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# Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between Eastern European self-initiated expatriates in Denmark and their acculturation to the Danish society, particularly through apparel, by using hermeneutic circle. This study contributes to consumer behaviour field by investigating the link between acculturation and apparel consumption as intercultural phenomena, if such takes place, that have been given relatively little attention in scientific literature. It is intriguing to observe consumers directly through in-depth interview in order to understand their perspectives and values towards fashion consumption and integration to the Danish society through it. Therefore, attention will lie on fashion and apparel consumption in Denmark among Eastern European males.

Keywords: expatriates, integration, acculturation, fashion, apparel

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## 1. Introduction

Globalisation develop homogeneous trends in consumers needs, tastes, fashion and lifestyles. Nevertheless, there is a cause for heterogeneity for consumers to identify themselves for one or several groups at the same time in order to distinguish themselves from others (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2002). This phenomena can be seen particularly among expatriates. In regards to globalisation, the migration has grown significantly in recent years, allowing people to move from country to country for work or education. These expatriates who have been living for a longer time or who decided to stay in new country can acquire some habits from the host country or trying to integrate into the society.

The integration of individuals with different cultural backgrounds is rated among the top 10 public policy concerns, where minority culture integrates to host nation's political, legal, educational, and cultural landscapes (NCSL, 2008). Border crossings initiate adaptation for migrants into unfamiliar economic, social, and cultural aspects (Berry & Sam 1997). Through acculturation, migrants adopt attitudes towards new cultural context but depending on their decision to what scale they are comfortable to change or maintain cultural habits of their primary socialisation (Berry, 1980).

Many shopping and consumption practices are considered as major sources of social solidarity and they play a key role in establishing, maintaining, transforming, and displaying social relationships (Warde, 1996), whereas fashion and apparel consumption is part of it.

This paper examines the relationship between Eastern European self-initiated expatriates in Denmark and their acculturation to the Danish society, particularly through apparel, by using hermeneutic circle. This study contributes to consumer behaviour field by investigating the link between acculturation and apparel consumption as intercultural phenomena, if such takes place, that have been given relatively little attention in scientific literature. It is intriguing to observe consumers directly through in-depth interview in order to understand their perspectives and values towards fashion consumption and integration to

the Danish society through it. Therefore, attention will lie on fashion and apparel consumption in Denmark among Eastern European males.

## 1.1. Motivation

The main focus area of current Master Thesis was the investigation of men and fashion. The very first idea was to find out how e-commerce homepages are performing and whether there should be any specific web-page attributes according to the country and culture of the male shopper for better user experience. As the topic mainly covered marketing fields' interest, it was not covering all academic criteria of the researchers' university programme and therefore needed some changes.

In order to keep initial area focus (men and apparel) without major changes, with help of thesis supervisor tried to find an interesting research topic within this area. As it took a lot of time in reading and analysing academic literature and find the research question that would align with own interest and curiosity, the communication with the supervisor was stopped from behalf of the writer. Nevertheless, by reading more academic literature and observing own surroundings, the problem statement of the project became as it is (See 1.2. Research Question).

The inspiration for this thesis was an interest in how Eastern European men perceive Danish fashion and whether they have preferences. In addition, the interest lied to observe from target groups if the clothes, as a form of communication, can be used as a tool for integration into the Danish society. By the fact that this is still an emerging area focus (research field), there is a lack of academic studies focusing on the relationship between consumption of fashion by men and integration. Along these lines, it was interesting and challenging to contribute to this field.

## 1.2. Research Question

Based on information presented in introduction and researchers motivation has led to the following research question, that is:

*How do Eastern European male self-initiated expatriates perceive Danish fashion and whether it is a form of communication and integration to the society?*

The research question of this thesis consists of three parts that will be investigated throughout the paper. They are seen as:

1. Male perception towards fashion and apparel consumption;
2. Apparel as form of communication; and
3. Apparel and fashion as tool for integration.

## 1.3. General definitions

Self-initiated expatriates - individuals who seek out international assignments on their own initiative instead of being assigned to them by their organization. This can be due to many reasons such as limited career possibilities in the home country and high interest towards internationalization or host country location (Doherty et al., 2011, pp. 607-608; Richardson & Mallon, 2005, pp. 416-417). Another differentiating factor is the funding, as the self-initiated expatriates finance their travel, accommodation and other expenses by themselves instead of receiving a big compensation package from the headquarters (Inkson et al., 1997, p. 352).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Men and Fashion Consumption

Clothing for both men and women is culturally defined. Cultural norms and expectations are related to the meaning of being a man or woman and are closely linked to appearance.

Popular culture has created a shift in meaning of masculine clothing in business and leisure setting, whereas leisure clothing has been adjusted by media expressed in TV, film and popular music (Crane, 2000). Moreover, clothing is perceived differently among men – some simply as clothing while others both consume and create styles. Nevertheless, men have become interested in the fashion and their appearance compared to previous decades.

Janus, Kaiser & Gray (1999) stated that men who belong to minorities, such as race, ethnicity or sexual orientation, tend to use clothing and styles as identity expression and resistance to the dominant culture. However, Segal (1990) claimed that heterosexual men were becoming unisexual in their appearance as they become more fashion conscious.

Piper & Capella (1993) analysed men's shopping behaviour and identified apparel as a priority trend. Thus can be influenced by not only popular culture and media but also ease of access through e-commerce, where wide range products can be bought by any quality or price.

### 2.2. Communication through Apparel

Apparel and fashion are compatible when analysing consumers behaviour field as there is additional meaning of attire than just body protection or modesty. Clothing has formed from utilitarian purposes to the way of communication. Apparel can be seen as a narrative, a story about where person has been, what was doing, who want to be, and how we reveal ourselves to each other (Savage, A., 2016). Concurring to the editorial policy of Fashion



Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture, fashion is defined as "the cultural construction of the embodied identity."

French sociologist Bourdieu (1975) has analysed the logic of the field of fashion by revisiting fashion as a language and way of communication. According to Bourdieu, fashion consists mainly from two sociological conceptions: high fashion and popular fashion. Each of the concepts gathers moral notions or values as well as knowledge (calling it *habitudes*) with what can be used as a manipulation of social activities – distinguish oneself into a group, class and gender. Another French social theorist Sahlins (1976) stated that proper attire works as an element of proper behaviour, meaning that the dress makes wearer behave and act according to the attire he or she wears at the moment. In addition, Sahlins (1976) studied on consumers goods significance on an ability to communicate cultural meaning has a result that fashion gains social meaning and creating status, sex, age and gender. Addition, Carling et al. (2014) claimed that clothing style can help to position ourselves through physical appearance, gender, age, class, religion, and sexuality (Carling et al., 2014, p.45-46). All academics have found connection between consumer goods with culture, communication and persons perception on who he is and wants to be seen as.

Lisiak (2015) has compound qualitative research to see whether researchers' performances through apparel and way of communication have an effect on how respondents perceive them. Her article was based on observations and reflections on some of the fieldwork and interviews. She argued that "its implications are most relevant for our thinking about how we design and perform fieldwork". She stated that certain clothes and accessories have strong meaning and intend to attract attention. In addition, if person tries to blend into a specific group, person may prefer to avoid items that give much information, such as garments, accessories or symbols.

Loxley (2007) argues that "our bodies cannot be understood as standing outside culture, as the ground or origin of our social identities". He means that culture has an impact on persons' appearance. As an example, by taking middle-class men from Western culture

(USA) and from Middle-East, their appearance and clothing are different from each other and thus represent the culture they are coming from.

### 2.3. Acculturation and Consumption

Culture is acknowledged as having major influence on consumer behaviour (Askegaard, Arnould & Kjeldgaard, 2005; Cleveland & Laroche, 2007).

Culture is learned experience; acquired by individuals in the course of integrating with others in their daily lives. (Cleveland, Laroche, Pons & Kastound, 2008, 196-212)

A clear depiction of acculturation is fundamental to the conceptualization of ethnicity and cultural adaptation in multicultural contexts (Phinney, 1990)

Whereas socialization is the process whereby individuals learn the standards of the culture in which they grow up, acculturation requires the interaction of at least two cultures, describing the process by which a person learns and adopts the norms and values of a different culture (Mendoza, 1989; Rudmin, 2003).

Assimilation and acculturation are both used to describe what happens when two cultures come in contact for extended periods of time. If enough of the cultural markers of language, tradition, and food from the minority culture are maintained for the members to be able to recognize themselves as a distinct culture, then it is said to have undergone acculturation instead of assimilation. This type of change is much more likely to happen during voluntary migrations or peaceful coexistence, rather than as a result of the conquests or forced coexistence that typically characterize assimilation. Of course, acculturation is also a two-way process because both cultures will still change and be affected by each other.

Acculturation was once viewed as a unidirectional process corresponding to assimilation: as minority individuals acquire the cultural aspects of the host culture, they simultaneously shed parts of their original cultural heritage (Phinney, 1990).

Berry (1980, 1997) has asserted that changes occur along two independent continua from where the most interesting that is for current study is the second one: the degree to which the individual conforms to the attitudes and behaviours associated with the host culture. Individuals who maintain their original cultural identity while exhibiting behavioural characteristics of the host culture are said to endorse integration. Individuals who progressively abandon their original EID in favour of host culture traits reveal assimilation.

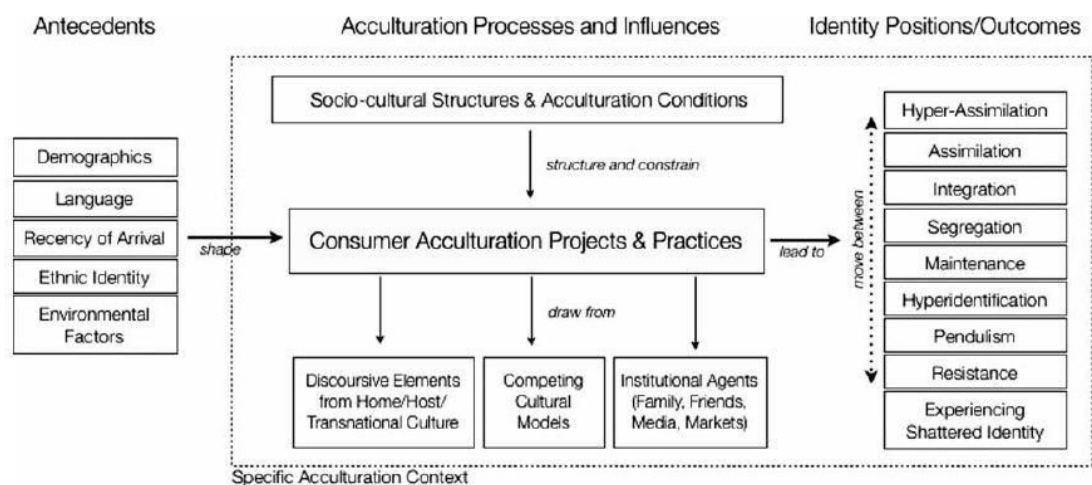


Figure 1. A synthesized model of consumer acculturation phenomena.

#### 2.3.4. Danish Expatriates - Why Eastern-Europe?

The main purpose of this section is to show the reader why named target group (Eastern-European Expatriates in Denmark) has been chosen.

##### *Who is an expat?*

Expatriate, or shortly expat, is a person who lives outside their native country (Oxford Dictionaries. (n.d.)). By the following definition from Oxford dictionary, the word expat has several synonyms, such as refugee, foreign worker, immigrant, and migrant. Still, all these words have a deeper meaning as they have a different set of assumptions, but the main

characteristic is individuals living outside of their native country. There can be numerous reasons why people migrate to another country - economic, social, political and environmental.

- Economic migration is caused by individuals choice for better work or enhancing career opportunities;
- Social migration can be due to person's decision to have better quality of life or family reunification;
- Political migration - moving to escape political persecution or war; and
- Environmental causes of migration include natural disasters.

Migration can be done on persons free will (economic and social migration) or forced (political and environmental migration). According to the UN report, in 2015 there were 244 million international migrants, and the number has grown rapidly from 222 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000 (UN "International Migration Report 2015", 2016, p.1.). These numbers consist of various migrant that have moved to another country for different purposes. Whether someone is an expat or not doesn't depend on origin – it's about the motivations behind their decision to move abroad (Nash, K. (2017, January 20). According to the Business dictionary, most expatriates only stay in the foreign country for a certain period of time and plan to return to their home country eventually, although there are some who never return to their country of citizenship (Business dictionary, (n.d.)). Another definition is "*(A)n expatriate is expected to relocate abroad, with or without family, for as short a period as six months to a year; typical expat assignments, however, are from two to five years long*" (Financial Times, Lexicon, n.d.). By following mentioned definition, expatriates move to another country based on certain decisions, preliminary due to economic reasons, such as work or enhancing career opportunities. By working abroad in a more profitable position, it requires skills and previous education that might be considered as a high standard. Here, international students can also be considered as gaining a higher education is one of the means for acquiring better jobs in future. Regarding the age of the 'economic' expatriates, they may be considered as your-adult (18-39 years old) or adult because of higher education criteria or workplace/country regulations.

Considering facts mentioned in this section, the definition of the expatriate in this study will be an individual who is over 18-years-old and who lives outside of its native country primarily due to economic reasons, such as career and higher education.

