

*Consumption of Baby Gear:*

*the new father identity of the “Danish cosmopolitan man”*

*constructed through consumption*

Master Thesis

Consumption of Baby Gear:

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Student:

Marie Tannit Hedetoft-Fraire Romano

Supervisor:

Pernille Hohnen

Culture, Communication and Globalization

Department of Culture and Global Studies

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**Abstract**

Mothers and babies, babies and mothers. As normal as it may seem in most cultures where the matriarch hierarchy is strongest, to look at the mother to find answers in regards to the baby and vice-versa in any given area of interest, a man is always necessary in this equation whether it be through a bigger or a smaller contribution, seen as co-constructors or even as the breadwinners more than co-parents. What have in such case been the reasons for researchers to focus their attentions towards the women and not acknowledging or being interested in the participation of the men? Very little has been investigated on fatherhood when it comes to consumption of baby gear, role transition, and consumer identity.

The aim of this thesis is to focus on how new fathers experience this life changing event in regards to consumption of baby gear and how they live this change and build upon their new acquired role manifested at the light of their consumer identity through consumption in light of the intercultural environment they are inserted in. All in all, the ultimate desire with this thesis is to look at the consumption of baby gear from a father’s perspective and learn from what we see and understand on what is being processed in terms of consumption in the mind of the new father identity transitioned into.

Therefore, a main research question has been established where the fundamental problem in question is addressed, that being the lack of space for the cosmopolitan man in terms of consumption of baby gear and the undefined role those men come to assume once becoming a father. Also, the new negotiations that will play a role in the fatherhood position have led to:

*How is “the Danish cosmopolitan man” consuming for the baby to build and negotiate his new acquired father role and what does this express in regards to his consumer identity?*

With the main question, three more sub-questions were developed and with the aid of theories available in the academic world and in-depth interviews held with six Danish and foreign couples with small children, a thorough analysis of these men’s insight to fatherhood was reached.

The “Danish cosmopolitan man” is perhaps being able to use consumption in his favor to construct the new identity as a father that becomes needed when he has a child. In some ways consumption has minimized this gap between the real self and the ideal self, but as a cosmopolitan man in the opened-minded Danish society, he has more tools, such as great communication media, cheap flights back and forth from the family’s second nation, and mainly, feelings of love and interest for their child which has been proven through the interviews held are not feeling exclusive to mothers alone.

*I dedicate this Master Thesis to my son Marco:*

*Because no challenge is too big, despite our limitations. Mommy loves you.*

 *My special “Thank you” to:*

 *God, my dear family, my supervisor, Pernille Hohnen, and my interviewees.*

*Your support and contribution* *was greatly appreciated.*

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1. **Introduction**

**1.1. Background of the study:**

Baby crib. Baby pram. Baby clothes. Baby toys. These are just a few of the many objects that are needed for a new born baby. When mom and dad come back from the hospital with a new family member of around 50cm and 3 kilograms, perhaps 30 shopping bags, unopened gifts and flat boxes have already been filling the expectant home. The biological preparation necessary to sustain a well-functioning life just after labor is taken care of by the body itself, but according to modern cultural norms, the material and psychological preparation takes other considerations into account such as decision-making, anxiety issues, consumer identity, (Afflerback et al., 2014; Jennings and O’Malley, 2003; Theodorou and Spyrou, 2013), among other.

Baby diaper hamper. Baby splat mat. Baby swaddle. Here are a couple more items, less common perhaps, to add to the list above also to be used at the very beginning of life. How many of these products were bought by the fathers? Did they feel more prepared as fathers after discovering what these items were and bringing them home, ready to be used with the baby?

Mothers and babies, babies and mothers. As normal as it may seem in most cultures where the matriarch hierarchy is strongest, to look at the mother to find answers in regards to the baby and vice-versa in any given area of interest, a man is always necessary in this equation whether it be through a bigger or a smaller contribution, seen as co-constructors or even as the breadwinners more than co-parents (Thompson et al., 2013; Thomsen and Sørensen, 2006). What have in such case been the reasons for researchers to focus their attentions towards the women and not acknowledging or being interested in the participation of the men? There are countless studies that have been written on motherhood on several fronts, such as what they buy, what they avoid buying, how they buy, what they feel when consuming for the baby, vicarious consumption, extended self (Belk, 1988; Rose, 2013; Clarke, 2004; McNeille and Graham, 2014; Hogg et al., 2004; Prothero, 2002; Fischer and Gainer, 1993; Gram et al., 2015), and much more also in other areas of study other than that of marketing and consumption. On the other hand, very little has been investigated on fatherhood when it comes to consumption of baby gear, role transition, and consumer identity. Are all of these studies reveling that parenting is a phenomenon only happening in the life of women? Is it a notion or an impression that men have no interest in the material needs of the babies and practical gear of being a father? Or a general apathy for what the fathers have to contribute from their perspective on what becoming a parent for the first time means? What is the desire of men to contribute also through consumption for the participation in parenthood?

Regardless of the motivations previous researchers have had to scrutinize the women instead of the men, this master thesis intends to do quite the opposite of what has been done until now. The aim is to focus on how new fathers experience this life changing event in regards to consumption of baby gear and how they live this change and build upon their new acquired role manifested at the light of their consumer identity through consumption in light of the intercultural environment they are inserted in. All in all, the ultimate desire with this thesis is to look at the consumption of baby gear from a father’s perspective and learn from what we see and understand on what is being processed in terms of consumption in the mind of the new father identity transitioned into.

However, as much as the focal point of this study are the fathers, it would be diminishing to ignore what has already been found in the academic world about parenting in its most general aspect with a tendency to investigate these issues from the mother’s standpoint. Previous studies indicate a strong connection between the consumption of products for the baby and the construction of motherhood. Women have indicated in some of these studies how they felt more prepared to receive their child in the world for every new item they bought, for every new product they pre-tested or for every new piece of furniture that was assembled or put in the place. They described the tensions and anxieties in wishing to give their child the best products possible, and even so not being sure of what was truly the best. These women confided their desire to give others the image of a “good mother” by considering risks and avoiding dangers for their babies. Altogether, what was presented and concluded by many of these studies was that the active position as consumers helped them transition from a non-mother role to a mother one, thus strengthening their motherhood identity (Sévon, 2005; The VOICE Group, 2010; Cook, 2008;Gram et al., 2015).

 Therefore, this will be a study on men with emphasis on the male perspective and consumption pattern development during pregnancy and the early stages of the baby’s life and considerations made in regards to motherhood will be acknowledged. Two distinct ways in which this will happen is through the theory that will be collected in the specific chapter on motherhood and its different aspects within marketing and consumption. The second way of utilizing a mother’s perspective will be during the interviews where couples will be interviewed together as to obtain empirical data on the father’s point of view, but allowing the mothers to interfere and collaborate with their input pertinent to the men’s consumption experience for their common child. The objective of this master thesis is to provide some more specific notions on how men relate to consumption of baby gear, on how they transition into the new consumer identity of fatherhood and how they negotiate this role with themselves and others, particularly the mother of their child.

The relation between men and women, or in this specific case, fathers and mothers, gender differences will be investigated to identify to what extent this influences in the way consumption develops with respect to baby gear. Where do the responsibilities get divided and when are they shared? How many of these decisions are conscious and based on gender differences? How willing are couples to bend these norms that they have established for their household and in connection with their roles as parents, and where is the limit? On some situations, gender role and the division of tasks in the household are notions that go beyond the daily thoughts of couples and can create expectations that influence the decisions which concern their new common child (Menasco and Curry, 1989).This is just one aspect to mention among many others that will be addressed in a section of its own in the Theory chapter.

Continuing, a complementing area of interest for this study is in regards to the role transition from being a non-father to becoming a father. What does it mean for these men to have a baby in their lives, and therefore have the responsibility to supply the adequate baby paraphernalia of daily life? Again, how do these men create their consumer identity as fathers through that which they buy and how do they feel not only like men, but also as fathers?

With the intention of providing an intercultural and international aspect to this master thesis, the men being studied are within a category which I have chosen to name as “the Danish cosmopolitan father”, being the junction of three words: “Danish”, “cosmopolitan” and “father”. “Father” is well known and somewhat straight forward as shown in Dictionary.com, an online dictionary: “male parent; a person who founds a line or family”. “Cosmopolitan” on the other hand has been described in several ways, but for the purpose of this master thesis, the definition by Ulrich Beck (2005), German sociologist born in 1944 very interested in the modern aspects of State, power and globalization, will be related to the bending of what is national and international, local and global. The idea of the modern man that thinks and considers for his own life the trends that are not connected necessarily to his homeland or where he lives, but that can be similar to the behavior of another man in any given part of the globe. A cosmopolitan man could perhaps transfer this same sense of cosmopolitanism along to the new role as father. This man could be more detached from the national bonds presumed to mold our decisions in consumption behavior, and instead of a nationalistic attitude towards consuming baby gear this father could embrace a more global approach. As the term “Danish” is a part of this category defined for this thesis its role will be explored as it is the common point to all of the interviewees and the country were this study was written and which local culture is certain to influence the way these men live and think. Therefore, three types of men with different connections will be interviewed as to collect empirical data. These men will be either Danish born married to foreign women and living together in Denmark; foreign men married to Danish women and living together in Denmark; or both husband and wife from the same foreign country living in Denmark during the course of several years.

Denmark is known internationally as being a leading country in gender equality, personal freedom rights and many other advanced thoughts that have later been imitated by other countries in Europe and also around the world. In this sense, NATLEX (National Laws on labour, social security and related human rights) presented in 1998 the Consolidation Act on Equal Treatment of Men and Women as regards Access to Employment and Maternity Leave, etc. in which was stated that men had the same right to paternity leave as women did. This possibility granted men the chance to split the maternity/paternity leave amongst both parents if they wished to do so. Perhaps not as a law, but as a standard behavior, this equality in the home can be reflected in the way of thinking of Danes also in regards to other shared activities in the household for the baby, as cooking, hygiene routines, laundry. If this is the case in today’s Denmark it will also be investigated throughout this process.

