economic situation and their experience and understanding of illness.

### Question 2

This question aimed at understanding how Ghanaian witchcraft constitutes an epistemological and moral framework for making sense of reality. Although many responses were quite descriptive, some candidates produced excellent, well-informed, analytical responses.

The highest achieving responses were able to bring into the explanation relevant concepts and provide detailed analysis. Many candidates understood how the priest was successful in treating illness and misfortune because his practices may be interpreted as a quest for meaning in the context of migration. Some candidates were able to analyse how Abe reinvented traditional and modern divination techniques, and how his healing practices revolved around the client's personal relationships rather than abstract knowledge independent of the client's social context. These responses gave clear evidence of understanding how the priest's approach to healing was dynamic and contextual and articulated with its modern setting.

Other candidates offered valid responses showing how the anti-witchcraft shrines represented legitimate forms of knowledge which provide healing for the Ghanaian migrants. Many candidates were aware of the author's critique of the view that witchcraft is ineffective and no longer relevant to the modern world and discussed this point, although modernity was addressed from a conceptual framework only in a few cases.

Some candidates referred to terms drawing from Bourdieu or Foucault with reference to knowledge and belief. Others introduced the concepts of socialization, identity and social control referring to kinship obligations and the migrant condition. These responses demonstrated an awareness of how individuals are embedded in social structures and cultural dynamics that shape identity, actions and meanings.

A growing number of candidates were able to recognize the viewpoint of the anthropologists and most of those who did referred to the distinction between “insider” and “outsider” perspectives, generally using the terms emic/etic but not always effectively. A great number of candidates challenged the validity of the author’s research because only one partial life history had been worked on by the author, failing to see that this was a mere extract of the original research. Some good responses analysed the authors’ emphasis on the local categories as illustrated in the analysis of the actors’ understandings of modernity.

### Question 3

Overall, candidates brought in relevant comparative ethnographies and developed well-structured comparisons. Though some approaches were quite simplistic and not fully discussed, others presented well-established arguments and were fully contextualized in terms of author, place and ethnographic context. Many candidates chose cases of migration to answer this question, mostly stressing similarities as to how these experienced human suffering.

Many ethnographies were drawn upon producing successful answers. Some of them include Bourgois’ *In Search of Respect*, June Nash’s *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us*, Leo Chaves’ *Shadowed Lives*, or Scheper-Hughes’ *Death without Weeping* focusing on the experience of social suffering in relation to economic inequalities; Reena Patel’s *Working the night shift*, Brennan’s ethnographic work on Dominican sex workers, and Abu-Lughod’s *Veiled Sentiments* addressing suffering and gender power dynamics in the context of globalization. Other popular choices included Lee’s materials on the Ju’hoansi, Chagnon’s work on the Yanomamö, Weiner’s Trobrianders, Allen’s *The Hold Life Has: Coca and Cultural Identity in an Andean Community* and Kraybill’s materials on the Amish, with reference to their belief systems on their approaches to sickness and healing.

The highest achieving answers were those that made good ethnographic choices where comparative points were clearly linked to the issues raised in the text and were fully contextualized in terms of author, place and ethnographic context. Most candidates successfully identified and presented a relevant ethnography in the comparison, though the lowest achieving responses did not always fully develop both similarities and differences. Some answers were more narrative than comparative in nature and structure.

### Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Most centres are now using recent ethnographic material and this is to be encouraged.
- Some centres seem to be using non-ethnographic documentary material, and while it is possible to use this material in an anthropological manner (*ie* critically, and with an understanding of the context of how the material was produced, *etc*) the evidence indicates that most candidates simply take this material at face value. Candidates need to be taught to apply relevant anthropological concepts to these texts in order to study them through an anthropological lens and to evaluate them in anthropological terms.