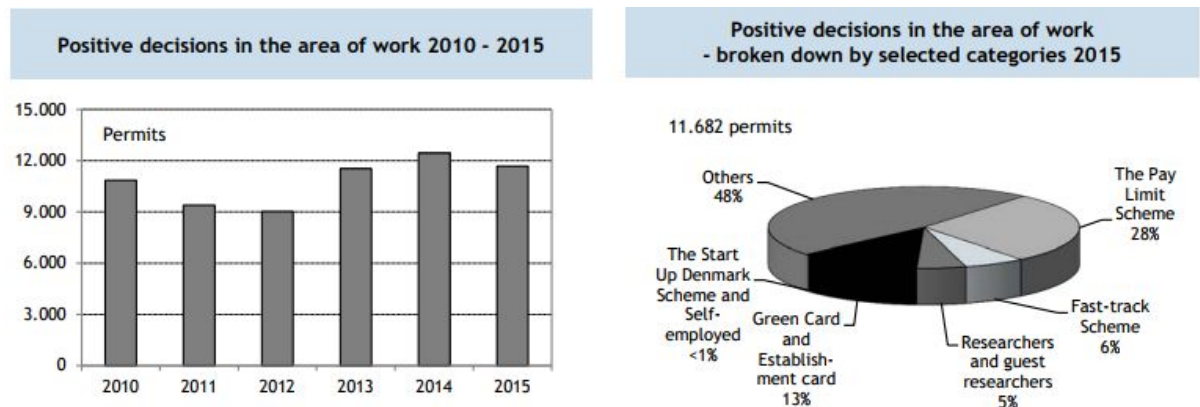
### *Expatriates in Denmark*

#### **Categories of Residence Permit**

In order to live and work in Denmark, every person should apply for residence permit. According to a statistical overview of Denmark's migration and asylum in 2015, the number of granted residence permits have increased from 59 019 in 2010 to 84 693 in 2015 (Statistical Overview "Migration and Asylum 2015", Autumn 2016). These numbers include several categories like asylum, family reunification, work, study and EU/EEA. According to the target group for this thesis, I will concentrate on the three last categories that are work-, study- and EU/EEA- based residence permits.

According to the publication from The Danish Immigration Service, the number of permits granted on the basis of work activities has decreased from 12 436 permits in 2014 to 11 682 permits in 2015 due to reduction of permits granted cf. the Green Card Scheme (Statistical Overview "Migration and Asylum 2015", Autumn 2016, p. 2). It means that individuals who were obligated to have Green Card in order to work in Denmark has decreased but it does not state that all work permits are based the Green Card Scheme. European countries that need to have a Green Card in order to travel for work to other countries are Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Republic of Macedonia (. In 2015 97 percent of all permits granted in the agricultural sector were issued to Ukrainian citizens.

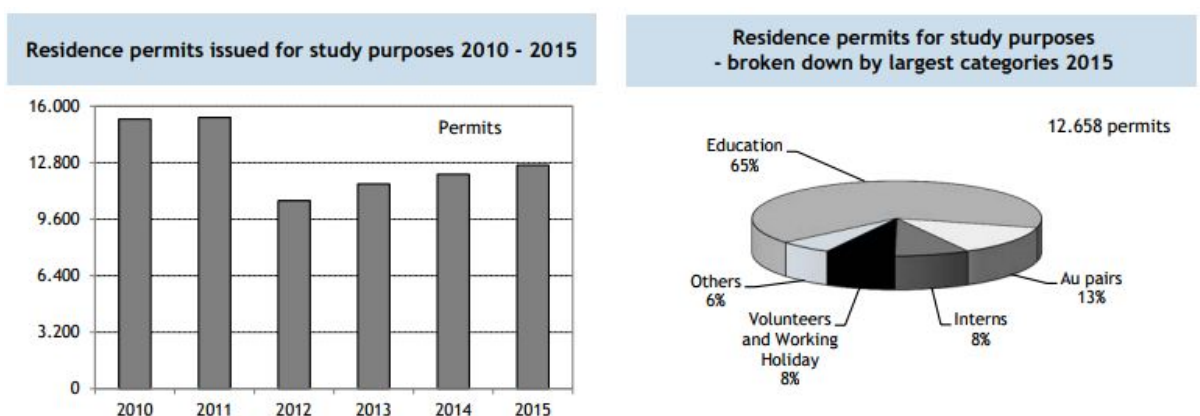
Figure 1. Work based residence permits illustrative tables



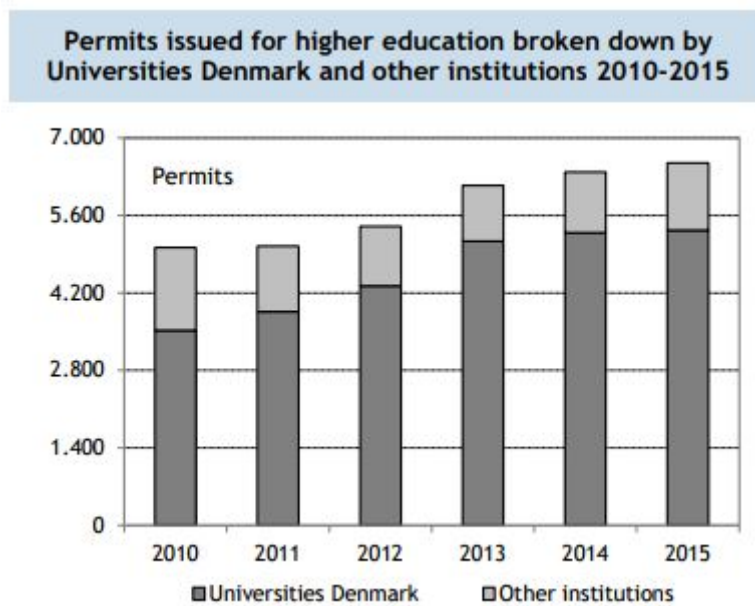
Source: Statistical Overview “Migration and Asylum 2015”, Autumn 2016, p. 4

The number of permits in the study-related area has increased from 7 425 in 2014 to 8 246 in 2015, where increase resulted in permits granted to students attending what is defined as other institutions of higher education and to students at Danish universities (Statistical Overview “Migration and Asylum 2015”, Autumn 2016, p. 3). The study-related residence permits cover education, au-pair, internship, volunteer and other (see Figure 2). In publication was stated that most permits in this category were granted to the USA and Nepalese citizens but 68 percent of permits for the internship was issued to Ukrainian citizens. Even though internship is considered as part of the study in high educational programme for certain period of time, it may also be considered as a work experience.

Figure 2. Study based residence permits illustrative tables



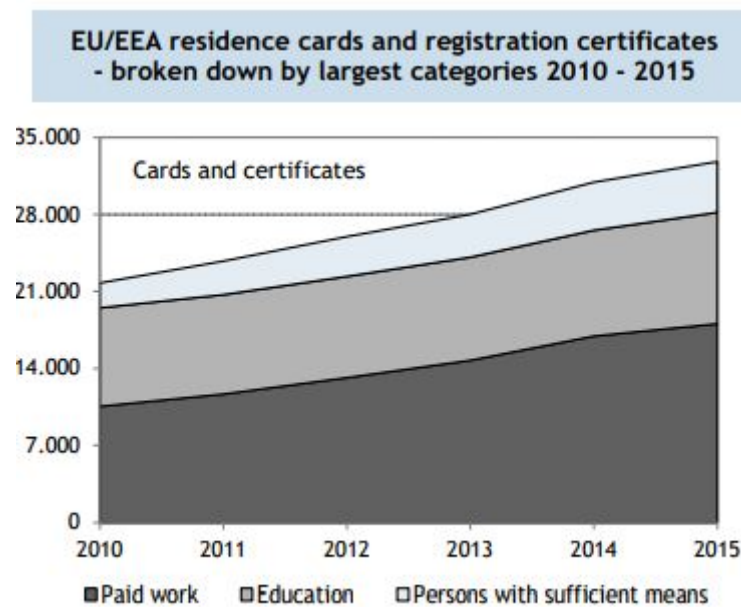




Source: Statistical Overview “Migration and Asylum 2015”, Autumn 2016, p. 5

The biggest category where residence permits were issued was EU/EEA citizens. It was stated that half of all permits were granted to this category where their number reached 37 366 in 2015, corresponding to a 6 percent increase from a previous year (Statistical Overview “Migration and Asylum 2015”, Autumn 2016, p. 3). In this category, the registration certificates were work- and study-related which both have increased from the previous year.

Figure 3. EU/EEA based residence permits illustrative table



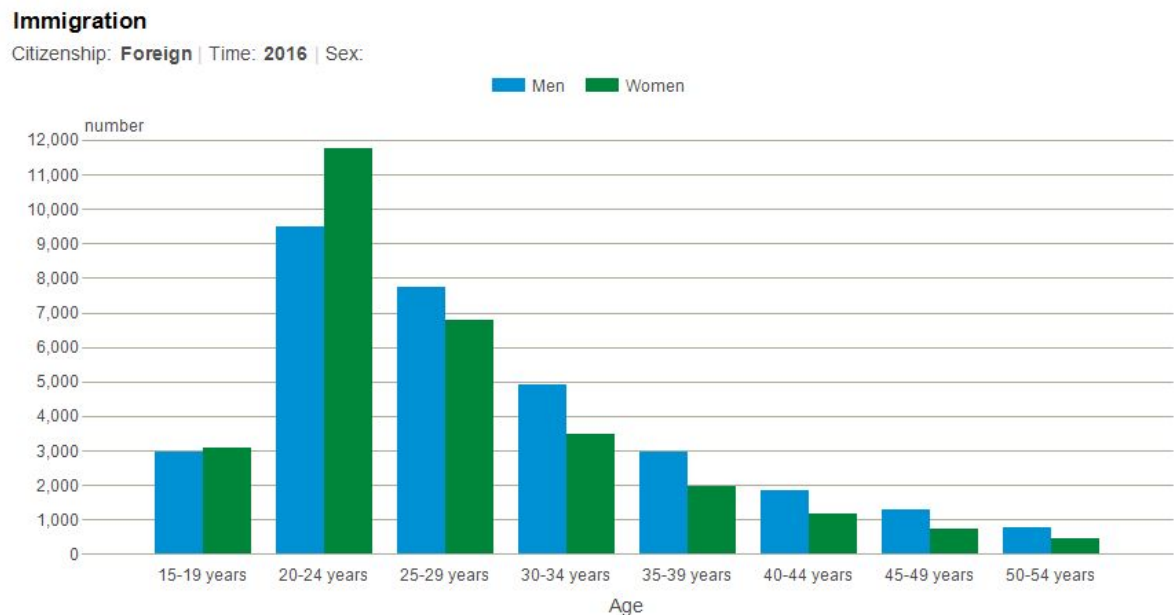
It should be mentioned that EU/EEA citizens and Swiss citizens can live and work in Denmark under the EU regulations on freedom of movement, which means that they are not obligated to have residence or work permit in the beginning. Still, if the duration of stay in Denmark is more than three months (or six months if due to searching for a job), applying for EU residence document is obligatory (web page of Statsforvaltningen, May 2017). The largest nationalities who obtained the residence permits in 2015 were Romania, Poland, Germany, Lithuania, and Italy (Statistical Overview “Migration and Asylum 2015”, Autumn 2016, p. 3).

### Demographics

As current thesis concentrates on male representatives from Eastern Europe, empirical findings about immigrants who come to Denmark according by their gender, age and nationality will be evaluated. As there were no publications about demographics of Eastern European expatriates coming to Denmark by category of the residence permit, the investigation lied in evaluating finding by immigration from Danish Statistics Bank (Statistikbanken).



Figure 4. Graphical illustration of individuals with foreign citizenship according gender and age groups in 2016.

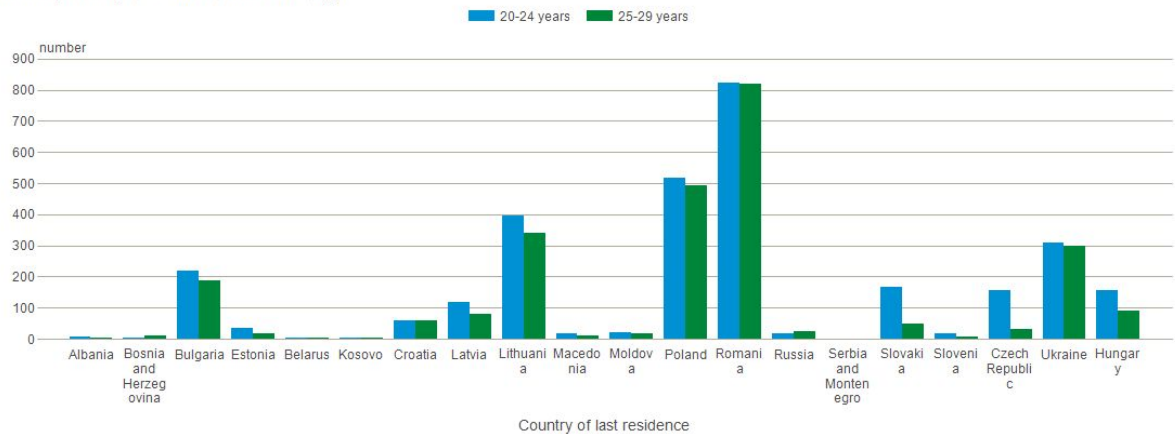


Source: Statistics Denmark

According to the figure shown above, age group between 20 to 24-years-old is having the most number of immigrants compared to other age groups. In this age group can be characterized by individuals who can be mainly international student, due to the age and coherence with the number of residence permit granted for the study. Moreover, there is connection with the education and expats period of living in another country, meaning that after graduating from the universities, thus fulfilling own assignment, traveling back to their native country. In addition, it is seen that in 2016 female individuals with foreign citizenship were over-represented in age groups 15-19 and 20-24 years old, while male representative are over-represented in older age-groups. It might be due to the fact that male representatives are more likely to come to Denmark by economical means.

#### Immigration

Citizenship: Foreign | Sex: Men | Time: 2016 | Age:



While “nation-state” clearly refers to such common elements as territory, people, and an organized “sovereign” state structure, it is often given further content in terms of people sharing a common culture, sometimes even ethnicity. (Casper G., 2008, “ The Concept of National Citizenship in the Contemporary World: Identity or Volition?”)

Clearly, when we talk of nations, let us say Germany, we somehow assume that the Germans, as Germans, have much in common, but what exactly they have in common is subject to much dispute. Consider such ambiguous ethnicity defining variables as common descent, a community of customs, a community of beliefs, a sense of self-identity, a shared history, a shared language. (Casper, G. (2008))

### 3. Methodology

The purpose of this section is to explain the methodological framework of the thesis. In the Philosophy of Science part, the clarification of the paradigm as well as ontological and epistemological considerations towards the research topic will be discussed. The reason lies to show the reader how I, as a researcher, perceive the world and what my methodological considerations are in current study. In Method section, the structure of the current paper, data collection methods as well as explanation why is it done in this way will be covered. Finally, the delimitation of the thesis will be evaluated.

