



BRANDING AARHUS – ATTRACTING HIGHLY EDUCATED INTERNATIONAL FAMILIES

ABSTRACT OF THE MASTER THESIS

The aim of the thesis is to investigate the experiences of highly educated internationals and their families with the city of Aarhus. The goal is to generate ideas, on how these experiences can optimize the prevailing branding strategy of Aarhus.

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1. Introduction

“Aarhus is a dynamic city that has a lot to offer the world. It has a growing and youthful population, and it has ambitious plans for the future. In order to realize these plans, Aarhus will need to both galvanize the belief and mobilize the activity of those people who live in the city, and attract new people and new businesses”, Aarhus municipality strategy plan 2015/2018.

Globalization and urbanization have changed the nature of contemporary cities (Rogers, 1998, p. 208). Recent years, most contemporary cities have been looking for new ways to promote themselves. Due to the fast changes in technology, and the shift from being local to becoming a globalized environment. Most cities are forced to compete to become an attractive destination, for instance in terms of providing a diverse workplace environment, a cultural rich place for diverse societies, and an excellent infrastructure, such as transportation, opportunities for families and residential requirements (Kaneva 2009; Kotler 2012). The concentration of highly educated workers in urban centres, both foreign and local, are seen as a vital resource, which provide constructive and innovative ideas, which in turn generate development in the city and the surrounding regions. Thus, leading urban regions are no longer contend to be passive by-standers at the hands of the globalized forces, that are associated with the ever-increasing dispersal of information technologies. On the contrary, they are taking control of their own growth and development (Audretsch 2002).

Moreover, the practices of branding and marketing have become extremely popular within the context of destinations, and the branding of such making it an attractive place for highly educated and skilled employees (see e.g. Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005).

The branding strategy report 2015-2018 for Aarhus city, Denmark, recommends a new direction that the city should take. In order to achieve its objectives, it is important to attract

its key audience and update the perceptions of the city as a place of influence on the world stage.

The key audience that Aarhus aims to attract, are divided into four sections:

(1) International students, (2) International workers, (3) International businesses and (4) International visitors. For every section the city develops specific strategies and marketing initiatives, to attract the specific audience.

The focus of this thesis, is to generate new branding ideas and to optimize the current ones towards branding Aarhus city for highly educated foreign workers, and their accompanying family's. This will be done, by investigating and analysing the target group experiences in regard to working and living in Aarhus city (the focus will be on section (2) branding strategy towards international workers). Furthermore, the purpose of this thesis is to find out how these experiences can contribute to the city branding strategy and initiatives.

According to a recent report by the Danish Industry, 2016 (*DI Global Talent, 2016*), attracting highly educated and skilled people, has become a point of interest for governments across the world. Apparently, with countries fighting for their share of a constantly shrinking, highly educated people to ensure prosperity and growth. Thus, most cities have been engaged in a set of marketing and branding strategies, designed to improve the active promotion of the various nation's assets and attributes, to better portray its image in the world (Kaneva, 2009). Branding a destination is a continuous long-term goal, which is organized and designed in a way to make it most favourable, highlighting the features of the destination, so that people would want to move, live and work there. Another reasons why most cities are investing in polishing up their image and identity, is the growing competition in the global market, where the main goals are to attract tourists and highly educated skilled foreigners, inward investment and boosting export, in addition to enhancing national pride (Dinnie, 2016; Kavaratzis, 2005).

Ren and Blichfeld (2011) propose a different approach to branding cities. They argue that contemporary cities can have more than one identity, thus indicating that branders have not fully identified the potential of multiple identities while branding the cities, as Ren and Blichfeld argue, this creates a multifaceted place, which is more dynamic and interesting, and can provide different experiences (Ren & Blichfeldt, 2011).

Most cities must constantly adjust to the changing circumstances, and at the same time maintain a balance between the values and visions they have set for themselves, therefore it is a never-ending process (Baker, 2012). In other words, destination identities are constantly in the making of globalized world, and furthermore most destinations often consist of many stories, which contribute to the destination identity construction and reconstruction (Ren and Blichfeldt 2011). Thus, investigating the experiences of the highly educated international workers and their accompanying families is inevitable, in order for new branding ideas to be born.

Aarhus is Denmark's second largest city - the city calls itself the "*World's Smallest Big City*", and aims to become one of the major destinations in Denmark for foreigners and foreign investments (*Aarhus branding report 2015-18*), especially after gaining a tremendous popularity and positive feedbacks as being an ECoC (*European Capital of Culture*) in 2017. Recently, the business community in Aarhus has realized that in order to attract more highly educated foreigners working for businesses, they have to devise a strategy and put emphasises on their accompanying families (*Høringssvar Erhvervsplan 2018-2019*).

The economy in Denmark is challenged due to low growth rates and increasing pressure on the public finances. In addition, many employees from the Baby Boomer generation are retiring from the labour market. These different factors create a situation where more labour is needed now and in the future as well, making it harder for companies to recruit the highly skilled labour needed to increase growth and prosperity (*DI report 2016*).

In 2010 the Danish Government agreed on an action plan called Denmark 2020 – Knowledge, Growth, Prosperity and Welfare. The goal is that in 2020, the total Danish supply of labour is to be among the 10 highest in the world. On other hand, Denmark will work on strengthening the positive image abroad, with the goal of attracting foreign key employees. The Government will make it easier for highly qualified foreigners to work and study in different cities in Denmark, by ensuring a more non-bureaucratic, trans-public-sector cooperation (Denmark 2020). This may, among other things, include measures that make it easier to set up a business in Denmark, and create a better framework for accompanying children and spouses, such as, securing the necessary supply of places at international schools and upper secondary schools. Following the general governmental plan, Erhverv Aarhus/Business Network Aarhus

acknowledges an interesting business plan 2018-2019, which overall emphasizes that Aarhus city is in a rapid development as the businesses sector in Aarhus are interested in attracting educated workers. By working on the Internationalization strategy of Aarhus, Business Network Aarhus, aims to developing more career opportunities for professional workers and their families, as well as motivating highly educated foreigners to move across national borders (*Høringssvar Erhvervsplan 2018-2019*). Further in the project, the content of contemporary destination branding will be discussed. Moreover, what content is currently being used to brand a destination for highly educated internationals and their families members, in order to generate ideas for Aarhus city, also the discussion will help the research to analyse the interviewees experiences and detect which ones could contribute to the branding strategies (*Chapter 3, point 3.5 branding a destination as a highly educated foreigner magnet*).

As Aarhus city business area is growing, the need for a highly educated working force follows suits. According to the latest Danish industry research survey (DI Global Talent, 2016) on the business environment in the Danish municipalities, more than 30% of the companies participating in the survey, have been unsuccessful in their recruitment efforts (*DI Global Talent, 2016*). The survey shows that Denmark has a solid ranking, which provides a strong talent readiness and competitiveness platform. Though, this does not translate into equally positive results, in terms of a strong ability to attract highly educated workers. According to the survey, Danish businesses consider the attraction of highly educated foreigners a top priority, but the target group is not correspondingly attracted to the Danish business environment (*DI Global Talent, 2016*).

It is evident that branding a destination for highly educated foreigners is not only of interest of many regions, but it is of a great interest of Aarhus city's today's business and economic development. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how the insights from the highly educated workers and their family members, could contribute and generate new branding ideas towards attracting highly educated international workers to Aarhus city.

1.1 Problem Area

Several Danish business and governmental organizations, find that there is a high demand for highly educated workers in Aarhus city (Aarhus University, Vestas, Arla, Business network

Aarhus, Aarhus municipality). Thus, Aarhus city aims to attract more highly educated international workers, in order to stay on top of the competition and attract the brightest minds to Aarhus' companies. The further goal is that the International workers will contribute to the diversity, innovation and international understanding of the city, by living and working in Aarhus (Aarhus municipality internalization report 2015-2018). In terms of city branding, according to the report 2015-2018, the most important task for the municipality is to provide a framework, for both initiatives and events in the city. To encourage and help the private stakeholders to take initiatives, it is necessary to provide good services. On the other hand, Aarhus municipality, wants to make an extensive use of the ambassador formula, to keep the highly educated foreigners engaged during their stay in Aarhus city, and even after they leave the country. Therefore, it is important to understand how the highly educated international workers and their accompanying family members who live and work in Aarhus, experience the city initiatives designed for them for social, cultural and informative initiatives, and how these experiences can contribute to the city branding strategy. Branding these initiative is a strategy Aarhus Municipality make use of, according to the city branding report 2015-2018. For this study Park and Petrick Morgan (2006), Ritchie and Richie (1998) as cited in Ren and Blichfeldt (2011), highlight that the perception of branding is applied. They explain branding as such: *branding is perceived, as the only way, in which clear destination identities can be created and meaningfully communicated to the target group*. The study agrees with Ren and Blichfeldt (2011), believing that destinations cannot and should not presents themselves as having one clear identity. Furthermore, this study will investigate how the perception of the physical environment of Aarhus can contribute to the city branding initiatives, taking into consideration Lynch's (1960) statement, that the city physical environment influences a city image/images and identity/identities.

In this study, city branding initiatives towards educated international workforce are analysed from educated international workers' perception.

Research Questions:

How are highly educated international workers and their accompanied family experiencing Aarhus, furthermore how can these experiences contribute to the city branding strategies and initiatives?

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the branding strategies and initiatives of Aarhus, towards attracting educated foreigners and their accompanying family members. Further, the city prevailing branding strategy will be discussed, before analysing the target group experiences, in order ideas how to be improved to be generated. Last but not least, the goal is also to discover the expectation of both the educated foreigners and the city of Aarhus, in order to generate ideas, which city identities should be communicated.

Also, the interviewees were performed to share their positive and negative experiences with the city of Aarhus, in order to find out their satisfaction level. Similarly, as word- of -mouth is considered a strong marketing and branding tool, the perspective of families to spread word-of-mouth regarding their experiences is also analysed.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with highly educated workers and their accompanying spouses, who are currently living in Aarhus, in order to find out their point of view on Aarhus city branding initiatives. The interviews with the foreign families can be also seen as a customer feedback to the organizations involved. That is, feedback to the organization, whose services and products the customers have been using. In this case, the customers are the highly educated internationals and their spouses, and the organization is the city of Aarhus. The management being the governmental bodies working with city branding.

The data represents the educated international workers and their partners' perspectives of the city. Moreover, all the acquired materials allow the researcher to have full insight of the way Aarhus is represented and perceived before and after the arrival of the workers and their accompanying spouses.

The negative experiences of the foreign families' can be used to generate ideas about altering the practical situation, regulations and the bureaucracy system for foreign families in Aarhus. Last but not the least, their positive experiences will be used to generate ideas, on how the branding strategy towards attracting highly educated workers and their families can be optimized.

In order to investigate the research question, this study will first elaborate methodological considerations in Chapter 2. In continuation, Chapter 3 will discuss relevant literature and theories, in which the topic of this research is situated. While chapter 4 consists of the analysis and interpretation of the interviewee responses, and the data collected through online sources

regarding branding strategies and initiative of Aarhus city, as working and living destination for highly educated foreigners and their families. Finally, this study ends with a discussion of the findings in Chapter 5, which will lead to a conclusion in Chapter 6.

2. Methodology

This chapter will introduce the reader to the methodological approaches and the scientific methods of the empirical data collection. The chapter will explore the aspects of the philosophical undertone, which are prominent throughout this paper, as well as the data collection process, consisting of articles and interviews. Also, the quality of the process is reviewed by validity and ethical issues.

2.1 Philosophical orientation

This study will be guided by the constructivist paradigm, which *“is a way of interpreting different aspects of social life as they were constructed and given meaning through social processes”* (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Bryman, 2012). The philosophical foundation of the thesis is based on interpretivism. This means that the paper follows an interpretivist orientation, in which the researcher is perceived as a traveller instead of a miner (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In other words, the researcher is a traveller on a journey to find out and learn about the experiences of foreign families in Aarhus, the researcher will wander through the different experiences and enter into conversations, in order to generate information and answer the problem formulation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Bryman does not perceive the ultimate truth about reality to be simply found and picked up, untouched by its surroundings, but rather as a reality and meaning constructed by humans' interacting with one another (Bryman 2012). Daymon and Holloway, believed that there are multiple truths out there, each as 'true' as the other, and constantly changing due to being socially constructed (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). Furthermore, the interpretivists want to obtain an understanding of the phenomena, and uncover the meaning of how people understand their own experiences. In this study, the phenomena researched is the experience

the highly educated and skilled foreigners have, as well as their accompanying family members. This phenomenon will include, narratives of moving, working and living in Aarhus city, Denmark, and how these experiences can contribute to the city branding initiatives. The specific case of this study is Aarhus city and the city branding initiatives.

It is acknowledged that the research cannot be ultimately objective and separate from the researcher's own ways of viewing upon the findings. Interpretivism is underpinned by subjectivist ontology, and sees the truth as constructed by the people who experience it, and how it is perceived through those experiences (Guba, 1990). This is seen as the constructivist way of viewing the nature of reality. Factors such as social environment, culture, language and the like influence the way people perceive their experiences. This is a particularly relevant approach, when investigating how an educated foreigner and their families, experience living and working in foreign country, and how their truths are constructed. Therefore, the reality they perceive is constructed through the lens of another culture's setting.

Methodologically the study aims to identify the constructions and experiences the interviewees hold, as accurately as possible (Guba, 1990). A typical way of collecting empirical data, within this approach, is through qualitative interviewing (Bryman, 2012; Guba, 1990). This means that the data collection and the analysis, do not suggest that the findings of this thesis will represent the ultimate truth, but will be a representation of one version of the truth. The researcher analyses the interviewees, their answers, from her own way of viewing '*reality*'. However, this does not hinder the academic authenticity of the study, since the chosen approach will act as a guide, and will be followed when the data collection and analysis occur.

This study will be guided by a constructivist paradigm, and in the next sub-chapters the methods applied will be discussed. According to Guba, Lincoln and Bryman, a constructivist perspective is: "*a way of interpreting different aspects of social life as they were constructed and given meaning through social processes*" (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Bryman, 2012).

2.2 Data collection Method

In order to identify how the highly educated foreigners and their accompanying partners experience Aarhus city, and how these experiences can contribute to the city branding, a

qualitative approach will be applied. By using relevant destination branding theories to analyse the collected data, an inductive approach will be used. This is done to better understand the research in question, and explore ways in which the experiences of the highly educated workers in Aarhus, can contribute to the branding initiatives (Bryman 2012, p. 36). The inductive research will begin with the collection of data, where the theory and concepts emerge (Bryman 2012: 27). This approach supports the chosen social constructivist standpoint, which requires investigating the research question without limiting itself to a specific theory from the beginning of the research. Thus, the qualitative research and methods in this project will allow the flexibility of going deeper in the study, but the disadvantage is that it can create a lack of structure and confusion (Silverman 2006: 35). The qualitative approach is necessary in order to ensure the interpretivist and social constructivist approach in this study, as it sets the findings of the data into context raised from the research topic. Even though this study follows a qualitative approach, it is possible that some characteristic of quantitative research occurs. Bryman (2012: 37) argues: *“studies that have the broad characteristics of one research strategy may have a characteristic of the other”*.

2.2.1 Desk Research

Both desk and field research were used to gather the needed data for this study. The data was collected through already naturally occurring data that: *“exists independently of the researcher's intervention”* (Silverman 2006: 201). Governmental reports, Aarhus city municipality papers, academic books, academic literature reviews, online articles concerning city branding, image and identity in a globalized society, as well as articles from the market communication stream course with focus on city identity (Ren and Blichfeldt 2006, Ren and Blichfeldt 2011), and destination branding (Askegaard, 2016; Baker, 2012) were examined and used in the collection of secondary data.

2.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

The qualitative data collection method was a semi-structured face- to – face interviews. The sample consisted of seven highly educated foreigners and their accompanying spouse, which are currently living and working in Aarhus. The original interview guide can be found in *appendix 1*.

The interview questions are specific and structured, to provide additional support for the interview situation. The reactions of the participants varied, some were more talkative and did not require additional questions, whereas others only offered answers to particular questions and needed more encouragement to elaborate. See appendix for further detail (*Appendix 2*).

Before conducting the interviews, key questions and topics were created to guide the interviewees, and to ensure that the overall topic was adhered to. This was done in order to ensure that the questions will cover the research area and give the participants enough room to answer fully.

During the interviews, the relevance of the information provided by the interviewees for the study is taken into account. Considering the epistemological standpoint of interpretivism, the researchers were able to ask questions to go deeper into the topic, provided that the information, the interviewees was giving, was important and relevant to the research question (Bryman 2012: 471).

The questions themselves were framed based on the literature and theories discussed. In addition, to addressing challenges that were brought forth, Aarhus branding strategy report and plan 2015/18 for attracting educated foreigners and their family was considered. Also, destination branding literature, points out that it is vital to know your target audience, their perceptions of destination branding initiatives, and how these initiatives influence the image building and spreading of information (the word- of- mouth) (e.g. Dinnie, 2008; Ren and Blichfeldt, 2011; Baker, 2012; Askegaard, 2016). The respondents were asked about the images they had regarding Aarhus, Denmark before and after moving here, whether there was alignment between images and reality. The interviewer's role was to be as non-influential as possible, within the frames of the interview guide. The aim was to ask short questions, and let the interviewee speak freely, and elaborate on their interpretation of the question. However, particularly in the beginning of the interviews, the interviewees were brief and required more guidance than towards the end of the interviews. Each interview lasted between 25 and 45 minutes. The Interview questions follows Kvale's nine type of questions guide (Bryman, 2012, p. 476-478). As Kvale suggests, interviews with internationals start with *Introducing questions*, inquiring the respondents regarding what their reasons were to relocate, and what their perception about Aarhus city in general was. During the interviews, *follow-up questions*, such as "What do you mean?" (*Appendix 2*) were asked, in the cases where the interviewer

recognized the need to elaborate more on interviewees' previous answer. *Probing questions*, were also frequently used, if for instance previous replies of direct questions needed clarification or a deeper explanation, e.g. "*So you feel satisfied living in Aarhus?*" (Appendix 2), *Direct questions*, considering interviewees expectations of Aarhus as multicultural place, which was the central topic of the whole interview, were asked at the end of the interview, as proposed by Kvale: "...in order not to influence the direction of the interview too much" (Bryman, 2012, p. 478). Since the research group were seeking to get an individual perception of the matters in question, many *indirect questions* were applied, for instance: "*Do you feel comfortable in Aarhus?*" (Appendix 2).

The interviews also contained *structuring questions* in order to return the respondents to the main topic or to change it. *Interpreting questions*, which are the last in Kvale's guide, were also adopted, to ensure that interviewer understood the answers of interviewees properly (Bryman, 2012, p. 478).

2.3 Research design

In order answer the research question this thesis to answer the problem formulation, the city of Aarhus was used as a critical case study.

A case study can be designed in several ways and the most appropriate is a critical case study. This means that the analysis is constructed by the theories used, where the purpose is to catch specific circumstances, and to confirm, challenge or extend existing theories (Yin, 2003, p. 40). A case study is an appropriate design, to investigate Aarhus city branding initiatives in a globalized society, and image of spread communication, as a phenomenon framed by the specific time, place and people (Bryman, 2012).

In order to investigate how the experiences of certain foreigners can contribute to the branding strategies and initiatives, it can be viewed as a single case experiment (Bryman, 2012), where Aarhus city will serve as a testing point.

2.4 Research Sample

The sample for this study is a selective sampling, as the target group of the study is highly educated foreigners and their accompanying partners. Thus, sample of the empirical data, consisted of seven highly educated foreign workers from the EU countries and the USA – all working in various international business organizations in Aarhus city. According to statistical

information 15,9267 foreigners came 2015 to work in Denmark (*statistical overview 2015*), most of them from EU countries and USA (*statistical overview 2015*). Although there is no statistical data revealing the distribution of the foreign working force across Denmark, it could be concluded that the majority of the highly educated foreign workers in Aarhus city, are from the EU countries and possibly from the USA. Taking into consideration that in 2015, Americans ranked as the fourth largest group in Denmark, who were issued residence permits (*statistical overview 2015*). Also, most of the business industries in Aarhus, are dealing with different countries from the EU and the USA. This will create a need for a highly educated foreign work force, from both the EU and USA. All interviewees had to be currently living in Aarhus, which is necessary in order to conduct all the interviews in person. As Kvale (2009) and Bryman (2012) claim, finding interviewees to participate can sometimes be difficult. Therefore, a snowball approach was used in this study, in order to gather interviewees. All the interviewees were contacted through - different social media platforms. The response rate from the groups were very low. Therefore, there was a need to enlist the aid of the respondents, in order to gather more interviewees for the study.