Discussions on what cosmopolitanism, nationalism and globalization are will be further addressed in this thesis.

**1.2. Problem formulation:**

To give a direction to this investigation, identifying the specific touch-points that will under scrutiny to make pertinent analysis and reach a conclusion to the findings. Therefore, a main research question has been established where the fundamental problem in question is addressed, that being the lack of space for the cosmopolitan man in terms of consumption of baby gear and the undefined role those men come to assume once becoming a father. Also, not only the construction of the new identity as a father will be looked into, but also the new negotiations that will play a role in the fatherhood position because parenting many times also involves a participative mother. As such, the main research question for this study has been elaborated in the following way:

*How is “the Danish cosmopolitan man” consuming for the baby to build and negotiate his new acquired father role and what does this express in regards to his consumer identity?*

As this question alone can perhaps not reach a total understanding of the problem at hand, three sub-questions were developed to is three different aspects: empirical, theoretical and analytical, respectively:

* What do “the Danish cosmopolitan men” buy for their baby and what are they responsible for?
* How is consumption of baby gear enabling identity construction, specifically in regards to fatherhood and gender role?
* How can we perceive the influence of a global consumer society in the “Danish cosmopolitan men” construction?

The first sub-question is in an empirical level where the investigation revolves about what concretely it is these men are buying, and also what they are not buying. The degree of their feelings of responsibility for one or another area of the baby’s life could indicate why some areas are preferred to other. The second sub-question is on a more theoretical level to aim at finding congruent or diverse points from the theory exiting and exposed in the Theory chapter of this thesis and as such, determine where the consumption of baby gear opens the possibility for men to construct their identity as a father or not. Also, gender role issues are significant, especially as mentioned previously, a high level of interest has been shown in regards to mothers, but not that much on fathers. Lastly, on a more analytical account, the third sub-question enables a wider view of the global consumer society today in regards to the father role construction and whether it has an impact or not on how and why the “Danish cosmopolitan man” is consuming the way he is exactly because he is from one or another country living in Denmark and having access to so many globalized consumption opportunities. Keeping all of these questions, main and sub, in mind, the objective of this master thesis is to shed light on these areas of consumption with respect to men as fathers which has previously not had a great interest from academics, but that can become a strong area of investment if shown to be beneficial and lucrative or of value for the study of Marketing and Consumption.

This master thesis will, after the Introduction chapter including a background overview of the theme at hand and the problem formulation in connection with that, lead to a description of the “interpretive framework” ( Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) and the research design and methods used to conduct the study, all of which included in the Methodology chapter. Later, a Theory chapter will present some of the academic perspectives already elaborated by other authors on subjects such as fatherhood, consumption, gender and other areas pertinent to this study. Then, in the Analysis chapter, as a result of the data collected in the Theory chapter and the empirical data collected through in-depth interviews, I, as researcher, will attempt to make sense of the information at hand and create new perspectives and enlighten new areas that can reveal answers to the problem formulation and its proposed questions. Finally, in the Conclusion chapter, apart from the conclusion to this paper itself, limitations encountered during this process and suggestions for further studies will be presented and discussed.

1. **Methodology**

This chapter on Methodology will elaborate on three main areas: the philosophy of science which identifies the epistemological, ontological and methodological position of the researcher; the research design where the specific ways in which data was collected for this thesis are shown and justified; and the method which elaborates on the procedures followed to go about the data collecting itself, including a table on the participants and a table of the pictures of items that were specifically mentioned during the interviews (the images themselves are available in the appendix file).

**2.1. Philosophy of science:**

The philosophy of science section is to show the reader how the researcher understands reality and sees the world we live in. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 33) there is an “interpretive framework” that is an ensemble of answers to a paradigm composed of three parts: ontology, which investigates the nature of reality; epistemology, which investigates the connection there is between the inquirer and knowledge; and methodology, that investigates in which way the inquirer should search knowledge (Guba, 1990; Belk, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Due to the researcher of this project’s stand point, the constructivist paradigm according to Guba’s (1990) approach will be used throughout the study.

For the ontological perspective, relativism will be applied, as it is believed in this perspective that there are multiple realities and that they are mentally constructed through the interpretation of people, therefore, diverse (Guba, 1990). Stories told are not identical, but instead multiple in accordance to the different life experiences (Hesse-Bieber, 2010). As such, I understand that there is no right and wrong, no truth that is established and absolute for all in regards to fatherhood, the decisions made towards the construction of a consumer identity, and how men interpret their actions in regards to consumption patterns for baby gear.

Subjectivity is the epistemological perspective adequate to the researches point of view on how she is connected to the world. Therefore, answers are analyzed from the interaction between interviewer and interviewees, researcher and theory, as answers are social and cultural constructions created in each person’s mind. The realities each one talks about are subjective and individual interpretations of what consumption within fatherhood mean to them (Guba, 1990).

From the methodological perspective, the hermeneutic/dialectic was chosen. As for the hermeneutic, the constructions of each father will be depicted and later on, for the dialectic, all of these constructions will be analyzed as to find the consensus amongst them by looking deeply into the aspects that are similar and contrasting. That is why some methods will be used under this study to bring out several interpretations and opportunities for analysis and then reach answers to the research questions. To better be able to interpret all the information found, a meta-matrix table will be created with issues or points of interest that are observed in several of the interviews, but also the ones that are singular and significant to individual interviewees. In this way, in one same glance, relevant issues can be detected and will then be set into groups of analysis that make sense whether it be by their similarities, differences, or for not fitting into any other category and thus making them unique. The research question and sub-questions will be taken into consideration when choosing those themes that indicate can be helpful in reaching answers or clarifications of the questions posed in this study.

**2.2. Research design:**

As a starting point to explore the universe of fatherhood, a pre-interview was held as the area of study involving men as fathers seemed vast and generally unexplored. During the pre-interview, an intention of seeking a very narrow field of study which included the psychological connection between fathers and their daughters, some observations were made that revealed that is was not necessary to go in such depth with only female offspring, but that a first child regardless of gender could provoke the same feelings and consumption patterns in a father-to-be. Also, the pre-interview was intended to be exclusively with the husband, but the wife, in a desire to be a part of the study and more aware of practical information such as dates, prices and products in the household for the baby, showed the benefits of involving the women during the interviews, not as a way of testing or contradicting the men, but as a support and help for the men during the interviews.

From the issues suggested by the pre-interview and intentions with regard to the direction for this thesis, a literature review was collected. Later, in-depth interviews were conducted with fathers and their partners. This design was not fixed in the beginning, but developed taking into consideration the difficulties encountered along the way. As mentioned above, in being constructivist the whole idea of constructing something together with others, being in the form of theory or in the form of empirical data, is an ongoing process that has a need for space and flexibility to develop. This will enable meaningful and sophisticated construction in the Analysis chapter (Guba, 1990).

The first source of data for this thesis was a pre-interview with a father to an unborn baby, who is due in the beginning of June 2015. As a decision was made as to interview only fathers of born babies, this couple would have to be felt out of the thesis, but an opportunity to ask some questions into the fatherhood universe was foreseen. This particular couple was composed by a Danish man married to a Brazilian women living together in Denmark for over three years. This pre-interview was unstructured in its format, as few questions were prepared, and only some topics of interest were noted. As the interview proceeded, new areas of interest were reached. Also, after the pre-interview a small observation session was held in the nursery and bathroom. The observation method is not highly used, but can reveal points of contradiction or confirmation on what was said during the interview (Boote and Mathews, 1999). It was not an extended observation processes and therefore not much time-consuming as suggested by other authors (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) as it was associated to only one interview and was not repeated in other contexts or during the in-depth interviews.

Some relevant issues mentioned by the father of the pre-interview were:

* the desire to divide tasks with his wife, where he would be more responsible for assembling furniture and reading usage manuals for electronic equipment and she would be more responsible for the fashion and esthetic aspects of products bought;
* the intention of waiting to buy items along the way when the need for them arose, as a way of resisting unnecessary or impulsive shopping and also in the hope of counting with gifts from friends and hand-me-downs from family members;
* the need to be economically prepared for the arrival of their child, providing the best products possible, but at the best cost x benefit relationship, eventually meaning to opt for second-hand products;
* considerations made in regards to the culturally diverse family this baby would become a part of and how important it was for him and his wife that their child could experience both cultures and feel Brazilian, but at the same time still being able to fit into the Danish society through the consumption decisions they took on his behalf.

These issues indicated some points of interest for the researcher such as the strong gender role definition present in this particular household, this fathers way of building his new father identity through the consumption of that which he considered to be the best products available, an unawareness of his active consumer identity in general as he several times mentioned that he hated spending money; and the aspects regarding couples with diverse cultural backgrounds and the implications for their children. These aspects were discussed, broadened and narrowed to fit the intention and possibilities of this thesis.

For the data collecting of theory, an extensive literature review was started by researching articles that elaborated firstly on more broad aspects of fatherhood and then into more specific areas of interest as to determine theory sections pertinent to the research questions. The two most used data banks used to research and have access to complete articles and books were the Aalborg University website (aub.aau.dk) and one of Google specific websites for research, named Google Scholar (scholar.google.com), alongside with the utilization of the vast book availability at the Aalborg University Library (on campus and in the Aalborg city center). The information found and selected for this thesis were used in order to aid in the process of creating a guide for the semi-structures in-depth interviews and later, helpful in structuring and giving theoretical support in the Analysis chapter.

