



**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY  
STANDARD LEVEL  
PAPER 1**

Thursday 12 November 2009 (afternoon)

1 hour

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the passage carefully and then answer all the questions.

*Texts in this examination paper have been edited: word additions or explanations are shown in square brackets [ ]; substantive deletions of text are indicated by ellipses in square brackets [...]; minor changes are not indicated.*

*Extract from Dickson-Gomez, J. 2003. “Growing up in guerrilla camps: the long-term impact of being a child soldier in El Salvador’s civil war”, **Ethos**, 30/4:327–356.*

Young adults, who fought with the guerrilla army as children, were interviewed to explore the social and economic effects of children’s active participation in the war that ended in 1992 in El Salvador. All those interviewed had family members who were assassinated when they were still children.

- 5 Many youths, describing why they joined the guerrilla, seem to reverse roles with the adults in their families, as they took on the responsibilities of protecting and providing for them. Samuel described why he joined the guerrilla saying: “we suffered from the economic situation; by joining I improved my family’s situation. They gave me clothes and corn, that’s why I joined.” Lucas stated, “we left when my dad was killed, I was 7, it shattered my mother.”
- 10 The interviewees portrayed themselves as children who had actively provided for adults. This contrasts with adults, who, when asked to describe their children’s experience of war, stated that they were too young to understand or quickly forgot about incidents. This insistence came despite many parents telling of children being present when they were captured by the army or of their separation from children when imprisoned.
- 15 Reports on the impact of armed conflict on children recommend reintegrating former child soldiers into community and family activities [...] However, in rural El Salvador, communities have not recovered from the war. In post-war reforms, education and land was provided to help former combatants rebuild lives. Yet, the education provided was insufficient, employment opportunities very limited and insecure, and the land parcels inadequate to support their families.
- 20 In the exaggerated discipline of guerrilla camps, male adolescents did not learn subsistence agriculture or the socially acceptable use of alcohol or tobacco (prohibited in the camps). They had not learned how to be adults in peace time, yet they could not return to the role of the child.
- 25 José, aged 20, provides an example of the complexity of reintegration for child soldiers. After demobilization<sup>1</sup>, he farmed land received by his grandfather, taught himself to read and became a health worker. He was also on the community school board and studied farming. José suffered from alcohol abuse. His family suffered, as he could not earn enough to feed them. In addition, within a matter of months of each other two women had children fathered by him. When a local NGO<sup>2</sup> heard about his problems, it employed him to provide agricultural training to others, but José almost lost this job because he would arrive late or miss work due to alcohol abuse.
- 30

The despair José felt because of his economic difficulties was intensified by his participation in the war and the disillusionment he felt that the social justice promised by the guerrillas had not been achieved. He also identified strongly with his fellow [child-soldiers] who were imprisoned  
35 or in gangs. Pessimism learned as a young soldier, believing he would not live to adulthood, was replaced by feelings of powerlessness to improve his present circumstances. His opportunities were limited, yet he struggled against his alcoholism and poverty, and remained a community leader.

Elva, 25, was another example of the difficulties of reintegration. She took classes after  
40 demobilization and received her high school diploma. She organized health workers for a small salary from an NGO, was elected president of the community's board of directors and had five children.

It was her leadership qualities, however, that made her a target for criticism and abandonment. Community members accused her of stealing and having affairs, saying she dominated  
45 her husband. The frustration Elva felt was compounded by the fact that her husband had no income and she was responsible for her children's well-being. However, being responsible and earning money made her more vulnerable to abandonment. Her husband, convinced she was having an affair, left her. She also lost her salary because the NGO decided that health was not a priority [...]

50 Elva felt betrayed by her husband and the NGO and overwhelmed by economic difficulties yet did her best to provide for her children and continue her political activities.

In rural El Salvador it is clear that communities have not recovered from the war.

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<sup>1</sup> Demobilization is the act of disbanding or discharging troops.

<sup>2</sup> NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) are organizations, whose staff are not employed by a government, that provide financial and technical help to developing countries in order to promote economic development, protection of the environment, or some other objective.

1. How did the war change the roles of children in El Salvador? *[6 marks]*
  
2. To what extent are the problems that young adults face after demobilization the result of the war? *[6 marks]*
  
3. Compare the disruptions of war in El Salvador with the way in which change has affected **one** group that you have studied in detail. *[8 marks]*