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# Understanding Arabs

(projection – short version)

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# The Arab world includes 4 regions...

North Africa (5 countries)

The Middle East (5)

The Gulf states (7)

The African states (5)



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# For Arabs, public is not private

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- The attitude of Arabs is rarely the same in **public** and in **private**
- The difference between the public and the private sphere is the difference between **showing** and **being**
- **Men** are mainly responsible for the public sphere (**outside**)
- **Women** are mainly responsible for the private sphere (**inside**), but it is changing (mainly in Saudi Arabia)

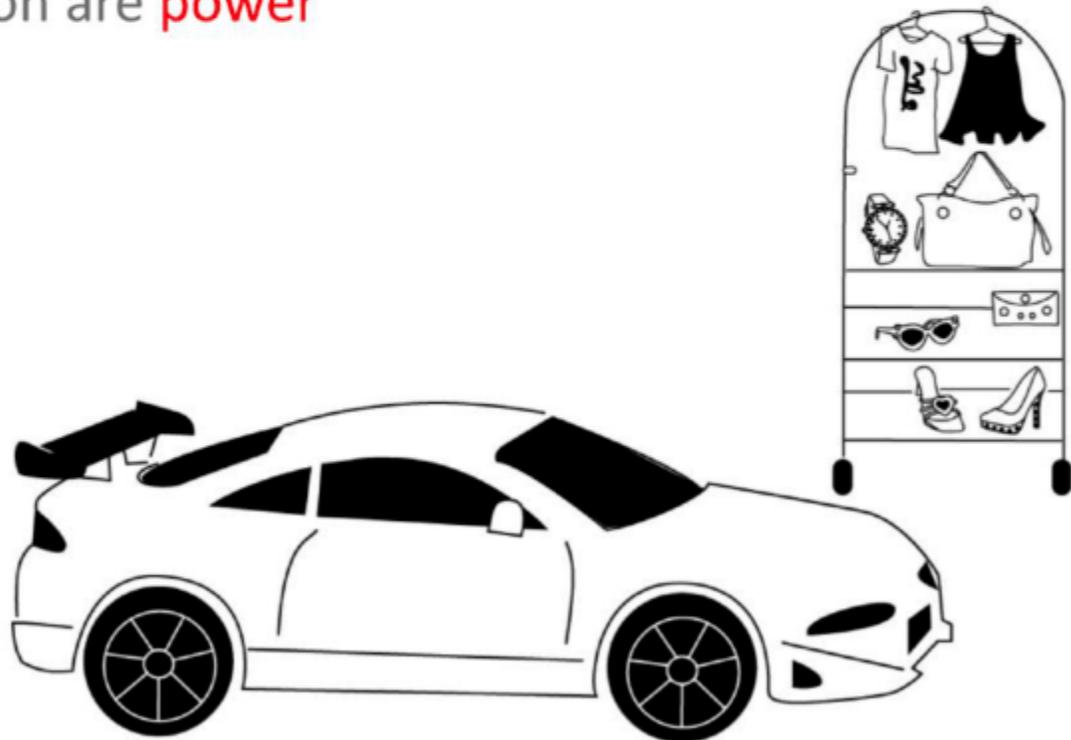
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# Showing-off is very important...

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Displaying wealth inspires confidence  
Confidence attracts business and social position  
Business and social position are **power**

- Car
- House
- Dress
- Women's jewels
  
- Standard of living
- «Servants»
- Behaviour



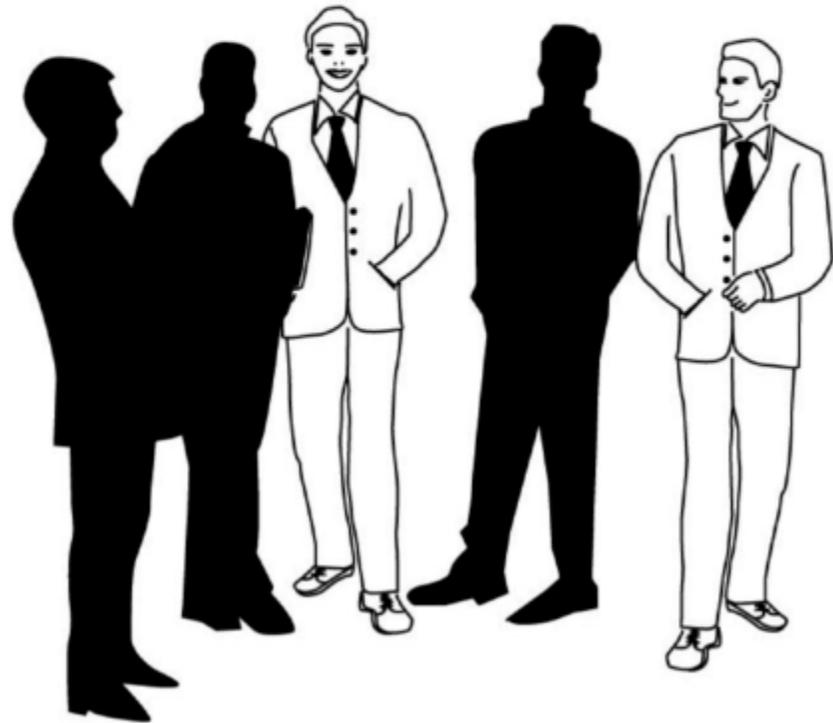
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# Men take care of the public sphere...