In regards to the in-depth interviews, the qualitative method was selected firstly for seeing that many of the previous studies written on motherhood, baby product consumption, consumer identity, role transition, and gender differences had part of their empirical data retrieved by these means (Sévon, 2005; Thompson et al., 2013; McNeille and Graham, 2014). Secondly in a more educated decision, the qualitative method seemed to be right considering the constructivist stand point were meaning is created as a subjective interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees. Again, to look into the individual life experiences could be achieved not only by asking a sequence of formulated questions, as in the case of quantitative methods, but as questions asked in a dialog with a person who has his own perceptions and can in a narrative way tell how these events interact in the different areas of interest suggested to aim for clarifying the problem formulation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

A small part of the deep studies of Crano, Brewer and Lac (2015) on dyads, which are pairs or small groups of interviewees, has been extracted for this thesis in order to achieve a greater depth in the interviews held with the fathers of this study. In this case, the dyads were composed of the couple, meaning the father and the mother of a small child. Most couples that choose to have a child together have an intimate relationship between them and consequently a mutual responsibility for a baby. This could be one of the aspects pertinent to this study as mentioned by Crano et al, where individual assessments are looked into, but instead, the nature of their relationship and their interactions holds more significant value.

At the end of the in-depth interview, pictures of common baby products were showed to the couple being interviewed as to promote specific conversation in regards to areas that were not touched during the interview. This was meant as a precaution and anticipation to subjects interesting to the study. As the in-depth interview was more a series of narratives about their consumption experiences during the pregnancy and early months of the baby, it could feel unnatural to incorporate specific questions and perhaps even break the line of thought of the person. Therefore, these pictures were asked at the end and not all were mentioned if that aspect had already been started, or strategically mentioned if some comment rang a bell in regards to a conflicting or strongly opinionated areas within the study.

**2.3. Method:**

As the focus of this master thesis is the men, the interviews will be held with the couple being together, but as a way of supporting and complementing each other. The women can contribute with their perception of how they have seen their spouses to be living fatherhood through consumption from their point of view. That is why the dyad method of interviewing was chosen. The intention of interviewing the couple together has never been that of confronting their answers nor seeking a conflict between them.

For this study, the snowball principle (Miles and Huberman, 1994) was selected. Posts were made on a Facebook group for Aalborg University students and on the researcher’s personal Facebook wall. Thus, the snowball principle was not a way of choosing couples to be interviewed, but a method to collect potential interviewees. The selection criteria for the interviewees was that they fit into one of the following three categories: 1) Danish men married to foreign women living in Denmark; 2) foreign men married to Danish women living in Denmark; 3) foreign couple, not necessarily from the same country, living in Denmark during the last three years or more. No specific interest was taken into social class or age, even though all couples did have similar ages perhaps due to the fact that they were couples with their first child and therefore around their thirties. From the interviewees found some were selected to participate in the study as there was a bigger likelihood that their experiences could reflect a global situation and therefore the nationality of the foreigner was crucial. That way, the study ended with insights from couples with cultural background from Europe (Denmark, Portugal, France and Poland), Oceania (Indonesia), Africa (South Africa) and America (Brazil, also in the pre-interview).

Here is a table showing the interviewees, their spouses and babies, and interview language:



*Table of Interviewees*

The next figure that follows shows the level of connection to Denmark that each of these categories had according exclusively to the three categories of interviewees established. In the inner circle are the interviewees that have the strongest connection to Denmark, thus the darker color, connection due to the fact of being born in Denmark and having the Danish nationality. The next circle, in medium blue, represent those interviewees that have a connection to Denmark through their spouses, probably weaker also due to chronological factors, as they have longer been without the Danish influence in their life than with this influence or contact because of their spouse. The outer circle represents those interviewees with the weakest connection to Denmark, and therefore has the lightest shade of blue. They are the ones that have recently moved to Denmark and prior to that had no connection at all with Denmark. Also, their knowledge and contact with the Danish country and culture comes from interaction with work colleagues, friends and general acquaintances.

*Chart on the “Danish cosmopolitan man”*

As mentioned above, this figure only takes into consideration the primary criteria of selection and classification of the men interviewed. However, important factors such as the desire to “fit in” into the local culture, the love of Denmark or the lack of love for their own country, the parenting examples and experiences they have had during their time in Denmark can play a significant role in the strength of their connection to Denmark. This will be considered in the Analysis chapter and it will be a relevant discussion to what extent the interviewees will continue in the current category or skip to a category above or below. It is valid to say, however, that all the men interviewed belong to this figure as they have a connection, strong or weak, simply by the fact of living in Denmark and having been exposed to the Danish parenting culture as all pregnancies and births were in Denmark. Therefore they can all be considered within the denomination created for this thesis: the “Danish cosmopolitan man”.

At the beginning of each interview all couples were asked for authorization to record the interview and all were told that their identities could be kept confidential if they so desired, even though none of them did, and that they were free to answer or not all questions they felt comfortable about. Also, the language chosen for each interview depended on the language each individual felt more at ease to express themselves and according to the researcher’s abilities. Therefore, languages present in the recordings are: English, Danish, Portuguese and French.

During the interview, a previously made interview guide was created to be followed and give a sense of structure to the interviews, in the way that themes were brought up. The topics selected to ask were extracted from themes related to the research questions and the theory that was being selected. This was a process that happened simultaneously. The more the Theory chapter progressed, the more understanding of the topics, and thus, the clearer the intention of the questions asked during the interviews. As there was a desire to construct meaning together, both the interviewees and the interviewer, the questions were neither fixed nor closed-ended, but instead, gave a freedom for the interviewees to develop their thoughts, sometimes being expressed in concrete answers, other times as narratives.

At the end of the interview, the men will see some pictures of baby gear and asked questions in regards to feelings of fatherhood, consumption patterns, gender role and responsibility, and how they experience the “Danish cosmopolitan father’s” way of living in comparison and similarity to their own country or that of their spouses. The items were showed as follows:

1. Stroller / Pram
2. Crib / Changing table
3. Potty / Training seat
4. Sleeping bag
5. Girl doll / Boy doll

This method for obtaining data is to look into concrete items of baby gear and compare or contrast their responses in this specific part of the meeting with that expressed in the in-depth interview.

During the process of interviewing, that was extended during the period of two weeks, the questions within the interview guide were re-arranged to better fit the course of the interviews previously held and to make the next interviews smoother in their flow.

When all of the interviews had been held a systematic method was created to insure that all the qualitative data was being analyzed in such way as to guarantee that the complexity of the information collected could be maintained, and not lost accidentally because of the big volume involved in the case of valuable for this study, and discard that knowledge collected that was not pertinent to the study itself. Therefore, the first step was to listen to all the interviews in a sequence and notes were taken of the main themes mentioned by each interviewee. Then, all the interviews were transcribed in full, not only due to the interest in the overall thoughts expressed during the interview, but also the specific wording utilized, which was later used as quotes during the Analysis chapter. As mentioned previously, the interviews were held in that language the interviewees felt more comfortable expressing themselves in and that was possible for the interviewer to understand and participate in. Therefore, a simultaneous translation was made as loyal as possible from Danish, Portuguese and French to English. When all the transcriptions are done, general themes will be highlighted, some selected and others discarded in regards to their relevance to the research questions and regrouped under each sub-question of the problem formulation, making indications of analysis by comparison and contrast. In the transcriptions, quotes that could reflect in a clear way a certain issue wii be underlined and safe-kept for use in the Analysis chapter. This process is done in order to find similarities and patterns amongst interviewees whom being from the same proposed segment named “Danish cosmopolitan men” could react and consume in similar ways, and so, determine an analytical generalization possible for analysis (Kvale, 1996).

**2.4. About the researcher:**

As mentioned in the philosophy of science section above, the researcher of this thesis has the constructivist paradigm as interpretive framework and is therefore significant to mention whom she is, as her own experiences and ways of looking at the world will be part of the constructions built during the interviews, and nevertheless throughout this whole work. Her husband could very well have been one of the interviewees if they did not have four children, instead of the preferred only child, as she herself is Danish born and her husband is Brazilian man living in Denmark for over four years. Her two oldest sons were born in Brazil, whilst the two last children were born in Denmark, being the youngest a girl of 14 months. Even though they are a mixed nationality family, they consider themselves as a Brazilian family, being Portuguese the language of preference in their household.

Therefore, it is safe to say that most aspects of this thesis were analyzed from a personal perspective asking questions such as: “What did we do in that situation?” “What would my husband answer to this question?” “Why is it we buy as we buy, we do as we do, and we act as we act?” Her own experience with motherhood and parenting have been the building blocks for the pre-judgments that we carried into this project, and that have influenced to a higher or lower degree. However, it is important to underline that at all moments, restraints have been made precisely to assume a neutral and non-judgmental posture in regards to the empirical data collected as well as the theory selected.

1. **Theory**

The theoretical framework for this thesis combined with the empirical data collected will be utilized together in order to create a base for analysis, or analytical framework, which will be presented below. It was divided into four sections: Consumer identity and the extended self, Role transition via consumption as a way to fatherhood/motherhood, Gender differences and masculinity, and Cosmopolitism. As these are wide concepts, they have been narrowed down to the studies related to fatherhood, babies, and family life, as to explore them in a more direct connection to the empirical data collected and through the analysis aim at providing answers to the research questions described in the Introduction section.