#### 3.1. Philosophy of Science

Philosophy of science, according to Holm (2013), is the study done in systematic way in order to show how scientific knowledge is produced, substantiated, and used in society (Holm, 2013, p. 14). It is important due to it helps to guide the research through a “systematic study” in order to produce knowledge that can help to understand the society (Holm, 2013, p. 14), in this study’s case - Eastern-Europe male expat community.

In this thesis, the chosen paradigm used will help to guide this study through outlining the ontological, epistemological and methodological understanding (Guba, 1990, pp. 17-18; Guba and Lincoln 1994, p. 107) :

1. Ontology answers to the questions “What is the nature of the ‘knowable’?” or “what is the nature of ‘reality’?” (Guba, 1990, p. 18) and it is the position of how the researcher perceives the world or/and reality.
2. Epistemology answer to the question: “What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?” (Guba, 1990, p. 18) and it refers to the relationship between the researcher and the knowledge or data that is acquired.
3. Methodology stands for the question: “How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?” (Guba, 1990, p. 18) and is about how the knowledge is collected through methodology and method.

These characteristics create an integrated view of how knowledge is viewed: how we are placed in relation to the knowledge and what methodological strategies are used to identify it.

This paper examines what are the factors that are considered for acculturation from male Eastern-European expat perspective and whether appearance, especially apparel and fashion, are part of it. This study contributes to consumer behaviour field by investigating the link between integration and fashion consumption, if such takes place, that have been given relatively little attention in scientific literature. It is intriguing to observe male consumers through in-depth interviews in order to understand their values and aspects of integration into Danish society and if fashion have had any influence on it. Therefore, attention will lie on changes in personal apparel while living and integrating in Denmark.

### 3.1.1. Paradigm

A ‘paradigm’ is a term that can be described as a set of beliefs of theories or a system that guides researcher through its study (Kuhn, 1962; Guba, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As it is depending on what type of research is made and which discipline to choose, there are different approaches and definitions for the term. According to Kuhn (1962), paradigm is seen as a “collection of shared beliefs” where there are set of agreements on how problems or questions are to be comprehended. Guba (1990) defines the term paradigm as:

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*“(A) basic set of beliefs that guides action, whether of the everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry”*

Guba, 1990; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005

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In addition, the researcher claimed that *“it is important to leave the term in such a problematic limbo”*, addressing the term to have no clear definition. He argues that by not having strict definition to the term gives opportunity to reshape it in researchers’ own understanding. However, Guba (1990) discuss four types of research paradigms: positivism,

post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. This project follows to understand the reality as a continuous development of multiple interpretations from the target group perspective, it follows a **constructivist paradigm**.

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*Constructionism or constructivism is an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors.*

Bryman, 2012

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By following constructivist approach in regards to this study means that researcher recognizes that identity and constructions of meanings regarding apparel as catalyst for integration. In other words in relation to research topic, both researchers and interviewees generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and their ideas regarding acculturation, taking into consideration motivation, appearance, identity, communication, etc. In addition, constructionism suggests that the categories that people employ in helping them to understand the natural and social world are in fact social products (Bryman, A. ,2012).

### 3.1.2. Ontology

According to Guba, ontology answers to the questions “What is the nature of the ‘knowable’?” or “what is the nature of ‘reality’?” (Guba, 1990, p. 18) and it is the position of how the researcher perceives the world or/and reality. This can be described as the basic understanding of the reality and how person perceives it.

As chosen paradigm is constructivism, the ontological stance is that there are always many interpretations that can be made in any inquiry, and as there is no fundamental truth or

falsity of these constructions. The **relativism** position characterise that there are various realities that exists in people's minds (Guba, 1990, p.26)

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*“Relativist - realities exist in in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them.”*

Guba, 1990, p. 27

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Constructivists believe that actions and experience influence humans reality and perception of it at the same time influencing on others realities. Accordingly, it is important that the researchers are acknowledged that their presence and understanding is also influencing on theirs research field and vice versa (Guba, 1990, p. 25-27; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110-111).

In this study, the interviews and analysis of it will be based on personal understanding of the topic and understanding of respondents matter of contention and reality, therefore findings may not be the same as other researcher investigation on the same topic. It should be mentioned that inquiry gathered from interviewees are not either ultimate truth or false due to their perception and understanding of the reality.

### 3.1.3. Epistemology

An epistemological issue concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline (Bryman, A. 2008, p.13), meaning what is the ‘real’ knowledge for the researcher, in what level of involvement and how will the justification of true beliefs be from researchers perspective.

The epistemology is **subjective**, which means that researcher recognizes and accepts the influence to the project, field, people or groups:

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*“Subjectivists inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are the output of creation of the process of interaction between the two.”*

Guba, 1990, p. 27

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This means that we have an influence on the field and on the research and vice versa (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, as subjectivist, we are aware that we still have an influence on the study field, in the sense that we, as the researchers, have an impact on our perception and interpretation of the data.

The epistemological relationship between theory and the research of this paper will be **interpretivist**. As interpretive researcher, accessing the reality only through social constructions such as language, expressions and shared meanings, meanwhile integrating personal interest to the study. Therefore, the decision lied towards conducting in-depth interviews that will provide relevant data for investigating this thesis’ research topic.

### 3.1.4. Methodology

Methodology is a procedure how the knowledge will be collected. Methodology of constructivism aims to establish the variety of interpretations that exist and bring them into general agreement as much as possible (Guba, 1990, p.26).

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*“Hermeneutic, dialectic - individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one (one or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus.”*

Guba, 1990, p.27

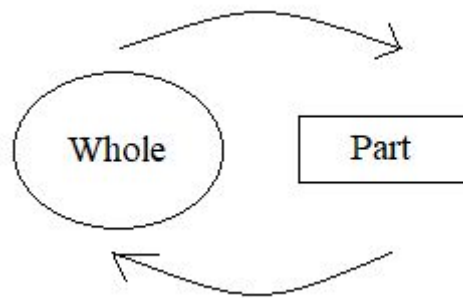
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Guba (1990) claimed that there are two aspects of the process: hermeneutics and dialectics. Following hermeneutical process, the individuals interpretations should be portrayed as accurately as possible, while dialectic aspect consist of comparing and contrasting the individual's inquiry in a way that all the meanings come in term (Guba, 1990, p.26). Concurrently the methodology aims to keep communication open so that information can be continuously be improved (Guba, 1990, p. 27). Gerard (2005) explains it as “value-freedom” (Gerard, 2005, p.42). Aspect of openness or “value-freedom” is the main differential point from positivism approach. Thus, there is no intend to control or predict what is the “reality” but to build up the “reality” at the present point in the mind of its constructors (Guba, 1990, p.27)

Gadamer’s hermeneutical tradition is seen as the cyclical process of understanding that constantly moves back and forth between the parts (statements and sayings of participants) and the whole (topic) to represent the findings faithfully.



Figure 4.. Hermeneutical circle, based on Gadamer's



The key concept is interpreting research participants' narratives and findings - language as a means of communicating the meaning. *It is important researchers own experience of understanding when relating concepts of belief (bias, fore-structure), intersubjectivity, authenticity, temporality (time affecting understanding and emotion), and culture* (Regan, 2012). What is significant about Gadamer's hermeneutics is his ontological focus (Being) and capacity to not only interpret human understanding but misunderstanding as a mechanism for effective communication.

### 3.4. Method

In this section, the method of acquiring sample, interview procedure, and chosen qualitative analysis method will be described.

#### 3.4.1. Reaching Sample

In this thesis, a non-probability sampling, also called snowball sampling, was used by considering the concept of voluntary participation. The request for the interview was sent as a post in different Facebook group channels as well as shared from researchers own acquaintances. The chosen Facebook groups were chosen based on desired sample groups occupation (employed) and the ones which were open communities. The reason to reach target sample namely through Facebook was due to high usage of social media in Europe and due to the researchers used social media channel. The invitation for the interview for

this thesis was sent to Facebook groups such as “Expats in Denmark”<sup>1</sup>, “Aalborg Marked”<sup>2</sup>, “Life in Aalborg”<sup>3</sup>, “Job offers in Denmark”<sup>4</sup>, and “~~~~ Expat in Denmark ~~~~”<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, if location of interviewees would reach out from researchers place of living (Aalborg, Nordjylland region), it was still decided to meet participants at the location most suitable for them. The invitation was posted on 1st of May and deleted on 14th of May evening. The reason for deleting the post was regarding the time planned for going through interviews and time spent on writing the analysis.

### 3.4.2. The Sample

The aim was to have at least 10 in-depth interviews in order to get better understanding of males’ perception towards chosen topic. In total, five individual interviews were conducted. The ages of respondents range from 22 to 27 and all participants are not married, have higher education, have lived in Denmark for at least three years and plan to stay in Denmark. Respondents were coming from Czech Republic, Estonia, and Latvia (3). Those participants who were from Baltic States had named Russian language as native one. The participants’ place of living in Denmark was Aalborg or Aarhus. Names were kept confidential. Each interview was conducted individually in different days and arranged at the place based on interviewees’ preference. The interviews with three Latvian participants were arranged in the neutral location (café) in the Aalborg city center, other interviews were taken at interviewee's home (Aalborg) or at work place (Brande). The interviews were audio-recorded lasting an average of 20 minutes. Mostly open-ended questions were based on the literature review and the pursuit of the researcher. All the interviews were transcribed word by word, and added emotions and comments if applicable, so as to represent the original interview as precise as possible. After the interviews, participants were asked to validate data of presenting inquiry in order to have the views of participants as faithfully as

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/724994634231812/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/232077560192402/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/lifeinaalborg/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/vacantes.denmark/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/4386755843/>

possible. It was done in addition to be clear that all interpretations are anchored in the experiences of participants' texts of research interviews. By thus, the trustworthiness of qualitative research process was ensured.

### **3.4.2. Respondents**

Here I will list the respondents background information of the conducted qualitative interviews. The summarised information can be seen in Table 1. (see Table 1. Qualitative interview respondents background, p. 26)

Respondent A: 27-years-old from Czech Republik, have been in Denmark for three years, living in Aarhus, undergoing last semester in Master of Science (MSc) in Economics and Business Administration at Aarhus University and working as a student worker at Bestseller A/S in Jack & Jones E-commerce department. He is single and shares apartment with other international students.

Respondent B: 23-years-old from Latvia, have been in Denmark for four and half years, living in Aalborg. He acquired Bachelor in Export and Technology Management at University College Nordjylland, Aalborg, and now works as a part-time worker in restaurants (did not want to mention the names). He is single and shares a room in the dormitory with other international student. When asking about his place of birth and first language, he stated that even if he was born in Latvia and has latvian citizenship, his first language is Russian.

Respondent C: 23-years-old from Latvia, have been in Denmark for five years, living in Aalborg. He acquired Bachelor in Export and Technology Management at University College Nordjylland, Aalborg, and now works on full-time position (position and place of work unmentioned). He is single and shares a room in the apartment with other international students. Similar with respondent B, when asking about his place of birth and first language, he stated that even if he was born in Latvia and has latvian citizenship, his first language is Russian.

Respondent D: 22-years-old from Latvia, have been in Denmark for three years, living in Aalborg. He acquired AP Degree in Marketing at University College Nordjylland, Aalborg, and has part-time work in the restaurant (place of work unmentioned). He has a girlfriend with whom he shares the apartment. Similar with respondent B and C, his first language is Russian but was born in Latvia and has Latvian citizenship.

Respondent E: 27-years-old from Estonia, have been in Denmark for seven years, living in Aalborg. He acquired his higher education in Denmark as MScs in Architecture at Aalborg University. He stated that he is post-graduate when asking about his occupation. He is single and lives alone. Similar with respondent from Latvia, his first language is also Russian.

Table 1. Qualitative interview respondents background information

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Place of birth</b>	Czech Republik	Latvia	Latvia	Latvia	Estonia
<b>Age</b>	27	23	23	22	27
<b>Nationality</b>	Czech	Latvian	Latvian	Latvian	Estonian
<b>Native language</b>	Czech	Russian	Russian	Russian	Russian
<b>Period living in Denmark</b>	3 years	4,5 years	5 years	3 years	7 years
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	Employed	Employed	Part-time employee	Post-graduate
<b>Education</b>	MScs in Business Economics	B in Export	B in Export	AP in Marketing	MScs in Architecture
<b>Plan staying in Denmark</b>	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes

### 3.4.3. Qualitative Interview

The used interview method for collecting the data was individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. It allows the researcher and participant to engage in a dialogue whereby researcher can modify its initial questions based on the respondent's answers. Interview is flexible and adaptable way of finding meaning behind experiences (Robson, 2002). Therefore, there are no concrete guidelines to follow during the interviews.

The advantages of face-to-face in-depth interviews are possibility in modifying respondents' inquiry by investigating interesting responses and motives, where questionnaires cannot do so. Moreover, respondent can share its independent view and there is possibility to discuss intimate or confidential issues without a fear of judgement. In addition, respondents' who may not feel comfortable in a group or new surrounding allows the interviewer to see the surrounding home or office of the respondent.

The disadvantages of the in-depth interviews are that they are time consuming (interview itself and long time spending on analysis) and have some expenses (transportation, small gifts as expression of gratitude for finding time for the interview). Other disadvantages may be that responses are over rationalised and not true emotions and motivations. Moreover, interviews take longer time to organise than focus group interview and there is possible interruptions or eavesdropping by the respondent's family if in their home, or colleagues if interview is done at their workplace.

According to Bryman (2012) in a semi-structured interview the researcher has an interview guide, which is seen as a template of questions that is less structured compared to the question scheme. Interview guide used in this thesis can be found in Appendix "Interview Guide" (see p. 45-46) . It should be noticed that in the interview guide questions are not intended to be followed in the same sequence but for researcher to keep a track on the interview process (Bryman, 2012, p. 471) in order to cover interest topics, as well as giving respondents more freedom in their reply. Moreover, by not following concrete guideline during the interview process, it gives interviewer space for asking any additional

questions based on the answers from interviewee, that might add valuable information for the study. Thus, questions being asked in qualitative interviews are very flexible.