The sample demographics can be seen in the following table:

Number	Nationality	Age	Living in Aarhus	Children	Activities
F1	USA/China	F26/M28	3Y	0	M: AAU PostDoc F: Linberg International
F2	Scotland	F37/M40	5Y	2	M: Lego F: Self-employed
F3	Ireland	F30/M30	5Y	2	M: IT F: Social helper
F4	USA/England	F26/M28	3Y	0	M: AAU PostDoc F: Consultancy
F5	Italy/Latvia	F35/M37	5-6 Y	0	M: Arla F: Student
F6	Spain	F28/M30	3 Y	0	M: Research F: Customer service

F7	Bulgaria	F25/M30	3y	1	M: Dansk Supermarket F: Maternity
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The sample can be considered as homogeneous, in the sense that all participants indeed possess a high level of education, and decided to move to Aarhus city with their families. Sampling is often more purposeful in qualitative research than in quantitative research, as Silverman argues: *“The validity of qualitative analysis depends more on the quality of the analysis than on the size of the sample”* (Silverman, 2010:54).

2.4 Methodological concerns regarding the analysis

The connection between the theory and the analysis, in this thesis, is an inductive, grounded theory approach. Grounded theory begins with an inductive approach with the purpose of a hypothesis from the data acquired; pre-existing knowledge about the topic is deliberately withheld until the initial data collection and analysis are complete. This is done to prevent pre-existing knowledge from influencing the research findings. On the other hand, to understand the highly educated international workers and their family members, experiences and perceptions, an iterative relationship to the theory is necessary, where the iterative relationship *“...involves weaving back and forth between data and theory”* (Bryman2012: 26). Before starting the analysis, it is important to use the correct theories about destination branding, learn what attracts highly educated internationals and their families, as well as an understanding of how building and communicating destination identities are conducted. Current reports and articles concerning Aarhus branding strategies, towards educated internationals, were taken into account, and will serve as a background for understanding the discourse in which the phenomenon exist. Data from the interviews was coded on different topics, and main themes was interpreted in order to develop current knowledge in certain time and space *(the experience of the educated foreigners living and working in Aarhus and how their experiences can contribute to the city initiatives for further attraction of the target group)* which can contribute to the existing theory of destination branding and highly educated working force attraction.

The process of analysis started by assembling and transcribing the interviews. After that a thematic analysis was used, as a tool to examine and structure the data. Bryman (2012) claims that, thematic coding cannot be considered as a separate way of analysing, but as an additional tool, in combination with other methods, e.g. grounded theory. In this research paper, the thematic analysis is understood according to Braun and Clarke (2006), who argue that thematic investigation is a method to analyse qualitative data on its own right (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.78). The distinction between grounded theory and thematic analysis is made, as grounded theory is a way to explore patterns found in the data, which Braun and Clark argue are theoretically bound (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 80).

A thematic analysis is a method which lets researchers identify, analyse and report particular patterns within data in a detailed way (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

As the analysis is carried out from a social constructivist perspective, thematic analysis is understood as a constructionist method. The goal is to examine cases in which meanings, experiences, events and realities are the responses of a numerous discourses, which are functioning within the society (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 81).

Braun and Clarke (2006) argues that an element, which captures an important point within the gathered data, is linked to the research question, and consequently it will produce, to some degree, certain patterns within the overall data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 82).

The interviewees answers were transcribed and analysed thematically in order to categorize the participants responses in the *following themes*: Based on the information, the categories provided, conclusions were drawn: 1. image/expectations/branding 2. City identities/Urban identities 3. Initiatives awareness/city communication 4. Word-of-mouth. The coded interviews and the interview codes can be found in *appendixes 2 and 3*.

2.5 Theories and models

The following models and theories were applied, in order to analyse and support the findings. To answer the research question, theories about destination branding, and city identities in a globalized world, will be used in order to tackle the research area.

The book by Baker (2012) *Destination Branding* outlines how destinations can use its assets to achieve different urban goals, objectives and help develop a branding strategy. Additionally, it also shows how to support and (re)construct the image and the identity of the destination.

When taking into consideration some parts of the book, the researchers want to investigate how Aarhus branding strategies can be optimized, by investigating the experiences of people who chose Aarhus as a work and living destination. On the other hand, a study by Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) is used to investigate and understand, how these experiences can contribute to the city identities and branding considerations. To analyse and understand how to create attractive destination for highly educated foreigners and their partner, several materials, related to professional foreign work force attraction, were discussed. Last, but not the least, the current Aarhus strategy towards attracting foreign professional and their families, was discussed in the analysis section, in order to shed light on what the city does, and at the same time, leave it open for discussion with the findings of the qualitative research (interviews). This study contributes to the theoretical field explained above, and can shed light on how the different experiences of a target group, can help optimize the destination branding and attraction initiatives.

2.6 Source of criticism and Validity

The information sources, and the data used for this study, must be discussed in a critical light. Part of the data used in the study, is based on information found in academical articles, and books from different scholars. Some of the discussed scholars, have a different philosophical conviction, then the philosophical foundation statement for this study (constructivists versus positivist), but none the less, some of their arguments make their way into the same conclusion, that destination identities can be influenced by tangible and intangible factors. In general, the researchers believed that they are reliable, even though there might be contradictions among them. This research paper is following a qualitative approach, which is subjective compared to a quantitative. A quantitative approach is impossible to replicate, as generalisation can occur, and the examination is not as transparent and easy to follow, as it is with a qualitative approach. The chosen qualitative approach offers a handy set of tools, which helps explain the meaning and complexity behind certain actions, which is the aim of this study (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, find out if the research is representative, a few areas were evaluated: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability (Hirschman, 1986). One of the ways to test for credibility is to ask for feedback about the interpretations from researched interviews (Hirschman, 1986, p. 244). In this case, the chosen sample, the highly

educated foreigners and their spouses. It is possible to contact them and consult with them, about the accuracy of the analysis and findings.

The transferability criterion is not concerned with generalization, but with the ability to apply certain interpreted findings to other similar interpretations in the same social field (Hirschman, 1986, p. 245). Regarding how this type of research, concerning the experiences of highly educated foreigners and their accompanying spouses, can contribute to the destination branding. A comparison to already existing studies about other destinations, where the aim is to become an attractive place for highly educated foreigners and their families, by looking for repeated motifs and patterns. None the less, it is important to keep in mind that every social context is specific, and there may emerge similarities, as well as significant differences (Hirschman, 1986). The dependability criterion is related to the researcher, as she is the interpreter of the data and findings (Hirschman, 1986). As the researcher is an educated international, living with her foreign family, studying and working in Aarhus, she already has constructed some sort of mind set about living and working in Aarhus. Therefore, in order the researcher to keep the objectivity of the findings, she has to be careful when interpreting the data, as the researcher is not an outside observer, but is in fact in the same position as the participants, and is therefore in a position to better relate to the data, but at the same time she could be prone to bias.

2.7 Ethical and Social Issues

The final chapter of the methodology part, will discuss the ethical and social issues relevant to the study. Bryman (2012) argues, that ethical considerations take up a considerable part of the discussion, more than ever before. This might be due to increased sensitivity about both, social and ethical issues, but also because a growing concern among *“representatives of universities, research funding bodies, and professional associations to exhibit good ethical credential”* (Bryman 2012: 131). Diener and Crandall (1978, as cited in Bryman 2012: 135) point out four areas of possible categories to take into consideration when carrying out a research, which are: harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy or if deception is involved. The researcher followed the mentioned categories strictly. All of the participants in this study were voluntarily involved, and the interviews always started with the researchers explaining the interviewees about the topic and the following interview. Most of the

participants requested to be anonymous, as most of them work for well-known international Organizations in Aarhus. Thus, they preferred to keep their confidentiality. Before starting the interviews, all the interviewees were asked, if they are comfortable with recording the conversations. All of them agreed with one rule, the records will be kept internally, and not played publicly. The participated families are called F1, F2, F3 and so forth. All participants were also informed about the purpose of the interviews, and what the data will be used for. They all requested to receive the final version of the thesis, as they were deeply interested in the findings of the study.

3. Theoretical and literature review

The following chapter will examine different literature as well as theories, both are necessary to answer the research question. The theoretical and literature review in this chapter will be used in order to conduct the analysis of the collected data within this study. The topics concerning destination branding and destination environment, both physical and not physical, will be discussed. In order to design a destination branding strategy, the physical and not physical values of the city, have to be taken into consideration.

3.1 Destination Branding

To understand destination branding, it is important to know the difference between branding, place branding, destination branding and the image and identity of a destination, this is so because it helps understand the focus of the research area.

Destination and city branding activities, have become a necessary part of the global arena. The purposes is to attract highly educated foreigners, tourists, investors and general positivity from foreigners, where differences show themselves within areas such as: expense, strategy and coordination (Kaneva, 2012). According to Baker (2012) and Richards (2015), branding is still one of the most misunderstood concepts, both in the businesses world and by governments. Baker (2012) thinks of brands as *“the totality of thoughts, feelings, and expectations that form a distinctive and compelling promise and enables people to easily choose one product or service over another”*. In essence, Baker considers a brand successful when consumers are making use of the brand without much thought, he continues, and underline two aspects of branding, firstly that it is determined by the value of the promises that it makes, and secondly the

promises that it keeps (Baker, 2012). Thus, marketers and branders should be aware of the final consumer levels of satisfaction, in order to be able to balance between the brand value of promises and the promises that it keeps (Baker, 2012).

A brand is not a physical entity – it exists only in the consumers mind. Baker (2012) believes that a brand is collection of associations and thoughts, that are sorted in the mind of individuals, and not simply opinions of a committee or the marketing department (Baker 2012). A true brand must make and keep a clear, single-minded promise and then consistently deliver on it.

A brand is a promise of something for the consumer, and most of all it differentiates the product or service from other, similar ones. The added value that derives from successful brands is called brand equity (Aaker, 2010). Brand equity is a set of assets, that are linked to the brand, they either add to or diminish the brand value. Brand equity consists of brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand associations (Aaker, 2010). In other words, the managerial effort of branding, whether it is a product, a company, service or a destination, is beneficial to the product, because it separates the product from its competitors, the higher the effort, the more it increases turnover due to customer loyalty and the ability to ask higher prices, additionally it protects the company's reputation in a time of crisis (Aaker, 2010; Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009).

Furthermore, a place brand: *"is the totality of thoughts, feelings, and expectations that people hold about a location. It's the reputation of the place and represents its distinctive promise of value, providing it with a competitive edge"*, on the other hand place branding *"provides a framework and toolkit for differentiating, focusing and organizing around the location's competitive and distinctive identity"* (Baker, 2012).

Baker (2012) continues that in spite of the good intentions of the cities may have, developing a branding strategy can be challenging, because it takes passion, commitment, innovation and most importantly no single entity owns a location. Thus, partners throughout the location, must embrace the attitude that each time they are in touch with a customer, it is an opportunity to reinforce and build the brand, through positive customers experiences with the brand (Baker 2012). A destination brand refers to the brand in context to the location, where the location is an attractive place to visit, work, live, study etc.

Baker (2012) believes that, branding can, and does, bring short benefits, but the true value is in the long term. Successful destination branding in the long term, is achieved with small victories, again and again. A city's image is the result of the thousands of influences over an extended period. True success, will only come from a consistency of the message and outstanding experiences from many sources hitting their mark again, and again, and again (Baker 2012).

Moreover, Baker argues that the essential elements of branding theory are concepts of *identity*, *image* and *communication*. In destination branding context, *identity* would consist of factors such as history, culture, politics, gastronomy, society and environment. *Image* is how others perceive and understand the brand. In a country branding context, the people who perceive the *image*, are for example, domestic and external populations, investors or foreign diplomats. In the end, *communication* is the way of messaging the *identity*, in a destination branding context, media could be used in brand initiatives and assets of the city (Baker, 2012). Baker continues, by saying that the terms *image* and *identity* are often confused, because, *brand image* relates to how the brand is perceived from the customer's point of view, while *brand identity* is the unique set of visions that express the brand and shape the image. Moreover, if the image of destination does not match the way it is supposed to, a 'reality problem' problem arises, in which Baker (2012) believes that leaders of cities prefer not to recognize the problems, but sooner or later they must be addressed.

The next sub- chapter will discuss the key components needed, when accounting for branding a destination towards attracting highly educated workers.

3.2 Destination branding and identity

The sub- chapter will discuss different approaches and understandings of city brand identity and image, and how the concept influences the destination branding processes.

Citizens and visitor's satisfaction, is strongly influenced by the image of a city or a place, to which cities are branded and presented, plays significant role in the globalized society. The contemporary relation between globalization and branding, is according to Askegaard (2006) there is a new relation between globalization and branding. In his study he states, that brands act as vehicles in authenticating practices, identities and performances, as well as outside the

market place. Moreover, he mentions, that the social world is constituted by and local principles of branding, and the meaning of effects places and people, are increasingly created through the link to branding and the perceived image of branding

One part of the discussion, is the argument that destination should be presented as having more than one identity, and the other part argue the opposite, that destination should present a *clear identity and image*. Consequently, the concept of destination identity/identities and image/images, will be discussed from a scientific perspective, in order generate a broader view on the topic. The discussion will contribute to the understanding of how, the highly educated internationals and their accompanying partners experiences with the destination can contribute to the branding initiatives and identity/identities design.

According to Therkelsen (2002), a branded destination, may generate certain internationally shared meanings, which can constitute to a standardized platform, from which culturally differentiated market communication, can take its point of departure. Thus, it's very important for cities to be aware, how their communicative effort is perceived from the target audience. As target group orientation is, according to Therkelsen (2002) considered as a prerequisite for good market communication, which is essential for destinations to be aware of, because it is the frame of reference for their promotional efforts, which is then interpreted by the target groups.

Hankinson (2006, p. 240) and Kavaratzis (2005, p.1) argue, that there are three potential approaches for promoting and branding destinations: *cultural events/social events, restoration and promoting heritage* and *the construction of iconic buildings*. Therefore, the tangible and intangible components in a destination, play a role when it comes to designing destinations identity/identities. Furthermore, Andrews (2001, p. 202) believes that, when branding a destination, all the components in the city play a role (physical and not physical), which might be related, to some extent, to the concept of *Quality of Life* (QOL). Andrews, defines QOL as: '*Quality of Life is a feeling of well-being, fulfilment, or satisfaction on the part of residents or visitors to a place*'. In relation to this, Lynch (1960) argues that the concept of a *city image and identity*, is attached to the urban physical design (Dong and Duysters, 2015, p.1103). Further, Lynch (1960) believes, that the *city image* is seen as a crucial feature for the destinations competitiveness and popularity, among other destinations (Dong and Duysters, 2015, 1103).

It could be argued, that the destinations image, in the narrow sense, consists of urban shaping, city planning and ecological protection, natural scenery, as well as previous and present progress, and development of the destination (Dong and Duysters, 2015, p. 1104). Moreover, *city image* can be defined as a reflection of beliefs, ideas and impressions, which individuals, both local and visitors, have perceived it to be by evaluating it (Dong and Duysters, 2015, p.1104). In order to measure *city image*, a cognitive-emotional model is typically used. In this context, cognitive features are indicated by, public facilities, culture, activities, atmosphere and similarly, while emotional elements are selected by researchers, depending on the purpose of the study. For instance, Baloglu and McCleary, applied three cognitive indicators for this, *tourism quality, scenic beauty, and amenities*. Two sets of bipolar emotional indexes *pleasant–unpleasant/uplifting–boring and exciting–depressing/relaxed–suppressed* which are used for measuring public recognition and evaluation on the certain city image (Dong and Duysters, 2015, 1104).

Lynch (1960) defines *city identity* as, “*the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places*”. Accordingly, *city identity* can be seen as a distinction, which is obvious and visible at first sight, as well as creating strong images on people’s mind, even those haven’t seen it before.

On the other hand, the constructivist scholars, like Askegaard (2006) and Ren and Blichfeldt (2011), strongly believe that destinations should communicate multiple identities, which gives the opportunity for destinations to communicate and express their uniqueness, during different periods of time, and show this difference. Ren and Blichfield (2011) also believe that, a destination image and identity, often consist of many stories. Their study shows a constructivist approach, which says that each city can be presented in multiple ways, by emphasizing the characteristics of the different cities.

Destination branding, according to Ashworth (2009, p.9), is to discover or create uniqueness, which makes the city stand out from others, thus not on only concentrating on one city identity, but additional, which can bring more uniqueness to the city image.

For instance, Zhang (2009, p. 248) discuss, that the city branding should be concerned about the question: “*how culture and history, economic growth and social development, infrastructure and architecture, landscape and environment, among other things, can be*

combined into a saleable identity that is acceptable to all people” (Zhang 2009, p.248). In order to examine city branding, Ren and Blichfeldt’s (2011, p. 417) study has taken into account. Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) state, that one of the branding principles is to ensure that one’s place stands out from the crowd. Furthermore, they point out that, *“branding in the form of identification and dissemination of a brand’s core identity increases the correspondence between the communicated identity and the images that the customers form in their minds”* (Ren and Blichfeldt, 2011, p. 418). Therefore, a part of this study will look into the interviewees perception and experience, in relation to Aarhus identities, and examine how they are presented.

Moreover, Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) state that, *“communicating identity is, accordingly, not a one-way transmission but rather a process involving a variety of actors, artifacts, and technologies, as well as cultural, social and individual competences”* (Ren and Blichfeldt 2011). Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) study shows, to some extent, that the traditional branding approach, assumes that it is better to focus on one identity, rather than multiple identities, as it will increase the probability, that the inhabitants and potential inhabitants, will see the branded destination, as the marketers intended.

Therefore, Ren (2009, as cited in Ren and Blichfeldt, 2011) argues, that the focus on various versions of the destination, which not only manifest itself in discourse and images, but also in destination performances and materiality, will help to recognize the multiple characters of a destination. Moreover, Ren and Blichfeld (2011) argue, that multiplicity should be not ignored, as well should be not ignored by place branders. Rather, it should be seen as, a positive possibility to enrich and diversify the destination ~~place~~ brand. By connecting place branding, to the different activities inside the city, it can be seen as a way to create truly differentiating points- of – interest (Ren and Blichfield, 2011). According to Ren and Blichfield (2011), in relation to destination branding, this entails not only containing one fixed identity or image, but rather as being constantly constructed, negotiated and enacted.

The next- subchapter of this thesis, will discuss how the multiplicity approach, can contribute to destination branding initiatives.

3.3 Destination branding and multiplicity

Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) suggest, taking a closer look at the destination and a more diverse branding approach to marketers. Taking a multiplicity approach to the destination, and to what and who take part in its process of construction (Ren and Blichfeld, 2011). To do so, they propose that the destination is viewed as in different *versions*. These *versions* vary, according to which stakeholders are addressed or involved in the process of creation. This understanding, is exemplified in this thesis, using Aarhus city as a case study, and the experiences of the educated internationals and their partners. Ren and Blichfeld (2011) argue that discourses, images, destination performances and materiality, help recognize the multiple characters of destination. Also, they argue that multiplicity should not be ignored or especially by place branders. Rather, it should be seen as a possibility to enrich, and diversify the place brand in question, by using different enactments of the destination, which are rooted in existing tourist services and offers practices and discourses identified and located within the destination. Connecting place branding to these versions, is a favourable way to create truly differentiating points-of-interest (Ren and Blichfeld, 2011).

Destinations should stand out from other destinations; hence, the critical question shifts from what the place has to offer, to what the place may offer, particularly what ~~that~~ other destinations do not. This kind of thinking originates, from the idea of points-of-parity versus points-of-difference (Ren, C. and Blichfeldt, B., 2011).

According to Keller (2003) points-of-parity are associations, that are not unique to the brand. Instead, they are shared with other brands and hence, related to associations that are *"...necessary – but not necessarily sufficient – conditions for brand choice"* (Keller, 2003, p.133). For example, for a destination targeting at highly educated workers and their family members, a plenty of job opportunities, multicultural events or opportunities for personal growth, will probably act as points-of-parity, in order to attract them to the city. Points-of-difference, on the other hand, have much in common with the notion of unique selling propositions (USP). Keller defines points-of-difference as *"attributes or benefits that consumers strongly associate with a brand, positively evaluate, and believe that they could not find to the same extent with a competitive brand"* (2003, p.131). Furthermore, he argues that *"consumers' actual brand choice often depends on the perceived uniqueness of brand associations"* (ibid. p. 132). In a destination branding context, this means that the choice of destination relates more to the destination's unique points-of-difference, than to the points-of-parity shared with others

destination brands. Hence, a destination must possess destination specific points-of-difference (Ren and Blichfeldt, 2011).

A second branding component, is explained as such, the way to ensure that one's place stands out from the crowd, is that it has a clear image/images (Ren and Blichfeldt 2011). Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) argue, that destinations has more than one identity, and in a globalized world they are constantly in the making. A destination often consists of many stories, not only one. Moreover, the stories generated from the highly educated foreigners and their partners in Aarhus, can be used as a way of communicating the different identities of the destination to attract potential groups in the future.

Therkelsen (2002) argue that, branding a destination as an attractive working and living place, for highly educated people and their families, requires a good market communication approach. She continues, when branding a destination, it is essential to be aware how the target groups interpret the city promotional and communicative efforts globally. Thus, when creating an image for a destination, it is not only about the imaginary universe and demand patterns of the consumer, but also the inherent resources of the place, such as the climate, the landscape and the culture, as well as the strategic plans for development in a given area, including the interests of the locals. The creation of the communicative efforts, also play a role (Therkelsen 2002).