**3.1. Consumer identity: self and extended self:**

Many theories have been explored in regards to consumer culture and the way and reasons people consume (Rose, 2013; Holt, 1995; Shankar and Fitchett, 2002). Arnould and Thompson (2005) even wrote an article on the evolution of the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) during the last 20 years. “Who am I?” could perhaps be one of the triggering questions asked. Then, more analytical inquiries such as “Where does this identity come from?”. Descartes (originally 1637, 2006) would define it with the famous phrase: “Cogito ergo sum” (Latin) or “Je pense, donc je suis” (French)[[1]](#footnote-1). In order to be or to have an identity we have to think: have thoughts on past, present, future; analyze our surroundings; perceive opportunities; interpret events. In more mode rn times, Berger and Luckmann (1966) and Gergen (1997) state that the signifying values of properties can be identity building and therefore collaborate to answering these questions. A man wishing to acknowledge the fact that he has offspring and has then gained the title of “father” can demonstrate the desire to create a consumer identity to accompany the other aspects of this new acquired identity (Thompson, Lee and Adams, 2013; Attwood, 2005) through consumption. This theory will be used as a perspective when analyzing the empirical data and in that way verify if this is one of the truths out there in regards to fatherhood and consumption.

A psychological theory from 1987 by Higgins, even though nearly 30 years old, is still current and can be used to identify consumption patterns in regards to self-identity that is then translated to concrete consumption thoughts and actions. Higgins (1987) shows in his study that there are, according to him, three layers to self:

* The actual self, which considers the characteristics that the person thinks he possesses;
* The ideal self, which takes into consideration the desires the person has in regards to the characteristics he would like to possess; and
* The ought self, where the considerations of others in regards to himself determine the characteristics the person should or ought to have.

In terms of fatherhood, the actual self could be the real characteristics of father that a specific man has when he relates to the child and consumes baby gear. The ideal self is in regards to the characteristics he has a desire to achieve and perhaps perceives he is lacking. As mentioned in Theodorou and Spyrou (2013), it is the image of self the mother or father wished to have. The ought self is the image that other people around the father have of him, whether it is the mother of their child, his parents and in-laws, friends, colleagues, etc.

When these three parts of the self are in unison, the desired self is formed. In regards to fatherhood, this identity can be built and maintained by continuous buying and using of baby gear that the father can identify with. This experience of self can be helpful for the construction of the father identity, alongside with the signal value that is attribute the products being bought (Thomsen and Sørensen, 2006; Silver, 1996). However, in a cultural setting, all of these selves or none could be constructed through consumption and will therefore be investigated using the empirical data collected. Even so, for the benefit of this project, and in the specific case of baby gear, this is very convenient for this analysis as the biological evolution of the baby requires a renewal of furniture, clothing and disposable items, such as diapers, etc. at a very fast pace during childhood (Rose, 2013), and especially in the period defined as toddlers or infants generally considered from newborn until 24 months of age. (As mentioned above in the Methodology chapter, this is the age specifications chosen for this thesis.) For women, studies have shown that this maternal identity via consumption happens already in the gestational stage (Theodorou and Spyrou, 2013; Thomsen and Sørensen, 2006) and continues whilst they are doing so in behalf of their children (Clarke, 2004; Cook, 2008). All in all, several studies have shown how buying new possessions can help to develop new identities (Silver, 1996; Thomsen and Sørensen, 2006; Nobel and Walker, 1997) and identities are not built and finished, but instead, are an ongoing process (Holt, 2002; Belk, 1988).

Still, as part of the consumer identity, another component pertinent to this study is the theory regarding the extended self. The notion of extended self has been looked into by several authors (Wong et al., 2012; Ahuvia, 2005; Shankar and Fitchett, 2002), but special note will be taken to that presented by Belk in his work from 1988. Again, as in the case of Higgins, Belk’s work is from the 80’s, but it enables a concrete base to build upon in future studies even until today. A more recent study from 2012 by Wong and his colleagues was directly based on Belk’s theory on possessions and the extended self. In general terms, Belk describes that the extended self could be considered to be ideas, experiences and people, places and objects that we feel attached to somehow. In 1988 he wrote about a new category in which other things part from objects, such as collections, pets and body parts, were not considered part of self but instead, part of the so-called extended self. Also “other people” were considered in this category, and this is particularly pertinent to this thesis as it could involve offspring. Another way of looking at the extended self would be is the sense of the power or control there can be over something, making it become a part of one self (McClelland, 1951 in Belk, 1988) and the objects, such as tools, which enable us to do the things we otherwise would not be able to become an extension of self (Belk, 1988). In regards to the former, parent’s control over the possessions of their children can create the possibility to reach certain behavior in the children (Belk, 1988), but in this study a perspective on vicarious consumption will be addressed. According to the findings of Veblen (1899 in Belk, 1988), vicarious consumption can enhance ones extended self when consuming for one’s dependents, whom can be a part of one’s extended self. In the case of consumption of infant apparel, this area of consumption has a symbolic notion attached to it that associates good mothering skills the type of consumption choices made for the children (McNeill and Graham, 2014; O’Cass and Frost, 2002), where parents image can be identified or enhanced. An example of this can be when a husband has success in his carrier, this can reflect well on the wife. By means of consumption, emotional needs in regards to these people can be reached in the form of self-esteem and self-fulfillment (McNeill and Graham, 2014; Cook, 2013). Also, consuming object with meaningful aspects can communicate characteristics of one self to others or even to one self (Thomsen and Sørensen, 2006) and in the specific case of children this is even more clear as children are unable to consume for themselves and depend of the responsibility parents assume over them, considering many times their own desires instead of those of the child (McNeill and Graham, 2014).

As a last topic in regards to extended self, one more category that can be associated is nationalism and patriotism. Family, city and nation are considered multiple levels of self (Belk, 1988) and even an item, such as a national flag, can be considered by some people as a part of the extended self (Ahuvia, 2005). This aspect of self in connection with the globalization section that will follow in this chapter can be supporting and enlightening of another dimension of self less explored, but still pertinent as to analyze aspects of the empirical data collected. As all the men interviewed will have at least one other nationality in their household apart from the Danish, they can all be susceptible to this extension of themselves in the sense of whom they identify themselves to be, over that which they become through consumption.

**3.2. Role transition via consumption as a way to Parenthood:**

Consumption as a means to change roles from not being a parent to being one has been studied by different authors (Afflerback et al., 2014; The VOICE Group, 2010). Initially, it can be pointed out that men and women are seen as being image-conscious consumers, regardless of their gender (Attwood, 2005). Role transition means to become integrated into a new and distinct social role, beyond gender, meaning the separation from a former group and integration into a new one (Silver, 1996). It has been suggested that consumption related to the actual transition between life cycle stages can be of benefit to those transiting from one role to another (Thomsen and Sørensen, 2006; Hogg et al., 2004; McNeille and Graham, 2014). Objects have been seen to help administrate the changes that occur during role transition phases (Silver, 1996) and the consumption of these items that support the role in transition may help to reduce feelings of uncertainty in regards to the new role (The VOICE Group, 2010), minimizing the gap between real self and ideal self (Schouten, 1991) and therefore creating a sense of preparedness for the new role (Afflerback et al., 2014). An example can be drawn from Thomsen and Sørensen’s work (2006) in which they show how mothers grew closer to their desired motherhood identity transition through the purchase of the baby pram for their unborn child. Consumption uncertainties in role transitions can also be a matter of discussion as several times the consumer will have to navigate in new areas of consumption where they neither understand nor know symbolic and public meaning of products and brands (The VOICE Group, 2010), leading to non-consumption practices (Gram et al., 2015). In even more specific situations, studies on the transition into motherhood via consumption (Fischer and Gainer, 1993; Prothero, 2002; Jennings and O’Malley, 2003) have shown aspects such as the women’s desire to be a “good mother” reflected through their consumption decisions (The VOICE Group, 2010) and directing more attention to others than themselves (Sévon, 2005), such as in the case of a child (Cook, 2013). “Nesting” is a way of preparing the “nest” for the arrival of the baby, and even though it is a project for both parents, many times the mother is the one leading it (Afflerback et al., 2014).

**3.3.** **Gender differences and masculinity:**

Within the literature selected on the theme of gender differences and masculinity, discrepancies were found, not so much in regards to the previous view on women and men and their position within the home and in regards to children, but mainly considering these issues in today’s society.

Initially, Holt and Thompson (2004) present the iconized masculinity of cowboys, adventurers and wild game hunters that lead to a gap between that man and the post-war domesticated breadwinning man. The first man was strong, brave and courageous, whilst the latter was fully aware of his masculinity, yes, but also in control of his household as an active participant. Thus the depiction in that same study of the breadwinner model: a discourse for the mass culture of a man interested in his family, good towards his children, and successful in his career. This model, however, became the central and most important point to a man’s identity and many times reduced men’s role in the household to exclusively that of the provider and not any more of a co-parent (Lee and Owens, 2002). From this concept, other common associations arose, such as the idea of lack of involvement and interest in family life and the understanding that the women were the ones that should be concerned with the children and their needs and the ones responsible for making the decisions in regards to parenting (Thompson et al, 2013). Stereotypical gender role position and cultural norms showed men as being independent and tough, leaving no space to believe that they were willing to take part in family life and chores, nor assume their fatherhood, restricting men’s and women’s choices (Thompson et al, 2013). In alignment with this line of thought, all marketing efforts in connection with the home were aimed towards women (Attwood, 2005).

We have during these post-war years moved ahead with new concepts, experiences, laws, interpretations, all of this in a global level, but still, until today, many men have encountered difficulties in administrating this contemporary representation of themselves through the juggling between the private and the public spheres in regards to their male domestic persona (Attwood, 2005). Nowadays, discourses on the “new man” have represented masculinity as the ability to embrace traditionally feminine qualities such as cooking and caring for the children, alongside the more traditional male characteristics such as activeness and easy-goingness, and all of this has free space to develop in the home as a place of self-expression for the men and the women, as presented by the contemporary consumer culture; this can be called as “regendering the home” (Attwood, 2005). Scandinavian countries have created different family policies and a system of legal support for fathers to be able to partake in the caring for their child (Sévon, 2005). As an example, Denmark approved a law in 1994 offering equal rights for men and women in regards to maternity leave, including economic benefits in connection with employment and weeks off from work for the men to be with their child (Consolidation Act on Equal Treatment of Men and Women as regards Access to Employment and Maternity Leave, etc, 1994). Still, as women are the ones going through the biological process of pregnancy and labor, some occupations are pre-defined as being masculine and feminine (Thompson, 1996).