In order to move to questions regarding the interest and focus of the research area, interviews were starting with respondents' period of living in Denmark (Q1. How long have you been in Denmark?; ), choice coming to Denmark (Q2. What was your reason of coming to Denmark?), their expectations (Q3. Did you have any expectations about the country before coming to Denmark?) and impressions (Q4. What were your first impressions about Denmark?), the interview gradually moved to the three topics interested for the study.

Firstly, the respondents were asked about their fashion conscious and perception of Danish fashion apparel as compared to their home country (Q 7-13 in Appendix "Interview Guide"). The topic covered the likeability of Danish fashion, the differences in fashion and clothing from home country, as well as their personal preference.

Secondly, interest lied in if the clothes can be seen as form of communication. The reason was to find out if through clothing participants want to communicate who they are, such as belonging to their culture, class, occupation, etc.

Lastly, with the connection of the second point, do interviewees' think that it is possible to integrate into society through clothing. Here, some of the questions addressed participant whether they have changed their fashion styles and if they have noticed their friends or acquaintances in doing so. Moreover, question lied if it is important to dress alike with Danes will ease the process of integration into Danish society.

### 3.5. Delimitations

There are several factors which have directly or indirectly influenced the research process by delaying or restricting the applicability of the research.

The desired target group for individual interviews were self-initiated labour expatriates and not international students. Here, the international students are considered as the group

of people who came abroad in order for acquiring higher education in foreign country. Still, those students who intentionally came to Denmark for their studies and who graduated and found a job in Denmark were also considered into the interest group. Eventually, all interviewees can be considered as international students as some of them have graduated but have not found a job or were working as a part-timer. The reason might lie that initial target group was not interested or the method used to contact them was not efficient. International students and postgraduates are more likely to answer as they might have been in a similar situation through their studies; are more trusting, agreeable nature and had more time to spend.

There was difficulty in gaining the interviewees and contacting them for making an appointment. Many of respondents agreed to give an interview but had cancelled, did not show up or have not replied to the appointment. That might have caused from different circumstances, such as planning other events at the time of the interview, being nervous or fear of being judged by the researcher. Due to this, conducting interviews took much longer time than originally planned which resulted for prolonging the thesis submission date.

Using Facebook-platform community groups in order to gather interviewees have several risks. As researcher have limited time and finances for this research, specific Facebook communities were targeted according to the region. When the invitation for the interview was posted to the group 'walls', a number of the community's members who have seen the post was less than half of the group overall members amount. Moreover, from some groups have received zero answers or interest in participation. It can be due to the community members interest, such as finding job or receiving news from governmental institution about changes in the rules, etc. where interview invitation is not part of community's interest. In addition, there is a probability that even if the Facebook's community participant is a member of the community he or she is inactive. For example by contacting Facebook group "Expats in Aalborg" there might be members who do not live in the city any more and have not left the community for different reasons, such as being informed about changes in legal notices, changes in community structure, etc.

The limited sample size (5 interviews) may not give an adequate representation of the study. By reason of time constraints and travel costs, only a limited number of people were interviewed. In connection with finding the target group, there was almost no interest for accepting the invitation for interviews by cause of the process itself (individual interviews) or research topic (Fashion apparel and Eastern European expats).



## 4. Data Analysis

The data analysis was based on the dialogue with participants' in order to get the deeper meanings of the up mentioned topics. I, as a researcher, hermeneutically transformed what was said into an understanding of the experiences of the participants in a form of text. The interpretations were formed in order to create continuity forming the hermeneutic circle. Finally, it was aimed to give the reader insight on the discussed phenomenon.

In this research, an interpretive qualitative analysis based on Hans-George Gadamer's (1989) hermeneutical tradition was used. The aim of this analysis is to explore the participants' personal and social world related with their personal perception and particular experiences of the research topic, in detail. It combines hermeneutics and phenomenology as a guide to understand the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants (Smith and Osborn, 2008: 53).

Based on the interpretations the Berry's model of acculturation (Berry, 1997), known as Fourfold Acculturation Model, will be used to analyse participants acculturation experience and belonging in the model.

### 4.1. Fourholds Acculturation Model

The Fourfold model categorizes acculturation strategies along two dimensions. The first dimension concerns the retention or rejection of an individual's minority or native culture (i.e. "Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics?"). The second dimension concerns the adoption or rejection of the dominant group or host culture ("Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with the larger society?") From this, four acculturation strategies emerge.

- Assimilation occurs when individuals adopt the cultural norms of a dominant or host culture, over their original culture.
- Separation occurs when individuals reject the dominant or host culture in favor of preserving their culture of origin. Separation is often facilitated by immigration to ethnic enclaves.

- Integration occurs when individuals are able to adopt the cultural norms of the dominant or host culture while maintaining their culture of origin. Integration leads to, and is often synonymous with biculturalism.
- Marginalization occurs when individuals reject both their culture of origin and the dominant host culture.

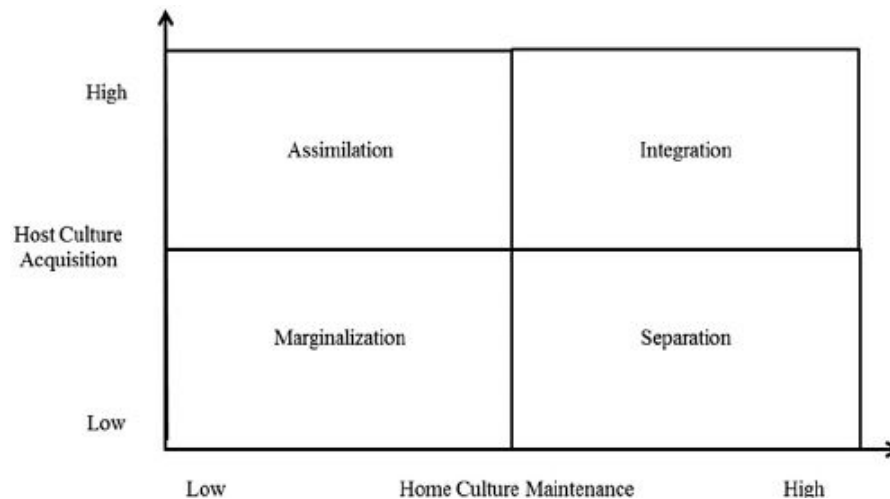


Table 2. Berry's Acculturation Model, based on Berry (1980)

Studies suggest that individuals' respective acculturation strategy can differ between their private and public live spheres. For instance, an individual may reject the values and norms of the dominant culture in his private life (separation), whereas he might adapt to the dominant culture in public parts of his life (i.e., integration or assimilation).

## 5. Interview Findings

In order to move to questions regarding the interest and focus of the research area, starting with respondents' choice coming to Denmark and their expectations and impressions, the interview gradually moved to the three topics interested for the study.

Before asking participants on their perception towards fashion and its application towards integration into Danish society, it was considered to be important to find out their expectations prior moving to Denmark and first impression encountered in the new culture. This information would give an understanding about if informants were elaborating the pro's and con's of the country, its regulations, culture, values, etc. and showing interest for living in the country for a longer period.

All interviewees claimed that, before coming to Denmark, they did not have any expectations neither they had researched anything about the culture. Respondent A have mentioned that he was expecting it to be different due to the difference with Eastern Europe culture in general (*"Not really much of expectations. I knew it is going to be different from my country. Like the culture is still quite distant from the East, post-communist countries."*) It can be claimed that all participants' main intention was to acquire higher education in foreign country, and therefore have not thought about staying in Denmark for longer period after graduation. As no prior research about host culture was made, first impressions turned out to be unique and different from the culture they were coming from, considering weather, economic situation, mentality, and, especially, positive experience with local people (Informant A *"People are generally more willing to help. Sometimes they seem a bit closed, unless you ask them, they don't like to interfere."*; Informant B *"...here people are aiming to help. It is pretty nice but I cannot say the same about youngsters"*; Informant C *"People are very open-minded"*; Informant D *"...they are really friendly when you are asking for help. They would stop doing their things and just help you out"*; Informant E *"People are relatively nice here."*).

### 5.1. Perception of Danish Fashion

The respondents were asked about their fashion conscious and perception of Danish fashion apparel compared to their home country. The topic covered the likeability of Danish fashion, the differences in fashion and clothing from home country, as well as their personal preference.

When it was asked participants about opinion in degree of fashion conscious of Danes, it was found that opinions were different. Two participants (A and D) claimed that Danes have high sense of fashion, whether regarding females or males in comparison to their place of birth. Interviewee A stated that *“even males have quite high sense of fashion”*. By saying so, he wanted to highlight the fact that male representatives of his home country (Czech Republic) are not seen as the ones who would be considering being into fashion. In addition, he claimed that people in Czech Republic have low sense of fashion, and described it from both male and female apparel (*“Guys general have low sense of fashion but even girls I would say.”*). In contrary, participants B and C stated that Danes do not have any sense of fashion (Informant B *“...they don't have any sense of fashion”*). During the interviews, participants were mentioning females – their clothing and appearance – initially (*“Like if we speak about the girls, because the guys they almost have no fashion in Latvia”*). It might be due to the fact that respondents unconsciously connecting apparel and fashion with females more, than with men. There was coherence in both interviewees that Latvian female apparel is seen more fashionable compared to Denmark and therefore it was asked their opinion about male representatives and their fashion. While participant C did not want to discuss differences between men and women by generalising Danish fashion as whole, participant B claimed that males fashion conscious is fine. The last participant (E) viewed Danish fashion as a method of taking care of the ones appearance (*“I mean fashion as they take care of themselves”*). Here, informant E understands fashion not only within clothes and accessories but also personal hygiene and haircut.

When asked about peculiarities of Danish fashion and main distinctiveness in their clothing, there was coherence between three participants (A, B, and C). They agreed that

clothes worn in Denmark were not colourful, mainly in dark shades, where black was the dominant colour (*"It is more dark colours; they wear a lot of black colour"* (A); *"They only wear black"* (B); *"I would say more about dark colours, like dark grey, dark blue"* (C) ) Participants B and C, who both were from Latvia and claimed to have Russian ethnicity, were mentioning that they preference lies on colours such yellow, green, red, etc. that are missing from the Danish wardrobe in their perspective. Participant D stayed neutral by explaining that colours and styles do not particularly differ from Latvia (answering question if the Danish clothing style is different from Latvia -*"I wouldn't say so."*). Participant E, on the contrary, stated that represented colours are whitish by explaining that colours are seen not as depressing ones. Nevertheless, all informants stated that Danish fashion is different from their native countries, referring it to belong as Scandinavian style of fashion (Informant D *"...they look really Scandinavian"*).

All participants agreed that the style of clothes worn in Denmark is informal, describing it as casual, relaxed, every-day, and sportish. In addition, some explained that a sportish style of clothes has become as casual style. When discussion lied on colours, some remarks were made, such as *"they wear the almost the same thing"*. It was understood from participants' perspective that Danes wear some similar clothing pieces when it is fashionable at the moment (e.g. white sneakers) and by thus, creating visually the common colour or brand trend. It is interesting to find out that even when describing sportish clothes in Denmark as a casual clothing style, participants stated that in their countries the sportswear is also seen as dominant apparel but considered as non-fashionable and have criminal sense in it (*"If you are in jogging suits it is quite often you get considered as a person who is stealing phones"*). Nevertheless, all participants described their local fashion norms as strict and more formal comparing to Denmark (*"There are strict rules"* (B); *"It is more formal way, if we talk about the work. Even outside you need always look good, like its must to be jeans, t-shirt, shirt, whatever"* (C)).

When asking participants about their shopping habits and where they buy their clothes, participants mainly buy clothes from their own country due to the price (B, C, D, and E). Participant B stated apart from price, there are some implications in buying clothes, such as

preferences in style and colours used in own wardrobe (*"It is not a problem only for me but also for my friends, they have the same issue."*). Still, if there are situations when there is an urge to buy clothes in Denmark, they are following purely utilitarian purposes. Participant A have claimed that he had purchased clothes primarily in Denmark due to several reasons: preference in Danish fashion and styles and due to the benefits acquired at his internship and work place. Namely, he is employed at Danish fashion company Bestseller and has high discounts (50%) for purchasing clothes, as well as frequent sample sale events that allow to acquire clothing pieces inexpensively. In addition, he agreed that he prefers Danish fashion prior to his homeland and has intention to keep it (*"I would like to keep it, actually. I like how I dress now more than I used to."*) Participants who claimed that they are buying apparel in their home country stated that they have preferences in casual styles with remarks on more bright colours (*"[m]ore bright colours, like yellow, green, something like that. Light blue and red maybe too."*). In addition, they remarked the degree of preference by choosing Danish apparel style by stating „[T]he opportunity you can wear whatever you want and no one actually cares, gives you more freedom”.

## 5.2. Apparel as Form of Communication

The interest lied in whether the clothes can be seen as form of communication. The reason was to find out if participants would like to communicate through clothing like who they are, such as belonging to their culture, class, occupation, etc. All participants agreed that apparel can have a form of communication (*"I think there is a form of communication"* A; *"Yes, but it shows the preferences of the person"* C; *"I think it is true. People try somehow to show themselves with their hair and clothes"* D; *"Absolutely"* E).

Participant D has shared his experience in wearing the hoodie which represents the sport team he supports. He claimed that people who he meets on the streets, and who have sympathy to the same sports club, are addressing him and showing their concern.

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*“(W)hen someone sees me in this hoodie and he is also a fan of the team, he graduates me, like giving hand shake. It is kind of thing you can somehow communicate with these people without talking.”*

Informant D

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Participant C claimed that he sees the meaning of clothing in wearers preferences to the colours or symbolics represented on apparel, such as brand name, colours or texts. There might be connection to his own preferences in colours, and therefore sees passersby apparel that stands out ‘of the crowd’.