- In terms of examination skills, candidates should be reminded to read the questions carefully and structure their answers accordingly. Practice with previous paper 1 examination papers and markschemes are critical to developing this skill. Candidates should be encouraged to be explicit in demonstrating their understanding of concepts by, for example, defining the terms used.
- Teachers should help candidates clarify key terms within questions, to make sure that answers are relevant and closely focused; again, practice with previous texts should be helpful with this issue and candidates should be aware of the assessment criteria for this examination paper. Candidates need to make sure that they support any claim with anthropological evidence.
- In question 1, candidates need to use their own words rather than rely too heavily on quotations from the text. Candidates are expected to go beyond simple description and develop some generalizations that are relevant to the terms within 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. Criticality is to be encouraged, but this is not the same as criticizing the text and the research behind it. Up-to-date, high-quality peer-reviewed articles are the basis for the text and candidates should not make assumptions about the anthropologists' research or methodology, and any such claims should be supported by evidence from the text.
- In question 3, candidates should learn to present a comparative ethnography in terms of author, place, and historical context. Many candidates missed out on receiving more than 4 marks for this question because they seemed unaware of the need to present the ethnography in full detail to receive higher marks. Some candidates would only make a very generic reference to a group of people, without any identification in terms of place, author or historical context. 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.

## Higher level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 21	22 - 25	26 - 30	31 - 44

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

Some candidates either did not address, or only partially addressed, the questions on the examination and so produced essays which were not relevant or were only partially relevant. Some candidates produced scripts that did no more than describe, sometimes very briefly, the contents of the texts they had studied or the films they had watched without applying any anthropological understanding to the material. These candidates rarely demonstrated knowledge of anthropological concepts, core terms or theory. Not all candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge of three or more societies and a very small number wrote on only one society in their responses to the examination paper as a whole.

Some candidates failed to make clear which option they had chosen to answer on for the questions where alternatives were possible.

A few candidates answered questions which they seemed ill prepared for and did not show understanding of terms such as "social movement" or "indigenous". In some cases candidates produced what appeared to be a standard introduction covering a potted history of anthropological theory before beginning to answer the question itself and in some cases this meant that candidates did not start the relevant part of their answer until halfway through the response. Some candidates applied the "theoretical perspectives" to the societies instead of to the theories, stating, for example, that the societies themselves were "cohesion-centered". In other instances candidates misunderstood theoretical approaches to the study of culture such as structuralism and simply labelled any pair of opposites or a contrast of some kind "structuralist" and linked this to Lévi-Strauss.

Some of the lowest achieving candidates were only able to show very rudimentary knowledge of anthropological theory or concepts and sometimes there was little evidence of having studied the requisite number of ethnographies in sufficient detail to do well on the paper. A number of candidates were able to answer one question on the paper quite well but then struggled to find a second question that they could answer to the same standard.

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

The highest achieving candidates produced extremely good work presenting detailed levels of knowledge and skill in answering the questions. These candidates demonstrated high levels of critical thinking and were particularly adept at selecting only relevant anthropological theory and concepts which were applied to the ethnographies and used to evaluate the work of the anthropologists in a sophisticated and considered fashion. These candidates were also often able to make explicit comparative points both ethnographically and also theoretically and conceptually.

It seems that a wider range of ethnographies is now being taught and many of these are more recent works so candidates are being introduced to more contemporary ethnographic concerns, including ethical and methodological ones and this is a very positive development.

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

### Question 1

This was a very popular question with gender relations as the most popular option followed by systems of production. Weaknesses in responses tended to centre on the failure to define terms such as 'globalization' or 'gender relations' clearly; to consider any social change as de facto globalization without demonstrating how this was the case; to write about women rather than gender relations; or to write on one of the parts of the question but not both. Some candidates also had a tendency to write about globalization at the start of the question and then to ignore this for the remainder of the essay while they described a usually relevant ethnography. Higher achieving answers were able to work quite effectively with Appadurai's "flows and disjunctures" to frame their other materials. In both choices, some of the more effective responses made effective use of Patel's *Working the Night Shift*, Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*, Pun Ngai's *Made in China* and Mills' work on modernity in Thailand. On the whole, those choosing systems of production were more closely focused and here good use was also made of Mintz' *Sweetness and Power*. A few candidates also chose to write on Sanday's *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy* about the Minangkabau in Indonesia.

