



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

Monday 15 November 2004 (afternoon)

1 hour

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 three dots in square brackets [...]; minor changes are not indicated.

*Extract from Suzanne Brenner, “Reconstructing Self and Society: Javanese Muslim Women and ‘the Veil’”, **American Ethnologist** 23:673-697 (1996) (pp. 673-682).*

Since the later 1970s the phenomenon that is often called “the Islamic resurgence” has had a profound impact on religion, politics, and society throughout the Islamic world and beyond. One of the most conspicuous symbols of this powerful and resilient movement is the style of women’s clothing that is frequently called “the veil.” [...]

- 5 In many parts of Java, [the most populous island of Indonesia,] veiling was limited until quite recently, even though most Javanese are Muslim. Covering the head with a light scarf or woven cap was generally reserved in the past for a small number of older, devout Muslim women, particularly those who had already made the pilgrimage to Mecca. The head covering, if worn at all, typically accompanied a tightly wrapped batik¹ sarong² and a close-fitting blouse, often
10 low-cut and of sheer material. This style of dress tended to accentuate rather than hide the shape of a woman’s body. [...]

- By the end of the 1980s, a new, loose style of Islamic clothing called *jilbab*, covering the head and body completely except for the face and hands, had become a familiar sight. Javanese women who dress in this style, however, remain a distinct minority of the population, most
15 visible around university campuses and at Islamic schools. Some Muslims oppose the practice of veiling strongly, arguing that the Qur’an calls for this covering style of dress only for prayer. [...] Wearing jilbab is far more of a disadvantage than an advantage for those seeking secular types of employment. Some employers will not hire a woman who veils, or will insist as a condition of employment that she not wear jilbab in the workplace. Wearing jilbab may also
20 interfere with a woman’s career advancement. [...] Many young women who adopt this style of dress do it against the explicit wishes of their parents and at the risk of becoming the butt of criticism and gossip among friends, neighbors, and relatives. [...]

- Given the social, psychological, and economic disadvantages that a woman who wears jilbab may encounter, one must ask what motivates Javanese women to veil and why the practice is
25 becoming more popular, especially among young, educated women in the middle classes. [...]

- The veiling movement must be understood within the social and political contexts of contemporary Indonesia. [Since the mid-1960s], the Indonesian government has actively pursued a policy of economic development and insertion into the global capitalist economy, introducing an era of industrialization, urbanization, and economic growth that has been
30 accompanied by an increasingly skewed distribution of wealth, a booming urban consumer culture, and an increase in the population’s education levels. [...] Among the middle classes, responses to these changes have been mixed. While there is considerable support for the regime, there is also frustration. Growing cynicism toward the blatant opportunism of government functionaries and resentment of the elite’s unabashed displays of wealth and power
35 fuel the sense that social justice is not being adequately served by the present system. Another source of disenchantment for some people is their perceptions that modernization has triggered moral decline and social disintegration.

¹ Batik – type of traditional patterned textile

² Sarong – skirt-like garment worn tucked around the waist

40 Some see Islam as the key to maintaining an ethical and disciplined society in the midst of
modernization and the breakdown of the older social order. The younger generation has been
at the forefront of this growth of Islamic practice and devotion. [...] They assert the viability
and dynamism of Islam as a basis for living in the modern world. They challenge the notion
that the only way to be modern is to accept a Western model of modernity. [...] This desire
45 to be modern has had a noticeable impact on the veiling movement. Some people who
promote the wearing of jilbab stress the need to be fashionable in clothing style, not for
fashion's sake but in order to motivate oneself to veil. Keeping Islamic clothing "up-to-date"
reinforces the idea that the Islamic movement has a modern, future-orientated agenda rather
than a conservative, stagnant program looking only to the past for inspiration.

1. Explain why we must understand the meaning of the veil in contemporary Java
in terms of the local context. *[6 marks]*

 2. Discuss why the decision made by young Javanese women to wear the veil is
an act of agency. *[6 marks]*

 3. Choose a social group you have studied that has adapted to the forces of
modernity, globalization or industrialization. Compare these responses to that
of veiled young Javanese women. *[8 marks]*
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