

“TATTOOED & (UN) EMPLOYED”

The possibilities and limitations of a future career with tattoos

Identity – Stigma – Groups & Categories – Consumption – Transition

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Abstract:

Scope – The major focus of this research paper is identity, consumption of tattoos and its possible influence on a future career after the transition from student life to work life.

Purpose – This research aims to explore behaviour of people who are “consuming” tattoos, their perception and considerations of their tattoos body placements in connection to their future career and the way they may be influenced by their surroundings personally as well as professionally.

Methodology / Approach – Preliminary research was conducted with Danes as well as foreign people - both non-tattooed and tattooed in order to narrow the area of interest. Furthermore in depth interviews and netnographic research were conducted amongst a randomly chosen group of people representing Danes and foreign people who are tattooed and studying or are employed. These researches were done in order to explore their perception of their own identity, the way they “consume” tattoos and its possible influence on their potential career.

Findings – Key findings include the major differences between experiences of the tattooed participants within the research as well as the perception they are given by other tattooed and non-tattooed people in general and its influence towards their identity.

Research limitations – Due to the fact that the overall topic in this thesis is identity which is a very complex area to research, it was not possible to find, for example, details about how the family, friends, employers and employees as colleagues perceive tattooed people. Furthermore findings from the research cannot be generalized due to the fact that the sample of the participants only represents few Danes and foreigners from few different parts of the world and the size of sample was limited. Possible longitudinal interviews and netnographic research could not be obtained due to the lack of time.

Practical implications – Findings are evaluated based on the answers and information given by the participants. The ways these people are treated and perceived by their surroundings show that it does influence their identity. It also shows that the communication towards tattooed people needs to be improved. Even though it is possible to see more and more tattooed people nowadays it does not mean that tattoos are absolutely accepted by the society, it still evoke some level of prejudice and associations of, for example, criminal background.

Conclusion – In this part a cross-analysis were conducted based on the findings from all of the areas. The major purpose was set in order to find possible patterns within different experiences and points of view regarding the identity and the consumption of tattoos with possible influence regarding the future career after graduating from university.

Paper type – Master Thesis research paper

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1. INTRODUCTION / "Let's make the sketch"

"We are what we have." (Tuan, 1980: 472) Thinking of such a concept one may think that people might be perceived by others through the lenses of possessions. Also that such saying may be one of the most simple yet very powerful facts regarding consumer behaviour (Van Esterick, 1986; Feirstein, 1986; Rosenbaum, 1972).

The way people consume and what they consume is done in many different ways (Bourdieu, 1984; Halle, 1992; Morley, 1986; Press, 1991; Radway, 1984).

Throughout different areas and categories people are able to express their gender, values, social status as well as their social roles, their lifestyle and interests and other features which may have an influence regarding their identity. One of the things through which people can express themselves may be more creative than another yet all expressions are done in a way of certain fashion. Fashion is a part of our identity. Fashion is in our everyday life, anywhere and basically in anything i.e. clothes, cars, furniture, make-up, body decorations (piercing, tattoos, and hair colours), healthy lifestyles and sport activities (Creyer, Murray, Veliquette, (1998)).

Sproles (1974: 3) argues that "*Fashion is a culturally endorsed style of aesthetic expression in dress and adornment, which is discernible at any given time and changes over time within a social system of group associated individuals*". Nowadays it is not just about the way people dress but also about how people express themselves through fashion and body modifications. In other words, where body modifications as tattoos, piercings and other similar body decorations are not unusual to see, there are certain companies which will not even consider a person with the mentioned body modifications, as a potential employee (Nugent, 2011).

1.1. Tattoos and history

In order to get a deeper understanding and overview regarding how body modifications are perceived it is vital to look a bit into the history (for more information about terms used in this project, please see the Terminology part at the end of the Introduction).

The history is not going to serve this thesis as a major overall topic yet the knowledge that tattoos may be understood as products used as well as consumed within different types of people might be vital. Consumption of tattoos cannot be understood without using certain views from the past such as the perception of tattoos, their use and their connection to associations with certain things, types of people and therefore even prejudice (Allen, 2002).

Many years ago tattoos were associated with sailors and criminals as well as Jews who were in concentration camps in the Second World War and had been stamped/marked in such a way. According to Clerk (2009) tattoos have become a part of our daily lives and it is not that unusual to see people with tattoos regardless if it is just a small design or if it is a whole part of the body. Nowadays it is more accepted as a way of self-expression, and body art is no longer just a badge of a rebellion and outsider status. It is a part of the mainstream culture and it is shown by different types of people regardless their jobs such as for example: bankers, doctors, lawyers, managers, celebrities as well as ordinary people.



Photo Nr.2 – Tattooed sailor aboard the USS New Jersey –

1.2. Perception & Consumption of Tattoos

The attitudes as well as the perception towards tattoos and tattooing have changed within society in the last decades. Tattooing is no longer connected to minor groups of the underground respectively non-mainstream culture. It is no longer associated with deviancy and criminals, but it is accepted and associated more as a part of modern consumer culture. Tattoos are presented in fashion as well as in the mainstream culture (Atkinson, 2002; 2003a; Bengtsson, Ostberg & Kjeldgaard, 2005; Kjeldgaard & Bengtsson, 2005; Kosut, 2006, MacKendrick, 1998).

Different stages between the associations, acceptance and tolerance of tattoos and tattooing are parts of social change as well as any other aspect within fashion which have changed over time such as designs, technological advancement, social and community structures including differences in families in different countries and cultures and the way people communicate (Mun, Janigo & Johnson, 2010; Sweetman, 1999). Above all of these mentioned examples there is one major difference between fashion and tattoos. Fashion trends and designs are changing through the times and they are staying for longer or shorter periods as something trendy. On the other hand tattoos are permanent body decorations. Tattoos are made in a different range, from small ones which are not visible on a covered / clothed body to those which cover the entire body (Edgerton & Dingman, 1963; Kang & Jones, 2008).

The choice of tattoo / tattoos may not only have an influence on one's identity in general, but as well the student life and then the future possibilities regarding a career (Horn, 1968; Roach & Eicher, 1992, Sproles, 1981).

In relation to tattoos and possible consequences regarding the future career, a preliminary research was done in order to find various opinions between different people, tattooed and non-tattooed. (For more details, please see Appx. nr.1 (DVD)). The influence of the choice of tattoo(s) in the transition from student life to career life was set as one of the leading themes. Furthermore

participants were asked about the level of tolerance of tattoos in the society nowadays. The research was made from a randomly selected group, including people who have tattoos, do not have tattoos, who think about getting a tattoo in the future, as well as those who do not have any tattoo and do not plan any. The ages of the participants were between 23 – 29 years representing students who also have part time jobs and those who are done with their studies and are employed. Those who participated in this preliminary research are from different countries such as Czech Republic, Denmark, Romania and Slovakia and the total number of participants were 15 (8 females, 7 males).

The findings show that there are many different opinions between those who have tattoos, those who do not have tattoos, those who plan and those who do not plan to have any tattoos. In general they all have similar opinions about that people should think about the placement before getting a tattoo, since it can actually decrease their chances of a future job. On the other hand many of them argued that having a tattoo depends on the job position you will be/you are in. For example, K. (female) who is 28 years old and manager of a hotel in UK is of the opinion that people who are working in close connection with clients should not have a visible tattoos, even though she has one which is only partly hidden.

“Visible tattoos should be for job positions where you are not in connection with a client or in a public job position are not acceptable because you never know who will be your future client, for example, someone from older generation. Every individual should reflect the company in which he/she is working and it should be representable. ”

Furthermore she also argued that she would not personally hire a person with tattoos.

“...I would not hire a personnel with visible tattoos; it would be as a part of an interview. Even the cleaning ladies have to have tattoos covered...”

The participants are aware that the tattoos can influence one’s future career, yet in some cases they are saying that society should be more tolerant and on the other hand they are saying that the society is more tolerant nowadays than, for example, six, ten years ago. Furthermore some participants argued that having tattoos, in general, depends on the future job as well as the employer and many other factors such as, for example, the job position and responsibilities tied to that job, whether it is a job in the public sector or a more artistic/creative environment and that it also depends on the country you live in. One of the female participants (A., student of photography, Denmark) is of the opinion that even a doctor with tattoos should not be a problem:

“ But then there are also 50/50 jobs, in my opinion, such as fx a doctor - someone who doesn't represent a company. Why should or shouldn't it be ok to have a tattoo as a doctor? Older people might look at it strangely, asking questions, young people wouldn't mind/notice the tattoos.” Yet another female participant (P., epidemiologist in a hospital, Czech Republic) argued that people might not trust a doctor with tattoos: *“...people do not trust doctors with visible tattoos...”*

When comparing these two opinions and experiences, it shows that the level of acceptance in certain jobs might differentiate on the country of origin. What is acceptable as a norm in one country might be problematic in another and vice versa. Regardless that, all of the participants are aware of that tattoos can influence one’s future, for example, H., female and student of communication also said that:

“And I think the society should be more tolerant, people should be able to decide for themselves if they want a tattoo without fearing not finding a job.”

(For more information, please see the appendices nr.1 (DVD) regarding questions asked and answers provided by the participants. And see Appx. Nr. 2 (DVD) for citations used in this project including their original/translated version).

1.3. Research Question / “Getting under the skin”

Based on the issues mentioned above, as well as findings from the preliminary research, the major topics of this project will be focused within the consumption of tattoos and its influence on one’s life and identity in the transition from student life to a first real job/working life in general.

The opinions as well as the experience of the participants in the preliminary research brought me to the major research question as shown below.

How does the choice of getting tattooed influence the perception of the future career?

As mentioned, tattoos are perceived in many ways, in personal life including the perception by families, friends as well as in professional life including the employers and certain companies all over the world. By answering the major research question, possible points of view towards tattoos will be offered in order to get a deeper understanding, as well as to get an overview from people who are tattooed and are yet studying, working or are unemployed at this moment.

Regarding the major research question, additional sub-questions, as shown in the diagram below, are applied in order to get a deeper view and understanding within this broad subject.

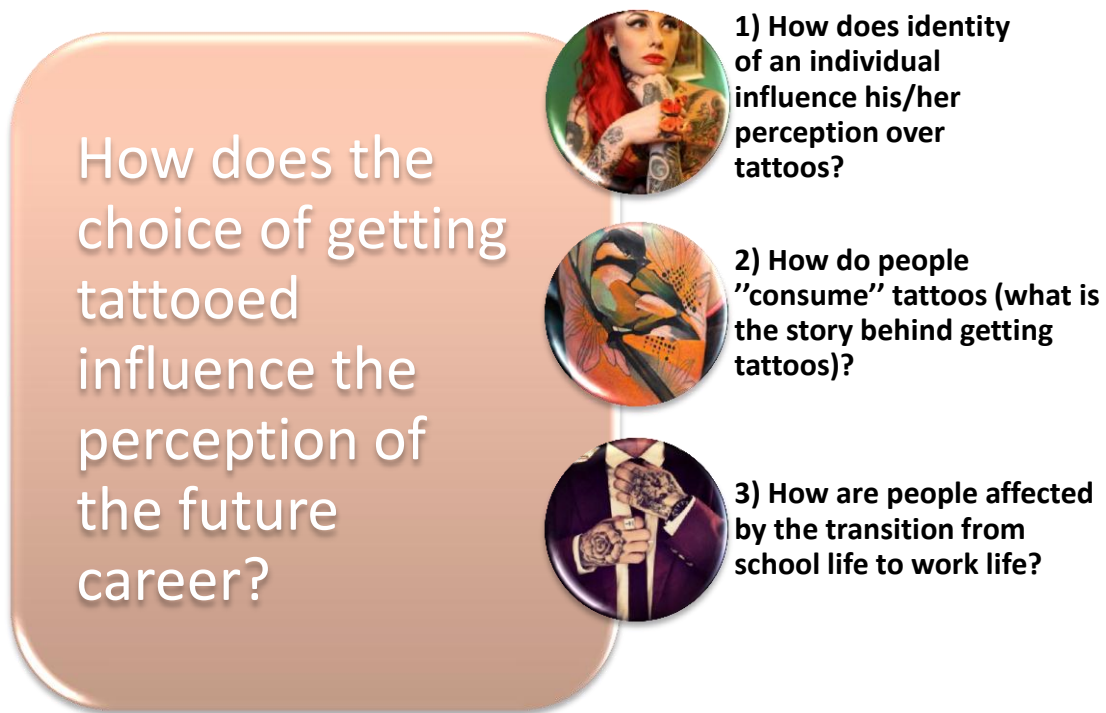


Figure 1: Research question and sub-questions (Appx. nr.3 (DVD))

Photo nr.3,4,5 – Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

1) How does identity of an individual influence his/her perception over tattoos?

From the researcher’s point of view it is quite impossible to know how people perceive their tattoos as well as what meanings they have for them. Every individual has its own list of reasons, associations, values and guidelines which may therefore differentiate one from another. What

'tattoo' is for one individual might be very different for another, simply because of the way people express themselves in combination with how they perceive themselves. This might be a question to their internal and external identities. As tattoos might be a very complex thing connected to other areas such as feelings, perceptions, associations, then the identity will also take a place within this project in order to get a deeper understanding of this act. Therefore interviewees participating in the research supporting this project will have the possibility to express themselves, to share their opinion as well as their experiences regarding their tattoos – what does it / does it not mean to them, what they do / they do not associate with it and how they influence their daily life.

Jenkins (2006) argues that our social identity is the same as our personal identity; simply because it is constructed by interactions with others which include a process of identification and categorization. So according to Jenkins (2006) there is no direct personal identity.

Tattoos and its influence on the external (social) identity taken from the perspective as being a part of a group where the majority has no tattoos might take us to the journey of different meanings, associations and opinions by others towards this type of body modification. It may show us different ways and opinions that people have regarding one individual and it can provide us with feedback from the individual interviewees and their experiences; how they are perceived by others when it comes from their family and friends and what are the major aspects of such influence if any.

Considering the point of view on identity by Giddens (1991), he argues that every individual is reflective; also the society has changed from being traditional to being more reflective. In other words this means that there is a transition between the individual being reflective as well as critical to its surroundings. When applying Giddens' theory (Giddens, 1991), the linkage between tattoos and relationships or social interactions is that the activities that people choose are influencing the relationships they might create with other people who choose the same or similar activities.

The way people interact and the way they have been or are influenced regarding their actions will be investigated in more details within the section of analysis as well as the acknowledgement supporting the importance of identity's construction in our everyday life will be provided.

2) How people "consume" tattoos (what is the story behind getting tattoos)?

Taking Jenkins' point of view on identity into consideration then identity is seen as something active, therefore something that has to be created. Furthermore diversity is considered as one of the important parts in creating one's identity as well as the process of identifying itself; acts which are crucial for constructing one's identity done by the individual.

This can be supported by Jenkins' quote:

"One of the things we have in common is our differences from others. It is often in the light of their differences, that our similarities are brought into focus. To define 'us' also involves a dimension of 'them'. (Jenkins, 2006:105)

Collaborating on the quote above and also regarding the sub-question and its major focus on internal identity it is quite impossible to separate 'our individual who is tattooed' from the group of

people he/she might be surrounded by, before or after making this act. The interviews might show different tendencies in relation to the act of getting tattooed, yet they may also show certain similarities regarding one's identity - not only towards the whole process of why one actually get tattooed but what feelings and thoughts it brings to them such as: pleasure, the feeling that they belong somewhere, that they are seen as someone who is independent, that they are creative and also the relationships they may have towards their surroundings and furthermore how these things affect their personal identities.

Furthermore Holt (1995), for example, argues that consumption of products as well as possessions has always been viewed upon as self-evident; he suggest that there are two ways of looking at consumption; one is economic perspective by which people can look at products as that they have certain value and provide them with benefits. Another perspective is symbolic which in other words mean that the products have a certain meaning to its owners (Holt, 1995). When talking about tattoos they can be seen as products of a personal value as well as potential economic perspective or as a combination of both. In the case of personal value, there are many different stories behind one's choice of getting tattoos yet if someone is also working, for example, as an alternative model then the tattoos are matter of an image and money.

3) How are people affected by the transition from school life to work life?

Graduation from a university and transition to the work life might affect one's identity in several ways. The university will not prepare the individuals for certain changes which may happen to them after studies. In fact they might be in need to change and prioritize their time, habits and goals in order to pursue their career (Fournier; Payne, 1994). In the linkage to this project the transition from the university to work will be a part of the investigation together with the possible influence of tattoos on the future career.

1.4. Delimitations

Regarding this project, the major field is within identity, consumption and transition from the student life to the work life. Identity is the overall topic which influences all the mentioned aspects and because it can be approached through different angles, the section bellow is to show certain limitations during the project:

All of the interviewees within the individual interviews as well as people from the netnographic research are people from different parts of the world and they were chosen regardless their nationality, age, social status. The way these people were chosen is to make this project from the international perspective and to investigate different areas under different views as well as experiences in relation to tattoos, studying as well as approaching or doing a professional career.

Regarding the Identity and Stigma section, its main focus was in relation of how the interviewees perceive themselves regarding their tattoos and how they think that they are perceived by their surroundings. Even though the interviews were done in personal way and the material for research within the part of netnography was given by the people themselves, the obstacle with such research is that people may change their mind, may change their opinions, style as well the way the they feel and due to the lack of time it was not possible to make extra or follow-up interviews with the same

people which could have been rewarding for this project in the sense to see whether there were or were not certain changes.

In the section regarding Categories and Tribes, the main focus was regarding the way people interact with their surroundings as well as how they perceive to be or not to be in a group, how this aspect influencing or not influencing who they are.

In the section of Culture Consumption Theory (CCT) the focus is set within four sub-categories which helped to look through different parts of how people consume products, in the case of this project – tattoos, and what kind of influence such consumption has or has not on them, their identity and their student or work life.

In the last theory section, transition from the student life to the work life, the main focus was to explore the interviewees' behaviour and considerations in relation to tattoos towards their future career.

All in all, due to the lack of time regarding this project, the numbers of participants within the individual interviews as well as the numbers based on the netnographic research were limited. Therefore, as mentioned previously, no longitudinal work was possible yet it would have been very rewarding in order to see whether there were some new aspects or changes in the lives of the interviewees; new patterns to research in relation to their identity, social interactions and their experience within the transition from the student life to the work life as well as experience based in the same job that some interviewees were in during this research or if there has been some changes too. It is necessary to take into consideration that findings from this research cannot be generalized due to the limited numbers of participants.

1.5. Project Overview

The Theory part (part nr.2) is used to discuss five sub-sections which represent a relevant theoretical approach for this project and its major topic of tattoos in connection to transition from the student life to the work life and its possible influence through the consumption and social interaction.

Methodology part (part nr.3) is used to discuss the philosophy of science approach within this project and furthermore the research design, the method chosen for analysis and limitations for this research, the sampling method and explanation of the interview guide.

The Methodology and Theory part led to the part of Analysis (part nr.4) and shaped the structure within the investigation of this project. The main focus in this part is then all of the sections mentioned within the part of the Theory (part 2).

The last part is the Conclusion part (part nr.5) and it is part were cross-analysis were conducted based on the findings from all of the areas as mentioned above. The major purpose was set in order to find possible patterns within different experiences and points of view regarding the identity and the consumption of tattoos with possible influence regarding the future career after graduating from university.

1.6. Assessing Qualitative Research

It is necessary to take into consideration the way the findings of this project will be evaluated. The main criteria for evaluating research's findings in relation to its credibility are validity, reliability and generalizability (Bryman, 2008).

1.7. Validity

As mentioned previously, the overall topic regarding this project is identity followed by consumption and transition. Therefore in-depth investigation is necessary in order to get a deeper understanding of the interviewees' identities and this was done based on a personal contact between the interviewees and the researcher (me) and the subject of the investigation (tattoos); the method used was semi-structured interviews.

The questions which were asked were written in a way to be able to investigate the way the interviewees perceive themselves, their identity, the social interactions as well as the consumption of tattoos and its possible influence over their future. Those questions were made in sets reflecting the theory used within this project and in order to answer the major research questions as well as the sub-questions.

This project is written under the constructivist paradigm / interpretative paradigm and therefore the investigation for this project might be subjective on some level. Furthermore there cannot be guaranty of the conclusion of the analysis of this project being open and unbiased.

