

MARKSCHEME

November 2004

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Standard Level

Paper 1

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1. Explain how veiling has changed over time in Java.***[6 marks]***

The simplest way to answer this question consists in pointing out that the veil in contemporary Java has a different demographic distribution, material appearance, and symbolic value than prior to the 1980s. In fact, veiling today seems to have little to do with former veiling practices. In the past, only a few older women wore it, particularly returnees from the pilgrimage to the Muslim holy city, while today it is young educated women who don the veil. Even though they constitute a minority, they constitute a more conspicuous minority than the veiled women of the past (being, for example, the object of moral anxiety on the part of the rest of the population). The veil that old women wore was a body-hugging, rather revealing garment that included locally specific elements such as batik and a sarong and in which a head-covering was optional, whereas the jilbab worn today is a loose full-body tunic that reveals little other than the hands and the face. We can surmise from the passage that women prior to the 1980s wore the veil to signal their old-fashioned religiosity and their having accomplished the trip to Mecca, whereas the contemporary jilbab symbolises modernity, sophistication, and an orientation towards the future.

This last contrast may be stated in a different way, by remarking that the jilbab could not have arisen in its current form without decades of economic progress and of the developments concomitant of this progress, such as the wider gap between the rich and the poor, the increased consumerism, and the social breakdown that is part and parcel of capitalism in the eyes of some. The jilbab is therefore an innovation because it is the temporal and logical consequence of economic, social, and political developments that have taken place in Indonesia since the 1960s.

Candidates may present these arguments in a variety of ways. Well developed, clearly organized, and analytically couched answers that utilise the candidate's own wording and link the arguments explicitly to the question will receive the best marks.

2. **Explain why wearing the jilbab is not just a religious act but also the affirmation of a social and political position.** **[6 marks]**

This question is designed to test candidates' understanding that symbols may have a multiplicity of meaning at different levels of analysis. As is well-known and indicated in the passage, veiling is prescribed for Muslim women by the Qur'an. However, Muslims within the same society may disagree about when and for what purpose the holy book prescribes veiling, as is the case of Java. So veiling is already a religious symbol of a contested nature. The jilbab is a particular form of veiling, one that many people in mainstream Javanese society consider extreme and inappropriate to modern life, while the young middle-class women who wear it consider it to be a statement of a modern and future-orientated religiosity, an affirmation of the possibility that Islam provides an alternative modernity to what they see as the corrupted, ostentatious, greed-dominated, and Western-influenced forms of modernity that dominates contemporary Javanese society. The jilbab highlights discipline and morality, and the possibility that the West (and those outside of the West who emulate it) does not have a monopoly on how modernity should be constructed and implemented. This symbolic assertion is the reason why the jilbab is a religious, symbolic, and political statement all at once. Particularly astute responses may include that the jilbab can also be seen as a sign of middle-class status and education for those who wear it.

Candidates who develop a version of this answer presented in their own words, organize their answer logically and clearly, approach the task of answering the question in an analytic fashion, and link explicitly their arguments to the question will gain good marks on this question.

3. **Choose an object, activity, or symbol found in another society you have studied that refers to modernity, progress or globalization. Compare it with the jilbab in contemporary Java.** **[8 marks]**

While the relationship of the jilbab in Java to mainstream conceptualizations of modernity is an agonistic one, the comparative case study need not exhibit the same characteristic. The important aspect of both the standard and target of comparison that candidates must foreground are their local meanings, *i.e.* the attitudes and symbolic values that people bring to them. A wide range of case studies may form the target of comparison for this comparative question. Answers must be organized in a clear manner and highlight similarities, differences and generalizations. To receive more than **[4 marks]**, candidates must explicitly structure their answers as comparisons, and clearly situate the comparative case in terms of group, place, author, and historical context.