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**Men's** responsibilities traditionally are:

- **Protection** of the group  
he belongs to (family, clan, etc.)
- Their place in the society (**image**)
- Provider of money and has to  
assume all **financial** issues



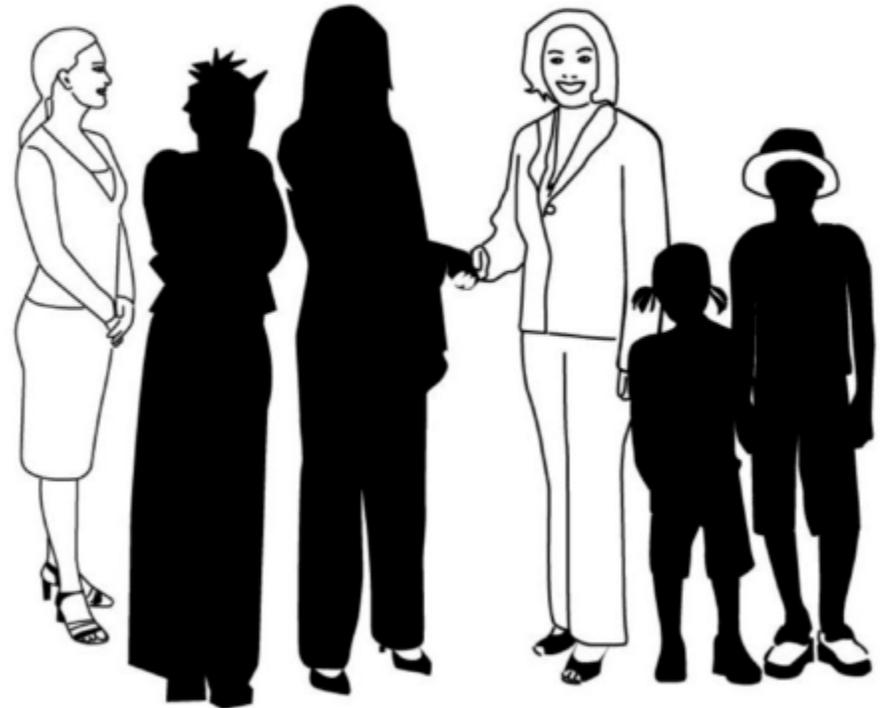
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# ...while women look for the private sphere

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Women's responsibilities are:

- **Relations** between the people of the same group and with the members of other groups
- **Education** and **development** of the children (she prepares them for their future roles)
- **Private** matters within the group (sicknesses, weddings, etc.)
- In general, women are responsible for **harmony** within the group



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# Western and Arab women

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## Western

- Greater freedom and equality
- Less respect
- At home: same rights as outside
- Try to convince and prove their competence

## Arab world

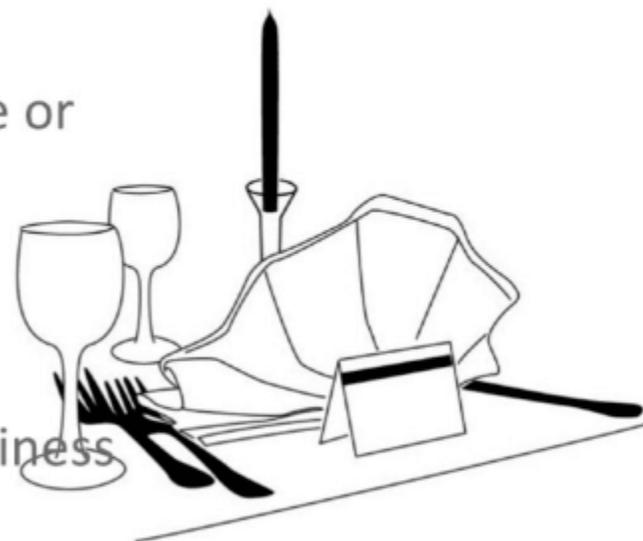
- Less freedom, even if becoming better
- Greater respect
- At home: almost absolute power
- Try to please and seduce