### 5.3. Integration through Apparel

Lastly, with the connection of the second point, do interviewees’ think that it is possible to integrate into society through clothing. Here, some of the questions addressed participant whether they have changed their fashion styles and if they have noticed their friends in doing so. Moreover, question lied if it is important to dress alike with Danes will ease the process of integration into Danish society. In order to have simple view on the topic, I have divided interview finding into two subsections: experience integrating through apparel and changes in own apparel style.

#### Experience integrating through apparel

When asking interviewees whether they have felt or experienced the integration through their apparel or see it as a method to get closer to the Danish community, some informants agreed to the statement (*“I think you accommodate a bit to the culture or to the style they wear”* (Informant A); *“Of course I know if I will stay here I need to get some connections with them. it will be easier to integrate”* (Informant B); *“If you want somehow to integrate here I think it is a good idea. Dress like a Dane but have something from your*



own culture” (Informant D) ). Only Informant E shared his perception that by dressing similarly with Danes will not assist him in integration (*“I don't think so. I think it is personal preferences, I am not following the others”*). Still, other informants showed that even if they stated that it was hard for them to get Danes into their social surrounding, they prefer to keep their own community or clothing style but are acknowledged in how to behave in the Danish society (Informant B *“Well, I think it matters, I'm not sure how is it in Danish, maybe the proverb that "You don't have to think that you are better than anyone else." ; Probably will be strict to my roots”*; Informant C *“I try to stick to the russian-speaking commune.”; It is not that hard to adapt through their traditions.”*).

### Changes in own apparel style

Informant A and D have recognized their changes in apparel style during the period of living in Denmark. From all informants, respondent A shows that he has changed strongly in his clothing style and enjoys it (*“I actually changed my clothes style compared from when I came to Denmark.”; “ I like how I dress now more than I used to.”*). If the apparel style did not change completely, some parts of the clothing items have been used more in favour than it was weared in their home country (Informant D *“I have started to wear sneakers more often than I was doing it in Latvia because everyone is doing it here.”; “I am just wearing more sportish style now, in Latvia I wouldn't do that that often.”*). It should be mentioned that there are no direct connection with the changes in apparel in favour for integration but in personal preferences, as informant D has presented: *“A little bit because I had to sometimes. – based on variety of things, not for integration but change in preference.”*

Informant B and C showed no interest in fashion in general and did not notice themselves or their friend, who are also Eastern European and living in Denmark, to change their preferences in apparel style or colours (Informant B *“They are almost the same sense of fashion what they had before”*; Informant C *“I don't care about it.”*). It can be connected with their social interest where they feel most comfortable in the same community as they have been during their life in Denmark (Informant C *“I try to stick to the russian-speaking*



*commune.”).*

#### 5.4. Applying Fourfold Acculturation Model

According to interview findings, participants B, C and D are considered to belong into ‘separation’ sphere. It can be claimed through their intention to keep their socialisation among people similar to their mentality as they claimed to have complications to get into socialising with Danes, have no Danish acquaintances and there were no sign for doing so, have difficulties in learning language, have acknowledgment but no strong interest in the Danish values and traditions, as well as lack of curiosity in integrating to society through communication, improvement in own professional skills or adapting the clothing style. They were also unsure of staying in Denmark or moving to another country in the near future.

During the in-depth interview with Participant A, it is seen the bound with ‘integration’ sphere. It is found by interest to adapt to the dominant culture in public parts of his life, such as social surrounding of the participant who is communicating more with people from Danish and Western communities (friends and colleagues), learning Danish language, having expectation and desire to continue working in Denmark and having preference towards Danish clothing styles, appearance and norms.

It is believed that Participant E is on the stage of ‘assimilation’, despite long period of living in Denmark. The assumption is based on the initial interest in country's culture and claiming to view it as a good opportunity. It can be covered by the participants actions – learning language on the daily basis and doing part time jobs where Danes are mostly represented. Moreover, it is seen that respondent E tried adopting cultural norms, including preference in Danish fashion style, even though he does see it as a strong impact for integrating into the society.

## 6. Conclusion

According to the finding acquired during semi-structured interviews and data analysis, it is seen that all informants describe their overall clothing as a casual style which did not notably change from the time living in their own country. Still, there were some changes in clothing preferences, that can be adapted to the Danish look, such as colours and mixing leisure or sports items into their everyday wardrobe. Respondents find it more comfortable to use but consider some of the clothing items unacceptable to wear in the same situation in their home country. Nevertheless, according to the theoretical findings, where it was stated that men are becoming more interested in fashion, it is seen from respondents answers that, in Eastern Europe, the fashion and apparel are more considered to be female characteristic, and thus having strong connection of terms with females appearance. It can be declared from the interview procedure when asking about characterisation of the fashion style in Denmark and in their native country. First thing that informants were explaining about their perception of fashion and fashion conscious is by imagining females in both countries and comparing them. Informants did not pay much attention on their apparel nor strong changes in adapting to closely to the host country's look. They have showed their knowledge on how they see Danes and what is considered as norms in the clothing but no strong interest to imitate it, only as in changes of personal preferences.

All respondents agreed that clothing, and individuals appearance as whole, has role of nonverbal communication. Apparel can play as a role of introducing oneself to others by their occupation, age, sex and/or interest. Still, clothing is not considered as one of the methods to become closer to the Danish community. It is about communicating with locals in their language and adapting or following traditions and understanding national holidays.

As expatriates one of distinguish point from migrants is the limited period of living in the host country and fulfilling the assignment (work or education related) there are no conclusive decision to integrate into the society. Still, I believe, those expats that have adapted or are interested in some social or professional factors of the host country and try to

adapt similar clothing style as locals will help to increase the chances in feeling more comfortable and open in the new country.

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## Appendixes

### Interview Guide

#### Basic Information about Informant

Interview date and place: \_\_\_\_\_

Informants place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

First language: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Period living in Denmark: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest education degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan to stay in Denmark? \_\_\_\_\_

Status:                      single ( ) ; married ( ) ; in relationship ( ) ; other ( )

Living arrangement: alone ( ) ; with partner ( ) ; with friends ( ) , with family ( )

apartment ( ) ; dormitory ( ) ; other ( )

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#### Coming to Denmark

1. How long have you been in Denmark?
2. What was the reason for coming to Denmark? Work, family, education?
3. Are you planning to stay in Denmark?
4. Did you had any expectations before coming to Denmark? Was there investigation made about the country, values, culture, norms, etc.?

5. What was your first impression about Denmark and Danes? Differences with native country?
6. What do you think is important to know about the Denmark and/or Danish society?

### **Fashion conscious and consumption**

7. Do you think that Danes are different in appearance? What about clothing?
8. Can you characterize local fashion?
  - a. Males vs females
  - b. Comparison with own country
9. How often do you buy clothes? From where?
10. How do you usually dress? Paying attention what informant wears.
11. How you choose you clothing?
12. What do you think about dress-code in Denmark? Difference with own country.
13. Do you follow any dress-code? Work, leisure, events.

### **Integration**

14. Do you still dress the same way as you did in your home country? Have you noticed any differences?
  - a. If changed, would you feel or be seen differently with 'Danish' style clothing in your home country?
15. Have you noticed changes in clothing of your friends from Eastern Europe in Denmark?
16. Have you payed attention to the styles offered in Danish shops vs shops in home country? Are they different?
17. Do you think it is important to dress similarly as Danes when trying to integrate?

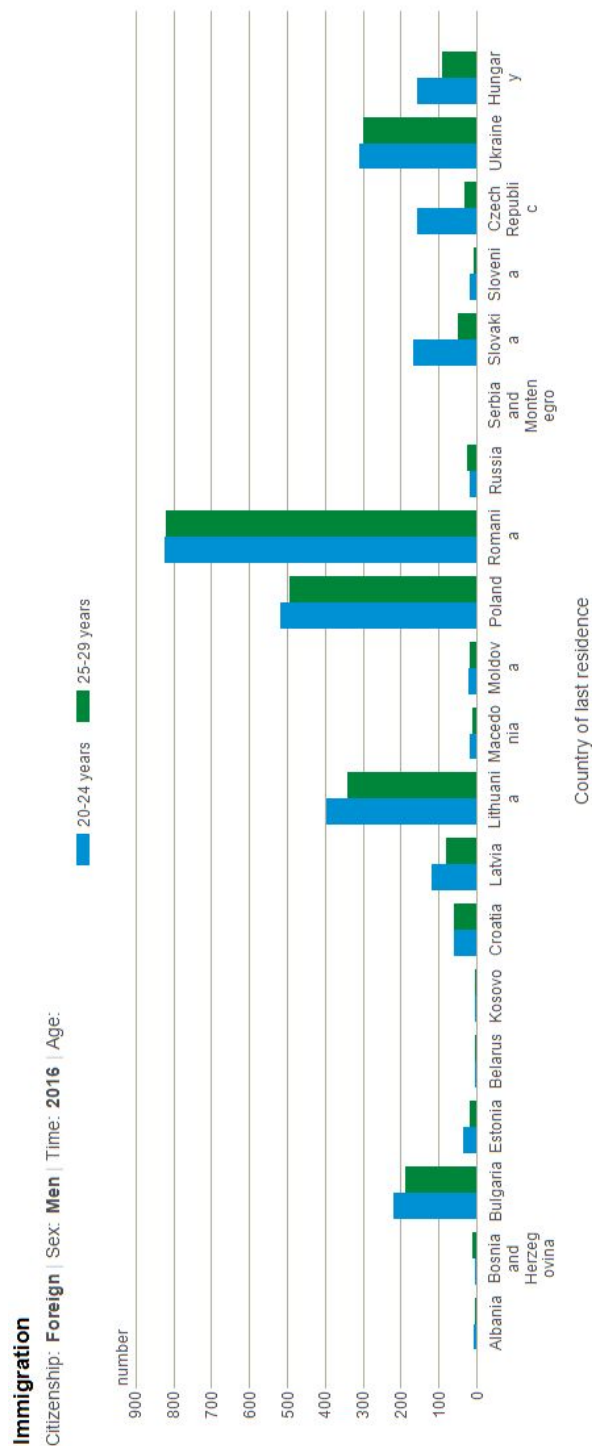
### **Apparel as form of communication**

18. Do you think that clothes or overall appearance can be as a form of communication?  
Showing others who you are (class, gender, age, culture).
19. Do you think it is important?



Figure from Statistics Denmark

Statistics of males with foreign citizenship in Denmark, by country of origin in two age groups





## Interview Transcript – Participant A.

I – Interviewer

A – Interviewee (A)

I: How long have you been in Denmark?

A: It is going to be three years with one year break, when I went home.

I: What was the reason of having the break? Was it vacation?

A: No, I actually went home to finish my studies. I did exchange in Copenhagen, then I came for a year to finish my studies, now I am taking Master Degree in Denmark.

I: Have you been working in Denmark? Any kind of job position.

A: Yes, I have been. Almost entire time, unless the first year when I did exchange. Yeah, I did my internship during my Masters for half a year. And the rest I was working part-time so 20 hours a week approximately.

I: When you came to Denmark, did you have any expectations about the culture or fashion? What you had.

A: The first time, actually, did not have much of an idea what is going on here. How is the culture and...yeah, how all the things go. Not really much of expectations. I knew it is going to be different from my country. Like the culture is still quite distant from the East, post-communist countries.

I: When you came to Denmark first for having exchange programme, did you found something odd about the culture? Or how people act or speak or how they dress? Or you did not put any attention to it?

A: Yes, there are quite a lot differences. People are generally more willing to help. Sometimes they seem a bit closed, unless you ask them, they don't like to interfere. But that

is similar to my country. As you said, yes, their clothes are quite different compare to my country.

I: What is the main difference?

A: I think they have sort of fashion, they know how to combine things, whereas in my country people put on quite random stuff that might not even fit together. Like they use a lot of colours but they do not really know how to use it, unlike in Denmark. The difference is that they wear a lot of black colour and they know more about the fashion here in Denmark. How to dress.

I: When you came to Denmark where your clothes different, like it could be seen that you were from different society (cultural background)? Or did you notice that how you acted is different?

A: If they could feel it?

I: Yes

A: Yeah, maybe. I think so. I was using some colours, maybe not exactly Danish style.

I: But as you came here for the Master's Degree did you somehow change your style? Or you kept having basically the same style as you had back in...where you were from?

A: Czech Republic. I think I actually changed my clothes style compared from when I came to Denmark. Quite a lot.

I: Was there any reason for it? Or was it just what you could find in the shop or you just felt like it?

A: I think when I see what people wear, I get some inspiration and partly because of that, and partly because I was working in fashion company. So I see a lot of fashion websites. In all, the more you see it, then I realise that this style and colours I like. That's why I was buying different clothes.

I: Ok. I can see that today you are in grey pullover... A little kind of Danish style. So now you basically wear these kinds of clothes?

A: Yes.

I: And if you go back to your home country, just for a vacation or for a longer stay, will you keep the same style? Or you again, somehow, change back to your old 'version' (meaning 'style')?

A: (Fast answer) I would like to keep it, actually. I like how I dress now more than I used to.

I: Why? Is it only colours?

A: I feel I can more combine stuff. Like what goes well with each other. I think I care more these days than before. And the reason is I have quite a lot of clothes now than I used to had before. Now it's much more chance to combine stuff or... you know, change the stuff you wear.

I: But you think that the style you have now, like because you are in Denmark, helped you to be more 'Danish'? Like it helped you to be more into the Danish society?

A: Could be. (Positively) I think people are not used to colours here, like to wear yellow jacket, then they will get you in. They might guess that you might be a tourist. I don't know.

I: Maybe you had some situations in your life, like on the street, somehow people were approaching you differently? Or instead, they were approaching you as a Dane (local)?

A: They usually approach me as a Dane. So they speak Danish to me. I think it never happened that they straightly new that I am 'a tourist' (meant to use this word as for 'international'). Not really, unless I started to speak...

I: It didn't matter about what kind of style you were wearing?

A: No.

I: You said that now you are more aware about the styles and how you combine clothes, so did you stop to... where actually you are getting your clothes from? Like did you buy spontaneously or you plan your shopping? Or is it mix of everything?