### Question 2

Candidates who were able to discuss political organization typically chose leadership and produced generally sound responses to this question. Leadership was a more popular option than egalitarianism although a few who chose to use Lee's work on the Ju/'hoansi were able to discuss his work appropriately in relation to the question. A few candidates used the term "bushman" and this is no longer an acceptable term to use when describing hunter-gatherers. Higher achieving answers came from candidates who were able to conceptualize and apply the key terms in the question to their chosen ethnographic material.

### Question 3

This question was another popular choice on the paper and well-answered by candidates who were able to describe agency – most often in relation to Bourdieu or notions of resistance and who were also clear about social class. Lower achieving responses dealt with forms of stratification that were not examples of "social class". Often such answers wrote as though women were members of one class and men another. Alternatively, such answers considered that members of an ethnic group were all also members of the same social class. Other essays dealt with how agency was constrained but not with how it was enabled. A popular ethnography to answer this question was Bourgois' *In Search of Respect*. Some candidates chose to write on caste rather than class and did not seem to realize that these terms are not synonyms.

### Question 4

This question produced answers that at one extreme were very good with sound understandings of ideology and detailed examples of kinship systems and, at the other extreme, some much lower achieving scripts with little or no understanding of ideology but usually some knowledge of kinship. Ethnographic material to answer this question ranged from the older work

on Tiwi society to some more contemporary work on transnational families or on matrilineal descent groups such as the Na/Mosuo. Candidates who were able to link ideology and kinship systems to myths, descent theories and sexual morality produced interesting essays. Some answers also drew on White's *Money Makes us Relatives: Womens' Labour in Urban Turkey* to good effect.

### Question 5

A very popular question and one which was well-answered when candidates were able to discuss power using appropriate theorists and address all parts of the question. There was some occasional theorization referencing Marx, Weber, Foucault or Scott, but usually this was not applied critically: some exceptions include responses that used Abu-Lughod's *Veiled Sentiments/Romance of Resistance*, Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* and *Made in China* by Pun Ngai. Bourgois' work on violence in El Salvador was also used to answer this question as was Nash's *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: dependency and exploitation in Bolivian tin mines* with a few candidates also choosing to write on Ortner's ethnography on Mount Everest, Kovats-Bernat's *Sleeping Rough in Port-Au-Prince*, Ward's *Gangsters without Borders: an ethnography of a Salvadorean Street Gang* or Hautzinger's *Violence in the City of Women: police and batterers in Bahia, Brazil*. Some candidates wrote only on power and not also on resistance or, alternatively wrote on more than one society or social group.

### Question 6

While there were many sound answers to this question a common failing was to focus on one of the options and to ignore 'economic organization' for much of the response. Responses were reasonably divided between the different options and while many candidates were able to produce descriptive responses, the higher achieving answers were able to discuss the ethnographies chosen to develop conceptually relevant points. Candidates used various ethnographies to answer this question including Macleod's *Tourism, Globalization and Cultural Change: an island community perspective* and Hewamanne's *Stitching Identities in a Free Trade Zone: gender and politics in Sri Lanka*.

### Question 7

Here a weakness was often the choice of a non-indigenous group or an indigenous population but not an indigenous movement. For social movements the failing was sometimes to consider that this meant some form of geographical migration. When candidates had studied, for example, the Arab Spring or the Occupy movement as social movements made possible in part by particular forms of modern technology and were also able to link this to relevant theories the answers were often good.

### Question 8

When modernity was clearly understood and also linked to one of the options in the question in a meaningful way the essays produced were often sound. The same applied to a smaller number of candidates who chose to write on changes in consumption practices. Of the three options sexuality was the least often chosen but when it was the ethnographies selected were usually on the Hijra in India or alternatively documentary films about same sex relations which



were described in some detail but rarely went beyond a superficial recounting of the documentary. Consumption and identity was a popular choice and one that was often well discussed. There were effective discussions based on Mills' *Contesting the Margins of Modernity: Women, Migration and Consumption in Thailand*, Hutzinger's *Violence in the City of Women: police and batterers in Bahia, Brazil* and Mintz's *Sweetness and Power*. Other ethnographic materials that were sometimes quite well examined included Lee's *The Ju'hoansi*, Hall's work on Sikh Girls in Leeds and Abu-Lughod's *Veiled Sentiments*.

