HL extension: theory

IB DP Social and Cultural Anthropology HL extension: theory full package

Anthropologists with an army

> Who an anthropologist works for, and who could be harmed, is always a question.

- 2007: the US Army's Human Terrain System placed social scientists with units in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- The AAA (2007): people could not freely refuse, and what they said might be used to target them.
- The programme ended in 2014.

What HL adds

Theory

Six theories, each asking different questions of the same material.

Used in Paper 2 and the internal assessment.

Ethics

One Paper 1 question, on one of two stimulus texts.

Consent, harm, anonymity, and who the research serves.

Theories of order and meaning

Theory	Key idea	Asks of a gift
functionalism (Malinowski)	every institution does a job that keeps society stable	what job does it do for the group?
structuralism (Levi-Strauss)	culture is built on pairs of opposites	giver and receiver, kin and stranger?
interpretive (Geertz)	culture is a web of meanings - thick description	what does it mean to the givers?

Theories of power and position

Theory	Key idea	Asks of a gift
practice theory (Bourdieu)	habits (habitus) - but people bend the rules	how is it used strategically?
political economy (after Marx)	unequal wealth and **power** shape culture	who gains, and who pays?
feminist (Weiner)	gender shapes social life and how it is studied	what do women give, and who noticed?

What Malinowski did not see

1. **Malinowski, 1915-1918** Wrote about men's kula; said little about women's wealth.
2. **Weiner, 1970s** Women exchange banana-leaf bundles and skirts after a death.
3. **Why the gap** As a man, Malinowski spent his time with men.

Decision

Theory and the researcher's position decide what gets seen.

Two theories, one material

1. **Mauss** The gift makes a debtor: explains exchanges between equals, carefully returned.
2. **Power reading** Gifts follow and reproduce rank: villagers give to cadres, unreturned.
3. **Judgement** Mauss fits gifts between equals; the **power** reading fits gifts up the hierarchy.

Decision

One theory rarely explains everything - say where each works and where it fails.

Five ethical principles

Principle	What it asks
do no harm	the people studied must not be put at risk
informed consent	people know what it is for, and are free to say no
anonymity and confidentiality	identities are protected
openness	who pays, and who will use the results?
responsibility to share	the research gives something back

A description that followed a people

> How a people is described can affect their lives.

- Napoleon Chagnon described the Yanomami of the Amazon as a "fierce people" (1968).
- Critics: the image was used against them in debates over their land.
- Darkness in El Dorado (2000) made more accusations; some were later rejected.

Worked plan: a company pays for the research

1. **Consent** Do the families know who will use the findings?
2. **Harm** Could they be used to sell to children or vulnerable people?
3. **Funding** The company owns the results - can the anthropologist publish freely?
4. **Judgement** Ethical if open, consented and anonymous - but be ready to refuse harmful work.

Check yourself

Your turn

Without notes,

A. Name the six theories and what each asks of a gift.
B. Read Yan's gifts with Mauss and with a power reading.
C. Explain what Weiner saw that Malinowski missed, and why.
D. Plan the ethics answer for the advertising study.