Next, Menasco and Curry (1989) present two sides to decision making when in a couple: compromise and capitulation. Compromise is when neither part gets their wish attended, and capitulation is when one spouse is favored in the decision reached. Even so, the authors suggest that there is a difference in behavior when consumers decide individually than when they are in a situation where they have to choose together.

However timeworn, Thompson’s study form 1996 suggests that the married working woman is still the one responsible for the traditional household chores, including those related to children care. In the Analysis chapter this idea will be explored and compared to the empirical data collected from couples living this reality of administrating the home in 2015.

**3.4.** **Cosmopolitanism**:

To better understand who the men in the category created for this thesis, the “Danish cosmopolitan man”, below is a discussion on some of the concepts existing in the academic world regarding the term cosmopolitan. Also, there is a short look into the Nordic consumer culture to depict the Danish culture in terms of consumption.

When the term cosmopolitan was first developed, it meant living in a way that was not local in a national-local level. Today, however it has evolved to a world-local level. Many still see cosmopolitanism as being someone that travels around the world a lot (Hannerz, 1990). Today, nation state boundaries concerning culture, economics and political globalization are more and more blurred (Beck, 2007) A new World culture has developed into being an organization of diversity instead of a copy of uniformity, where many local cultures begin interacting with each other and mixing into a new culture with no fixed connection to one locality or territory and with a pattern of influences in which they overlap and blend (Hannerz, 1990).

The Cosmopolitan outlook came as a global sense, not imposing any fixed and ridged boundaries, where mixed differentiations and contrasting cultures can be found and are an option for those who chose to life in this way (Beck, 2006).

The cosmopolitan person is one willing to interact with the Other, there is an openness to different cultural experiences and an avoidance of everything that is homogeneous. He or she is also always ready to encounter these differences and embrace them through all of their senses, intuitions and thoughts (Hannerz, 1990). Therefore, the world can be described as being a mix and match of cultures and traditions in a cosmopolitan, national, local, ethnic and religious level (Beck, 2006).

In the study by Østergaard et al. (2014) they develop an insight to how the Nordic consumer behaves. Nordic societal model of open markets, good welfare system and high equality concerning social differences have made this consumer culture unique. The Nordic consumer has a characteristic of being able to absorb cultural contradictions. This is due to the free market laws that have governed Nordic lands for many years. Another issue present in the Nordic societies is the gender equality theme, where amongst other measures paternity leave is incentivized as it is a gender-neutral activity.

**3.5. Theoretical framework:**

In order to have a better overview of all the theories described and discussed above, a theoretical framework will be presented to be able to summarize them, but also to explore which aspects will be directly connected in the process of answering the research questions together with the empirical data collected. Also, this framework will enlighten the procedure in which the empirical data will be analyze and which specific aspects mentioned by the interviewees are relevant, whether similar or contrasting between each other or in regards to the theory available. The information extracted from the theory and from the interviews will be, according to the research questions, grouped within the three sub-questions.

Firstly, with the consumer identity theory, specifically on self and extended self, there are two psychological concepts connected to self described by Descartes and Higgins, and one about extended self by Belk, more oriented towards consumption. Descartes builds on the idea that to be a rational being, thoughts and considerations must be made. Therefore, a consumer identity can be lived in a conscious level and not only as a product of impulses or other subconscious processes. This can point out to which level the interviewed men had made deliberations to become a father and how the transition to becoming one had been thought out and was why he could consider himself to think and act as a “father”. The concepts of Higgins on the three types of self: actual, ideal and ought, could reveal the kind of father these men wish to be, the idea of “the good father” can be shown through consumption decisions, but perhaps as well through other actions, and these possibilities will be detected and analyzed from the interviews. After all, is it what they are buying or what they are doing that make them the “good father” they pursuit to be? Or is it a mixture of these two? Using Belk’s focus on the interviews, the extended self notion that one’s own children can be a part of one self, buying for them can show aspects that want to be presented to others not only in regards to the child itself but also of the parents through vicarious consumption. If fathers are consuming branded products instead of the regular one for their baby, who is unaware of the impact of marketing and brands, then this could be a demonstration of how important it can be for some men to show an image of themselves that is favorable. Another aspect pertinent to this study is in regards to nationality as extended self. An investigation will be made as to perceive the importance of showing the couples foreign nationality or hiding it and preferring to “fit into” the Danish society also via their consumption decisions.

Secondly, considering role transition via consumption to fatherhood, using consumption as a way of administrating this change in life cycles, as it is when becoming a father, could be perceived if the interviewees make connections between the actual buying of object and baby gear in general for their babies where they felt more prepared for the new role and had more a sense of being an actual father after the purchase, the assembly or the utilization for the first time of it by the child. Will these men feel a smaller gap between the real father and the ideal they have for the role, do they feel more prepared for the arrival of the baby or the moment when they will need that specific object (For example in the case of the highchair which is usually used only a few months after birth when the child had the strength to sit up straight.), are they aware of what is expected of them as fathers?

In regards to gender differences and masculinity, reducing men to a breadwinner position, where there is a lack of interest for family life and the involvement with their children will be looked into and verified with the answers of the interviewees on how they perceive themselves within the household and how their contribution really is manifested in the daily chores. Whether the “regendering” of the home or the Scandinavian point of view in regards to childcare by the fathers is the “Danish cosmopolitan man’s” choice will be explored in the way they manifest their interest and participation. Also, where they set a limit or show discomfort within the gender role and masculinity themes will be considered and addressed. Then, the relationship between father and mother will be analyzed to identify where there has been capitulation or compromise being made as to favor their common child.

Lastly, concerning the cosmopolitanism part of the theory selected, how the couples relate to them having a foreign spouse or living in a foreign country influences in their personal identity and also in their consumption choices. How much of the Nordic image and consumer culture is the one being lived in everyday life by these parents?

1. **Analysis**

After collecting and selecting the literature in the areas chosen to enlighten aspects regarding the problem formulation of this thesis and after conducting all of the in-depth interviews that compose the empirical data, this chapter intends to promote an analysis and discussion on how the research questions can be answers. No definite and final truth is promised to be found, but instead, a view into how it is that the “Danish cosmopolitan man” is consuming into the new role of fatherhood and building this new identity alongside the negotiations necessary with the world around him. The sections that follow were organized following the systematic analysis of the empirical data and the theory within the three sub-questions established to answer the problem formulation determined at the beginning of this thesis. Each section has the intention of answering specific aspects of the research sub-questions by pointing out similarities and contrasts to the data available for this study.

On a more specific note, the empirical data was collected through in-depth interviews with couples lasting approximately one hour. They were free to answer all the questions they thought were relevant and they felt conformable speaking about. Therefore, there was a smooth flow to all of them and a sense of openness towards the questions and the topics in general. Each couple had different stories to tell on how they experienced the whole shopping experience before the birth of their child and during the first few months, the transition from being a couple to being a family, the change in roles and responsibilities, and many more topics. First, however, a closer look at each one of the couples:

Hans is a Danish man who married Veronica, a French woman, and together they lived in Paris where their daughter, Isabelle, aged one year. Her addition to the family was not planned, but greatly desired by both parents. It did however come as a surprise to them because even though they knew that Veronica could become pregnant at any moment, it happened just one month after their marriage. When Isabelle was three months old, they moved back to Denmark as Hans got a new job in Ballerup. Due to this change in country, the couple felt very limited in the amount of items bought for their baby and most things purchased were those that would fit only for the first three month of her life whilst in France or items that could be taken along to Denmark for usage during a longer period of time, such as a foldable bathtub (Danish made). As Veronica is has a Fashion degree, it is an important aspect in their life and they use this as a valid argument in their eyes to why their daughter has the clothes she has, many times portraying French motives. At home they speak each their own language to their child and French amongst each other. Throughout the interview Hans was very outspoken whilst Veronica intervened very little and mostly as small reminders or remarks to her husband.

Thomas is the second Danish interviewee and his wife is Ita from Indonesia. They have always lived together in Denmark, and she has been in the country for the last two and a half years. Thomas lived prior to their marriage in China for more than six years. The couple found out about the pregnancy and the baby’s gender just before a trip of theirs to Indonesia and this was the opportunity to buy many clothes in pink for her and also for the family to send presents back home to Denmark for her. Several items, especially furniture, were bought second-hand but still considering good quality in preparation for perhaps more children in the future. They speak Danish at home, but Ita generally speaks in her own language to their daughter when they are alone. Johanne, their ten month old child was a planned and desired child and therefore they felt prepared for parenthood. Ita was as well quite reserved in her comments and several times concurred with Thomas in his remarks.

Theo is South African has his mother tongue is English. His wife, Rebecca is Danish and they met years ago in a famous bar-street in Denmark, country he has been living in for the last 15 years. He therefore says to feel half South African and half Danish now. Their oldest daughter is Chloe and is four years old and their youngest child is Connor, nine months old. The couple speaks Danish amongst each other and also with Chloe, who now refuses to speak English with the father or family, so they have chosen to speak English with their baby boy since the beginning to not have the same difficulties as with the girl. In a common agreement, the interview was held in English as the couple and the interviewer felt comfortable in that language. Most of the questions asked to this couple were more in regards to their first experience as parents. Chloe’s arrival to their family was decided, but still a shock when it happened. They both agreed that they had wanted to become parents, but were not as prepared for parenthood has they had initially thought. The whole transition from not being a father to being one was difficult for Theo as he felt the weight of responsibility for a baby and also the lack of freedom to do as he wanted and when he wanted. Theo pointed out that Rebecca was the one doing all the shopping and researching for the baby’s arrival and that he felt he had no say nor interest in clothes and other objects bought for their child. Rebecca was a very participative wife even though it is possible to hear in the recording that their children were around and she was actively trying to prevent them from distracting their father and interfere in the interview.