1.8. Reliability

Every method used within research may have certain limitations, its pros and cons - the main research within this project is done via semi-structured interviews and by one researcher (me). There were some additional questions which I asked the interviewees individually; this provided another type of information yet at the end only the areas related to the major topic of this project were analysed. The questions were asked in the sets which represented the theory part sub-parts and which represent the major areas of interest within this investigation.

1.9. Generalizability

All of the findings from both areas the interviews as well as from the netnographic research cannot be generalized for all international interviewees of different nationalities and from different parts of the world due to the limited numbers of participants. As mentioned previously longitudinal interviews were not possible to make, in order to see whether some changes occurred or not, due to the lack of time and furthermore every person having a tattoo or tattoos is still an individual who have different background, different experience from student life as well as from the life as being

professional and all of these aspects can be very different not just from an individual to another individual but also from university to university as well as company to company.

1.10. Terminology used within this project

Body Modification

Body modification is *“any method of permanently adorning the body, including tattooing and piercing”*.

(www reference nr.1)

Tattoo

“A tattoo is a form of body modification, made by inserting indelible ink into the dermis layer of the skin to change the pigment.” (www reference nr.2)

Old School Tattoos

“Old School (also "Old Skool" or "Traditional") refers to a Western or traditional Americana tattoo style featuring bold, blue-black outlines, usually filled with solid red and green with rare additions of blue, yellow, brown and purple; and embellished with little or no shading.” (www reference nr.3)

New School Tattoos

“New school refers to tattoos that are bold, bright and in-your-face.” (www reference nr.4)

Tribal Tattoos

“Although deriving from some forms of ancient tribal art, tribal tattoos today have no significant meaning. They are random patterns of lines and curves put together to create an abstract form of art.” (www reference nr.5)



Photo Nr.6 – Sailor Jerry design, tattoo sketch - Old School Tattoo / Photo Nr.7 – New School Tattoo example / Photo Nr.8 – Tribal Tattoo example

Branding

“Branding is “a form of body modification that involves applying extreme heat to the skin in order to create a burned image or pattern. Unlike animal branding, this is usually done with a pen-like instrument for precise artistry, rather than a large heated iron poker. It is clean and sterile, and most people that get branded say the pain is minimal.” (www reference nr.6)

Flesh Tunnels

“A flesh tunnel is “ a hollow, tube-shaped variety of body piercing jewellery.” (www reference nr.7)

Pattern Cutting / Scarification as a body modification

“In the process of body scarification, scars are formed by cutting or branding the skin. Scarification is sometimes called *cicatrisation* (from the French equivalent).” (www reference nr.8)



Photo Nr.9 –Branding / Photo Nr.10–Scarification before and after / Photo Nr.11 – Flesh tunnel in her ear

2. THEORY / “Looking in the mirror”

2.1. Identity

The purpose of discussing ‘identity’ in the section of the theory is because identity is a concept which covers many different areas of studies, as well as issues in the daily lives of individuals. Identity depends on various factors based on the interactions of an individual with its surroundings (Jenkins, 2006). In this project, the focus is also on personal and social identity including areas regarding men and women, their personal view over their tattoos as well as their experience from interactions with their surroundings. Furthermore the investigation will be focusing on the individuals’ experiences and its influence on their identity. An investigation of such interactions, regarding the mentioned areas, will be made and discussed later on in the section of analysis.

To get a deeper understanding and overall view on identity it is vital to look at different areas as well as work from different authors due to the fact of the complexity of this subject. The first two areas are personal and social identity based on the work from Jenkins (2006) and Giddens (1991).

For instance, Jenkins (2006) believes that people are creating their own identity by interacting with their surroundings. Yet on the other hand he (Jenkins, 2006) does not distinguish between the two major areas of identity - personal and social. Jenkins (2006) sees both areas as one and refers to them as social identity.

According to Jenkins, identity can be understood as something active, something that has to be always created. Equality as well as diversity are also important parts in creating one's identity followed by the process of identifying itself; individual is active within certain active acts which are important in the process of constructing one's identity. Classifying objects or individuals then means association of itself to someone or something (Jenkins, 2006). This, in other words, means that identity is created by interaction with others and cannot be created by an individual itself; identity must be confirmed in a social context. Jenkins (2006), in his work, highlighted the fact that the individuals' understanding of themselves is actually dependent on the understanding by others.

Through Jenkins point of view tattooing can be seen as an activity which may have an influence on one's identity in both ways, personally as well as socially. It can be applied in various situations regarding the group where one or more people are tattooed while others are not; for example one can feel differently when having tattoos only according to him- or herself, but for the group of his/her family or friends, it can be very different in the case of public interactions towards their tattoos. Then the influence might have different meanings as well as values.

Furthermore when looking into Giddens' understanding of identity, he is of the belief that there is not a social world which has traditional norms and values which are determined for the individual's way of making choices. It means that the individual is now not only reflective to the surroundings but it is also critical to them (Giddens, 1991). Giddens is also using a term 'self-identity' which can be understood as a process of forced reflection on the actions and choices made by the individual – this was previously pre-determined in the traditional societies (Giddens, 1991).

According to Giddens (1991), the individual is as an active part of its own identity construction in nowadays. Based on his view it is possible to understand that the individual is creating his/her own identity through reflection and experience based on their interactions with others rather than by influence from their surroundings.

Giddens' theory could be applied in the similar way as Jenkins' theory, but with the difference that the individual is the one who is in the charge until which extent he/she let the others influence him/her. Regarding the topic of tattoos and tattooing, it may be explained as that if one is getting tattooed, he/she might be influenced by other's advices on what to get, where to get and when to get, yet he/she may accept some of the opinions as well as that he/she may be also critical to its surroundings.

Furthermore, Locke (1689) argues that personal identity / the self can be understood as consciousness and not a substance and neither soul. This, in other words, means that if talking about people, us as "we" it is possible to say that "we" are characterized by our actions and thoughts as long as "we" are conscious; "we" as people or "I" as an individual may have many various personalities.

Hume (1739) argues that besides that one may have many personalities, some people tend to think that they have not changed through a certain period of time, even though everyone is changing in various aspects; the same people may appear present now as they did before. This can be explained in a way that people may change without necessarily changing their inner character. Into contradiction Hume (1739) stated that there is no distinction between the way one was and features one had with the way one is now.

Applying this to tattooed men and women, their personalities might have changed over years while they stayed the same inside, but on the other hand the way they perceive tattoos and the process of tattooing, trends regarding tattoos and the way they see their tattoos, the way they perceive themselves and how others perceive them, may have changed. Investigating such area can bring valuable findings regarding tattooed peoples' identity.

In the theories by Avicenna (Goodman, 1992) he states that regarding the personal identity, the self is not fixed to physical things and therefore a soul is not physical and people should look at a soul as a substance. This point of view is then a contradiction to all of the theories mentioned earlier. In the way of this project one may think that identity is not affected by physical activities and therefore tattooing and tattoos would not have any influence on one's identity.

Tajfel and Oakes (1986) argue that social identity of an individual consists of influence within a social group. Furthermore Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986) and Turner (1999) use the term 'intergroup behaviour' which is behind one's social identity.

In the terms of tattoos/tattooing and social identity this can be interpreted as that individuals are behaving under certain circumstances. They are therefore influenced by the behaviour of other members in a group. The behaviour may differentiate, for example; within the group of family and friends, the behaviour of an individual might be very different than in the group of strangers or a group of people from different cultures. The way people interact and are then influenced by their surroundings goes hand in hand with the Giddens theory (1991) as mentioned above.

Furthermore on behalf of the cultural aspects, Chapman (2012) is of the belief that cultural identity has an influence on every individual regarding various areas such as: gender, race, history, nationality, language, sexuality, religious beliefs, social media and even food. According to Pratt (2005) the cultural aspects which have influence on one's identity varies from country to country. For example, in Canada and the United States the population is diverse, yet they are united by common beliefs as well as social values.

Regarding this project, the aspects mentioned in the Chapman's theory (2012) might play a certain role within the investigation as well as the cultural aspects mentioned within the theory of Pratt (2005). In other words the culture from which the interviewees come from may reflect within their behaviour towards others and therefore can be applied individually in to a certain extent by these individuals. Their social norms as well as values may be different or similar and the findings later on could show how people's behaviour differentiate and affect different areas of their lives regarding the social interactions in general as well in relation to tattoos/tattooing.

Holliday (2010) is of the belief that cultural identity of one is influenced by several factors covering many different areas, for example, family, language, cultural background, religion, profession, skills. These factors might be of an issue within the investigation of this project together with the social norms and interactions as mentioned above and could be found within the area of tattoos/tattooing. He (Holliday, 2010) further argues that nationality is also one of the major factors which influence one's cultural identity, yet it may be in certain contrast with one's reality. In other words, regarding the interviewees' countries of origin and their background, it may create a potential issue too; even though some people live in a different country, it does not necessarily mean that they will change all their social norms and habits towards the new culture as well as tattoos/tattooing in the case of this

project. Accepting the new culture may be one thing, adapting to all of its aspects another one (Lewis, 2006); people interact differently based on their surroundings (Hume (1739); Giddens (1991); Jenkins, (2006); Tajfel and Turner (1979); Tajfel and Oakes (1986)).

According to Mora (2008) cultural identity can be defined through the work presented by media regarding people's behaviour; people in some cases may be influenced by media to extent that they will imitate and follow its work in order to be able to represent certain social norms. This is done within the area of social network. In the case of tattoos/tattooing one may think that media does not play any role but perhaps they still may influence certain groups of people as well as individuals. As any other factors which may be related to the process of tattooing and have the power of being influential it might be interesting to find whether the interviewees are influenced by media when getting tattooed.

Sub – conclusion:

Looking over the views represented by different authors, it is obvious that all of them have certain different views regarding identity. Therefore it is more difficult to find a suitable theory which will be perfect for this particular project regarding identity and the theme of tattooed men and women and possible influence of their tattoos over their future career. Theories presented above from Jenkins (2006) and Giddens (1991) are the exact opposites; Jenkins believes that identity of the individual is created by interactions with other individuals and recognition in others, and on the other hand there is Giddens who believes that the identity is created by the individual itself through his/her own actions and reflections in his/her life.

Throughout the difference in between these theories it is still possible to see certain logic in both of them, yet there are some questions which might be asked, for example: Are we able to be immune to the surroundings without reflecting anything back? Can we avoid the influence of what others think of us as an individual? Are we really reflecting our identity only through our own experience and interactions with others? Hume (1739) is of the belief that one may have different personalities through a certain period of time, yet there are some people who think that they have not changed at all. But one may ask: Is it possible not to change over time while interacting with others, and creating new habits?

Locke (1689) argues that personal identity / the self can be understood as long as one is conscious and should not be looked at as substance or soul. On the other hand Avicenna (Goodman, 1992) is the absolute opposite of all theories mentioned within this section of the theory, because he argues that personal identity is not fixed on anything physical and therefore one's identity cannot be influenced by physical activity; for example it can be understood that tattoos/tattooing would not have any influence on one's identity either. Tajfel and Oakes (1986), Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986) talks about that identity is influenced by interactions within a certain group and later on, they use the term "intergroup behaviour" to define it. Therefore the way one's identity is influenced depends on the group he/she is in; behaviour may differentiate based on for example, family, friends, strangers and cultural groups. Furthermore it also depends on various factors which were presented by Chapman (2012) and Pratt (2005) as culture, gender, race and many more as well as one's social norms and other aspects. Mora (2008) and Holliday (2010) are of the same beliefs, yet they also discussed the issue of one's identity being influenced by social network and media.

Regarding the theme of this project, one of the main issues is to find out if and how different social interactions, connected to their tattoos, can shape and influence men's and women's identity.

There are probably many reasons why men and women choose to get tattooed and those will be investigated within this project in order to be able to get a deeper understanding and to be able to conclude certain patterns regardless the country the interviewees live in. There might be a certain influence by their surroundings – their culture, family and friends who are or are not tattooed.

The linkage between tattoos/tattooing, together with the whole process of decision making while choosing a tattoo, the possible influence from others, seems together to be a very big complex within social interactions or relationships in general. The way one interacts with others, as well as the reason why one chooses a certain type of people to interact with, is showing a lot about their identity regardless the fact whether it is an interaction with another individual, small or large group of people. Therefore the way people have been or are influenced regarding their actions (in the case of this project getting tattooed) will be investigated more in detail and discussed within the chapter of analysis.

2.2. Stigma

Tattoos are used as a way of self-expression including many designs, yet there are limits set by the society in relation to what is and what is not acceptable. Due to the consumption of tattoos people may be limited in their choices towards their future career (Steele, 2000). This way the society treat people can be explained by stigmatization (Goffman, 1963)

Goffman (1963) associates the term stigma with a historic meaning used by the Greeks who referred to *“bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier”* (Goffman, 1963:1). That sign was either cut or burned into the skin and was signifying to others that he/she was for example a criminal or a slave (Goffman, 1963).

There are many ways which are possible to look at in order to understand the term stigma. First two views could be the views based on the theories by Erving Goffman (1963, 2010) and Richard Jenkins (2006).

Those two theories are both based on social processes, on interactions with peoples' surroundings and they are both presenting different angles on how to understand stigma. Goffman's theory (2010) is about how society treats social deviance and the behavior of deviant people and Jenkins' theory (2006) regarding stigma is more about how people can find their place and role in the society throughout the interactions with others.

Goffman (1963) view stigma as something of great shame. Shame which a person can feel when meeting, interacting with others' standards of living, followed by fear of being discredited and therefore not showing his/her shortcomings. The stigmatization itself arises from those social interactions and may reveal those whose behavior is different and therefore not accepted as *“normal”* and furthermore those people are not treated the same way as those who are behaving *“normally”*. In the case than an individual is treated by the society as mentioned above, it can cost him/her an identity change among the stigmatized individuals (Goffman, 2010).

Based on Jenkins' view on stigma, it is possible to use the differentiation between deviants and "normal" people in a positive way; it helps to identify every individual amongst others (Jenkins, 2006). He also suggests that the view can be negative too, depending on the point of view. This is because the process of stigmatization is a very complex thing. It is not something that happens to an individual overnight. Therefore the process may affect the social interaction with others depending on the individuals' view over his/her stigma and the way others see it.

According to Link and Phelan (2001) there are many different components which can be associated or considered as a part of the stigma such as labeling, separation, stereotyping and discrimination. Yet they can all happen at the same time.

Another view is that one's social identity may include physical activities, professional roles as well as the concept of self. The change in one of these concepts in the individuals' identity then may cause a stigma (Markowitz, 1998).

When applying the mentioned theories to this project and the topic of tattoos, it is possible to say that nowadays tattoos, or as the Greeks would call it; "cuts and burns" (Goffman, 1963), are fashionable, yet traditional and many people regardless of age, sex, race have them. Tattoos are not anymore the signs to aware others that the owner is / was a criminal or a slave, but they are worn by people who wants to stand out from the crowd, and who wants to show their individuality through this skin art (Clerk, 2009).

Using Goffman's theory (1963, 2010) for this project is vital, due to the fact that having tattoos around 60 years ago, when his theory was created, was not as usual to have as nowadays (Bradley,2000). And therefore the case of people being stigmatized because of tattoos was more obvious, since it was giving a sign that those people were, as mentioned above, slaves or criminals.

Nowadays tattoos are more accepted and more usual to see around, mainly on the younger generation yet on others too (Clerk, 2009). It is also possible to see different styles of tattoos between the generations and it is possible to think what those tattoos mean based on the style, as well as the year they were probably made. Brandtstädter (1984) argues that young people like to identify their own paths even in the situations where there might be specific circumstances. Jenkins (2006) is of the belief that the stigma is not something which happens on a short term, but that it is a process and all people go through it in order to find themselves, and to find who they are and where their place in society is.

Yet as a constructivist, I will leave this open as I believe that there is no absolute truth; it can help to find out about the way the tattooed people are/are not influenced through the way their tattoos are perceived within their surroundings as well as if such perceptions given by their surroundings may influence their identity and how.

2.3. Groups and categories

According to Jenkins (2006) people define themselves by evaluating differences between them and other individuals or groups. This can be also done in the way of that a group can look for differences between them and an individual (Jenkins, 2006). To be in a group one must fulfill the profile characteristic for a group, as well as he/she must have something in common before

being called a member regardless if it is a category or a group.

Their differences must be recognized first, followed by the recognition of their common things; the differences as well as the common things need to be recognized by the individuals as well as the other group/category members. Furthermore in every group there are certain borders, limits, lines which its member must fulfill in order to become a part of such group / category. If there is inclusion, then there must also be exclusion; limits for when the individuals cannot join the group/category (Jenkins, 2006). There is a difference between a group and a category; as mentioned previously a group has members who can and cannot become its members for several reasons which creates a certain level of cohesion. On the other hand a category is a "group" of people who has been put together regarding practical reasons, for example, they are students, pensionists etc. or they have to pay the same amount of taxes (Jenkins, 2006).

Categorization might be seen as a routine as well as a practical way for any individual to find a meaning, and create "known" parts within their own world. It may help the individual to identify his/her surroundings by giving them a category. It can also create an illusion of the "known" and therefore the ability of predicting and expecting from the surroundings (Jenkins, 2006).

As mentioned previously, Jenkins (2006) suggests that there is a certain level of cohesion between the members in a group yet on the other hand, the members do not have to know each other personally to be able to recognize each other as group members. Furthermore he argues that when talking about a category no closer relations between the members are necessary.

His theory (Jenkins, 2006) is quite useful within this project in order to see and to find out how people perceive themselves, as well as others in relations to some group or category; if tattooed people look differently on other tattooed people, if they are categorizing the style of the tattoos they see around or even if they are part of some group or category.

2.3.1. Consumer Tribes

Jenkins (2006) suggests a combination regarding the groups/categories and combining tribes with consumption; therefore it is also important to have a look through communities and sub-cultures in this relation.

When looking through different definitions, a community can be perceived as a "place" where the same or common interests are gathered, yet there is more to consider. According to Mitchell & Imrie (2009) there are brand communities; these are made in order to support a specific product or a brand. A sub-culture can be represented by a group of people who are of the same culture, who share the same lifestyle and who differentiates its members from the mainstream culture even though being a part of the mainstream culture is not avoidable (Barker, 2008).

Communities and tribes are quite similar in its purpose. According to Cova & Cova (2002) communities can be perceived as a group of people sharing common interests while on the other hand tribes are based on emotions in relation to a certain object or interest. Mitchell & Imrie (2009) argues that tribes are different regarding their relation to the similarity of their beliefs as well as their values. And according to Cova et al. (2007) those tribes also share consumption behavior, activities, social interactions as well as beliefs and values.

Regarding the investigation within this project, it is also necessary to understand tribes as such, in order to see whether there might be a tribal activity within the group of interviewees who participated.

2.3.2. Identifying Tribes

Cova & Cova (2002) argues that there is a huge problem for marketers when it comes to identifying tribes in a specific way; for better understanding why, they used the metaphor below:

“Tribes are like elementary particles: Hard to measure because they exist but do not exist” [and they continue] *“Tribes are fussy; more societal sparkle than socio-economic certainty”* (Cova & Cova, 2002: 11)

Regarding the tribes and people being members, it is not unusual that when one person is a member of one tribe that he/she would not be also in another one. This can be interpreted as that if, for example, an individual is a member of a tribe of fashion stylists, and he/she could also be a member of a tribe associated with body modifications – tattoos and piercings included.

Below the text is “The Tribal Clover”, it was developed by Cova & Cova (2002) and which represent a model through which is possible to find the signs within a tribe as well as ways of how to identify a tribe.

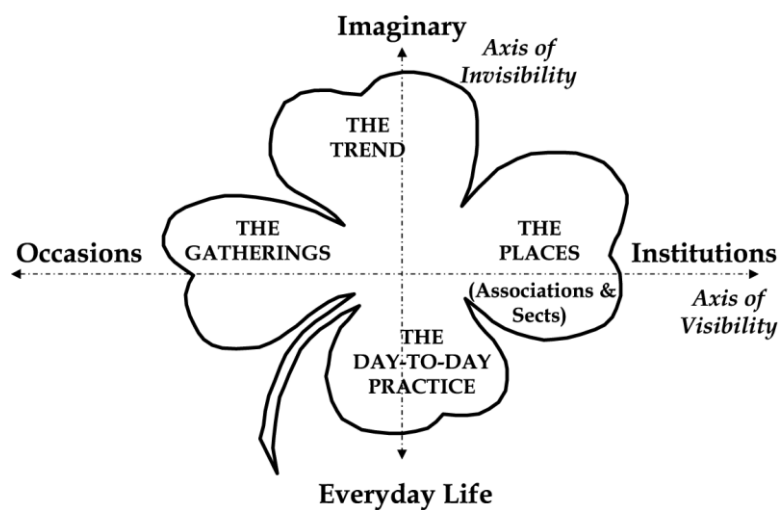


Figure nr.2 –“The Tribal Clover” model by Cova & Cova (2002) (Appx. nr.3 (DVD))

The model is presenting different aspects on two axis; axis of visibility and axis of invisibility.