### Question 9

A typical weakness in responses to this question was to write about transformations in marriage practices rather than in exchange systems. Candidates were usually able to describe changes in marriage or labour practices but linking these to transformations of exchange systems proved more challenging for many. Higher achieving answers used ethnographies detailing the transformation of local economies through migration or industrialization and then linked this to altered marriage practices or to the greater inclusion of women in the formal workforce depending on which option was chosen. Various ethnographies on the recent changes in Mosuo society because of tourism were sometimes used to answer this question.

### Question 10

This was not a particularly popular question and was, with a few exceptions, not well answered. Some candidates seemed to use the question to present their own moral position on the particular option chosen. Human rights were not well understood. For belief systems candidates chose to write on a variety of societies and these included Okely's *Traveller Gypsies*.

## 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 response. Candidates need to understand that concepts/key terms also require some discussion to be used effectively.
- The discussion of theory and theoretical approaches needs to be constantly placed in the context of specific ethnography and vice versa: making these links is essential to successful responses.
- When a question has options to choose from it is in the best interest of the candidate to make clear which option is chosen.
- 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 examination paper. Candidates who write from their own personal knowledge of social life and who have no relevant concepts or theories that they can use to evaluate their descriptions of society are very unlikely to do well.

- 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.
- 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.
- Teachers need to spend time in the classroom working with previous examination papers to make sure that candidates are familiar with which concepts/topics are relevant to which ethnographies studied and to make sure that candidates are choosing questions they have the knowledge and materials to answer effectively.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 19	20 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 44

### General comments

This examination session saw an overall achievement that was slightly lower than last year, which is disappointing. Although there continued to be some excellent work at the top end and some solid achievement in the middle, all examiners noted a drop in performance overall and across all assessment criteria, which is of some concern. More than has usually been the case, answers were not well focused in terms of the question, fewer candidates seemed able to define and discuss relevant concepts and in a worrying number of cases there was little if any ethnographic knowledge demonstrated. As noted last year, however potentially relevant, excessive use of documentaries, films and television programmes, as well as written materials that are not ethnographic, places candidates at a real disadvantage. As in past examination sessions, the key distinction between higher and lower achieving responses, continues to be the explicit knowledge and application of anthropological concepts to well-detailed **ethnographic** materials; without this responses continue to be more descriptive than analytical and sometimes not anthropological at all.

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

Beyond the concerns noted above, many candidates treated anthropological concepts – such as globalization, modernity or identity – in common sense terms and rarely made the connection between concepts and other descriptive materials explicit, which meant that explanations were often missing. Many candidates were apparently unfamiliar with key terms and concepts such as indigenous or social movements, or unable to distinguish between social class and social status or social relations, or gender relations and gender roles. Other key terms/areas identified as problematic included religion, ideology, political and economic organization, the transformation of exchange systems and transnational systems of production. In addition to knowledge of relevant concepts, another area of difficulty, as was the case last year, was explicit comparison between societies or between different groups within a society which was often missing or implicit at best.

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

Despite the concerns and difficulties noted, for almost every question there were always some responses that were excellent, clearly linking the core terms and concepts with well-detailed and relevant ethnographic materials, and discussing and analysing them critically and sometimes reflectively. Some of the highest achieving responses were on the impact of globalization on gender relations, power and resistance, and modernity and identity where candidates demonstrated their ability to think and write with and about anthropological questions, concepts and materials both analytically and quite thoughtfully.

