



MARKSCHEME

November 2007

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Standard Level

Paper 1

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1. Why is sex the most significant aspect of a person at birth and death for the Vezo? [6 marks]

In brief, the answer to this question is that at birth a baby's sex may be known but as it is not capable of "doing" anything in a socially meaningful way its gender cannot be known. This reflects the Vezo understanding that sex is a biological given while gender identity is culturally constructed in the behaviour and practices of active social agents who choose, through their work and, more particularly, their "ways of doing" their gender identity. Again, at death, as at birth, an individual's capacity to act in a socially meaningful way ceases and with it the gendered identity built up over a life of doing and being also ceases to exist. What remains is a sexed body to be buried in a tomb and, one assumes, ritually transformed into an anonymised, gender-free ancestor.

Candidates may develop their answer drawing on a range of descriptive elements from the text. The difference between a poor and a good answer to the question is not in how many examples are selected but in the capacity of the candidate to develop a thoughtful and reasoned answer to the question.

2. How does a boy become a *sarin'ampela*? [6 marks]

This question requires candidates to make the distinction between the work people do and the gendered ways of doing among the Vezo. Candidates should be clear that boys become *sarin'ampela* by learning to do things in the ways in which girls and women do things, *i.e.* they carry water on their heads and not on their shoulders as men do, they do *mitohake* as women, but men never do *etc.* While ways of doing are clear markers of gender identity among the Vezo jobs are not. Firstly, in different localities Vezo have different ideas of what constitutes a woman's or a man's job. Secondly, even with this knowledge it is possible for a man to do a woman's job or vice versa without bringing the gender identity of the person performing the opposite sex labour into question.

Better answers may develop the issue of agency and also how agency is both enabled and constrained within Vezo society because of shared norms and understandings of gendered behaviour. Good answers should also be able to justify examples chosen from the text in the context of a reasoned and coherent answer to the question.

3. Compare Vezo understandings of gender with those found in a society you have studied in detail. [8 marks]

The question requires candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the social and constructed nature of gender and its performance within contexts which will, inevitably, both allow for certain practices and simultaneously constrain others. It also requires candidates to demonstrate their awareness that the way in which gender is understood and its social enactment vary across societies in complex and subtle ways. Gendered ways of being are performed, negotiated and transformed in social interactions with others. They are not everywhere understood as essentialized givens. It may be possible for candidates to show that while members of a particular society consider gender to be an essentialised given, anthropologists may be able to demonstrate the socially constructed nature of gender.

Candidates may, but do not need, to select a group that directly compares with the *sarin'ampela* of the passage, nor do they need to focus on the life cycle as an organising frame for their answer.

However, in order to obtain full marks answers must be organised in a clear manner, highlighting similarities, differences and generalizations.

Candidates must situate the comparative case in terms of group, place, author, and ethnographic context to gain more than [4 marks].