The evidence of the tribe’s existence and institutions as well as occasions are represented within the horizontal axis; the axis of visibility (Cova & Cova, 2003). Examples can be places where people make gatherings together, places where they socialize together such as a coffee shop, where people like to meet with their families and friends and talk about anything, a tattoo shop where the tattoo lovers talk about their existing as well as new tattoos while buying a service provided by the tattoo artist, furthermore it can be for example sport clubs, art clubs. *“The occasions are gatherings, where the tribal members come together for their rituals.”* (Cova & Cova, 2002:13).

On the vertical axis then, the axis of invisibility the invisible evidence of the tribe is presented. It is representing the influence of personal and shared experience over the members of the tribe; it includes day to day lives, new trends, lifestyles and its influence.

2.3.3. Tribal Roles

According to Cova and Cova (2002) there are four different types of roles which could be adopted by a tribe member within a tribe within a tribe; the sympathizer, the participant, the adherent/devotee and the practitioner. Their theory (Cova & Cova, 2002) was used and applied by Mitchell and Imrie (2009) within their research related to the tribes who collected vinyl records.

According to Mitchell and Imrie (2009) the way one can understand those four categories, regarding the positions as a tribe member in relation to tattoos, is:

Sympathizer/s - a person or people with an interest in tattoos yet those who mainly do not have any or just a few tattoos.

Participant/s or Member/s – a person or people who are getting tattooed repeatedly and who interact with other tattooed people physically as well as virtually.

Devotee/s – a person or people who have the passion, knowledge and who are involved within the world of tattoos; tattoos are therefore considered as a central or major part of their identity.

Practitioner/s – a person or people who are working as the tattoo artists in the professional studios or people whose work has some relation within the area of tattoos.

2.3.4. Tribes and Consumption

Regarding this project I decided to narrow the focus in order to find out about tribalism, its activities and its relation within consumption.

Furthermore the linkage towards a brand, or a product as well as an activity might be even more important than all of these things per se (Ostberg in Cova et al., 2007). The loyalty shared towards an interest, a group, a brand as well as towards personal relationships may also be very useful when trying to find out more about the tribal activities within the tattoo culture (Mitchell & Imrie, 2009; Gainer, 1995).

2.4. Culture Consumption Theory

The fourth area of focus within this project is “consumption of tattoos” internationally. The way people “consume” tattoos is also analysed in the previous sections regarding their relation to the formation of their individual identity.

For this project the Culture Consumption Theory – CCT – was chosen as an appropriate tool for analysing the way people “consume” tattoos; it shows four different angles of this consumption (it will be explained below). The interviewees who participated within this project are representing people of different ages, sex, and country of origin as well as different social statuses yet with the same interest – tattoos. This type of consumption (CCT) can be understood as a choice of behaviour and practice connected to the social and cultural phenomena (www ref. 9).

Arnould and Thompson (2005) made certain summarization within their article about the field regarding CCT and they define CCT as *“a family of theoretical perspectives that addresses the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings”* (Arnould and Thompson, 2005:868).

Besides the major definition they also identified four different areas within this theory such as: 1) market place culture, 2) consumer identity projects, 3) mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers’ interpretative strategies and 4) the socio-historic patterning of consumption. Every area deals with different details and all of these areas will be applied within this project. Why and how these theories will be applied will be explained below when applying every section separately.

Regarding the consumption and this project it is possible to see that people are “consuming” tattoos and tattooing as products or as services like anything else which helps them in a creation of their own identity (Fromm, 1976).

2.4.1. Four research areas in the CCT:

1) Market Place Cultures

Regarding the investigation within this project and the area of market-place cultures it is important to find out how *“consumption as a dominant human practice reconfigures cultural blueprints for action and interpretation, and vice versa”* (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.873).

According to Arnould & Thompson (2007) the way that consumers creates their identities is through consumption and the way they create, adopt and share values as well as the way they use symbols,

myths, rituals. Furthermore the process of creating one's identity is also depending on shared practises, hierarchical structures and systems. The market then serves as the mediator between the social linkages and relationships.

Belk & Costa, 1998; Celsi et al., 1993; Kates, 2002; Kozinets, 2001, 2002; McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002 argues that subculture(s) are getting their hierarchical status via demonstrating its cultural capital. This capital is perceived as a very important aspect by its members as well as that the members of a certain subculture share and use the same symbols.

Cova & Cova (2002) are explaining this in terms of tribal marketing: *"...we see marketing as the activity of designing and launching of products and services destined to facilitate the co-presence and the communal gathering of individuals in the time of the tribes: a kind of —tribal marketing. The credo of this so-called tribal marketing is that today consumers are looking not only for products and services which enable them to be freer, but also for products, services, employees and physical surroundings which can link them to others, to a tribe"* (Cova & Cova, 2002, p.600).

Regarding the tattoos and its use within the subculture(s) Rubin (1995) argues that tattoo has been used as a symbol representing a membership within a certain subculture(s) including different class such as working class up to the high society class (Bradley, 2000; Featherstone, 1999, 2000). In between those classes belongs for example groups of bikers (Gilbert, 2000), music based subcultures (Atkinson, 2003b; Wojcik, 1995), sailors (Parry, 1999), the military (Scutt & Gotch, 1974), criminals (Braithwaite et al., 2001; Hunt & Phelan, 1998; Caplan, 1997), sex workers or sexual _deviants' (Brown, Perlmutter & McDermott, 2001; Ferguson-Rayport, Griffith & Straus, 1955; Fried, 1983; Parry, 1999), or extreme body modifiers (Atkinson & Young, 2001).

Furthermore tattoo is not only connected or associated within different subcultures yet it is associated with a certain level of rebellion and inappropriateness which was revealed throughout 20th century together with "fashionability" as well as certain level of "coolness" (Atkinson, 2003; Bengtsson, Ostberg & Kjeldgaard, 2005; Irwin, 2003; Kjeldgaard & Bengtsson, 2005).

Tattoos are therefore associated also with a certain negativity which is shown not only by its design but simply by its presence on someone's body. It can be explained by a fact that tattoos are permanent body decoration / body modification over those which are only impermanent such as body piercing, different hair cut as well as different hair colours (Raspa & Cusack, 1990).

Furthermore when talking about the whole point of market place cultures and CCT it also relates to other theories which are connected to neo-tribes and belonging. The major idea is about the creation and formation of neo-tribes respectively groups as such; those are created and formed through different activities and processes such as globalization out of a fragmented society (Maffesoli, 1996). Regarding the processes together with identity it is possible to say that it is not just the groups that can be created, formed and re-created and re-formed but it is the same for identity of an individual too; it is done through the process of consumption (Belk, 1988). This view goes hand in hand with the beliefs of Baudrillard who argues that consumption is something which has a major influence on the entire society (Baudrillard, 1998). According to Veblen's theories about conspicuous consumption an individual who is flaunting his/her commodities can gain not just his/her identity but also prestige (Veblen, 1899). Barthes (1964) and Baudrillard (1998) argue that

representing a sign or an item of certain experience can be consumed for its symbol; this exists in both personal as well as public form.

When applying those theories to tattoos it is necessary to mention that the consumption of certain culture starts with the tattoo itself, the fact that one is tattooed then opens the doors to the tattooed community. But this is also connected outside the tattooed community and that is when an individual identifies themselves by a certain tattoo design, tattoo ownership – this is connected to the associations of tattoos by the wider public to groups as mentioned above (bikers, military, sailors, criminals etc.). The process of the association is also connected to the process of recognising ourselves as presented by Maffesoli: *“ Parva esthetical? Be that it may, the hodgepodge of clothing, multi-hued hairstyles and other punk manifestations act as a glue; theatricality founds and reconfirms the community”* (Maffesoli, 1996, p.77). And furthermore he continues that there is a role of the mask, that could be the same with the tattoos *“ ...the role of the mask, which we know has the function, amongst others, of integrating the persona in an overall architectonic. The mask may be an elaborate or colourful hairstyle, an original tattoo...all these examples, it subordinates person to this secret society which is the chosen affinity group”* (Maffesoli, 1996: 91).

Arendt (1958) argues that once an individual is tattooed then they have chosen to have a certain cultural identity as well as the individuals' membership of subculture, they are then owners of tattoos, tattooed body and therefore a tattooed identity. He is of the belief that such an individual limits their capacity due to the fact of being tattooed (Arendt, 1958).

According to De Mello (2000) and Kjeldgaard & Bengtsson (2005) tattoos and tattooing serves as the badge of identity and in some cases the process of tattooing is more important than a specific design of a tattoo. Tattooing is connected with certain rituals as well as sacred consumption – in other words it is when tattooing/ getting tattooed is as an act of purchasing and consuming and therefore it can be seen as a transcendental experience (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989).

Turner (1999) argues that *“... in our present day society, the tattoo is an—optional, decorative, impermanent and narcissistic item and has become, —a regular aspect of consumer culturell rather than a necessity”* (Turner, 1999a: 43). Sweetman (1999) on the other hand sees that there is a different level of commitment regarding tattoos between tattooed people; his theory shows that consumers differentiate between the permanent and impermanent body decoration as well as its connection to fashionability and possible regrets in the future in the life of an individual. Regrets might occur within any field as well as tattooing and that is due to its limitations and ability to be changed. The results in this thesis find a high commitment to tattoos and tattooing as well as examples of regrets.

Regarding this part of the CCT and tattoos/tattooing as a body modification, the Western society is more tolerant and the acceptance of such body modifications is increasing. Other examples of body modifications besides tattoos and piercings also include branding, pattern cutting or flesh tunnels (Myers, 1992). Furthermore not only the mentioned invasive body modifications are perceived as the only provocative ones within the society; between these provocative body-modifications belong also extreme hairstyles (shaved head, Mohawk hair, vibrant hair colours) (Hebdige, 1979).

All in all, it is obvious that over the increasing acceptance towards tattoos in the Western society, there is still absence of the levels of acceptability regarding body modifications as such and that

creates different messages within different cultures and society; on one hand body modifications are accepted on the other hand rejected even though tattoos has been part of the culture and society for many years. He also argues that people nowadays getting tattooed with as well without particular reasons and meaning within the design of a tattoo (Turner, 1999). The findings within this thesis show both sides of people getting tattooed with a certain meaning behind its design as well as those who just enjoy to get tattooed without a deeper meaning.

2) Consumer Identity Projects

Second area of investigation within the CCT in relation to tattoos is the Consumer Identity Projects – within this area consumers are perceived as seekers as well as makers of identity. Every individual is creating his/her own identity through a process by visualizing a specific goal. This part of CCT furthermore deals with “... with how consumers manipulate and use market produced resources to: —forge a coherent if diversified and often fragmented sense of self” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005: 871).

According to Belk (1988) and Holt (2002) the market-place is a place used by individuals within their consumption activities due to the resources offered by this place. The creation of an identity is seen as a process within consumers (Mick & Buhl, 1992; Schau & Gilly, 2003).

The market-place identity is influenced by the market itself in a way of what does it offer to its consumers in the process regarding the creation of their identity; the identity of an individual is then made by the individual choices he/she make and furthermore how big value and what meaning does the certain choice have. Kozinets (2001) argues that identities of some individuals were made by the mass media and on the other hand, for example, Belk et al. (2003) and Murray (2002) show that some identities were made through the market and through different products.

According to Holt (2002) the creation of the identity, creation of a difference is very important for every individual in order to be able to re-create or make a new identity; this can be done through a different products, symbols. Davis (1992) stated that “*Subcultures produce their own particular practices which are in part body orientations or ways of walking and talking which are worn like a second skin on the body of the skinhead, punk, raver etc.*” (Davis, 1992: 138). These mentioned practises are then applied by every individual in order to be a part of a certain sub-culture yet with the act of applying them into their own personal identity (Davies, 2004; Hebdige, 1979). Different changes within signs, symbols and therefore their meanings changing all the time and within every group; for example when applying this to a tattoo it may be interpreted that the design of a tattoo can change over time within society but the reasoning behind the tattoo will not change for the owner of the tattoo (Pierce, 1984).

In association with tattoos – one’s identity can be created within the design used to represent a tattoo of its owner through the act of consumption and experience (Baudrillard, 1998; Belk, 1988; Cova, 1997; Featherstone, 1991). Certain tattoo designs may differentiate in its meaning between the owner and certain sub-cultures and therefore within the area of fragmented sense of self (Firat, Dholakia & Venkatesh, 1995; Firat & Shultz, 1997; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Then the identity can be created through the symbols and designs (Firat & Shultz, 1997). Tattoos can be perceived as an identifier regarding the civilised and uncivilised individuals as well as those who are not fulfilling the

norms stated by the society such as, for example, criminals (Gell, 1993; Lombroso, 2006; Rubin, 1995).

The duality mentioned above can be explained by Bell (1999):

“Tattoos, as a visual means to separate oneself from the normalized culture, can be thought of as a —loaded choice, a choice that draws attention to oneself intentionally (Hebdige, 1979: 101). Although Dick Hebdige refers to specific images, clothing, and hairstyles as signs, I believe that the appearance of any permanent mark on the body is a sign to the mainstream culture of one’s separation, whether one meant it as such or not, regardless of the chosen image. Imagery comes into play where specific and personal identity is concerned, but, in relation to normalization, a tattoo is enough to separate oneself from society at large” (Bell, 1999:54).

The variety of tattoos designs are almost endless as well as their meanings yet there are limits set by the society within the terms of what is and what is not acceptable within the world of tattooing. Furthermore these limits might be projected as limits for doing certain jobs; for example a police officer (Steele, 2000).

The research within this thesis will present information about different tattoos, its placements in relation to the experience within the transition from school life to work life provided by the interviewees and participants.

Body image is a very important aspect and not only when applying for a job. According to Cash (2004) the body image *“refers to the multifaceted psychological experience of embodiment, especially but not exclusively one’s physical appearance”* (Cash, 2004:1). Another view regarding the body image is by Garma (1949) who argues that the variables of body image are in fact clothes as well as body decorations.

According to Auty & Elliott (1998) the way one is developing their body image as well as creating their own identity is a process which continues through life and it can include many different aspects such as accident, plastic or regular surgery as well as tattoo and other body modifications. The difference is then in areas which could be influenced or not influenced yet they both have a part in the concepts of social acceptability and group identity. Furthermore certain processes regarding the body image are outward – towards the social world and in-ward towards identity construction of self as well as symbolism.

2a) Consumption Symbolism

According to Elliot & Wattanasuwan (1998) the tendency of consumers to attach certain meanings to the products they consume can be understood as consumption symbolism. Through different products it is possible to show as well as communicate something about themselves as Elliot & Wattanasuwan stated in their quote: *“ All voluntary consumption carries, either consciously or unconsciously, symbolic meanings; if the consumer has choices to consume, she / he will consume things that hold particular symbolic meanings. These meanings may be individual or shared with others. For example, using recycled envelopes may symbolise ‘I care for the environment’, going to classical concert may represent ‘I am cultured’, supporting gay rights may signify ‘I am open-minded’, or even buying unbranded detergent may mean ‘I am clever’ ”* (Elliot & Wattanasuwan; 1998).

This part of the research enables me to find out more about the consumers / interviewees identity based on their tattoos they made and the stories they told.

Regarding the process of creating symbolic meanings of products, there must be two actors – the first one is encoder; someone who is willing to share and who is sharing something about him / herself through a certain product/s. The second is then decoder which is someone who supposed to decode the symbolism shown by the encoder (Belk et al., 1982). On the other hand *“consumption symbolism on the part of the encoder is easily confounded by materialism, thus most research has focused on the decoder role”* Schoenbachler (1995:2). Within the investigation in this project the focus will also be on the meanings behind the interviewees’ tattoos in order to decode its symbolism for them.

The way people consume certain products is a very individual form of creating their identity, by this they assigns the symbolism and therefore the meaning behind the products they consume (Belk, 1988). Regarding this project the investigation was also set with a focus on how the interviewees see themselves as well as how they think that they are perceived by their surroundings regarding their tattoos.

3) Mass-mediated Marketplace Ideologies and Consumers’ Interpretative Strategies

The third area of investigation within the CCT is related to mass-mediated market-place ideologies and consumers’ interpretative strategies which can be understood as a part about that every consumer within different and every market places associated different things within, has different feelings, values, opinions as well as ideologies and strategies and therefore activities; those are connected with the interests of the society, how the consumers perceive it and how they apply it (Hirschman, 1993).

According to McCracken (1986), Thompson & Haytko (1997) consumers are presented to different cultural production systems which project certain images to them such as, for example, fashion industry and different marketing communications and which through they are influenced regarding their identity projects. The identity projects, tattoos and its representation is used as a tool within the advertising business; as a medium which serves for advertising and on the other hand a conveyer for information within adverts (The Promotional Marketing Association, 2000), and as a medium for advertising (BBC, 2002; 2005a, 2005b).

Furthermore regarding these aspects of possible influence on one's identity many adverts can be also used as sources within a lifestyle, identity yet they are showing through another media, such as television, magazines, books, movies as well as music videos certain ideologies how the consumer should ideally look like, how he/she should act and what kind of lifestyle he/she should live (Belk & Pollay, 1985; Hirschman, 1988, 1990; Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998; Stern, 1993, 1995).

As an effect of the mentioned aspect of possible influence, Brinol, Petty & Tormala (2004) suggest that through such systems it is possible to see how the consumers are made for consuming certain products in order to create and crave different identity types as well as lifestyles.

The way the consumers behave, crave and interpret the manipulation from the market-place aspects can be seen through their adaptation, the way they advert themselves, the lifestyle they choose to live or present as well as the way they shape and build their identity. Yet the way market-place trying to influence its consumers does not always lead to the purchase of presented products, services, lifestyles which is perhaps expected (Belk & Kates, 2001; Mick & Buhl, 1992; Ritson & Elliott, 1999).

In relation of media to tattoos, the influence can be seen within different designs presented by the industry as well as lifestyles connected to tattoos as such. The way tattoos are perceived by the society may change through the time based on the associations they have in certain period of time. The way tattoos and the aspects which influence the consumers can be seen in the dualistic point of view; tattoos are not absolutely accepted and nor they are absolutely rejected. Therefore tattoos are perceived in a positive as well as negative way (Goulding & Follett, 2002b; 2003; Sanders, 1985).

The positivity and negativity towards tattoos is connected to the different aspects such as the gender of the tattooed person (Agris, 1977; Atkinson, 2002; Coe, Harmon, Verner & Tonn, 1993; Goulding & Follett, 2002a; Hawkes, Senn & Thorn, 2004; Mifflin, 1997; Sanders, 1991), the age (Anderson, 2001; Atkinson, 2003a; Brown, Perlmutter & McDermott, 2001; Davies, 2004; Sanders, 1985, 1988), the quality of the tattoo (Bradley, 2000; DeMello, 2000; Sanders, 1989, 1991) and also its placement tattoo (Camphausen, 2000; Mercury, 2000; Sanders, 1989, 1991). The investigation in this project will also be focused on the aspects mentioned above in order to find out about the experiences from different people, the interviewees.

The way media are presenting tattoos is also influential and its presentation differ from its interpretation by the society; for example tattoos are presented as fashion accessories nowadays (Cristina, 2006; Kjeldgaard & Bengtsson, 2005; Midgley, 2000) or by celebrities presenting their brands and therefore acceptance towards tattoos too (BBC, 2000a, 2000b, 2004; Davies, 2004; Samson, 2004).

Regarding media, tattoos had influenced them too; for example, it inspired different television channels to produce their own tattoo reality shows: *Inked* (A&E Television Network, 2006), *Miami Ink* (TLC, 2006), *L.A. Ink* (TLC, 2007). This presentation of tattoos still does not mean total acceptance by the society and in relation to certain jobs, for example, even some of the models who have tattoos getting their tattoos airbrushed out of their photos due to the limitations by some corporate clients (Cristina, 2006).