First and foremost, Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) argue, that the responsibility for branding goes beyond the boundaries of the marketing department, and flows into the board room, as well as, into all organisational departments (Ren and Blichfeldt 2011). This means, that the primary concern of product branding, is the creation and maintenance of the bonds with the customers, which is created by marketing departments and corporate branding. This in turn, relates to the top managements visions, organisational culture and the outside world's impression of the company (Hatch & Schultz, 2001).

Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) argue, that the new approach to branding, the "*branding audience*", expands beyond customers, and include all stakeholders (Ren and Blichfeldt 2011). Thus, such branding becomes an emotional bond between the organisation, and many the different groups of stakeholders. As the research group of this thesis, can be perceived as one of the stakeholders in the city, their experiences could play an important role in the branding process.

The next- subchapter will discuss, which factors influencing the image formation of a target group, and how the communication of these images could influence a destination branding.

3.4 Image formation and communication

According to Baker (2012), most places are trying to be all things to all people, only having made a small attempt to manage their competitiveness. Thus, external audiences still have an image of a place, and this become its default positioning. The brand planning process brings increased focus on all aspects, of how the city presents itself. Every time a person interacts with it, thoughts are derived, and perceptions build about (Baker, 2012). According to Therkelsen (1999), to be able to develop and communicate an accurate identity and image of a destination, in order to attract the wanted target group, a cultural perspective of the target group image formation, has to be taken into consideration (Therkelsen 1999).

Therkelsen (1999), talks about the importance of culturally determined perceptions, which exist on the demand side independently of the communicative effort. She emphasizes on t the difference between an image gained from media, cultural and educational systems, and an image formed from the controlled communicative efforts. The purpose of the discussion is to offer an understanding of these cultural images, and to position them as a central parameter for marketers to consider, when dealing with the promotion of a destinations (Therkelsen, 1999). Further, she explains that marketers have difficulties considering individual experiences, and those of their friends and family, thus it's important to look into the image formation, both on an individual level, as well as on the collective level, where the predominant one is the collective level.

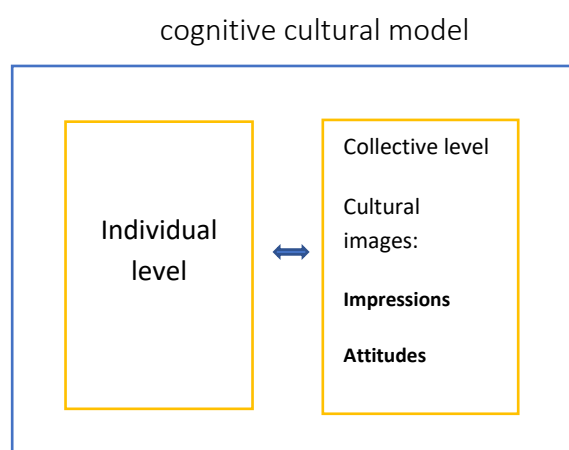


Fig 1. Cultural Images. Source: Therkelsen (1999, p. 78).

Cultural images are conceptualized as a three-split structure, which consists of a hierarchy of ideas about the Other – the further one moves down the hierarchy, towards the value level, the more unchangeable, subconscious and taken for-granted, the perceptions of the Other become (Hedetoft, 1995, as cited in Therkelsen 2011). Impressions are based on actual actions and events, in a given culture, which are transient, and consequently may be forgotten by the image holder over time, such as political actions or cultural. Impressions may, however, turn into more permanent, reflective and deeply felt attitudes towards a destination ~~place~~, if a given event occurs repeatedly, or if the event agrees or disagrees with the norms and values of the image holder (Therkelsen, 1999). Values, on the other hand, are predominantly unconsciously viewed, and not subject to reflections. Values represent “*the way things are*”, and taken for granted, in relation to the other, and thereby gain a kind of sacredness (Hedetoft 1995, as cited in Therkelsen 2011). Therkelsen (2011), questions the promotion of standardized brand identity, and ~~it~~ suggest that marketers should take a look beyond the surface, and take into consideration the individual and collective image formation of the targeted group.

Furthermore, the image formation from the target group experiences is related to the destination. These experiences can be perceived as both positive and negative. A positive experience is important in relation to the destination branding, in the sense that if successfully provided, a positive brand experience will ideally engage the destination brand (Szondi, 2010). This means that the person will speak well of the brand experience, through word-of-mouth as a brand ambassador, or if the case is opposite, the individual will speak negatively of the brand experience.

The next- subchapter of the thesis, will discuss what it means for a destination to be an attractive place for educated foreigners and their accompanying families. The discussion will include relevant literature and reports, in relation to what would attract educated foreigners and their families to a destination. Moreover, it will shed light on how the empirical data from the interviews, can be used to brand Aarhus towards attracting the target group.

3.5 Branding a destination as a highly educated foreigners magnet

The following discussion will help clarify the positive experiences from the interviewed participants, which will contribute to the discussion, on how these experiences can contribute to the city branding initiatives.

The early years of the twenty-first century witnessed the rise of a new philosophy of economic development, that portrayed the search for highly educated and creative workers, as a prerequisite of innovation and urban growths within what, Allen Scott (2007, as cited in Grant 2014), called cognitive- cultural capitalism: an economy that increasingly relies on high technology, service industries and cultural products.

Destination and place branding, is in itself melting pots, where cultures become especially attractive for highly educated workers, as the brand is blended with the culture (Florida 2002).

Florida (2002, as cited in Grand 2012) argues, that the social characteristics of a particular destination, attract the desired workers, and thus, serve as a critical determinant of local economic growth and prosperity. Advocated by the creative class theory, the quality of a place or destination influences the decision, the highly educated workers make, when they decide whether or not to move there (Florida 2002, as cited in Grand 2014). Furthermore, the quality of place includes diversity of employment options, lifestyle amenities, such as parks, running trails and nightlife the possibilities for ~~of~~ social interactions, such as cafés and books stores, diversity in for instance, ethnicity, age and sexuality, as well as, authenticity (ibid., 223).

Cities, regions and countries, are increasingly competing in a globalized market place, in which professional, highly educated workers become sought-after goods (Zenker, 2009). The highly educated and skilled foreigners, do not only provide tax income to the city they live in, they also provide the so called creative capital, innovation and a different mind-set, as well as a certain perspective, which can be turned into meaningful new concepts and products (Florida, 2005).

Aarhus, Denmark has realised the value that the highly educated foreigners can provide for its economy (*DI report 2016*).

Jacobs (1961) and Brawn (2003), as cited in Grand (2014) claim, that the local levels of tolerance and openness to diversity in a city, in terms of social characteristics of the population and economic structure of the region, shape the demography of highly educated and skilled foreign workers. For example, Ottaviano and Peri (2005) argue that demographic diversity, influences the flow of educated foreign workers, while Florida (2002) say that cultures of tolerance, attract educated foreign workers, that can contribute to higher rates of innovation and regional development (Ottaviano and Peri, 2005; as cited in Grand, 2014).

Florida (2002) and Stolarick (2010) believe, that destinations which are open to diversity through economic development, for instance by making local resources more productive and efficient, have a competitive edge. Thus, it is important to find out how the educated foreign professionals and their accompanying partners, experience the city resources and how these experiences can be discussed in branding context (Florida, 2002; Stolarich, 2010; as cited in Grand, 2014).

Factors, such as quality of place and policy, are now commonly used by Florida and Melander (2012) to explain the ability of cities and regions, to attract educated foreigners and their family members (Florida and Melander 2012, as cited in Grand, 2014).

Florida (2010) argues for a regional economic development, which is grounded in highly educated international workers, technology and tolerance. An alternative view appears in national and regional innovation systems literature (Florida, 2010, as cited in Grand 2014). The literature emphasizes the role of institutions of higher education, access to career buzz, and overall quality of the regional innovation system, as being critical to economic development (Grand 2014).

The literature further concentrates on the quality of place characteristics, that help attract educated foreign workers. Four concepts are discussed creativity, innovation, sustainability and the urban economy. Florida (2002) argue, that most successful urban regions, are those that develop tolerance and a welcoming attitude, towards social diversity and ~~an~~ offer a critical mass of cultural activity. The innovation levels of the city, as an important factor of generating new ideas, play a critical role when it comes to human capital in the innovation and knowledge

creation process, due to the workers mobility between projects and places (Grand 2014). In other words, creating an easy access to social networks, career buzz and job opportunities, help facilitate local learning, innovation and knowledge exchange (Hauge and Hrach, as cited in Grand 2014). Last, but not the least, a growing interest in sustainability and liveability, highlights the concerns for environmental and social justice, as well as, the long-term health and being of a place (Grand, 2014). The wider definition of sustainability resonates with the arguments of Gertler (2001) and Bradford (2004), who suggest that the ability of a city to attract highly educated foreign workers, depend on the ability of a place to be affordable, liveable, strong, socially cohesive neighbourhoods; access to social employment and social services; access to childcare; diverse cultural live and other amenities (Gertler 2001; Bradford 2004; as cited in Grand, 2014).

According to Baker (2012), one the main principles of successful place management and branding, is a coordinated effort by all place stakeholders within the cohesive place context, created by the key stakeholders' place branding literature, policy makers, private and public businesses, civil society and academic governmental institutions. Therefore, in order for the countries to be able to introduce what they can offer to the potential targeted group, a cohesive stakeholders' collaboration, is becoming a vital part of the branding strategy, toward attracting educated foreign workers.

The ability of a city or region, to attract a strong highly educated workforce pool, is determined by its ability to sustain businesses and jobs, as well as, to offer the best living conditions. In order to succeed, city branders need to understand the demands and decision-making process of a highly-skilled working population. According to *LinkedIn Global Talents report 2015*, disposable income, is a top consideration, when accepting a new work opportunity. A balance between work and personal life, professional development and opportunities for advancement are equally important. A highly educated work force, traveling with their families, is considered the largest component of the workforce in the developed countries. According to the report, they prefer to live in the green walkable neighbourhoods, with mixed amenities, to make use of bicycles or transportation. The sense of place, which have a good mix of activities, is wanted, and in order to succeed, cities need to invest in the needs of the migrating work force. What's more, they want the workplaces to move to the proximity of their homes. According to the report, 62 percent of the educated foreigner and their accompanying family members, prefer

a home close to shops, restaurants and offices. With the modern level of technology, and with prevailing demand on jobs, this is a doable task for city managers and branders. According to Jane Jacobs (1969), quality and diversity of the city, play a significant role, when attracting highly educated workers with their family members. This group will most likely will look for housing affordability, calmer and greener neighbourhoods, cultural openness, variety of public services in the sphere of education, and healthcare (Jane Jacobsen, 1969).

The city of Huston, is an example of a campaign called *The City with no Limits* which demonstrate the emerging practices in attracting, a highly educated work force, based on collaboration of city stakeholders, such as proactive participation of local companies in design and communication.

The global talent competitive index (GTCI) 2016, gave Switzerland a top spot, as the best country in the world, to attract a highly educated workforce, ahead of Singapore, the UK, the US and Sweden.

“The initial GTCI rankings show that although megacities such as San Francisco, Madrid or Paris are among the leaders, smaller cities such as Copenhagen, Zurich, Gothenburg, or Dublin are competitors to be reckoned with” (The Local, 2016). The countries are rated by having an education system that meets the needs of the economy, employment policies that favour flexibility, mobility and entrepreneurship, as well as, stakeholders who are well-connected in business, government and social activities (The Local, 2016; GTCI 2016).

It could be said, that the quality of education and career opportunities are not the only factors cities has to emphasize on, when attracting educated workforce. Factors like lifestyle, societal openness, welcoming programmes and cultural integration, must be taken inconsideration, too. In other words, a strong cooperation of the cities, academic, governmental and cultural institutions, and business, is important to create a shared value, in developing a strong place brand content.

4. Analysis

In this part of the thesis, first the current branding strategy of Aarhus will be analysed, in order to give an overview of the city current strategies and initiatives. Further, the interviews will be analysed in combination with the chosen theories. The data generated from the interviews

were divided in positive and negative experiences. Through the analysis, an explanation of how the interviews were coded into themes, and how they were interpreted. This is followed by an analysis, which is done category by category. The thematic analysis, allows for an examination of the qualitative data, and it will assist in identifying common patterns.

The semi-structured interviews can be found in the Appendix 2, the interviews are referred with numbers 1-7, further in the analysis part they will be mentioned as family 1 (F1) till F7 (F7) and family 1 Man (F1M) Woman(F1W) till family 7 Man (F7M) and Woman (F7W), when citation is used.

The examples of coding can be found in Appendix 3.

Table 1: For the readers' reference, the following table show the demographics of the interviewees:

Number	Nationality	Age	Living in Aarhus	Children	Activities
F1	USA/China	F26/M28	3Y	0	M: AAU PostDoc F: Linberg International
F2	Scotland	F37/M40	5Y	2	M: Lego F: Self-employed
F3	Ireland	F30/M30	5Y	2	M: IT F: Social helper
F4	USA/England	F26/M28	3Y	0	M: AAU PostDoc F: Consultancy
F5	Italy/Latvia	F35/M37	5-6 Y	0	M: Arla F: Student
F6	Spain	F28/M30	3 Y	0	M: Research F: Customer service

F7	Bulgaria	F25/M30	3y	1	M: Dansk Supermarket F: Maternity
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As discussed in the methodology chapter, it was specified that the chosen sample is homogeneous, in the sense that all the selected interviewees, currently live in Aarhus city and have at least a Master degree. Within this frame, the aim was to pick up a heterogeneous sample. From the people who replied to the interview request, families from different EU countries and the USA were chosen. One of the interviews functions give s is feedback to the organizations involved. That is, feedback to the organization, whose services and products the customers have been using. In this case, the customers are the highly educated internationals and their spouses, and the organization is the city of Aarhus. The management being the governmental bodies working with city branding.

The aim of the thesis is to generate ideas how the family's experiences can contribute to the city branding content and initiatives.

The function of the interviews, was also to find out through which communication channels, the target group had heard of Aarhus and to learn their expectations of the city, as a working and living destination for foreign families. Furthermore, the interviews were to find out: What motives the educated foreigners and their partners had, when coming to live in Aarhus, how did they know about Aarhus? Which reasons did they have for living in Aarhus? What contributed to their involvement with the brand? Also, the interviewees were performed to share their opinion about Aarhus strengths and weaknesses, and experiences with the city initiatives, in order to find out their satisfaction level with the city and find out how they could spread word-of-mouth regarding their experiences? The purpose was to unveil these factors, to suggest a strategy for future attraction of highly educated foreigners and their partners, by branding Aarhus as an attractive destination for foreign families and help develop a strategy for brand ambassadors.

4.1 Coding and Interpretation

The interviews were transcribed and coded. They were coded by using topic codes, the topics were allocated under wider topic categories.

Finally, a few main categories were drawn from interviews' data inductively, which acted as umbrellas and helped gather related topics together. The categories were: Expectations towards Aarhus, before and after the arrival, i.e. images motives to move and live in Aarhus, strengths, weaknesses and impressions - the most important factors to promote how did you know what you knew? how did the city welcome you? The marketing message positive reality of the city initiatives, what created loyalty/engagement? negative reality of the city initiatives, what interfered with engagement? and finally, how does foreign family promote Aarhus, by the word-of-mouth, and/or brand ambassadors?

Based on the information, the categories provided, conclusions were drawn: 1. image/expectations/branding, 2. City identities/Urban identities 3. Initiatives awareness/city communication 4. Word-of-mouth. The coded interviews and the interview codes can be found in *appendixes 2 and 3*.

After all the data from the interviews was separated and coded, it was structured and divided into three themes:

- 1) *Experiences that may contribute to expand branding channels:* brand communication/ how to increase the brand awareness
- 2) *Experiences that may contribute to improve the conditions for foreigners:* the negative reality
- 3) *Experiences that may contribute to expand branding content:* the positive reality

Next – subchapter will start with an overview of the current branding strategy of the city, in order to generate ideas what could be improved and how the data from the interviews can contribute to the city to attract more highly educated international families.

4.2 Empirical Analysis of Aarhus city strategy

In this part of the thesis, an analysis of the current branding initiatives taking place in the city of Aarhus. It's important to discuss, the city's current initiatives, towards attracting the highly educated international and their families. In order to understand what is done, and to find out how the strategy could be optimized with the help of the interviewed families.

The expectation of the city to create a welcoming environment is based on: *"Factors such as a work– life balance, international schools, international citizens services, safety and job opportunities – including for the spouse – matter in terms of moving to Aarhus."* (Aarhus branding report 2015-2018).

Branding in Aarhus is about supporting the city's strategic development. The branding effort focuses on positioning the city through supporting and promoting existing activities, organisations, events, businesses, etc., which serve to exemplify the brand position. The branding effort in Aarhus is not centred at City Hall. Rather, branding activities are distributed to dedicated organisations like VisitAarhus, the ECC2017 secretariat (European Capital of Culture) and local institutions. Furthermore, the municipality works systematically with Aarhus online presence, trying to create a more consistent image across the most used web channels. These organizations and institutions have come up with an overall brand strategy, that is closely connected to the city's long-term strategic goals. The strategy was designed, in close collaboration, with its key stakeholders, when branding the city internationally (*Aarhus branding report 2015-2018*). From the report, it became clear, that the most discussed groups to target, are students and businesspeople, on a third place comes the educated internationals and their families.

The governmental organizations and business in the city are responsible for attracting highly educated internationals, and to supply them with information. Moreover, the governmental organizations are responsible, to develop and deliver the information, about Aarhus to the potential target group, this is done through the city's stakeholders and online sources. The municipality of Aarhus has published a report called, *internationalise with Aarhus: Branding of Aarhus 2015-2018, Local Action Plan Aarhus, March 2015*, in the report, the current approach towards attracting the target group is stated. It could be concluded, that the information about the topic was very limited, no details were published. The strategy was compared to a *dinner*

party. It consists of four steps: *Attract*, sending invitation and creating interests via promotional materials and social media channels, *Welcome at the door*, the city provides welcome package with information *Entertain*, the city offers activities and events and *Goodbye*, the city thanks for the time spend and hopes to keep the highly educated workers engaged, even when they leave the country (*Branding of Aarhus 2015-2018, Action Plan*).

Furthermore, the business community, one of the responsible parties to attract the target group in Aarhus, is represented by Business Network Aarhus (Erhverv Aarhus), and has a strong relationships and close cooperation across businesses, educational institutions, public partners and cultural companies in and around Aarhus city (*Erhverv Aarhus, official webpage*). All of the involved organizations, work towards attracting highly educated foreigners to Aarhus city - business life. Basically, Business network Aarhus (Erhverv Aarhus), is Aarhus' business association, working broadly as the voice of the business community in terms of the city's development (*Erhverv Aarhus, official webpage*). Therefore, when business organization attract, and hire educated international workers, the governmental organizations has the responsibility to present the city as a suitable place for them to move, live and work. Also, to support the hiring process with information, promotional materials and different citizen services (*City branding action plan 2015-2018*). The vision of Aarhus 2017, is to create a sustainable development – in terms of cultural, human and economic growth – by inspiring citizens to live, work and participate in the European region in the long term. The city has an idea on how to keep working on this value, and also how to embrace multiculturalism, and invite new comers to the city (Strategic Business Plan Aarhus 2017). Aarhus was named among the best European destinations to visit in 2016, by an influential travel guide, Lonely Planet (*The local, 2016*). On the other hand, Aarhus municipality works on an extensive branding and internationalization strategies, to make the city a great place for foreigners (*City of Aarhus 2016, Aarhus municipality guide 2016*).

It can be concluded that Aarhus governmental institutions, education institutions and the business community, are working together to brand Aarhus, as an attractive education and career destination, for the highly educated and skilled foreigners (Ministry of Higher education and science, 2015). Moreover, there is a strategy for attracting the foreign families, but it doesn't look very detailed and that the city has a clear idea nor images, the city branders need to think what images they should communicate to the target group, thus the strategy must be

revised. For example, from *Chapter 3, point 3.5*, can be said that topics like the quality of life of destination, diversity of employment, lifestyle amenities, such as parks, running trails and nightlife, the possibilities for social interactions, cultural openness, variety of public services in the sphere of education and healthcare are used as current topics to brand a destination attractive for foreign families. These examples of contemporary branding content will be used to generate ideas how the data from the interviews could contribute to the city strategy. The next three sub- chapters will analyse the participants experiences with the city and what contribution they can make.

4.3 Experiences that may contribute to expand branding channels

This section will discuss the participants experiences with the communication channels of Aarhus. The idea is to find out through which communication channels the interviewees learn about the city initiatives, in order to find out the communicated branding content and how it can be optimized.

The interviewed families were asked, how and through which communication channels and sources, they learned what they knew about Aarhus city. Additionally, they were asked about their experience with city communication after settling in the city. The motive for asking these questions, was to find out, which communication channels and sources should be emphasised in future city's branding activities. Two of the families said, that they had a friend or contact person, who had been working or living in Aarhus (F1, F7). One of the participants, had previously visited Aarhus for study purposes, and had first-hand experience of Aarhus as a semester student (F6W): *"I arrived in Aarhus for the first time in 2014 for a student exchange of half a year with the Erasmus scholarship. The university provided me with a lot of information about Aarhus. I also got a Danish mentor, Camilla, who absolutely prepared me for the trip and was the biggest help I got in Aarhus"* (F6W).