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

### Question 1

This was the most popular question and although too many candidates took the meaning of globalization as self-evident, treating it very generally as if referring to almost any kind of change, there were some informed and thoughtful responses here, with those addressing either gender relations (the most frequent choice) or systems of production more successful than those addressing religion, which was generally not well done. In terms of globalization and gender relations, many candidates were able to write in detail and sometimes critically about Patel's *Working the Night Shift*, Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* and/or Pun Ngai's *Made in China*, all of which provided detailed materials that raised relevant questions. *Made in China* and *In Search of Respect* were also used quite effectively along with Mintz' *Sweetness and Power*, to examine globalization and systems of production which also produced some sound answers.

## Question 2

This question about political organization (which was rarely defined) was not often chosen but produced some strong responses, along with many more that were much lower achieving, quite often confusing egalitarianism with equality and making little explicit connection to political organization as such.

## Question 3

This was a relatively popular question and produced a wide range of responses, reflecting whether or not the candidates had a secure understanding of social class as something more than just social status or social relations – or sometimes any kind of social category such as gender or even football players or drug dealers – which was all too often not the case. This meant that often the ethnographic materials chosen were not relevant to a discussion of agency and social class. There was a better appreciation of agency, with more candidates demonstrating at least some understanding, however only a few actually examined both how it might be constrained and enabled, depending on context. Materials well used here included *In Search of Respect*, *Chang's Factory Girls* (but not an ethnographic account) and Foley's *Learning Capitalist Culture*.

## Question 4

This question was not popular, and few responses demonstrated any understanding of ideology although most were able to provide some relevant materials about kinship, with a few demonstrating detailed knowledge. Materials well used included Lee's *The Ju/'hoansi*, Kraybill's Amish materials, Weiner's *The Trobrianders* and Fernea's *Guests of the Sheik* (but not an ethnography).

## Question 5

This was the second most popular question and perhaps the most successful overall, with many candidates able to present relevant and quite well-detailed ethnographic materials from several different sources including Abu Lughod's *Veiled Sentiments*, *In Search of Respect* and Victor Rios' *Punished* about Latino and African American Youth in California, among others. A key limitation was that either the key terms of power and resistance were neither discussed nor defined, and/or that only one key term (power **or** resistance) was addressed thus not really answering the question.

## Question 6

This question was only occasionally well answered, with most responses simply using the term 'economic organization' as if self-evident. They were a little more successful when focused on migration (the most popular choice, often using Chavez' *Shadowed Lives* or *Factory Girls*) and sometimes tourism (Ortner's *Life and Death on Mount Everest* was sometimes quite well used here).

### Question 7

This question was only occasionally answered successfully as many candidates did not understand the key terms, “indigenous movements” or “social movements”, and interpreted them literally as some form of physical movement. And while “social movements” was more often understood, and candidates familiar with relevant materials (most often based on Manuel Castells’ *Networks of Outrage and Hope*), in most cases descriptions remained very general – for example with little attention to differences in terms of class, gender, ethnicity or race – and thus lacked much anthropological (as opposed to common sense) discussion or analysis.

### Question 8

This question quite often produced some sound responses, particularly in terms of modernity as “shaping” identity, but “success” reflects more the extent to which candidates were familiar with the details of relevant ethnography than any informed conceptualization of either concept. Some higher achieving responses on identity made good use of Mill’s work in Thailand and Norbeg-Hodges work in Ladahk, and on sexuality which was much less often chosen, candidates produced some quite interesting accounts using Gay y Blasco’s *Gypsies In Madrid*.

### Question 9

Very few candidates chose to answer this question and all who did had difficulty with it, suggesting very little understanding of what might be meant by “the transformation of exchange systems” although some were able to describe a range of marriage practices.