Favazza (1996) and Featherstone (1999, 2000) suggest that if the tattoos were not permanent and would be only semi-permanent then people would not have a reason to be negative towards them. And therefore possible feelings of regret would not exist (Tsiros & Mittal, 2000).

The way tattoos are accepted or rejected is associated within the connection between tattoos and rebelliousness (Parry, 1999; Rubin, 1995; Scutt & Gotch, 1974). In the connection of tattoos to the ancient Greeks, this can be interpreted as the being in or outside of the boundaries which tattoos can set up for an individual (Gustafson, 2000; Jones, 1987, 2000).

This last section shows that tattoos are in connection with the past and therefore the last sub-section of the CCT will be presented below as the socio-historic patterning of consumption.

4) The Socio-Historic Patterning of Consumption

The last sub-part of the CCT presents the socio-historic patterning of consumption and was chosen to be applied as *“it aligns CCT with burgeoning sociological and historical research on the role of class, gender, and ethnicity as structural influences on market-place behaviours”* (Arnould & Thompson, 2007:8).

Even though the history of tattoos is not a major theme of this project, the knowledge that tattoos may be understood as products used/consumed by different people is crucial. The information regarding different aspects comes from the past and cannot be seen without it. For example, Kam-hon Lee stated that: *“For some phenomenon, it is impossible to conduct survey or experiment to trace the cause. However, the phenomenon may be largely and satisfactorily explained by history”* (Kam-hon Lee 1983:152).

Allen (2002) argues that the consumption of tattoos cannot be understood without using historical data about tattoos such as the historical usage, views as well as patterns. The importance within this aspect can be applied in this project in a way that tattoos and their permanence do not only have the aspect of a certain action. The act of getting tattooed is connected to other aspects, such as its use as an identifier regarding different periods of time, belonging to a certain group and culture.

In relation to the perception of tattoos, it is important to have a quick look back in the past as it can be helpful in order to see what the perception of tattoos back then was and how the tattoos are perceived nowadays (Allen, 2002). For example the tattoos were not that visible in the nineteenth century in Britain as they are now, and if they were then it was in *“scanty literary sources, criminal records, and medical literature – makes an accurate inference of its incidence within the wider population is impossible”* (Bradley, 2000:137). The work of tattoos and its visibility in literature was limited throughout Europe until the 1980's – 1990s and yet it was published only in the limited areas of literature such as psychology and criminology (Ferguson-Rayport, Griffith & Straus, 1955; Fried, 1983; Lombroso, 1896, 2006; Post, 1968) or special publications related to dermatology (Becker, 1988; Goldstein, 1979; Goldstein, Muller & Tuttle, 1979; Goldstein & Sewell, 1979; O'Donnell et al., 1995). Even though it is possible to see tattoos in a higher volume in many areas nowadays, it does not reflect its absolute acceptance neither rejection within the society as mentioned previously in the third part of the CCT.

2.5. Tattoo(s) as a permanent body decoration(s)

A tattoo is known as the oldest body modification (Hambly, 1925) which is permanent, as mentioned previously in the part of Terminology in this project (Camphausen, 2000; Mercury, 2000; Millner & Eichold, 2001). The reason of applying this fact within the theory is due to its possible influence in many other areas within consumption as it is one of the major aspects within the investigation in this thesis. The decision of getting tattooed might be regretted, as well as socially rejected by the surroundings of an individual which can influence his/her future, as it will be discussed below. The way tattoos are related to consumption and therefore products, is the same like any other products with high or low involvement, its purchase and its use (Radder & Huang, 2008).

In relation to tattoos as products, there is a different level of involvement which is shown by the consumers (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1986) – those could be perceived as those within a group presented previously in the part of Categories and Tribes. According to Aaker and Lee (2001) and Taylor (1974) the way one is involved in the process of being tattooed, is also in close connection with the physical, the psychical as well as social risk due to the fact of tattoos being permanent body decorations/modifications.

Alba and Hutchinson (2000) argues that even though the consumer might be aware of the product features (in this case the tattoo) they may lack the expertise regarding its “side effects” which in the case of a tattoo can be understood as its permanence, and in the social interaction its acceptability or possible rejection. These aspects may therefore influence the consumers’ mind regarding his/her choices and as the feedback on that it can create possible regrets based on the choices made.

When a potential tattoo customer/consumer does his/her “homework” (research) regarding the tattoo they would like to get, the process of getting tattooed, its design as well as which tattoo artist will suit their needs the best, they are preventing themselves from the possible regret after the tattoo is done. The research can be done personally by consultations with different tattoo artists as well as online via different web sites related to tattoos, forums, reviews, literature (Mandel & Johnson, 2002).

On the other hand those possible customers/consumers who are not doing their “homework” are more likely to be those who will later regret their decision to get tattooed and therefore its purchase. The purchase of a tattoo can therefore be perceived within the high or low involvement by the customer/consumer (Sanders, 1988). Furthermore the permanence of the tattoo and its purchase has an influence on one’s identity and the possible shifts within (Mandel, 2003). According to Belk (1988) those shifts within one’s identity are possible because they are influenced by the limits of the permanence and are in close relation to physical identity.

According to Gilbert (2000) tattoos are associated with the way people dress up; as clothes can have a certain meaning and influence on the consumers’ satisfaction, the tattoos can have it too. The symbolic meaning of clothes or in this case tattoos can create a certain psychological satisfaction (Solomon, 1986) and they can also present a social status, desires as well as ambitions of its owner. The meaning of the tattoo might just also change throughout the times in life. As well as people change their clothes, their style and on their surroundings which once, for example prejudged the tattoos, may possibly change their mind towards acceptance (Kaiser, 1998).

According to Firat & Venkatesh (1995) identity, tattoos and permanence are linked to freedom and the ability to create and recreate one's identity through different actions regarding their consumption of products. Johnson (1994) suggest that every individual have its freedom to be tattooed as well as everybody have the right to not be tattooed; this last part was different in the past where tattoos were also used as punitive action and therefore physical abuse. This happened for example in the concentration camps of the Nazi regime on prisoners who got tattooed for administration purposes (Lockheart & Hemingson, 2000; Oettermann, 2000).

On the other hand, even freedom has its limitations. In this case, the choice of getting tattooed may have possible consequences in the form of influence over an individuals' future when studying, socially interacting or searching for a job (Kakoulas, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d). Regarding the future career, the freedom of getting tattooed may limit one's future in order to get the dream job, to restrict displaying tattoos and other possible reactions (Steele, 2000; BBC, 2000b, 2002).

All of the aspects mentioned above will be as a part of the investigation in order to find out about the interviewees' experiences regarding their tattoos in relation to their studies, social interactions as well as their experience when searching for a job and actually working.

2.6. Transition from the student life to the work life

According to Cowan (1991) transition is a process which involves many different aspects in order to be complete such as recognition of an individuals' character, qualities, goals as well as his/her social interactions, external behaviour and choices made regarding his/her life in different periods of time. This process is a process which can be restructured depending on the individuals' needs and circumstances within a specific moment of his/her life. Furthermore he (Cowan, 1991) argues that the process of transitions is based on physical, psychological and social surroundings and therefore can be very challenging. The level into which every individual is able to succeed within any transition depends on his/her ability to identify potential resources which can help within the process of transition (Cowan, 1991).

In the case of this project, the focus was set within the transition from student life to work life. There were two different points of which to look at, depending on the interviewee; a point where the transition is done in case of the working interviewees, and a point of awaiting in the case of those who are still studying. Furthermore the focus is within the choice of getting tattooed and its possible influence within the decision regarding future career. Interviewees were asked about their jobs as well as the possibility of having visible / invisible (covered) tattoos (For more detailed information, please see the Interview Guide - Appx..nr.4).

There are certain circumstances and decisions waiting for every individual to make, in every period of life. The most decisions are made within the third decade of life; in other words by people in their early adulthood (20 – 29 years) (Caspi, 2002; Grob, Krings, & Bangerter, 2001); this age group is the major group of this project. The decisions which are usually made in this age include the choice of education, then transition from school to work and therefore possible future career, and on the other hand also areas from a private life such as relationships and possible decisions for a future family (Caspi, 2002; Shanahan, 2000).

The way people make their decisions in any sphere depends on many aspects. Since the major group of the research in this thesis is group of people are in the early adulthood, the theory of the life-span model of motivation by Nurmi (2004) is applied as it fits this project (the part of transition) the most and yet it provides deeper understanding behind the selection process by young people.

- 1) Young people are growing up in different environments which can influence their development. The way they think, in what they believe, how they behave and what motivates them may be influenced by the circumstances within these environments. In relation to the choice of getting tattooed; the interviewees may have been influenced by the way they grew up as well as by the way they interact with their surroundings (Nurmi, 2004).
- 2) According to (Brandtstädter, 1984) young people are aware of their possibilities and even though they might be under certain influence of the different environments they live in, they prefer to identify their own life paths. Arnett (2004) argues that psychological factors, for example, individual goals regarding life plans, decision making as well as commitments are in the charge of this cycle (mechanism).
- 3) According to Tanner (2006) young people are then facing certain role transitions while getting feedback based on their choices and performances regarding both successes and failures within the process of selection. This process requires that young people adjust to their individual goals regarding their future life.
- 4) The fourth and last point is that, after all of the stages as mentioned above, young people settle down in certain personal and social positions which reflect the choices and the decisions they made; these aspects are also as part in the process of creating one's identity (Nurmi, 2004).

Within this thesis the relation between the transition from school to work is a matter of the investigation in order to find out whether the tattoos influence the interviewees' decisions towards their future, whether they take into consideration the placement of their tattoo or not, whether they think of the permanence of a tattoo and its possible consequences when searching for their future dream job and what experience they actually have.

3. METHODOLOGY / "Using the sketch from the paper and applying it to the skin"

This section shows methodological choices used within this project. It clarifies my position as a researcher in relation to philosophy of science as well as decisions made regarding the research design, methods and tools.

3.1. Philosophy of science

The aim of this project is based on qualitative research in order to create knowledge regarding tattoos and identity in connection to the professional career life after studies. Furthermore the way people value their tattoos as well as their experience through their life will be a part of the investigation. For creating and providing scientific knowledge, it is vital to explain how I as a researcher perceive reality as well as the creation of knowledge. This is due to the fact that it will influence the research and the way the whole project will be written and structured; then stating the paradigm under which the whole research will be conducted is also vital (Silverman, 2001).

Paradigm is a set of basic beliefs connected to the epistemological as well as ontological position, the methodology used, as well as the ethical aspects which influence the collection and data analysis (Guba, 1990). This project will be written under the social constructivist paradigm.

3.1.1. Epistemological considerations

According to Guba (1990) the epistemological approach is connected to the relationship between the researcher and the known. Bryman (2008) argues that the meanings of social phenomena are being accomplished by social actors. Furthermore he argues that there are three different epistemological views: positivism, realism and interpretivism respectively constructivism.

As mentioned previously, this project will be written in the constructivist paradigm which, in other words, means that the researcher is connected to the subject and that the research design is influenced by the way the researcher thinks – in general, in the scientific way (Silverman, 2001). The interaction and connection between the researcher and the subject provides a framework regarding the understanding of individual realities, and then the findings are created by both the researcher as well as the individuals participating in this project (Guba, 1990).

3.1.2. Ontological considerations

Considering me as a researcher being constructivist, the belief of reality is that it exists because we make it exist. According to Guba (1990) ontology studies the way of what the perception of the reality is and how the perception of the reality influence the epistemological aspect. Bryman (2008) argues that there are two major ontological ways of perception; objectivism and constructivism.

Looking at reality as a constructivist it means that there is no ultimate or absolute truth about reality. There are individual realities which are constructed by different social actors. Therefore different interpretations of reality are not something unusual - they are valid (Silverman, 2001). Regarding this project and its relation to tattoos, there is a possibility that the perception of tattoos might depend on people's personal and impersonal, positive and negative experience and furthermore the view on tattoos could be based on their social and local background (Guba, 1990). The purpose in this project is not to find statements which would generalize the view over tattoos,

but more about to find the insights regarding tattoos, identity, and experience from the work life while having tattoos of the interviewees.

3.1.3. Hermeneutic analytical approach

In other words hermeneutic analytical approach means that the research is based on interpretation. The individual is perceived as a thinking and reflective being; a being who is able to create its own reality and its own meanings based on experiences and actions (Berg-Sørensen, 2010). Hermeneutic analytical approach is often in relation with purpose where the starting point is about to understand humans and their social actions; that gives deeper understanding and knowledge regarding their subjective intentions (Lippert-Rasmussen, 2010). Through this approach it is possible to understand and interpret the meaning behind the actions of an individual. It will be used in the analysis' part of this project regarding the interviews where statements from the interviewees will be interpreted, as well as the statements from the netnographic research made within this thesis.

As mentioned, based on the constructivist / interpretivism paradigm no absolute truth exists, yet it is possible to make actions understandable. The understandings are then found in many layers which are referred to as the hermeneutic circle or spiral (Thurén, 2008).

The hermeneutic spiral is about the holistic understanding of phenomenon. To be able to understand the holistic point of view it is therefore vital to understand every individual part of the phenomenon (Berg-Sørensen, 2010). This, in other words, means that before the researcher enters a new field he/she might have certain perception, but the perception will change the more the researcher will get into the field. The more information the researcher find about the parts which matter to the whole phenomenon, the more understanding he/she will get.

Regarding this project and its topic, I have found it important to provide an image of my pre-perception within the field of tattoos. In fact, I have tattoos myself and I am always surprised by others' reactions, stories behind their tattoos, as well as the views on tattoos and different experiences from both non-tattooed people as well as tattooed people. Being a very open-minded person gives a great approach towards this project. Through the project I have created even greater knowledge of the field; I have visited different tattoo shops as a part of the research necessary for this project, I have read even more articles and books and watched some documentary movies about tattoos as well as body-modifications in general. This experience made my knowledge even wider and also gave me new perspectives on this topic.

3.2. Research design

As mentioned previously, this project is based on the constructivist/interpretivism paradigm where words rather than statistical interpretations were chosen in order to answer research questions when analysing data. This research is qualitative and therefore quantitative data is not collected and research questions are tried to be answered by asking "how" and "why" (Bryman, 2008). Regarding the interviewees and the interviews made in this project, it is possible to look at them as one case;

they will be also analysed and concluded like that. Case designs are divided into ideographic and nomothetic design approaches; ideographic approach focusing on one or few cases while the nomothetic approach is testing a few factors on many cases (De Vaus, 2001).

This project is based on 18 individual interviews, 7 interviews with Danish interviewees and 11 international interviewees, furthermore on netnographic research (will be explained in the text below in the section of Netnography) and also a preliminary research for my own reference from randomly selected people; 3 Danes and 12 international. The cases of the people which I have been working with through this thesis are reflecting their views and stories behind their tattoos; this giving a wider view of this field than if it was based only on one case. One of the main things in this project is to hear about the individual interviewees' experiences in relation to their tattoos, for example, why did they get their first tattoo, what or who was the influence, what was the reaction towards their tattoo/tattoos and more. The interviews were done based on the interest in certain areas regarding their tattoos which was created before the interviews were made, therefore the interviewees has had no influence on these situations (De Vaus, 2001).

3.3. Meta-Matrix

For a better overview, a special sheet called Meta-Matrix was created; it summarizes data collected within this project and helps to analyse gained information as well as the results of the findings (please see Appx. Nr.3 (DVD)).

In other words, Meta-Matrix is a tool for collecting data from several cases into one master chart. It is a form of condensation to the qualitative data "quantifying" it and allows the researcher to do cross analysis over the individual cases in a much simpler way. The way the chart is filled is done by summarizing statements into determined themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994),

The advantage of a Meta-Matrix is that it provides an overview of the collected data, and a visual representation of the data with clusters, patterns and themes/categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Based on the recognized clusters, patterns and themes it is possible to categorize the individual interviewees' views on the topics, and then proceed to a detailed listening of the interview's recording, which will be used in the analysis.

	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee n
Theme 1				
Theme 2				

Theme 3				
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Figure nr.3: Meta-matrix design for the interview analysis (Appx. nr.3 (DVD))

Figure nr.3 above describes how the meta-matrix was designed in this study. The vertical axis contains the summarized form of the answers given by the interviewees grouped into themes of the project, some of which correspond to the pre-determined questions, while others were recognized during the interviewing process and its cross analysis. The interviewees' answers are placed along the horizontal axis.

3.4. Qualitative Interviews

As mentioned previously in the introduction, preliminary research was conducted in order to get a general overview from a randomly selected group of people over tattoos and their possible influence on one's future, as well as their opinion regarding level of tolerance of tattoos in the society. Then the research design suggests a qualitative approach where qualitative interviews were conducted amongst Danish and foreign interviewees who have tattoos.

According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2008) the qualitative research/interviews help to understand the reality from the subject's points of view - from their lived experiences rather than scientific explanations. In this project, two qualitative approaches have been applied; individual semi-structured interviews with tattooed people and observed participants within the netnographic research as mentioned above.

3.4.1. Qualitative interviews/semi structured interviews

Semi-structured interview was applied as a method to collect the data for this project; semi-structured in other words means "qualitative" or in depth interviews. Those interviews are based on face-to-face conversation between two people regarding a certain topic where questions might be asked, not in a strict order, they might be broad and narrowed down during the conversation with an interviewee as well as additional questions might be asked (Bryman, 2008; Hiller and Diluzio, 2003). In order to be able to analyse those interviews, the interview guide is applied for every interview. Semi-structured interviews are interviews where understanding and knowledge is constantly constructed and reconstructed through the dialog (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Føllesdal et al., 2005). Hiller and Diluzio (2003) also emphasize the role of the researcher during the interview; constructivists' paradigm is followed, yet the interview is not defined as question-and-answered format but as a special performance involving both the researcher and the research participant respectively interviewee.

3.5. Explanation of the interview guide

Identity and transition from the student life into a professional career life was set as an overall topic and a deductive approach was applied while collecting the empirical data from interviewees participating in this project. The interview guide is a reflection of the theory section and it is divided into seven parts. Those parts include: preliminary questions, identity, stigma, groups and categories, consumption and transition from the student life into professional career life. Every interviewee was informed about the major field of the investigation related to this project as well as that the whole interview will be recorded for the study purposes, yet that they have the right to not answer questions if they think they are somehow irrelevant as well as that they can stop the whole interview at any point. Every interview started after the interviewee agreed with the rules and rights presented. In order to get to know the interviewee better and make the connection with the whole experience comfortable, some preliminary questions were asked. Those questions were set to find out about the interviewees' age, occupation, nationality, amount of tattoos; the questions were asked without a specific theoretical approach. The identity part of the interview guide was mainly focused on questions which could provide answers regarding the interviewees' own view towards their tattoo/tattoos, as well as their first experience with tattoo/tattoos, experience connected to their surroundings and its view over their tattoos. This part as well as the following part focusing on stigma, was mainly done in the connection of theories by Chapman (2012), Giddens (1991), Goodman (1992), Goffman (2010), Holliday (2010), Hume (1739), Jenkins (2006), Locke (1689), Mora (2008), Pratt (2005), Tajfel and Oakes (1986), Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986), Turner (1999). Furthermore the section regarding groups and categories included questions towards possible influence from a group of people on the interviewees, as well as their possible membership within a consumer tribe. This section was mainly based on the theories by Cova & Cova (2002) and Mitchell and Imrie (2009). The part regarding the "consumption of tattoos" was based on the consumer culture theory (CCT) by Arnould & Thompson (2005) and it was focused on the decision making process behind the interviewees' tattoos, as well as the process when considering a new tattoo. Furthermore the focus was also set in order to find out whether tattoos for these interviewees are as a fashion statement or if they have some deeper values. The last part was about the transition from student life to professional career life and included questions about the interviewees' studies or job positions depending on their current occupation.

A set of questions were asked in order to get a deeper understanding and overview about possible connections between the tattoo body placement made by the interviewees and their experiences based on their surroundings in their studies or their jobs. These questions were based on theories by for example Cowan (1991), Caspi, (2002), Grob, Krings, & Bangerter, 2001 and many others (more sources are presented within the section of the Transition within this thesis).

