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The Bro Code Of Saudi Culture: 1142 Bite-Sized Explanations Of How The Human Body Acts In Arabia

The Bro Code of Saudi Culture

Abdul Al Lily



Synopsis

Every culture is governed by an internal code of conduct, and this publication offers the first written code of Saudi culture. The Saudi way of being has long been an oral tradition passed merely verbally from one generation to the next, despite its power to regulate every aspect of public and private lives. Most Saudi norms and values have long been unwritten and only orally communicated among Saudis. As a result, visitors to Saudi Arabia have been unable to read about Saudi norms and values. For this reason, this book spells out these norms and values in bold print, recording the Saudi code of conduct and displaying it in a published format. It displays 1142 bite-sized (often previously unrecorded) explanations of how the human body acts in Saudi Arabia. It seeks to cover everything from top to bottom; the face, cheek, hair, eyes, skin, brain, mouth, ears, nose, stomach, waist, heart, genitals and extremities. It is the product of close observations of everyday activities and around 2,000 interviews with nationals and residents, over the past five years. This book is the first to talk about Saudi culture in a purely descriptive (and thus non-judgemental and unbiased) manner. It is the first to present Saudi values and norms in the form of a bullet-pointed list and in bite-sized explanations. Most explanations can be read independently of any other explanations. The way the content is focussed on bite-sized statements helps put across clearly and simply the information. The book is the first to be written by a male Saudi who was born and raised in Saudi Arabia, who is still based in this country, who is a former officially-recognised imam and who comes from a working-class family—yet he is a backpacker, is married to a non-Saudi, non-Arab and non-Muslim European, has studied in Oxford, has published with the largest international academic publishers, has written in different languages and hence has the ability to communicate with and convey information to foreign mentalities. Publications about Saudi culture tend to be too serious; however, this book is not meant to be taken too seriously. The book is intended to be entertaining and humorous (and, surely, informative). It tries to avoid the use of the words “religion” and “politics” because of two main reasons. First, these two words are sensitive and, more importantly, serious. Second, the book is purely cultural and written entirely for the sake of cultural exchange (not for religious or political matters). This book is unbiased, exposing both negative and positive practices in Saudi society. Many Saudi readers of the book have criticised the author for not trying to invite (through and in the book) non-Muslim readers to Islam. Yet, this book is written purely for the sake of international communication (not for religious reasons), with neither religious nor political agendas.

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Customer Reviews

I have lived in Saudi Arabia for over 20 years. One frequent activity that I undertake is giving new employees, expatriates in particular, an introduction to the Saudi culture. This book definitely makes life easier in that sense. It also enlightened me on some additional facts (and myths that existed and I wasn't aware of!). I like the 'Interval' sections which shows the view of locals on foreign cultures as well, giving you further insight to their thought process. Thank you for this handy resource.

Interesting read. You can read a few pages at a time. Listing of DO's & DON't's is more than my western mind can handle.

I am a Saudi woman and an academic. What I like the most about this book is that it reveals sensitive topics that are not presented in usual narratives, and at the same time are based on real data from Saudis not based on assumptions. I like that the author is an insider who can present to both insiders and outsiders audience.

I am a Saudi studying in America, and eventually I have found a good book that I can give as a present to my non-Saudi friends and supervisor... Surely informative and engaging...

It's a very well written piece... I wish I could've read something like this when I went to live and work there... It would've made acclimating to the culture easier for the first year of the five years that I spent there..So, I give it a five.Thanks

An excellent 'under the hood' look at the social nuances of Saudi culture. As a scholar who deals with the politics of the Kingdom I found this a very illuminating examination of many of the peculiar practices I've encountered during fieldwork in the country.Lily's work is rigorous in detailing the various prevalent social, religious and cultural attitudes and practices amongst Saudi society today. Although the work itself is somewhat decoupage in nature, this reflects its breakthrough nature and the sheer degree of uncharted cultural complexity it must tackle. Highly recommended for sociologists, political scientists and area specialists wishing to unpack some of the Saudi puzzle, or just anyone who wants to understand a society that often appears extremely alien and confusing from the outside.For those wishing to get the most out of this read, I suggest reading it in tandem with a solid history of the country, such as those by Vassiliev of al-Rasheed.

This book is an entertaining and informational look into Saudi culture. I especially enjoyed the style of writing, which is very straight forward, and at times, surprisingly quite funny. Its very useful for anyone planning to live and/or work in Saudi, or for someone who would like to perhaps write about Saudi in a fictional, but accurate way. There are useful tidbits to know if you find yourself in some unanticipated or baffling situations in Saudi. As a foreigner living in a kind of medical city in Saudi, I hadn't expected how friendly the atmosphere would be, particularly in the hospitals, as opposed to Saudi at large. It makes sense though, as there are no religious police roaming the hallways of hospitals, thus allowing for quite a bit of flirtation. I didn't notice it at first, but after a few weeks, it became apparent that not everyone is discussing work related issues in the corridors. People greet and speak to each other much more freely than any other place I've been to outside of diplomatic quarters and compounds. The book reaffirmed my feelings about this aspect of Saudi culture. There are numerous insights to gain from picking up this highly detailed and accurate book.

The Bro Code of Saudi Culture: 714 Rules on how the Human Body should Act Inside Arabia5.0 out

of 5 stars... work in Saudi Arabia and this book is a wonderful, easy to readBy Michael Collins, author of *St George and the Dragons: The Making of English Identity*, 29 December 2016Format: Kindle 4th edn 2016Having lived and worked in Saudi Arabia I can heartily recommend this ground-breaking easy-to-read presentation of the role of tradition, especially gender segregation, on everyday life in the country. Abdul Al Lily, an Oxford-trained sociologist, himself a Saudi living and teaching there, enables us, especially the many who, like me, do not speak or read Arabic, to understand in detail how tradition tenaciously shapes Saudi culture.Based on qualitative research with 2,000 respondents (although the sub-cohorts for some questionnaires are rather small) the author poses bold questions about how Saudi men and women respond to Western liberal values and how they evade restrictions on their experiences of other cultures through the use, for example, of headphones and internet apps.Because the research is presented in bite-sized sections which are listed in the Contents the book can be easily used as a guide to social, religious and cultural attitudes and practices on such subjects (among many) as marriage, gender roles, family relations, eroticism (or lack of it) and the frustrations experienced, if not often expressed to strangers, among Saudi young people. The author leaves the political role of tradition as the subject for further study.5.0 out of 5 starsInsightfulThe Bro Code of Saudi Culture is essential reading for specialists and non-specialists interacting with Saudis and for Saudis who wish to reflect on much they may have taken for granted about their culture. The appendices propose a theory of tradition as the basis for further research. This, together with the body of the book, comprises an outstanding contribution to the study and understanding of Saudi society.

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