### Question 10

Although there were a few quite thoughtful and anthropologically-informed responses, most were not able to go beyond common sense knowledge and opinion in this question: moral systems were frequently confused with belief systems and the terms used interchangeably and randomly with little ethnographic support.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- In keeping with the concerns raised in the general comments, it seems critical to insist again hereon the central importance of using ethnography in teaching this course, as without it candidates are placed at a huge disadvantage. Documentaries and film, or newspaper and magazine articles cannot replace this, although it may be used to support or extend it in a variety of ways. The online curriculum centre (OCC) provides a useful place to start as it identifies many ethnographies and ethnographic materials used by IB teachers of Social and Cultural Anthropology.
- Candidates need to be helped to understand that anthropology uses a specialized language to think and write about the social and cultural worlds they study and the processes of transformation, which change those worlds every day. Thus any study of anthropology includes learning this language, recognizing the distinctions it makes and using it as precisely as possible in relation to ethnographic materials, where links need

to be made explicit and not just assumed. This needs to be a central component of every anthropology classroom and much more evident in every examination response. Critical examples here are the frequent conflation of ethnicity and race (almost never defined), as well as colonialization, globalization and modernity.

- Teachers also need to give candidates some carefully planned practice using IB examination papers, to develop the skills of close focus in terms of the questions along with systematic comparison and analysis (as well as legible handwriting which was a problem in a number of cases this examination session); candidates also need to be more familiar with the assessment criteria both for each essay (A, B and C) and the overall criteria (D and E).

## Higher level paper three

### Component grade boundaries

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

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

Higher level paper 3 requires a response that includes a balance between theory, theoretical perspectives, and ethnography, all of which must focus on the question. Lower achieving candidates found it challenging to cover all of these elements. The most obvious area of difficulty was knowledge of relevant theory and an ability to use this in response to a specific question. The responses showed a wide range of ability but the lowest achieving responses appeared not to have grasped theory or theoretical perspectives in any meaningful way.

Some candidates wrote convincingly about particular theories but understood them in a vacuum. In these cases, theories were explained but not applied to ethnography nor categorized in terms of theoretical perspectives. It appeared that definitions had been memorized rather than understood. Lower achieving responses showed confusion about the difference between theories and theoretical perspectives; they were used interchangeably. Perspectives such as conflict or structure were mistakenly understood to be theories in their own right.

Historical and comparative dimensions of theoretical discussions were often ignored, even in the more competent responses. Some higher achieving candidates seem to feel the need to add as much theory as possible, not all of it relevant, and this diverted attention from the focus of the question.

The use of non-anthropologists as theorists or ethnographers was problematic. Documentary films were in some instances used instead of long-term fieldwork accounts and reflective theory. This made for superficial discussion of both ethnography and theory.

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

Although in the minority, there were excellent responses that reached a level of sophistication approaching a university course in theoretical anthropology. Their central quality was a detailed and nuanced knowledge of specific theory and an ability to find relevant ways in which to apply theory to ethnographic accounts. The highest achieving responses also connected or compared theory and approaches, and placed them in historical perspective.

Even though it was sometimes strained, most candidates knew at least one theory and found ways to apply it to ethnography. Structuralism, functionalism, structural-functionalism were generally used well, as were Bourdieu, Marx and Mauss. Post-modernist analysis was attempted by some but only a few were successful.

Theoretical perspectives when used to categorize diverse theories were quite useful in discussing the parameters of theories themselves. Most candidates understood the perspectives but not necessarily how to use them in relation to theory.

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

### Question 1

In some cases, responses to this question centered on the advantages and disadvantages of a particularistic approach to ethnography rather than theory, which was ignored. This reflects a general tendency for lower achieving responses to focus on ethnography rather than theory and to give responses that are more suited to higher level paper 2. "The work of one anthropologist" can mean both ethnographers and theorists; some candidates may have misunderstood the question. "School of thought" should have been evident but was not always clear even for more competent responses.

Some higher achieving responses effectively used functionalism as a particularistic approach and structuralism as a universalistic approach. There were good responses that used Malinowski as theorist and ethnographer to analyse the Trobriand society from a particularistic, synchronic perspective. This was then compared to the ways in which a universalistic, (symbolic, interpretive) approach following Lévi-Strauss' binary oppositions might reveal other aspects of Trobriander life.