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# Receptions are key moments for networking

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- Most valuable means for maintaining a **NETWORK**
- Style differs from region to region
- Depend on the place (public or private, house or flat, etc)
- Depend on the size of the group invited
- Depend on the purpose of the invitation (business or entertainment)
- It is mainly woman's responsibility to receive



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# Proper timing for arrival

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- It is impolite to arrive on time
- But it is even more impolite to arrive too late
- The more important you are, the later you arrive
- It is good to arrive with a gift in your hand, but not flowers (have to be sent earlier)
- A gift will rarely be opened on the spot, so it is customary to leave a small note to show who offered the gift



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# After receptions...

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- The guests should call to thank (normally the woman's role)
- The host calls to thank for the gift
- Those chats are essential because they allow you to continue a conversation but in "private"
- You often get more infos during those calls than during the reception (difference of public vs private)



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# Gifts for a reception

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- Gifts are important. Without them you could be labelled as "stingy" (one of the worst faults for Arabs)
- A gift should have a "correct" value, representing the value of the host as well as the guest
- A personalized gift shows that you know the person well and that you care about her



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# Men and women have complementary roles...

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- After having established new relations, men and women “exchange” information about the newcomer
- Often it is the woman’s remarks that weigh more in the evaluation of the character of the newcomer
- But in the end, it is still the man who decides to collaborate or not with this person



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## ...and both should talk about the “right” things.

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- The objective of any conversation or relation is strengthening the network
- Men must strengthen the public image
- Men discuss politics, business, the military
- Women should discover more about the private sphere of the others
- Women talk about private issues, “secret” relations, under-the-table issues

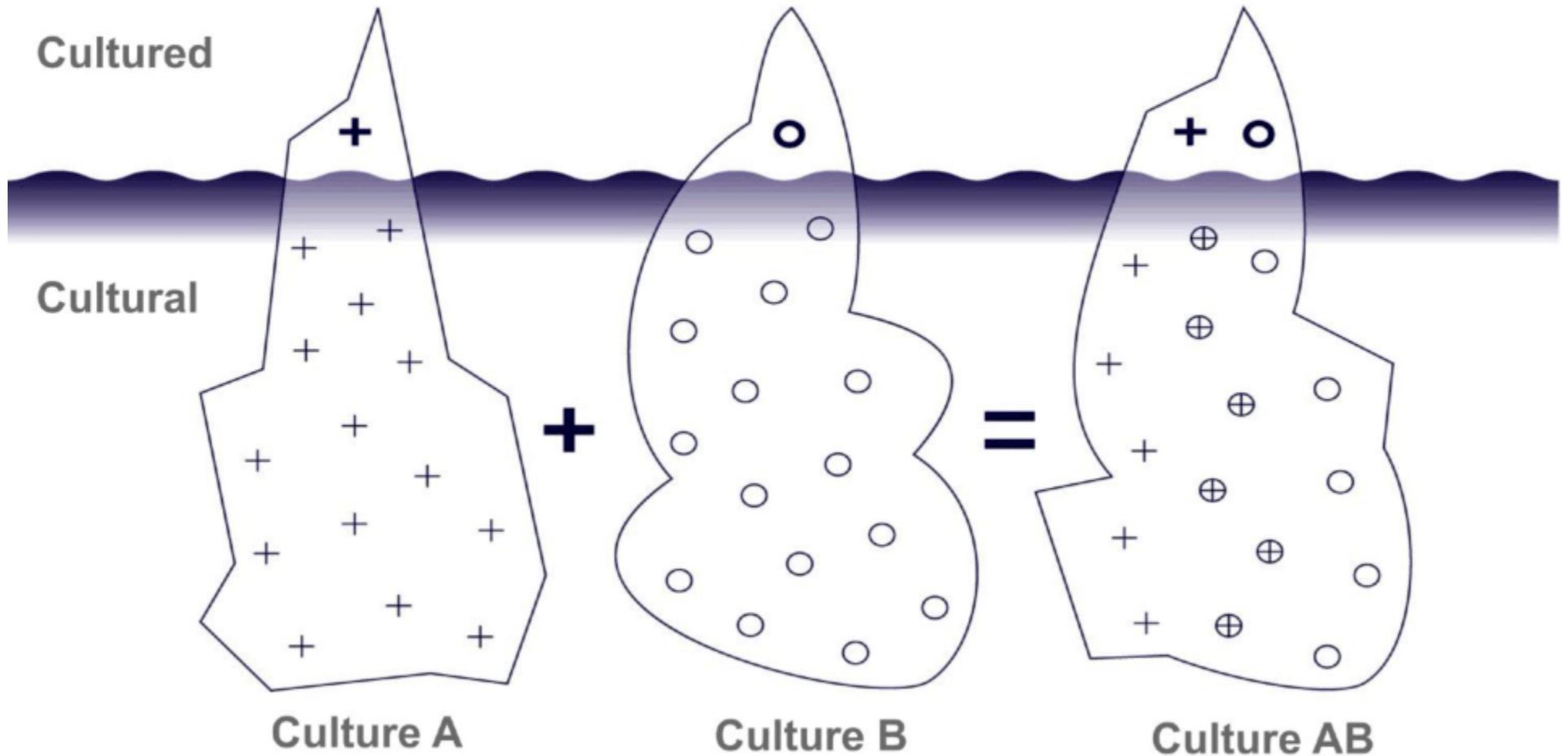
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# Professional gifts carry messages