The major intention behind the questions asked was to find out about the interviewees' perception over their tattoos as a part of their identity, what the reasons of getting tattooed are and whether they consider its placement due to the possible influence in relation to their future career.

3.6. Interview Sample

18 interviews were conducted for this project. The group of the interviewees chosen for this project was a group of people between 22 and 48 years. This was done due to the fact that some people are still studying, some finished their school and are looking for a job, and then those who already have experience regarding professional career. The first two groups are also mainly connected to their identity, finding themselves, thinking of what they want to do in their life and all this in connection with tattoos which can possibly influence their career. The last group of people is representing those who already work after school in the same job or they have changed different job positions; some because of their priorities and some because of the fact that they have tattoos. Some people differentiate themselves through their behaviour; some through their clothes, hair style and some also express themselves through their tattoos.

Interviewees for this project are represented by a group of different nationalities, age, job positions, and background. Different nationalities gave this project international dimension and it shows how people see themselves and their tattoos in relation to their identity, to their social interaction with others, as well as the relation to their job positions and experiences regarding the job interviews before being offered the job.

The interviewees in this project were eight men and ten women, representing countries such as: Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Slovakia, and USA. There are some who are students of Communication, some freshly graduated students from International Relations, those who are working as operators in a call centre, hotel managers, media production assistants, health counsellor in a drug rehab centre and some of them are self-employed etc. (For more information, please see the Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - Meta-Matrix).

3.7. Limitations of Qualitative Interviews

A qualitative approach was chosen for this project as an ideal approach regarding the constructivist paradigm and the semi-structured interviews, but as any other method even qualitative approach has limitations. It needs to be taken into consideration that every researcher has different pre-perception within a certain field, as well as ways how to create and how to ask questions in the interviews. Furthermore personal influence is also something which cannot be reduced hundred per cent and therefore creating criticisms might be very difficult, because of the lack of objectivity. Also the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee might differentiate. But one of the major limitations is the sample size due to the big consumption of time including finding the interviewees, pre-organizing the right time for them, confirming the time of the interview, in some cases transport to another location, then the interviews itself and the time after which is spend on its transcribing and analysing.

Another limitation is, for example, the lack of generalizability – it is not possible to create general assumptions or some final statements based on the outcome from a limited number of interviewees; therefore the results are not representable over the whole society, neither the entire nation and in the case of this project, neither for Danish and foreign people having tattoos. On the other hand, this qualitative approach is useful regardless of its limitations, due to the fact that as a constructivist I am not looking for the absolute truth and neither do I look for a certain picture which would represent something in general. This project is written in an exploratory way and its aim is to

gain deeper and better understanding based on the findings from the interviews made with people with different nationalities, as well as to understand their behaviour (Kvale, 2008).

3.8. Netnography

The netnography was applied as another part of the research for this thesis, due to the fact that the topic of tattoos, consumption of tattoos and possible employment correspondents with great online sources which were examined as very useful. This part of the methodology section draws on the theory by Kozinets (2010) whom suggests that higher volumes of people use the internet every day and this type of communication can provide and be used as a sophisticated channel and source for many researchers towards different topics. He covered this by stating that *“Online communities form or manifest cultures, the learned beliefs, values and customs that serve to order, guide and direct the behavior of a particular society or group.”* (Kozinets, 2010:12).

The term Netnography has originated from Ethnography (online and visual ethnography) and Kozinets (2010) argues that it is better to use this new term over some modifications of the term Ethnography due to a various methods used within this type of research. Netnography represents a new method of qualitative research and in other words it is explained as *“Netnography, like an older sibling, ethnography, is promiscuous. It attaches itself to and incorporates a vast variety of different research techniques and approaches”* (Kozinets, 2010:42).

According to Kozinets (2010) the netnographic method is as an extension of the ethnographic approach which is presented by cultural analysis, observations, face-to-face communications and interactions representing the online communication within different networks, communities and cultures in the cyberspace.

The data from this web page will be collected and used according to Kozinets’ suggestions (Kozinets, 2010) which include identifying the relevant community for the study, direct copy of the online communications by the members as well as observations and its meanings and final analysis.

Regarding this thesis the netnographic research will be done within one of the social medias’ site – Facebook (www reference nr.10) and the group called *“Tattoo Acceptance in the workplace”* (www reference nr.11). This group was founded in 2010 and it is supported by 1,748,509 people who are representing their belief via this web page and where many of those supporters are active fans presenting their tattoos as well as their job positions by voluntarily submitting their photos and descriptions of the tattoos, as well as their jobs in this public space. They are doing this in order to share their experience and to show that tattooed does not mean unemployed.

The description of this group is as presented *“Our goal is to take away the stigma attached to people who have tattoos in the workplace. Tattoos are art. Some of us have chosen to express ourselves not with vibrant shoes, or a colorful tie, but with body art. What is the difference?”* (www reference nr.12).

This research is presented by 30 men and women; from whom 15 are men and 15 are women. The age within this group of people is 19 – 33 years. They represent people who work within different job positions such as teacher, a government employee, tattoo artist, owner of a media company, nurse, pastry cook at a bakery and web designer. This group of people are from countries such as USA, Canada, and England.

The netnographic research was done as a point of reference, rather than as a major part of the analysis within this thesis. The way participants were chosen was based on the observations done within few months of work and its relevancy to the topic of this thesis (for detailed information about these observed participants, please see the Appx. nr.6 (DVD)).

3.8.1. Limitations of netnographic research within this thesis

As mentioned above, the netnographic research for this thesis was done within a social media online group called "Tattoo Acceptance in the workplace". Even though this research provides meaningful information in relation to the major topic of this thesis, there were also certain limitations.

For example, Kozinets (2010) suggest that when using any material from the cyberspace, it is important to divide between private and social and in every category it is important to contact the owner of the material needed/wanted for permission to be able to use it. In this case, contacting someone was not possible due to the fact that there is no administrator for that page and people are submitting their photos voluntarily in order to be used in this public page. Therefore I have used the material, yet with all the respect I also made the list of all photos and the following texts as a list of sources; contacting the people who submitted their photos was not possible due to the fact that there was no direct link to them. Furthermore some of them have not provided information about their country of origin, their age and therefore it is not possible to conclude how many people within this research come for example from USA, Canada or any other part of the world. The knowledge about the participants is therefore slightly limited since there is not one format of writing about them when submitting and uploading their photo to that web page. Furthermore there are also limited possibilities in connecting the information provided to the theories mentioned in the theory section in relation to Identity, Stigma and other sections. Yet as mentioned above it still provides meaningful and very useful information for the research I have made.

4. ANALYSIS / "Creating outlines, applying colour"

4.1. Identity & Permanence

As presented earlier in this thesis within the part of the methodology, the interviews were done with tattooed people only. The interviewees were between 22 years and 48 years old; there was a diversion between the numbers of tattoos of the interviewees; they had between 1 and over 50 tattoos on their bodies and another diversion was between the reasons of why they have got tattooed, how they perceive themselves now and in the future. The interviewees got their first tattoos when they were between 15 and 35 years old; four of them got their tattoos when they were between 15 and 17 years old with the agreement of their parents.

Looking at the interviewees' number of tattoos, it shows that no matter whether they only have one tattoo or many, they are pretty much aware of why they got it in the first place. They show that they have stories behind them and those who have more tattoos also show the tendency of having some tattoos just for fun or spontaneously, rather than having them all with deep meanings. Most of them have tattoos which represent some special events in their life. They have them as reminders of their

times within their life whether it is to remember the good or the bad, or something that they want to have on their skin forever, just because.

One of the examples of having a tattoo just for its artistic side is presented by the interviewee Julie, who is 24 years old and has five tattoos. She said that all of her tattoos are very meaningful, except the one she has on her chest which is just because she loves it. It is something that has no deeper meaning and it is just small symbols.

And on the other hand there is, for example, interviewee Anthony who has over 50 tattoos on his body, who said that like 90 % of his tattoos has certain meaning and that 10 % of the tattoos were made just for fun and very spontaneously. One of the tattoos that he was very open about, was a tattoo of a Koi-Fish which represents his victory in being free from the addiction of opiates and it represents his strength in life. He was addicted to opiates after he had to shoot someone in a call of duty while working as a police officer. In order to kill the pain in his head, he started using the opiates. Now it is nine years that he is free of this addiction and he is working as a health consultant at a drug rehabilitation centre and helping others.

"..., I have a koi-fish - represent my strength, representing my recovery from my addiction and strength in my life...I am proud of my recovery and I am proud of my strength..." Anthony, USA (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) – MetaMatrix)

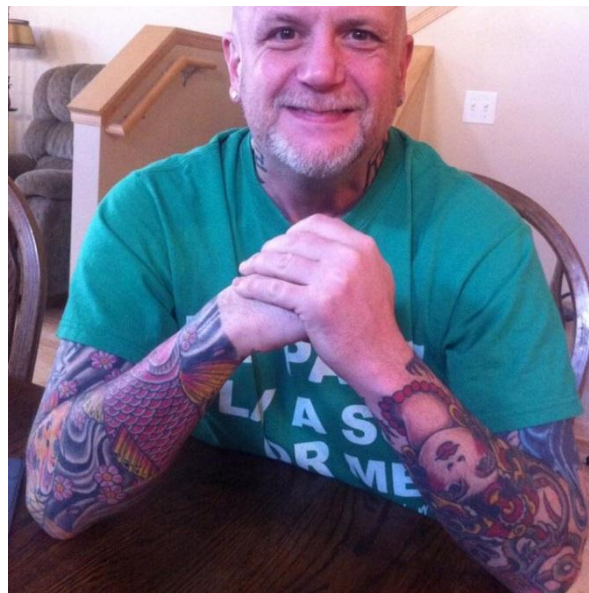


Photo nr.12 – Anthony, sleeves, Koi-Fish tattoo on his right arm - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

All of the interviewees showed the passion for tattoos and when they were asked to answer a question about what their tattoos reflect to others, many of them never even thought about it like that, yet many of them were pretty straight out answering that their tattoos are parts of their identity and parts of who they are. They said that tattoos represent the way they can express themselves. This can be explained by the theories about that people express their identity through different visual statements such as fashion where tattoos and other body modifications are included besides other ways of expressing themselves (Creyer, Murray, Veliquette, (1998).

4.1.1. “First time is not always the last time” / Getting a tattoo for the very first time – personal experience of the interviewees

In relation to the interviewees’ first tattoos, most of them show that they have some particular story behind it, except a few who did their first tattoo as an experiment, like for example the interviewee Petr, who is 28 years old and have six tattoos at this moment:

‘Well, the first tattoo, I got it when I was 16,...ehm...I was yet on a high school..ehm...the colleague who was sitting next to me decided that he wants to tattoo and he made a tattoo machine which was totally crazy,...yeah...it was a machine from Walkman and there were some parts connected into it from some machine that he used before,...and ...ehm...I have decided to get a comics character, very happy one and I still have it and...I don’t even feel like covering it up because you have a memory with it, and so...I am leaving it like that’

Petr, CZ (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) – MetaMatrix, Appx. nr.2 (DVD) - Original quote in Czech language and translation in English language)

And even though his first tattoo was done as an experiment by his friend, he never thought of covering it up or removing it. He said that people should not be ashamed of their tattoos and they should bare it with them no matter what it was and even though their opinion changed through their life. People should keep their memories from certain times and have them the way they were back then.

The interviewee Minna said that her first tattoo was “stupid” and that she is seriously thinking about covering it up.

“...when I was 19 and I think it is stupid, it is on my lower back, it was very spontaneous and I am thinking of covering this one or removing it totally...”

Minna, Finland (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) – MetaMatrix)

Other interviewees like Anthony, Martin and Rasmus have their first tattoos made as memorial tattoos. Antony did his first tattoo as a memory of his partner who got killed in action when he was working as a police officer. Martin made his first tattoo as a memory of his brother who died from cancer. His tattoo illustrates a big cross on his back with his brothers’ name.

Another interviewee, Rasmus did his first tattoo as a memorial tattoo for his grandpa who died in the Second World War. It is represented by his grandpa’s prison number from the concentration camp, followed by a chess table representing that you have to put many pieces together to make things right in life, and surrounded by flowers which means long life. The tattoo is shown on the photo below.



Photo nr.13 – Rasmus - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

The findings based on the answers from the interviewees show that for some, the first tattoos were one of the most valuable and emotional which goes hand in hand with Giddens' theory (1991) which can explain the reasons of having strong relationships towards the interviewees' first and other tattoos with deeper meaning or special story behind. Due to the fact that the tattoos represent something very special and therefore are very personal, they show the reflections over the interviewees' choices.

Another example of a very unique meaning behind a tattoo which was also a first tattoo is presented by Casper, who is 26 years old and work as a graphic designer. He said that he started thinking of tattoos until he met his now fiancé who has quite many tattoos. His first tattoo was done together with his fiancé and symbolizes their engagement – some people have rings and they have tattoos.

4.1.2. "Going under the needles" / Reasons behind getting tattooed

In relation to reasons of why people are getting tattooed there were various answers provided. When it came to the personal reasons, most of the interviewees have shown their interest in tattoos since their early age which is due to the fact that, for example, they grew up with parents and grandparents who had tattoos like Tine, Lucia or Karolína. Karolína even mentioned that she always wanted a tattoo.

Lucia from Slovakia, for example, is the interviewee who got her first tattoo in quite an early age. She was influenced by her dad and grandpa who have tattoos and she made a statement for herself that when she will grow up, she will get a tattoo. Her parents allowed her to have a tattoo when she was around 14 – 15 years old; they went with her to the tattoo artist and got it done. She said that her parents are very liberal and therefore it was not anything "crazy" to do.

Through this example it is possible to see that Lucia was unconsciously influenced by her grandpa and her dad and, as soon as she could, she decided to get tattooed as well which shows that Lucia's identity was created through the interaction with her family and their liberal way of thinking, including the area of tattoos (Jenkins, 2006).

Another similar example is presented by the interviewee Tine from Denmark who got her first tattoo when she was 17 years old and also went with both of her parents to get the tattoo done. She grew up influenced by her dad who had tattoos. Back then he allowed her to have the first tattoo in that early age, only if she will have it done at the tattoo artist he knew in order to make sure that the tattoo will be done properly and he even paid for this very first tattoo. Tine sketched the tattoo herself representing two scorpions fighting each other and her mom loved that design so much that they decided to get that tattoo together as a family thing.

These examples are then in the contradiction with the theory presented by Avicenna (Goodman, 1992) who said that the creation of one's identity is not attached to physical things. The examples above, Lucia and Tine, shows that one's identity is influenced by the actions and behaviours presented within their surroundings. At the same time these examples are related to the theory presented by Tajfel and Oakes (1986) who argued that the identity of an individual is created within a social group.

Furthermore other reasons for getting tattooed are presented by opinions such as to express who they are, to remember some certain events from their life representing their attitude towards life, their feelings, their friendships, the mentioned engagement as well as memories of the loved ones.

One of the more extreme examples regarding the volume of tattoos done within a short period of time is presented by the interviewee Martin who actually did all of his tattoos between his 18th and 19th year of his life and for now he stopped getting tattooed, even though he is still planning to get some tattoos in the future. He is now 26 years old and all in all has three large tattoos: a full sleeve, a tattoo on his lower belly and a tattoo on his back. He said that he was a bit more rebellious and he was thinking differently back when he got tattooed almost every week.



Photos nr.14, 15, 16 – Martin - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

4.1.3. "I feel good." / Tattoos and its possible influence on self-confidence

In the relation of the act getting tattooed and then having more confidence, the interviews show that most of the interviewees are not influenced by their tattoos; they do not give them more confidence even though they mentioned feelings such as happiness, enjoyment of being under the needles and the freshness when the tattoo is done.

"Well I don't see it anymore as a something extra - it is a part of my skin. I don't think about my tattoos that much but it makes me happy when people say something like that I got some nice tattoos but it is not that often..."

Martin, DK (Appx. nr. 5 (DVD) – MetaMatrix)

Furthermore some of the interviewees talked about that they never thought of the possible boost of their confidence by tattoos and few admitted the influence on their confidence through their tattoos. For example:

"Yes, definitely. I am a bigger girl and tattoos to me represent some kind of beauty and when I have new tattoo it make me feel good about myself."

Charlotte, DK (Appx. nr. 5 (DVD) – MetaMatrix)

And another one who admitted that tattoos gives him more confidence was Anthony who's body covers over 50 tattoos.

"I think that sometimes it makes me feel to feel more sure about myself, gives me more confidence, sometimes I am worried about what people will think about me with my tattoos..."

Anthony, USA (Appx. nr. 5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

So even though that in his case it is obvious that he has been through many hours of body decorations and probably many different situations within his life, the tattoos sometimes still have an influence on his self-confidence. This can be explained by the Giddens' theory (1991); the way the interviewees are influenced over their self-confidence is done through the reflection of their own actions. Yet according to Jenkins (2006) the way the interviewees feel about their confidence may be due to the influence from their surroundings.

4.1.4. "I don't care what ya think!" // How opinions from others do/do not matter

Most of the interviewees share the same attitude towards others' opinions regarding their appearance and that is that they do not really care - some of them do not care at all.

These answers are supported by the quotes examples below:



Photo nr.17 – Tomáš H. - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

“You know I don't care what people think so much - I was like fifteen years old and I was a punk rocker so..., I like others' tattoos and then the experience with that people see that I have tattoos but then they see that I have also my PhD. degree and that I am a teacher at the university...”

Tomáš H., CZ – Cand., PhD. and musician in his free time (Appx. nr. 5 (DVD) – MetaMatrix)

“Well, it depends in what..., of course ..ehm...I would not go to work without looking good but otherwise,..ehm If there is some special occasion then I wear something more formal and otherwise I like casual fashion...”

Iveta, CZ – working as an analyst in the bank sector (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix, Appx. nr.2 (DVD) - Original quote in Czech language and translation in English language)

“Of course, everyone cares a little bit, even though they say they don't but I prefer not to.”

Henrieta, SK – student (master degree) of Communication (Appx. nr. 5 (DVD) – MetaMatrix)

“No, not at all - I think that people often care too much about how others think about them. I don't want to spend time on thinking how the society looking at me.”

Lærke, DK – freshly graduated from International Relations (Appx. nr. 5 (DVD) – MetaMatrix)

Some of the interviewees divided the time into work time versus free time; for example, Julie from Denmark, who works as a receptionist at the Radisson hotel, said that she must care what others think about her appearance while at work but when she is free, then it is only her choice how she looks like.

“...I just dress the way I want and I do what I want. But of course I have to consider it when I am working I can't as a receptionist colour my hair with some crazy colour or something like that but when I am out...it's up to me.”

Julie, DK – receptionist at Radisson Hotel (Appx. nr. 5 (DVD) – MetaMatrix)

All in all, the statements above presented by the interviewees Tomáš, Iveta, Henrieta, Lærke and Julie show that they are not really influenced by their surroundings, at least not in the subject of their appearance. They wear what they want and the same way they have their tattoos because decided to. This is connected to the Giddens' theory (1991) in relation to individual identity and in contradiction with Jenkins (2006) due to the fact that the interviewees are very much aware of what they want in relation to their appearance including their tattoos, hair-style and clothes and they do not care what their surroundings think of them. So therefore most of the interviewees are affected by their personal/individual identity when deciding things in relation to their image and appearance in general.

4.1.5. Permanence & No regrets?!

Most of the interviewees are very happy for their tattoos and have no problems with the fact that tattoos are permanent body decorations. Most of them who started with one haven't stopped at that number, only one have done a cover up and only few have shown regrets and possible thoughts about covering it up or removing them totally. But Martin who does not regret his tattoos shared another point of view which is why he sometimes thinks about his tattoos more:

"No. Sometimes it pisses me off when we go out to eat and I have just a T-shirt on and even though it wasn't the plan to go out and eat then when I would like to enter certain places - restaurants, clubs - for example you are not allowed to go in to the club Saltlageret on Jomfru Ane Gade here in Aalborg - but they are very strict about boys, not about girls. I don't really understand that because in the old days it was just like bikers who got tattoos but these days you can be also a nice guy...I know that they are trying to keep the troublemakers out but don't like that they are putting everyone into one box ..."