Isaac is an interviewee from Portugal living in Denmark for 15 years. His wife, Anna, was born in Italy but has lived for over 25 years in Denmark with her family and therefore feels very Danish as practically all her life and all her memories and life experiences have happened in Copenhagen. They have been married for five years and have two daughters, Catarina aged three years and Cecilia aged 12 months. The interview was held in Danish as it is the language that was common for both the couple and the interviewer, even though their home language amongst each other and with the girls is generally Italian. Again, such as in the interview with Theo, questions were more targeted to their experiences and thoughts during the time they were expecting their first child. When Anna became pregnant with Catarina they did feel they were ready to embrace parenthood, but it still did come as a surprise to them. Isaac and Anna mentioned feeling more mentally prepared for the challenges of having a child, and that this was more important than buying things for her. For this reason, partly, they did discover after a few days that they had underestimated the amount of clothes a baby wore per day and realized that they needed to buy more outfits to have a steady rotation from the drawers to the washing machine and back again.

Fernando and his wife, Ana Paulla, are Brazilian and have been living in Denmark for over three years. They moved to the country due to his employment and further studies at Aalborg University. He has now a new work contract for the next three years, so they expect to stay for at least that new period of time. Their son, Daniel, is now around six months old and is only a Brazilian citizen even though he was born in Aalborg. When asked, they both agreed that they would consider requesting a double nationality for their son mainly for the benefits they could see in having a European citizenship. Fernando and Ana Paulla did some of the shopping online and researched the possibilities not only in Denmark, but also internationally. They have a clear interest in giving their Brazilian culture and language to their son, and do so through food, customs and regular trips back home. They made a decision after a certain years of marriage to try to get pregnant and felt prepared to take on the tasks and responsibilities of parenthood. Ana Paulla was the most participative of all the wives by helping her husband to remember dates and situations, but also gave her clear meaning of the different issues discussed. The whole interview was held in Portuguese, because although they both speak fluent English and an intermediate Danish level, they felt more linguistic possibilities to express themselves in their mother tongue and the interviewer had fluency in the language as well.

Michael is Polish and so is his wife, Anna. They have both been living in Denmark during the last seven years and came as exchange students from the Erasmus Programme and have now gotten permanent jobs at the Aalborg University. Their son, Jan, was born a year and a half ago, premature in about a month. It was a planned and discussed pregnancy, but it did come to them as a shock when he was born so much time in advance. Due to the anticipation of Jan’s birth, they were unprepared with all the necessary material items to receive him such as the pram, but also clothes in the right size as he was born very small. They received many gifts from family members as he is the fifth child of his generation in the family. They too, as in the case of Fernando and Ana Paulla, have a desire to give their son all the Polish culture and language and have no intention of requesting the Danish citizenship for him. They did, however, mention their desire to “fit into” the Danish society through their consumption decisions for their son who began in daycare after some months of being born. At home they all speak Polish, but the interview was held in English as they feel just as comfortable speaking about their opinions and thoughts in English as in Danish. Anna was reserved in her interventions, but did make emphasis in some aspects that were important to her.

**4.1. What do “the Danish cosmopolitan men” buy for their baby and what are they responsible for?**

There were three different ways detected in which items “arrived” at the household for future use for the baby: a) purchases; b) gifts; and c) hand-me-downs. Due to the nature of this study more emphasis will be given to the actual purchases made by the parents alone.

Here is a general overview of the other two categories: The gifts mentioned by most couples were given to the child before and after birth by family members and friends. One couple, Isaac and Anna, pointed out that because most of their family lives abroad, every time they met they had presents along for the whole family and they felt that this alone already fulfilled most of the necessities for clothing and toys. Concerning the hand-me-downs, it has become more and more common to find swapping groups on the internet or amongst relatives and friends. This could be seen in the answers of some of the interviewees. As stated previously, Jan, Michael and Anna’s son, is the fifth of his generation and has inherited many of the clothes from his older cousins from their homeland Poland. Thus, his parents did not see the need to buy many things on their own other than those specific items that were not given to them.

The purchases can also be divided into two main categories: new items and second-hand items. There is a difference between hand-me-downs which are used products given away and second-hand items which are used products being sold.

Some men were clear at pointing out that the items bought for their child were selected exclusively for their baby, were picked up at a store and came in boxes. Hans, Theo and Fernando were the ones most using expressions such as “the best for our child”, “were looked online” and “opened the box/assembled”. These fathers perhaps did not have a network for receiving gifts and hand-me-downs, but seemed comfortable with the fact of having to buy new baby gear for their children. None of them mentioned economical limitations in a significant way and did state some items bought which are on a higher price range.

Other men, such as Michael and Thomas said they had bought second-hand items for their babies, but more focused on expensive products, for example the pram and furniture. They did both make considerations about how much they wanted to spend on used items and preferred to pay a higher amount on them to guarantee a higher standard and longer durability. Thomas explained this decision by wishing to buy an item that could last a long time with their daughter, but also in preparation for eventually having more children in the future and being able to use the items with them as well.

All of the men interviewed had three similar aspects with regard to the responsibilities for the consumption of baby gear: 1) they were interested in participating in the purchases of baby gear necessary for their baby; 2) they relied on their wives to take the lead in the purchases; and 3) they had limited participation in the decision making process in the purchases. The levels of these three aspects did vary from father to father in the sense that some were more interested than others, some relied more on their wives than others, and some were more limited in their participation than others.

For their level of interest, this could be seen as most of the fathers were more or less acquainted with the specific baby gear terminologies and uses during the interview and when looking at the pictures shown to them. Also, they all declared having joined their wives to physical baby stores and online research and purchases.

For the lead of the wives, several fathers said that they participated in the activities, but it was their wives that were deciding what had to be bought first, which stores and websites they should visit, which new product was recommended by friends and medical staff (ex. doctors and midwives), and deciding on quantities, sizes, colors and prints. None of the men expressed to be annoyed or a feeling of inconformity with this position of leadership taken by the women, nor did they show the desire to be more involved or more taken into consideration.

For the power of decision making, some of the men chose to become more concerned and responsible for some areas that they judges me more for the father to handle than the mother. Fernando said that he had more understanding of electronic equipment and had therefore a bigger interest in the baby monitor (or alarm), making sure it would be a good and efficient model, and overall safe for their child. Hans stated that he had checked the different stroller options available and when he had a made a decision on the model, he had verified the color possibilities with his wife. So even in these situations of more autonomy, they checked back with the wives to guarantee that it was an “approved” purchase.

Finally, when questioned, in general it was difficult for the men to remember which item of baby gear was bought first by them alone for their child. After some time trying to point out which item it was, sometimes even with their wives help, most of them had an answer. Isaac said had it been a toy for his daughter that he gave her at the hospital. Hans said it had been he who had seen a cute body stocking with the Eiffel Tower for his daughter. Fernando said that he bought a cutlery set for his son, even though he knew it would take a long time before he could use it for the first time. Theo bought a Hello Kitty cap for his daughter, but a long time after her birth. Michael bought a body stocking in a premature size, suited to fit his very small son. Thomas could not remember was he had bought alone for his daughter, but told about the items purchased for her in Indonesia together as a couple and with friends and family. Other items cited by the fathers that they have bought or usually buy for their babies are: diapers, toys, transportation equipment, such as strollers, prams and car seats.

When asked if they felt or had felt uncomfortable buying any pregnancy or baby gear item, all of the men said not to feel any kind of difficulty in purchasing even more specific products such as breast pads used by women who are breastfeeding.

**4.1.1. Physical strength and technological knowledge:**

The men interviewed seemed to be aware of their physical differences compared to women, their ability to understand building and assembling instructions and their higher technological knowledge. All of these characteristics might not be exclusive to men, but it was the information they transmitted through their answers. Therefore, during pregnancy and the early months of the baby’s life, they took on the responsibility to handle practical issues where these attributes could come handy. Isaac reveled how he encounter this situation:

*“All the things that needed some handy work, such as installing the car seat or fitting the pram in the car, it was this kind of things that I became responsible for.(…) I am also the one assembling the furniture, not because I am a man. I tell Anna that she can do it if she wants to, then fine with me.”*

Isaac, married to Anna

On the other hand, not all of this feeling comes exclusively from the men. There were some wives that interrupted their husbands to make a clear statement that they were the ones that did not appreciate that type of handy work, such as Anna (Michael’s wife) and Rebecca. She said:

*“He does it much better than I can. I would take hours while he would take minutes. And he wants to do it. I mean, I could do it if he wasn’t there, but needs to have something to do as well, so these things I give over to him, because he likes them.”*

Rebecca, Theo’s wife

In this way, typical activities for men are reinforced by the women’s posture as well giving the men the idea that it really is their duty as men to do certain things.

**4.1.2. Clothing – a woman’s thing:**

One item of baby gear that was mentioned in all interviews and that had a major role in the heads of most fathers as being something very necessary for babies were clothes. However, in most cases the men agreed that this was an area of interest, ability and responsibility of the women. One father, Theo, did mention buying a Hello Kitty cap for his daughter on his own and another father, Hans, told that he had seen an Eiffel Tower body stocking for his French-born daughter and had encouraged his wife to buy it. This father, Hans, was actually the only one of the interviewees that had another reason for attributing this responsibility to his wife than the rest, being in this case that Veronica was a major in Fashion design. Also, Michael revealed that not only did his wife buy clothes for their son, but also for him and that he was comfortable with this situation because he knew how important this aspect was for Anna and how unimportant it was for him. Later on the issue of the division of responsibilities amongst the couple will be further addressed.