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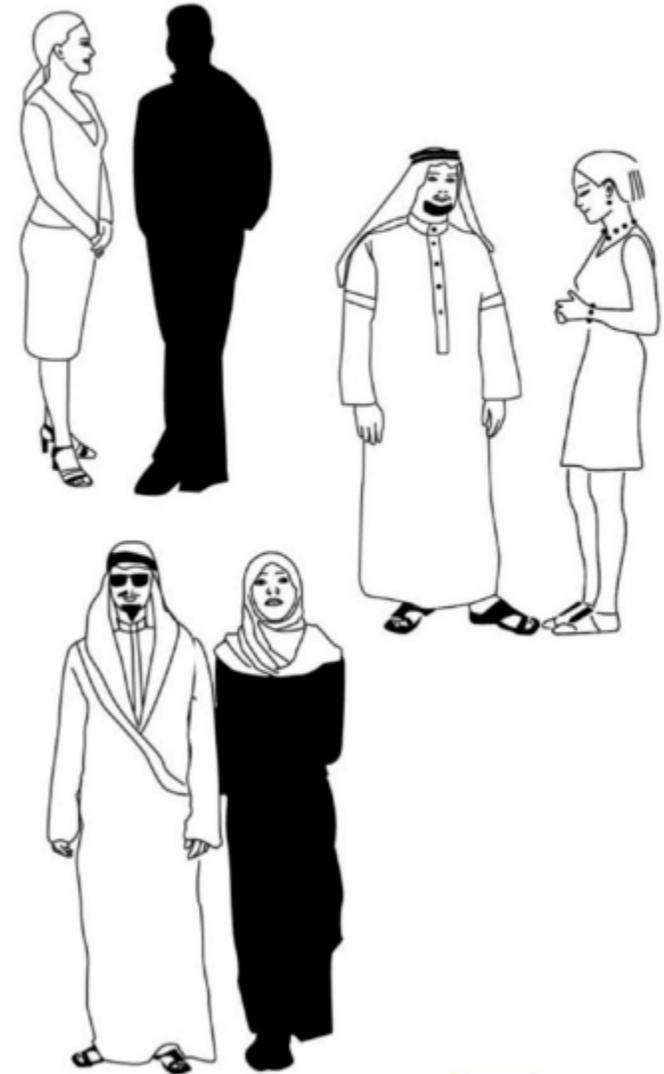
- They are “strategic” and bear a particular value or message
- They show the importance of the relation between two partners
- They can be for an introduction or a thank-you
- They may represent the company or the value of the company