A: (Confidently) It is mix of everything. You should make it more spontaneously these days and as I work for fashion company there are clothes available. We have different sample sales and photo-shootings... That's quite random and spontaneous, so what I like at the point – I take it. But sometimes I buy online and that is more, that I think about it, for example what I need lets say, I have a lot of black jeans so I should buy blue jeans or... I have only dark shoes so, I need white shoes to get.. you know, to mix up with black, so....

(08:39) I: You said that you in sample sales see that you like it and you are buying it, so where comes this 'urge'? Is it about what you have seen previously on people or in the shops or on friends?

(08:56) A: Yeah, I think it is about trends or what I see either on people or on the website. Some inspiration. Mostly inspiration.

(09:15) I: Do you think it is important to have the similar clothing appearance as a Dane or in Denmark? Or if you would be in Spain it would be more Spanish style?

(09:29) A: Yeah, I think you accommodate a bit to the culture or to the style they wear. Depends on people, some like to stand out but for me it is more like "I don't want to be extraordinate" or attract a lot of attention. I feel if you wear the different clothes nowadays, Danes will not make any judgements about you.

(09:58) I: Like free to choose whatever you like?

A: Yes. You can see the Danes as well. You can see that many dress more fancy but on the other hand a lot of people like to wear retro stuff, second hand stuff.

(10:17) I: But what about Czech Republic? Like, are there some kind of norms how you should be as your appearance in the society?

A: Not really. Of course it depends on what job you have. Like in finance they wear suits of course so there is a norm depending on jobs. But in general if you go out to the streets...not really. I don't think there is some kind of given style you should wear. People are more into sport clothes or.. I don't think that in my country people have sense of fashion.

(11:00) I: But you think in Denmark and Danes have high sense of fashion?

A: yeah, I think so.

I: You said that you have in Czech Republic, people who are called white collar workers; you need to have a dress suit like a dress-code. Do you see very strict lines of dress-code in Denmark?

(11:32) A: Depends. I think in Denmark they are more relaxed, so... The dress-codes are not so strict. Unless, of course we can take example of finance, if you work in the bank or finance company people wear suits, even in Denmark. But if you compare in my country, like if you have a casual office job, it's less strict in Denmark, I think. More relaxed.

(12:03) I: When you think about the managers you are working with at your internship – how they were dressed? There are managers which is high position.

A: I think it is casual, still. Actual depends, if Dane can be more fancy dressed but it can be casual as well. (He said something here) Not really strict.

(12:26) I: So you feel comfortable to go with the Danish dress-code or Czech Republic's?

A: I prefer Danish.

I: Is it only about the colours and styles or something else too? Like what makes it comfortable?

A: As you said – colours, styles as well as not really given guideline how you should dress. So if I come to the office with sneakers and T-shirt, no one really cares. That is what I like. I do not like to be pushed to wear something, I don't like it.

(13:03) I: But would you be pushed to wear something in Czech Republic in the similar position of the company you were working?

A: Yeah, I would felt pushed to wear as a bit more official lets say.

I: Do you think the clothing is a form of communication? Like we talked about a little bit of being part of society but when you dressed... like is it a way of form of communication that you show who you are with the clothes you wear?

(13:35) A: I think so. Some people can have it like that. I can take example of the school I'm going to. It is a business school and social sciences, so you can see people dressed differently than people from, let's say, history classes. You can see they are... It's more like chic or more fancy in the business school. But then if I see like if I go to some other faculty, history or something, it is different. You can see the difference. I think there is a form of communication. It can be. Depends on the person.

(14:26) I: You think it is important?

A: For someone it could be.

I: But how it is for you?

A: I don't know. It is a good question. In a way but I don't have specific style I will communicate... like to dress fancy all the time. So I don't want to communicate that I am business student or business person. I swap styles, you know... One day I have jean jacket, the other day I have blazer. Not really form of communication or directions of what am I. I don't know. I think I want to dress nicely.

(15:20) I: You think there is a difference in men's clothing and women's clothing in Denmark?



A: Do you mean like stylewise or they are more like fashionable?

I: Both.

A: Ok. I think of course they are. Style – it's different. Female clothes; men's clothes. But in a sense of fashion I think they are quite alike. They have females – and even males – quite high sense of fashion.

(15:50) I: Is it different than in your home country?

A: Yeah. There is. Guys general have low sense of fashion but even girls I would say. Lot of them.

I: So you see that there is one pattern of people who don't know how to mix specific clothes with each other.

A: Yes, you can see this on the streets a lot.

(16:20) I: Both men and women?

A: It is quite random what they put on. It is a lot of like sport outerwear, jeans...

I: How often you buy clothes?

A: Now it is quite often, actually, because I have discounts and benefits. I buy clothes quite often. Once a month maybe, like that.

(16:54) I: And if you would go back to your home country, how often would you buy clothes? If you had the same benefits, discounts?

A: If I would have same discounts, probably the same. Maybe a bit less, actually.

I: Yeah? Why like that?

A: If I needed to be dressed very well, because there is not so high level of fashion, maybe I would be less inspired by people, I would shop less. I would say "It is good enough what I have now" than more, like... Look at this people. (laugh)

(17:43) I: For example if you had an opportunity to have this ‘chic’ style, the nice style, of yours that you wear in your home country, would you feel better than others? Because you said they have low sense of fashion in your clothing and your appearance?

A: No. I would feel better than the others. I like my clothes, I like to feel comfortable. But its not...I don’t want to get attention of the others or anything. Like that, it’s just...I think it is mostly for myself of just to feel comfortable today what I wear. I don’t really like to show off. That is why my style is not so... It is not standing out. I don’t like to take attention.

(18:40) I: I don’t have more questions to ask, I think we have covered all of those. Yeah, but if you are not thinking about yourself but have some friends or other people you know and meet every day – non-Danes – what is your experience if they have or have not changes in their styles? Or it depends on the person?

A: I think it depends on the person. But my closest friend/friends, they haven’t changed the style. I don’t think they did.

(19:20) I: Where are they from? Western Europe or Eastern Europe? Or somewhere else?

A: It is mostly Western Europe. Some are actually Eastern. Mostly Western Europe and Australia.

I: But do you think that Danish fashion is a fashion itself or is it like combined with Western and Eastern Europe?

(19:54) A: I think it’s Danish. It is quite distinct from the other. Let’s say from French people or Spanish people. I think it is a really distinct fashion. Maybe more, I don’t know, Denmark or Scandinavia in general.

I: Do you have any examples on how it is distinguished? Is it only in sense of style or colours?

(20:19) A: Colours definitely. It is more dark colours. Mostly black. And the style as were. They sometimes combine sport clothes with more formal stuff. I think they are quite distinct from the others.

I: Do you know a lot, for example, the real Danish fashion companies except the one you are working? Or are there more 'mainstream' companies like H&M? It is Swedish but again it's very popular all over the world. Or Zara which is Spanish?

A: Yeah. I think they are a lot of local companies, a lot of Danish clothes store. Should I name or something?

(21:17) I: Yes, if you can.

A: I think it's more local than the mainstream. You can't even really find...Of course you can find a lot of H&M's in Denmark and people shop in there as well. But like Zara I don't really find it here or some major international brands. There is some, like I know the Danes wear a lot of Raul Florin, which is not Danish, right. But a lot of local. I think majority is the local brands.

(22:00) I: Do you think that the prices for clothes are high in Denmark?

A: Yes.

I: Is it much cheaper to buy clothes in Czech Republic?

A: Yes. It is cheaper. I think even H&M have different prices for both countries.

I: Are the clothes, qualities and styles also the same? For example you will buy a shirt in H&M in Denmark and in other country?

A: Yes, some of them. I think there is differences but same styles you can find in all of the countries.

(22:33) I: You think that companies are somehow focusing on the cultural aspects of other country in order to bring the specific clothes to specific markets?

A: I think so. Some of them at least. I think it also depend on the people who work in the store or who owns the store. They see the peoples buying decisions. So they know what the customers want.

## Interview Transcript – Participant B

I: How long have you been in Denmark?

B: Have been in Denmark for 4 and half years, almost five soon, soon I can apply for permanent residence permit.

I: What was your reason to come to Denmark?

B: The reason was for education and well known as well. I was always aiming at the Nordic countries, so I was thinking either Denmark either Sweden.

I: You said about your intention for applying to the permanent residence permit, so do you plan to stay in Denmark? 00:44

B: Yes, that was my plan but not sure about it. I mean about working. Because, I mean, you have to remain for three months at least...I mean that you have continuously remain here. I mean if you go somewhere for three months abroad from Denmark, then your residence permit can actually lapse. So I'm not sure I can actually get it, but there will be busy time somewhere in autumn. Because in September it will going to be 5 years.

I: Before coming to Denmark, did you had any expectations or did you know anything about Denmark or Danish people? 01:36

B: Well, nothing about their mentality, neither about people itself, the country. But when we have been at agency, which help with admissions. They said that you come here in Denmark better between June and July as you can easily find the job and accommodation and everything. So in fact we came here and UCN didn't accept us. Because they very thinking to accept us in July and we came here in June. So we have been here on our own and we couldn't find any job. And since we weren't accepted to UCN we were not able to get yellow cards - the CPR. So it was useless spent months just for no reason.

I: So did you went back? 02:32

B: No, we stayed here. We didn't had any accommodation and first week we stayed at some drug-addcted guy. Very bad experience. Afterwards we found dormitory, the UC House. So we came there and was actually for our luck, because administrator wanted to offer location and it was the last day of work and we caught him and asked if he had some spare rooms and he got one. So we got the last one. Just imagine - one day, plus minus, we would have been on the streets. The guys from UCN, when they come here, they agree on accommodation with UCN itself. We thought it would be easy just like that to find. And when I was checking the Google maps, the old campus, in Lindhold Brygge, there have been some student kollegiums, and I was thinking there is one main office (in Lidholm) they are ruling all accommodation stuff. But in fact the company was about some revisor and finance. I was not even partly connected with kollegiums. Let's say, expectations were really high than the first day everything was ruined. We have been four of us, so it was easier to deal with.

A: When you were struggling with all these things, how Danes looked upon you? Were they nice? Or did they acted differently? 04:34

B: Especially, elder people were giving extra help. But for example in Latvia, if you were lost or somewhere you ask for help, probably you will going to be sent away (meaning'shoed down). But here people are aiming to help. It is pretty nice but I cannot say the same about youngsters. They were actually...They were trying to get into our situation but adults were... It was really surprising for me. And everyone knows English, that is really very nice. It's fascinating.

I: What about how Danes dress? Like they appearance.05:20

B: In my case, during these 5 years of living here, I would say they don't have any sense of fashion. 05:29 They only wear black. Speaking about guys - it's fine. But for the girls, they can wear just tracksuits and then some fancy outfits on mix. And in my mind its not something that can get together. For example in Latvia and in other countries, our member states, the girls dress...how do I say, eventhough the go for a shop they dress

beautifully, really nicely. But here, they don't (here he was struggling to find a word to express himself that he didn't like). They don't care. 'laugh'.

I: Do you like more the fashion or appearance of people from Latvia?

B: Yes (confidently)

I: Or Danish?

B: Danish girls, for example, they use too much makeup. Because our girls don't use so much, they are more natural. About the guys - they are more tidy than ours. 06:45

I: So Danes are more tidy than Latvians?

B: I think if you compare my city, Danes are definitely more tidy. I mean, it is about looks, I really don't know what's happening in their bedrooms.

I: So they (Danes) are putting more attention to clothes than in Latvia?

B: Yes.

I: How you characterise local fashion, the Danish fashion? You said about that they are wearing only black clothes. 07:19

B: Of course when you go to shop like Friis or Salling, there is some choice, but if you go to other shops like Bilka and those...

I: Bug supermarkets?

B: Yes, or Jack & Jones - there are only dark tones. They have black and brown, something like that. Nothing like yellow, green or red. It's always some kind of darkness.

I: but in Latvia, you think... (couldn't finish the question).

B: Like rainbows. 08:01 Like different colours.

I: And you like more the fashion in Latvia?

B: Yes. Like if we speak about the girls, because the guys they almost have no fashion in Latvia 08:13. They just have tracksuits and thats it. And I actually read somewhere that there is not much sun, the skin is not getting much of vitamin D, and you have seen that the Danish girls look more matured than they actually are. Like older than ours. I had some classmates here in Denmark during the bachelor, these girls were 20 but looked like 30, at least.

I: Did you buy any clothes in Denmark? 09:07

B: Yes, I used to buy. But usually I spare some money and spend in Latvia, so I am trying to buy them there. Because here it was only few clothes that I really like. Tough to find something you will be satisfied with. 09:31 It is not a problem only for me but also for my friends, they have the same issue. 09:44 Usually online shopping - that's the different case.

I: When you were buying clothes in Denmark, did you buy online or from physical shops?

B: Here I only go directly to shop. Because I had some bad examples when I was buying online. Once I bought few T-shirts from Chinese-American shop, I ordered size L, but when I received them, they were maximum S. They were so small. So I had to give it to my roommate. And probably it was size L for Chinese. I don't know. Better not to...there is Russian proverb, I don't know if you can use it, but better not to buy "the cat in the bag".

I: What do you think about Danish dress-code? Is there any?

B: For example, for the guys, really slim or skinny jeans. 11:14 Black. Then some white t-shirt, some easy one. And the coat, the skin coat (he meant leather jacket). That's it basically. they also like to mix some formal dress with some rainbow socks, not the plain ones, but really colourful. With the formal dress or even suit, it looks kinda weird for me. But they like to mix unmixable 12:07 . And for girls, they are more or less fine. I still don't understand what's the trick to mix tracksuits and blazers or blouse. Strange for me. 12:30



I: But if you go for the company, do they have specific dress code or you are free to come with whatever you want? 12:39

B: It is more like casual. They don't have to wear shirts. When I had internship I was thinking that you need to be formal, you can't wear T-shirt or cardigan for instance. But you wear whatever you want.

I: What company was for your internship? With what they were working - financial or managemnt section?

B: Sales.

I: In Latvia like more strict norm of dress code?

B: There are strict rules. 13:13 If you work in office, you have to wear clothes of formal way. There is no time for casual. I think the same in Estonia, actually. So, Denmark is strange for me but actually fine.