Two of the families, in which the partners were offered a Postdoc positions at Aarhus University, emphasized the fact that no constructed information was offered (F1, F4), all of the conversations was work related, as F4M says: *"my contact person didn't send me any information, Everything I learned was when I arrived. Not very encouraging..."* (F4M). As most

of the participants did not get any information about Aarhus city, they didn't have a clear idea concerning which city they would like to settle in (F1, F2, F3, F5, F7). Therefore, the partner who got the job opportunity travelled to Denmark first, in order to check out the area, and settle the formalities, before the other partner arrived (F1, F2, F3, F5, F7).

As most of the families didn't have clear guidance where to search for information online, they simply avoided it (F1, F2, F3, F5, F7), and trusted fully their partners opinion. Only two families F4 and F6, information online prior to arriving in Aarhus. However, they mentioned mainly blogs as a source of information *"it was mostly American's posts, and they were saying that the Danes are pretty unsocial and closed ...but ones you get to know them they are nice people, also they were talking a lot about the family and work balance and the quality of live"* (F4W) or *"I tried to see some videos on YouTube, but they did not seem that exciting either..."* (F6W). Once after arriving, no particular information about Aarhus was offered. The families initiated their own research, by approaching people and visiting different places around Jutland area (F1, F2, F3, F7).

After settling in Aarhus, five of the interviewed families, felt that the city communication towards foreigners is very poor (F1, F2, F3, F7). *"I think Aarhus should try another way to present its initiatives. I think the city communication is bad, it's hard to know what is going on around the city, the only information I get is from Facebook, everything else I get is in Danish. Basically, I felt that I have to walk around the city and ask people, in order to get some information. Even if I go to websites, there is no information in English and it's lame the websites are definitely lame"* (F1M). In relation to social media, four families mentioned that Facebook as their main source to learn about the city activities (F1, F2, F3, F7), the families mentioned the group *Aarhus Internationals*. Only three of the interviewed families talked about the official web sites for information, or the city initiated movements/activities: *International and Spouse Community and Visit Aarhus*. The rest of them basically relied on the local foreigner's information, or the so-called *Aarhus International facebook group*. Overall, the families mentioned that the availability of social media, had in the last few years made their lives easier. They are able to find any activities or events any time of the day: *"Nowadays social media is more active, so it's easy to join groups and contact people who already live in Aarhus city, in order to get some help. I think that Facebook is the most helpful platform for information and to find people with similar experiences in the city"* (F3W). F6 continues: *"As I mentioned,*

there are quite different cultural and social events, fairs, events about companies or any other interest you might have – it is always good to have a look at social media (i.e. Facebook) to find what suits you best” (F6W).

Generally, the majority the interviewed families got the impression, that the city wants to attract foreigners, but despite wanting to be open city for diversity, there needs to be some changes in considering all types of the culture (F1, F2, F3, F5, F6, F7). By this they mean that most of museums main language in Danish, very little description in English and maybe in German, also bus stops, routes and maps are just in Danish. One of the families mentioned that people are smiley in Aarhus, and they really enjoy the former logo of the city *The City of Smiles* as opposed to the new one, *Aarhus- Danish for progress* or *With Aarhus* (F6W).

What can be concluded from this data, is that word-of-mouth, whether or not it is a foreign family or a friend, who has previously worked and lived in Aarhus, a or facebook group managed by the internationals in Aarhus, brand communication plays a major role, as it helps create awareness for Aarhus initiatives as a destination for foreigners. Easily accessible and reliable information online, is of course an important communication channel. *VisitAarhus.dk*, *internationalcommunity.dk* *spousecommunity.dk*, *destinationaarhus.dk*, *talentattraction.dk* is a part of the international community project. Aarhus University international club (UNC), international citizen service Aarhus (ICS), is the governmental flagship website, which represent Aarhus city (branding report Aarhus 2015-2018). This goes to show that also governmental bodies, that are responsible for the highly educated international workers and their families attraction, in this case the Municipality of Aarhus, the internationalization sector development, realise the importance of providing information about Aarhus city in English on the various websites. According to the participants experiences, only two of families pointed out social networking official sites and blogs, as a source of information, about Aarhus, but this can in fact be counted under the wider theme of word-of-mouth (F3, F5).

It also becomes clear, that at least within this sample group, paid promotion, whether it is actual advertising campaigns, or popular culture and the likes, had not made a significant contribution to the sample group's image of Aarhus and failed to communicate the city initiative. At least, not to the point of pointing out specific incidents, which would have influenced or build the interviewees' images on Aarhus.

Next- subchapter will analyse the negative experiences of the research group and discuss what contribution they can make.

4.4 Experiences that may contribute to improve the conditions for foreigners

One of the main categories of the empirical data was considered as *a positive and negative reality*. These were the topics, the different families pointed out, as being both a positive and negative experience, once they had arrived in Aarhus and starting to work and got to know the culture. This subchapter will discuss the negative experiences of the sample, as those negative experiences cannot contribute to the branding, but they can rather generate ideas about altering the practical situation and regulations for foreign families in the city. In the end of the sub- chapter the interaction with Danish society of the participants will be analysed, as the interviewees shared many conflicting arguments, also those experiences can be used to suggest practical improvements of the environment.

As going hand to hand the negative and positive experiences of the participants, they have to be considered both equally, in order to help Aarhus, become more attractive place for educated international families.

Moreover, the interviewed families, were asked to elaborate their negative experiences, about working and living in Aarhus. Furthermore, they were asked their opinion on what could be improve in the city, in a way that foreigners would be more attracted to live and work in Aarhus, which could increase the foreign family positive word about the city.

This was done in order to find out whether or not, there were some factors that the governmental institutions in Aarhus, and the local society were not aware of, due to becoming blind to inconsistencies within their own society. Strong or multiple negative experiences, can lead to the educated foreigners and their accompanying partners leaving the country faster than planned, but also to give a negative word– of – mouth, which can be destructive for the brand image and identities (Kavaratzis, 2012).

Four families pointed out, that the bureaucracy was very tricky and a nightmare to deal with (F1, F2, F3, F5), further they mentioned that the system in Denmark, is so different and unique

from other countries, and feel that more information in English is necessary. F1M complained: *"I realized that I am not getting paid for 2 months, then went to the bank and they told me that I need more documents. I went to my landlord and she was the only one that helped me to figure what is the problem"* (F1M) F2M also complained, that Aarhus University didn't help his wife to obtain a visa, so she need to wait 6 months for her documents. Rest of the complaints was regarding registration: *"the rules has to be followed all the time, the web sites are not good enough, so if you miss something you are screwed"* (F1M). F2W and F3W mentioned, that there is not enough help for families with children: *"for example when you need to sign the children to day care or school there is not much help and all the information is in Danish, so it's really difficult to deal with formalities, especially for teenagers there is nothing available, so defiantly more service is need it"* (F3W).

In relation to the social life, most of the interviewed families, think that Aarhus is more for young people and single people, who are here just to study (F2, F3, F5, F6, F7). They presumed, that most of the available events are for young people, not really for families.

Five out of the seven interviewed families, believe that Aarhus is not open for diversity, in cultural and social context. The participants strongly believe that the city does not offer enough multicultural authentic places to eat, they mentioned that most of the multicultural places serve the food in a Danish way, which is very ecological, not spacy, clean food, which negates the idea behind it: *"when professionals move here they expect to find variety of international restaurant places"* (F3W). F1M: *"I feel that the government should try for more diversity. The events appeal to certain group of people, but they definitely don't cover all. I mean the atmosphere is not very international, even though they have festivals, for example food festival, just feels like, nothing special"* (F3W). The families mentioned, that the Danes are really into their culture and in some way, they feel pushed to become more like them, F2: *"we grew up with the idea the multiculturalism is a big thing and here is very much, yes we want to attract internationals, but to integrate them, mean to become Danish and the Danes show very limited interest in becoming more international"* (F2W). That indicates to certain degree, that some Danes prefer an assimilation not an integration.

Five out the seven participants, complained about the difficulty of finding housing. It's particularly difficult for foreigners, who do not know how the system works, don't have access

to the information and don't speak the native language, to find an apartment (F2, F3, F4, F5, F7). *"...we didn't have the information how to find accommodation fast, Aarhus it's also big city for students...it's really hard. When we moved here nobody explained to us, which suburbs are good or bad .. we could of easily end up living in some bad area in Aarhus"* (F2).

Finally, all of the families pointed out the importance of job and personal growth opportunities, when relocating. Unfortunately, all of the interviewed couples believe that Aarhus has a high inefficiency of jobs and personal growth opportunities for foreigners, especially for the accompanying spouse. F2, F3, F4 encapsulated it: *"the job diversity is very low, it doesn't make sense that here in Aarhus are not as many industries as are in Copenhagen.....I feel that in Aarhus you have few sectors, if you want to work here you have Vestas, Grunfoss, Arla, AAU, Bestseller, but if you don't fit into these IT, business, engineering types... you have to leave"* (F3W). F4M continues: *"even Aarhus University is moving more to engineering and IT or Business and IT, I can see the new Phd and Post Docs application,... very limited, in that way the city loses the diversity and also the sectors in English are limited, so the diversity of people is not high, which might be for what the city and the country is going for."* (F4M). The lack of job opportunities and the limited options for personal growth, led few of the families to believe that Aarhus city does not want to attract professional foreign families (F2, F3, F4). Furthermore, the families believe that that city could be a good destination for guest workers for two to three months, as some of the company's contracts are for very short time. One of the accompanying spouses said: *"There are some international companies like Vestasand for me as a spouse I couldn't get a job the first year in Aarhus, I got a job in Sweden and I run a Nordic organization in Malmo, I run it from Aarhus and I was travelling few times a month to Sweden, but I was employed in Sweden. After my job finished, I was not able to find job in Aarhus.... unless I create my own projects"* (F3). A few of the accompanying spouses mentioned that in term of foreign spouses, finding a job is almost impossible *"all my spouse friends from different countries, all of them say the exact same thing that they have lost their job to a Dane and most of the time even if they are more skilled they would lose the job to a Dane, as I said the diversity of job industries is very limited in Aarhus"* (F2W).

Many conflicting comments by the participant, were made about interacting with the local society, and how that affected the families' image on living and working in Aarhus. Five of the interviewed families felt, that social interactions with Danes and Danish families were positive

(F2, F3, F4, F5, F6). From their experience, Danish people are very friendly once they let you in, *“generally our first impression was to not talk to Danes, because they will be frightened or be rude or say something...but after we lived here we found out that people are extremely friendly and helpful, but maybe 1 of 5 people match the stereotype of the anti-social awkward Dane, as what I read online”* (F3W). As F2W and F4W mentioned: *“Danes are tough nut to crack, but once you crack it, they are the warmest people ever”* (Appx). However, some of the families who pointed out Danes friendliness, admitted that is hard to integrate into the society (F1, F2, F3, F7). *“Most of the Danes in Aarhus has been living here all of their live and they have well-constructed network of friends from their childhood. It’s a big challenge for foreigner to make friends with them”* (F1M).

The families mentioned, that in order to integrate in the society, they needed to join different Danish communities, to relate to the local society, and learn more about them (F2, F3, F4, F5). The language was seen as a big obstacle for making friends or in general to feel excepted in the society. As a result, three of the families pointed out, that their social network mainly consists of other internationals (F1, F5, F7), which naturally lead to more isolated lives. Also, few of families were a bit shocked of the working environment: *“Danes are like “Hello, we are here to work, not to interact” when you meet at work. Feels weird in a way”* (F1M), which generated thoughts of not friendliness: *“I feel that the Academic environment is not welcoming at all here. Most of the people in the department, didn’t bother to connect with me. So, I felt disconnected.... my experience in USA is that everybody is in the office and it’s easy to make connections. Also, the professors are very isolated and it’s tough to make friends”* (F1M).

“In experience when you apply for a job if you are not Danish they skip your application and I think that they miss a lot on very experience international people. I think I don’t how to change company’s minds, but it will be more useful for them to have more international workers” (F2W).

It can be concluded, that almost all of the participants had negative experiences concerning interaction with the local society, whether it was fear of integration, bureaucratic misunderstandings or cultural shock. Danes are perceived as friendly and helpful, but only to certain extent. How the Danes perceive foreigners is one of the most obvious challenges Aarhus and in general Denmark has, in regard of creating a positive living experience for the

foreigners they want to attract. The locals might not always understand or accept the input the foreign professionals and their family, could provide for the city. As the locals are somewhat the 'personnel' of the organisation that is Aarhus, they need to be engaged to the brand the government is promoting, as they can become one of the identities of the city (Ren and Blichfeldt, 2011).

The next final sub- chapter will analyse and discuss the participants experiences that might contribute to the city branding strategy in Aarhus, by discussing the participants images and expectations of the city before and after their arrival.

4.5 Experiences that may contribute to expand branding content

In this final part of the analysis the images and expectation of the sample will be analysed, in order to find out how the current strategy of the city should be improved. Furthermore, the positive interaction and experiences of the participants will be analysed, in order to generate ideas for branding content. Last and not the least, the positive word- of -mouth will be discussed, in order to build an idea how the participants promote the city to their international friends around the world and how Aarhus city can integrate it to its the branding processes.

When the respondents were asked, for what kind of image the participants had on Aarhus before moving here, all of the interviewees answered that they never really heard of Aarhus city, so they didn't have expectations of the city Interviewee F3W said: *"I was imagining Denmark way more scenery, much more open and liberate"* (F3W). The quote indicates that the family did have some ideas about Denmark, but not about Aarhus city.

Even though most of the interviewees got a job in organizations situated in Aarhus, or a bit outside of Aarhus, no additional information about Aarhus city was provided from the hiring company (F1M- Aarhus University, F3M- Aarhus University, F5M – Arla).

In general, all of the interviewed families knew very little about Denmark. However, this statement was often followed by a number of expectations they had on the country. One of the most frequent image, of the country was a very good welfare system, technologically

developed and innovative country, with nice Scandinavian modern style and architecture (F1, F2, F3, F5, F7). The rest of the interviews (F6, F4) said that they didn't have any image nor expectations, as they never really heard about Aarhus or Denmark in general, before their arrival. F4M mentioned *"I don't think we get much news in England from Denmark, so we didn't have any image or expectations, neither where my husband comes from (Texas, USA)"*. However, two of the families (F3, F4), pointed out, the work/family and life balance, and that Aarhus city is the second biggest in Denmark, so they assumed that the city should offer more job and social opportunities, after they had done some active research on Denmark online (F4).

When asked about the motives to come work and live in Aarhus, all of the interviewees mentioned the great job opportunity offer their partners got. It became apparent from the comments made, that several of them came to Aarhus, because of the quality of life or other factors, people came here mainly because of the right job opportunity offered. When asked whether the job opportunity that one of the partners got was the only reason to come to Aarhus Yes, no other reason, then my partner followed me to find her/his career opportunities (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8). The lack of information about Aarhus in general, social, cultural and family life no guidance from where to start, or where to look for information even, did not make it easier at all for the families to start their life in the city. Additionally, after the arrival, the families were confused for long period of time, indicating that they were experiencing cultural shock, eventually they did find themselves, and figured out how the new environment worked.

All of the families mentioned, that they had the opportunity to choose to live in different cities in Denmark, but the reason why they chose Aarhus, was because it was the biggest city in the region. Furthermore, it is the second biggest city in Denmark and, according to the interviewees, job offers were more abundant, as well as social and cultural opportunities for foreigners and their children, as opposed to the smaller cities, F1M stated: *"Basically, as a couple we decided pretty quickly to live in Aarhus, because smaller city would be tough on us, we love cooking Chinese food and in the small cities like Herning, they don't have any Asian shops, also the community there is not diverse"* (F2M), they continue: *"we basically went to different cities and we decided to move to Aarhus, because the city was more alive than the other cities"* (F2W).

A few conclusions can be drawn from F2W's statements, the family's image of Aarhus city or Denmark, before their arrival and their motives to actually come work and live here. First of all, it was apparent that the participants didn't really have a clear memory anymore, on what images they had three or four years ago, prior to their arrival to Denmark and why they chose to live in Aarhus. Commenting that, they really didn't have any particular images or any image of Aarhus city or Denmark for that matter, but then starting to list a number of images, which suggest that they are now pointing out attributes, that they have later come to know, while living in Aarhus. It became obvious, that even all of the interviewees didn't have certain image about the city after a self-initiated research of the city of Aarhus, it was pointed as a suitable city for foreigners.

After the participants were living in the city for a while, they started to build their images and perceptions of Aarhus. As destination branding is a new aspect of urban communication, where the purpose is to improve marketing of the destination image in various ways. For instance, by converting the visual image of the city into a brand image, presenting the unique characteristics and features of the city. Each and every city can maintain multiple identities (Ren and Blichfeldt, 2011), which can be composed of different images and memories, that are either negative or positive. City identity is used widely, as a branding tool and advertisement. Thus, the positive images of the participants can be used to generate different branding content. As Baker (2012) mentions city branding should present unique aspects of cities' culture, creativity and activities to the different target groups (Baker, 2012).

All of the interviewed families agreed, that Aarhus is a beautiful and extremely safe destination, which offers a variety of landscapes, (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6): *"there is so many parks, forests and the sea is here"* (F3W) the families with children (F2, F3) mentioned: *"We have children and I would say that is fantastic for children, all the parks and public playgrounds are so good, the Dokk1, also the city is extremely safe"*, they continue: *"We really value that the families and children are in the centre of attention and everything for children is so organized"* (source needed)

F4W, also referred to her international family and friends in the city, who have children: *"they mention how different the life for their children will be if they were leaving in their home countries, the most important thing would mention is that the children can play out all day,*

they can go to the forest in morning and come in evening, so they have much better childhood here, playing and also u get used the cold weather [...] The safe outdoor live is a big plus". The other two families with children supported this statement (F2, F3) by explaining how safe it is for their children to play outside all day, and how nice private and public schools the city offers. Most of the families emphasized, how great an urban area ~~is~~ Aarhus is. F2W says: "We live in the city centre, so everything we need is close to us, the day care is in 5min, shops, restaurants, bars [...] even the cinema is 3 min away" (F2W). F3, F4, F5 mentioned, that the city is small and it's easy to get from place to place. Five families mentioned, that the location of Aarhus is perfect in relation to getting around in the rest of the country, also there are some many attractions to visit, especially for children, such as, Legoland, the rainforest, museums and outside landscapes (F2,F3,F4,F6,F7). All of the interviewed families noticed positive development in the city "the harbour of the city is expanding and becomes really beautiful, also Dokk1 is great initiative [...] its great place to socialize and meet English speaking people" (F2, F3, F4, F5). Most of the families emphasized on how much you can do in Aarhus "that cannot even match or equal Copenhagen" (F2W), hey mentioned the variety sports activities "there is puddle boarding club, so many yoga studios, running clubs, water sports, ice hockey, beach volleyball" (F4, F5, F6). Furthermore, F2W mentioned the music hall in Aarhus and the jazz festivals, bringing so much foreign culture to Aarhus.

Three families (F1, F2, F4), mentioned that Aarhus doesn't feel like a city, F2W: "I always say that Aarhus is practical city, it's a real example of town big enough to have a urban things, but it's a small town... I really like that is on the coast and it has forests, not many things are happening... but I would say that the city has a bit from everything" (F2W). All of them expressed that Aarhus feels very slow, relaxed, there is rush, like a seaside town, mostly you get the impression, that the city is family oriented, because everybody is home at 5pm "it's a very quiet town, and there is always something for everybody" (F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7).

F6W continues: "There is a rich social life in Aarhus, small cosy events, from salsa free lessons on Thursday nights to yoga classes on a Saturday morning. There are also many activities and groups to join, from pole dancing to capoeira, or taekwondo and badminton. There are random little markets in certain streets, or some events like Irish dance night, karaoke and other live music events (I highly recommend Sherlock Holmes and Tir Na Nog, this last one is known as the best Irish pub of Europe!)" (F6W). Two of the interviewed families mentioned that this year

has been amazing in terms of culture and social activities, as the city of Aarhus is the European Capital of Culture, and they hope it will continue next year (F2, F4).

Three of the families found the bureaucracy to be not that confusing, and not particularly problematic (F2, F5, F6). F2 mentioned: *"we were so surprized that the administration works, it was a bit tricky, but overall, the citizen services were quite helpful, and we felt very welcome"* (F2W), F5 says: *"we would say that we felt welcome, we got free tickets to visit places in Aarhus...it was a bit confusing with the documents, but I think as a foreigner you also have to take the initiative, the city should not be responsible for everything"* (F5W). Overall the families agreed, that the Danes at the citizen services are very helpful. Once, all of the families got used to the bureaucracy, they were very satisfied of the welfare system, and the social security, especially the ones with children.

Finally, the families were asked, whether or not they talked about their experiences of working and living in Aarhus, within their family social network, both in as well as outside the country. How actively they talked about it, and whether or not it was positive or negative. The idea behind this question, was to find out how active the participants talk about Aarhus, and how these could influence the branding strategy.