Marxian and Durkheimian analyses were used as universalistic approaches and in the higher achieving answers, also identified as being conflict and cohesion approaches. This gave room for some interesting comparison. The feminist universalistic approaches of Rosaldo and Ortner were used to illustrate gender relations in particular ethnographic examples.

## Question 2

This question was very popular, probably because there were many possibilities for candidates to connect one of these two perspectives to three aspects of social life. There was a wide range of responses.

Many of those choosing the diachronic perspective argued that the use of history was essential for in-depth analysis of society. These arguments were often limited to ethnography, not theory. Changes in a particular society caused by the introduction of technology connected to modernization was generally the theme. Of the three bullet points modernization was the least well understood and was often loosely connected only to technological changes. The higher achieving responses noted shifts in class and gender power relations in a diachronic analysis and competently connected structural impacts in relation to marginalization, modernization, or inequality.

Marxism was applied as a diachronic and conflict perspective, connecting it with perspectives such as universalistic and materialist. The most successful were those responses that demonstrated knowledge of Marxism in relation to conflict and either inequality or marginalization, with convincing ethnographic support. The conflict perspective was again this year confused with being a theory in its own right.

Candidates sometimes did not make clear which option was being answered and did not always define how they were using terms such as marginalization or inequality, which left the answers less focused and convincing.

## Question 3

This question was also a popular choice and was successful for those candidates who were able to connect the perspectives with theory. Bourdieu was applied well to ethnography, especially Bourgeois' *In Search of Respect*. Here unjust social structures were seen to be constraining for any agency these drug dealers might attempt, their narrow social and cultural capital limiting their success in mainstream society.

Some essays incorporated Marxism, which was used both as agency-centered and structure-centered perspectives. Some argued that marginalized sectors of a society can be encouraged to rise up against oppression but many overlooked the structural constraints of class, power and economic relations central to Marxian analysis.

## Question 4

Lower achieving answers linked idealist to idealism and so failed to grasp what was meant by an idealist theoretical perspective. The knowledge and application of symbolic anthropology were understood more or less well. Ideology was sometimes mentioned because it sounds a bit like ideal, but in other cases an argument was made for the links between symbols and ideological positions.

Ethnographic examples of ritual were often selected to demonstrate symbolic anthropology where some used Geertz's *Thick Description*. A deeper understanding of interpretive



approaches treating culture as texts to be understood through interpretation of their deep structure was only mastered by a few. Structuralism was used with more success, albeit at various levels of expertise. Some excellent responses used Foucault and postmodernism to describe the relativity found in some idealist perspectives.

### Question 5

This was not a popular question. There seemed to be some confusion as to what was meant by a school of thought in this question. When in doubt candidates merely described a theory and used it to discuss an ethnographic example.

Durkheim was used as a cohesion-centered perspective, functionalism with Malinowski and Radcliff-Brown as a synchronic perspective, and Marx, cultural ecology or culture materialism as a materialist perspective.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- The central challenge is learning to apply specific theory to ethnography while framing it in terms of theoretical perspectives. Theories should be taught as analytical tools to understand the human condition, and more specifically ethnography.
- A productive pedagogical approach could be to introduce theory in a systematic fashion at the beginning of the course and apply it consistently throughout the two years. This could defuse a potential unease with theory, and candidates could become competent and comfortable with thinking theory into all aspects of the course. Many candidates do not seem to know how to use theory and theoretical perspectives. Examination responses show that in some cases, theories have been memorized rather than understood, and thus lack critical analysis of theoretical knowledge with examples from ethnographies.
- It should be clear to candidates that theoretical perspectives such as conflict or structure are not theories but rather a way of classifying theory. They are not a substitute for the specifics of various theories, theoretical discussion and comparison, or schools of thought. Historical perspectives and the development of anthropological thought, should be incorporated in the course. This can facilitate the teaching of theory in that it gives a framework, a narrative, in which to understand theory and the development of anthropological ideas.
- Documentary films can be inspiring teaching tools but only as a supplement to accounts based on long-term fieldwork and reflective theory.