I: Which one you prefer? Do you like Danish version where you can wear anything anywhere and anyhow?

B: I will be fine enough with casual styles, so Danish one. 13:49 Because I am not comfortable overtime to wear shirt, the formal way. You know these suits. In my case it would be better Danish. 14:01 At least I will feel as myself.

I: Do you think it is important to have similar clothes as Danes as you plan to stay, live and work in Denmark? Or it doesn't matter?

B: Well, I think it matters, I'm not sure how is it Danish, maybe the proverb that "You don't have to think that you are better than anyone else" 14:38 . They are more to be equal. In general terms, I think Danes don't like to speak about the dress, I mean clothes. They don't care. 14:49 But I am not sure how is it working in their environment. Maybe with international they say "yeah, I really care" but the fact they can say something behind your back. I'm not sure.

I: But for you - will you change much of your wardrobe in order to be similar as Dane?

B: Probably will be strict to my roots 15:20 , my sense of what should be worn. And what actually look like in the balance. Not just taking this one that, this one that, and then you are like a clown. And sometimes they look like a clowns. 15:43

I: Do you think that clothes and persons appearance are used to communicate who they are or what they are doing?

B: You mean sense of occupation?

I: Anyway. If you just meet a Dane on the street.

B: What I experienced that in their daily life they use specific pants for working, if they are a painter or carpenter, they use to walk like that entire day. Even if they are not working (means that person wears some type of clothes during his or hers day off). Even if they have a vacation they still can go and wear those pants. For me it's kind of strange, but yeah. Maybe let's do like that and they just "That's our guy" 16:40 . Otherwise, I think it is very tough to say.

I: I see you have a t-shirt with print and sweatpants today. How you usually dress? Are they usual clothes of yours?

B: Usual are basically the jeans and some t-shirt. As easy as possible. 17:12

I: So I think its more casual for your everyday life but what about formal events?

B: I basically wear shirt, blazer, jeans, dress shoes. Not a lot but sometimes sneakers, but not with huge heel. It is tough to say those specific words (names of apparel). 18:14

I: So you basically have the same clothing in Latvia as well as in Denmark. 18:19

B: Yes.

I: Do you have a lot non-Dane friends?

B: Yes , I try to stick to the russian-speaking commune 19:00 . Internationals yes, many, not like many but they are not that close that I can name them as my friends. Only few guys. Regarding Danes I have none. Not even a single person. In my case, their mentality is different. 19:37 They have basic principles, like they can speak in front of the face "yes, it's cool" but in fact they are going 100 meters away and it turns out that actually he hate you or whatever. 19:56 Like two-faced. They can set up if they want to. Of course I know if I will stay here I need to get some connections with them. But I'm not sure how exactly it is working for me. Probably I will still try to get someone from same mentality. Even though not russian-speaking but at least from Baltic states 20:35 It is easy to find connection. Because we are almost the same. 20:39 Especially with Lithuanians. I don't know why but with Estonian it is more tough, I don't know why. I have asked Joel (his friend from Estonia), he said...they are more closed, they are not open 'minded', of course they can open for you afterwards but after some time and not just like that (snapped with fingers - hand gesture). 21:14 Danes can actually be open-minded but...I will never trust them.

I: Did you noticed any changes in your friends clothing styles? Or you didn't pay any attention to it.

B: I don't think so. They are almost the same sense of fashion what they had before. 21:44 They are wearing what looks balanced, not conflict, lets say. So then it's fine. They are wearing normal colour of socks, for instance. Not like...whatever.

I: If you plan to stay in Denmark and find a job what do you think it is important in order to integrate into the society (planned to see if respondent start talking about language, traditions, etc.)?

B: I don't even know. It is hard to say.

I: Maybe knowing some traditions?

B: That's for sure and....Actually I don't know a lot about them. Yes we have to know important dates. I think to stay as simple as possible.

I: You think that clothes can help to integrate into society? Or appearance?

B: Yes, it could be. For example staff party at the workplace, you don't have to be formal dressed, but smart-casual style for instance they will be more up to...it will be easier to integrate. 24:05 As you are not too much into formal. I don't think there is clear connection but probably.

I: Do you have same shops in Latvia as in Denmark (brands)?

B: I have never seen those like Kaufmann. Maybe probably there is one shop. But not sure. Jack & Jones of course is everywhere.

I: Did you know that Jack & Jones is Danish company?

B: I didn't know. It really is? I haven't noticed. But others...I cannot find any other example.

I: Okay, so you have different shops?

B: Yes.

## Interview Transcript – Participant C

I: How long have you been in Denmark?

C: Five years.

I: What was the reason to come to Denmark.

C: I wanted to get Bachelor education in foreign country as I am more interested in international relationships then just living in Latvia.

I: Do you plan to go back to Latvia?

C: Hopefully not.

I: So you plan to stay here and to work or...?

C: Either Denmark or other possibilities as I don't see myself in Latvia.

I: What do you think it is important in new country? Like in order to live in the country what is important to know or to do?

C: In Latvia?

I: No, in Denmark.

C: Everything is very expensive, you need to learn language as soon as possible as I made mistake of not doing so. 00:54 And later it is quite challenging. People are very open-minded, I would to say. I like the possibilities of entrepreneurship 01:12

I: So you plan to start your own company?

C: Well, there are ideas but who knows. I will see.

I: You said it is important to know language, maybe there is something else? If you want to live in Denmark maybe some traditions or values?

C: No, I don't think so. I mean of course over time you will find closer look to these values and traditions of Denmark but as I compare to Latvia, there are no big differences in general. 01:56 It is not that hard to adapt. 01:59 Only the weather also, get ready for a lot of wind. Minus temperatures, unpleasant.

I: Did you had any expectation about Denmark before you came here?

C: Well, I was told that it is not challenging to find a student job here and my agency (referring to agencies that send students for higher education abroad) it is possible to find in one month that's why I came earlier. I found my first job almost after a year. So it was quite challenging and I was hoping it won't be like that.

I: When you came to Denmark - what were your first impressions?

C: I was curious. New city, architecture, everything new. People. A lot of new people. My first year, first weeks, there were amazing. I lived in dormitory, in UC House, and I met a lot amazing new people whom I still keep in contact.

I: Are they also all international students?

C: Yes, all of them. Mostly.

I: From which countries they are - western europe or eastern europe?

C: All over the Europe, also America, Brazil, Chinese.

I: Who would be the majority?

C: Romanians, Bulgarians, Latvia.

I: So Eastern Europe?

C: Yes.

I: Is Denmark different from Latvia?

C. In what aspects?

I: Way of living....

C: Well it is different. Denmark is more focused on middle-class people, you are socially secured in Denmark. As in Latvia, it is kind of opposite. It is very bad to change the job. Might be very challenging to find a new job. The salary which would be enough support you and your family. From economical point of view it is bit different.

I: Do you think Danes are different in appearance from Latvia?

C: Yes, I guess so. Not that there are big differences but you can see.

I: In what aspects?

C: More smiling I would say \*chuckles\*

I: What about clothes? Or haircut?

C: I already understood that in Denmark it really doesn't matter how you dress. 04:46 And all of them look like they just came out from home, just in slippers and the socks, and that is usual thing. And in Latvia it counts as something very wrong to do. Going to city center with the slippers and socks, people will look at you like on the retard. Here it is kind of normal thing to do.

I: Can you somehow characterise local fashion, the Danish fashion?

C: Not very colourful 05:19 I'm not very into the fashion 05:21 That's why I don't know. There are no bright colours. It is more like grey, blue, the dark shades. 05:30

I: Do you like it?

C: It is fine with me. I don't care about it that much. Sometimes you see some girl in the red dress and you can distinguish her, like in the movie, one girl who is in red all around hundreds of people who are in the same greyish. 05:52

I: So is it very different from Latvia fashion?

C: Yes.

I: Are Latvians wearing more colourful clothes?

C: More colourful, yes, even despite the fact that life is not that much better \*laughs\* More colourful than Danes. But Danes follow this "You are not better than a crowd". 06:24 I forgot how it is called exactly. You can see that that everybody is the same-ish.

I: I can see you have today a green t-shirt and jeans and sneakers. Is it your usual clothing style?

C: Yes.

I: The same as it was in Latvia or did it change while living in Denmark for five years?

C: Some things have changed, more warm clothes, more all-over-the-year clothes. 07:09 But in style exactly, I wouldn't say something changed. Everything is the same, I'm following the same style as I was. I buy what I like. Usually I prefer more bright colours, like yellow, green, something like that. Light blue, red maybe. I have my favourite jacket, it is completely like banana (means bright yellow). And my yellow hat.

I: Do you think that Danes are looking at you (draw attention) when you wear that yellow jacket and hat during the winter? Danes look at you differently?

C: No. Well once I had problem with the friend from UC House, he got frustrated, bit angry (laughs) about yellow jacket 08:10 . But he was drunk so it doesn't count.

I: Do you think it's important to have similar clothing as Danes as if you want to stay in Denmark, want to work here, to integrate into society? Does it need to be similar clothing?

C: No. As I have worked at few places it is more like informal way of wardrobe. they really don't care how you dress. People really don't care how you look. 08:53 I don't think I need to change.

I: You said it is informal clothing at the workplaces but do you think there are any specific dress codes in Denmark?



C: To be honest, I don't know. I think there are to some extent, depending from place to place.

I: What about Latvia - dress codes...?

C: It is more formal way, if we talk about the work. Even outside (on the streets) you need always look good, like its must to be jeans, t-shirt, shirt, whatever. You cannot go outside, as I see alot in Denmark, in your own trainers, training pants. Adidas (refers brand as specific clothing item). Like jogging suits. Thats what unusual and if you are rest in jogging suits it is quite often you get considered as a person who is stealing phones. And you are aggressive. Just you are wearing so you can run faster away. It is comfortable.

I: Do you think that clothes have communication aspect, like saying who you are?

C: I see where are you going. Yes, maybe. Maybe to some extent, yes. But it shows the preferences of the person - colours, logotypes. How people wear extremely noticeable dress, maybe he don't have enough attention. So he wants to say "look at me". To get more attention.

I: You said you are wearing the same clothes as in Denmark as in Latvia. Where do you usually buy your clothes?

C: Now I buy usually in Denmark. Unfortunately the quality of Latvian products is lower. I'm not going to Latvia that often so there is no point waiting to go back and buy something. When I am in Germany I am looking for some clothes because the have good price and quality. Usually buy in Denmark, like H&M, actually no I haven't... Marcus - the last place I have went.

I: You are going to the physical shops and not buying online?

C: No, I don't like buying clothes online. I just sometimes look for something, like shoes just to see before I buy, but still buying them from shops. I wan't to try them in store.

I: As you are buying in Denmark do you try to buy colourful clothes?

C: Actually I don't like process of shopping so that's why usually when I need to buy some clothes I am going and choosing from that what they have at the moment 12:40 . They don't have at the moment bright yellow or green whatever jacket, it is not that I will wait for week or two weeks or go to the other places, I will buy what they have on the spot. Of course if I don't like anything then I will leave but that's very unlikely.

I: Do you have a lot of friends from Eastern Europe?

C: Define 'a lot'. Friends? I do have friends. Lately because people are leaving more and more to their places, I mean I don't see them that often, but I do have some friends.

I: Have you noticed that they have changed somehow in their appearance or clothing?

C: Them? (long pause) No, not really. Usually I'm not paying much attention to styles but maybe on the writing on the t-shirts. But I have never thought that "Oh, today he wears something else that is unusual". I mean, whatever, I don't care about it.

I: If we talk about the shops, due you have similar shops in Latvia as in Denmark?

C: Some of them yes. Like Eurosport, H&M, there was one more but I don't remember but it was in Copenhagen. Zara. We have Zara also. Maybe more but I don't know that much. Some big brands for sure.

I: Do they have similar styles, like t-shirt from H&M will be the same t-shirt in Latvia regarding style and quality?

C: Well, I cannot say about H&M as I haven't been there in Latvia neither here. But if we look Eurosport then the products are kind of the same because they are selling Nike, Adidas, Puma. Jogging and sportsuits and they are all the same. They are making worldwide and they are the same. Only different colours. Most usual is for sportswear is the black, white and blue.

I: What about quality and price?

C: I would say in Denmark it is more expensive clothing but I would also say that quality is higher. 16:04 Based on my experience of course. Only not shoes, I don't like it.

I: In Denmark?

C: Yes.

I: Why?

C: Because they are getting bad quite fast, very fast. Just that. I had bad experiences but maybe I am just unlucky.

## Interview Transcript – Participant D

I: How long have you been in Denmark?

D: I have been here for two years and nine months.

I: What was your reason to come to Denmark?

D: For studies. There was a great opportunity to start studying here.

I: Do you plan to go back after your studies to Latvia or you plan to stay here?

D: I don't know if I am going back to Latvia or no, maybe another country. But for now I plan to stay in Denmark and I cannot say anything else about it.

I: Did you have any expectations or knowledge about Denmark before coming here?

D: No, not at all. Basically I didn't know anything.

I: What was your first impression?

D: It is hard to say as it was long time ago for me but everything was different from back home from Latvia. It was a shock.

I: Was it about Danish society or was it the weather or traditions or...?

D: I think a little bit of each. The shock about the weather was really huge. But the language for me was so hard to even to understand what they are saying. Their lifestyle, like what they are doing in spare time. Everything was so different.

I: What do you think is important when you come to another country and you want to stay there? What you need to know or do?

D: You definitely have to be ready to be shocked. It will definitely be different from what you were before. Even if you will be somehow prepared it will definitely be still a big

change. You have to know that a lot of things are really just different. So you need to be prepared.

I: What do you think about Danes? How they are and how they look like?

D: It depends from what point will we look at them. I would say they are really friendly when you are asking for help. They would stop doing their things and just help you out. But if you want to become a friend with Dane and really get into some group of friends, like for socialising, it is really hard and takes a lot of time and energy. You don't have the guarantee that they will get along with you.

I: What about their clothes? Appearance?

D: Well, they look really Scandinavian. I don't think I have seen here a dark-haired girl. Their clothes style is really casual, even if they go out they can easily dress some sneakers and just dress. It was also a little bit shock for me when I just came and seeing some girls partying in sneakers.