Four of the seven interviewed families, said that they always talked positively, concerning how great it is for children in Aarhus (F2, F3, F4, F7), F3: *"we always brag, how great is for children, all the free transportation, education, free tickets, the working hours and benefits, it's fantastic, the work life is balanced. We recommend it a lot. Also, there is so many children festivals, its save for children.... more activities are need it for grownups."* (F3M). F2 says: *"we mention that the place is great for children, even sized, near the forest and the city, just enough culture."* (F2).

The rest of the families who were active ambassadors of the city turned out that even though they speak positively about Aarhus, they wanted to let people to know about the possible challenges they might run into when moving in Aarhus, thus it felt they were actively informative in both, good and bad (F1, F5, F7), F1M: *"I would really recommend Aarhus city to my friends (laughing...), the work conditions are great in a way... I think that Aarhus should try other way to presents its initiatives...the city communication is bad; the websites are lame, and all of the festivals and activities are during the summer and nothing during the winter"*. F5W *"I*

say that, it's hard to find apartment and its costly. So, it's important that both partners have a job, in order to enjoy life".

When asked about how they promote Denmark when they do, all the participants replied that they talk to friends and family about their experiences. Not many specified the use of social media or if other forms of online promoting took place, but all in all it can be concluded that all are promoting through word-of-mouth.

In conclusion, all of the families do speak about Aarhus actively. However, most of them speak actively, how great a place it is for children, the quality of work environment and the perfect balance between work and life. On the other hand, they don't miss a chance to share their negative experiences concerning the city. Many do not seem to be using other media, except for talking about experiences in private conversation with friends, who don't live in Denmark. However, word- of – mouth could be considered one of the most important promotion tools, when talking about destination branding (Kavaratzis, 2012; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). In many cases the families had not heard much about Denmark, and Aarhus at all. The one that had heard about Aarhus, was from their contact person in Denmark, a friend who lived there or an online forum, which presented both positive and negative points. One of the challenges for the city branding could be to increase the amount of positive word-of-mouth activity among the international families, thus all the participants experiences should be taken into to consideration by the city.

5. Theoretical discussion of the empirical analysis

The following chapter will discuss the empirical analysis and types of ideas for city branding of Aarhus. Furthermore, the discussion will include the theoretical articles discussed in *Chapter 3 theoretical and literature review*, and how these are important when used to illustrate the branding process.

In a contemporary growing economy, it is important to understand how destinations, cities or countries are represented and branded, in order to attract international professional's, tourists, business investments and how to present a certain quality of life, as it was discussed in *Chapter 3*.

The interviewed families shared positive and negative experiences and stories with Aarhus. The stories of the families were held in relation to different topics, such as the bureaucratic system, city communication channels/social media, interaction with the local society, the family life in the city, and the physical environment. The data generated from their experiences was divided in three main themes: *Experiences that may contribute to expand branding channels; Experiences that may contribute to improve the conditions for foreigners; Experiences that may contribute to expand branding content.*

First, *experiences that may contribute to expand branding channels* will be discussed, as most of the interviewees were not particularly happy with the communication between the city and its habitants. Furthermore, the experiences can be used as guide, in obtaining knowledge on how the city communication could be improved, in order to reach the potential target group, and send the intended branding message.

When discussing the communicative platforms with the participant, the city of Aarhus failed to reach the target group, prior to them actually arriving, according to the families no information was offered from their contact person in Denmark, even though the location of the offered job was in Aarhus city. Mostly, the interviewed families complained about the lack of information in English, which made it difficult as a foreigner to locate events, accommodation, transportation, dealing with the bureaucracy (especially for children), or finding information for activities and events. They suggested, that the communication between the city and its foreign inhabitants should improve, for instance through face-to-face interaction, or an online portal. Also, one of the families refer to the International Community and Spouse Community, the rest of the families never heard about the communities for foreigners in Aarhus.

Furthermore, no information was offered on how to interact with the Danish society, instead the families turned to social media, such as the Facebook group *Aarhus Internationals*, when they need to find information related to the city activities or other topics. Based on the participant experiences with the city communication channels, it can be concluded that the city's internal and external communication does not reach the intended group and needs to be revised. By improving the city communication towards the foreign families, before and after their arrival to the city, it will increase the brand awareness of Aarhus, and it will also have a

positive impact on the word-of – mouth, meaning a more positive image will be given by the foreign families, to their families back home.

Next the negative experiences of the interviewees will be discussed

Experiences that may contribute to improve the conditions for foreigners

The participant negative experiences can be used for improving the city environment for foreign families, in terms of city branding optimization.

Moreover, those experiences can serve as inspiration to governmental bodies, to improve the environment in Aarhus for foreign families, which could minimize the negative feedback of target group.

The families experienced culture shock, which took them a long time to adapt to. For instance, in terms of interaction with the locals, the participants found that by joining the local communities, the acceptance by the local population increased. In some cases, the participants felt, in a way, pressured to become assimilated into the Danish society, rather than integrate and share their own culture.

Another big issue was the limited job opportunities, and personal growth for ~~of~~ the accompanying spouses, they mention that Aarhus has a low variety of available jobs. They suggested that more companies/business from different industries should ~~to~~ place offices in Aarhus city, increasing the amount of jobs. Most of the spouse's experience, that if they don't speak Danish, it is impossible to find a job. Finally, they mentioned the low variety of foreign food in the supermarket, and international restaurants. Furthermore, they feel that the city offers very few events for foreign families, moreover, they got the feeling that the local society has difficulties celebrating and embracing the multiculturalism in the city.

The governmental bodies in Aarhus should pay more attention to the negative feedback of the foreign families, perhaps to supply them with up to date information on the city initiatives, as those negative experiences can have negative impact on the branding strategy, and decrease the chances of the city to attract more educated internationals and their families.

Further, the participants positive *experience that might contribute to the branding contend* and the current branding strategy of the city will be discussed. Last but not the least, branding ideas

will be proposed, and the discussion will end up with how theoretical articles discussed in *Chapter 3 theoretical and literature review* can be used to illustrate the branding process.

The interviewees experiences, revealed that Aarhus city was an unknown destination, before the arrival of the families, most of them had only heard about the city, because of the job offer they received, but no further information was offered. Which contradicts the aim of the city, to represent and send a clear message to the international community, that Aarhus is an international and multicultural city, which is a fast-growing, and open to diversity. Aarhus wants to attract and welcome highly educated internationals and their families, to help the city grow internationally. Moreover, the lack of information, demonstrates weak branding activities, and poor internal communication between the stakeholders. Furthermore, most of the interviewed participant did not have any image about the country. Two of the families mentioned, that they were expecting a great work-family balance, after initiating they own research online. In general, they did not have any expectations or clear image on Denmark. This could be interpreted such, that in general, Denmark's problem is anonymity and lack of brand awareness, which reflects on Aarhus brand awareness, image and identity, as the city is an inseparable part of the country. After the families have been living in the city for a while, they experience Aarhus as a very beautiful and safe destinations for families. They emphasised on the great physical surroundings of the city, the variety of parks, forests, biking areas, indoor and outdoor playgrounds for children, also the sea. Thus, the positive feedback on the city physical surrounding could be used of the city branders to communicate to the target group one of the many faces of the city, as Lynch (1960) argues that the concept of a *city image and identity*, is attached to the urban physical design (Lynch, 1960).

All of the families' experience, that the city has an extremely safe outdoor life ~~live~~, especially for children. Few of the families perceive Aarhus as a practical city, as it is not easy to get from place to place. Moreover, they view the city as a relaxed place with no stress, one of the families share, that the place feels like a seaside town, cosy and has a bit from everything. Talking about the work and family, all of the interviewees feel that the city offers a great balance between work and family life. They feel that the city has a high focus on family, as everybody finishes work early and goes home. Also, the interviewees shared that, if you want to go out, the city always offers something for everybody. One of the family refer to Aarhus as their "*safe haven*" (Appx. 3, F3W). Also, some of the interviews mention the great music hall,

which offers a variety of international acts, the new library as great meeting point for international families, the international jazz and summer festivals, also the big variety of indoor and outdoor sports.

Overall, all of the families' experience Aarhus as having multiple identities. Therefore, these stories can be used to revise the branding strategy, by concentrating on the multiplicity of the city. According to Jane Jacobs (2006) quality and diversity of the city plays a significant role, when attracting highly educated workers with their family members. They will most likely look for affordable housing, calmer and greener neighbourhoods, cultural openness, variety of public services in the sphere of education, healthcare etc. Aarhus as a destination for foreign families, has been experienced as being a family city, safe and calm with variety of activities for children, multinational bars and restaurants, events with free healthcare and education for children and adults, with a fast developing physical and not physical environment. To create higher international interest, Aarhus should communicate these identities more actively to the potential target group. Furthermore, the quality of a destination includes diversity of employment options, lifestyle amenities, such as parks, running trails and nightlife, the possibilities for social interactions, such as cafés and books stores, diversity in for instance, ethnicity, age and sexuality, as well as, authenticity (ibid., 223). All of the mentioned characteristics can be found in Aarhus city, so why not used actively to brand the city for foreign families. These images are, per se, 'true', and not an outcome of a particular branding process, but were mostly discovered through self-initiated research from the families after their arrival. The local level of Aarhus promotion and advertisement could have played a role. Moreover, we can see that the first step, *attract* in the city strategy towards attracting educated international and their families was not completed. No interest about the city was created, nor images. Neither via promotional material or social media channels. Therefore, the branding strategy fail to communicate any of the city identities to its new potential inhabitants. Moreover, the families felt welcome from authorities once they made the choice to live in the city.

Another part of the city strategy, is to make sure that there is enough activities and events for foreign families. All the families pointed how great it is for children, the variety of activities and event, also most of them pointed the diversity of different group sports activities. Moreover, they felt that more introduction to events for foreigners, would be a great idea, as most of the

participants had problems understanding the Danish culture and social life and the bureaucratic system. Finally, the city hopes to keep the highly educated workers engaged, even when they leave the country and hopefully to spread the positive word about Aarhus.

Which means that most of the business organization private and public, should be aware of Aarhus initiatives towards foreigners. Thus, the new potential comers to the city should be supplied with information. Which will present Aarhus' different social and cultural characteristics, as well as the initiatives taken to create a welcoming environment towards the internationals, by providing them with a feeling of safety, growth opportunities and a well-functioning infrastructure. Furthermore, Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) suggest, taking a closer look at the destination and a more diverse branding approach to marketers. In which the marketers should make use of the multiplicity approach, and apply it to the destination, (Ren and Blichfeld, 2011). To do so, they propose that the destination is viewed as in different *versions*. Ren and Blichfeld (2011) argue, that multiplicity should not be ignored when branding a destination and a place. Rather, it should be seen as a positive possibility, to enrich and diversify the place brand and identity. Connecting place branding to the different activities inside the city, can be a way to create truly differentiating points of interests (Ren and Blichfield, 2011). Therefore, the family's positive experiences with the city can be used to communicate Aarhus differentiating points of interest, as already they have experience the city initiatives towards foreign families.

6. Conclusion

For the purpose of better understanding and concluding on the research question, which has been the basis for this paper, I have chosen to place it here:

How are highly educated international workers and their accompanied family experiencing Aarhus, furthermore how can these experiences contribute to the city branding strategies and initiatives?

During the course of the interviews and analysis, it can be concluded that the participants had many and different positive and negative experiences with the city. Their stories covered topics such as the, city communication, bureaucracy system, family life, outdoor activities, physical environment and much more. Moreover, their experiences could be used to improve the city conditions for foreign families, and help to expand the branding channels and content.

The participants negative experiences were related to the city' limited range of job opportunities for both partners, the bureaucratic system, the language barrier and cultural shock. Furthermore, those experiences could be used as a suggestion for improving the city environment for foreign families. When discussing the communicative platforms with the participant, they felt that the city fails to provide information to its foreign inhabitants, before or after arriving to the city, instead the families had to turn social media, such as the Facebook group *Aarhus Internationals*, when they needed to find information related to the city activities or the bureaucratic system. Based on the analysis of the interviewees' experiences and the city' strategy, it can be concluded that the city' internal and external communication does not reach the intended, and needs to be revised. Due to the weak communication and brand awareness of Aarhus, it became clear that none of the participants had any expectations of Aarhus city what so ever, prior to their arrival. Which can be perceived as curious, as the branding strategy of Aarhus is meant to entice the highly educated internationals and their families, through the *dinner party* approach. Moreover, the city has recognized a need for multiplicity, by elaborating several aspects like international schools, work- life balance and job opportunities as a foreign family, but it has failed to communicate it to the target group.

Last but not the least, the positive experiences of the participants can contribute to the prevailing strategy of the city, by offering new ideas of content. The families experience Aarhus as a very safe, family and child friendly city. Further, they mentioned the great work and family life balance, the amazing outdoor life and physical environment of the city for children and adults. All these stories about safety, family life, great environment, location and size of Aarhus, can be used to improve the branding strategy, by showing the different faces of the city to the target group. Taking the respondents stories and experiences concerning moving from their country to Aarhus into account, leaves multiple perceptions of the destination in question. The families provide their own images of what the city is to them. Therefore, those images are diffused by the families through word of mouth, as Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) says, that by embracing the diversity of these images and identities of destination it creates more opportunities for the destination, because a destination can only brand themselves to certain point after these points, they rely on the word-of-mouth approach (Ren and Blichfeldt 2011). Also, living in a globalized world makes it impossible to control the message, therefore these different components, both the positive and negative experiences of the families, are part of

different stories, which contribute to the different identities of the city. These stories will keep spreading, creating and recreating the identity of Aarhus. Therefore, destinations should work together with the intended target group to create branding on a higher level, because the word of mouth is a powerful tool when the goal is to attract the desired group.

It can be concluded that by integrating the families' positive stories to the branding strategy of the city by embracing the place diversity, the immediate consequence could be a richer, more complex picture of Aarhus, which would be recognisable to the target group and make it easy for them to relate to.

This research contributes to the knowledge of Aarhus place branding, and what type of branding content should be send to the target group. Further, research on how to optimize the branding channels of the city, and build a clear and strong communication strategy, between the city stakeholders, is needed, in order for the branding content to reach its target group internationally.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Questions:

1. Tell me about you?
 - Where are you from?
 - How old are you?
 - What is your professional background and educations?
 - How long have you been living in Aarhus? How long you are planning to stay in Aarhus?
 - Did you get some information about Aarhus before you arrive in the city?
2. Do you think there is enough information about Aarhus city as being an attractive place for International professionals and their family?
3. Why did you decide to move to Aarhus?
4. What was your image of the city before your arrival?
5. How did your image of Aarhus city progress after your initial arrival and subsequent stay?
6. Do you think Aarhus city is open to diversity? Why?
7. How would you describe the lifestyle associated with Aarhus? Activities, events etc.
8. Do you think Aarhus city is open to the diversity of different cultures? Why?

9. Do you think Aarhus offers enough job opportunities and opportunities for personal growth for international professionals?
10. You as an accompanying Spouse, do you like being in Aarhus? Do you feel welcome in the city? Why?
11. Are there cultural and social amenities in Aarhus?
12. What do you think sets Aarhus apart from other cities, in terms of being an attractive place for a highly educated workforce?
13. Do you have any suggestions on how, Aarhus can become a more attractive place for educated foreigners and their partners?
14. How would you describe the activities and initiatives in Aarhus, to your family and friends back home?

Appendix 2

The interviews, further will be mentioned as family 1 (F1) till family 7 (F7). The women interviewees will be mentioned as FW and the man as FM.

Family 1,

1. Tell me about you?

- **Where are you from?**
- **How old are you?**
- **What is your professional background and educations?**
- **How long have you been living in Aarhus? How long you are planning to stay in Aarhus? 26 y and 28 y**

FM: My name isand I am a postdoc researcher in Aarhus University, originally, I am from California, got my Phd in the East cost of United States. I am in Aarhus, because after I finished my Phd in USA, I I was offered a post doc position in Aarhus University and I took it....and.. I think that's the main details.

FW: My name is....., I am from China and I was living in USA for years, doing my graduate school...then I met Noel and we got married, and I followed him here , because he got a job offer. Currently I am working in Linberg International, as a researcher And that's about it.

How long you have been living in Aarhus?

FM: I have been living here a bit longer than her (4 months more than her, just to settle things up) , but I think I have been living in Aarhus for almost 2 years.

FW: Yes, came later, first because his visa came earlier than mine.

FM: The university took care of my visa, because of that I got it faster, they didn't help her, even though they knew I am married, and my spouse will move with me...

2. What was your image about the city before your arrival? And from where did you get information about Aarhus city?

FM: (Laughing) I literally knew nothing about the city, mmm, my boss now , he was in the committee during my Phd, I knew he was working somewhere in Denmark, so even I was here just for 2 years, I knew him for 4 years. I knew he was working with Denmark, but nothing more, so I knew nothing about Aarhus. Before I got the job, he invited me to come to Denmark for few days, just to see the city and make my final choice. Sooo, before I came I knew nothing, but sort of I was expecting like an Ikea style, very modern, diverse, slink and developed, fancy city. But then, when I came here, was much greyer and depressive (I think it was October) , sort of Northen- German , everything was made from grey bricks. I think I was here for 3 days and the first day I was very depressed, and I was thinking should I take this job and the second day I went to the deer park in Aarhus by the sea,so.... I was OK, that is beautiful, and the other parks are nice too.

FM: Basically, I was expecting more Scandinavian style in general, more technology and innovation, but then it looked very little and quite place. But then the areas around the city are nice.

3. What about the people, did you feel welcome?

FM: Well, my situation was very interesting, because my department is situated in Herning, but I was able to choose to live either in Herning or Aarhus, my boss didn't care. In Herning the team, I work with is very international, so I did not integrate with the Danish people, so when I go to Herning I fell that the Academic environment is not very welcoming at all. I am in the business department bu I don't have anything to do with the business, because I am from the technology side. Most of the people in the Business department, didn't bother to connect with me. So I felt disconnected , because from my experience in USA everybody is in the office and it's easy to make connections. When I went to the office there, everybody left at 4pm, so I didn't speak with anybody. Also, the professors are very isolated and its tough to make friends. So, we choice to live in Aarhus, because Hening seemed very small town and it look like we will have very tough time integrating. So, we tough Aarhus will be less depressing.

FM: Basically, as a couple we decided pretty quickly to move in Aarhus, because Herning would be tough on us, we love cooking Chinese food and in Herning, they don't have any Asian shops.

FW: Also, Aarhus is the second biggest city.

4. Did you get some promotional materials or information about Aarhus city, before you making your final choice?

FW and FM: No, not really, we didn't get any information.

FM: We discussed briefly with my boss, but he didn't tell me much, just that maybe Aarhus would have more activities, but mainly we spoke about work. The only information about Aarhus I got from my landlord, when I was living in my temporary apartment and waiting for She provided general information about Denmark and the transitioning.

5. Do you think Aarhus it's a good destination for foreign families to live and work? Why?

FM: MMM, my contract is for 3 years and we don't plan on staying more.

Why?

Lance and Fibi laugh

FM: Well, we come from hot places, so we cannot handle the winter here, other thing is don't want to say that Aarhus does not have activities or smt, but just intend that they don't interest us, I want to say, that what Aarhus offers didn't not match with our interests.

What would you like Aarhus to offer more?

FM: Diversity, diversity. I follow the events in Aarhus Internationals facebook page, because I want to get out of my apartment, but they don't seem interesting.

FM: So I would say to might friends maybe mostly not. But of course, I always explain that Aarhus, has these huge advantages but also huge cost, like depressing, isolated, lack of diversity, shitty weather. But my job is amazing, getting to work from home, travel the world, 6 weeks' vacation, special tax rate. So, the work environment is great, but the rest for us is not what we want.

6. What about you Fibi?

FW: Depends on the person personality and what they want in life, I guess for us it is a...as Lance is from California, there is no winter and I am originally from Hong Kong (city near to Hong Kong) , so the weather there is very hot, basically no winter, so we are not use to the cold , dark and windy weather.

FM: Also it gets dark so early here..

FW: So for us the weather plays big role when choosing a destination to live... and also the diversity its very low, there is no Japanese or Korean food, just sushi that is not really sushi and fried stuff.

FM: Just all the restaurants offer the deep fried crappy Chinese food, no diversity in food, there is actually no real Chinese food. I am from the Southern California where there is a lot of Asians and Mexicans and we can get great authentic food, but not here, we love spicy food and Denmark hates everything spicy, just clean organic food. Aarhus is not bad in general, just it has very specific characteristics that appeal to specific people.

FW: I guess USA has more immigrants, so they have way more variety of authentic foods. The categories IN Aarhus are really narrow.

FM: I mean I could say that the work conditions are pretty good, we have also nice apartment...I can take off from my work when I need to

7. Do you think there is enough information about Aarhus being an attractive place for educated international worker and their family?

FM: No, I don't think so, at least we didn't get any..

8. Do you think Aarhus offers enough job opportunities, multicultural events and opportunities for personal growth, in order to attract educated international workforce?

FW: No, at least for me no.. we don't speak Danish and most of the jobs wants you to speak some sort of a Danish, so it's very difficult for international to find a job here (both agree). I was really difficult to find something for me..