# Intercultural hybridization



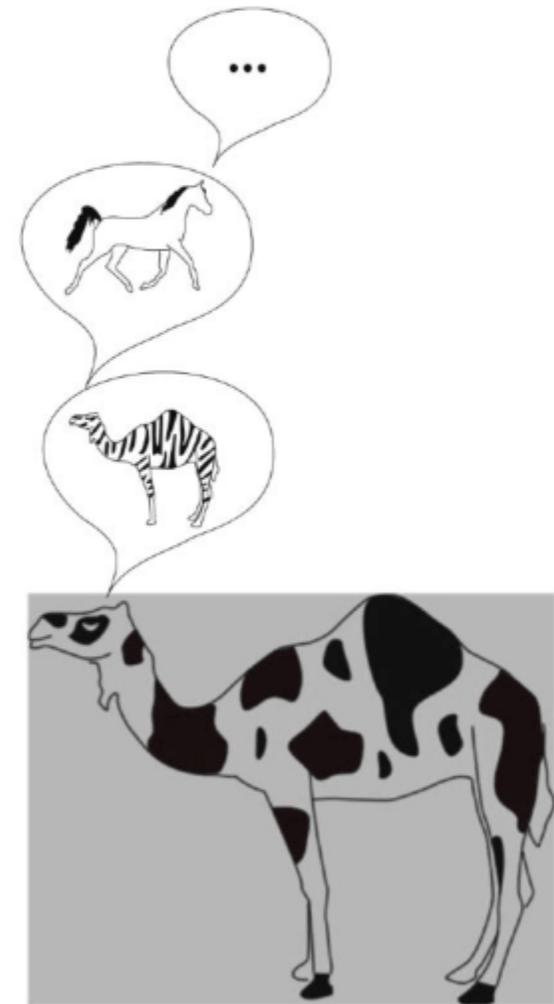
# Hybrids have evolved...

- Pure traditional Arabs are very rare nowadays
- The young generation could be divided into 3 categories:
  1. Those educated abroad
  2. Those with a mixed education (local and foreign)
  3. Those with a pure local education



# Behavior of hybrids

- Hybrids are wonderful, knowledgeable, adaptable people
- But the extent and impact of hybridization varies with each person
- Hybridization mostly affects the behavioral level (the global)
- Emotions and basic assumptions never hybridize

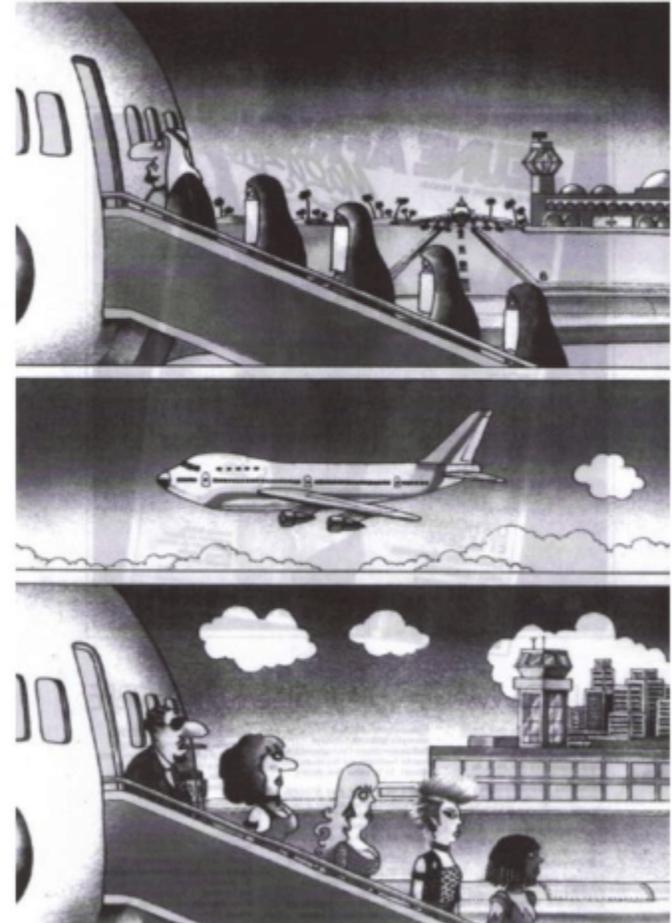


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## ...and have many facets

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- Arab « hybrids » (those you meet the most frequently) can play very much on their different « backgrounds » and « belonging »
- « Hybrids » may react as Westerners or as Arabs or as a combination of both.



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# Last but not least, **loyalty comes first!**

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- Loyalty to the group you belong to is the most important value
- Therefore you may sometimes feel that friendship is less important
- The objective of networking and relations is to strengthen the solidarity and power of the group