I: How is it in Latvia?

D: If you go to party, every girl is wearing high heels, like huge high heels with some hot dress. Not like here. here is more everyday clothes. Very casual.

I: You said about girls wearing high heels but if we would talk about men's fashion - is it different from Latvia?

D: Well, I wouldn't say so. I think everyday style is kind of similar, like very casual. 05:11 Maybe I have started to wear sneakers more often than I was doing it in Latvia because everyone is doing it here. 05:19 And it is very comfortable wear it everywhere and no one cares 05:27 .You can be more free in your choice.

I: But in Latvia you are more thinking what you are wearing?

D: Yes, most depends on where you go but if it is some kind of meeting which is a little bit more important than everyday meet with the friend, you are thinking if you should wear

some good shoes. Not a good costume, like shirt, more formal one. And here it is like you probably wearing formal clothes only for really important job interview. Even for example exams in school back home we were all dressed formal like shirt, girl like black and white and here everyone is coming to exams just like it is usual day. I saw people coming in some trousers or sport costumes but here they just don't care about it.

I: Do you like this kind of dress code in Denmark?

D: It is hard to say. I was actually pretty okay wearing some formal clothes. Back home I liked it. I do it even here, when I go to exams I still dress formally. The opportunity you can wear whatever you want and no one actually cares 07:32 . I think it is pretty nice and gives you more freedom.

I: I can see that today you have red hoodie and sweatpants. Do you buy clothes in Denmark?

D: Not that often. I would say really rare occasions. For example if I need something really in a hurry, for example something is broken, I can go and buy. I did it two or three times here in this period. Mostly I buy clothes when I go back home because it is cheaper and easier for me.

I: Did you buy in Denmark from physical shops or online?

D: Kind of both. I was buying some sports clothes online and casual from physical stores.

I: You were saying about Scandinavian style. Can you somehow explain it?

D: It was more about the appearance, not outfit, like blond hair, light grey hair, hard lines on the face, glasses. It is very Scandinavian. You can easily see people of other nationalities here when you go somewhere. It is easy to spot them among Danes. But it is about appearance and not outfit. About outfit - I think all newcomers are also wearing the same things as Danes do 10:03 .

I: Do Danes have own fashion style?

D: If you ask me to define scandinavic style it is probably very hard for me because I'm not into the fashion. 10:27 I think they have a lot of choice to transform from sportish style into casual everyday style. Sportish style becomes as casual here.

I: What about the colours?

D: Thats a nice question. I wouldn't say here is some specific colour is in use mostly, I would say more about dark colours, like dark grey, dark blue. That's what I would spot mostly. It is hard for me to remember something. If you see something really light, like yellow or green, neon colours, it just gets your eye attention. For me it's hard to remember when I last time saw this. 12:04 I would say here are dark colours common mostly.

I: What about Latvia? Are there same styles and colours?

D: Yes, probably, because it is also kind of north country. Because of the weather and because of the summer days are really grey. People are mostly wearing dark colours also. I think the most popular colour at home is black. I would say it right away.

I: Did you change in your clothing style?

D: Not really. I am just wearing more sportish style now. 13:01 Almost every day, almost everywhere I go. For me it is just hoodie, sweatpants and in Latvia I wouldn't do that that often. 13:11 Maybe just in the evening when I go to shop or a walk. But I think if I would go somewhere in the city center i would wear jeans and these kinda things. Here it is like i am wearing it everywhere (sportish clothes).

I: Do you think that clothes and persons appearance can be a form of communication? Like if they want to say something with their clothes?

D: Probably depends on the place you go, but if you meet someone on the street...Yes, probably, most likely. I think it is true. People try somehow to show themselves with their hair and clothes. If they are happy they are making fancy hair cut. For me I am wearing not just usual hoodie but my favourite sports clubs hoodie so I can show people around me

whom I support 14:43 . Actually I did it sometimes - when someone sees me in this hoodie and he is also a fan of the team he graduates me, like giving hand shake. It is kind of thing you can somehow communicate with these people without talking.

I: If you plan to stay in Denmark do you think it is important to dress similarly as Danes?

D: I think I already do that. 15:20 Maybe I will buy couple of more hoodies.(Laughs). If you want somehow to integrate here I think it is a good idea. 15:34 Otherwise they will see that you are most likely not Dane. It will be a signal that this guy will be hard to integrate with, to communicate with. Hard to integrate into society. 15:56

I: You said it is kind of way of communication and it is important to dress as a Dane but do you think you also need to show that you are not Dane? Or would you hide it?

D: It depends on what is your plan. As I said if you want to integrate you should most likely wear clothes like a Dane. I think you can also combine it somehow if you want to. Dress like a Dane but have something from your own culture. Some accessories or something. I don't think it is a bad idea. If I had something cool on my mind about this I would most likely do that.

I: But if you think about the shops in Denmark and shops in Latvia, are the same brands or are they totally different?

D: They are not totally different. Here are a lot of local brands. I know that Denmark has a lot of good brands that are in use. Danish brands as well as some international know ones. In Latvia it mostly international brands because we don't have that popular local fashion. Of course there are same brand shops in Denmark and in Latvia. I think it is a bit different here.

I: You have some shop here and it is also in Latvia, right?

D: Yes. Some internationals, like H&M, Tommy Hilfigter. Not sure about Intersport. Some Zara shops, Pieces. There are.



I: If we could take one T-shirt from H&M in Denmark, would it be similar t-shirt of H&M in Latvia?

D: It is hard for me to say as I have never been to H&M in Latvia. I think it was opened two-three years ago, so at the time when I actually left Latvia.

I: Do you think that the styles in Danish shops are the same styles you can find in Latvia?

D: I think it would be most likely the same collection, if that is what you are asking.

## Interview Transcript – Participant E

I: How long have you been in Denmark?

E: I have been like almost seven years.

I: What was your reason to come to Denmark?

E: For studying and going abroad. Find the new culture, new things and stuff. It was good opportunity though. Came here through advertisement.

I: Do you plan to go back to Estonia or you plan to stay in Denmark?

E: I would rather prefer to stay here in Denmark. Not so many good possibilities regarding my job related studies I had in Estonia. I am thinking to work here in Denmark and then we will see if I would like to go back or stay here.

I: Did you had any expectations before coming to Denmark? Did you researched anything about country beforehand? Or you knew something about Denmark?

E: Actually I didn't know much about Denmark. I only new couple of my friends who were going to Denmark and studying prior maybe half a year. Only from them I know some information what it is and if it is good enough. Otherwise no, I haven't.

I: What were your first impressions when you came to Denmark?

E: It was mixed. There were good stuff and bad stuff. Most was actually good. Of course most things that comes out are prices, they are incredibly high here comparing to Estonia. People are relatively nice here. It is clean and tidy. Education was quite good. I would say a lot better than in Estonia because I was studying in Estonia prior coming to Denmark. In TTÜ (Tallinna Tehnikaülikool - Tallinn University of Technology) and I didn't like that.

I: But what about people as their appearance or clothing in Denmark? Do they differ from Estonians?

E: I would say yes.

I: In what sense?

E: I think Danes are more towards the fashion.02:28 I'm not sure. They are all tidy and clean.02:34 They take care of themselves. I guess that is the thing - they really take care of themselves. About styles - the thing I noticed is that they wear the almost the same thing everyone.02:54 I don't know, I just sometimes noticed that, like the brand of shoes that everyone wears it. That is just following the brands. Pretty much that.

I: Can you somehow characterise their clothing style? Colours? Dress code?

E: It depends on the age, of course. Elder ones are more tidy, wearing shirts. Young ones, I would say...I don't know how to describe that. More fashion style, yes.

I: What about the colours?

E: I would say white-ish. 03:52 They are more brighter, they are not that dark. 03:55 Let's say that more bright colours are quite appeared here. I guess. Definitely not depressing colours, that's for sure. 04:08

I: If you compare to Estonian clothing and fashion? Do they differ?

E: I think so but that's the thing I cannot actually...I can say it is different but I don't really know what is the actual difference. 04:23 Also depends on the people in Estonia. Depends on the neighborhood, where you are. Russian neighborhood, Estonian, Centre - it really depends on that. I would say from the neighborhood where I came, I don't think that many people are fashion followers there. But I don't know. It is hard to tell.

I: I can see you are wearing striped t-shirt and sweatshorts. Is it your regular clothing?

E: It is just the stuff I wear at home (meaning apartment). I would go out in them, they probably has stains on them. It is not appropriate 'go out'. The shirt, yes, I might go out with this shirt outside, it is quite okay. Depends where.

I: Which kind of clothes do you wear when you go outside?

E: Depends on the time -summer or winter, or just now during the summer?

I: Let's say right now.

E: Summer shorts, some fashion sneakers, not the running one but the Adidas or Puma ones, what so ever. Maybe shirt like that (striped t-shirt), like polo or normal, v-neck shirts, t-shirts. Something like that. Shorts and pants, depending when. When it is warmer then khaki pants, when colder then jeans.

I: What kind of style it is - casual or formal?

E: I would say casual. 06:03 I am not really good in the terms of casual, semi-casual, formal. I don't wear formal clothes that often. Only on special occasions. It is cosy to go in nicer clothes (meaning casual).06:30

I: What do you think about Danish dress code? How they wear clothes during the work?

E: Actually I heard that here is 'no dress code' 06:40(Positively) You can come to the bank with slippers and all these things. I can come pretty much like that at the bank work. And it will be fine. That is what I heard. They are very sort of relaxed in this sense 06:53 But I am not sure though.

I: And if you compare to Estonia?

E: I think in Estonia they are more strict in this sense.07:01 I would say if you go for job interview or to work it is kind of necessary that you look sharp in sense of wearing clothes. Again it depends where you work, where you go. Generally I would say they are more strict in Estonia.

I: So Danes are more loose in clothing style?

E: Yes. I would say that.

I: Where do you buy your clothes?

E: Shops particular?

I: Do you buy them in Denmark or in Estonia?

E: In Estonia, of course, if I go there I will go to some shops. But I quite often buy online. Of course it depends if it is like jeans or shirt, like they have precise measurements, then I don't buy online because it is hard to do that. If it is sneakers or shoes or t-shirts, you can just buy online. There are more variety. At least I have found in Denmark it is quite hard to find something that suits you 08:12 . It is probably because smaller city and there is not so many shops. The variety of shops is not that big. There is mostly H&M.

I: The 'mainstream' clothing stores?

E: Yes. Actually when I just came to Denmark I liked H&M because it was cheap. But as I have been long enough here I am bit of tired of it. It is everywhere. But definitely when I am going to Estonia I am trying to buy as much clothes as possible. There are more what to choose from.

I: What about the price and quality?

E: Price - i think some thing are cheaper here in Denmark, I would say. Quality - I cannot actually compare. It is hard. Depends on the shop. I think it is not region related but it depends on a shop.

I: For example you have one t-shirt from H&M from Denmark would it be the same t-shirt if you buy it from Estonian H&M shop regarding the quality and style?

E: I actually don't know. It is hard to compare. Because you need to buy exactly the same t.shirts to compare. I don't normally do that.

I: But you think that styles are similar or they still somehow try to sell styles appropriate to the country?

E: I think it is a bit different. At least I noticed that in Estonia that it was a little bit different but I am not sure. If I am in Estonia I will definitely not go to H&M. Maybe I will just passing by of it but will not go there as I am tired of it. So I shop in other places.

I: But do you think that clothes can actually communicate who is the person and where he belong to?

E: I think yes, of course.10:16 Absolutely. If you see a policeman with his uniform then I will respect him, if I see after the same policeman wearing these shorts (showing the ones he is wearing) you wouldn't not consider that he is policeman. Yes, I think it is valuable as it represents you 10:39 . I think it is important.

I: You have been in Denmark for seven years, have you noticed any changes in your clothing style?

E: A little bit because I had to sometimes. 11:01 Because of the variety of the things you can buy. I think it also depends on changing to urban style or things to buy. That is not always possible to find the region.

I: So you didn't change a lot?

E: I wouldn't say that dramatically but maybe I needed some clothes and had some other preferences to buy. For example some kind of pants, I used to wear that. I buy if I like it. Just like that.

I: Do you follow any fashion trends or find inspiration on the streets or anywhere else? Or you just buy what you like?

E: I just prefer minimalistic styles. 11:50 Not much of the stuff - as less as possible. I won't say that I am following something specific. Just try to find appropriate clothes. The

clothes that fits, that is the important. For me it is fits, fashion not so much, the fabric is important. And I guess it is just the style.

I: Do you have any specific colours that you prefer mostly in your clothing?

E: I try to go with neutral colours. Most of the time. Maybe to add some accent. I don't like to go crazy on colours. Not taking the yellow, like "oh, yellow, lets take that". Burn their eyes when they see me. That definitely not going to happen.

I: You think it is important to be in similar clothing style as Danes? Because you are in Denmark and you would like to integrate into the society?

E: I don't think so. 12:58 I think it is personal preferences. I would hate myself to wear something that I have forced to be wearing. Because there are so many styles you can follow and not be like the others. That is just my opinion.

I: Do you have any friends from Eastern Europe?

E: Yes, sure. That also depends what you mean what is considered as Eastern Europe.

I: Have you noticed if you friends have changed somehow in clothing style as they have been in Denmark for some time?

E: Fashion wise? It is hard to say. Not that much, to be honest. Again, I am not following the others, I might forget what they wear. Not that much. Pretty much the same to the style as they had. No drastic changes. I don't think so and I wasn't paying attention to that.

I: Do you think that Danes are fashion conscious people?

E: I think yes. 14:22 I mean fashion as they take care of themselves.

I: And what about Estonian?

E: I think you need to differentiate like Russian-Estonians or Estonians. It could be different from that perspective. I would say also...Well I am not so often in Estonia so I cannot compare. I would say yes, specifically Estonians. Russian might wear...not focusing

so much at daily time but if comes some meeting or similar, they dress really sharp.  
Probably it is how it is.

I: Do you mean that Estonians and Danes are on the same level?

E: I would say yes. More or less, at least how I noticed it.