FM: I think even if we spoke Danish will be very difficult to find job here, so also, we are going be here for few years, so we don't think we should spend so much time in learning Danish. I think there should be way more jobs for internationals here.

FW: it's very difficult for me to find a job, I think for Lance if he loses his job will be way easier to find something, he has a Phd and I have only Masters.

9. Did ask somebody to help you when Fibi was searching for job?

FM: Yes, I ask Aarhus Uni, but they just gave us a generic contact, that didn't help us much, nobody listen to her story and what she want.

FW: I just got the contact and she told me to do my CV, but nothing specific, no guidance

10. You as an accompanying Spouse, do you like being in Aarhus? Do you feel welcome in the city? Why?

FW: Yes and No. it's really save here, so I don't really need to worry about my safety. It amazingly save. Also, I think Danes are nice people, they are not a racist.

FW: The people are nice in general, they are trying to be helpful.

FM: I think people are nice in general, but you have to force it out of them in a way, in America people smile at you way more than here.

FW: I think Americans are very humorous and Danes are less, people are very quiet here. The people at work are very very quite and even if they welcome you fell less welcome than in America.

FM: Danes are like "Hello, we are here to work" when you meet at work. Feels weird in a way.

11. Did you get enough info about the starting live in Aarhus when you arrived?

FM: No, no, I did not get any information, I think we survived here, just from the information I got from my landlord. I started working on the project before I come to Denmark and when I arrived I realized that I am not getting paid for 2 months, then went to the bank and they told me that I need more documents. I went to my landlord and she was the only one that heled me to figure what is the problem.

FW: I think Denmark has a very difficult system, which so different and unique to the other countries, so they need to give more information about it. The websites are really not helpful, the important information is in English and all the documents are complicated, so it's a big mess. It's a very complicated stuff and nobody, gave us proper introduction

FM: The information I got from the university and the web sites, the English was limited and basically if you don't follow exactly, you are a little fucked.i think they have to help more here. Because if you move t America there is no CPR and stuff like that its way easier.

12. Do you have suggestions how some of the assets in the city should be used so the highly educated foreigners and their family could assist economically, socially and culturally to the region?

FM: I fell that the city tries to attract people. But I fell that the government should try for more diversity. The events appeal to certain group of people, but they definitely don't cover all. I mean the asthenosphere is not very international, even though they have festivals, for example food festival, just feels like, nothing special, just a guy selling a food for bunch of money.

FW: I think the transportation should be improved, they don't have any English sings and some of the buses are very rear, even in Copenhagen they don't have sings in English. When our friend came to visit they got lost.

FM: The transportation out of the city centre is very rear, every 30 mins you can get a bus to the city. Also, I don't understand the mean of the tramp line that Aarhus builds, doesn't stop close to any suburb or shop, so what is the point. In my opinion Denmark has the worst transportation from all the Scandinavia. If we decide to check some event in Aarhus takes all

day because of the public transportation, maybe if the transportation was better, we can pop up and check more stuff.

13. What do you think distinguish Aarhus from other cities as being an attractive place for educated workforce?

FM: Aarhus didn't have anything to do why I came here, I came for my post doc position.

FW: I think the bike lines are really distinguished, they have great bike lines everywhere, that is really unique from other European cities.

L: Maybe if the Uni offered me an office in Aarhus, maybe I would benefit more of the bike lines or so. I work all the time from home, so my experience is being home and the grocery shop. I think from the University perspective would be so nice if they just offered me a space, just a desk anywhere, so I have a community and meet people, just to talk to somebody. All of my team members work from home, so that doesn't really help. The university should try to improve. In my University back home, when I was doing my Phd, they gave us space with the other departments, so I was able to meet people from different areas and here nothing. But, think that shows pretty much the Danish way, very isolated and narrow. I think it's a long shot for Aarhus to become an attractive place for foreigners, they have to work a lot. My landlord told me that is going to be very difficult to make Danish friends, because all of the people in this region has been living here their entire life, so they think why should I make friends with you if you going to leave the place in few years anyway.

L: I have been traveling a lot and I can say that any other city is already more international than Aarhus, just of the culture that Danes have.

14. How would you describe Aarhus activities and initiatives to your family friends back home?

FM: I think that Aarhus should try other way to presents its initiatives. I think the city communication is bad, it's hard to know what is going on around the city, the only information I get is from Facebook, everything I get is in Danish. Basically, I fell that I have to walk around

the city and ask people, in order to get some information. Even if I go to websites, there is no information in English and it's lamethe websites are defiantly lame.

F: I also feel that all the activities and festivals they have are only during the summer and the rest of the years is quiet. I don't think they have enough indoor activities for the rainy season

FM: Yes, I also think that the most activities or festivals are during the summer, where we don't need them, because we can go out by ourselves and enjoy the sunny weather. But during the wither period there is nothing. So, I would really recommend Aarhus city to my friends (laughing...), the work conditions are great in a way, but nothing else....

Interview Family 2

1. Tell me about you?

- **Where are you from?**
- **How old are you?**
- **What is your professional backgrounds and educations?**
- **How long have you been living in Aarhus? How long you are planning to stay in Aarhus?**

FW: We are both from Scotland. I have a Master of Arts in Literature and Film studies, I was working many years in the TV and Media industries when I was 19 and now I am 37 and Mark is 40, mainly I was working in job festivals, also I was working in film funding and tv networks, producing and also buying films for programmes.

FM: I am from the same place as my wife and I studied engineering, I worked in multimedia and now I am working as designer in Lego in Billund.

FW: Now I am running a festival in Aarhus.

2. Why did you decide to move to Aarhus?

FM: I got a job in Lego and we decide to move in Denmark, Kath came after 1 year, I convinced her (laughing). We choose to move to Aarhus, because is a bigger city, it's the second biggest in Denmark, we had chance to move in Billund or Vajle, but we defiantly chose Aarhus.

Why?

FW: Mark got the job, first we had a long-distance relationship and I came after year, during that year we had a chance to travel around Denmark and where to settle, so we chose Aarhus, because of practical things and the kids.

3. Do you think there is enough information about Aarhus being an attractive place for educated international worker and their family?

4. What was your image about the city before your arrival? did you get information about Aarhus city?

FM: We didn't know much about Aarhus, we just wanted a city which can offer more activities than Billund. We generally knew about Denmark, we both wanted to get to know Denmark, maybe if we grew up in village before we would like the small cities, and we also knew about the family work balance the country offers.

FW: we basically went to different cities and we decided to move to Aarhus, because the city was more alive than the other cities, also we checked if there are nice place around Aarhus and we found that there is so much to do, also we wanted place with more restaurants. And now I found many nice places around Aarhus. First I thought that there is not going to be much to see around Aarhus...

5. Did you get some information about Aarhus before you arrived?

FM: No, not really, we got to know everything about Denmark after we came.

6. Did your image about Aarhus shift after your arrival?

7. Do you think Aarhus city is open to diversity? Why?

FW: NOOOooo not really, I mean the cultural activities are ok, there is something in English language all the time, Dook1 is there with open space and activities, Fest week is on the street of Aarhus and other similar events, is nice people speak English, so far its been easy to be here, socially I don't thinkthat people are particularly open...mhhhh we have some Danish friends. The last two year I was living in Aarhus on a project with Danes who live here and my international network , I really got to know people, but unless you don't have a reason to build a relationship in Aarhus it doesn't really happen. People have their network from the moment they grew up , and they don't need to.....I mean I was living in Glasgow and there is such a diversity it was way easier, but when we moved here in the building for the last two years, we got to know the community and we have Christmas dinner and Summer parties together, so we do that together in order to the practical things around the building , its what I said unless you have a reason to connect.

8. How would you describe the lifestyle associated with Aarhus? Is there enough events, activities etc.?

FM: Our lifestyle is changed after we got children, mmmm. ... I always say that Aarhus is practical city, it's a real example of town big enough to have urban things, but it's a small town, and ...I really like that is on the coast and it has forests, not many things are happeningbut I would say that the city has a bit from everything...

FW: I would say that Aarhus has all the ingredients. Now when we have children here in Aarhus we spend much more time with other families with children, also my friends back in UK ask me all the time how is it in Aarhus with small children....and I always say that is a family friendly city, not much stuff is going on, so its not the most exciting city to be , its not like Copenhagen, but has got enough of everything , that we can get..... I would say its enough for us, we love that is a family friendly city..... We live in the city centre, so everything is really close to us, the day care is in 5 min, shops, restaurants everything we need is here.....but it doesn't feel like we are living in the middle of the city.... There is no traffic....the cinema is in 5 mins. Its really good at the stage of life we are like now. The bar street is close, its great

9. Do you think Aarhus offers enough job opportunities, multicultural events and opportunities for personal growth, in order to attract educated international workforce?

10. You as an accompanying Spouse, do you like being in Aarhus? Why? – yes go to q12

11. Are there enough job opportunities, cultural and social amenities in Aarhus?

K: No...

FM: Well it's not London, I know that Aarhus has the impression to be bigger and better. But not really, huge changes are going on around the harbour I mean I don't what to say, I am not sure they can offer more, for the size of Aarhus I think is ok, I don't think that matches the diversity, because Denmark has been a monoculture for so long...

FW: the problem is the language. And the language is quite tough ...There are some international companies like Vestasand for me as spouse I couldn't get a job the first year in Aarhus, I got a job in Sweden and I run a Nordic organization in Malmo, I run from Aarhus and I was travelling few times a month to Sweden, but I was employed in Sweden. After my job finish there, I was not able to find job in Aarhus.... unless I create my own projects.

15. What do you think about Aarhus city? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the city?

FM: I like the work and family balancethe city is small and its easy to get from place to placethe social life is low here, I mean we are adjusted to the culture , but sometimes feels cold , but the city is clean and safe , the work hours are reasonable, the beach is near , more art , music and diversity would be good

FW: We really value that the families and children are really in the centre and everything for children is so organized. its ok to leave your work earlier to pick up your child. The holidays

are long and we really value that people here like to spend time with their family all the time ...the city work, the administration works, it was a bit tricky to get used to it, maybe more info about it, because it was a bit difficult in the beginning. But overall, the citizen services were quite helpful, and we felt welcome.

12. What do you think distinguish Aarhus from other cities as being an attractive place for educated workforce?

13. Do you have suggestions how Aarhus can become more attractive place for educated foreigner and their partners?

FM: it comes down to the job opportunities I guess. Also I think the city improves, shops are working longer and places now are working during the weekend, the city changes fast, I think from this point of you it will increase the diversity. More international places open the last years, which is great...

FW: and also, when professionals move here they expect to find variety of international restaurant places.... And the supermarket. So, more food international food in the super markets.

FM: More integration would be good as well for foreigners and more cultural initiatives would be good

FW: And I am sure a lot of Danes don't want to see that ... I really mean it...because if the city wants to attract professionals from other cultures they are expecting more diversity....

FM: Godsbanens has been nice cultural place, things are there, a real city as am concern really have different culture

FW: In Glasgow where we are coming from, there is a people from different cultures, and all of the foreigners live in the community with you there, go to school and its good school, u know there is restaurants and the same amount of jobs as Scottish people can get. I you know there is this strange thing about Denmark is that, well.... You know when we grew up with the idea that a multiculturalism is a big thing and in Denmark is very much , yes we want to

attract this people we are interested, but to integrate , they mean to become Danish and there is very little maybe limited interest in the Danes to become internationals, and I think to make more international city they have to increase the job opportunities and the business industries in Aarhus, more opportunities for the other partner and people have to feel that they can celebrate their own culture and people have to appreciate that

FM: Well the restaurants are not that good, there is Asian restaurants but all of them offer not authentic food, they do it Danish way.

FW: I can add also that in experience when u apply for job if you are not Danish they skip your application and I think that they miss a lot on very experience international people. I think I don't how to change companies minds, but it will be more useful for them to have more international workers.

14. How would you describe Aarhus activities and initiatives to your family friends back home?

FM: We always say its : Great for children

Interview 3, Family 3

They have two children- 4y and 2y

1. Tell me about you?

- **Where are you from?**
- **How old are you?**
- **What is your professional backgrounds and educations?**
- **How long have you been living in Aarhus? How long you are planning to stay in Aarhus?**

FW: Ok, my name is Jacklyn and I am Irish, I came here several years ago, because my boyfriend wanted to find job here and I came to complete my last semester of my studies here and find a job. We had and intention to be in Denmark just for 2 years, but it turn out that we are still here.

2. How long you have living in Aarhus?

FW: 6 years. I finish mine Social science and community work Master and Marck has IT degree.

FM: Yes, I was working in several companies back in Ireland and though that it might be easy to get a job in Aarhus, so I decided to come with Jacklyn.

3. Why did you decide to move to Aarhus? Do you think you did the correct choice?

FW: We first arrives in Horsens, we live there for 1 year, then we decided to move to Aarhus.

4. Why?

FW: Because, Aarhus is a bigger city with more opportunities.

FM: Yes.. Aarhus is a bigger city with more job opportunities and social opportunities. Also, the transportation is way better in Aarhus, then in the smaller cities.

5. Did you feel welcome by the city when you move to Aarhus... I mean did you get the expected information from the citizen services or the international community..?

FW: No, we didn't get anything, we basically need it to look for information by ourselves, but that was few years ago, I would say that they are much more visible now..Now social media is more active, so its easy to join groups and contact people who already live in Aarhus city.. in order to get some help. I think that Facebook is the most helpful platform to info when you did it. People with similar experiences always answer.

6. What was your image about the city before your arrival? And from where did you get information about Aarhus city?

FW: I did know anything about Aarhus at the time...Marck new that they have football team (laughing) ...But overall, I was imagining Denmark way more scenery with more socialite, much more open and liberate.

7. Do you think there is enough information about Aarhus being an attractive place for educated international worker and their family?

FW: No , I am not sure....

8. How would you describe the lifestyle associated with Aarhus?

FW: its casual.

M: Yes, the Danes are really into their culture. The city offers a lot of music and art event in general. I mean they also embrace a lot of other cultures, the city offers tapas, burgers, burritos etc. There is Irish, German, Spanish bars. I think Lately Aarhus is becoming more multicultural.

9. What do you think about Aarhus city? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the city?

FW: I don't think Aarhus offers enough information for foreign families, we need it find out everything by ourselves, how to sign for kindergarten, accommodation etc. I think Aarhus is more for young single people who are here just to work. Most of the events are young people, not really for families. We have children and I would say that is fantastic for children, all the parks and public playgrounds are so good, the Dook1, also the city is extremely save. Also, the transportation is free for children, the day-care is great ...it fantastic for children.

10. Do you think Aarhus offers enough job opportunities, multicultural events and opportunities for personal growth, in order to attract educated international workforce?

FW: I think the city is a bit too small for all the international looking for jobs. I would say Aarhus is not Copenhagen. It difficult if you don't know Danish to find job, because there is not a lot international jobs....

11. Do you have suggestions how some of the assets in the city should be used so the highly educated foreigners and their family could assist economically, socially and culturally to the region?

FW: The city should provide more help to families with children, for example when you need to sign the children to day care or school there is not much help and all the information is in Danish, so it's really difficult to deal with formalities. You can go and ask the International community, but there is no specifics how to complete everything, which schools are good which not. So defiantly more service.

FM: and it's so difficult for families which have teen children, there is nothing available no information.

FW: Also for housing in Aarhus is very tricky, there is not enough housing I think, or we don't have the information how to find accommodation fast, Aarhus it's also big city for students so it's really hard. When we moved here nobody explained to us, which suburbs are good or bad .. we could of easily end up living in some ghetto in Aarhus.

FM: So I would say more information for international , more events for internationals , people should be more open and...mm more information in general for internationals.

12. Did your image about Aarhus shift after your arrival?

FW: Yesss.. the Danes are really closed and its hard to make friends, if you are not at the right community, I found out that is very difficult to socialize. I mean the Danes are Danes, its really hard to crack them, but ones you do it, they can be great people. The Danes are just closed, I work with them and it took me long time, but I think it's just in their culture.

13. Do you think Aarhus city is open to diversity? Why?

FW: Yes, I think the city is open to a diversity...Especially the International community get more active lately and they are really helpful, if you have questions. I mean the city overs activities and the Danes who have been travelling around the world are very open minded.

14. What do you think distinguish Aarhus from other cities as being an attractive place for educated workforce?

FM: I think it way more saver that Copenhagen. . Also Aarhus location is perfect, in the middle of Jutland, it so easy to get from place to place and there so may attraction to visit .. The location is perfect to get to the rest of the country. Its very similar from where we come from.

FM: The summer festivals are great over here...

15. How would you describe Aarhus activities and initiatives to your family friends back home?

FW: Yes , we always brag , how great is for children, all the free transportation, education , free tickets, the working hours and benefits its just great. The work life is balanced. We recommended a lot... Also there is many children festivals, its save for children. I mean the city needs more for grownups (laughing)..

Interview 4, Family 4

1. Tell me about you?

- Where are you from?
- How old are you?
- What is your professional backgrounds and educations?
- How long have you been living in Aarhus? How long you are planning to stay in Aarhus? 2 YEARS

FW: Hey, my name is ...and I am originally from South Africa, moved to England when I was 11, after that I went to University to study piece and conflict and communication at Sant Andrews University, then I worked few years for Amnesty Internationals and other organizations dealing with human rights and indigenous rights and now I am working for consultancy company here in Denmark.

FM: I am Gerardo and I am from Texas USA, for the last seven years I was living between USA, England and Denmark. I did business with my Uni. Degree and then I changed to Masters in

energy and sustainable development, so as my Phd and I work for AAU at the moments, dealing with electrical cars.

2. Why did you decide to move to Aarhus?

FW: I got a job with my phd at the AAU Uni and we decided to move here.

3. Do you think there is enough information about Aarhus/ Did you hear about Aarhus before you arrived?

FW: No, I never heard about Aarhus in my life, G: Neither me... , we didn't hear much about Denmark in general, I though Denmark as place with blond and very tall people.

4. What was your image about the city before your arrival? did you get information about Aarhus city?

FM: I can't say, I didn't get any news from Denmark, so image

FW: Yes, I don't think we get much news also in England from Denmark, so nothing... we checked some forums online, it was mostly Aamerican's posts, and they were saying that the Danes are pretty unsocial and closed, that was basically, but ones you get to know them they great people, also they were talking a lot about the family and work balance and the Hight quality of live.

Did you get some information about Aarhus before you arrived?

FM: Nop, not really, my contact person didn't send me any information, Everything I learned was when I arrived. Not very encouraging, oo yes. I got few picture of Arhus, but that's about.

FW: Yes, I learned everything after I came

5. Did your image about Aarhus shift after your arrival?

FW: Now its defiantly changed, I learned that we had to join the society , different communities in order to get information and that helped us a lot to make friends, generally our first impression was to not talk to Danes, because they will be fretted or be rude or say something...but after we lived here we found out that people are extremely friendly and

helpful , but maybe 1 of 5 people match the stereotype of the anti-social awkward Dane, as what I read online. I can say that Aarhus became such a warm help for us, after we arrived we felt that we don't know anything and we are afraid to go to cafes, because people will just stare at us, and now is opposite we love living in Aarhus, nowwe travel we can't wait to come back to Aarhus, the city became as our save heaven ... we feel very relaxed and safe here.

6. Do you think Aarhus city is open to diversity? Why?

FM: Not really, it depends what you want from diversity, For me is ok, but it requires a bit more openness from me, I felt good with it, for example all my international friends think that the city is not open and good to diversity....they think that the city it's not that flexible.

FW: I think Danes are already fairly open minded, they don't shock that easily or don't look at you strange and they are not shock that you are different ... I think in a sense that's being diverse, somebody don't draw attention if you don't follow the norm ...

FM; I think they are very welcoming... We are also surprised that things work in Denmark, for example we are in programme called Spouses from the university, and they invited us to join and meet other families ... Danish families, I would say that that helped us to make friends we enjoyed it a lot. I think it was initiative from the University and the city of Aarhus, I never felt something like that in my country or in England... and now we are good friends with these families.

7. How would you describe the lifestyle associated with Aarhus? Is there enough events, activities etc.?

FW: very slow, very relaxed, there is no rush, its like a seaside town, you get the impression that everybody is family oriented, because everybody is 5pm at home, its....very quiet town, there is always something for everybody.. Aarhus feels like in some parts as village and some part as town but it's not a city.

FM: Most of the time you are left alone, people don't bother you, but if want to socialize you can always find somebody Also if you see somebody driving or cycling fast people give him look, just relax, it doesn't fit to with Aarhus image to rush or be in hurry...

8. What do you think about Aarhus city? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the city?

FW: for me the biggest weakness is that there are not many job opportunities – the job diversity is very low. In Copenhagen, there is many industries based in Copenhagen that could be based in Aarhus, so it doesn't make sense that here in Aarhus are not as many industries as are in Copenhagen, especially in my industry human rights, I feel that in Aarhus you have few sectors, if want to work here you have Vestas, Grunfoss, Arla, AAU, Bestseller, but if you don't fit into these IT, engineering types, I don't think there is much more to do here and that's a big down side and also there is a good amount of food and restaurants but at the same time there isn't, I can probably I can count on my one hand place I would go and eat in Aarhus.....but the positive is that there is some much to do here, that cannot even match or equal Copenhagen, there is puddle boarding club, there is so many yoga studios , running clubs, forests...the ocean is here, I saw that they are building water sports – outdoor water sport. Ice hockey, beach volleyball, there is so much to do.....its just really job wise and I think the music hall brings so much culture to Aarhus, we got to see so many different plays, so that's so cool.