**4.2. How is consumption of baby gear enabling identity construction, specifically in regards to fatherhood and gender role?**

Through the interviews it was possible to perceive some of the benefits in identity construction via baby gear consumption to construct the new identity as fathers. Also, gender roles became more evident in everyday life when confronted with the responsibilities connected with having a baby in the home.

**4.2.1. The father as an individual:**

After reviewing the interviews collected, the one word most said was: We.

Traditionally, when a direct question is asked to a specific person, he or she would most probably answer in the singular form utilizing words such as I, me, myself, and so on, all of which describe the individual as the center of the phase or thought. However, it was evident and striking that the men, and also the women, interviewed gave responses in the collective or plural form. As mentioned in the Theory chapter, Descartes described the origin of being in thinking, but when the men said: “We went”, “We looked”, “We bought” and many times repeated the word “together” in their sentences, what their thoughts reflected was that they were thinking together and therefore were parents together. In being so insistent in the fact of not having decided on any purchase alone, they gave their spouses sitting next to them the reassurance that the process of becoming a father was in connection with the women becoming mothers. As Higgins explains, the image of self to the other can be as relevant as the ideal self to oneself.

Below is a figure that illustrates the idea transmitted by the men throughout the interview, at least in the words chosen to answer the questions, even if they were directed specifically to them. One father was especially reluctant in admitting that he had made a decision on his own:

*“ I was responsible for reading the manuals and checking that the things we were looking at were safe and all… But I always checked with Paulinha (Ana Paulla) first if this was what we wanted”*

Fernando, married to Ana Paulla



*Relationship between parenting responsibilities*

“I” was mostly brought up in issues that did not involve the child, as when asked about their profession, their likes (for assembling, for driving, …), their relationship to Denmark, but when their baby was mentioned, then there was a switch to “couple mode”. As the interviews were held via Skype or Facetime and the camera on either side was turned off to improve the audio for recording, it was not possible to analyze the body language showed by the men in regards to their wives. However, several times during the interviews, some men more than others, such as Hans, Fernando and Isaac, ended their sentences with phrases like: “Right?” directed to the women, some of which only answered with a “yes” and others that intervened adding more details to what had just been said.

Therefore, in the figure, two circles are overlapping each other, being the one on the left, in blue, representing the father’s responsibility towards the child (F) and the one on the right, in pink, representing the mother’s responsibility (M). The overlapping area, in green, are the responsibilities with are shared by both parents in regards to their child (B). As it can clearly been seen, the green section is significantly bigger than the sections that are exclusive of each parent individually. This is represented in this way to emphasis the idea that their shared child was mostly a responsibility that they both had and that only a minor part of the activities around the baby were exclusively designated to the father or the mother. Once more the “ought self” (Higgins, 1987) playing a role in the sense that the men were, in some aspects, looking for the approval of others (in this case: the wife) of the father they should be or ought to be, the father that is involved and a part of co-parenting their mutual child.

However, these men did not completely forget their individuality simply for the fact of becoming a father and sharing responsibilities for a child. There was a sense of pride and involvement when they all said to actively change diapers and bathe their babies. When asked, none of them seemed to remember any item they felt or would have felt uncomfortable buying for their pregnant wives or babies. One father to a girl did, nevertheless, mention a back thought to when his daughter grew older and the unease in still being a part in buying specific items for her:

*“When she gets older and has to buy a bra, I will ask her mother to take care of that, you know, she is a woman too and will be able to figure it out better than me. Of course, if I have to do it, I will, as long as they tell me what I have to get.”*

Isaac, married to Anna

In this specific case, buying bras is one responsibility that is exclusive to the mother and was metaphorically pushed by Isaac to fit into the pink section of the figure. In this, it is possible to see the negotiation necessary when becoming a parent as it can, in many cases (biologically speaking it is in all cases), be an identity that is created together with two other people: the mother and the child. Menasco and Curry (1989) explore this negotiation in their study when presenting compromise and capitulation, and it is in this moment that the amount of overlapping of responsibilities becomes flexible and can merge to a bigger or a smaller degree. Being opened to compromise or willing to capitulate is in the hands of the father as much as of the mother for the sake of their baby.

**4.2.2. Becoming a father, receipt after receipt:**

The actual buying of baby gear was, as described above, a process undergone by all of the couples, even those that received many hand-me-downs from friends and relatives. Some couples began early and planned in their shopping experience while others had less of a hurry and were counting on the whole nine months of pregnancy, and even after birth, to buy those items that became needed during the child’s development and growth. The majority of the fathers did use the word “prepared” to describe the feeling they got from their purchases, and this, as mentioned in the theory, has been proven to ease the insecurity feelings of fatherhood and minimize the gap between being the men with no parenting experience, knowledge and gear, to being the fathers that they ideally wished to be for their children. One clear example of this process was told by Hans, who expressed his happiness, expectation and preparedness by every new item that was bought, and then received, assembled, installed and put in place:

*“One moment where I felt that a real father was when we order the car seat and we had to pick up the box from the store and we had to come back home carrying this big box. It was difficult to carry it, but once we got home and opened it and saw it, tested it, it was one of these first moments. Another thing was when we ordered her crib, I think it was one or two months before she was born, it was on sale. It came in a box and I was the one building it. I think men they usually like building things, but it was fun to build and make sure it was safe and stable. So, yeah, it was these two moments where I thought: Yeah, I am going to be a father, I am responsible for a little baby. (…) I felt very happy that we had everything ready for her.(…) In the beginning I was a bit afraid, but the feeling of being a father came gradually especially from buying things, when we took the car seat out of the box and see that it was something I chose for Isabelle. I felt prepared to become a father and had everything ready for when she was born.”*

Hans, married to Veronica

Having this physical contact of carrying and assembling gave this father a sense of preparedness and the baby gear bought was used as props in their home to illustrate the readiness and expectation to the arrival of their daughter.

On the other hand, one father, Isaac, spoke about a whole different dimension to feeling ready and prepared as a father in this household. He made clear that for him more important than the objects bought it was how he lived his new life as a father responsible not only for his daughter, but also for his wife especially after giving birth. The fact of being present and helpful, making the first milk bottles for his baby and being in charge of all the meals in their home gave this man the sensation of transitioning from man to father, where consumption did not play so big of a role as in the case of other interviewees. They were actually the couple that mentioned not having bought unnecessary items, but instead, having seen the need to buy more clothes as they had not realized how many outfit changes are required in the first months of a baby’s life.

One other aspect pertinent to this issue of consumption as a way to acquiring the new father identity is that some of the men described the shopping experience for baby gear as being something decided by their wives and that they followed along. This was the case of Theo, Michael and Hans. Almost none of the decisions or initiatives were taken by the men. They did, however, not feel any problem with this conduction of the purchase process. Some items were part of what they considered to be a “father’s department”, such as the car seat (researching, buying, and installing), the crib (checking security features and assembling), and electronic devices (readying usage manuals). Michael had the opportunity and need to buy some items on his own because his wife gave birth a month before due date and they had not prepared two essential items for the first days: baby clothes in premature size and a stroller to take the baby back home in (as they live walking distance from the hospital). He was then forced to go alone into a baby gear store and pick out some items and later, online, choose and pick up the stroller from a person selling second hand as the delivery time for a new stroller was around eight weeks. This was his impression of walking into the baby gear store on his own:

*“I was running to get it done and get back as fast as possible to the hospital to deliver it. There was not much philosophy in that to be honest. It was just something new, I had to find the place, and it was completely new for me to look for this kind of place. There was no emotion to be honest.”*

Michael, married to Anna

As shown, he felt lost, out of his element, trying to take care of a practical issue and therefore describes the experience of buying the first piece of clothing for his new born child as being a emotionless situation. This is quite different from the way some of the women expressed their experience to their husbands, where more emotions and expectations were involved. That is the case of Thomas telling how Ita, when in her homeland already four or five months into the pregnancy and knowing it was a girl they were expecting decided to have a shopping outing with her friends and family and bought many pink things for her baby.

Finally, there was some special object that was bought by the men, alone or together with their partners, which gave them a special sensation of truly being a father.

*“That which I remember buying was feeding bottles. In some way it had a great deal involved for me when we went out to buy them. “Now it is real!” That was big because I knew the time was coming.”*

Thomas, married to Ita

Feeding bottles are generally not something that is bought as a gift, but an item that parents buy for their children, which maybe indicated to Thomas that this was his child and his chance to experience buying an item so far away from non-fathers. For Theo, buying diapers was an experience of mixed feelings for him, perhaps in the sense that it was good that they were in need of diapers for their desired child, but bad because some diaper changing was bound to happen soon.

From these examples, it is possible to perceive that it is not the size or price of an object that determines the impact in the father identity a purchase can have in a man, as some small and cheap products were mentioned, but it is the symbolic value they carry in them.

**4.2.3. Responsibilities based on gender roles:**

The “Danish cosmopolitan man” has seen a change in posture in the image of the father’s partaking in the household activities, especially in regards to children care. This is at least what was exposed by the men interviewed were they all mentioned participating in several of the activities of everyday life of their babies, some more, others less. However, of all of the couples, the men that depicted a more equal division of tasks and a greater participation in for example diaper changing where the two Danish born men, Thomas and Hans. Thomas’ way of explaining how did what at their home was simply “practicality”: The person that is home at the moment things have to get done, does it. The other men had a more established division that in most cases was created as a “natural process”. Where this “natural process” came from, being suggested by the interviewer as perhaps being gender related, that possibility was denied, but no other explanation was given as to justify some choices. Some wives, such as Anna (Isaac’s wife), Rebecca and another Anna (Michael’s wife) did argument the characteristic of strength and also ability that their husbands had to assemble things, where did neither had the ability nor the interest to do so, unless they explicitly had to.

