

# Action sheet A

## How much do you value clothes?

People wear clothes every day. Some people think carefully about why they wear something. Please check off what applies to you in the table!



### WHAT DO CLOTHES MEAN TO YOU PERSONALLY?

Completely agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Don't agree	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Expressing my personality
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Showing affiliation with a group
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Expressing moral ideas
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Showing affiliation with a social class
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Emphasising femininity or masculinity
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Protesting against something
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	My religion
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Showing my position in society
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Differentiation from "others"
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Preserving traditions
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Showing my character
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Freedom
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Being modern
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Making an impression
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Age
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Political opinion
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Having fun trying something new

Questions for a shared reflection in the group:

- Have you ever thought about the items in this table? If so, on which occasion or for what reason?
- Do these items determine the selection of clothes in your wardrobe?
- Are these items important for you when you see, talk to or meet other people? If so, how do these items influence your life?

# Info sheet

## Function of clothes

### CLOTHES AS COMMUNICATION?

People try to understand everything they perceive. If someone is wearing a raincoat, you pay attention to the weather: does it look like rain? This shows that clothes are “read” like signs. It’s a form of unspoken communication: if someone is wearing a suit, this person is probably on the way to an event, works at a bank, or similar. But he or she isn’t likely to work as a carpenter. The function of clothes is to cover, retain heat and protect. There are also other functions, e.g. clothes can be worn to make a statement. This also includes everything else visible about the body: hairstyles, beards, accessories, etc. There are categorically two effects of communicating with clothes. Imitation: Someone who wears the same things as others shows that she/he belongs to a group, e.g. bankers with their suits. Differentiation: The elegant suit material shows precisely that the person is not a carpenter.

### DIFFERENTIATION AND AFFILIATION

Clothes communicate through imitation and differentiation. They show affiliation with one group and a distinction from another. But does this also work to make a particular statement? Yes, under one condition: the more complicated the statement, the more knowledge is needed by the person intended to “read” the clothing style. One of the main differences in clothing is that between men and women. This was cracked open in the 20th century. Women’s fashion took on elements of men’s fashion. Attempts to introduce skirts for men failed, however. One of the designers who revolutionised women’s fashion was Yves Saint Laurent. Born in Algeria, he spent a lot of time in Marrakesh/Morocco from 1966 on. Later he always stated that the clothes and art there inspired him.



# Info sheet

## Mr. Erbil

### MR. EBIL



In Erbil, in northern Iraq, one group gained worldwide fame with their fashion. The group is called Mr. Erbil and considers itself Iraq's first "Gentlemen's Club", meaning a group of fashionable and elegant men. Mr. Erbil was inspired by Effendis: high-ranking men in the Ottoman Empire who reflected their status through selected clothes that were usually inspired by European styles. At the same time, Mr. Erbil refers to a trade fair in Florence, Italy. This is where men go to present their most stylish clothing. Mr. Erbil stands for the idea of showing a contemporary and differentiated image of people in the region and promoting tolerance and openness at the same time. They include men from all kinds of professions and religions and thus all segments of Iraqi society.

### BETWEEN LOCAL AND GLOBAL

Mr. Erbil was criticised for being too strongly guided by the "West". Although they often wear garments originally shaped in Europe, a suit, they refer back to the regional role model of the Effendis. They also design the clothes themselves and have them made locally, preferably with textiles from Iraq. Ahmed Nauzad, who grew up in Germany, tries to produce ties made from goat hair and market them internationally. Some garments have more of a local flavour than others. The button-less jackets with raised collars and cummerbunds (Farsi: kamarband = hip belt), a cloth with ornamental decorations wrapped around the torso, are particularly suggestive of local clothing from Erbil. However, the pinstriped fabric, watches and chains above the cummerbund show "Western" influences. The mix of local and globalised clothing creates something completely new: the style typical for Mr. Erbil

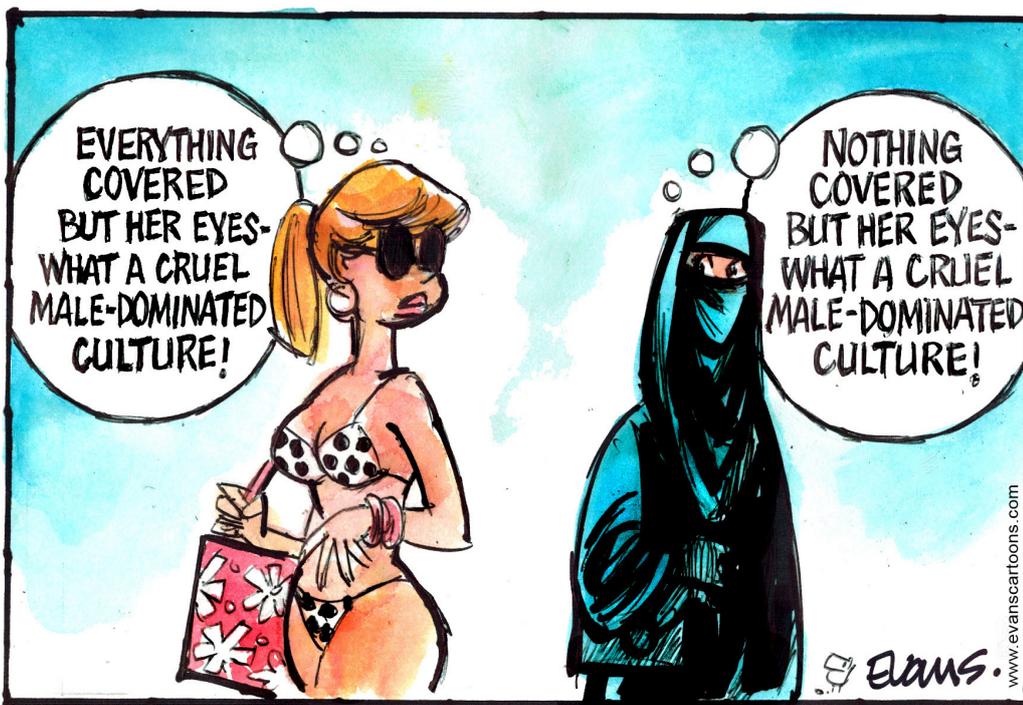


## Info sheet

# Statement and perception

Clothes can be misinterpreted, as this caricature shows in exaggerated form. These two women are only paying attention to each other's clothes. With their different interpretations, they come to the same conclusion: the other one must live in a terrible culture in which she is subjected to the will of men. Because, in contrast to language, the meaning of fashion isn't established unambiguously but is open to interpretation.

For Mr. Erbil, the statement of following local fashion traditions runs counter to the perception of adopting European clothing. The observers thus see something other than what Mr. Erbil wants to say. Transferred to language, it would be as if these two don't speak the same language. The fact that the suits are "understood" differently is also related to their ambiguity. A suit can stand for a wedding, a funeral, a job as a banker, etc. And of course everyone has their own idea of what a suit means.





# Info sheet

## Fashion designs



### NESLIHAN KAPUCU

Neslihan Kapucu has been a lecturer at the Düsseldorf Institute of Fashion Design since 2013. With Neskapucu, she has her own fashion label that offers clothes for all women, regardless of which group. She gets inspiration from the history of her family, who came to Germany as so-called guest workers some time ago and now live in North Rhine-Westphalia. In her first collection, "One Way", she particularly focuses on this affiliation with two cultures.