9. Do you think Aarhus offers enough job opportunities, multicultural events and opportunities for personal growth, in order to attract educated international workforce?

FW: in my experience there is favouritism over Danes, which is ok, but you can easily lose your job over a Dane, but in terms of Spouses finding jobs, all my Spouses friends from different countries, all of them say the exact same thing that they have lost their job to a Dane and most of the time even if they are more skilled they would lose the job to a Dane, as I said the diversity of job industries is very limited in Aarhus.

FM: Yes, there is not many opportunities for personal growth, even Aarhus University is moving more to Engendering and IT or Business and IT, I can see that in the new Phd application, which is very limited, in that way you lose the diversity and also the sectors in English are limited, so the diversity of people is not high, which might be for what the city and the country is going for. From what I heard is very difficult to find job as foreigner – First is if you don't know Danish or if you don't show interest and second many contracts are temporary – like ours, so we are not sure that we will be able to find jobs after that to stay ...

10. What do you think distinguish Aarhus from other cities as being an attractive place for educated workforce?

FM: I live in England it was in 5 cities, Aarhus is very safe, so you can come alone or with you families, everything is very accessible and nice, the you have security, I feel that the quality of live is very high from day 1 and I think that the main things that the city offers

FW: When I talk to my friends with children who are international, they mention how different the live for their children will be if they were leaving in their home countries, the most important thing would mention is that the children can play out all day, they can go to the forest in morning and come in evening, so they have much better childhood here, playing and also u get used the cold weather... The safe outdoor live is a big plus.

FM: I would say the freedom of the quality of life

11. Do you have suggestions how Aarhus can become more attractive place for educated foreigner and their partners?

FW: I think in terms of culture if they continue the same way bringing international vibes as the street food is a brilliant idea, if they continue with the jazz festival and continue bringing international act every year and the art festival, music should continue and allow people to share different cultures , you get to experience everything and if it can bring some sort of job desertification if they b ring perhaps offices in Copenhagen and Aarhus, so there is the option of both , so companies could have the option of putting the headquarters in Copenhagen and a different base In Aarhus, just because you could have more options, and it will make me stay here, because I am already planning to leave the city, because of career options.

FM: Culturally and Socially it has been amazing right now, and I hope it's not just the city European Capital of Culture, I have that they will continue with the multicultural events after the year pass. I am not sure they will at the same phase once the year of culture is finished. Because then we have not experience Aarhus before, and heard of people that it has not been so active before 1 , 1,5 year ago, of all this event and that could be a great downfall if they stop the effort and the with the jobs ,

FM: More business should be located in Aarhus, otherwise the city will attract foreigners for 1 month to 3 and if that's what the city wants its ok, just Aarhus will always stay like the little baby brother of Copenhagen, also all the investments the city do by building the harbour, the library ... it feels that they want to become the capital too, perhaps not the size of Copenhagen, but they can do if they keep the momentum. And also keep the integration, to integrate the people who are already here, I know that the city of Aarhus, has these events to come and meet the Mayor of Aarhus, but it feels like something is missing, because people leave very fastlike we would like to stay it has been the best city I was living in , but we can't perhaps it's the language , job opportunities etc...

Interview 5, Family 5

1. Tell me about you?

- **Where are you from?**
- **How old are you?**
- **What is your professional backgrounds and educations?**
- **How long have you been living in Aarhus? How long you are planning to stay in Aarhus? – 4 years**

FM: Hey, my name is Marko and I come from Italy, I am a computer engineer and I have a Master's degree from Italy, I have been working in Italy, England and currently I am working here in Aarhus, I am working for Arla the last 4years.

T: My name is Tamara and I am 34 years old from Lithuania, we meet with Marko online and got married 6 years ago in Italy. I have a Bachelor degree from Lithuania.

2. What did you study?

FW: English language

3. Why did you decide to move to Aarhus?

FM: I applied for job in Aarhus and I got it, because of that I came, I didn't know much about Denmark or especially Aarhus before I got the job offer, simply I liked the job and what the company offered. First, I came to Aarhus to get an apartment and settle, then Tamara came.

FW: I basically followed my husband, I didn't want to stay in Italy alone. I decided to follow him and get a job in Aarhus. I applied for several positions before I came, but it didn't work out.

Do you work now?

FW: No, I tried to find job for long period of time and nothing.

Did you get help from some organizations in Aarhus?

4. Did you felt welcome when you arrive in Aarhus?

FM/FW: We would say yes, we got some free tickets to visit the museums, well it was confusing with the documents...T: I think when you arrive as foreigner you also have to take initiatives and find out things, I don't city should be responsible for everything. In overall, I think Danes are helpful if you just ask them, also depends on a the person...if you are willing to integrate ... not just waiting something to happen. Its all about how you behave yourself in a social context.

FW: Not really, I tried to but most of the information was in Danish, so it.... was very difficult, I got some information, but it was very general...So... I decided to go back to school and start a Master degree in Aarhus University...I tough it might be easy to find a job, later. But a, I think that without knowing Danish will be impossible to find something..... here in Aarhus

5. What was your image about the city before your arrival? And from where did you get information about Aarhus city? / TAMARA ALSO answers to You as an accompanying Spouse, do you like being in Aarhus? Do you feel welcome in the city? Why?

FM: I imagined Denmark, modern, develop and social country. The company gave me a little information about Aarhus, very general. They didn't help much with settling, I need it to find

all the information about apartments and documents, it was very difficult in the beginning, I would say. But the working environment is good.

FW: Well.... Laughing I come from bigger city.... So, I tough Aarhus is a bigger city, but nopp, it out to be very small city.... And I said I come from bigger city, so I felt a bit like in cage. Also, I tough the social live is more active and diverse. It took some time to adjust, because Aarhus to me is a very quiet and a bit boring city. Also, my husband works a lot and he like to spend time alone with his computer as he is a IT engineer (Laughing). I didn't really know much about Aarhus before I arrived, my husband came first, and he explained to me that is a quit, dark and a beautiful place...

6. How would you describe the lifestyle associated with Aarhus?

FM: I mean its not like a really like to sit home all the time, just I feel it's a bit difficult to have a nice social circle if you don't know Danish, also Danes like to be left alone most of the time, or at least I feel like that. Also, I don't really find many exiting things to do in Aarhus. I really like my job I work with few internationals and hang out most of the time with them, I don't really have any Danish friend (laughing)...

FW: Yesss.....as my husband like to stay away from social context most of the mine, for me is quite hard. Me as being a foreigner and accompanying spouse its quite difficult, and also think that knowing the local language is a barrier to make friends.

FW: Also if we decide to stay longer, we don't know, yet. I think I am going to learn the language, which will make it easier to find friends and build social circle.

7. Do you think Aarhus as a destination for foreign families to live and work? Why?

FW: In general, I think it a good place for families, of course there is always positive and negative sides. I think it's a very safe place for families, with a great place to visit.

8. Do you think there is enough information about Aarhus being an attractive place for educated international worker and their family?

FW: mmmm, I think the city is more promoted for students and don't think so much for families.....

9. What do you think about Aarhus city? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the city?

FW: It's a save, small and cozy city, but I think needs more diversity and family events.....

10. Do you think Aarhus offers enough job opportunities, multicultural events and opportunities for personal growth, in order to attract educated international workforce?

FW: As I said coming alone with a husband who is not that social is quite difficult, so in general we are not very social. I got a lot of emails about event...so we went to some ...but in general my husband is very picky....All depends on the person..

What do you think about the communication between the city and the foreigners?

FW: After you settle and find all the channels I would say that the communication is great, I can find everything now. I mean social media helps a lot, you can find other foreigner in the city to help you, also events and so. I would say its quite fine. Visit Aarhus app is good.....

11. Does the size of the city play role in job opportunities, cultural and social amenities in some way?

FW: Yes , Aarhus is small city , so the jobs and activities are limited in some way, but as well if you search enough you can find everything , but firs you have to take the initiatives , if you search you will always find it . I think if you work hard, you will be able to find job, activities everything....But of course it's a bit more difficult that bigger and more diverse places.

12. Do you have suggestions how some of the assets in the city should be used so the highly educated foreigners and their family could assist economically, socially and culturally to the region?

FW: I Think AARHUS changed a lot the last year, new buildings, Dook1 is great and think those things are important. I think the city is improving and with the new library and nice views its becoming a place where can go and socialize. If they keep developing in that area, it will attract more people in a future.

13. Do you think Aarhus city is open to diversity? Why?

FW: I think they are trying more lately, so it's getting more international in a way ...

14. What do you think distinguish Aarhus from other cities as being an attractive place for educated workforce?

FW: I would say more support for new comers, maybe for the first half a year. Mare information in English and more events for new foreigners. Because for me it was very difficult to adjust in the beginning. You have to adjust find places, like locations everything is Danish...

15. How would you describe Aarhus activities and initiatives to your family friends back home?

FW: Well it's hard to find apartment and its costly. So its important that both partners have a job, in order to enjoy life

Interview 6, Family 6

Only the Spouse was able to attend the interview

1. Tell me about you?

- Where are you from?

I come from Vila-real, a beautiful city in Spain, at the Mediterranean Sea and my partner too, he is busy working today.

- How old are you?

I'm 28 years old.

- What is your professional background and education?

My education is a Bachelor degree in International and European Law at the University of Groningen and currently studying my Master's of Law at the University of Aarhus. My current job is related to the Spanish and French markets for a Danish company.

- How long have you been living in Aarhus? How long you are planning to stay in Aarhus?

I'm here for almost 2 years. I am planning to stay (hopefully) permanently ☺ I love this city.

- Did you get some information about Aarhus before you arrived in the city?

I arrived in Aarhus for the first time in 2014 for a student exchange of half a year with the Erasmus scholarship. The university provided me with a lot of information about Aarhus. I also got a Danish mentor, Camilla, who absolutely prepared me for the trip and was the biggest help I got in Aarhus.

2. Do you think there is enough information about Aarhus city as being an attractive place for International professionals and their family?

In my opinion, Aarhus is shown more attractive for tourism and for international students in general, rather than for international professionals and their family. There is a lot of information about the most interesting points of the city to visit, the night life, and about the university; but not really about how any international professional could fit in here.

3. Why did you decide to move to Aarhus?

When I was doing my exchange, I completely fell in love with the city, the people, the language, the traditions and the country as a whole. So it was not a difficult decision to decide to move to Denmark after I would graduate in The Netherlands.

4. What was your image about the city before your arrival?

Despite a lot of information from the university, I was still very hesitant about it. Before being accepted in Aarhus University as part of my studies, I never even heard about the name before. I had no expectations because I never really heard about Aarhus. I tried to see some videos on Youtube, but they did not seem that exciting either. So, it was a bit difficult to create an image about the city before my arrival.

5. Did your image of Aarhus shift after your arrival?

I didn't really have an image about it, so I cannot really say my image of Aarhus shifted after my arrival. What I can say, however, is that it gave me an absolute positive image. The more I got to know the city, the more I loved it here. People seemed smiley and open, so that gave me a welcoming feeling. The city seemed cosy from the beginning, there are always activities in the city centre, the shopping street is always lively, the coloured houses beautifully aligned next to each other bring an absolute delight to anyone who passes by them.

6. Do you think Aarhus city is open to diversity? Why?

Aarhus is being everyday more and more open to diversity. It can be seen by the events made in English, fairs, plenty of open festivals, and so on.

7. How would you describe the lifestyle associated with Aarhus? Activities, events, culture etc.

There is a rich social life in Aarhus, small cosy events, from salsa free lessons on Thursday nights to yoga classes on a Saturday morning. There are also many activities and groups to join, from pole dancing to capoeira, or taekwondo and badminton.

There are random little markets in certain streets, or some events like Irish dance night, karaoke and other live music events (I highly recommend Sherlock Holmes and Tir Na Nog, this last one is known as the best Irish pub of Europe!) There are also plenty of interesting museums that are worth paying a visit. Whoever searches, finds, and it is generally not difficult to find various events and activities by making a little search in social media ☺

8. Do you think Aarhus city is open to diversity (different cultures)? Why?

Yes, I have met people from so many different backgrounds and they generally feel at home in here. For example, I work in an international Danish company where many of my colleagues are from other countries, and we all feel like a small family together despite the diverse cultural backgrounds we come from.

9. What do you think about Aarhus city? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the city?

The big strength of Aarhus is its openness. Its people are smiley (I miss very much calling Aarhus the City of Smiles. It was a much better name than Aarhus – Danish for progress or “With Aarhus”??), welcoming and ready to help foreigners. The

nightlife in Aarhus is really great, and during the day it becomes this lively city that is so nice to walk through.

One of the weaknesses from a cultural point of view might be that, despite wanting to be open, there needs to be some changes in considering all type of tourists. By this I mean, for example, when going to a museum, the main languages are Danish or English (in the description of art and so on). Sometimes, German. I miss the involving more languages if Aarhus really wants to become international.

10. Do you think Aarhus offers enough job opportunities and opportunities for personal growth for international professionals?

Unfortunately, not really. Despite Aarhus being a great city to live in, the opportunities for international professionals are not that abundant. If the international does not speak Danish, then the opportunities go down to almost 0.

11. You as an accompanying Spouse, do you like being in Aarhus? Do you feel welcome in the city? Why?

I love Aarhus, I fell in love with this city. I had my exchange in here and I immediately felt at home. Not too big to feel anonymous, not too small to feel bored.

12. Are there cultural and social amenities in Aarhus for highly educated foreigners and their accompanying partner?

As mentioned above, there are quite different cultural and social events, fairs, events about companies or any other interest you might have – it is always good to have a look at social media (i.e. Facebook) to find what suits you best 😊

13. What do you think distinguish Aarhus from other cities as being an attractive place for educated foreigners?

One of the most attractive traits of Aarhus as a city is definitely being the smallest city in the world, as they name it. It is a city, yet still having that familiar feeling that it does not make you feel so anonymous like in other big cities. Aarhus is also known for having very welcoming people, so that really makes internationals feel at home even with local Danes, and that is a great feeling.

14. Do you have suggestions how Aarhus can become more attractive place for educated foreigners and their partners?

Aarhus is doing a good job in trying to attract more educated foreigners, but perhaps one of the most important ones would be to make the opportunities to work here more

available for internationals. More fairs, more events targeted to internationals would be very interesting. Perhaps more accessible information on how the Danish job market works would be absolutely big help for educated foreigners. Danish job market has its own peculiarities which differ from many other countries, and when we arrive here, it is not easy for us to know how to find the best opportunities that fit us.

15. How would you describe Aarhus activities and initiatives to your family friends back home?

Very rich night life (especially since it is a very young city), several activities and groups to be part of, plenty of bars and restaurants, lively centre, lovely colourful streets and in general a complete city, that doesn't really miss anything 😊

Interview 7, Family 7

1. Tell me about you?

- Where are you from?
- How old are you?

FW: Hey, we are coming from Bulgaria, 29 and 25 years old.

- What is your professional background and educations?
FM: I have a gymnasium and my wife has a masters in Business, we decided to come to Denmark, to finish my Bachelor and both of us to find professional jobs.
- How long have you been living in Aarhus? How long you are planning to stay in Aarhus?

FW: 3 years

- Did you get some information about Aarhus before you arrive in the city?

Fw: We have a friend that was working for years in Aarhus and we met with him, he told us about the great work environment in Aarhus and we decided to try.

2. Do you think there is enough information about Aarhus city as being an attractive place for International professionals and their family?

FW: No, defiantly not. We did not receive any info except our friend's opinions

3. Why did you decide to move to Aarhus?

FW: I wanted to find professional job and my husband got excepted in the university and we decided to try, it turn out very difficult to find jib without speaking the local language, therefore we need it to find any job, later on I got pregnant and I was not able to find any.

4. What was your image of the city before your arrival?

FW: We did not have any particular image what so ever, as we did not know much about Denmark or Aarhus, only that the working environment is good.

5. How did your image of Aarhus city progress after your initial arrival and subsequent stay?

FM: Well I would say it's very beautiful city with activities, from cultural perspective is difficult as the locals are closed and quiet.

6. Do you think Aarhus city is open to diversity? Why?

FW: I think they are trying, but more work is required

7. How would you describe the lifestyle associated with Aarhus? Activities, events etc.

FM: After we got the baby we are most of the time at home , so we don't really know what is going on around the city.

8. Do you think Aarhus offers enough job opportunities and opportunities for personal growth for international professionals?

FW: No , if you don't know Danish

9. You as an accompanying Spouse, do you like being in Aarhus? Do you feel welcome in the city? Why?

Fw: Yes and No, I need it to find most of the information by my self or my friends helped ...

10. Are there cultural and social amenities in Aarhus?

FM: Yes there are some, but I would say the city should reach the

11. Do you have any suggestions on how, Aarhus can become a more attractive place for educated foreigners and their partners?

FM: More job opportunities and information in English

12. How would you describe the activities and initiatives in Aarhus, to your family and friends back home?

FW: Quit and family friendly

Appendix 3

The coded interviews

1. image/expectations/branding

Family 1:

L: (Laughing) I literally knew nothing about the city, mmm, my boss now, he was in the committee during my Phd, I knew he was working somewhere in Denmark, so even I was here just for 2 years, I knew him for 4 years. I knew he was working with Denmark, but nothing more, so I knew nothing about Aarhus. Before I got the job, he invited me to come to Denmark for few days, just to see the city and make my final choice. Sooo, before I came I knew nothing, but sort of I was expecting like an Ikea style, very modern, slink and developed, fancy city. But then, when I came here, was much greyer and depressive (I think it was October) , sort of Northen- German , everything was made from grey bricks. I think I was here for 3 days and the first day I was very depressed, and I was thinking should I take this job and the second day I went to the deer park in Aarhus by the sea,so.... I was OK, that is beautiful, and the other parks are nice too.

L: Basically, I was expecting more Scandinavian style in general, more diversity, more technology and innovation, but then it looked very little and quite place. But then the areas around the city are nice.

Image - Herning I fell that the Academic environment is not very welcoming at all. I am in the business department bu I don't have anything to do with the business, because I am from the technology side. Most of the people in the Business department, didn't bother to connect with me. So I felt disconnected, because from my experience in USA everybody is in the office and it's easy to make connections. When I went to the office there, everybody left at 4pm, so I didn't speak with anybody. Also, the professors are very isolated and its tough to make

friends. So, we choice to live in Aarhus, because Hening seemed very small town and it look like we will have very tough time integrating. So, we tough Aarhus will be less depressing.

my contract is for 3 years and we don't plan on staying more.

Expectations - So for us the weather plays big role when choosing a destination to live... and also the diversity its very low, there is no Japanese or Korean food, just sushi that is not really sushi and fried stuff.

Image- L: Just all the restaurants offer the deep fried crappy Chinese food, no diversity in food, there is actually no real Chinese food. I am from the Southern California where there is a lot of Asians and Mexicans and we can get great authentic food, but not here, we love spicy food and Denmark hates everything spicy, just clean organic food. Aarhus is not bad in general, just it has very specific characteristics that appeal to specific people.

F: I guess USA has more immigrants, so they have way more variety of authentic foods. The categories IN Aarhus are really narrow.

Image - No, at least for me no.. we don't speak Danish and most of the jobs wants you to speak some sort of a Danish, so it's very difficult for international to find a job here (both agree). I was really difficult to find something for me..especially as a spouse.

Aarhus didn't have anything to do why I came here, I came for my post doc position.

Image- I also think that the most activities or festivals are during the summer, where we don't need them, because we can go out by ourselves and enjoy the sunny weather. But during the wither period there is nothing. So, I would really recommend Aarhus city to my friends (laughing...), the work conditions are great in a way, but nothing else....

Family 2

M: We didn't know much about Aarhus, we just wanted a city which can offer more activities than Billund. We generally knew about Denmark, we both wanted to get to know Denmark, maybe if we grew up in village before we would like the small cities.

Diversity - K: NOOOooo not really, I mean the cultural activities are ok, there is something in English language all the time, Dook1 is there with open space and activities, Fest week is on

the street of Aarhus and other similar events, is nice people speak English, so for is its been easy to ne here, socially I don't thinkthat people are particularly open...mhhhh we have some Danish friends.

Image the problem is the language. And the language is quite tough ...There are some international companies like Vestasand for me as spouse I couldn't get a job the first year in Aarhus, I got a job in Sweden and I run a Nordic organization in Malmo, I run from Aarhus and I was travelling few times a month to Sweden, but I was employed in Sweden. After my job finish there, I was not able to find job in Aarhus.... unless I create my own projects.

Family 3

CITY awareness - J: I did know anything about Aarhus at the time...Marck new that they have football team (laughing) ...But overall, I was imagining Denmark way more scenery with more socialite, much more open and liberate.