As shown previously, the interviewees consider clothing as part of what the women should be involved with in their everyday concerning the children. Some other choices stood out: Theo was the only one to state that he was responsible for medicine administration; and Isaac said that he was the one responsible for shopping and preparing of meals for the whole family, including the milk bottles since birth. Some aspects that were common for most men were the responsibility for having travel documents prepared for trips, reading electronic device’s manuals, assembling furniture such as the crib, and installing the car seat. One father, Michael, had a comment that in broad strokes described his impressions in regards to chore division in their home:

*“The most important things I plan and think through. So, Anna is dealing with the small stuff and I am dealing with the big stuff. In our relationship it works like that.”*

Michael, married to Anna

What these big and small things are for him could be discussable, but maybe there was a sense of importance meaning that what he did was important and relevant for all during a long time, whilst that which she did was not as important or relevant. This same couple does state having felt a difference in mentally since arriving in Denmark in comparison with their family and friends from Poland, thus motivating Michael to take advantage of the paternity leave laws in Denmark during a whole month where he was alone with his son visiting his family in his homeland.

**4. 3. How can we perceive the influence of a global consumer society in the “Danish cosmopolitan men” construction?**

The cosmopolitan being is incorporated in the men interviewed as they showed not only the interest in living away from their local realities, but in an ever deeper sense, have the attributes of openness and interest in the Other that are necessary to be more than just a tourist and really embrace the global-local style of life. In receiving much of this influence on a local level from the Danish society, gender equality issues, strong welfare desires, and free market possibilities come to confirm this man that truly exists in the real world: the “Danish cosmopolitan man”. Isaac, even though European had a strong sense of the Nordic gender equality in the way he administrates his household together with his wife. Michael spoke about the frustrated expectations they have with regards to the health system when they are visiting their family in Poland and have been called “spoiled” by friends for having become used to the welfare possibilities available in Denmark. Fernando talked vastly about all the opportunities that were offered to him and his family to buy products of almost any place on the planet, and thus select what he believed to be the best in each product category. Some of the general attributes of cosmopolitan people where made even clearer in these men’s relationship to their children and the experiences they have while living in Denmark: their reception to differences and desire to take advantage of all the alternatives at their disposal by listening, seeing, tasting, and understanding the Other.

**4.3.1. Connection with Denmark:**

The initial selection of interviews for this thesis was illustrated though a graph in the Methodology chapter, where the Danish men were showed as having a stronger connection to Denmark and the foreign men with foreign women being the ones with the weakest connection to the country. That was the criteria chosen to create the category of men here called the “Danish cosmopolitan man”.

However, during the interviews and after a closer analysis, the graph seemed not as true to reality as imagined. As it was a general impression, while interviewing real men part of that group created, the boundaries to how patriotic they felt and how much influence they had received from the Danish culture, having lived here all their life or only three years. The former is the case of Fernando, the man from this study with the least number of years with some contact to Denmark, thus one of the ones most interested in understanding the Danish way of doing things and willing to fit into the Danish society, even considering filing for a Danish citizenship for his son Daniel. However important it is for him and his wife that their child is and feels Brazilian, knowing the language, the culture and the food, they see benefits in being Danish officially, as they understand that he will be partly Danish for being born and raised in a Danish environment.

Another example of this difference in posture concerning Denmark is what Danish born Hans said about his interest that his daughter has with her own and her mother’s country, France. Hans mentioned speaking French both with Veronica and Isabelle, and only sometimes trying to speak in Danish to her. Also, he said that they both tried to buy clothes with French images or texts simply to make evident the fact that Isabelle was French when in Denmark, something they would not do if they were still living in Paris. One question that could have been asked was if the feeling would be the same if inverse. Would they try to buy clothes in the Danish colors or from brands like “Danefæ” to illustrate her double nationality? This children’s clothing bran in most of its products brings the image of a Viking or of a Swan, which is the Danish national bird, as shown below:



Clothing from Danefæ: www.danefae.dk

From these examples, it is possible to see that a certain nationality or exposure to a culture does not determine the degree or influence that specific country, in this case Denmark, will have on the “Danish cosmopolitan man”.

**4.3.2. Globalized parenting:**

The “Danish cosmopolitan man” comes to life when globalization issues are mentioned and this was the part of the interview that had the most mixed feelings and unsure answers. It is true that the parents interviewed had very young children and it can still seem as a distant thought to be concerned about how their son or daughter will live their mixed identity as being of two nationalities living in a perhaps third country. One this that was common to all fathers was the desire to give their children the opportunity to develop skills and abilities from all sides and make the most out of the chance to be born global. This was shown through their own consumption decisions where the item chosen was neither from the father’s country or the mother’s, but regardless of origin, the product bought was the one the parents judged to be the best that they could offer and afford. Fernando gave that example himself, saying that the stroller was German, the highchair Swedish, another item British, and several more from other countries than Brazil, his own homeland, or Denmark, his current living country.

Another aspect that was touched was concerning the language spoken at home with the child and amongst the couple. This too was very mixed: Isaac (Portuguese) spoke with Italian with his wife and daughters; Fernando (Brazilian) spoke only Portuguese at home; Theo (South African) spoke Danish to his wife, but was now trying to speak only English to his children; Michael (Polish) spoke Polish with his wife and son; Thomas (Danish) spoke Danish all the time at home, but Ita, his wife spoke her own language when alone with their daughter; and Hans (Danish) spoke French at home, but Danish to his child when they were alone together. There was a major interest in giving a cultural background to their babies through language, more than in trying to buy specific Danish or foreign products for their children.

Michael and his wife expressed a dilemma that they have had as a young Polish family living in Denmark for many years: in some moments they wish to stand out from the rest by choosing very Polish or non-Danish baby gear for their son. However, in other moments, all they want is exactly the opposite: fit into the Danish society also through consumption. Anna, the mother, said that she could clearly see that all Danish kids were very uniform in their way of dressing and also that which was expected of them to deliver at the daycare for their son: everybody wearing the same overall, the same “elephant” hat, the same rain set.

1. **Conclusion**

 Is it possible to make the same theoretical assumptions for men as what has been showed about women? This study has shown different aspects of fatherhood that have not yet been contemplated in the academic world, but that have opened a field of investigation in which similarities and differences from the woman as a mother can be found.

Looking back at the main research question that made a clear question to attempt to answer the problem formulation at the beginning of this thesis, some general and some very specific aspects of the sub-questions were addressed. The main question is: How is “the Danish cosmopolitan man” consuming for the baby to build and negotiate his new acquired father role and what does this express in regards to his consumer identity?

The “Danish cosmopolitan man” is perhaps being able to use consumption in his favor to construct the new identity as a father that becomes needed when he has a child. In some ways consumption has minimized this gap between the real self and the ideal self, but as a cosmopolitan man in the opened-minded Danish society, he has more tools that only consumption, such as great communication media, cheap flights back and forth from the family’s second nation, and mainly, feelings of love and interest for their child which has been proven through the interviews held are not feeling exclusive to mothers alone.

**5.1. Limitations:**

One of the limitations encountered for the execution of this project was the limited time available for its most complete result. There are clear rules and time restraints according to the CCG program and the extent of this study became deeper than initially intended. Therefore, not all aspects were studied with the same depth and interest even though adequate and of value. Another limitation was due to the fact that this is a less explored area of study than that which regards women and children. Although this is exactly the reason that made this thesis novel and of interest for the academic world, it was the same motive that made finding other studies and theories more complicated and restricted. A third limitation worth mentioning is that the interviews were held via Skype or Facetime. Even though most people in the age range of the interviewees are accustomed to using electronic devices and computer applications in their everyday life, it does not substitute real physical interaction between interviewer and interviewee and can at time be an obstacle to seeing face expressions, gestures and body language, as the camera was switched off on both ends during most of the interviewing time, being made available only for showing the pictures at the end of the recording.

**5.2. Further studies:**

Further studies can be made in this area in several directions and focuses, as the consumption relationship between fathers and their children has been very little explored until now. One specific issue that was notices from the Analysis chapter was a polarized “genderification” of men towards women: maybe they have a shared household and equal gender roles in the home, but when a baby comes, typical gender role are expected by the husband: cooking, cleaning, taking care of the baby. A clear example of this concerns the car: in all the interviews the men drove the car and pushed the stroller or pram. When questioned if this was because they were the men of the family, they all responded negatively, but had no other answer than simply saying that that was the way things functioned best in their home. One observation made was in the sense that several of the men, Isaac standing out, had taken the responsibility for many of the domestic chores to give the mothers the chance to do more things for the children, as they judged that they could better substitute cooking and cleaning that what a mother could do for their child.

Here is a figure of how the household responsibilities look for the father and the mother after having children, even if the situation prior to having children was more balanced amongst the couple.



*Relationship between man and woman in the household*

This can however, be an interesting subject to de addressed in a later project or study.

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1. **Appendix**

The appendixes for this master thesis are available as a CompactDisk attached below.

**7.1. Interview Guide**

**7.2. Recordings of in-depth interviews:**

* Hans and Veronica
* Thomas and Ita
* Theo and Rebecca
* Isaac and Anna
* Fernando and Ana Paulla
* Michael and Anna

**7.3. Transcription of in-depth interviews: (same order as above)**

* Hans and Veronica
* Thomas and Ita
* Theo and Rebecca
* Isaac and Anna
* Fernando and Ana Paulla
* Michael and Anna

**7.4. Images of pictures shown during in-depth interviews:**

* Stroller (or pram)
* Crib and changing table
* Toilet seat and adaptor
* Girl and boy dolls
* Sleeping bag
1. “Cogito ergo sum” (Latin) or “Je pense, donc je suis” (French) translated to English as “I think, therefore I am”. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)