Martin, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

And one another very special example was presented by the interviewee Tine who does not see tattoos as something permanent and is not afraid of the removal procedures, as well as that she is open for possible cover ups. At the time of writing, she has been going through the removal procedure for a couple of months. The tattoo which is getting removed is her very first one which was presented earlier in the part 4.1.2. as the one she did together with her mom. She is even thinking that some more tattoos will be removed in the near future, like a tattoo that she did together with her friend. She mentioned that even though these tattoos mean so much to her, they are in the way; regarding the tattoo she has done with her mom, she explained that she is planning a whole back tattoo as one big piece and therefore that tattoo does not fit the idea since it was located at the lower back area. And the other one which she has done with her friend, representing their friendship is located behind her ear. Because she thinks that everybody is getting tattooed behind the ear she is thinking of the possible removal of this tattoo too.

Her view is supported by the following quote:

“Actually I expect that maybe the next tattoo I will get removed is the one behind my ear because everyone is getting tattooed behind their ears,...I think that ten years from now on I will have other tattoos removed as well ”

Tine, DK - (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)



Photos nr.18 – the next tattoo to be possibly removed / Photo nr.19 - the tattoo which is getting removed in this period of time – Tine - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

The examples provided by the interviewees above can be explained by the theory of Radder & Huang (2008) who argues that the way people consume certain products may influence the way they feel about the product(s) after the use of it; in the case of this the product(s) is a tattoo / or tattoos. Therefore some of the interviewees never regret their tattoos and are satisfied with their choice and others do regret their “purchase of such product” and have to deal with it by either covering it up or removing it out from the body. The decisions regarding the tattoo removal may be influenced within the personal choice of the owner or possible influence by his/her surroundings (Jenkins, 2006).

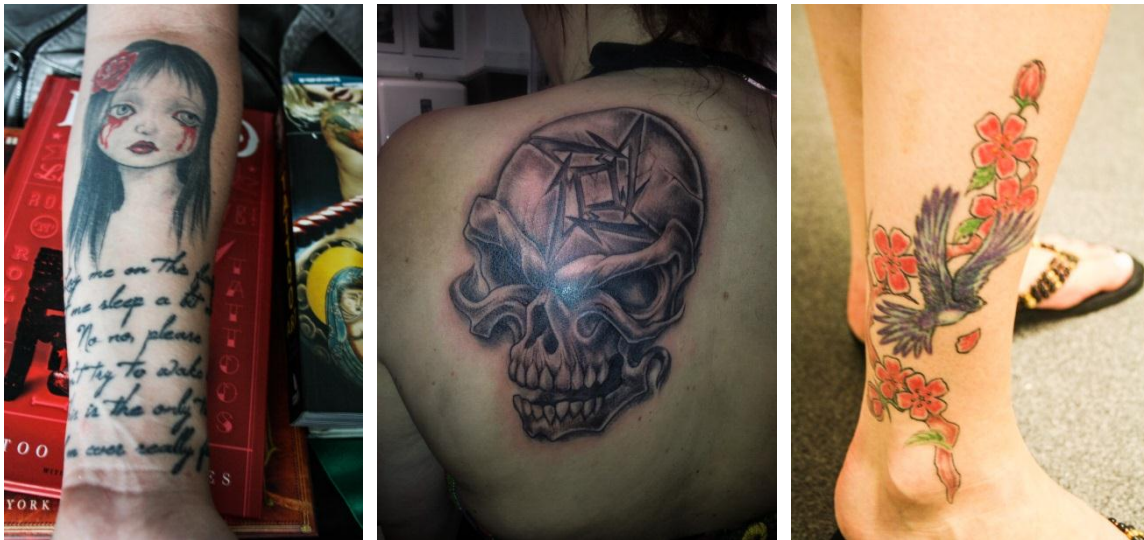
4.2. Groups & Categories

When looking into the results based on the interviewees’ answers regarding the area of groups and categories, it is possible to connect to Jenkins’ point of view (2006) where he is working with two different theories regarding groups; first one is a group which is made for practical reasons where people are added based on the general rules without their exact influence (they are in the same age group, they live in the same place,...) and the second group where people belong based on their own decisions and beliefs.

To be able to see categories and groups between the interviewees it is important to find their differences as well as similarities. They are all in the group of tattooed people, since this was the major focus within this thesis, yet there are differences in between them regarding their age, sex, nationality, job position, the number of tattoos they have and how much they are interested in the tattoos – not just for themselves but also towards others.

As mentioned previously the interviews were done with 18 interviewees from different countries such as Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Slovakia and USA. For this project the groups of interviewees are divided into Danish interviewees and foreign interviewees in order to be able to compare the patterns in differences and similarities found within the answers from the interviewees.

The minimum of tattoos that the interviewees have was one, and the maximum was over 50 tattoos. The female interviewees have between one and nine tattoos; the Danish women have between two and nine tattoos and the foreign women have between one and two tattoos.



Photos nr. 20, 21, 22 – Tine (Denmark), Charlotte (Denmark), Minna (Finland) - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

The male interviewees have one up to and above fifty tattoos; the Danish men have between one and ten and above, and the foreign men have between four and fifty and above.



Photo nr.23, 24 – Igor (CZ), Tomáš (CZ) - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

The Danish female interviewees are more tattooed than the foreign ones while the foreign male interviewees are more tattooed than the Danish men.

According to the article about the trends within tattoos, it is Danish people between 15 – 25 years old who are seriously considering tattoos and who get tattoos. It represents 43 % (www reference nr.20) while for example the trend between Americans shows that 40 % between 18 – 25 years have

tattoos already (www reference nr.21). This can be explained by that tattoos are going through a "boom" period of time where it is more normal to see many people tattooed and therefore there is also a higher level of tolerance towards them, as discussed within the part of analysis regarding Stigma & Transition.

Even though all of the interviewees are tattooed, not all of them feel a certain level of coherence with other tattooed people. Some of them do not really care about others' tattoos, some of them do not even comment on other tattoos and if so, then mainly when they get in personal connection where the talk about tattoos gets more common, some care more about the world of tattoos in general and those are looking for more information about what is new in the tattoo industry or they are reading about tattoo artists and they work as well as finding information about tattoo conventions. Yet there are also a few of the interviewees who can recognize themselves as tattoo enthusiasts.

One of them is the Danish girl, Tine who has nine tattoos at this moment and plans more in the near future, said that whenever and wherever she sees someone with a tattoo she cannot help it, but she have to look at it. Yet on the other hand she does not like when others are asking about the meanings behind her own tattoos.

"...I hate when people asking me for example about the meaning behind the tattoo on my forearm - I would say that it is a long story, we'll take it some other time and then I would walk away,... it is way too personal, if I know the person a bit more, then I might be more open..."

Tine, DK – (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

Furthermore Tine said that she does not differentiate tattoos between those she knows and strangers, yet the one that she knows might have much more deeper meaning. She is very passionate about tattoos and she also mentioned that men should be tattooed at least on their arms. On the other hand even though she showed a passion towards tattoos, she does not really interact with people in the way that she would go to tattoo conventions or hang out with people because they would have tattoos. She explained that she is not really a social person, but more the watcher who likes to look at the tattoos of others either personally or just online. Based on her answers she is more of the Participant within a tattoo tribe as Mitchell & Imrie (2009) described; those are people who play their role physically as well as virtually.

4.3. Tribes

Based on the findings within the answers of the interviewees it is possible to see certain signs of that they belong to a tattoo tribe. There are many visible signs as getting tattooed, being involved in a tribe in different ways as discussed previously in the theory section (Cova & Cova, 2002) as well as many invisible signs which are presented by, for example, stories and experiences shared in relation to the process of being tattooed as well as the experiences with the interviewees' surroundings (prejudice, positive reactions) which are discussed in more details in the section of Stigma & Transition analysis later on.

Many of the interviewees who have more than two tattoos said, that they do not think about their tattoos anymore. They perceive it as a part of their skin and they do not really see the colours of the ink on their skin. Also some of them really enjoy getting under the needles because it is a part of the joy while being tattooed.

For example,

"...when I started with my back, I got the taste of it, I like getting tattooed, I like the pain of it and you get like addicted to it, I was thinking about the motives,... but definitely not about how my tattoos will look like when I am like 50 years old..."

Martin, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

4.3.1. Roles within a tattoo tribe

Furthermore many of them have the actual interaction about tattoos when it comes to their own and they share their vision with their friends, families and then have a consultation with their tattoo artist prior to the time that the tattoo is done in its final version. That shows that just because one is tattooed he/she does not have to spend every day studying, reading and being interested in tattoos as such. Neither have they showed the need of interaction with other tattooed people. Yet in the connection to Cova & Cova (2002) most of the interviewees are then Sympathizers and Participants; they are active yet they do not share as much knowledge as others in a tribe and have few tattoos, then only few of the interviewees could be perceived as Devotees because they have the knowledge. They are active and their tattoos are parts of their identity.

4.3.2. Online groups & Inspiration

Regarding the extended interest of tattoos, interaction with others, physically or virtually as well as looking for an inspiration when deciding about a new tattoo, most of the interviewees said that they are not very active within these areas.

Most of the interviewees are only following some groups online which are related to tattoos via social media such as facebook or instagram, but they do not interact with other users. They are more searching for inspiration from others' tattoos, just as a regular interest or perhaps for their future tattoo. Some of the interviewees are members of tattoo related groups online.

Sub-conclusion:

As there were many different examples shown above within the interviewees regarding their "consumption of tattoos" including their experience, beliefs and values which show the signs of tribalism, there is a doubt about whether they can be included in a tattoo tribe as such. The way they interact and what they have experienced goes hand in hand with Jenkins' view (2006) of how the interaction with the surroundings influence and reflect in the process of creating identity of an individual.

4.4. Culture consumption theory

As discussed previously within the section of Theory, the CCT is applied as a tool in relation to the "consumption of tattoos" in Denmark as well as in the foreign countries presented within the research. The way people "consume" tattoos is also analysed in the parts above as well as below this section in the relation to identity, permanence, stigma and transition.

The four different areas within the CCT (below) deals with different details which are discussed in relation to the findings within the research.

4.4.1. Market-place Cultures

This part of the analysis can be connected to the theories by Arnould & Thompson (2007) who argues that people create their identities through different beliefs, values, myths and rituals. In the case of getting tattooed this can be interpreted as that getting tattoos is a consumption activity which includes shared experience, meanings, opinions, beliefs and rituals. As discussed in the part of Groups & Categories even though all of the interviewees share the same interest and all of them are tattooed, they do not necessarily feel connected to another person just because he/she has tattoos.

Most of the interviewees are not that active within the tattoo tribe; only a few of the interviewees showed interest in going to tattoo conventions when they have the time. Most of them are sharing the idea about their tattoos with their friends, families while others are sharing it only with their tattoo artist. Some of them are members of online communities related to tattoos via different social media such as facebook or instagram but they do not have the need to interact with other members.

"..., I was at some couple of festivals few years ago but not now....I don't spend my free time on it..."

Karolína, CZ (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

Furthermore, Sweetman (1999) argues that there are different levels of commitment to tattoos. In relation to the interviewees, it was discussed previously that the women have between one and nine tattoos and that men have between one and fifty and above. Therefore it is obvious that there are differences between the interviewees and their reasons behind why they have different levels of commitment to tattoos; some of them said that they want their tattoos to be hidden due to their personal reasons or choices. Other interviewees said that after some tattoos done they are now more considering placement of their future tattoos due to the fact that it can cause some problems and limitations within their current or future job. So they are 'consuming' tattoos carefully (they are discussed more in details including quotes in the section of analysis: Stigma & Transition; for example Charlotte, Martin).

4.4.2. Consumer Identity Projects

The interviewees can be perceived as seekers and makers of their own identity, yet in the case of this thesis through the consumption of tattoos, every individual is visualizing their goals and creating their identity (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). In relation to the interviewees in the research, it is

possible to say that they all have different ways perceiving tattoos; they all have different reasons behind getting them

as well as the way they perceive themselves with them. Sometimes the process of getting tattooed goes under certain circumstances which are influenced by their surroundings such as family; especially parents and grandparents, yet sometimes friends who do not support or understand their decision behind getting such permanent body modification (Jenkins, 2006).

4.4.2.1. Getting tattooed because... / The reasons & symbolism behind the interviewees' tattoos

Tattoos, as explained before, are more visible nowadays due to the fact that more people are getting tattooed, yet the reasons behind are various. Most of the interviewees do not really care about what their families, friends as well as strangers think of their tattoos or their appearance. Yet when looking at the reasons behind why people are getting tattooed, the interviewees mentioned various possibilities such as: that they would like to express themselves, they would like to embrace their friendship, remember loved ones who passed away, or to remind themselves who they are and what they have been through within their life, positively as well as negatively.

For example Tine decided to get a tattoo when she lost her dad. The tattoo is located on her right forearm and it represents the coordinates of the ashes of her dad.



Photo nr.25 - Tine's tattoo representing the coordinates of the ashes of her dad - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

Another case is the example of Casper from Denmark who got engaged with his now fiancé and who got a tattoo instead of a ring. Furthermore it was his first and yet the only tattoo that he has at this moment which symbolises a big decision in his life. He said that he wanted it to not be too visible, so the placement of this tattoo is on his leg.

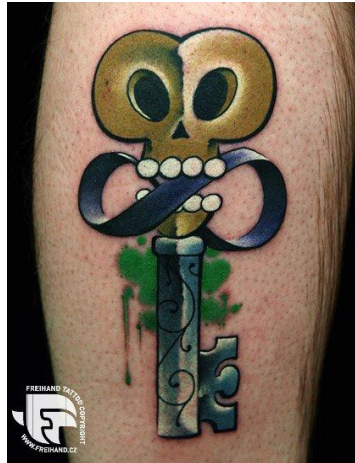


Photo nr.26 – Casper’s first tattoo representing his engagement with his fiancé - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

The symbolism in the mentioned cases can be connected to the theory by Elliot & Wattanasuwan (1998) who argues that people are giving certain value to the products they consume.

4.4.3. Mass-mediated marketplace and Consumers’ Interpretative Strategies

Regarding this area, many things were already mentioned within the previous parts: Market-place Cultures and Consumer Identity Projects where many patterns were found. In the relation to the possible influence on making a decision before getting tattooed, as well as the influence over the interviewees from their surroundings, there are different cultural systems within production of various media which might influenced the interviewees; for example through different communication channels connected to the marketing or fashion industry which usually dictates the newest trends and presents how people should and should not look like McCracken (1986) and Thompson & Haytko (1997). The way people then get or not get influenced is another story (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

4.4.3.1. “I just wanna be, wanna be trendy.” / Fashion influence over the choice of getting tattooed

In this section it is vital get back to the connection of fashion as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, as well as in certain parts of this analysis. Fashion is not only presenting many statements of what is and what is not trendy, it also comes back in certain period of times. So what was once trendy and then fall into category of not fashionable can actually be back as fashionable or may never come back into fashion at all. As there are thousands of people and thousands of opinions, there will always be someone who still will find something special in something where others would not look anymore.

Based on the findings from the answers provided by the interviewees, it is clear that 16 out of the 18 interviewees have done their tattoos because of their personal reasons or special stories behind them.

Those two interviewees who clearly admitted that they also did their tattoos because of fashion were Minna from Finland who has two tattoos and Tine from Denmark who has nine tattoos. Minna said that her first tattoo was “stupid”, it is placed on her lower back and illustrates a small mouse

which is not even coloured and done only with outlines. Tine said that she definitely did the first tattoos because she wanted to be one of the “bad girls” and yet to be trendy.

“..., before I really wanted to be one of the tough girls, I was seventeen years old and it was purely fashionable...”

Tine, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

But then as both girls admitted that they made their first tattoos because they wanted to be trendy and fashionable they also said that now they think and choose their tattoos based on different reasons than fashion.

Furthermore back then it was very popular to get the “tramp stamp” which was mainly a tribal type of tattoo placed on the lower backs of many girls and women. Even though these tattoos are perceived as not fashionable at all anymore, there are still people like Petr from Czech Republic who are of the opinion that people should not be ashamed of the tattoos they have because they too represent their certain period of time and they should not even cover them up with another tattoo. The same opinion is shared by Tomáš, also from Czech Republic, who besides said that people should not judge others by their appearance only and associated this to the known English idiom “*don't judge a book by its cover*” (www reference nr.22). Tine even said that if people do not like her tattoos, it means to her that they do not like her.

“...to me if people don't like my tattoos it is like they don't like me...”

Tine, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

4.4.3.2. “I want to have a tattoo just like Beckham” / Possible influence over the choice of getting tattooed by other media

None of the interviewees said that when choosing their tattoo they were influenced by magazines, celebrities or other similar aspects. Some of them have been influenced by their parents and grandparents in their early age like Tine or Lucia who had tattooed dads and grandpa. Some of the interviewees were influenced by their friends, like Tomáš, who said that back then in Czechoslovakia when it was possible to travel out of the country, after the Revolution, many of his friends went abroad and when they came back, most of them had tattoos which made him think that he too would like to have a tattoo. Later on he got his first tattoo in 2000 by his choice. Many of the interviewees said that they have someone in their family who also have tattoos and who may had the influence on them, like Karolína who said that even though she always wanted a tattoo, it was possibly her ten years older auntie who influenced her, because she looks upon her as her role model.

“Probably, probably it was my aunt - she is 10 years older than me and when she got her first tattoo, ...I was a teenager, she was an example for me, she was my role model. I think when I saw it on her I wanted one as well and she has few now”

Karolína, CZ (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

4.4.4. The Socio-historic Patterning of Consumption

As mentioned previously within the section of the theory of this thesis, the history of a tattoo is not set as a major subject for the investigation in the research yet according to Allen (2002) the consumption of a tattoo cannot be understood without the historical data – the way of how tattoos were made, how common they were back then as well as what were the reasons behind getting them.

In relation to the interviewees they have shown that their tattoos are presenting certain periods of their life as well certain events and reasons like Tine who got the coordinates of her dad's ashes tattooed on her forearm, like Casper who got his first tattoo as a symbol of his engagement, Julie who got a big rose tattoo on her shoulder blade in memory of her mom who passed away, or Martin who got his first tattoo in memory of his brother who died of cancer and on the other hand for example, Petr who got his first tattoo as an experiment but still means a lot to him and he really embraces his tattoo as a part of a great memory when he was back on high school. All of these examples of tattoos show that tattoos are as identifiers of certain moments in the lives of the interviewees (for more examples please see Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

4.5. Stigma & Transition from the study life to work life

4.5.1. "Getting stamped" / Considerations of possible consequences when getting tattooed

In relation to stigma the interviews show that exactly 50 % were thinking of possible consequences before they got tattooed, where five were women and four were men. The other 50 % have not even thought about it or simply did not care at all, and were presented by the experience of five women and four men.

Below are some examples from those who are giving their tattoos more thoughts over the others before and when they are getting tattooed.

For example a hotel manager, Karolína (28 years old) from Czech Republic has at the moment only one tattoo and even though she is planning more in the future, she wants them to be hidden and mainly visible only to herself.

"Well, that is why my tattoo is hidden,... I like my position and visible tattoos are not acceptable, maybe in 20 years I will have something more visible but not now"

Karolína, CZ (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

Another example is Henrieta from Slovakia (25 years old) who is now at her master degree studies, said that she thought about it yet she said that regarding the future career, she would be willing to cover her tattoos if necessary but that there should be a balance.

"...,I am willing to cover my tattoos if I have to but there should be a balance..."

Henrieta, SK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

The third example is Charlotte from Denmark (30 years old) who is educated as a teacher, but working at a call centre at the moment. She shows that she is really aware of that a visible tattoo can cause some problems in the future and therefore is placing her tattoos on places where they can be hidden; similar to behaviour of Karolína.

"..., I still think a bit about the placement..., I am aware of that it can cost some problems in the future."

Charlotte, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

Martin from Denmark (26 years old) presents a very different example, since he actually is glad that he has not made all the planned tattoos when he was at the age of 18. As mentioned previously, Martin made all of his tattoos within one year and had planned sketches with his tattoo artist to get tattoos also over his chest, hands and maybe even neck. He did not do these tattoos and even though he could not know what he will do after his studies, he said he was happy that he has not done it. Today he is the CEO of Crossfit Aalborg. And furthermore when he was asked about if he would hire tattooed people, he showed that he would not have problem with it at all, but he might not like if people would have tattoos in their face. Then he also mentioned that most of the trainers at Crossfit Aalborg have some tattoos anyway.