Impression - . I think Aarhus is more for young single people who are here just to work. Most of the events are young people, not really for families

Image - the Danes are really closed and its hard to make friends, if you are not at the right community, I found out that is very difficult to socialize. I mean the Danes are Danes, its really hard to crack them, but ones you do it, they can be great people. The Danes are just closed, I work with them and it took me long time, but I think it's just in their culture.

Family 4

Image - I applied for job in Aarhus and I got it, because of that I came, I didn't know much about Denmark or especially Aarhus before I got the job offer, simply I liked the job and what the company offered. First, I came to Aarhus to get an apartment and settle, then Tamara came.

Family 5

Image No, I never heard about Aarhus in my life, G: Neither me... , we didn't hear much about Denmark in general, I though Denmark as place with blond and very tall people.

G: I can't say, I didn't get any news from Denmark, so image

K: Yes, I don't think we get much news also in England from Denmark, so nothing...

Image : in my experience there is favouritism over Danes, which is ok, but you can easily lose your job over a Dane, but in terms of Spouses finding jobs, all my Spouses friends from different countries, all of them say the exact same thing that they have lost their job to a Dane and most of the time even if they are more skilled they would lose the job to a Dane, as I said the diversity of job industries is very limited in Aarhus.

Yes, there is not many opportunities for personal growth

Family 6

Image - In my opinion, Aarhus is shown more attractive for tourism and for international students in general, rather than for international professionals and their family. There is a lot of information about the most interesting points of the city to visit, the night life, and about the university; but not really about how any international professional could fit in here.

Image after arrival What I can say, however, is that it gave me an absolute positive image. The more I got to know the city, the more I loved it here. People seemed smiley and open, so that gave me a welcoming feeling. The city seemed cosy from the beginning, there are always activities in the city centre, the shopping street is always lively, the coloured houses beautifully aligned next to each other bring an absolute delight to anyone who passes by them

Family 7

2. City identities/Urban identities

Family 1

L: Basically, as a couple we decided pretty quickly to move in Aarhus, because Herning would be tough on us, we love cooking Chinese food and in Herning, they don't have any Asian shops.

L: Well, we come from hot places, so we cannot handle the winter here, other thing is don't want to say that Aarhus does not have activities or smt, but just intend that they don't interest us, I want to say, that what Aarhus offers didn't not match with our interests.

F: Yes and No. it's really save here, so I don't really need to worry about my safety. It amazingly save. Also, I think Danes are nice people, they are not a racist.

F: The people are nice in general, they are trying to be helpful.

L: I think people are nice in general, but you have to force it out of them in a way, in America people smile at you way more than here.

F: I think Americans are very humorous and Danes are less, people are very quiet here. The people at work are very very quite and even if they welcome you fell less welcome than in America.

L: Danes are like "Hello, we are here to work" when you meet at work. Feels weird in a way. the Danish way, very isolated and narrow

I have been traveling a lot and I can say that any other c0ity is already more international than Aarhus, just of the culture that Danes have.

Urban - when I came here, was much greyer and depressive (I think it was October) , sort of Northen- German , everything was made from grey bricks. I think I was here for 3 days and the first day I was very depressed, and I was thinking should I take this job and the second day I went to the deer park in Aarhus by the sea,so.... I was OK, that is beautiful, and the other parks are nice too.

Family 2

K: we basically went to different cities and we decided to move to Aarhus, because the city was more alive than the other cities, also we checked if there are nice place around Aarhus and we found that there is so much to do, also we wanted place with more restaurants.

Urban - Dook1 is there with open space and activities, Fest week is on the street of Aarhus and other similar events

I always say that Aarhus is practical city, it's a real example of town big enough to have a urban things, but it's a small town, and ...I really like that is on the coast and it has forests, not many things are happeningbut I would say that the city has a bit from everything...

Closed society - The last two year I was living in Aarhus on a project with Danes who live here and my international network , I really got to know people, but unless you don't have a reason to build a relationship in Aarhus in doesn't really happen. People have their network from the moment they grew up , and they don't need to

the citizen services were quite helpful, and we felt welcome.

Activities and Culture

: No... not enough

M: Well it's not London, I know that Aarhus has the impression to be bigger and better. But not really, huge changes are going on around the harbour I mean I don't what to say, I am not sure they can offer more, for the size of Aarhus I think is ok, I don't think that matches the diversity, because Denmark has been a monoculture for so long...

Family 3

Aarhus is a bigger city with more opportunities.

M: Yes.. Aarhus is a bigger city with more job opportunities and social opportunities. Also, the transportation is way better in Aarhus, then in the smaller cities.

Lifestyle - J: its casual.

M: **Yes, the Danes are really into their culture.** The city offers a lot of music and art event in general. I mean they also embrace a lot of other cultures, the city offers tapas, burgers, burritos etc. There is Irish, German, Spanish bars. I think Lately Aarhus is becoming more multicultural.

I think the city is a bit too small for all the international looking for jobs. I would say Aarhus is not Copenhagen. It difficult if you don't know Danish to find job, because there is not a lot international jobs....

Diversity - Yes, I think the city is open to a diversity...Especially the International community get more active lately and they are really helpful, if you have questions. I mean the city overs activities and the Danes who have been travelling around the world are very open minded

Urban We have children and I would say that is fantastic for children, all the parks and public playgrounds are so good, the Dook1, also the city is extremely save. Also, the transportation is free for children, the day-care is great ...it fantastic for children.

Family 4

Diversity - Not really, it depends what you want from diversity, For me is ok, but it requires a bit more openness from me, I felt good with it, for example all my international friends think that the city is not open and good to diversity....they think that the city it's not that flexible.

K: for me the biggest weakness is that there are not many job opportunities – the job diversity is very low. In Copenhagen, there is many industries based in Copenhagen that could be based in Aarhus, so it doesn't make sense that here in Aarhus are not as many industries as are in Copenhagen, especially in my industry human rights, I feel that in Aarhus you have few sectors, if want to work here you have Vestas, Grunfoss, Arla, AAU, Bestseller, but if you don't fit into these IT, engineering types, I don't think there is much more to do here and that's a big dawn side and also there is a good amount of food and restaurants but at the same time there isn't, I can probably I can count on my one hand place I would go and eat in Aarhus.....

The city is becoming more : even Aarhus University is moving more to Engendering and IT or Business and IT, I can see that in the new Phd application, which is very limited, in that way you lose the diversity and also the sectors in English are limited, so the diversity of people is not high, which might be for what the city and the country is going for. From what I heard is very difficult to find job as foreigner – First is if you don't know Danish or if you don't show

interest and second many contracts are temporary – like ours, so we are not sure that we will be able to find jobs after that to stay

Family 5

Welcoming city : We would say yes, we got some free tickets to visit the museums, well it was confusing with the documents...T: I think when you arrive as foreigner you also have to take initiatives and find out things, I don't city should be responsible for everything. In overall, I think Danes are helpful if you just ask them, also depends on a the person...if you are willing to integrate ... not just waiting something to happen. Its all about how you behave yourself in a social context.

Jobs jobs and activities are limited in some way, but as well if you search enough you can find everything , but firs you have to take the initiatives , if you search you will always find it . I think if you work hard, you will be able to find job, activities everything....But of course it's a bit more difficult that bigger and more diverse places.

Urban identity I Think AARHUS changed a lot the last year, new buildings, Dook1 is great and think those things are important. I think the city is improving and with the new library and nice views its becoming a place where can go and socialize. If they keep developing in that area, it will attract more people in a future.

Family 6

The big strength of Aarhus is its openness. Its people are smiley (I miss very much calling Aarhus the City of Smiles. It was a much better name than Aarhus – Danish for progress or “With Aarhus”??), welcoming and ready to help foreigners. The nightlife in Aarhus is really great, and during the day it becomes this lively city that is so nice to walk through.

One of the weaknesses from a cultural point of view might be that, despite wanting to be open, there needs to be some changes in considering all type of tourists. By this I mean, for example, when going to a museum, the main languages are Danish or English (in the

description of art and so on). Sometimes, German. I miss the involving more languages if Aarhus really wants to become international.

Opportunities personal development - Unfortunately, not really. Despite Aarhus being a great city to live in, the opportunities for international professionals are not that abundant. If the international does not speak Danish, then the opportunities go down to almost 0.

Family 7

3. Initiatives awareness/city communication

Family 1

AAU Employee. No, not really, we didn't get any information before we came.

L: I follow the events in Aarhus Internationals facebook page, because I want to get out of my apartment, but they don't seem interesting

L: We discussed briefly with my boss, but he didn't tell me much, just that maybe Aarhus would have more activities, but mainly we spoke about work. The only information about Aarhus I got from my landlord, when I was living in my temporary apartment and waiting for Fibi. She provided general information about Denmark and the transitioning.

Communication: L: No, I don't think so, at least we didn't get any info about Aarhus.

No, no, I did not get any information, I think we survived here, just from the information I got from my landlord

.The websites are really not helpful, the important information is in English and all the documents are complicated, so it's a big mess. It's a very complicated stuff and nobody, gave us proper introduction

L: The information I got from the university and the web sites, the English was limited and basically if you don't follow exactly, you are a little fucked.i think they have to help more here. Because if you move t America there is no CPR and stuff like that its way easier.

L: I think that Aarhus should try other way to presents its initiatives. I think the city communication is bad, it's hard to know what is going on around the city, the only information I get is from Facebook, everything I get is in Danish. Basically, I fell that I have to walk around the city and ask people, in order to get some information. Even if I go to websites, there is no information in English and it's lamethe websites are defiantly lame.

Family 2

M: No, not really, we got to know everything about Denmark after we came.

Family 3

Info before arrival and when arrived

J: No, we didn't get anything, we basically need it to look for information by ourselves, but that was few years ago, I would say that they are much more visible now..Now social media is more active, so its easy to join groups and contact people who already live in Aarhus city.. in order to get some help. I think that Facebook is the most helpful platform to info when you did it. People with similar experiences always answer.

Infor for families :

don't think Aarhus offers enough information for foreign families, we need it find out everything by ourselves, how to sign for kindergarten, accommodation etc.

Family 4

AAU employee - G: Nop, not really, my contact person didn't send me any information, Everything I learned was when I arrived. Not very encouraging, oo yes. I got few picture of Arhus, but that's about.

Before the arrival : we checked some forums online, it was mostly Aamerican's posts, and they were saying that the Danes are pretty unsocial and closed, that was basically, but ones

you get to know them they great people, also they were talking a lot about the family and work balance and the Hight quality of live.

K: Yes, I learned everything after I came

J: I don't think Aarhus offers enough information for foreign families, we need it find out everything by ourselves, how to sign for kindergarten, accommodation etc. I think Aarhus is more for young single people who are here just to work. Most of the events are young people, not really for families.

Family 5

Info related Not really, I tried to but most of the information was in Danish, so it.... was very difficult, I got some information, but it was very general...So... I decided to go back to school and start a Master degree in Aarhus University...I tough it might be easy to find a job, later. But a, I think that without knowing Danish will be impossible to find something..... here in Aarhus

Family 6

As mentioned above, there are quite different cultural and social events, fairs, events about companies or any other interest you might have – it is always good to have a look at social **media (i.e. Facebook) to find what suits you best**

Family 7

4. City improvement

Family 1

L: Diversity, diversity.

L: I fell that the city tries to attract people. But I fell that the government should try for more diversity. The events appeal to certain group of people, but they definitely don't cover all. I mean the asthenosphere is not very international, even though they have festivals, for example food festival, just feels like, nothing special, just a guy selling a food for bunch of money.

F: I think the transportation should be improved, they don't have any English sings and some of the buses are very rear, even in Copenhagen they don't have sings in English. When our friend came to visit they got lost.

The university should try to improve. In my University back home, when I was doing my Phd, they gave us space with the other departments, so I was able to meet people from different areas and here nothing.

Family 2

M: it comes down to the job opportunities I guess. Also I think the city improves, shops are working longer and places now are working during the weekend, the city changes fast, I think from this point of you it will increase the diversity. More international places open the last years, which is great...

K: and also, when professionals move here they expect to find variety of international restaurant places.... And the supermarket. So, more food international food in the super markets.

M: More integration would be good as well for foreigners and more cultural initiatives would be good

K: And I am sure a lot of Danes don't want to see that ... I really mean it...because if the city wants to attract professionals from other cultures they are expecting more diversity....

M: Godsbanens has been nice cultural place, things are there, a real city as am concern really have different culture

K: In Glasgow where we are coming from, there is a people from different cultures, and all of the foreigners live in the community with you there, go to school and its good school, u know

there is restaurants and the same amount of jobs as Scottish people can get. I you know there is this strange thing about Denmark is that, well.... You know when we grew up with the idea that a multiculturalism is a big thing and in Denmark is very much , yes we want to attract this people we are interested, but to integrate , they mean to become Danish and there is very little maybe limited interest in the Danes to become internationals, and I think to make more international city they have to increase the job opportunities and the business industries in Aarhus, more opportunities for the other partner and people have to feel that they can celebrate their own culture and people have to appreciate that

M: Well the restaurants are not that good, there is Asian restaurants but all of them offer not authentic food, they do it Danish way.

K: I can add also that in experience when u apply for job if you are not Danish they skip your application and I think that they miss a lot on very experience international people. I think I don't how to change companies minds, but it will be more useful for them to have more international workers.

Family 3

The city should provide more help to families with children, for example when you need to sign the children to day care or school there is not much help and all the information is in Danish, so it's really difficult to deal with formalities. You can go and ask the International community, but there is no specifics how to complete everything, which schools are good which not. So defiantly more service.

M: and it's so difficult for families which have teen children, there is nothing available no information.

J: Also for housing in Aarhus is very tricky, there is not enough housing I think, or we don't have the information how to find accommodation fast, Aarhus it's also big city for students so it's really hard. When we moved here nobody explained to us, which suburbs are good or bad .. we could of easily end up living in some ghetto in Aarhus.

M: So I would say more information for international , more events for internationals , people should be more open and...mm more information in general for internationals.

Family 4

K: I think in terms of culture if they continue the same way bringing international vibes as the street food is a brilliant idea, if they continue with the jazz festival and continue bringing international act every year and the art festival, music should continue and allow people to share different cultures , you get to experience everything and **if it can bring some sort of job desertification if they bring perhaps offices in Copenhagen and Aarhus, so there is the option of both , so companies could have the option of putting the headquarters in Copenhagen and a different base in Aarhus, just because you could have more options, and it will make me stay here, because I am already planning to leave the city, because of career options.**

G: Culturally and Socially it has been amazing right now, and I hope it's not just the city European Capital of Culture, I have that they will continue with the multicultural events after the year pass. I am not sure they will at the same phase once the year of culture is finished. Because then we have not experience Aarhus before, and heard of people that it has not been so active before 1 , 1,5 year ago, of all this event and that could be a great downfall if they stop the effort and the with the jobs ,

G: More business should be located in Aarhus, otherwise the city will attract foreigners for 1 month to 3 and if that's what the city wants its ok, just Aarhus will always stay like the little baby brother of Copenhagen, also all the investments the city do by building the harbour, the library ... it feels that they want to become the capital too, perhaps not the size of Copenhagen, but they can do if they keep the momentum. And also keep the integration, to integrate the people who are already here, I know that the city of Aarhus, has these events to come and meet the Mayor of Aarhus, but it feels like something is missing, because people leave very fastlike we would like to stay it has been the best city I was living in , but we can't perhaps it's the language , job opportunities etc...

Family 5

Well it's hard to find apartment and its costly. So its important that both partners have a job, in order to enjoy life

Family 6

Aarhus is doing a good job in trying to attract more educated foreigners, **but perhaps one of the most important ones would be to make the opportunities to work here more available for internationals. More fairs, more events targeted to internationals would be very interesting. Perhaps more accessible information on how the Danish job market works would be absolutely big help for educated foreigners. Danish job market has its own peculiarities which differ from many other countries, and when we arrive here, it is not easy for us to know how to find the best opportunities that fit us.**

Family 1

Work condition, information

5. Possible brand ambassadorship

Family 1

L: So I would say to might friends maybe mostly not. But of course, I always explain that Aarhus, has these huge advantages but also huge cost, like depressing, isolated, lack of diversity, shitty weather. But my job is amazing, getting to work from home, travel the world, 6 weeks' vacation, special tax rate. So, the work environment is great, but the rest for us is not what we want.

L: I mean I could say that the work conditions are pretty good, we have also nice apartment...I can take off from my work when I need to

I think it's a long shot for Aarhus to become an attractive place for foreigners, they have to work a lot. My landlord told me that is going to be very difficult to make Danish friends, because all of the people in this region has been living here their entire life, so they think why should I make friends with you if you going to leave the place in few years anyway.

Family 2

Urban positive feedback

I would say that Aarhus has all the ingredients. Now when we have children here in Aarhus we spend much more time with other families with children, also my friends back in UK ask me all the time how is it in Aarhus with small children....and I always say that is a family friendly city, not much stuff is going on, so it's not the most exciting city to be, it's not like Copenhagen, but has got enough of everything, that we can get..... I would say it's enough for us, we love that it is a family friendly city..... We live in the city centre, so everything is really close to us, the day care is in 5 min, shops, restaurants everything we need is here.....but it doesn't feel like we are living in the middle of the city.... There is no traffic....the cinema is in 5 mins. It's really good at the stage of life we are like now. The bar street is close, it's great. I like the work and family balancethe city is small and it's easy to get from place to placethe social life is low here, I mean we are adjusted to the culture, but sometimes feels cold, but the city is clean and safe, the work hours are reasonable, the beach is near, more art, music and diversity would be good.

K: We really value that the families and children are really in the centre and everything for children is so organized. It's OK to leave your work earlier to pick up your child. The holidays are long and we really value that people here like to spend time with their family all the time ...the city work, the administration works, it was a bit tricky to get used to it, maybe more info about it, because it was a bit difficult in the beginning. But overall, the citizen services were quite helpful, and we felt welcome.

Summary Great for children, even sized, near the forest and the city, just enough culture.

Family 3

We have children and I would say that is fantastic for children, all the parks and public playgrounds are so good, the Dook1, also the city is extremely safe. **Also, the transportation is free for children, the day-care is great ...it's fantastic for children.**

we always brag, how great it is for children, all the free transportation, education, free tickets, the working hours and benefits it's just great. The work life is balanced. We recommended a

lot... Also there is many children festivals, its save for children. I mean the city needs more for grownups (laughing)..

Points of difference - I think it way more saver that Copenhagen. . Also Aarhus location is perfect, in the middle of Jutland, it so easy to get from place to place and there so may attraction to visit .. The location is perfect to get to the rest of the country. Its very similar from where we come from.

M: The summer festivals are great over here...

Family 4

We are also surprised that things work in Denmark, for example we are in programme called Spouses from the university, and they invited us to join and meet other families ... Danish families, I would say that that helped us to make friends we enjoyed it a lot. I think it was initiative from the University and the city of Aarhus, I never felt something like that in my country or in England... and now we are good friends with these families.

I think Danes are already fairly open minded, they don't shock that easily or don't look at you strange and they are not shock that you are different ... I think in a sense that's being diverse, somebody don't draw attention if you don't follow the norm ...

Family 4

Identity : very slow, very relaxed, there is no rush, its like a seaside town, you get the impression that everybody is family oriented, because everybody is 5pm at home, its....very quiet town, there is always something for everybody.. Aarhus feels like in some parts as village and some part as town but it's not a city.

G: Most of the time you are left alone, people don't bother you, but if want to socialize you can always find somebody

Positive identity : but the positive is that there is some much to do here, that cannot even match or equal Copenhagen, there is puddle boarding club, there is so many yoga studios , running clubs, forests...the ocean is here, I saw that they are building water sports – outdoor water sport. Ice hockey, beach volleyball, there is so much to do.....its just really job wise and

I think the music hall brings so much culture to Aarhus, we got to see so many different plays, so that's so cool.

K: When I talk **to my friends with children** who are international, they mention how different the live for their children will be if they were leaving in their home countries, the most important thing would mention is that the children can play out all day, they can go to the forest in morning and come in evening, so they have much better childhood here, playing and also u get used the cold weather... The safe outdoor live is a big plus.

G: I would say the freedom of the quality of life

Family 5

Family 6

Very rich night life (especially since it is a very young city), several activities and groups to be part of, plenty of bars and restaurants, lively centre, lovely colourful streets and in general a complete city, that doesn't really miss anything

One of the most attractive traits of Aarhus as a city is definitely being the smallest city in the world, as they name it. It is a city, yet still having that familiar feeling that it does not make you feel so anonymous like in other big cities. Aarhus is also known for having very welcoming people, so that really makes internationals feel at home even with local Danes, and that is a great feeling.

Aarhus is being everyday more and more open to diversity. It can be seen by the events made in English, fairs, plenty of open festivals, and so on

There is a rich social life in Aarhus, small cosy events, from salsa free lessons on Thursday nights to yoga classes on a Saturday morning. There are also many activities and groups to join, from pole dancing to capoeira, or taekwondo and badminton. There are random little markets in certain streets, or some events like Irish dance night, karaoke and other live music events (I highly recommend Sherlock Holmes and Tir Na Nog, this last one is known as the

best Irish pub of Europe!) There are also plenty of interesting museums that are worth paying a visit. Whoever searches, **finds, and it is generally not difficult to find various events and activities by making a little search in social media** 😊