"...Because working probably in a shipping job, bank or something else when you have to look representable and wear some nice clothes and can't show your tattoos could be then very difficult. But then again it depends because more people are having tattoos, so I think it is changing a bit....In my office if I would hire more people, then I am totally ok with tattoos even though I would not like tattoos in their face, I just think that tattoos are cool"

Martin, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

And another different example can be seen in the answer by Igor from Czech Republic who has been working at the same company for 17 years. It is a job in the company producing products from plastic material and he started there after his studies. For a couple of years he was in the production and having tattoos have not influenced his job at all. Later on he got a higher position and is now working at the management level, representing the company, going on business meetings and at the time of the interview, he was about to go for a longer business trip to Russia. He has many tattoos and last year he got tattoos even on his both hands. His boss is very supportive and has not showed anything against it and neither did his colleagues and business partners. He said that it might be due to the fact that he really made his way all the way up, has the knowledge which is important and therefore it is much more acceptable. At his work he is the only one who has tattoos.



Photo nr.27 – Igor’s hand tattoos representing the good and the bad - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

These examples above goes hand in hand with the theory by Brandtstädter (1984) who argues that young people like to identify their own paths even in the situations where there might be specific circumstances. As shown in those examples, the interviewees are aware of the possible consequences regarding their choice of tattoos over their future career, yet they are choosing to get tattooed; some of them are more thinking about the placement and some of them get tattooed exactly as they want without considering possible consequences. Regarding those interviewees who prefer to get tattoos on places where they can be hidden, it is possible to connect to Goffman’s theory regarding stigmatization and furthermore they are willing to cover up their tattoos at work if necessary in order to avoid a possible stigmatization and/or to follow the rules within their future job.

Furthermore there were interviewees who did their tattoos and simply did not care at all what the future will bring in relation of their tattoos and possible career.

For example, Tomáš H., who did his first tattoo when he was 19 years old, said that he thought that his life is over at that time because he got diagnosed with sclerosa multiplex. This tattoo is represented by the quote, *“Too fast to live – too young to die”* (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix). So thinking to the future about what can happen one day because of the fact that he is tattooed was not really on his mind.

“I didn't think about it, I was 19 and thought that my life is at the end.”

Tomáš H., CZ (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

Tine from Denmark (30 years old) has shown a very different approach when getting tattooed and thinking about possible consequences regarding her future.

“I do think about it a lot but kind of the other way around than others,...if I go for example to a job interview I make sure that my tattoos are visible, I want them to know what they get - so if they don't want me because of my tattoos, then I would say no. But I won't worry about that I don't belong there, I will not make the effort to cover them but if I should wear a long sleeve or something then I would, no problem...but I don't want to change because of a job or I don't want to change who I am. In a perfect world I would love that they would look at me and my qualifications instead of tattoos. It might cost me a job...I am a bit stubborn with my tattoos, nobody is gonna tell me what to do and how should I feel and stuff like that...”

Tine, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

It shows that Tine definitely is not afraid to get stigmatized at work due to the fact that she wants to be seen for her qualities related to her job over her tattoos.

4.5.1.1. “To show my tattoos or not to show my tattoos”/ Visibility of the tattoos on job interviews

In the relation to the topic of this thesis and the transition from the study life and work life, most of the interviewees are already in their jobs, working on their careers. When asked about their job interviews and the fact whether they showed their tattoos or not, one example was mentioned above represented by Tine from Denmark. Otherwise this experience with job interviews and showing or not showing the tattoos to the potential employer at the very first meeting, shows that it did not apply to some of the interviewees who are self-employed like Martin from Denmark or Tomáš from Czech Republic and the results of the rest answers were that most of the women have not shown their tattoos while most of the men have shown their tattoos at their job interviews.

A different example was provided by Julie from Denmark who actually told her potential boss that she has tattoos, as well as she has told about the placements before possibly getting the job. The boss accepted the fact that she is tattooed and offered her the position as a receptionist at the Radisson hotel without problems and just under the conditions which applies for every of their employees and that is to wear a working uniform. Petr from Czech Republic have shown his tattoos at his job interview, yet after the interview he asked whether the tattoos are a problem regarding the possible job. The way they treated him after was very different and he did not get the offer. He said that it happened in three job interviews. Then anyway he thought for himself that he would not like to work in the company where they could not accept that he has tattoos and where they are looking on the appearance before the qualities of the potential employee. Then he got an offer from the company where he is working today. He is on a high post in one of the biggest cell phone operator companies in Czech Republic and his boss, neither his colleagues, have any problems with it.

The experiences from Tine, Julie and Petr as mentioned above are examples of choices and decisions made in order to get a job offer and whether to show or not to show tattoos is a good or possibly good idea at the jobs interviews. Their experiences are then in connection with the theory by Nurmi (2004) who argues that the transition is the reflection of the decisions and choices made by an individual as well as it is a part of one's identity.

4.5.2. “Me & My Tattoos = Every day Love” / Influence of Tattoos in Every Day

Regarding the tattoos and its possible influence in the daily life, the interviewees mostly said that their tattoos are not influencing them in their daily life, they see their tattoos as a part of their skin and therefore they do not see it anymore like something special. Yet there were a few who think and feel that tattoos influence their daily life in aspects of work, their memories, the way they feel about themselves like Julie, Lærke, Charlotte and Anthony.

“Actually it does, but only when it comes to like the uniform that we wear at work because the one I have on my chest, you can cover it with like a T-shirt but it have to be high up to the neck, but we don't have that, we have like a shirtI have to wear like three layers of clothes to hide them”

Julie, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

“I think about tattoos as a part of my skin, but actually yes, I think a lot on my Polynesian tattoo... a lot, it reminds me a lot and makes me feel that I want to travel..., I've seen example of some backpacker girl who did a tattoo of the world's map and then she coloured every country she's been, so I think that it is a great idea...”

Lærke, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

“Yes, well I am still thinking of my tattoos when I look at them and I am still impressed by the details made on my tattoos...”

Charlotte, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

And the last example as mentioned above is Anthony, who feels that some tattoos do have the influence on his every days. He has the most connection with his newest tattoo which says “Judgement is his”. He is Christian and believes in God and this tattoo represents for him that only God can judge us as well as it is a reminder for not to be judgmental towards others.



Photo nr.28 – “Judgement is his”, Anthony - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

4.5.2.1. "Dress to impress."/ Dress code within the company

When looking at the job positions, places where the interviewees work and the way they are supposed to dress while being at work, only two interviewees said that they have a specific dress code; it was Julie, who works as receptionist at the hotel and Karolína, who works as manager of a hotel. All of the others interviewees said that the way they should dress at work is to have a nice clothes which is perhaps more formal sometimes like blouses, pants, blazers but there were also examples when wearing jeans and T-shirts, therefore more informal type of clothes, was not perceived as a problem.

Both, Julie and Karolína have not shown anything against the fact that they have to wear uniforms while working and that their tattoos must be covered. It seems that they really accept the rules required by their employers and therefore they do not feel stigmatized by them. They perceive it as a necessary part of their job, yet in the case of Karolína she does not really have to feel that she needs to cover her tattoo since it is on her upper thigh on the inside and therefore it is not visible anyway. And Julie's tattoos are covered because of the uniform, except the one on her chest which is sometimes visible. Yet she has not experienced any negative comments or negative reaction in general. Perhaps if Julie would have the possibility of wearing different clothes where her tattoos would be visible, she might have experience stigmatization in a bad manner from, for example, the guests from the hotel; then they might judge her based on her look (tattoos) as in Goffman's theory (1963, 2010).

4.5.3. "Oh my god, she has tattoos! That's horrible!" / Prejudice – positive & negative comments, experiences - toward tattoos

When looking at the experience of positive and negative reactions towards the interviewees' tattoos most of them said that they experienced prejudice. The prejudice towards their tattoos was mainly experienced as comments from their families – parents, grandparents representing the older generation as well as by strangers. Furthermore some of them have experienced the "evil eyes" looks from strangers as well as their families who rather just give an "evil look" than they would comment over the tattoos and then some interviewees did not really experienced anything negative towards their tattoos.

Lucia answered that she have experienced prejudice towards tattoos and even though she could not come up with an exact example, she thinks that people should not care about what is on your skin.

"Yes, of course ,...it is kind a hard to remember. I think I am kind of a person who doesn't really think about it and at the end why should people care what you have on your skin..."

Lucia, SK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

Or Julie's experience was from a party where she was with her boyfriend. Then one of his friends started a conversation to prove a point and let her know that he really does not like tattoos. Lærke also experienced a similar situation as Julie when people gave her an opinion towards her tattoos without her starting a conversation about it, and neither was asking for someone's opinion.

"Actually one of my boyfriends' friend, he doesn't like tattoos at all ...and it was like discriminating when he started talking about it and I just told him "Well, it's my choice and I haven't actually asked you for your opinion"but he gave it to me....he thinks that all tattoos are ugly...."

Julie, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

Most of the interviewees are pointing out that the older generation is the generation with the most problems toward tattoos and the young generation of nowadays is more accepting. They pointed out that they think that the level of acceptance is also higher from different employers for example, and that they hope tattoos will only be more and more tolerated by society in general.

Tine said that if someone is judging her tattoos and does not like them, it is like if they do not like her. Her view is perhaps more personal, yet it shows reflection of that tattoos are a part of her identity and that she wish that people can still see her as a whole and not just her and then her tattoos.

Other interviewees also differentiate between the reactions in a way that they come from different people within different generations and sometimes the prejudice or certain comments come from people who are also tattooed. It shows that no matter whether people have tattoos or not, there will always be prejudice towards something. The reason why the older generation sometimes react more negatively could be because of the association of tattoos and criminals and bikers. These type of people were stigmatized by the "regular" society and they were perceived as the "bad ones". And because of such association, the older generation is not so positive when seeing the young people getting such body decorations which are permanent. They may not like that in between these young people who are their own children and grandchildren which they do not want to be involved in such things due to the possible stigmatization.

In relation to the transition from the student life to the work life and therefore the experience of the interviewees from their work, most of them did not experience negative comments and reactions, yet some of them have experienced the shift in behaviour after showing their tattoos; for example Petr who got such experience on his job interview as mentioned above. Similar situation have experienced also Tomáš H., who is Cand. and PhD. and who is teaching about the bank sector and finances at the university, who is participating in different researches and who has published his work with many other important people. He said that sometimes he has to travel to attend certain conferences and when talking about the serious subject as finances, he is presenting in regular formal clothes. But as soon as he got the sleeves of his shirt up, the same people who listened to him, who talked to him have not continued the same behaviour after they realized that he has tattoos.

"Yes at one conference, there was a situation where one man haven't talked to me anymore after he discovered that I have tattoos,... some people are very conservative and especially in the academic area..."

Tomáš H., CZ (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

Some of the interviewees pointed out that the way tattoos are or are not accepted really depend on the job position you have, as well as the people you are working with.

Iveta is of the opinion that if you are working within a creative environment, then your tattoos might be perceived as a part of your creativity and your identity. Charlotte said that it also depends if it is a man or a woman who has the tattoo, as well as what kind of motive. Anthony is of the similar opinion; he said that if people do not have some vulgar type of tattoo, then it should not be a problem and even though all of the interviewees said that it is possible to see more and more tattoos in the streets they also have their limits which they would not cross, such as having a tattoos all over body, having tattoos on their face.

The major difference between the negative comments and reactions by the older generation and the younger generation towards tattoos, is in the way they perceive it; younger generation perceive it also as something fashionable and therefore they might get more positive comments from the people of the same age or employers and colleagues who has nothing against tattoos.

4.5.4. "I think your tattoos are just fine." / The interviewees' perception over others' tattoos

When looking over how the interviewees perceive others' tattoos, the most common answers include that there are people who get tattooed because of the fashion trends and therefore they are more mainstream. This view goes hand in hand with that some people are getting tattooed without actually having a story behind, but then there are people who get tattooed because they think it is a part of who they are - it is a part of their identity. Regarding the volume, it is for example perceived that tattoos can be very addictive as drugs as presented by one of the interviewees, Tomáš H. and many people who start with one tattoo usually continue to higher volume. Some of the interviewees showed tendencies of being pre-judgmental when it comes to special motives of tattoos such as swastika, upside down crosses, tribal type of tattoos which in their opinion symbolizes "bad people" and those with tribal type of tattoos are, for example, looking like hooligans and do not care about themselves since they have such tattoo. On the other hand there were interviewees who said that people should not be ashamed of their tattoos and should not cover them up or remove them, due to the fact that it represents a certain period of their life - a special story perhaps. And in general people should accept every person as a whole being with certain process not just within their way of behaviour or their way of thinking, but also in the way of how they got tattooed. Therefore just because someone have a tribal tattoo, it does not mean that he/she got it in the year of 2013, but perhaps when they were younger and not because it was fashionable, but because they liked it as people nowadays like certain designs which may look "funny" once they will get old. The opinions from the interviewees were various as mentioned above.

Based on the answers from the interviewees it is obvious that they really do not feel stigmatized even though they have experienced positive as well as negative reactions towards their tattoos by their surroundings. Some of them are thinking about the body placement of their tattoos because of the possible consequences in their future career, yet those who are already working showed that there are no big problems with having tattoos. Some of the interviewees have to wear uniforms, some have to cover their tattoos and some of them can show their tattoos while working. The prejudice is experienced from different people within different generations where most of the

negative comments come from the older generation who perhaps fear that their children and grandchildren will be stigmatized by the society.

4.6. Extra messages from the interviewees / “The cherry on the top”

This part of analysis is more like a personal expression towards tattoos, a personal message to people in relation to their decision of getting tattooed as well as their perception of tattoos. The interviewees were asked at the end of their interviews if they have anything more to say, if they have some messages they would like to leave in relation to the topic of this thesis.



Photo nr.29 – Tattoo by George Keclík, Origin Tattoo Olomouc, CZ - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

All of the interviewees shown passion towards their tattoos, some are tattooed more and some less yet they all had something to say; they think that people should not be afraid of expressing themselves if they want to, that tattooed and non-tattooed people should have the same chances in relation to get a great career, some of the interviewees were more pointing out that yes, people should not be afraid of getting tattooed yet they should think about the placement. Also a message about hope towards more acceptances in relation to tattoos was left and that people should be open towards tattoos whether they are / are not tattooed themselves.

Below are some examples of what the interviewees said in relation to the topic of this thesis:

“Tattoos should be done with responsibility”

Karolína, CZ (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

“Don't think about it, just get it.”

Tomáš H., CZ (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

"People should make tattoos if they want to, they should not be scared but they should check the work of the artist before getting one as well as know the studio and their hygiene... But yeah, just go for it."

Rasmus, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

"I just think it is important to be open even though if you don't have tattoos - there is no reason to just go over and say "Hey, you are an idiot" just because someone have a tattoo."

Casper, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

"If people want a tattoo, they should just get it - they should think about it, do some research and not being drunk and do tattoos in such situations - because there are some of my friends who have done it and some of them are regretting it"

Lærke, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

"Not really, just that tattoos do not make us bad people,...they do define us... It doesn't mean that I am morally bankrupt,...it does not mean that I am morally a bad person. My moral is strong as everybody else's,...I just choose to have tattoos."

Anthony, USA (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

All in all there was one of the interviewees who used her possibility to say something as using this quote in connection to tattoos as shown below and that quote basically covers all of the messages, opinions by other interviewees.

"If you like tattoos always remember, those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind"

Tine, DK (Appx. nr.5 (DVD) - MetaMatrix)

4.7. Netnography

As mentioned in the part of methodology, the netnographic research was done within a group of 30 people represented by 15 men and 15 women. Due to the limitations of information provided the known age is between 19 and 33 years and the countries from which these participants were are Canada, England and USA.

Based on the data collected most of these participants are already employed except one who is currently studying at a medical school and all of them are tattooed.

Smaller half of the participants are working within a healthcare sector as for example paramedic, nurse, dental hygienist, working in a psychiatric secure hospital, working as a sterile processing tech at the hospital. The bigger half have jobs as web designer, pastry cook, hairdresser, teacher, tattoo artist or different positions within finance, gastronomy, fashion (for detailed information about all of

the participant, their job positions and the information they provided, please see the Appx. nr. 6 (DVD).

All of the participants shared their information, photos and views in relation to tattoos and their jobs via facebook group *"Tattoo Acceptance in the workplace"* (www reference nr.12).

When looking at patterns within the information provided:

Most of them said that they do not have a problem with showing of their tattoos while doing their jobs, some of them experienced also a support and respect to their tattoos by their bosses or colleagues like David who is working as a Chef or Jason who is working within the car industry.

"My name is David. I'm a Chef de Cuisine at a 4 star resort. My tattoos represent my spirituality. I have never had any issues with my ink at my job or at any other gig. My bosses have embraced my artwork as part of the package when they hired me." (www reference nr.13)



Photo nr.30 – Jason via *"Tattoo Acceptance in the workplace"* - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

"My name is Jason and I work as a Ford technician for one of the biggest dealers in my area. I have several tattoos, most of which are visible. My employer does not care, they actually support it! I also have a tattooed wife and three amazing children that love ink. This is my 3yr old daughter giving me a crayola tat" (www reference nr.14)

Furthermore for example Scott who is working in the psychiatric secure hospital said that as long as his tattoos are not offensive he can show them of too and there have not been any problems so far. He also said that tattoos are working as an ice breaker when talking to patients.

"...I work in a psychiatric secure hospital and am allowed tattoos as long as they aint offensive. They are a good conversation starter with patients." (www reference nr.15)

Another example is Marcos who experienced that his bosses see him for his working skills not for the tattoos. He is landscaping and working within a construction industry in New Jersey.

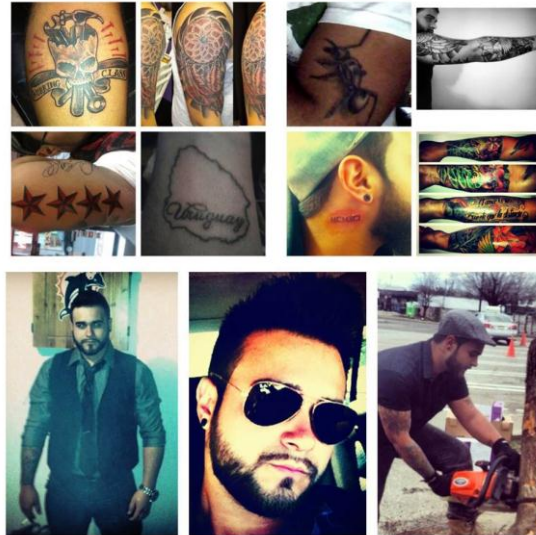


Photo nr.31 – Marcos via “Tattoo Acceptance in the workplace” - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

"... My boss and co-workers don't judge me by my tattoos. They have nothing to do with my working skills. I do get looks here and there but hey!, those people don't pay my bills; my hard work does. Proud to be tattooed and employed." (www reference nr.16)

Most of the women presented within this research said that they do not have to cover their tattoos while doing their job and some of them mentioned even visible piercings. Some of them even said that they have never been asked to cover their tattoos like Rachel, many of them are encouraged toward their tattoos by their colleagues or bosses who support them and some of them are supported even though they are the only one in the company who is tattooed like Amber.



Photo nr.32 – Rachel via “Tattoo Acceptance in the workplace” - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

"..., I have never been asked to cover my tattoos or remove my piercings while at work. Tattooed, employed, and proud of my art. Feel free to share this photo on your page." (www reference nr.17)



Photo nr.33 –Amber via “Tattoo Acceptance in the workplace” - Appx. nr.3 (DVD)

Amber - "My name is Amber and I am a website designer. None of my employers or co-workers have tattoos but they are all accepting. We work in a very small town community, for other professionals in a business to business type environment. In fact, the owner actually encourages the boldness. I have tattoos, nose pierced and dyed my hair purple when I first started there. She says 'people remember that kind of stuff' I love that they share those ideals and that I am free to express myself while earning a living"(www reference nr.18)

Furthermore Shannie from England said that there is no stigmatization within her job at all.

"..., so far I have four tattoos. My most recent and biggest is my half sleeve. I work in an Aerospace and Defence recruitment agency. My boss has tattoos as well and I don't get any stigma from my colleagues,..." (www reference nr.19)

Sub –conclusion:

All of the findings within this research shown that there are various jobs where tattoos or even piercings are not any subject of stigmatization and even though some of the participants need to have their tattoos covered, they are not stigmatized (Goffmann, 1963). The reason for covering their tattoos is more less connected to the dress code which depends on the job position and company. It seems that all of the participants are pretty much aware of what is right for them, what they want in relation to their appearance including their tattoos, hair-style and clothes and based on their experience from their jobs they do not have to really worry about how others perceive them (Jenkins, 2006). Even within the examples of the participants it is possible to see that tattoos are “consumed” like any other products or services which correspond with the theory by Fromm (1976) who argues that the way tattoos are “consumed” as both products and services helps people in creation of their own identity. Regarding this part of the research and its relation to tattoos and transition from study life to work life it seems that all of the participants overcome the challenging aspects within. According to Cowan (1991) the process of transitions depends on physical, psychological as well as social surroundings of every individual and due to its complexity it might be very challenging. This research was limited regarding the information provided by the participants as discussed within a part of limitation of netnographic research, yet based on the experiences

mentioned above it seems that the transitions can be successful regardless the appearance of tattoos since they are perceived by some as something different and not acceptable.

5. CONCLUSION / “Voila! The Tattoo is done!”

Based on the findings within the research regarding the interviews as well as the netnographic research, it is possible to see various results due to the fact of different relations to tattoos provided by the participants. In order to answer the research question, three sub-questions were applied. Therefore the discussion below will be first focused within the area of the three sub-research questions:

- 1) How does identity of an individual influence his/her perception over tattoos?
- 2) How do people “consume” tattoos? / What are the reasons behind getting tattooed?
- 3) How are / are not people affected by the transition from school life to work life?

And then the major research question will be answered.

How does identity of an individual influence his/her perception over tattoos?

Even though all of the interviewees have tattoos there are still different reasons behind the act of getting tattooed in the first place. Some of the findings show that the interviewees might have been influenced regarding the decision of getting tattooed. This was done due to the fact that some of the interviewees grew up with tattooed parents or grandparents and therefore they were unconsciously influenced in order to get a tattoo later in their life. This goes hand in hand with the theory by Jenkins (2006) who argues that people’s identity is created through interaction with their surroundings; in the case of the interviewees’ family and friends.

Furthermore such influence can be also explained within the theory by Tajfel and Oakes (1986) who argued that the identity of an individual is created within a social group. The influence on the interviewees by their surroundings was clear regarding the decision, the desire of being tattooed one day.

On the other hand the decision behind choosing the design of a tattoo was not influenced by the same surroundings. Most of the interviewees said that what they chose as a design of their tattoo, as well as with whom they share the ideas behind their tattoos is clearly only their decision. This type of behaviour can be then explained with Giddens’ (1991) theory regarding individual identity. These mentioned examples of findings are in contradiction with the theory presented by Avicenna (Goodman, 1992) who argues that creation of an individual’s identity is not connected to physical things. In the case of this thesis, the creation of one’s identity is connected to tattoos which can be understood as a physical thing and as a permanent mark on the skin.

The findings also show that getting tattooed is something very special for all of the interviewees, yet some of them were giving higher value to their first tattoos. This can be explained within Giddens’ theory (1991) where it is clear that giving such values and having strong relationships towards the first and other tattoos is connected to the deeper meanings or special story behind. It is due to the fact that in the case of the interviewees, their tattoos represent very special and therefore very personal moments in their lives; those moments are then as a reflection of their identity. The interviewees have shown a great interest in their tattoos and awareness regarding the permanence of them. The differences between the interviewees were clear regarding their level of involvement

towards tattoos; some of them only have few tattoos while some have tattooed most of the parts on their body. The level of involvement is influenced by physical, psychical and also a social risk due to the fact that tattoos are permanent (Aaker and Lee: 2001, Taylor: 1974). This will be discussed further within the third sub-research question in connection to stigma.

How do people “consume” tattoos? / What are the reasons behind getting tattooed?

Based on the findings within the research it can be concluded that all of the participants are having a clear idea regarding the decision making process before getting a tattoo. They are also having a similar way of how they are going about the pre-tattoo process starting from the idea of what to get as a tattoo through the ways they are looking for some inspiration, with whom they are/are not sharing their ideas until the act of getting tattooed itself. The differences between the answers amongst the interviewees show that there are some of them who take into consideration the placement of their tattoos, due to the possible influence on their future career and then those who simply enjoy getting tattooed and are not limited by the placement of their tattoos.

The fact that there are interviewees who are taking the placement of their tattoos more seriously can be explained in the connection of the theories by Steele (2000) who argues that even though people have their freedom of getting tattooed, it can still influence their future and the possibility of having a dream job. It can be concluded that those interviewees were very clear about their current jobs and they reflect that they would not like to risk, for example, their promotion within their jobs because some of their tattoos would be visible and therefore unacceptable within their company.

Yet on the other hand those who are aware of the possible consequences and do not take the placement of their tattoos so seriously, may therefore lack the expertise of its “side effects” and may then face a possible rejection by society (Alba and Hutchinson: 2000). But in most of the cases of the interviewees within this thesis there were very positive reactions and almost no regrets towards their tattoos. Basically all of the interviewees got tattooed because of the deeper meanings and only two admitted that they got tattooed for the first time because of the fashionability.

How are / are not people affected by the transition from school life to work life?

It can be concluded that the way people are or are not influenced within their transition from the student life to the work life depend pretty much on their surroundings, the way they are treated within different groups and the experience of being/not being stigmatized within those groups. Also, as mentioned previously in the discussion under the first sub-research question, the level of involvement of the interviewees in relation to tattoos play an important role in physical, psychical and social risk when the decision of getting tattooed was made.

Based on the answers from the interviewees it can be concluded that they really do not feel stigmatized; they have experienced positive as well as negative reactions towards their tattoos by their surroundings. Some of them are thinking about the body placement of their tattoos because of the possible consequences in their future career, yet those who are already working showed that there are no big problems with having tattoos. Some of the interviewees have to wear uniforms, some have to cover their tattoos and some of them can show their tattoos while working. The prejudice is experienced from different people within different generations where most of the

negative comments come from the older generation who perhaps fear that their children and grandchildren will be stigmatized by the society.

Regarding the experience of the interviewees within their jobs it can be concluded that most of them have the possibility of having their tattoos visible while doing their job and over some cases where the bosses found out about their employees having tattoos, there were no consequences yet some of the bosses showed respect and support towards the interviewees' body decorations such as tattoos are.

By using the three sub-research questions it is now possible to discuss the major research question of this thesis.

How does the choice of getting tattooed influence the perception of the future career?

The perception of the tattoos does as well does not influence the perception of possible future career with tattoos. Based on the findings within the research it does not matter if people do consider the placement of their tattoos or not due to the fact that the possible consequences towards their future career are influenced by their surroundings personally and professionally. In the case on personal influence it is mainly the influence within their circle of friends and family, in the case of professional influence it may be by their potential employers and their perception over tattoos and other possible body modifications. The way they may stigmatize the potential employee may influence his/her identity and further choices and decisions when applying for a job. Most of the interviewees within this thesis had positive experience towards their tattoos and whether they have to cover their tattoos while doing their job or are able to show their tattoos, they are accepted for their skills, for who they are over their tattoos. Therefore it is obvious that even though tattoos might not be accepted fully, they do not have to be necessarily a problem within a transition from school life to work life and neither in other areas of life. It all depends on the surroundings and their perception.

6. LIST OF SOURCES



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THEORY PART:

Reference nr.9

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Reference nr.10

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Reference nr.11

FB group: Tattoo Acceptance in the workplace

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7. LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appx. nr.1 (DVD) – Preliminary Research – Questions & Answers
- Appx. nr.2 (DVD) – Citations used in this thesis
- Appx. nr.3 (DVD) - List of photos, list of figures, www sources
- Appx. nr.4 – Interview Guide EN / CZ version
- Appx. nr.5 (DVD) – MetaMatrix
- Appx. nr.6 (DVD) – Netnography Research - men & women
- Appx. nr.7 (DVD) – Interviews – Overview (people’s information, time of the recordings)
- Appx. nr.8 (DVD) – Interviews - Recordings

APPENDIX Nr.4 - INTERVIEW GUIDE EN / CZ VERSION

ENGLISH VERSION_INTERVIEW GUIDE – MA THESIS – 2013

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

(Name:)

How old are you?

Where are you from?

Where do you live?

What is your social status? (student – of what?, working – as what?...)

How many tattoos do you have?

IDENTITY:

When have you got your first tattoo – what was it and what was the reason behind it?

When have you got your most recent tattoo? / When do you plan something new?

How about other tattoos / any special story / stories behind them?

Do you have a favourite tattoo?

Do you consider your tattoos being socially acceptable?

Do you consider your tattoos as fashionable or do you have them because of other reasons?

Have you ever regret some of your tattoos / all of them?

Have you ever had any tattoos re-done or removed? Why?

Did the choice of getting a tattoo / tattoos changed the way you feel about yourself – does tattoos have an influence on your self-confidence?

Do you care how other people looking at you? (Regarding the way you look, dress, behave etc.)

In your opinion, what your tattoos say about you? Would you say that they are part of your identity?

Do your tattoos describe the way you feel about yourself?

STIGMA:

What do you think that tattoos say about others? - If you know some people in your own circle – is your perception over tattoos the same or different regarding tattooed people in general and those tattooed people that you know?

Do your tattoos influence your daily life? If yes, how?

When wearing a regular clothes – dress code – dress style – are your tattoos visible or not? If yes, on which parts of your body? Could you give example of what you are wearing at school / work and then in your free time summer / winter?

Have you experienced prejudice towards your tattoos? Please share your experience.

How do you think that non-tattooed people perceive tattooed people? (different age, jobs, backgrounds etc.)

How people / family / friends reacted on your tattoos?

How did it made you feel?

Have you considered the possible consequences regarding future with tattoos? – school, job

TRIBES / GROUPS:

Is there anyone who has had or have an influence on your tattoos?

Does anyone from your close circle such as family & friends have tattoos? Or are you the only one?

Did the fact that they do have / not have tattoos influenced you in any way?

Are you sharing your ideas about the tattoos you have or you want in future with someone from your close circle (or do you discuss these things only with professionals tattoo artists before scheduling any new appointment)?

Are you a member of some kind of community, group regarding tattoos? – online – conventions – tattoo shop – if yes why? Please share your opinion and your experience.

Do you categorize people based on their tattoos? Do you belong into some category?

Do you think that some certain types of tattoos are more acceptable than others? Please give some examples and reasons why.

CULTURE CONSUMPTION THEORY:

Could you please share your own story behind the decision making process before getting a new tattoo? (from the idea in your head until the final tattoo is done on your skin)

Do you choose your friends and people that you socialise with based on their tattoos?

Do you think that you would have gotten any tattoo if nobody else had tattoos?

Why do you think that people are getting tattooed? Can you come up with some examples?

Do you think that the body placement of tattoos should be limited and allowed only on certain parts of the body?

Have you experienced certain events which have made you to change your perception on tattoos?

Have you experienced some shift in your feelings towards tattoos in your life?

Have you ever experienced a change regarding social acceptance regarding tattoos? Please give example.

Are tattoos also as your hobby in your free time – meaning – are you searching for some literature, visiting tattoo conventions etc.?

TRANSITION FROM UNI TO WORK LIFE:

FOR THOSE WHO ARE STILL STUDYING:

What is the ideal job that you could get after studies?

Do you think that your idea of your ideal job will match with your study background regardless the fact that you have tattoos?

Does your idea of your possible future career influence where you place your tattoos? (or do you simply go with what you want at that particular moment?)

Do you think that there should be jobs where no tattoos should be allowed? If so, please give example.

Have you been in connection with a tattooed person in a certain job where you felt it was inappropriate? Please share your experience.

How do you think that employers perceive freshly graduated students with tattoos?

If you were owner of some company that should higher new staff, would you even consider people with tattoos as possible employees? Please give examples regarding different job positions / or do you think that there should be no difference?

FOR THOSE WHO ARE WORKING:

Have you had any of your tattoos when applying for a job after your studies?

If yes, have you shown your tattoos at your job interview?

If not, when did your boss or colleagues find out that you have tattoos? /Did it have any consequences?

Are you still working at the same company or have you changed your work place?

Do you have any special dress code at your job?

Does your company have any special policy regarding tattoos and body-modifications?

Does your company allow their employees to have tattoos? If yes, are any of your colleagues tattooed or do they have some body-modifications such as facial / body piercing?

Does your job allow you to have all your tattoos visible?

- If yes / which body parts are acceptable?
- If not – do you undertake conscious efforts to cover your tattoos?

Have you experienced any negative reactions towards your tattoos at your work or elsewhere e.g. business meetings etc.?

CZECH VERSION - INTERVIEW GUIDE

ZÁKLADNÍ OTÁZKY:

(Jméno:)

Kolik Vám je let?

Jaké je Vaše rodné město?

Kde nyní žijete?

Jaký je Váš stav?

- studujete? Kde ?

- pracujete? Jaké je Vaše povolání?

Kolik máte tetování?

IDENTITA:

Kdy jste si nechali poprvé udělat tetování – jaký motiv a co Vás k tomu vedlo?

Kdy jste si nechali udělat nějaké tetování naposledy? / Kdy plánujete další?

A co Vaše ostatní tetování – mají pro Vás nějaký speciální význam? Jaký?

Máte nějaké oblíbené nebo nejoblíbenější tetování?

Myslíte si, že Vaše tetování jsou společensky přijatelné? (bezproblémové)

Myslíte si, že Vaše tetování jsou módní – máte je kvůli trendům a nebo máte jiné důvody k tomu, proč se necháváte tetovat?

Vyčítali jste si někdy, že jste se nechal/a tetovat? (jen u některých nebo u všech tetování)

Nechal/a jste si některé z Vašich tetování pře-tetovat a nebo zcela odstranit?

Má nebo měla Vaše volba nechat se tetovat nějaký vliv na to, jak se cítíte – má Vaše tetování vliv na Vaše sebevědomí?

Ovlivňuje Vás jak na Vás pohlíží Vaše okolí? Je to pro Vás důležité a nebo "staráte sám/ sama o sebe" ?

Co podle Vás vypovídají Vaše tetování o Vás? Můžete říct, že Vaše tetování jsou součástí Vaší identity, tedy toho kým jste?

Odráží se to, jak pohlížíte sám / sama na sebe skrz Vaše tetování?

STIGMA:

Co podle Vás vypovídají tetování o ostatních / na jiných lidech? Máte nějaké potetované lidi v kruhu své rodiny a přátel? Díváte se na lidi, kteří mají tetování ve Vašem kruhu jinak než na ty ostatní, kteří jsou taktéž potetovaní?

Ovlivňují Vaše tetování Váš běžný den? Pokud ano, jak / v jakých situacích?

Pokud vezmeme v úvahu Váš běžný den a to, jak se oblékáte – jsou Vaše tetování viditelná? Pokud ano – na jakých částech Vašeho těla? Můžete, prosím Vás, uvést jak se oblékáte např. do školy, práce a jak ve svém volném čase? (v létě / v zimě?)

Setkal/a jste se s předsudky vůči Vašemu tetování / tetování všeobecně? Prosím, podělte se o Vaši zkušenost.

Jak si myslíte, že lidé bez tetování pohlíží na lidi s tetováním, když vezmeme v úvahu různá zaměstnání, původ, věk, pohlaví ?

Jaké jsou / byly reakce na Vaše tetování – v rámci Vaší rodiny, přátel, lidí na veřejnosti? / Jak jste se cítil/a?

Přemýšleli jste někdy nad tím, že tetování můžou mít vliv na Vaše studium / na Vaši budoucí kariéru?

SKUPINY LIDÍ:

Je ve Vašem okolí někdo, kdo má vliv na Vaše tetování?

Má někdo z Vašich blízkých – rodina a přátelé – tetování? A nebo jste jediní?

Ovlivnilo Vás, že Vaši blízcí mají nebo nemají tetování ?

Sdílíte Vaše názory, nápady ohledně tetování, které máte / plánujete do budoucna s někým z Vašich blízkých (a nebo konzultujete jen s profesionálním tatérem před tím, než jdete na další tetování?)

Jste členem nějaké komunity, co se týká tetování – např.: virtuálně – skupiny o tetování na facebooku apod.? Pokud ano –jaké jsou Vaše důvody ? (hledáte inspiraci, zajímáte se o tetování jako takové.....?)

Rozlišujete lidi podle jejich tetování do určitých kategorií / skupin? Řadíte sami sebe do nějaké kategorie / skupiny ?

Myslíte si, že určitý typ tetování je více přijatelný společností než jiný? Uveďte prosím příklady a důvody.

CULTURE CONSUMPTION THEORY:

Můžete se, prosím Vás, podělit o Váš příběh za rozhodnutím nechat se tetovat – krok za krokem – od nápadu až po realizaci?

Vybíráte si své přátele podle jejich vzhledu / podle toho jestli mají – nemají tetování?

Myslíte si, že byste se nechali tetovat, kdyby nikdo jiný neměl tetování?

Jaké jsou podle Vás důvody lidí k tomu, aby se nechali tetovat?

Myslíte si, že svoboda v tetování by měla být omezena jen na určité části těla?

Zažil/a jste někdy nějakou situaci, která naprosto změnila Váš pohled na tetování?

Změnil se Váš pohled / Vaše pocity ohledně tetování během Vašeho života (např.: před Vaším prvním tetováním a nyní, kdy máte tetování víc)?

Zažil/a jste někdy situaci, která vyvolala změnu v přístupu k tetování ve Vašem okolí?

Zajímáte se o tetování jako takové ve Vašem volném čase – literatura, konvence atd.?

PŘECHOD ZE STUDENTSKÉHO ŽIVOTA DO PRACOVNÍHO ŽIVOTA:

PRO TY, CO JEŠTĚ STUDUJÍ:

Jaká práce – kariéra je Vaším snem?

Myslíte si, že Vaše snová kariéra by odpovídala Vašemu vzdělání nehledě na to, že máte tetování?

Ovlivňuje Vaše vize budoucí kariéry to, kde si necháváte tetovat další motivy? A nebo se tím vůbec neřídíte a necháváte se tetovat tam, kde se Vám líbí?

Myslíte si, že by měla být určitá omezení v tetování pro určitá povolání? Pokud ano, uveďte, prosím, příklady.

Byl / byla jste někdy v situaci, kdy jste se setkal / a s někým, kdo měl tetování, která na Vás působila nevhodně v dané situaci? Podělte se, prosím, o svou zkušenost.

Jak si myslíte, že zaměstnavatelé pohlíží na lidi s ukončeným vzděláním, kteří se ucházejí o zaměstnání a mají tetování?

Představte si, že jste majitel / majitelka firmy a právě máte přijmout nové zaměstnance – bylo by pro Vás zcela přijatelné, že vhodní adepti by měli tetování? Bylo by tetování překážkou? Prosím uveďte příklady různých pracovních pozic v různých odvětvích.

PRO TY, CO UŽ PRACUJÍ:

Měl / a jste nějaké tetování, když jste se ucházel/a o zaměstnání? (tetování již během studia a nebo později?)

- Pokud ano, bylo Vaše tetování viditelné při pracovním interview ?
- Pokud ne, kdy Váš zaměstnavatel a Vaši spolupracovníci zjistili, že máte tetování? Jaká byla jejich reakce – resp. Měl/a jste z toho nějaké problémy?

Pracujete stále ve stejné firmě, kde jste nastoupil / a po škole a nebo nyní pracujete u jiné firmy?

Je ve Vašem zaměstnání vyžadován určitý dress code – kód oblékání ?

Je ve Vašem zaměstnání nějaké pravidlo ohledně tetování a jiných tělových dekorací?

Povoluje Vaše firma tetování případně i piercing obličeje apod. Svým zaměstnancům? Pokud ano, má někdo z Vašich spolupracovníků tetování a nebo piercing / obojí?

Povoluje Vaše zaměstnání viditelné tetování?

- Pokud ano – které části těla můžete mít odhalené v rámci vykonávání práce
- Pokud ne – oblékáte se tak, aby Vaše tetování nebylo viditelné?

Setkal/a jste se s negativními reakcemi ohledně Vašich tetování ve svém pracovním kolektivu nebo někde jinde – např.: různé pracovní meetingy, styk s klienty apod.

.....

Chtěl/a byste dodat něco ohledně tetování, co nebylo zmíněno?

Děkuji Vám za Váš čas a za poskytnutí intervia pro můj závěrečný projekt.